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KILIMO KWANZA

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OUTRIGHT ECONOMIC SABOTAGE



Deadly 'virus' in circulation...
Agro-inputs counterfeiting is one of the serious
problems of the time. Jeopardising agriculture, the
country's backbone sector employing over 80 per cent
of the population, is outright economic sabotage...



Bumpy road towards counterfeit-free nation

IN the last issue of Kilimo Kwanza, we highlighted the challenges posed by the influx of counterfeit agro-chemicals. The different forms of fake agro-inputs being circulated silently in the local market like a virus include, expired pesticides re-dated to fool unsuspecting buyers, harmless white powder packaged as insect killer and sacks full of grey rock posing as fertiliser. From all these, unsuspecting farmers across the country have been losing their hard earned cash to unscrupulous comen.

The farmers have also seen their sweat and efforts go to waste, as crops and animals succumb to the effects of counterfeit products. This is not to mention the huge risks to human life, nature and biodiversity that expired and untested chemicals pose.

Reports on this issue of Kilimo Kwanza that the Tropical Pesticides Research Institute is working with other government authorities to implement stop gaps and measures that ensure un-certified pesticides don't reach the market are a welcome relief, the challenge remains in recalling agro-chemicals that have already made it past the gatekeepers.

Agriculture remains the country's economic mainstay, as upwards of 85 per cent of the population are directly engaged in the economic activity. This means that, majority of those living across the length and breadth of this vast nation take part in one form or another of agrarian activity; and as such are dependent on agro-chemicals for productivity.

The 160 or so inspectors that are currently crisscrossing the length and breadth of

Tanzania's vast landscape may hardly be sufficient to effectively stem the problem of counterfeits. In a show of commitment to the green revolution, the government needs to pump more funds and human resources into nipping the problem at the bud.

More efforts at identifying importers of fake products, coupled with quick and stiff penalties to all violators, are required. This calls for concerted efforts and the collaboration of all arms of government.

With our porous borders and the tendency of some of those entrusted with safeguarding national interests sometimes reportedly collaborating with the very law breakers they are supposed to apprehend, the road to a counterfeit-free Tanzania is bound to be bumpy and fought with all sorts of challenges that however, must be faced and addressed.

Counterfeit products are the greatest setback of the time and highest weapon of terrorism against agricultural productivity; they are a very dangerous form of economic sabotage.

Wallace Mauggo

Wallace Mauggo
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Study decries poor access to agro-inputs



By Milly Sanga, ACT

FARMERS in Tanzania are experiencing difficulties in accessing and applying agro-inputs. These are vital ingredients in crop production. A recent study carried out by Match Maker Associates Ltd and commissioned by the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) has revealed that in order to boost agricultural production and make it viable, more effort is needed in the accessibility, distribution and application of agro-inputs. This will facilitate small-holder farmers to modernise and commercialise their farming.

Senior consultant with Match Maker Associates Ltd, Edmond Ringo states that the objective of the study was to assess the challenges associated with access, distribution and application of inputs, specifically fertilisers, seeds and agro-chemicals. Six commodities were covered by this study, namely maize, paddy, coffee, cashew, tomatoes and livestock.

"Relevant data was collected from nine districts in seven regions: Morogoro - Mvomero and Kilosa, Iringa - Kilolo and Iringa rural, Mtwara - Mtwara rural, Kilimanjaro - Moshi rural, and Arusha - Arumeru and Karatu," says Ringo. He said that the exercise was also conducted in Dar es Salaam City by interviewing a good number of stakeholders to complement what was collected from upcountry.

Inputs unaffordable

Ringo notes that farmers in rural areas face problems not only in accessing agro-inputs, but also in their affordability and scientific application to bring about the expected results. The consultant says that the use of these inputs is also influenced by many factors such as infrastructure, crop subsidies, and the marketing system.

Agro-dealers and distributors play an important role along the value chain. These are people whose responsibility is to ensure timely delivery of all inputs that farmers need. "As regards to livestock, very few animal keepers are aware of the fact that the subsidy scheme also covers livestock," remarks Ringo. He says it's pertinent to educate livestock keepers about the voucher system, with a view to capitalising on the scheme to improve the quantity and quality of animal products.

The study has revealed that the state of rural infrastructure has a direct influence on crop productivity and profitability. Farmers need all-weather roads, reliable bridges, good storage structures, and market centres with necessary amenities. These factors contribute in creating a conducive business environment.

