



ENGAGING GOVT STAKEHOLDERS – USING THE UNAS ADVISORY MODELS

By

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Uganda National Academy of Sciences

UGANDA NATIONAL ACADEMY OF SCIENCES - UNAS – An Overview

- Founded in 2000; honorific and service-oriented
- Granted Presidential Charter in 2009 to operate as the National Academy of Uganda
- Main goal: to promote excellence in sciences by offering independent evidence-based policy advice for the prosperity of Uganda
- Convening & Consensus activities

CONVENING ACTIVITIES

- Academy provides neutral setting thru:
Workshops / Dialogues / Public Lectures
Forum Meetings to:
 - Illuminate critical issues & potential solutions
 - Provide scientific explanations
 - Clarify emerging scientific issues
- Challenges:
 - Stakeholders expect conclusions & recommendations / need high profile actors / other advisory bodies

CONSENSUS ACTIVITIES

- Policy studies / other formal advisory activities
- Issue of importance to country/govt explored in depth: UNAS mainly used:
 - Consensus studies
 - Position papers
- Studies offer evidence-based guidance to policymakers

CONSENSUS STUDY

- Mechanism for giving evidence-based policy advice to govt, public, etc.
- Challenges:
 - Usually controversial/sensitive issues
 - Need balanced panel of experts from diverse backgrounds
 - Need very good Chair
 - Keeping committee focused/available

UNAS Experience - the Malaria / IRS Case in Uganda

- UNAS stakeholder meeting (2005): malaria the single biggest health concern
- Malaria burden: high no of deaths in vulnerable popns; missed schl days; severe economic losses
- Political pressure to reduce burden of malaria
- Multi-pronged approach to prevention & control, incl Indoor Residual Spraying (IRS) by MoH

The IRS Strategy

- Several insecticides used, but general perception focused on DDT
- Protagonists believed DDT to be the magic bullet ; antagonists against the idea coz of perceived effect on the environment and organic food exports
- Lack of consensus as to whether to use DDT
- IRS serious policy issue in Uganda

Media Reactions to IRS

Police stops meeting on DDT

Robert Muhereza
Kabale

The police in Kabale dispersed about 30 district councillors and civil servants who were attending a one day sensitisation meeting on the spraying of DDT and its effects at the White Horse Inn in Kabale town, claiming that the meeting was illegal.

Over 10 policemen, commanded by the officer in charge of Kabale Police Station, Mr Godfrey Biryomumaisho surrounded the hotel and ordered the organisers

to stop the meeting immediately or else face arrest.

"We have express orders from above to disperse everybody attending this meeting. I am giving every body 10 minutes to leave this meeting room. The organisers of this meeting did not follow the right procedures before inviting the district leaders," Mr Biryomumaisho said.

He summoned the organisers to the Police station for questioning.

The workshop was organised by Uganda Network on

Toxic Free Malaria Control (UNETMAC), an NGO funded by the Swedish Society for the Conservation of Nature. "Giving people information on the effects of DDT and its dangers is not bad," said Kabale District vice chairman Silver Baguma, who attended the meeting.

The secretary general of UNETMAC, Mr Ellis Muyambi, said the meeting was not illegal as the police claimed because it informed all the district authorities including the poli-

Crops should be stored in a different environment from humans

DDT indoor spraying will not harm agricultural exports

I WISH to respond to a story in *The New Vision* of March 31, titled, "Bandibugye rejects DDT spraying." The article said the district council had rejected the Government's programme of indoor residual spraying because cocoa farmers threatened to stop buying the produce if the area was sprayed with DDT.

The Ministry of Health is aware of the many alternatives that exist for the control of malaria, including the insecticide-treated nets. But Uganda, like many other countries such as Eritrea, Ethiopia, South Africa, Botswana, Brazil, Panama, Vietnam, India, Italy and Israel, decided to use DDT for public health, based on the World Health Organisation and the National Environmental Management Authority guidelines as well as the Stockholm Convention.

The use of DDT in the above countries has dealt a big blow to malaria. Like Bandibugye, some of these countries grow cocoa and export it to Europe and beyond.

