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KILIMO KWANZA

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SUPPORTING THE PROMOTERS OF THE GREEN REVOLUTION

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FARMING AS BUSINESS



“ Reintroducing a lifetime opportunity for youths
...Ruka JUU, a business challenge for youths, is back!
Now, it's all about youths on the farming business



Farming as business: Not an empty slogan

TANZANIA'S population is predominantly young. Preliminary results of the Tanzania Demographic and Health Survey (TDHS) 2010 indicate that close to half (47 per cent) of the population is under the age of 15, the other half (49 per cent) is aged 15 to 64, with the remaining 4 per cent being 65 or older.

With only about half of the population in the economically productive age range of 15-64, a substantial burden is placed on the productive people to support older and younger members. The agedependency ratio - an indicator of the economic responsibility of adults in their productive years, is 107, indicating there are 107 dependants for every 100 persons in the productive agegroup. This figure is higher than the figure of 104 per 100 found in the 1999 and 2004-05 TDHS and points to high fertility rates.

Tanzania also has a mixed economy with agriculture; comprising crop growing, animal husbandry, forestry, fishery and hunting playing a key role in providing employment. Although at 42 per cent, the service industry is the major contributor to the gross domestic product (GDP) of the country.

Tanzania, like many developing countries, is an agrarian economy. Here residence has a close association with the type of occupation, with majority of rural women and men engaged in agriculture, while urban dwellers are mostly found in skilled and unskilled occupations.

The agricultural sector however remains the main employer, with 69 per cent of women and 62 per cent of men engaged in direct agricultural occupations. These figures are lower than those recorded in the 2004-05 TDHS, where 78 per cent of women and 71 per cent of men were employed in agricultural occupations.

While these trends point to growing diversification of employment opportunities, the exponential growth of the unskilled labour sector indicates that most are abandoning agriculture to work as unskilled labourers in other sectors.

Wealth was also found to be more prevalent in urban areas, with 64 per cent of the urban population falling in the highest wealth quintile, contrasted against only 5 per cent in rural areas. Furthermore, 24 per cent of those in rural areas fall within the lowest wealth quintile.

When respondents in the TDHS 2010 were asked how often they had problems in meeting the food needs of their households in the 12 months before the survey, 41 per cent reported they never had a problem, 21 per cent said they often had a problem, and 2 per cent reported always they had a problem in meeting their food needs. Urban households were also found to be far more likely than those in rural areas to have three or more meals a day (78 per cent and 49 per cent respectively).

Meat consumption is also not common in Tanzania with more than half of the households interviewed, (54 per cent)

reporting that they had consumed no meat in the previous week, 19 per cent ate meat once, and 15 per cent ate it twice. Despite the fact that Tanzania has the third largest cattle herds in Africa, only 12 per cent of households had meat three or more times in the week prior to the survey.

At current total fertility levels, the average Tanzanian woman will have given birth to 5.4 children by the end of her lifetime. The TDHS 2010 also estimates that one-quarter of Tanzanian households are headed by women.

However, female headed households are also typically poorer than male-headed households. A woman's nutritional status has important implications for her health as well as for the health of her children. Malnutrition in women results in reduced productivity, increased susceptibility to infections, slowed recovery from illness and a heightened risk of adverse pregnancy outcome for both mothers and infants.

Good nutrition therefore is a prerequisite for the national development of countries and for the wellbeing of individuals. The TDHS 2010 measured three indicators of nutritional status in children: height-for-age, weight-for-height, and weight-for-age.

At the national level, 42 per cent of children under-5 years of age had low height-for-age or stunted; 5 per cent had low weight-for-height or wasted; and 16 per cent had low weight-for-age, which reflects both chronic and acute under nutrition.

The TDHS 2010 preliminary results also suggest that the problem of poor nutrition still affects the entire population, with women and children being especially vulnerable. The new WHO child growth standards for example, indicate that the levels of stunting, wasting in infancy and underweight during the first half of infancy (0-6 months) is now higher than it was measured before.

The writing is on the wall. Left unchecked, these trends pose a serious threat to the overall growth and development of the nation. It is against this background that we welcome all efforts targeting youths to spur the growth, modernisation and development of agriculture in the country.

One such initiative is the Ruka Juu entrepreneurship competition, which will highlight the success and challenges of youngsters approaching and undertaking farming as business. Read all about it in this issue of Kilimo Kwanza.

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Why farming is life



"Because of this small business, I had my own pocket money most of the time and I was able to buy myself fashionable clothes whenever I wanted. My parents were so proud of me. Who says farming is hopeless?"

The same applies to me

As I am talking to Geoffrey and Bahati for stories for this article, I can't help, but think how similar their stories are to mine. I, too, cannot tell exactly when I started to engage myself in farming. I just found myself in farming with the rest of the family. It was our home.

I was born in a big family and when the time for farming came only the sick and infants were excused! Even when we were attending different boarding schools - during holidays each one of us would be assigned a piece of land to either till or weed and whoever finished her share would list down her requirements for school and get the money.

Farming was the name of the game, nobody ever complained about it. We knew that all our needs - from school fees to food - came from the farm. We knew that we were the manpower that our parents relied upon and that nobody was going to farm for us.

I would work day and night to finish my share, so I could have extra days to visit my relatives before the school reopened. Life went on like that until we all finished school.

Today, we are all scattered around, working everywhere from offices to the farm. Those who chose to stay on the farm have their childhood experiences to thank for helping them become the farmers they are today.

Throw me in the farm and you will not believe it is the same Mashulano you read in Fema! Thanks to my childhood experience, I have an extra skill which I can use anytime I want.

How about you?

Some students are already engaged in farming, while others are not, right? Have you realised farming is the source of life - everything from school fees, mobile phone credit, clothes and food come from the farm!

Have you ever thought of farming your own piece of land? You can access extra cash and contribute to your own pocket money like Dada Bahati did! Have you thought of how much money you can actually make from farming a small plot of vegetables today?

Think about it. Be smart, the farm smells of money! Remember, accessing farming land and farming while in school will give you and your family extra cash. Use your evenings, weekends and holidays for farming and let it be your way of life.

Remember, food, books, clothes, school fees, even pocket money comes from the farm. Later in life you can invest more in farming and make it into a profitable business. There is huge potential.

Send your comments for free starting with LIFE to 15774

By Pendo Mashulano, Fema

"AT the age of three, with just a few milk-teeth in my mouth, I was already a 'farmer', says Geoffrey Martin Sadana, a student at Nkasi Secondary School in Rukwa.

"Before the break of dawn, my mother picked me from my bed and secured me on her back. Then, she took her hoe, ready for yet another trip to the farm, located a few kilometers away from our home. I would sleep in bed, but on waking up I would find myself on the farm!"

