

Business

High population a threat to food security — expert

Martin Luthier Oketchi
Kampala

An economist at the Economic Policy Research Centre has said the current population growth that has surpassed the growth in agriculture is a threat to Uganda's food security.

While presenting a paper in Kampala last week, Dr Lawrence Bategeka, a senior research fellow at the centre said despite the importance of the agricultural sector

in Uganda, it has not been given enough attention to make it correlate with the country's growing population.

This, he said, has stretched the country's food resources which as a result have caused a serious case of food insecurity.

Currently annual growth rate in agriculture stands at 2.3 per cent per annum compared to annual population growth of 3.2 per cent per annum.

Low growth of the agriculture sector is mainly on account of de-

clining agricultural productivity. Dr Bategeka cautioned that the

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falling growth rate of agriculture below the population rate is a threat to food security.

The situation has been made worse by the lack of access to productive assets particularly land and other disincentive inputs.

During the same function, Mr Tress Buchanayandi, the minister of Agriculture asked farmers to employ the use of fertilisers due to increased soil infertility so as to improve productivity.

Despite its falling contribution to the country's GDP, agriculture

remains one of Uganda's most important sector of the economy employing about 60 per cent of the population.

Mr Buchanayandi said agriculture remains a key sector in Uganda's industrialisation contributing about 48 per cent of the country's industrial raw materials.

He said Uganda's population growth rate is higher compared to that of agriculture, which calls for a proactive approach towards increasing productivity in the country.