There are certain levels of DDT acceptable in the food chain, regardless of the levels in the environment and living tissue. Even if there was no market for such produce abroad, no country would wish to have its citizenry consume

BY
DR MYERS
LUGEMWA



Soils impregnated with harmful toxic substances. It would be naive, therefore, for the Government to make futile decisions to use DDT at the detriment of the vast local economy or agriculture, the backbone of Uganda. The European Union advised Uganda that it will allow all its agro-exports if DDT levels do not exceed the internationally stipulated levels.

Indoor residual spraying is an exercise that entails the spraying of any chemical insect for public health use within (inside) the dwelling of household members and not outside where agriculture takes place. Moreover, there is an ordinance regarding storage of agricultural produce which stipulates that crops produce shall not be stored in the same environment with man and other animals. This is why in

the past, every household was compelled to have granaries.

The ordinance still holds and we should invoke it to protect our agro-exports from vermin and other contaminants. This falls within the mandate of Bandibugye district council and others.

While the district council implored the Government to use "soa soa" alternatives, such alternatives have been used at one time or another and will continue to be used where and whenever applicable.

However, the cost benefit analysis of such alternatives, including the insecticide treated nets, has been on the lower compared to DDT. Indeed, malaria remains the number one killer in Bandibugye yet the district has benefited from alternative prevention programmes.

This does not mean that DDT is a magic bullet solution in the fight against malaria. Rather, it is part of a combination of strategies such as case management, Intermittent Preventive Treatment in pregnancy, use of insecticide-treated nets, good environmental management, behavioural change, communication and information, community education and education, and use of minor insecticides such as Fenitrothion.

Finally, the Public Health Act affirms to mosquitoes as a nuisance and failure to have the environment in which the mosquitoes live distributed is in itself an offence. Pesticides should be restricted of this act in order to have healthy people who will grow more crops and fight poverty, thus addressing government programmes like Poverty Eradication Action Plan and House Inhabitation. Bandibugye is not on the list for DDT spraying programme in the near future as the district council alluded in its meeting.

My technical team is at your disposal if the council should wish to be furnished with facts on DDT since its inception in 1954.

The writer is the international health specialist with the National Malaria Control Programme in the Ministry of Health

• Send a topical opinion with your picture to guestwriter@newvision.co.ug. We take 600 words only

The Daily Monitor, January 12, 2008

The New Vision, Thursday 31 April 2008

Gen Reactions to IRS

MAY 12-16, 2008 PUBLISHED WEEKLY BY THE NATION MEDIA GROUP

The East African, May 12-16, 2008

Now organic exporters say DDT spraying will destroy their market

HEALTH VS PROFIT? They fear Uganda's niche in America and Europe, worth \$500m annually, will be lost if traces of the chemical are found

By DAVID MUKINDA EYRE
In Kampala

Uganda's decision to re-introduce DDT spraying, the country's exporters' bodies are now sounding its alarm.

Exporters' bodies are now sounding the alarm over the re-introduction of DDT to control malaria, started in Uganda, the dispute between the government and exporters of organic products is re-emerging. This time over "impurities" in exporting the exports.

A combination of exporters of organic products is preparing to file a lawsuit against the government, accusing it of non-compliance to World Health Organisation guidelines on indoor residual spraying in the endemic districts of Oyam and Apac in the north.

The exporters claimed that the reason is which the spraying is for - "low-level applications for health" - is wrong because that Uganda exports organic, worth about \$500 million annually, will be rejected in America and European markets if traces of DDT are found.

The Ministry of Health has ordered the closure, saying they spent three years preparing to reintroduce DDT to fighting the epidemic that kills 500 people every day in Uganda. But a source at the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries said the exporters that they were aware of the "impurities" which they are investigating.

Dr Emmanuel Otiiso Otiiso, Junior Minister for Health, said, "We spent three years ensuring that we reintroduce DDT using the right procedures and made the relevant environmental impact study. It is an on-going of the government."



Not an oversight thing: Dr Emmanuel Otiiso Otiiso, Junior Minister for Health, said, "We spent three years ensuring that we reintroduce DDT using the right procedures and made the relevant environmental impact study." (The East African)

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The Daily Monitor, May 10, 2008.

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Tenders

DDT: Farmers lose contracts

Two companies cancel contracts

More than 10,000 households affected

Dorothy Nakweesi
Kampala

Farmers in northern Uganda have lost their contracts to supply commodities to the lucrative European market as a result of the government's decision to spray DDT in their houses.