"At the farm, I would play with anything that I could find near me, from soil to maize stalks. My mother would let me play as long as I didn't get harmed. Using a stick or a sharp stone, I tilled the land and planted, like

I saw my parents do! In short, farming was my childhood game, my childhood world!" "When I was five, my parents made me a child-size hoe and I started to help with farm tasks such as weeding, tilling onions and so on. As the years went on, I got even better at doing work around the farm. When I was seven, I could till up to 6 by 20 yards. I learned farming by doing. Each year I got better and my parents increased the amount of land I farmed; that was how they taught me to work."

"Farming became my life, I learned that it is the farm that gives us food, education, clothing, it covers all the family needs. Today, even though I am in secondary school, I make it a point to join the rest of the family in farm on the weekends and even during the holidays."



Remember, food, books, clothes, school fees, even pocket money comes from the farm

Horticulture: Great potential, opportunities in sight



THE Tanzania Horticultural Association (Taha) executive director Jacqueline Mkindi granted Kilimo Kwanza Supplement an interview. Various issues, including plans, strategies and investment opportunities in the sub-sector, were discussed. Excerpts:

Q. What kinds of investment opportunities exist in production of horticulture? Can they meet increasing demands for markets?

A. Fruits and vegetables production for local and International markets in Tanzania is very low compared to available productive land resource. Market demand on high value vegetables (green beans, peas, baby vegetables, chilies) and fruits such as mangoes, avocados and pineapples has been escalating.

To create enabling environment to attract investors to invest in horticulture, Taha has been working closely with the government on a number of issues as well as mobilising small and medium size farmers to produce and service the market swelling demands.

With small holder farmers, Taha plays a role of mobilising and building capacities of these farmers and connecting them with buyers or contractors, providing trainings on standards compliance, and offering infrastructural support.

Recently, Taha identified an investor who is coming to invest in the vegetable export market with a plan to buy up to 100tonnes of fresh vegetables daily to add into his current average export of an average of 50tonnes a day.

Although this investor is currently focusing on the northern zone (Kilimanjaro, Arusha, Manyara and Singida), there are other potential investors who are focusing on other regions.

Taha has embarked into conducting series of campaigns to mobilise small and medium size growers to produce for this market.

Q. Briefly explain about strategic interventions, if any, for production techniques, standards, value addition and market access on pineapples production.

A. Access to markets has been a hindering issue with horticultural farmers in most parts of the country due to poor infrastructure, logistics and access to finance. One of Taha's objectives is strengthening the buyer-seller linkage.

One of the major milestones in this process this year was to link Kiwangwa Pineapple Growers Association (Kipa) with counterparts from the Gulf region, who are willing to buy up to 5 containers a week from these farmers.

Taha will continue mobilising farmers to ensure production technologies are in place. The association will also work to ensure sufficient volumes, varieties, and standards to sustain this market.

Q. Do you have strategic Partnerships for enhancing capacity in the horticultural sub-sector?

A. Taha is mandated to extend its services to reach out to horticultural farmers and other stakeholders nationally as well as pushing for focus on regional agricultural markets using various platforms.

The role of Taha is to enhance the capacity of farmers so that they engage effectively and efficiently in a win-win and sustainable relationships. To achieve that, Taha has been engaged into strategic partnerships with various national and international organisations to ensure that business support services are delivered to the industry.

It is with this regard that the association joined hands with Kilimo Trust, to work together to realise food security and increased contribution of agriculture to eradicate poverty, as well as increase productivity and profitability of small and medium scale agricultural enterprises.

Taha and Kilimo Trust signed a MoU to engage in joint efforts to ensure increased horticultural productivity and integration of the Tanzania horticultural sub-sector into the region and global value chains.

We are doing this to take advantage of enormous opportunities for the

county to leverage existing comparative advantages in land and water resources to achieve supply response and move towards becoming a net exporter of agricultural products.

Q. Brief us on the plan to establish the horticulture practical training centre of excellence (PTC)? Do you think it will materialise? How?

A. Taha signed a MoU with the government through the Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives in April 2012, where we were allocated land to be used for establishing a self-sustaining centre of excellence for horticultural practical trainings (PTC).

The PTC will be providing trainings on different parts of horticultural value chain as well as hands-on experience on modern and good agricultural practices and other technical support services to farmers.

Currently, Taha provides trainings on good agricultural practices, farming as a business, harvesting and post-harvest techniques, amongst others. Therefore, Taha will not reinvent the wheel, but rather use the training centre to consolidate the current trainings and to have a practical "lab" for training farmers on the entire value-chain process.

The PTC will be a sustainable entity and will partner with appropriate private and governmental entities while maintaining its commitment to horticultural farmers. Taha has embarked on a series of activities to jump start the implementation of this project.

The development of this facility will be on a phase approach.

The first phase will involve construction of buildings and practical vegetable and vegetable seed plots, and then practical field/plots for fruits will be constructed during the second phase, while the third phase will involve development of fields for cut flowers and ornamentals.

Send your comments for free starting with HORTICULTURE to 15774

Dig in, dig deep, it's worth it!

By Gaure Mdee, Femina

“WHEN I was 17 my mom died, this was 6 years after my dad had passed away, I had just finished standard 7 and my sister was in standard 4, we had no source of income and I wanted to finish school no matter what. All we had was a three-acre farm. I had farmed, but was not sure what to do with the land or how to go about using it,” explains farmer Frank Kalezi.

Frank is now 32, and has a wife and three children. He has used farming to put his sister, himself, and two of his children, through school, plus he makes an additional profit!

“The challenges I faced then and the ones I face now are the same, I simply plan and tackle them differently now. I succeeded through perseverance, luck and some help from extension officers.”

For those of us who plan to get into farming for profit someday, or are already busy doing it, it would be wise to listen in! Be prepared. Here are tips on how to handle some of the challenges one might face while farming.

Negative attitudes

Many people are discouraged by the stigma associated with farming. This is a big challenge because too often we hear people say, “Farming is dirty, messy and for the poor and illiterate!”

Even on Bongo Star Search, a singing talent search competition, judges dismiss singing contestants by telling them to go back to the farm, as if farming is something to be shameful about. These ideas could not be farther from the truth. There is nothing shameful about being a smart, savvy, money-making farmer!

Frank says, “This attitude ruins farming stands for in this country! It makes many young people turn their back on farming as a business for them, in the end they lose out. An appropriate solution to this challenge is promoting the understanding and raising awareness that farming has value and could be a lucrative industry because as long as hu-

mans eat, there is always a market for farm products, especially food.

Any industry pays for those who are ready to sacrifice and work hard, the same applies to farming. So, don't be afraid of a hoe because farming is money. Make it your business.

