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BICCO
Tel: 0772 401955

CRANE
Tel: 414343700

CROWN
Tel: 414252500

DOLLAR
Tel: 0772486

KLYN CASH
Tel: 414345224

LLOYDS FR
Tel: 414 348561

MID WEST
Tel: 041425564

ODAA FRX
Tel: 414371738

STANHOPE
Tel: 414347298



Mr Kasekende, (R), Mr Heping (2R) and other colleagues, at the seminar in Kampala on Tuesday. PHOTO BY STEPHEN WANDERA.

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China and Uganda's trade increased by 10% in 2009

Faridah Kulabako
Kampala

Trade volumes between Uganda and China increased by at least 10 per cent in the 2009 financial year following the signing of a memorandum between the two countries' employer organisations.

Speaking at the Occupational Safety and Health seminar in Kampala on Tuesday, the Chinese Ambassador Mr Sun Heping, said trade between the two countries stood at about Shs550 billion (\$250 million) in 2009 despite the global economic challenges.

Streamlined relations

In 2007, employer organisations-the Federation of Uganda Employers, China Enterprise Confederation and the Confederation of Norwegian Enterprise-signed an agreement to promote good labour relations, encourage responsible business, trade relations and investments.

At the time of the agreement, trade volume between Uganda and China stood at about Shs490 billion (\$222 million). Exports to China

stood at about Shs44 billion (\$20 million) while imports from China were about Shs440 billion (\$202m).

Uganda exports cotton, coffee, leather, fish, and minerals, whereas major imports from China are mechanical and electric appliances, textiles and garments, pharmaceuticals, porcelain, enamel and foot wear.

Close collaboration

Mr Heping attributed the growth to close collaboration, joint effort, entrepreneurs' creativeness and the growing interest Ugandan traders have with their Chinese counterparts.

He said: "This is significant progress but there is still great potential."

The March 2010 World Trade Organisation statistics indicate that Norway is Uganda's second largest import origin country while China is fifth. Norway is also the fourth largest export destination for Uganda products.

Martin Kasekende, the FUE chairman said, since its inception, the federation has engaged in a number of programmes aimed at addressing labour related challenges.