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**Italian-Ugandan cooperation: meeting at EIMA International**

***The major exhibition of agricultural machinery, held in Bologna from November 9 to 13, will be attended by a delegation of Ugandan businessmen, interested in the most innovative technologies for increase the country’s productivity. The great variety of crops in Uganda and the different models of farm require the breadth of range that Italian industry can offer, within the framework of an increasingly solid technical and commercial cooperation.***

Ugandan agriculture plays a leading role in the African landscape. Thanks to its natural resources, agronomic skills and the support of public policies, Uganda is highlighted by economic observers as one of the continent's nations with the greatest possibilities for development. A central theme for the country is equipping itself with a new generation of mechanisation, capable of improving crop productivity and at the same time preserving natural resources. This was the subject of a press conference held this morning in Kampala, organised by ICE - Italian Trade Agency, and the Italian federation of agricultural machinery manufacturers FederUnacoma. Before an audience of Ugandan journalists and businesspeople, the speakers illustrated the opportunities for cooperation between Uganda and Italy in the field of agricultural mechanisation. They presented the 45th edition of EIMA International, the major exhibition of agricultural mechanics to be held at the Bologna exhibition complex from November 9 to 13 and which will see the participation of an official delegation from the African country and a programme of business meetings between the manufacturers present at the show and Ugandan businesspeople. The President of FederUnacoma Alessandro Malavolti pointed out how EIMA international - directly organised by FederUnacoma - is one of the largest exhibitions in the world in terms of agricultural machinery, the first in terms of range and level of internationality. To date, about 1,500 exhibiting companies have confirmed their participation representing 50 countries, with a total presence of about 50 thousand models of machinery, equipment and components. The wide range of products on display at the Bologna exhibition is divided into 14 specialised sectors and 5 themed shows, respectively dedicated to components (EIMA Components), irrigation systems (Idrotech), advanced electronic and information technologies (Digital), gardening and landscaping (Green) and bioenergy supply chains (Energy), the latter being a particularly interesting sector for Uganda, which has a considerable forestry wealth and is aiming to invest in alternative energy sources - noted Malavolti. In the boundless range of machinery and equipment - from tractors to combine harvesters, from tillage to crop protection equipment and electronic devices for precision agriculture - Ugandan businesses and farmers can find the most suitable means for extensive crops such as maize, rice, sorghum and potatoes, but also for the more typical products of their regions such as coffee, cotton, tapioca and bananas.

Agricultural activity is aiming at an ever-increasing industrialisation - FederUnacoma's Deputy General Manager Fabio Ricci explained during the meeting - which means a rationalisation of processes and an optimisation in the use of production factors, and this is only possible with the use of advanced mechanisation. On the other hand - Ricci added - the need to safeguard biodiversity and the development models of rural communities require mechanisation that is no longer standardised but extremely flexible, adapted to the environmental and social conditions of each individual territory. The breadth of the range and flexibility of technologies - President Malavolti went on to say - is the strong point of Italian industry, and this opens up excellent possibilities for cooperation between the two countries in this specific sector. Exports of Italian agricultural machinery to Uganda - explained the Director of the ICE Agency in Addis Ababa (responsible for Uganda) Riccardo Zucconi –accounted for 2.2 million euro in 2021, 64% of which is for machinery for the agricultural industry, 15% for tractors, and 12% for tillage and sowing equipment. But technical and commercial relations can increase considerably - added Zucconi - within the framework of an increasingly positive overall exchange between the two countries, which has grown by 45% in the last three years. Never as in recent years - characterised by a long pandemic, the effects of climate change and more recently the conflict in Ukraine - has agriculture emerged as a highly strategic sector, fundamental not only to guarantee global food security, but also to ensure the most efficient management of natural resources and, as a consequence, the economic and political stability of each country - said Italian Ambassador to Kampala Massimiliano Mazzanti in his speech - and cooperation in the agribusiness sector between Uganda and Italy, and more generally between Europe and Africa, is now more than ever a priority in the bilateral economic agenda.

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