



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Ugandan farm broadcaster helped to end conflict

Ottawa, Ontario March 1, 2011 - Grace Amito was bitter when her manager at Uganda's radio station Mega FM assigned her to the farm broadcast. "He told me all the other programs had been taken up by my fellow presenters since I was away."

That was in 2002, when Grace says she didn't have "a single clue on farming." Today she says her farm listeners are now part of her family and her life.

"They trust me so much. I cannot hesitate to receive them in my house whenever they travel to town and fail to find their way back to their villages. Others want me to be their surety whenever they seek loans from commercial banks."

Grace is host of "*The Farmers and the Animal World*," a daily program for Ugandan farmers, who like millions of others in Africa often have no other source of farm extension information except radio.

From March 1-12, she will be in Canada to speak and to formally receive the George Atkins Communication Award, named after the famous CBC farm broadcaster who founded Farm Radio International, an Ottawa-based NGO that provides radio scripts and training to more than 360 partner radio stations in sub-Saharan Africa.

"Grace is a skilled, courageous, and creative broadcaster, highly committed to helping small-scale farmers in northern Uganda rebuild after years of civil conflict. We are proud that she is a partner in the Farm Radio International community," says FRI's executive director Kevin Perkins.

Mega FM used radio broadcasts through 2004 to 2006 to facilitate peace talks that helped end the war in northern Uganda. A program called "Dwog Cen Paco" (come back home) targeted Lord's Resistance Army fighters and encouraged them to lay down their arms.

"Over time, they listened to the messages channeled through the program and they started coming out of the bush and were granted amnesty," says Grace.

Since 2008, Grace has been working closely with Farm Radio International to produce a hugely popular radio program on beekeeping and honey production. To show their gratitude for her programs, farmers stop by to leave gifts of pails of honey in the Mega FM lobby.

Grace Amito will visit Canada from March 1-12 and will be giving talks in Ottawa, Guelph, Toronto and Montreal.

30

Contact: Brenda Jackson
Farm Radio International
613-761-3646
brenda@farmradio.org
www.farmradio.org

About Farm Radio International:

Founded in 1979, Farm Radio International is a Canadian charity with the mission of supporting broadcasters to strengthen small-scale farming and rural communities in Africa. Farm Radio International researches and produces radio scripts on rural development issues and distributes them to over 360 radio broadcasters who interpret and use the scripts to provide their listeners with practical information about farming, land management, health and other issues. Farm Radio International also develops training opportunities; researches farm radio strategies and facilitates networking among and between broadcasters.