Share (U) Limited and Bo Weevil (U) have cancelled trading contracts with more than 11,000 farmers in the districts of Oyam and Apac, saying DDT is likely to contaminate the commodity supplies.

The affected households were certified suppliers of organic cotton, Sesame (Simsim) and Chillies (Pepper) for export to the EU.

"We had to stop a good number of our certified farmers from supplying organic commodities because

we cannot afford to lose our exporting contracts with our buyers in the EU and USA who are against the use of DDT," Mr Marck Van Esch, the managing director of Bo Weevil (U) Limited, a Cotton exporting firm, said.

"The indoor spraying of the farmers' shelters, most of which are mud and grass thatched, is not safe for the commodities especially when

'DDT indoor spraying of houses is not safe for especially when the houses are used to store harvest and farm inputs.'

Marck Van Esch,
Managing Director Bo Weevil (U) Limited

these shelters are used stores to keep the harvest and the inputs they use. These will definitely be contaminated with the residue".

He said once shelters are sprayed with DDT the residue takes more 10 years to fade from the houses, which

means farmers who lost their contracts will not have a source of income. However, another close to 20,000 farmers whose homesteads had not yet been sprayed may survive following a High Court order to the Ministry of Health to suspend DDT spraying.

The High Court on May 30 suspended the spraying of DDT in the entire country until there is a ruling on a suit filed by Share (U) Limited and Bo Weevil (U) and a host of other companies in northern Uganda contesting the government's decision to spray DDT in people's homesteads.

The Executive Director of the National Organic Movement of Uganda, Mr Moses Muwanga, said: "The collapse of exports has started as more districts are sprayed with DDT, more farmers are going to lose the market so the country should prepare."

Spraying of DDT has been a contentious issue since the government decided to adopt the approach in the treatment of Malaria. DDT spraying has already begun in northern Uganda.

UNAS Intervention

- Set up consensus study committee of 9 multi-disciplinary experts (national, regional and international)
- TASK: identify, review and assess the current state of knowledge and policies pertinent to monitoring malaria vector resistance in the context of an effective national program for IRS with DDT for controlling malaria

UNAS Intervention – Cont'n

- Recommend best practices for effective use of DDT and other insecticides for IRS
- **Malaria Mosquito Alert:** *Approaches to assessing and managing malaria vector resistance to insecticides used for IRS in Uganda – contributing to a National IRS strategy (UNAS, 2008)*
- Proved useful doc to convince policymakers on need to monitor insecticide resistance...

UNAS Experience – the Biosafety / Biosecurity Study – Why?

- Findings of the UNAS workshop (GLP in January 2009).
- VERTIC study on Biosecurity in Uganda
- The Uganda National Biosafety and Biotechnology Bill
- Request by Programme on Biosafety Systems (PBS) Uganda

