

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL
INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES ON THE REPEATED
POSTPONEMENT OF THE OPENING OF THE SOROTI FRUIT
FACTORY.**

OFFICE OF THE CLERK TO PARLIAMENT

PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS

KAMPALA - UGANDA

April 2019

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES ON THE REPEATED POSTPONEMENT OF THE OPENING OF THE SOROTI FRUIT FACTORY

1.0 INTRODUCTION

During the Plenary Sitting on Thursday 21st February 2019, Hon. Ilukor Charles, Kumi County, raised the matter of the repeated postponement of the opening of the Soroti Fruit Factory and the general fear by the population that the factory may never work. The Rt. Hon. Speaker therefore directed the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to immediately visit the factory to verify the status of the factory and report back to the House.

2.0 METHODOLOGY:

In execution of the Directive, the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries;-

Held meetings with:

- the Deputy Chairperson, Soroti District
- the Teso Tropical Fruit Cooperative Union
- the Soroti Fruit factory board members
- Uganda Development Cooperation
- carried out an oversight visit of the Soroti Fruit Factory

3.0 BACKGROUND:

Soroti Fruit factory project is a government project, it was borne out of a Presidential pledge in 2008. The factory was to address the post-harvest losses suffered by the fruit-growing farmers in Teso Region through value addition. It was also intended to increase household incomes through increased productivity, creation of employment opportunities, hence, leading to the socio-economic development of the region.

Teso Sub-Region was chosen because of the existence of abundant citrus fruits coupled with the high yield per tree which were the principal fruits under consideration. There are more than eight million orange trees in the Teso Sub-Region with each tree producing between five to six bags. Similarly, there are about 1.5 million mango trees, with each producing about six bags of 100 kilogram bags.

Construction of the factory commenced in April 2015 and was scheduled to have been completed in 2016 to kick-start commercial production of processed mangoes and orange juice. The factory was meant to benefit from and use up the large quantities of mangoes and fruits grown in the area.

The objectives of the fruit processing factory are as follows:

- a) Increase the incomes of the fruit farmers in the Teso Region by providing a readily accessible and fairly priced market for their produce.
- b) Promote value addition and agro processing of agriculture produce.
- c) Reduce post harvest losses.
- d) Produce fruit juice, concentrates and pulp that exceed the local, regional and international standards.

The project was implemented by the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) under MoFPED's Department of Investment and Private Sector Promotion. UDC was revived by cabinet in 2008 as an investment Arm of Government but became operational in 2009/10. It was, however, transferred to the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives (MTIC) in 2011/12. The development budget was retained by MoFPED until FY 2012/13.

4.0 FINDINGS

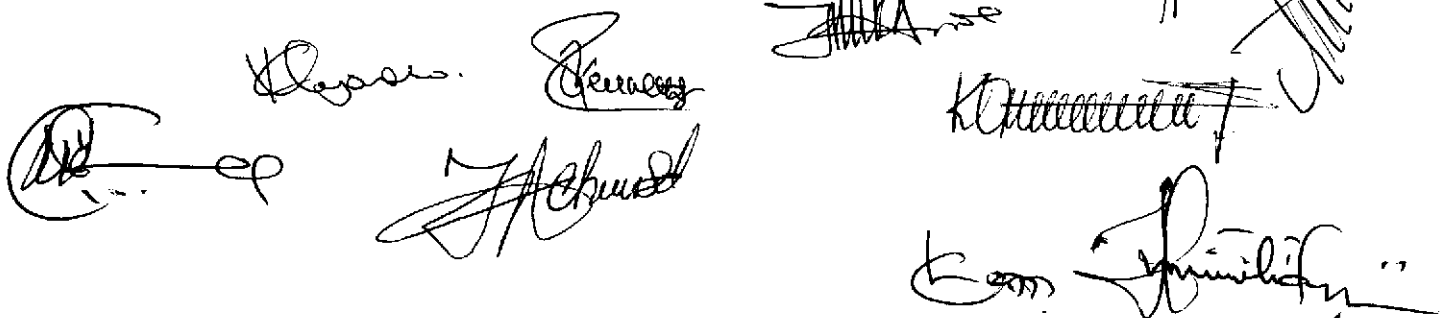
4.0.1 During its visit to Soroti, the Committee **held a meeting with Teso Tropical Fruit Cooperative Union Ltd (TEFCU)** members and in that meeting, the Committee was informed as follows:

- 1) TEFCU is an umbrella organization for fruit farmers in Teso Sub Region which promotes quality and quantity fruit production, value addition and marketing. After the Cooperatives ceased to exist there was need to form the Union, therefore TEFCU was formed in 2013.
- 2) TEFCU has membership across all the eight districts of the Teso Region namely; Amuria, Bukedea, Kaberamaido, Katakwi, Kumi, Ngora, Serere and Soroti.
- 3) TEFCU intends to work with at least 76 primary Cooperatives Societies in Teso Region, that is, one primary Cooperative Society from each sub county. The Union so far has 58 primary Cooperative Societies.
- 4) The production levels of the Union are:
 - Estimated number of trees (Teso Sub Region) 8,000,000
 - Average production per tree (year) 200kgs
 - Estimated number of trees (TEFCU) 5,000,000
- 5) The Union was informed that the factory requirements of fruits are 48metric tons per day. The Union is therefore concerned because there will be a gap due to increasing productivity and yet the capacity of the factory will not handle all the produce.
- 6) TEFCU members complained that a private supplier was also being contracted to supply the factory with fruits, a decision

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they perceived to be unfair. They argued that it should only be the Union to supply the fruits to the factory.

- 7) The factory management was proposing to buy from the Union a kilogram of fruits at 600shillings. The farmers were to be given 500UGX while UGX 100 will be for transport. They feared that UDC may manipulate the process.
- 8) TEFCU Members reported that at the time of construction, they observed that the work being carried out at the factory was very shoddy; the building materials were of poor quality and the road leading to the factory is in poor state.
- 9) Over 50percent of the fruits were infected by diseases and pests and a new disease had surfaced which blackens the fruit from the inside.
- 10) Raised concern over the problem of post-harvest management. They reported that due to plenty and bumper harvest in the previous seasons, they had to sell the fruits at low prices therefore they made great loses. The Union Members appealed that this matter be given urgent attention by putting into place post harvest management measures to address such occurrences.
- 11) Proposed that in order to keep fruits fresh, post harvest silos that are air conditioned should be built.
- 12) Raised concern that over 70percent of the oranges produced within the region are taken to Kenya and some to Rwanda. They noted that Kenyans were exporting some of the Ugandans oranges branded as Kenyan fruits.

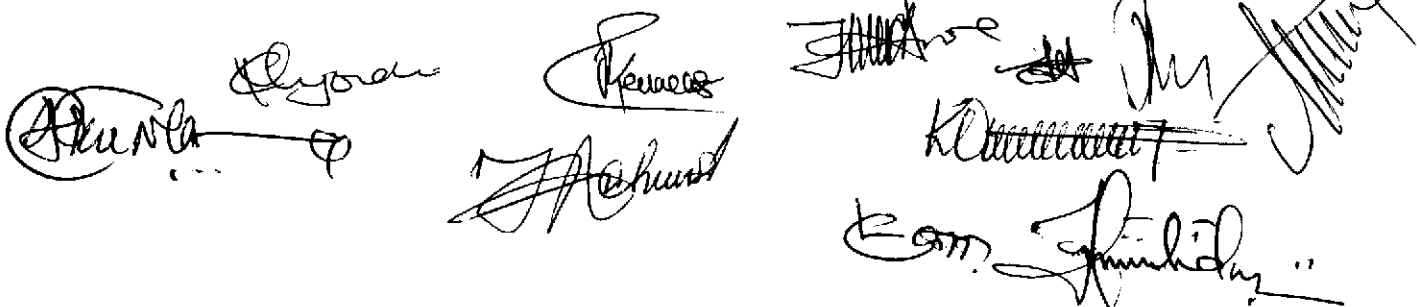

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- 13) Reported that there was poor relationship between the Union and UDC. The Union complained that UDC usually conducts training of farmers, however, members of the Union are not involved.
- 14) Israel had offered to assist the farmers but efforts to get government clearance has failed.
- 15) There is no weigh bridge at the factory.

