

**Small Business Administration**  
**Interview with Mabel N. Kiggundu of Uganda**

Ron Johnson: U.S. small businesses looking to grow are finding export opportunities in Africa. In 2008, U.S. exports increased by 29 percent to \$18.5 billion. Machinery, vehicles, parts, wheat, and electrical machinery, including telecommunications equipment, were sectors seeing growth. Hi, I'm Ron Johnson with the U.S. Small Business Administration, Your Small Business Resource.

With me today to discuss exporting to Uganda is Mabel Kiggundu, founder and managing director of Elma Express Delivery Limited. She also represents Uganda on the African Women's Business Network, a leading businesswomen's network accelerating economic growth for women to improve the quality of life in Africa. Now, for those of you not familiar with Uganda, it is a landlocked country located in Eastern Africa, and it's slightly smaller than our State of Oregon. Welcome, Mabel.

Mabel Kiggundu: Thank you. Thank you for having me.

Ron Johnson: What are the market opportunities for exporting to your country, and what types of U.S. products or services are in demand?

Mabel Kiggundu: There's a whole range of things that we need in my country. As a developing country, there are many areas where we need a lot of product and services. One of them

is the health sector, which is not doing very very well. The second one is the financial sector where most of the people - especially the women that I represent - cannot actually have affordable finances so that they can take their businesses to another level. And the other one is the education sector. I know we have many universities there but maybe what we need is quite a number of institutions for hands-on projects or vocational schools. That is also another area. As you might know Uganda is very excited about the discovery of oil right now and so I think the energy sector is also going to be a very lucrative area.

Ron Johnson: Now, U.S. small businesses may be surprised to find out that English is the official language of Uganda, are there any factors that might make it difficult for U.S. companies to do business in your country?

Mabel Kiggundu: Uganda is a very, very friendly people. They speak English so that's a positive one. And when people come in, I'm sure that is a start if the people are friendly and all that, the rest of the things can follow. But we definitely have culture issues because of different cultures; the dynamics of doing business could sometimes be quite different. Sometimes the processes are done not as quickly as they are done here so there could be some challenges. Also, the infrastructure, like I have said previously, it is also a challenge. There is the

congestion of traffic especially in the capital city. Energy tariffs could be on the high side because we don't have enough electricity right now. But we are in the process of building another dam and so soon we should be able to have enough energy for those people that would want to build industries in our country. So the potential is there, although, the challenges are also there but the potential is great.

Ron Johnson: You serve as treasurer of the Uganda Women Entrepreneur Association, how can your organization assist U.S. small businesses interested in learning more about exporting to Uganda?

Mabel Kiggundu: Because we've been around for quite sometime, we have a lot of information about businesses in Uganda. We are connected to quite a number of organizations, the embassies; the private sector foundation, we are partners with the private sector foundation; we are members of Uganda Manufacturers Association and all the other relevant ministries and institutions that are very, very crucial when one is doing business. So we would provide information to these people but not only information, we'd also help to connect them.

Ron Johnson: I'd like to thank Mabel Kiggundu for joining us today. If you'd like to know more about exporting opportunities, [go to www.sba.gov/international](http://www.sba.gov/international) and [www.export.gov](http://www.export.gov). Until next time, this is Ron Johnson with the

U.S. Small Business Administration, Your Small Business  
Resource.

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