Lack of knowledge, skills
Many farmers lack the skills to lift farming to the next level; they get satisfied as soon as they make a little money. Frank sought the help of a caring extension officer, who taught him how to farm profitably.

He sold eight bags of maize at first then bought an extra acre, “... after getting the extra acre, I was suddenly making more money and I made sure my sister could study.”

Two concrete suggestions could be a solution to this problem. First, every village should have access to advisory service, that's extension services in their areas.

The experts have the knowledge on the best crops to cultivate in a particular area, what fertilisers, as well as herbicides and pesticides to apply on a farm. Their job is to help farmers, so, farmers have the right to that help.

Second, seek out farming groups in your community who get together to share advice and ideas about farming. As always, together the farmers are stronger.

Lack of farm inputs

Fertilisers and seeds are sometimes provided by the government through subsidy; however, often they arrive late. This could be addressed by buying or getting fertilisers on your own. Frank never waits for subsidised inputs; he simply goes and gets it on his own.

Ask a farm group or extension officer for help about the local environment: find out the best time to plant so as to avoid insects, and how to make own compost. “The crop will be strong enough to withstand attacks from the bugs if planted ahead of moist conditions,” Frank says.

In a farm group, members can try to follow the inputs from the district or regional agent. If they are constantly reminded, things may happen faster.



Lack of storage units

Storing and processing crops is a good way to increase the value; if you wait until there is a need for your prod-

uct in the market, you'll get a better price. A solution to this challenge is putting crop sunders in the bedroom or sitting room. Frank used to do so. His wife didn't like it, but eventually, he got access to a warehouse.

Likewise, people in a farm community can find a place where they can store their products or split the cost of transporting crops to the closest warehouse. More traditional storing methods such as vihenge serve as good storage.

Lack of markets

Markets can be challenging to find, far from farms or not always give what one wants. Frank ensures that every time he goes to the market, he already has people to sell to.

If the buyer does not satisfy his asking price, he takes his corn to the millers, processes it and sells it out to other people as flour for a higher price. To address this challenge, a farmer should plan ahead, negotiate the price and make an agreement with buyers

or middlemen beforehand.

Again, the farmer must have a back-up plan. If the buyer doesn't agree on a good price, he or she should take the crops somewhere else, or find another way to market it.

Starting an association could be the best solution too. This will help farmers to negotiate better prices as a group.

Farming is a job with challenges just like any other. Good money can be earned through it. To become successful, one should work hard to overcome the challenges.

However, like anything else, farming requires three P's - patience, planning and persistence to come out on top. And this is a humble call for farmers: Be smart, get organised and conduct your farming properly.

Send your comments for free starting with DIG to 15774

“Starting an association could be the best solution too. This will help farmers to negotiate better prices as a group”

To farmers: Join forces, work together!



By Gaure Mdee, Femina

A tale about a snake

ONCE upon a time there lived a snake. It feasted on smaller creatures until he became too fat to fit in its hole. So, he searched for another.

The snake came across a big anthill. It called the ants and said, “I am the snake and I am very powerful. Leave this place, I want to live here.”

The ants said, “We have put so much hard work in making our home. How can we leave it?” But the snake insisted that they leave.

The ants came up with a plan. They climbed on the body of the snake. Soon, all the ants were crawling all over its body. They started pricking the snake. The snake could not bear the pain and ran for its life. The ants succeeded at defeating the snake.

Together you are stronger

Just like the ants, farmers who unite gain in strength, and can overcome the hardest of challenging situations.

When Mtibwa sugarcane farmers felt the tax they were paying last year was unfair, the Mtibwa Outgrowers Association (Moa) took a stand and approached the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) for help.

“We told the ACT that Kilombero farmers were taxed less than we were for the same amount of sugar cane load and this was not fair. The ACT took the issue to government officials and the Prime Minister asked that taxes be adjusted and that exemptions were made for us,” explains Hadija Kondo, Chairman of the Moa.

The more the merrier

Coming together in clubs, associations and groups is generally beneficial. If you just can't accept the idea, take it



If you have a problem or feel you have been treated unfairly. Raise your concerns, join forces, and speak with one voice. Together you can win!

from a Member of Parliament who can share his experience.

Kigoma North MP. Zitto Kabwe, says that farm inputs came in late last year, so he made sure they made it on time the next time around by giving sound advice to farmers in his constituency.

“I asked farmers to ouncilo, and ouncilo well. There are no two ways about it. You need to be a large ouncilor group. And just in case of problems, I tell them to involve journalists if they can.”

And Zitto's advice proved relevant in the following example: A group of ouncilor women farmers in Ijombe last year, found themselves in a tough spot after they were told the land they were farming on was no longer theirs.

“They (village leaders) rented our land out to other people and pocketed the money they got in the process. We called on the help of the Legal and Human Rights Centre in Mbeya. They

brought journalists who reported on the issue embarrassing the leaders who eventually gave us back the land,” explains Salome Simon chairman of Ijombe Women Farmer group in Mbeya.

“This could not have happened without the strength and determination of the ladies, and also a little help from the ward ouncilor who made sure he met with the village leaders. A demonstration of good leadership! Money taken from rent of the land was returned and directed towards the rehabilitation of some local schools,” explains Said Mohamed, LHRC chairman, Mbeya.

Benefits of groups

The benefits include lower operating costs, as groups you can buy inputs in bulk. In most cases inputs are sold at a discount and you can share transportation costs. This means profit, be smart!

Another benefit is more bargaining power. Price hikes from middlemen can be eased if farmers work as one with one voice. As a group you can come up with a set price that they will be forced to accept. Use your power.

Collective action is another benefit. If you have a problem or feel you have been treated unfairly. Raise your concerns, join forces, and speak with one voice. Together you can win!

Collective decision-making could be another benefit. Being in a group will help you learn and gain better farming skills. You will also make better decisions on issues that affect all farmers. Be efficient!

Another benefit is visibility. Local government and private organisations will notice you a lot easier and are always more likely to help a group than individuals. Make your association known.

Also, there is actually less work to do when you work together.

There will be challenges too. People sometimes get greedy. Don't let it happen in your group. Don't let anyone in the group take advantage or keep control. Try keeping everything open and make sure people are accountable. Yes, someone might try to run off with the cash so, be careful in the selection of group members, not everybody is trustworthy, and be patient; in fact be extremely patient with others.

If possible, have a constitution or set of rules to lead your group that everyone must follow and respect each another, otherwise, it won't work!

Send your comments for free starting with FORCES to 15774

Farming as business: Reintroducing a lifetime opportunity



By Rebeca Gyumi, Femina

REMEMBER the Femina's Ruka Juu entrepreneurship competition on TV 2010 that brought together six energetic and passionate young entrepreneurs to compete for the opportunity of their lifetime? Yes, the one in which Idrissa Mannah, a barber from Kibaha, won! Well, here is the good news. The very same competition is back, and now it's all about young farmers in business...

