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in the Tropics and Subtropics”

Livelihood Security and Organic Agriculture. The Case of Uganda

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Abstract

In Uganda, a high proportion of the rural population is poor or vulnerable to become poor. To them, agriculture is an important livelihood strategy. Over the years, organic agriculture has developed into a booming sub-sector and an increasing number of farmers have responded to the rising international demand for certified organic produce from less industrialised countries. Uganda is currently exporting coffee, sesame, cotton and fruits to the European Union, Asia and North America. Some of the cocoa and vanilla production is under conversion. Given the enormous drive of the organic sub-sector in a globalizing world, the question is what organic agriculture has to offer for the poor and the vulnerable segments of the Ugandan society. This paper describes the progress of a study that aims to contribute to a better understanding of **(a)** the impact of organic agriculture on livelihood security, and in particular on the asset base of farmers and **(b)** the linkages between micro-level outcomes of organic agriculture and institutional and policy factors at the macro-level. The sustainable livelihood approach is employed as an analytical framework. Disaggregated data collection will be carried out in three districts in the east and the north. Methods and tools comprise qualitative interviews with actors of the agricultural knowledge and information system of each district and participatory rural appraisal tools. Empirical data will be collected during the course of two seasons to capture seasonal variations, external shocks and response measures taken by farmers. At the macro level, secondary and primary information on policy issues such as the Plan for the Modernisation of Agriculture (PMA), certification and international markets for selected commodities will be collected and related to the outcome of organic agriculture at the micro-level to better understand macro-micro linkages. The study is being implemented in cooperation with Africa 2000 Network Uganda.

Keywords: Livelihood security, micro-macro linkages, organic agriculture, poverty