4.0.2 Uganda Development Corporation (UDC):

The Committee held a meeting with officials from Uganda Development Corporation. This meeting took place at Parliament after the Committee's oversight visit to the Factory. During this meeting, the Committee was informed by UDC as follows:

- 1) Government of Uganda tasked Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) to implement the establishment of the fruit processing factory in Soroti District to add value to the fruits that are abundantly grown in the region hence addressing the high post-harvest losses.
- 2) The Soroti region is the leading producer of citrus in the country and oranges constitute the bulk of the fruits grown with three major improved varieties namely; Hamlin, Sweet Valencia and Washington Navel. There are approximately four million trees of improved oranges with a projected production of 647,880 metric tons per year. The region also grows mangoes and there are approximately 50,890 mango trees with estimated fruit yield of 15,588 metric tons per year.
- 3) Fruit farmers are faced with numerous challenges including fruit pests and diseases, recurrent drought, post harvest losses, poor transport infrastructure leading to high transport costs,

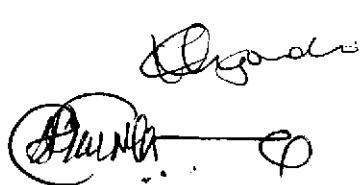

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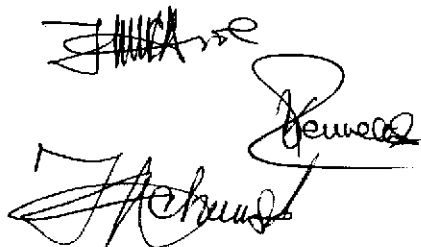
weak farmer associations which renders them vulnerable to exploitation by the middlemen, financing constraints and limited market information and lack of ready market for the fruits.

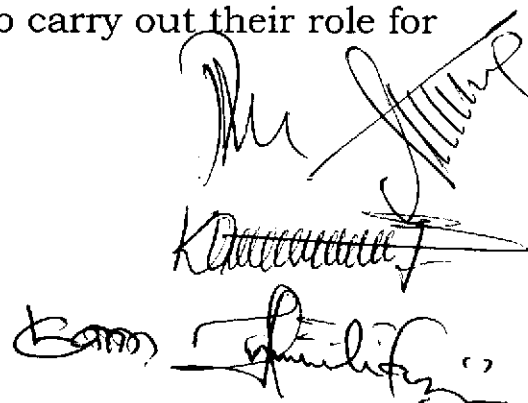
- 4) In order to address some of the challenges and contribute to increased incomes of the fruit farmers in the Teso Region, H.E the President pledged to establish a fruit processing facility in the region.
- 5) To complement GoU in this project, the Government of Korea was signed on August 9, 2012 and respective responsibilities for both parties on the establishment of the fruit factory were laid down as follows:

KOICA was charged with

- a) Construction of the fruit factory with the following components:
 - Manufacturing factory set
 - Welfare administration office set
 - Oil storage tank
 - Waste water treatment plant
 - Cistern tank
 - Dispatch a construction manager who will be in charge of managing the construction.
- b) Provision and installation of equipment, the equipment and materials necessary for the operationalizing of the factory.
- c) Dispatch of Korean experts to Uganda to implement, supervise and give technical assistance regarding the implementation of the project. At the time of the committee visit, the experts were at the factory and they were expected to carry out their role for one month; ending March 2019.

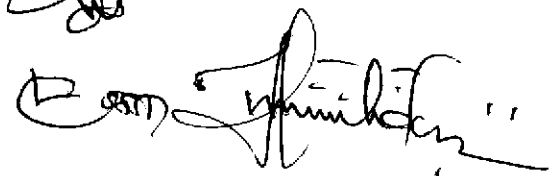
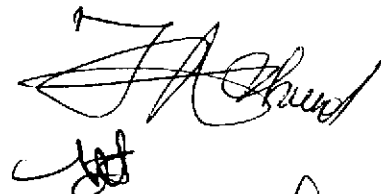
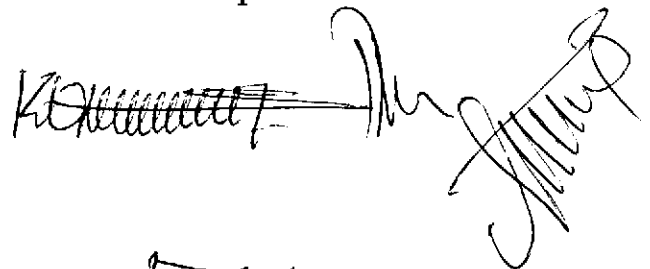
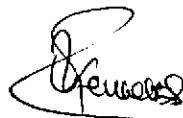
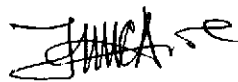
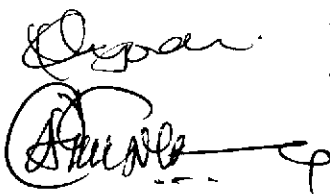






