

**PARTNERSHIPS FOR STRENGTHENING AFRICAN UNIVERSITIES'  
INVOLVEMENT IN RURAL DEVELOPMENT: PROPOSAL FOR  
COLLABORATIVE NEPAD COUNCIL PROGRAM IN INTEGRATED ANIMAL  
RESOURCE AND RURAL DEVELOPMENT FOR EASTERN AND SOUTHERN  
AFRICA**

Kabasa, J.D.  
Makerere University, Kampala

Rural development strategies rest largely on 5 pillars, namely: Partnership, Integration, Co-ordination, Decentralisation and Demand-driven delivery and diversity. Growth and development of Africa, leading to the eradication of poverty, will depend on efficient, equitable and sustainable utilisation of the region's natural resource endowment. For at least the next two decades, most of its inhabitants will reside in rural areas. Income generation and employment will continue to depend on transformation of the rural economy, involving steady advances in the productivity and efficiency of animal and agro-industries. Because of economic liberalisation and globalisation, the sectors must be competitive in international as well as domestic markets. To address these challenges successfully, the region will require a critical mass of appropriate human resources. Animal resources excluding wildlife constitute 25% of GDP in most sub-Saharan countries. In many regions such as the Sahel, livestock provides the bulk of the employment opportunities for the people.

This paper discusses a proposal for development of a NEPAD Council regional program for ***Integrated Animal Resource and Rural Development in Africa***.

The goals of the program include among others:

- Development of a centre of excellence in research, education and training in Integrated Animal Resource Management and Rural Development, Agro-Veterinary Processing, Entrepreneurship and Marketing.
- Provision of short-term continued training and advisory services for entrepreneurs, private sector, veterinary and agricultural workers in

appropriate skills for rapid transformation of the agro-veterinary industry in the region.

- Development and provision of professional expertise & leadership in Integrated Animal Resource and Rural Development.
- Development of a regional program at graduate level to generate a cadre of professionals responsible for quality Integrated Management of Rural Development with special emphasis on animals and associated resources & Agro-veterinary processing.

The paper discusses the failures of extension approaches since colonial times in transforming rural communities using the Uganda model and proposes an increased involvement of regional Universities in rural transformation partnerships and processes. It gives significant priority to the up grading of extension workers in the region to a level of professional Integrated Animal Resource and Rural Development Planners and Managers, and on equipping the private sector and University graduates with agro-veterinary processing and marketing skills.

The models of how such regional and interregional partnerships and synergies could be worked out are discussed.