Ruka JUU in a nutshell

RUKA JUU is Femina's own reality based TV entrepreneurship competition, an offshoot of Fema TV Talk show. It premiered season one in early 2011, leaving a huge impression with the viewers.

In a quest to reach youths and discuss pressing issues in an entertaining way, Femina, a youths' family health planning non-profit organisation, brings you Ruka JUU the second season, whose theme is "farming as business."

Farming is 'hot!' Femina has visited smart young entrepreneurs across the country using farming to build their lives. Smart farming is the key, like one guy explained to Femina reporter "the earth smells of money, but people just don't see it". Everyone wants a job and income, but employment opportunities can be difficult to find.

While jobs in other industries may be limited, agriculture is still the sector in Tanzania which has the most promise for youths. Yes, it's true there are hidden opportunities in farming that Femina wants to help youths discover. Femina strongly believes farming

can turn one's life around. The Ruka Juu TV competition is back, this time a radio show, Fema Radio, to go with it. So, viewers are encouraged to turn on, tune in, and keep themselves updated.

The Ruka Juu teams ABC: The charming Amabilis alias ABC, will be hosting the TV show. Many viewers loved her in Season I, they are going to do so again. This time

she'll be in full farm gear! She will guide the youth and others through in realising that farming is fun. Bwana Ishi: Viewers and listeners are definitely dying to see what Bwana

Ishi is doing on the farm. Yes, the funny Bwana Ishi is going to be farming; it's going to be so much fun. He will find secrets and challenges, just wait and see.

Dada Bahati: The contestants and other followers of the programme have a chance to win something. There will be judges in every TV episode, but those following the programme at home can vote as well. Their votes matters.

Rebeca: She presented in the Fema Talk Show alongside ABC. Now, she will be heard on the radio where she'll be one of the lead presenters along with a new member of the team, on the Fema radio programme.

Michael Baruti: Viewers may recall his smooth, dark voice from his work as a radio presenter for the East Africa Radio. Now, they should watch out for him, he will be mixing in 'Fema' style.

In addition, viewers will meet many young farmers across Tanzania, farm experts and other people who live and love the bounty of the land. So, watch out, this is going to blow every-one's mind!

Why focus on farming? Well...

- Farming is life. Food nourishes us, it fuels us! With food we grow, we satisfy our cravings, we cure ourselves. We are what we eat!
- Farming is wealth. Everyone has to eat to survive, so no other job is more fundamental than farming. The market for food is therefore unlimited, there is money to earn. Farm the right way, farming the smart way!
- Plenty of fertile land. Our country is blessed with land that is ripe with opportunities in agricultural development. Smart farmers who know what kinds of crops to grow can turn this land into money.
- Farming is our backbone. Did you know that 85 per cent of Tanzanians live off the land? This country depends on our farmers. It is time that we all pay attention to agriculture and make it more profitable.
- Kilimo Bomba. Call it kilimo bomba or kilimo kwanza, like the government campaign, let's all join hands in making farming a priority, let's feed our future, let's build our lives!

Scouting was fun, educational Tembeuone is a Swahili saying meaning that when you walk around you will learn a lot. That is what happened to the whole production team when they were out scouting for the settings and the contestants for the Ruka Juu Season II.

They travelled to three regions; Arusha, Morogoro and Rukwa, searching for the smart and skilled young farmers in Monduli, Karatu, Kilosa, Mvomero, Sumbawanga and Nkasi. Imagine the Ruka Juu Season II

team moving from the rough roads of Rukwa to the red dust in Karatu. They met dozens of young farmers, (aged 18-30) making a life for themselves and their loved ones through farming.

Most of them were eager to participate in the TV competition and radio show and share their experiences. The show found a selected group of 6 farmers to participate in the TV competition and we will meet many more on the radio.

Get with the new season During the TV competition, all

contestants will put their agricultural skills and entrepreneurial know-how to test as they face practical challenges.

The contestants, who are currently cultivating different staple crops for income, will be faced with mind boggling tests, all farm related. And they will show us what reality is like on the farm when you have to come up with solutions and tackle reality.

The filming is done in the contestant's home areas, in order to challenge them within their normal farming environment. Viewers will get to meet their families and friends, judge their performance and participate in choosing the winner.

On top of that, viewers will remain with a refreshing view of farming. Follow the programme this coming season. Farming is getting burning hot and smells like money. The show will start airing in March. Don't miss out!



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Send your comments for free starting with BUSINESS to 15774



Strategic initiative improves food security, changes lives

By Special Correspondent, Ansaf

IMPROVED and market-based production has potential impact on increasing incomes for large number of smallholder chicken keepers in rural communities. This has been proved by the impacts of one of Veco's programme interventions in Same district, Kilimanjaro region.

In 2007, Veco Tanzania supported a five-year programme on food security in Simanjiro and Same districts with the aim of making agriculture a viable undertaking and beneficial to under-privileged communities.

The programme was reviewed in 2008 to match Veco's change in approach towards enhancing food security for family farmers. A new approach of Sustainable Agriculture Chain Development (SACD) was adopted by the programme, and hence it was re-

named as Social and Economic Empowerment Programme for Simanjiro and Same Districts (Seep for SiSa).

The SACD approach views the development of a commodity in a much more holistic way; all direct and indi-

rect actors that are engaged in activities within the commodity chain are beneficiaries of the programme intervention.

The previous approach of sustainable agriculture for food security was considered too narrow. It only looked

at the family farmers' welfare resulting in leaving some crucial issues and bottlenecks unresolved.

Seep for SiSa adopted the SACD approach from July 2008 onwards and in order to achieve its goals, Veco in Same district supported the develop-

ment of chicken value chain.

How it works

The programme supported organised family farmer groups in four wards of Kihurio, Makanya, Maore and Same. This was a three-year strategic plan to support Organized Family Farmers (OFFs) to improve their livelihood.

Veco, through its implementing partner (Same District Council), facilitated the organisation and strengthening of farmer groups, which enhanced easy delivery of extension services, training, experiential learning and reduction of transaction costs through group action.

The training provided include better animal husbandry, particularly chicken production and management, marketing, record keeping, business skills management, group formation and strengthening.

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Strategic initiative improves food security, changes lives

The training enabled farmers to commercialise and improve the quality and quantity of indigenous chicken. It also improved entrepreneurial skills and empowerment in chicken business.

The entrepreneurship among chicken keepers became a new skill and a way of life for them. Farmers were not just given training for chicken production and selling, but much more on how best they can keep their enterprises alive.

Farmers have been using these skills to improve the wellbeing of their families and society in general, and they continue to invest and expand their enterprises. Chicken keeping is now a market-driven undertaking.