Government of Uganda undertakings include:

- a) Provide legally undisputed land as the project site and ensure that there will be no change in its location without mutual consultation.
- b) Secure a budget for the operation and maintenance of the factory for a certain period of time, at least two years and even after, to handle continuously after the completion of the project.
- c) Provide adequate land and facilities necessary for the construction works such as electricity, water supply system, secondary wastewater/effluent treatment, telephone lines and security for equipment and materials.
- d) Establish a secondary wastewater/effluent treatment facility as a way to preserve the natural environment of Uganda based on Uganda's laws in the long term perspective.
- e) Provide a suitable dumping site.
- f) Construct an access road to the project site.
- g) Collaborate with the construction company to obtain all the permits and authorization necessary for the project.
- h) Provide working capital for the commercial operations of the factory.



4.0.3 The processing capacity of the fruit factory:

The Committee was informed that the factory is expected to process 23,000 metric tonnes of fruits per annum with the processing facility having an operational capacity of 6MT/hr for oranges and 2MT/hr for mangoes. The factory is multipurpose and will process other kinds of fruit as well.

4.0.4 Ownership of the fruit factory:

The Committee learnt that the project is implemented through a special purpose vehicle; the Soroti Fruit Ltd (SOFTE), a subsidiary company to UDC. UDC and the fruit farmers through their Cooperative Union (Teso Tropical Fruit Cooperatives Union) hold 80% and 20% shareholding in SOFTE. The farmer's equity is thereafter supposed to increase annually until such a time when 100% equity will be owned by fruit citrus farmers through their Cooperative Union.

4.0.5 Achievements/milestones of the Soroti Fruit Factory as at 27th March 2019

During the meeting held with UDC at Parliament, UDC reported to the Committee that the following are the milestones that have so far been achieved:

- a) A company known as Soroti Fruit Ltd (SOFTE) that will own and operate the facility was incorporated in January 2011. A Memorandum and Articles of Association of SOFTE and the shareholders Agreements were signed by both parties in December 20, 2010 and January 11, 2010 respectively.
- b) The factory acquired 4.8 and 10 acres of land for the establishment of the fruit processing factory in the Soroti Industrial and Business Park and the solid waste disposal respectively.

- c) A feasibility and an environment impact assessment and business plan studies were completed – copies of each were presented to the Committee.
- d) Civil works and machinery installation at the factory have been completed. Dry test runs were successfully conducted in February 2018 and the defects that were identified were being worked on by the Korean contractors.
- e) The factory will use underground water to supplement piped water by NWSC for first and second washing of fruits.
- f) The hydro-geological survey and drilling of two boreholes with a total yield of 21 cubic meters per hour was completed and this is sufficient for factory operations.
- g) Flooring of the production area of the factory has been upgraded to a polyurethane floor recommended in a food processing industry.
- h) The Corporation secured 240 motorized spray pumps for utilization by farmers under their primary cooperatives societies.
- i) 123 staff have been recruited.
- j) A governance structure for SOFTE was put in place and the Board of Directors was inaugurated in September 2018 to oversee the affairs of the Company, the Board has seven members.
- k) UDC has so far trained 42,421 fruit farmers on better agronomic practices.

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l) TEFCU is among the suppliers of fruits to the factory and negotiations for a supply contract between SOFTE and TEFCU are complete and a contract for supply of fruits has been signed.

m)The wastewater plant is functional and trial runs of the machinery by both the Korean experts and SOFTE were on going.

4.0.6 Budget Allocations for Soroti Fruit Factory:

The Committee was informed by UDC officials that the total approved budget for Soroti Fruit Factory was Ushs 41,853,899,788, of this, only UGX shs20,479,870,495 was released representing 48.9percent of the approved budget.

