

Central Uganda's new leadership pledges support for GM crops: 'We have a cardinal role to ensure food security'

Newly elected leaders from Wakiso district in central Uganda pledged support for genetically modified (GM) crops during a sensitization workshop on on-going biotech research at the National Crops Resources Research Institute (NaCRRI) on March 25, 2021. The 10 leaders including district and division councilors were led by the Woman MP-elect Wakiso District, Hon. Ethel Betty Naluyima.

"We have a cardinal role as leaders to ensure food security in Uganda. I pledge support to engage relevant stakeholders to ensure political embrace of agricultural technologies like virus resistant (GMO) cassava," Hon. Naluyima said during the workshop. The local councilors accompanying her promised to rally support at their respective levels of administration to galvanize grassroots demand for GM crops developed at NaCRRI. NaCRRI remains at the vanguard of crop improvement using biotechnology in Uganda with crops like insect and drought tolerant maize, virus resistant cassava, and nitrogen-use efficient rice very close to commercial release stages.

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"You have heard the controversy around genetically modified organisms (GMOs) and more recently (COVID-19) vaccines. This needs to be urgently addressed. The reason NaCRRI develops GMOs is to help farmers. We are not a profit-making entity," Dr. Godfrey Asea, NaCRRI Director, assured the guests at the workshop.

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