The entrepreneurs focus on the ever changing preference of the buyers. One day to two months old chicks are on higher demand than eggs. As a response to this demand for chicks, smallholder farmers are now investing in the hatchery project which appears to be more profitable.

Long-term impacts

The long-term impact of supporting the organised family farmer groups in moving along the value chain beyond economic gains is that a significant part of the poor population is alleviated from poverty. Some success stories include the commercial chicken farming project that has transformed peoples' lives.

Danstan Kihedu is a farmer living with his wife and three children in Mpirani village in Maore ward, Same district. He has been keeping chicken

just as a hobby since 1998. As he said, "I was keeping chicken just in case I needed some eggs and meat for my family."

"I used to keep not more than five chicken at a time. I did not know that indigenous chickens can impact on my life economically. Suddenly, the chicken project changed my life completely. Thanks to the programme intervention."

Kihedu joined Muungano group in early 2008. Through the group and the Veco programme intervention in Maore ward, he transformed his chicken keeping from subsistence to commercial production.

This was after receiving some technical training on commercial chicken farming from Same District Council. He said that, commercial farming has broadened his knowledge and skills.

Kihedu's income increased and became a peer educator. He eventually turned into a supplier of chicks in his own village and the neighbouring villages outside of Maore ward.

The main market for his chicks is Same, Hedaru and Makanya. He can supply up to 400 chicks in a single transaction. He vaccinates the chicks before selling them and his customers

have trusted his supplies. "I also give them some advice on how to take care of them," he added.

The business has transformed his life. He has constructed two houses and was able to pay school fees for his children. Kihedu says: "Kuku nimali" meaning chicken is wealth.

Through entrepreneurship skills training and commercial chicken pro-



There is simply no clear information on what needs to be done at these checkpoints. As a result, exporters face delays, fail to meet supply commitments and incur losses

duction, Danstan Kihedu has broadened knowledge and skills which transformed him from subsistence to commercial farmer.

Also, Shogholo is a farmer living with his family in Same ward in Same. He started keeping chicken in late 2008 after joining his Umoja group. He was motivated after seeing some founder members of the same group benefiting from the training and other Veco programme intervention provided to the group.

Initially, he was not engaged in chicken keeping, so he was new to the project. After attending training and exposure visits, he started keeping about 10 chicken. Slowly the project expanded as more chicks were produced due to improved management and care. He now owns up to 300 chicken at a go.

He sells eggs, live chicken and some chicks. He can get up to 350,000/- per month as income from the business. From the income obtained he manages to settle family needs such as food and school fees.

Shogholo has also constructed a family house. He plans to expand his business by having categories of chicken, from a day old chicks to parent stock layers. Among the benefits he ob-

tained from the programme intervention that he will never forget, is the technical training and skills on commercial chicken production.

He said through various training and exposure, he has gained a lot of knowledge and skills with which he thinks they are more than money. He commented: "The gained knowledge and skills are the seeds towards economic and social success."

Shogholo is standing near his new building (three bedrooms with a kitchen) under construction. This construction is financed through the income obtained from commercial indigenous chicken project.

A similar experience Magreth Mashambo is a farmer living in Same district with her five children, two girls and three boys. She started keeping chicken after being motivated by the programme intervention in 2008. Initially, she kept chicken as a source of eggs and some meat for her family.

Later, commercial indigenous chicken turned to be the main source of income to support the single mother. "We have been leaving on the business. The kids obtain all their school requirements from the business. The business has employed me."

Mashambo is among the founder members of organised family farmer group called Muungano. The group was established in 2008 through the facilitation of the Veco programme implementing partner, Same District Council. The group has thirty members, 25 females and five males.

Through various technical training on commercial chicken production, Mashambo managed to establish the chicken project. She started with 50 chicken. Then the Seep for SiSa supported her with improved modern chicken shelter, whereby she had to contribute building blocks, water and labour while Veco contributed cement, iron sheets and timber for the building.

Construction of the shelter enhanced expansion of the production. She could increase the number of chicken up to 150 including some cocks. The cocks are kept for three to four months before they are sold at 8,000/- each. She can keep up to 15 cocks at a time.

Through small loans from her group's Village Community Bank, she managed to run the business smoothly. She also established a small hatchery whereby she produces 50 chicks every month.

"I also sell eggs. I can get up to four trays of eggs per month. Each tray is sold at 7,500/- hence I get 30,000/- from eggs while the chicks, especially the one-day old chicks are sold at 1000/- each. I get a minimum of 50,000/- from chicks business." She says on average she can earn up to 150,000/- per month.

"Two children are in secondary school, a boy and a girl. The boy is in form three while the girl is form one. This business has assisted a lot as I'm a single mother since my husband left me and the children. The children depend entirely on me," she adds.

Mashambo's husband went to Morogoro to look for employment in 2007 and he never came back. Despite her marital status, Mashambo was able to send her two children to secondary school. She also renovated her house.



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By Special Correspondent, Ansaf

Reforms: New era unfolds for coastal people

It has been a habit or a joke for very long time for people from the up country of Tanzania to consider people from the coastal areas as lazy, don't want to work, they are always interested in traditional dancing (mdundiko), and playing a traditional game known as bao. Some people call them mamwinyi, implying "the lazy ones."

This generalisation might be true in some of the cases as it is in all other people from other areas of Tanzania. Some are hard workers while others are not. People are saying this is due to the fact that the area was dominated by the Arabs during the colonial era, who had capital and were not engaged in any hard activities than earning from capital investment.

Therefore, this might historically explain why most coastal people don't want to engage in hard activities, instead they just want activities which are simple and can be done at leisure.

When Veco Tanzania programme started the implementation of its six-year programme in 2008 in Mkuranga district, Coast region, the peoples' attitude towards work was exactly characterised by laziness.

It was very difficult for farmers to engage themselves in commercial production of cassava. They used to say farming is cumbersome and it is an impossible undertaking in their areas because they were poor – they don't have capital to invest in the commercial farming activities.

The Veco intervention

However, when Veco Tanzania launched its programme in Mkuranga, the situation started changing slowly. Using its Sustainable Agriculture Chain Development (SACD) approach, this Belgian non-governmental organisation with the mission of improving the livelihood of organised family farmers in rural areas, started by organising a multi-stakeholder platform to discuss issues related to the cassava chain.

The stakeholders reviewed the findings of a cassava chain analysis

study. Challenges and opportunities were examined, and potential actors were discussed with the view to making better use of existing opportunities along the cassava value chain.

As a result, tailor-made interventions were designed and carried out to overcome the identified challenges. These interventions included training farmers on recommended agronomic practices of cassava in order to improve productivity per unit area.