Summary of budget, releases and expenditures for Soroti Fruit Factory as at march 2019

FY	Approved budget	Amount released	Expenditure	Amount released	not	Amount released a
				released		% of total budget
2009/2010	5,000,000,000	-	-	-		-
2010/2011	5,000,000,000	5,400,000	5,400,000	4,994,600,000		0.1
2011/2012	5,000,152,788	1,442,743,456	1,442,743,456	3,557,409,332		28.9
2012/2013	4,678,200,000	4,670,181,996	735,767,594	8,018,004		99.8
2013/2014	4,761,612,000	4,058,724,625	3,214,827,295	702,887,375		85.2
2014/2015	4,482,787,000	3,096,136,752	4,140,589,876	1,386,650,248		69.1
2015/2016	4,482,787,000	2,512,905,610	2,110,367,673	1,969,881,390		56.1
2016/2017	4,482,787,000	2,605,778,056	2,524,199,396	1,877,008,944		58.1
2017/2018	4,482,787,000	2,088,000,000	2,202,157,969	2,394,787,000		46.6
2018/2019	4,482,787,000	3,000,000,000	1,859,975,912	1,482,787,000		66.9
Total	41,853,899,788	20,479,870,495	16,376,053,259	16,891,242,293		48.9

GENERAL OBSERVATIONS:**The Committee made the following observations:**

1. The Committee learned from the Auditor General's value for money report of 2012 that Government of Uganda allocated Shs 5 billion each FY (from 2009/10 to 2011/12) to the project while GoK offered a grant of USD 6.5 million to finance the activities of the project. The construction and operationalization of the factory was to be completed over a five-year period commencing on 1st July 2009 and ending on 30th June 2014.

However, Construction works began in April 2015, and it was envisaged that commercial operationalization would start in November 2016. The factory began test runs of its production lines in May 2018 and commercial commissioning was to be done before the end of 2018. However, operationalizing of the project has been in suspense.

The Committee is not convinced with the utilization of the Shs5.4 billion, annually allocated to UDC to run the factory since 2009. UDC was not able to explain the actual activities that relate to the funds that have so far been released.

The Committee observed that some of the key planned activities had not been implemented and these include construction of nucleus farms, operationalization of the solid waste management and a suitable access road to the factory.

2. The Committee learnt that when the factory starts operating, plant Production is planned to be phased, starting with one 8-hour shift and gradually increasing to two and eventually three daily shifts. The single shift of about 8 hours is to be processing nearly 650,000 tonnes of oranges and 25,000 tonnes of mangoes annually. It is to move to a double shift and eventually

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to a 24 hour operation system in order to readily absorb the high fruit supply rate and meet market demand.

The company is to produce ready to drink juice and concentrates. The products from the fruit factory are to be sold to both local consumers and across East Africa and each 100kg fruits bag from any farmer is to cost UGX 50,000.

The Committee witnessed some of the packaged package drinks that had been produced during the test runs. The Committee is not satisfied with the type of packaging of the drinks, it is of very poor quality and type; and not suitable for general usage – *(samples available)*

3. The Committee learnt that UDC contracted Uganda Industrial Institute to produce the sample fruit juice that was being used as example of the factory products. This raises a lot of concern about the operations of the factory.

4. Challenges encountered by the factory

The Committee established that the Factory has suffered the following challenges;

- i. Frequent brief power outages which disrupts the trial runs and will also damage the factory equipment in the long run. The Committee notes with concern that if this is not addressed, all the fruits on the processing line will go to waste and the equipment may have to shut down.
- ii. Lack of working capital for the factory when it commences commercial operations. The investment requires Ushs35,762,941,120 but only Ushs4,482,787,000 has been allocated in FY 2019/20.
- iii. Inadequate supply of raw material especially during the off season due to reliance on rain feed agriculture.

