



## Concept Note

### Dialogue on **The Role of Labour Externalisation in Fostering Agro-Industrial value chains in Uganda**

#### Background

Uganda's youth no longer aspire to work in the agricultural sector (Aga Khan University, 2016). This coupled with the extensive marketing and portrayal of employment opportunities in the diaspora (externalisation), leave government with a dilemma to find avenues of making agriculture and agri-businesses attractive as employment avenues for youth and women. Yet, the country is pursuing an Agro-industrialisation (AGI) programme which presents opportunities for export promotion, import replacement and job creation as indicated in the National Development Plan III. Under this programme, the government intends to leverage industrial linkages and deepen the product space all of which present more employment opportunities for marginalised groups like women and youth in Uganda.

From this perspective, it is thus important to establish the existing skills and information gaps, which if closed, can potentially enable the youth and women to drive the AGI programme for the country. Worth noting is that labour externalisation bears both positive and negative implications for AGI agenda in Uganda. For example, can those who have returned easily be absorbed along the AGI value chain and benefit from the skills and technology transfer they have attained? Further, can the opportunities identified along the AGI value chains reduce helplessness, vulnerability or resultant exploitative employment? Will those who aspire to be externalised and those returning invest (through remittances) in AGI if such information and opportunities present themselves beforehand? Additionally, success stories of those who have invested in AGI value chains from remittances is key to inspire future externalised workers.

It is against the foregoing perspective that the Economic Policy Research Centre (EPRC) is organising a half day dialogue intended to bridge the gap between existing knowledge, policy and practice towards a more informed engagement of persons in labour externalisation and their role in sustainably contribution and benefiting from the AGI programme of Uganda. More succinctly, the event is meant to prompt a discussion on how best the country's AGI strategy can tap into the skills and the remittances earned by migrant workers and how returnees can best invest in opportunities presented by AGI. The output from the dialogue is part of the African Policy Dialogues (APD) under the Inclusive

Development (INCLUDE) project on *“Creating Productive and decent work for youth and women in Uganda through Agro Industrialisation”*

Therefore, the specific objectives of the dialogue are to:

- I. Explore the implications of labour externalisation on AGI value chain development agenda;
- II. Create a knowledge platform of sharing experiences between returnees, policy practitioners, knowledge generators and aspiring externalised workers; and
- III. Share inspirational stories of change of returnees who have invested in AGI value chains

### **Expected Outcomes & Outputs**

Dialogue outcomes are;

- Strengthened awareness, mind-set change, and linkages of AGI among externalised workers and the entire industry.
- Investment opportunities identified that enhance sustainable investments of remittances in productive and decent jobs for youth and women along the AGI value chains.
- Enhanced networks among participants and EPRC.

Outputs include:

1. Created community of practice
2. Dialogue brief
3. Synthesis report on stories plus video

### **Participants**

A total of 50 participants are expected. These will comprise of representatives from relevant government Ministries, Departments and Agencies such as the Ministry of Gender, labour and Social Development, Uganda Association of External Recruitment Agencies (UAERA), returnees and youths intending to travel for work, Civil Society (Platform for Labour Action), Action Aid, among others.

### **Format, Date and Venue**

The event will be both physical and virtual. It will be held at the **conference room of Economic Policy Research Centre, on Tuesday, 8th December 2020, starting at 2:00 pm.**

In line with the guidelines from the Ministry of Health and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), the physical meeting will be only by invitation and the number of attendees will be limited to 30 people. All participants will be required to wear masks, sanitize and social distance. For those joining in virtually, the zoom link will be shared on various platforms.