Voucher system lauded

Furthermore, research results show that the National Agriculture Input Voucher System (NAIVAS) has

increased the number of agro-dealers and availability of inputs.

"Unfortunately, some dealers are colluding with local officials to jeopardise the system by turning it into personal gains. This has created a negative image of this scheme. Fighting corruption is not an easy task because it is very difficult to pin down perpetrators," the consultant asserts.

There is very limited use of farm chemicals on maize crops in Iringa, Karatu and Kilosa districts, the report reveals. Mshana Mwikari from Naliendele Agricultural Research Institute based in Mtwara says, "There are many unfaithful agro-distributors who are bent on taking cash on counterfeit products. This is a booming business".

As a remedy, he urges the government to examine the accreditation process of agro-dealers, looking at their financial capacities and technical know-how. Furthermore, he says farmers should be educated on how to identify counterfeit products. This can be

achieved by a concerted effort from the public and private actors.

Hebrion Mwakalinga, an associate consultant with Match Maker Associates Ltd states, "Crop production is also impaired by low application rate of agricultural inputs and poor agro-



Improved safety regulations will impact on transportation and storage as well as on handling of agricultural inputs...

economic practices." He further points out, "Farmers, who grow high value crops with reliable market outlets, such as vegetables, can afford to use industrial fertilisers and pesticides because the profit margin is big".

The Tanzania Farmers' Association (TFA) division manager Gibson Kisamba says, "Due to lack of a common approach and instruments to promote availability and usage of genuine inputs, the entire value chain faces myriads of challenges. These challenges include curbing counterfeit inputs."

He advises authorities to review rules and regulations that govern agro-inputs with a view to containing wrong doers. "Improved safety regulations will impact on transportation and storage as well as on handling of agricultural inputs," Kisamba intimates.

Ringo states, "The report recommends the application of a smart subsidy and improving governance and transparency in its implementation like what is happening in Malawi. Malawi

fosters transparency along the value chain. All stakeholders are involved in the process, and give their maximum support".

Another recommendation given by the consultants is to improve infrastructure to facilitate transporting and handling of inputs, since this will bring down the operational costs. They also urge relevant institutions to ensure agro-dealers and distributors access working capital through bank credits.

ACT executive-director Janet Bitegeko calls upon stakeholders in the agricultural sector to put in place a mechanism for smooth delivery of farm inputs and their prudent utilisation. "This will facilitate the transformation of Tanzania's agriculture; this will ensure food security for every family. The surplus will find its way to the internal and external markets. This is the only way we can survive and thrive," she states emphatically.

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Silent terror wrecks havoc on backbone sector

By Kilimo Kwanza Reporter

THE Tropical Pesticides Research Institute (TPRI) has started working with the Tanzania Revenue Authority to make sure that consignments of pesticides don't pass through and reach end users without having a certificate of inspection.

TPRI registrar Bakari Kaoneka reveals this as he responds to a recent report by the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT), which unveiled that traders are reportedly colluding with importers and distributors in selling counterfeit agro-inputs to farmers, including fertilisers and pesticides.

According to the registrar, the institution has started issuing certificates to importers of pesticides, which indicate that the consignments have been inspected and are safe for distribution to the farmers. He adds that, so far the Institute has more than 160 inspectors across the country and five more have been added this year to step up ongoing efforts of curbing counterfeits.

"Serious inspections [carried out in collaboration with state organs] have been going on and we have managed to prevent many suppliers from distributing counterfeit pesticides to the farmers. Serious legal action has been taken against them and this will continue until we are able to eradicate the problem," stresses Kaoneka.

Speaking on the challenges, he says that more funds and time must be allocated for awareness creation on fake pesticides and how to identify them. Awareness campaigns, he says, should target relevant stakeholders, such as the Interpol, police and customs officers, traders and farmers.

Serious problem

Kaoneka informs that the government is working on a formal plan that contains three pillars: training, awareness, clean supply chain and in collaboration with law enforcers as well as other stakeholders to curb the problem. He views counterfeiting in agro-inputs, as one of the serious problems of the time "jeopardizing agricultural productivity". He believes product counterfeiting is outright economic sabotage.

"There are several reasons to explain this illegal business, one of them being ban on some much needed pesticides when each company tries to outsmart competitors in winning businesses. As a result, pesticides prices are pushed down. In the process, the quality of the pesticides supplied or services rendered are compromised as well, and finally adversely affected," says the registrar.