The content of the training on agronomic practices ranged from land preparation, planting, selection of planting materials, deep tillage, weeding to harvesting. Then training on processing of cassava flour, preparation of different cassava products such as bites, entrepreneurship and various study visits to successful farmers were conducted.

Adults learn better by doing. Action-learning allowed adults to understand and appreciate what was taught theoretically. Also the programme sensitised the farmers to invest in processing facilities as part of capacity building.

Motivation for farmers

The major motivation for farmers to invest in recommended agronomic practices and processing facilities was the increased profit margin compared to what they have been earning by selling fresh cassava.

Kizapala village is one of the villages where Veco Tanzania supports

the implementation of a six-year cassava programme with two phases (three years each – from 2008 to 2013). The village is located at Mkamba ward in Mkuranga district. There are four groups with 44 members. The groups that are involved in cassava chain have joined together to form a village Commercial Family Farmers Organisation (CFFO) in 2009.

The CFFO was formed after the members had realised that individual groups cannot meet the market demands in terms of quantity and quality. The main function of the CFFO is to organise collective initiatives such as collective processing, bulking, marketing and fund mobilisation while the function of the four groups is to mobilise and support the production of cassava in individual farms.

These groups support agronomic training through Farmer Field Schools and demonstration plots, supply of planting materials and monitoring the performance of farms owned by members.

In order to reach the objective of collective initiative, the Kizapala CFFO started mobilising resources for the construction of a processing, bulking and marketing centre.

Resource mobilisation

Each member contributed 80,000/- to support the construction of the centre, including the purchase of a two-acre piece of land.

Each member participated in the

construction of the centre by collecting sands, gravel, fetching water, raising walls and assisting technicians during construction. The contributions (either in cash or in kind) may be over 250,000/- per member.

During one of the sensitisation meetings, one member of the CFFO thanked Veco for awakening them. "We are going to show people that not all coastal people are lazy. If well sensitised and shown the benefits of investment, they are always ready to commit their resources towards an intervention." The building has five rooms, which will serve as a processing room, a store, meeting room and two offices.

After seeing their efforts on the construction of the centre, Veco Tanzania decided to support the organisation to purchase iron sheets, cement, windows and doors to complete the centre. To process cassava one needs to have the machinery. The CFFO mobilised resources to purchase a chipping machine worth 950,000/- and a milling machine worth 1,650,000/-.

The dependency syndrome

In some places where Veco is implementing the programme, other groups expected Veco to buy the equipment for them. But for Kizapala farmers, that is a "dependency syndrome."

The group secretary Juma Nyamgunda said, "After being trained on entrepreneurship we realised that

what we are doing right now is a business and if we want to know whether we are making profit or loss we needed to factor in our expenses." He said, "This helps us to know the cost of preparing the products."

The CFFO treasurer Fauzia Ufune said, "We have decided to commit our own resources because we want to create a sense of ownership among the members." She said, if members don't contribute, they will tend to consider the investments not theirs.

"It has been a habit that when investment is fully donated, members of the group do not hold leaders accountable for misuse of the investments."

Kizapala CFFO has now started realising the benefits of the investment. The CFFO now process cassava into chips, starch and flour. Individual members also make different cassava bites such as spaghetti, cakes, pancakes, donuts, "maandazi" and vegetable from cassava leaves. All these activities take place at the group's processing centre. Cassava vegetable from this group is sold at 2,000/- per kilogram and cassava flour is sold at between 800/- and 1,000/- per kilogram for unpackaged. When packed into improved packaging materials, the price of flour increases to between 1,000/- and 1,200/- per kilogram.

The group has orders of cassava products which they supply weekly in Dar es Salaam markets, Mkuranga town and within the village schools. VECO assisted the development of the packaging materials as starter kit which will then be purchased by the CFFO. The packaging materials would help the CFFOs to penetrate more lucrative markets such as supermarkets in big cities.

The success story

Their success story attracted more chain supporters. The Belgian Technical Cooperation (BTC) decided to support the drilling of a borehole to solve the problem of water shortage for cassava processing. This borehole is now at the final stages of its making, and it will be used by the CFFO in processing cassava.

Two extensions will be installed to supply water to other village communities. However, people will be charged for the service and the CFFO will use the money for maintenance of the borehole. Another member of the CFFO Rajabu Nyamgunda said, "We are very proud for what we have done because we have started earning income and we are food secured. We are known by so many people because we receive national and international visitors. Many people want to work with us."

"The business created employment to us and so many farmers want to join our CFFO after realising that we are far ahead of them. Despite the successes, Nyamgunda says, the group still has shortages of drying facilities especially during rainy seasons. "We depend much on direct sun drying."

The success of Kizapala community negates the wrong perception that coastal people are lazy. Success of any initiative "depends much on the sensitization techniques used by facilitators in disseminating the concept and whether the intended intervention has tangible benefits," concludes Nyamgunda.

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Setback as farmers forbidden to save, share quality seeds

By Special Correspondent, Ansaf

THE government has passed a law that forbids farmers from selecting, saving, and sharing quality seeds with their families, friends and neighbours; it has been learnt. The changes were made recently in legislative system regarding Intellectual Property Rights over seed and plant varieties.

While this is usually a boring business best left to the lawyers, it becomes crucial when 70 per cent of the population depend on agriculture for their livelihoods.

The changes include the new Plant Breeders Rights Bill 2012, signing up to an International Treaty on Plant Varieties (UPOV 1991), and the adoption of a binding legal framework through membership of the African Regional Intellectual Property Organisation (Aripo).

All three proposed changes will strengthen the hand of the multinational corporations who control the world's seed sales, and further disadvantage small farmers who rely on saved seeds for their food security.

The government is strongly supporting private sector involvement in agricultural modernisation, on a large-scale high-input industrial model as the context of agriculture in the country is changing.

The international business community is increasingly engaging and investing in Tanzanian agriculture. This is bringing new ways of working and new pressures, as multinational seed companies seek to secure intellectual property rights to existing and new plant varieties to generate profits through sales of seeds, pesticides and fertilisers.

Neo 'green revolution' agenda

Proponents of this 'green revolution' agenda have not stopped at agricultural practices, but have commissioned expert studies of how legislation in African countries can be changed to speed up the introduction of the new agricultural model. They have identified the regional trading blocs and international treaties as entry points.

African countries are busy organising into groupings. EAC, SADC, and Comesa are fertile grounds for planting the seeds of regional policies and legislation that support the interests of the multinational corporations.

Agricultural investors are queuing up to introduce Tanzania to large-scale plantations of high input crops for export as biofuels and animal feed. The model for this type of agriculture is America's Mid-West, where huge farms of a single crop are run by a few staff using gigantic machines, and where 98 per cent of farmers buy their seeds every year from the big seed companies. They do not save their seed for next year, as they used to in times gone by.