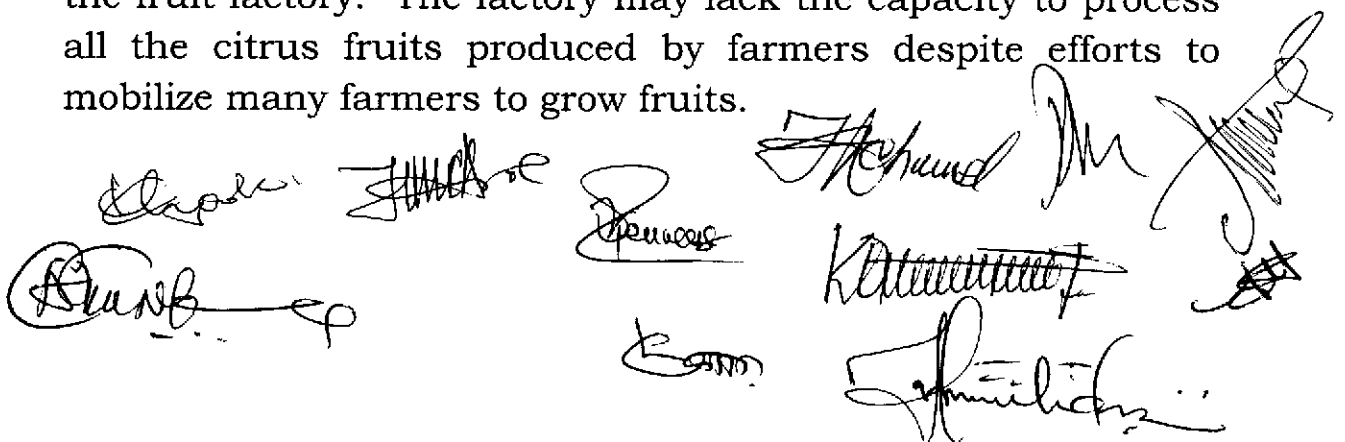
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5. The Committee further takes cognizance of the challenges being encountered by farmers some of which include:
- i. pests and diseases
 - ii. high cost of fertilizers and pesticides
 - iii. lack of water for irrigation
 - iv. improper storage facilities leading to fruit wastage
 - v. long periods of drought.
6. Furthermore, the Committee recognizes that there have been some other challenges that have been encountered that have also contributed to the delay in the operation of the factory and these include:
- i. Failure by Government to adhere to funding commitments.
 - ii. Failure by MoFPED to pass over the role of project implementation to the responsible ministries.
 - iii. Inadequate investment in fruit cultivation and non-functional cooperatives.

The Committee notes that some interventions to address some of the challenges cited above have been put in place by Government and these include: availing motorized spray pumps to alleviate pests and diseases; installation of boreholes to readily avail water and build a waste management facility. Government also plans to install a dedicated power line to the factory to ensure continuous production.

The Committee observed that the challenges cited above have been some of the contributory factors in the delay in opening the factory.

7. The Committee is concerned about the production capacity of the fruit factory. The factory may lack the capacity to process all the citrus fruits produced by farmers despite efforts to mobilize many farmers to grow fruits.



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8. At the time of the Committee visit, the Committee learnt that the challenge that was being faced by the factory was lack of fruits. The factory will therefore have to incorporate other farmers who are not part of the Teso Fruit Cooperative Union to supply fruits. This situation arose from the fact that farmers made a bumper harvest but due to lack of post-harvest handling mechanisms, most fruits got rotten especially because the factory was not yet in operation.

9. As reported above, TEFCU complained to the Committee that the factory management was proposing to buy from the Union a kilogram of fruits at 600shillings. The farmers were to be given 500UGX while UGX 100 will be for transport. .

The Committee notes that the matter of setting or deciding the price is still a challenge because UDC may manipulate the process. Furthermore, the Committee wonders where the 100UGX for transport is going to.

10. The Chief Executive Officer for Soroti Fruit Factory informed the Committee that another contributory factor in the delay of opening of the factory was a leakage in the treatment plant. During its oversight visit the Committee had observed the leakage, however, the CEO reported that the leakage had since been addressed.

11. The Committee observed that there was poor quality work during its inspection of the factory. The veranda and wall had developed cracks and the juice machine was a leaking.

12. The Committee learnt that there is very poor relationship between the officials of UDC and the local authorities.

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13. The land that was acquired for solid waste disposal had only been fenced and there was no further development on the land. The Committee observed that there is no clear plan of disposal of the waste from the factory. The purported arrangement to dispose of the waste through the Municipal Council is not feasible. The Committee did not see any evidence of plans for solid waste treatment.

14. The disposal area surrounding the factory has no proper system for water drainage. The Committee observed that the water had stagnated and there was algae in the water to show that the water did not have proper drainage.