He notes counterfeits impacts to the agriculture sector, as short term cruel and unfair competition hence leading to reduction in sales and profits for the genuine suppliers.

Kaoneka further states that due to increasing awareness on the problem and associated risks, many stakeholders slowly understand various aspects of counterfeits in agriculture and ani-



mal husbandry. In order to control the level of such products, some countries are preparing legislation to combat counterfeit products. However, such new legislations are mostly not specific for agro-inputs and often lack reliable enforcement by authorities.

The global consumption of pesticides is estimated to be 2.0-2.5 million tonnes of active ingredients per year. The use of pesticides will continue to rise due to ever increasing demand for crop production for feeding the world population.

The current world population of 6.5 billion people (2009) is projected to reach 10 billion by 2050. Secondly, we need more and newer molecules in order to counteract the effects of pest resistance and the emergency of new pests.

Speaking on the disorganisation and confusion within the industry resulting into crop production losses, he says that impacts negatively on the country's national economy and social development.

For instance, some products may have adverse effects on the crops and biodiversity as a whole. Also, it may trigger more pesticide dealers to shun paying relevant taxes due to fear that they are unable to compete with the unscrupulous dealers.

Kaoneka mentions the forms of counterfeits in the country, as the use of genuine packaging, but refilled with a variety of other ingredient(s), expired pesticides or pesticide without expiry date, or expired and those relabeled with the intention of extending their shelf-life. Others include pesticides

with active ingredient(s) that are not similar to the contents stated on the label and pesticides with none or very low active ingredients.

Pesticide forms

He also says that basic pesticides are the original molecules that are invented by a company for the first time and then put on the market. Because have undergone extensive or full laboratory, field and toxicological research, commodity pesticides have a known, constant and a full package of scientific data. After the expiry of the patent period, other companies may manufacture the very molecules.

"What these companies produce, are known as generic pesticides or simply generics. Since several manufacturers may engage in the production of

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language such as French or Portuguese), lack of manufacturer and/or registrant, distributor or supplier unknown or not shown on the label and if shown, not approved by the TPRI, price being extremely low compared to similar products in the market, poor physical and chemical results from laboratory analysis and product not registered in the country. This simply means the products specifications are not known.

In terms of characteristics, counterfeit inputs usually are supplied untested and unregistered; they are the ones produced or imported illegally. They also contain less amount of the active ingredients or something different – wrong active ingredients or even no active ingredient at all, toxic manufacturing by-products, toxic analogues and impurities of the active substance copied, solvents and surfactants that are not permitted or are banned from use.

Challenges ahead

Tanzania Farmers Association (TFA) division manager Gibson Kisambasays that the entire value chain faces myriads of challenges due to lack of common approach and instruments to promote availability and usage of genuine inputs. These challenges include joint initiatives for curbing networks of suppliers of counterfeit inputs.

"There must be deliberate efforts to review and forge new rules as well as regulations that will control and remove distribution systems of counterfeit inputs. Improved safety regulations will impact on transportation and storage as well as on handling of agricultural inputs," Kisamba states.

He notes that with all the agricultural technologies available, supply chains are directly applicable to agro-inputs supply and marketing in developing and developed countries. "There should be collective and deliberate efforts to set up an accreditation system coupled with enforcement mechanisms that will see airtight control of rampant production," says the TFA manager.

Kisamba adds that productivity and effective agro-input markets require investment in research and development on tools that will assist in the enforcement of accreditation rules, access to market information, as well as efficient transportation and communication networks.

He suggests the adoption of the Geographical Information System (GIS) to map all primary chain actors for the accreditation system to work. This system has been tried in Kenya, Rwanda, Mali and Nigeria with positive results.

The manager further says that proper governance will prevent investments from being channeled to rent-seeking groups and will ensure that enforcement of regulations, rules and penalties are in use. "Improved state capacity to monitor market development will allow governments to anticipate undesirable filtration of counterfeit agro-inputs in the market and devise appropriate responses to eventual short-term difficulties in a timely and

effective manner," he says.

Kisamba explains that although the government has set up a task-force to respond to counterfeit seeds penetrating the market, there is a deliberate need to build on this initiative to cover all agro-inputs in a much more holistic approach.