Instead, farmers are monitored by the so-called 'seed police', agents of the big seed companies whose job is to investigate farmers and bring to justice

anyone caught saving patented seed.

Here in Africa, more than 80 per cent of all seed sown produced and distributed informally, from farmer to farmer. Small farmers in East Africa save 60-70 per cent of seeds used on-farm, acquire 30-40 per cent of their seeds from relatives and neighbours, with less than 10 per cent obtained from the formal sector, for example, from agro-dealers.

The reality is that small farmers are by far the largest and most prolific group of seed breeders in Africa and they have successfully cultivated an abundant diversity of crops for centuries.

Farmer-to-farmer seed system

This farmer-to-farmer seed system limits the cost of production by preserving independence from the commercial seed sector, while the exchange of seeds ensures the free flow of genetic resources, contributing to the development of locally appropriate seeds and to crop diversity. We need to support the development of such systems, which are important sources for both modern and traditional varieties.

There is widespread recognition of the importance of smallholder farmer managed seed systems and the key role of women in maintaining them. On-farm seed conservation is recognised in global treaties such as the International Treaty on Plant Genetic Resources (ITPGRFA) as well as the Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD).

Tanzania is signatory to both of these, but fails to recognise the contribution of farmers and their rights to a share of the benefits in the new wave of signed legislation.

The Plant Breeders Rights Bill 2012 has been passed into Tanzanian law. It will be used to strengthen the rights of the commercial seed sector while marginalising the farmer community, risking a major impact on the livelihoods and food security of Tanzanian small farmers.

The Bill grants rights to sell seeds to those who develop new varieties. Crucially, it only allows farmers "to use the product of harvest (obtained by planting on his own holding) for propagating purposes on his own holding". This effectively means that farmers can no longer save, exchange and sell seeds from the protected varieties.

For example, in this new Green Revolution model, an international seed company sends scientists to Tanzania to develop an improved seed variety. They take a local, hardy existing seed variety and improve it by cross breeding to achieve a hybrid variety, or by inserting a new gene to give it resistance to a certain herbicide.

Then they register the new variety under the new Bill and gain the sole right to sell that seed for the next 25-30 years. If a farmer wants to use the new seeds she has to buy them from the seed company. If she plants them, she is not allowed to keep the harvested seed for anything other than her own use.

She cannot give or exchange some with her neighbour to try out, and she

cannot sell them to anyone. Also the offspring of hybrid seeds lose their parents' advantages, so the seeds become worthless.

Buying seeds year-on-year

Now, the farmer is forced to buy seeds year-on-year from the agro dealer, who encourages them to add fertiliser and pesticide to their shopping list. And no recognition is given to the role of the farmers in developing the existing variety. Gradually the stock of informal seeds is run down and soon the only seeds available are the expensive store-bought ones.

The alternative sustainable scenario is that farmers work with local extension staff and agricultural research institutes to test, select and multiply the best seeds, register the seeds with Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute (TOSCI), and then are able to exchange and sell the seeds to farmers in neighbouring villages, who know that these seeds are high quality, and will be successful in the local conditions.

Prices are kept very low, and local farmers (male and female) retain control of their seed and food sovereignty, while maintaining the rich agricultural biodiversity which Tanzania is celebrated for (Tanzania is the world's 11th most bio-diverse country).

The intellectual property rights remain in the public domain. This approach is already working in some areas of Tanzania, and until now has been encouraged by government under the Quality Declared Seed system. If the seeds are patented under the new PBR Bill, this practice will be outlawed.

The world's seed giants

According to the non-profit ETC Group, the world's six largest agrochemical manufacturers, who control nearly 75 per cent of the global pesticide market, are also seed industry giants.

Monsanto, the world's biggest seed company is the world's fifth largest agrochemical company. Syngenta, the world's second largest agrochemical company is also the world's third largest seed company.

Bayer, the world's biggest agrochemical company is also the world's seventh biggest seed company. And DuPont, the world's second biggest seed company is also the world's sixth largest agrochemical company. These

companies are struggling to export their way out of a global recession, and are fully backed by their governments, who need the export revenues to balance their national deficits.

Other beneficiaries are the world's investors in hedge funds who are betting on the rise of global food prices, the increased demand for meat (hence animal feed) by the rapidly growing middle classes in the world's emerging economies, and the switch from fossil fuels to biofuels. These billion dollar investment funds are busy funding large-scale agricultural projects wherever land is cheap – and it doesn't get much cheaper than in Tanzania.

The United Nations Special Rapporteur on the Right to Food, Olivier de Schutter, warns that: "the professionalisation of breeding and its separation from farming leads to the emergence of a commercial seed system, alongside the farmers' seed systems through which farmers traditionally save, exchange and sell seeds, often informally."

Monopoly privileges

This shift has led to grant temporary monopoly privileges to plant breeders and patent-holders through the tools of intellectual property, as a means to encourage research and innovation in plant breeding. In this process, however, the poorest farmers may become increasingly dependent on expensive inputs, creating the risk of indebtedness in the face of unstable incomes.

Private-led research may seek to satisfy the needs of farmers in industrialized countries, while neglecting those of poor farmers in developing countries. The farmers' seed systems may be put in jeopardy, although most farmers in developing countries still rely on such systems, which, for them, are a source of economic independence and resilience in the face of threats such as pests, diseases or climate change.

Finally, agrobiodiversity may be threatened by the uniformisation encouraged by the spread of commercial varieties. Farmers, including women farmers, need stronger rights, and a seat at the decision making table – agreed?

Why has Tanzania signed up?

Now, it's important to know why Tanzania has signed up to an international treaty (UPOV 1991) that protects the interests of multinational agribusiness corporations, while weakening farmers' rights.

Recently, Tanzania joined the International Union for the Protection of New Varieties of Plants (UPOV 1991). It is now the second country in Sub-Saharan Africa to do so, after South Africa.

Many independent agencies have voiced warnings about joining UPOV. Grain, an international non-profit organisation that works to support small farmers and social movements in their struggles for community-controlled and biodiversity-based food systems, has this to say:

"UPOV denies farmers' rights both in the narrow and the wide sense. In

the narrow sense, the right to freely save seed from the harvest is curtailed. In the wide sense, UPOV does not recognise or support communities' inherent rights to biodiversity and their space to innovate.

"Northern companies will take over national breeding systems in the South. National breeders and local seed companies will be bought out by the foreign companies. Northern companies will get ownership of the South's biodiversity with no obligation to share the benefits.

"UPOV does not provide for any sharing of benefits from the North's exploitation of the South's biodiversity. Farmers of the South end up paying royalties for their own germ plasm, which has been tampered with and repackaged in the North.