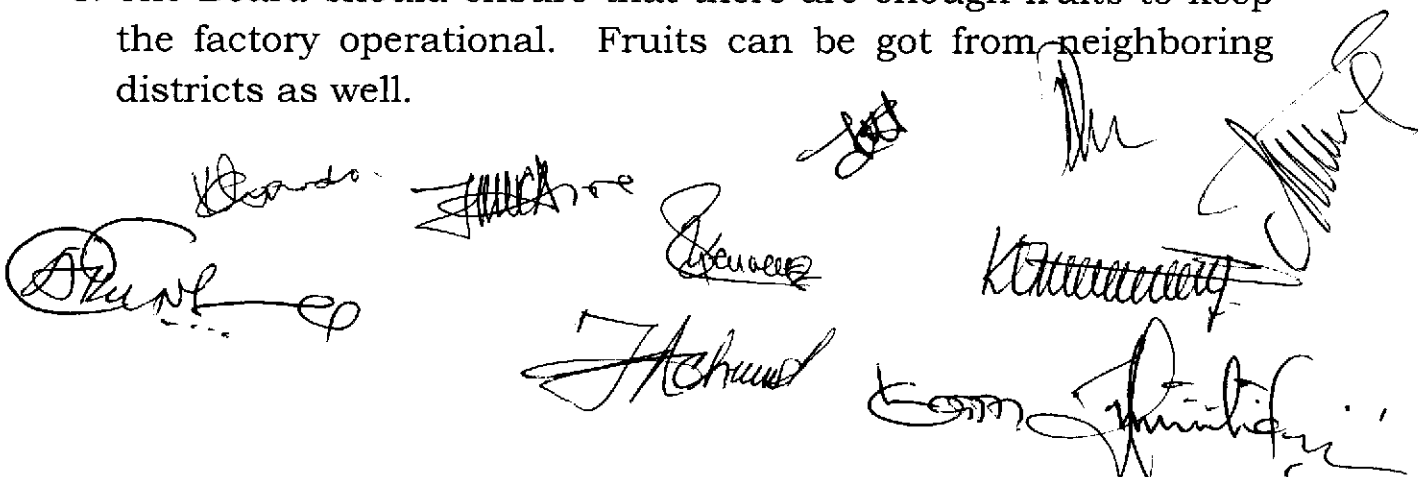
15. The Committee notes that there is no clear and proper training structure since the farmers complained that they were not included in the trainings conducted by UDC.

16. Observed that there was lack of proper planning right from the start. For example there were no plans to have water for production/irrigation, there are no nuclear farms and no storage facilities for post-harvest handling.

Committee Recommendations:

The Committee recommends as follows:

1. The Board should ensure that there are enough fruits to keep the factory operational. Fruits can be got from neighboring districts as well.



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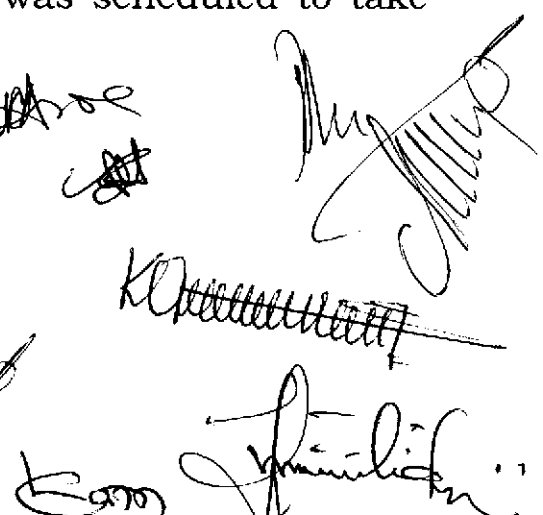
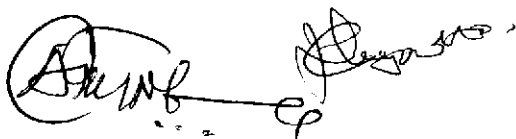
2. The power and water capacity should be beefed up to ensure no interruption in their supply when the factory is in operation.
3. Farmers should be aided with irrigation facilities to boost their production to avoid relying on rain. Small scale irrigation schemes can be put up to help the farmers.
4. Government is implored to ensure that it meets its obligation of construction of the access road by completing the incomplete part of the road that is still murrum.
5. MAAIF should put up storage facilities with cold rooms for storage of fruits at every sub county in order to prolong their shelf life.
6. Regarding that kind of packaging of the products, the Committee recommends that there should be a review of the kind of packaging to ensure that there is proper packaging of the products that is suitable for marketing the products.
7. The Auditor General should carry out a value for money audit of the funds that have so far been released to the factory.
8. MAAIF should provide extension services to the farmers to assist them engage in soil management practices and make use of organic manure and pesticides to ably deal with soil nutrients, pests and diseases.
9. MAAIF should provide support in form of provision of movable motorized pumps to citrus farmers with at least 300 trees.
10. A more scientific way of determining the prices should be applied in setting the prices for the fruits.