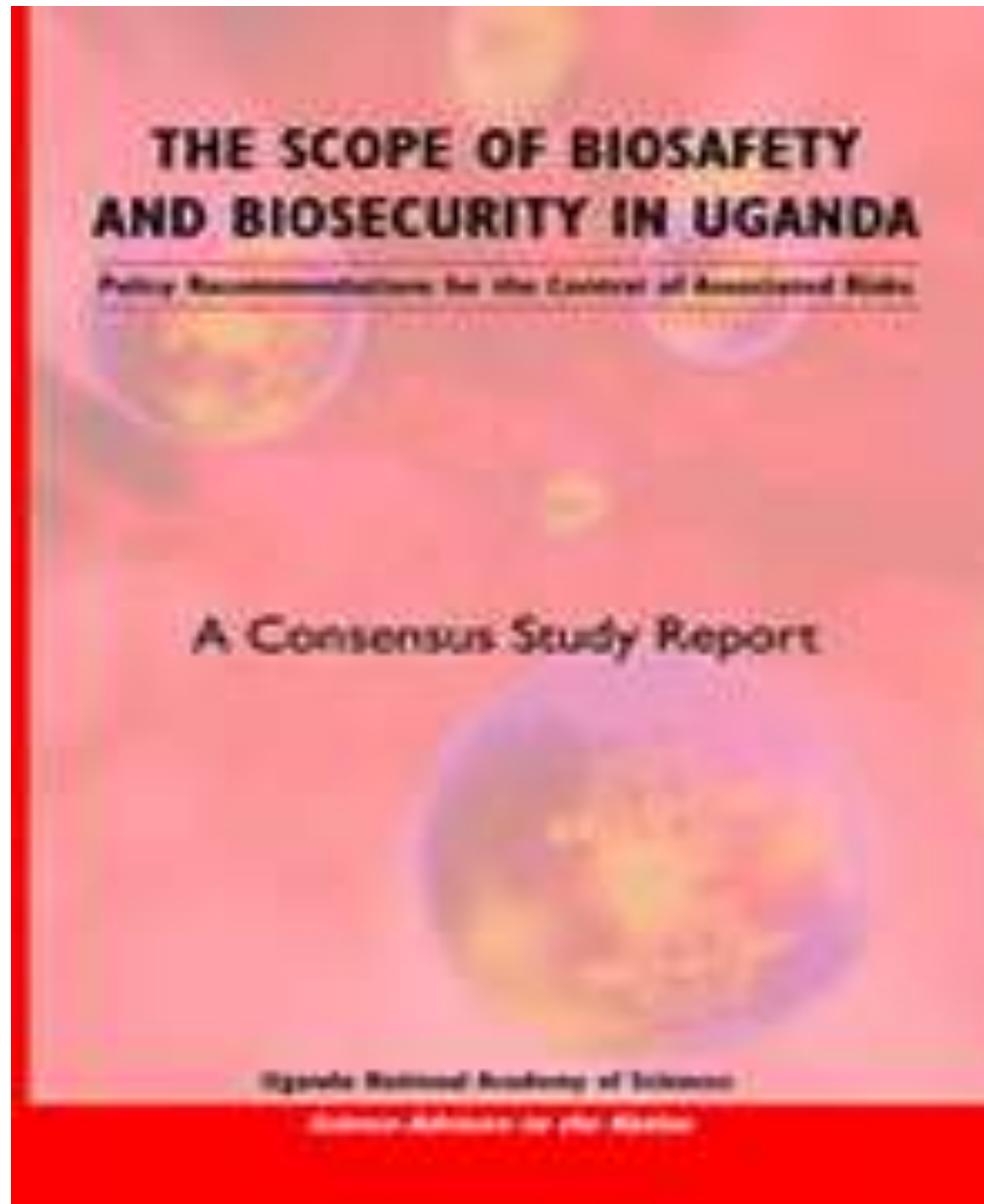
BASIS FOR STUDY

- **VERTIC study 2008:** Ugandan legislation not complaint with BWC and UN 1540
- **GLP workshop 2009:** biosafety & biosecurity perceived differently depending on background
- **Biotechnology/Biosafety Bill 2009:** Omnibus law? - measures for medical and scientific laboratories working with pathogens and infectious agents?

UNAS Intervention...

- Convened multidisciplinary committee of experts who responded to a defined Statement of Task
- Task: review and assess the current state of knowledge pertaining to the meaning and scope of biosafety and biosecurity with a view to informing both policymakers and legislators in Uganda as they attempt to come up with a pertinent policy and regulatory framework.

B/B REPORT



UNAS REPORT

- Inter alia:
- **EXPERT COMMITTEE URGES GOVERNMENT TO ENACT THE BIOTECHNOLOGY AND BIOSAFETY BILL INTO LAW AND SEPARATE IT FROM BIOSECURITY**
- Report widely disseminated to key stakeholders
- Ministry finalizing law without biosecurity aspects...

CHALLENGES

- Host of other advisors to Govt
- Academy yet to be at level of USNAS where govt can request for studies & fund them
- Takes time: stakeholders want quick results

OTHER CHALLENGES

- Experts expect to be paid
- High profile experts targeted – not readily available; last min withdrawals
- Impact not seen immediately – takes time
- No tradition for policymakers asking for advice
- Reaching consensus easier said than done: some experts have entrenched positions

CONCLUSION

- Consensus studies take 6mths – 1 Yr, been widely useful & welcomed by policymakers
- Reports & Policy Briefs released
- Need sufficient funding & time
- Convening activities more regular: useful as they many times turn out to be sources for consensus studies...

THANK YOU!