"UPOV criteria for protection will exacerbate erosion of biodiversity. Uniformity leads to harvest loss and further food insecurity. Joining UPOV means, becoming part to a system that support the rights of industrial breeders over those of farmers.

"UPOV is designed to facilitate monopolies in corporate plant breeding. Despite 35 years of Green Revolution and UPOV, the South is still food insecure. Joining a biased system like UPOV will ensure that the South's integration into Northern-controlled markets increases, but not for the benefit of those who are hungry today."

Graham Dutfield, Professor of International Governance at Leeds University School of Law, states, "Critics contend that the UPOV system is unsuited to the agricultural characteristics of developing countries."

But that UPOV is suited for and promotes an industrial-style, monoculture-based farming system and favors the commercial seed industry (including by furthering agricultural systems that require chemical inputs) over small farmers, diversity and traditional knowledge.

Concentration of seed industry

Many point to the increasing concentration in the seed industry that has occurred over the last two decades, saying that this concentration, as well as intellectual property protection for seeds, is inconsistent with human rights.

Critics add that yield improvements since UPOV came into force owe more to scientific developments than intellectual property protection, and that this has occurred simultaneously with a massive loss of biological diversity.

UPOV detractors add that the system does not recognize the incremental contribution of farmers over prior decades to developing new crops, nor that crop development and improvement has happened since farming began, even in the absence of intellectual property protection.

Dutfield cautions, "It appears that a number of developing countries join UPOV due to political and economic pressures, with insufficient consideration of whether UPOV membership would contribute long-term to the country's policy objectives in a range of key



areas, including economic development, food security and biological diversity."

The Aripo's Draft Legal Framework is another attempt to foist UPOV 91 on 14 African countries, including Tanzania. The legal framework does not make any attempt to develop a regime that is suitable to the needs of the region. It's about protecting the private sector on the pretext that this is in the interest of small-scale farmers.

The legal framework, if adopted will bind Tanzania to UPOV 91 and any national legislation developed will have to work within these parameters.

Shift of agro-industrialisation Together, these three legislative changes pave the way for a shift to the industrialisation of agriculture, while enabling the big corporations to satisfy their shareholders, but take little account of the needs of the millions of small farmers who rely on farmer seed systems for their livelihoods.

Interestingly, the African Union (AU) has provided a Model Law on these issues, which provides a safety net for small farmers, and recognises their key role in the maintenance of biodiversity, and the breeding and development of locally appropriate seed varieties.

The drafters of the new legislation have ignored AU advice and seem to be listening only to the industry advocates. The AU Model Law limits intellectual property over indigenous knowledge and prohibits the patenting of life forms and biological processes. It also protects farmers' rights to save, use, exchange and sell farm-saved seed.

Proposals for a fair play

So, here are a few proposals to help level the playing field including, tear up the draft Plant Breeders Rights Bill, and replace it with one based on the African Union Model Law – which balances the need to protect seed companies with the need to protect farmers' rights.

Delay joining UPOV 1991 until Tanzanian agriculture has developed to a position where the nation can benefit from the UPOV provisions; and start listening to the voices of the world's independent scientists, the UN and the AU, who are advocating against industrial agriculture and in favour of ecological agriculture.

It is also recommended to wise up to the fact that this legislation is driven by global agribusiness corporations and speculative investors who are pursuing the hottest investment opportunity the world currently has to offer: African agriculture.

Lastly but not least, involve Tanzanian farmer groups fully in the development of legislation to ensure it meets the real needs of the farming community, the people who are actually feeding the nation.

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Climate Change: Livestock rearing a cause?

This side of Africa

By Nicolas Begisen



THERE are multiple global dangers facing the livelihood of this earth. Experts have highlighted six major threats, as the most pressing ones, of our time, namely: climate change, water shortage, food scarcity, ocean collapse, deforestation, and biodiversity loss.

Although each of these threats on their own might cause reckless damage, their occurrence all at the same time would probably result in a wide scale global collapse resulting in extensive loss of life throughout the planet.

Today, let's talk about numbers. Numbers can be very fascinating at times, but not always will they leave a smile on your face and this will be one of those moments. Climate change is a growing concern in today's world and

efforts to counter it should be stepped up and more focus placed on combating it.

Did you know that one of the primary causes of climate change is livestock rearing? About 51 per cent of human caused greenhouse gas emissions are accounted for by livestock and their byproducts.

The animal husbandry industry is the largest source of methane and nitrous oxide which are 300 times more potent than carbon dioxide.

Livestock rearing is also a cause of food crisis, and here is where it gets interesting. Nearly half of the world's grain supply is used to breed and fatten livestock. This is at a cost to about 11 million children worldwide in countries producing these grains; ironically die from hunger each year.

Scientists argue that reduction of livestock so that these grains can be delivered to people meeting the needs of a growing population thus averting food crisis.

There are many contributing factors behind this food crisis, which is already a tragic reality in poorer countries and a looming threat for wealthier ones. One of the scandals of our global food system is that nearly 1 billion people suffer from hunger and malnutrition.

The world uses close to 67 billion animals a year for meat, milk and eggs. Animal husbandry is responsible for 18 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions which contribute to dangerous climate change. Over 30 per cent of global grains including wheat and maize and 90 per cent of soya are used to feed farm animals.

To produce one kilo of edible beef meat, ten kilos of animal feed are used, five kilos of grain to produce a kilogram of edible pork and about three kilos of grain to produce one kilo of edible poultry. Now, the average age of a well bred cow is about 300 kilos, this would require 3,000 kilos of animal feed to produce it.

If a livestock farmer had let's say 100 heads of livestock, that would amount to 300,000 kilos of animal feed made from grains. Then again, ask yourself how many children would this feed if it was given to them directly seeing as after the cow has been slaughtered the meat becomes expensive to

purchase for most people.

Directly supplied grain could feed the entire population of the earth easily. Another easy solution to help remedy this situation is simply for populations in high meat-eating regions to drastically cut down on their intake of meat and milk overall, and to choose animal products only from higher welfare systems which have paid more regard to environmental protection and animal welfare.

A June 2010 report by the United Nations Environmental Program and the European Commission concluded that a substantial reduction of environmental impacts would only be possible with a substantial worldwide change of diet, away from all animal products.

Everybody should make it a priority among themselves to do their part in combating climate change and global warming. If this is not harnessed fast the risk of losing everything is great. Priority should not be only for economic or political reputation of individual nations or we might lose all life on our planet; humans, animals, plants, trees etc.

"As human beings, we are vulnerable to confusing the unprecedented with the improbable. In our everyday experience, if something has never happened before, we are generally safe in assuming it is not going to happen in the future, but the exceptions can kill you and climate change is one of those exceptions," says US climate change campaigner, Al Gore.



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