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11. Government could explore partnering with Israeli investors because Israel is well known for its expertise in fruit processing and Israel has already expressed willingness to offer support.
12. The Auditor General should conduct an audit of the training component by UDC.
13. Since there will be a lot of solid waste generated at the factory the factory proprietors should ensure that the waste disposal does not negatively impact on the environment and the neighboring communities.
14. The Factory Board should have clear supply schedule given to the union to enable them plan and supply accordingly.
15. The Committee recommends that a fruit investor should be encouraged to invest in the region. Since investors are business oriented they will diversify and encourage farmers grow different fruits so that there is always fruit to feed into the factory.
16. UDC officials should ensure that they improve the relationship with the district authorities.

Rt. Hon. Speaker and Hon. Members, as I conclude, I would like to inform the House that the Committee was assured by UDC that the commissioning of the factory was scheduled to take place on 13th April 2019.

I beg to report.



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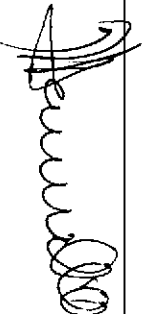



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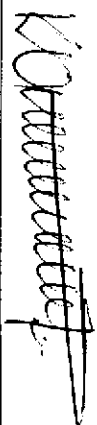


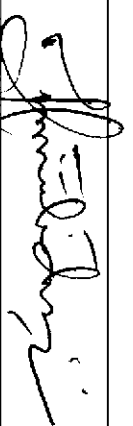
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**REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES
ON THE REPEATED POSTPONEMENT OF THE OPENING OF THE SOROTI FRUIT FACTORY**

NO	NAME	CONSTITUENCY	PARTY	SIGNATURE
1	Hon. Okori-Moe Janet	DWR Abim	NRM	
2	Hon. Akuqizibwe Lawrence	Mwenge North	NRM	
3	Hon. Bintu Jalia	DWR Masindi	NRM	
4	Hon. Migadde Robert Ndugwa	Buvuma Island	NRM	
5	Hon. Chemutai Evelyn	DWR Bukwo	NRM	
6	Hon. Lamwaka Catherine	DWR Butuda <i>DMS</i>	NRM	
7	Hon. Woboya Vicent	Budadiiri County East	NRM	
8	Hon. Lokoru Albert	Tepeth County	NRM	
9	Hon. Birungi Carolyn Nanyondo	Kyamuswa County	NRM	

10	Hon. Kohuo Andrew	Joseph	Toroma County	NRM	
11	Hon. Sekindi Aisha		DWR Kalungu	NRM	
12	Hon. Achia Terence Naco		Bokora County	NRM	
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14	Hon. Kusasira Peace		DWR Mukono	NRM	
15	Hon. Eliotu Cosmas		Dakabela County	NRM	
16	Hon. Mbogo Kezekia		Budaka County	NRM	
17	Hon. Alum Santa Ogwang		DWR Oyam	UPC	
18	Hon. Veronica Nanyondo Namaganda		DWR Bukomansimbi	DP	
19	Hon. Gonahasa Francis Barnabas		Kabweri county	FDC	
20	Hon. Muhindo Harold	Tonny	Bukonzo East	FDC	

21	Hon. Prof. Latigo Ogenza Morris Wodamida	Agago North	FDC	
22	Hon. Eitunganane Esiangu Kenneth	Soroti County	INDEP	
23	Hon. Adong Lilly	DWR Nwoya	INDEP	
24	Hon. Watenga Godfrey Nabutanyi	Luteshe county	INDEP	
25	Hon. Mukasa Julius Opondo	Bujumba County	INDEP	
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