Agriculture in Tanzania: Background

Agriculture is the foundation of the Tanzanian economy. It accounts for about half of the national income, three quarters of merchandise exports and is a source of food and provides employment opportunities to about 80 percent of Tanzanians. It has linkages with the non-farm sector through forward linkages to agro-processing, consumption and export; provides raw materials to industries and a market for manufac-

“Due to lack of a common approach and instruments to promote availability and usage of genuine inputs, the entire value chain faces myriads of challenges.

tured goods.

The sector is dominated by small-holder farmers (peasants) cultivating an average farm sizes of between 0.9 hectares and 3.0 hectares each. About 70 per cent of Tanzania's crop area is cultivated by hand hoe, 20 percent by ox-plough and 10 per cent by tractor. It is rain-fed agriculture. Food crop production dominates the agriculture economy.

Approximately, 5.1 million ha are cultivated annually, of which 85 per cent is under food crops. Women constitute the main part of agricultural labour force. The major constraint facing the agriculture sector is the falling labour and land productivity due to application of poor technology, dependence on unreliable and irregular weather conditions. Both crops and livestock are adversely affected by periodical droughts.

Irrigation holds the key to stabilising agricultural production in Tanzania to improve food security, increase farmers' productivity and incomes, and also to produce higher valued crops such as vegetables and even flowers.

Urban Agriculture

Urban agriculture has flourished as a household – level initiative to cope with economic hardships encountered as a result of raising cost of living. Urban agriculture that consists of raising and growing of vegetable and food crops is found in Tanzanian towns and cities where the ready market for agri-

cultural products is found. Producers of vegetables, milk, broilers' meat and eggs sell to private households and to school, hotels, hospitals, bars, cafeterias and restaurants.

Sector performance
Agricultural GDP has grown at 3.3 per cent per year since 1985, the main food crops at 3.5 per cent and export crops at 5.4 per cent per year. Considering that the overall GDP growth target for halving abject poverty by 2010 is in the range of 6-7 per cent, this performance falls short of the needed growth.

The macro economic reforms have and continue to have had significant impact on the agriculture sector. The economic reforms have lead to the opening up of the sector to private investments in production and processing, input importation and distribution and agricultural marketing. Most production, processing and marketing functions have been assigned to private sector players. The government has retained regulatory and public support functions or facilitation role.

SOURCE: National Website [http://www.tanzania.go.tz/agriculture.html]

Facts about agro-inputs counterfeiting...

- > Crop Life Tanzania, which is a local organisation dealing in farmers' affairs, estimates that about 35 per cent of agro-inputs in different markets are counterfeits.
- > Over 10,000 50-kilogram cement bags of counterfeit fertilisers were sold to farmers during the last farming season in Sumbawanga and neighbouring districts alone.
- > Unscrupulous businessmen repack Minjingufertiliser into phosphate 'DAP' bags.
- > One bag of subsidised DAP fertiliser sells at between 63,000/- and 85,000/-, while a bag of Minjingu fertilizer, which has proven to be unsuitable for the soil in the region sells at only 14,000/-.
- > In 2012, packaging materials, worth 23m/-, were stolen in Arusha and were reportedly being used to repack counterfeit seeds (maize grain bought from the market).
- > Tanzania Official Seed Certification Institute (TOSCI) in collaboration with Morogoro-rural, Kilosa and Mvomero district councils discovered counterfeit fertilisers in circulation after conducting scientific tests.

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Finance Minister
Dr William
Mgemwa

By Kilimo Kwanza Reporter

THE decision by Finance minister Dr William Mgemwa to waive value added tax (VAT) on irrigation, tractors, farm implements and dairy products will help growth of the agriculture sector. The Agriculture Council of Tanzania (ACT) said in a recent statement that the move has come at the right time following complaints from the private sector relating to a harsh tax regime suffocating the country's economic backbone.

"Whereas the government is very much aware of some unnecessary taxes imposed on farmers, it has been slow to address the issue. ACT has consistently been pleading with the government to remove disincentive taxes on agriculture because they stifle this industry," ACT Communications manager Cleophas Rwechungura is quoted, as saying in the statement.

He said the decision was revealed by Dr Mgemwa in Parliament recently when he was tabling the Finance Bill of 2012/13. Rwechungura said the move would help the industry to produce quality products which can be sold to the East African regional market. Presenting the Bill in Parliament, Dr Mgemwa said VAT has been waived on agro-nets which are used for covering horticultural crops to protect them against pests and harmful insects, but can also be used in covering poultry structures to protect the birds against attacks.

On parts, implements

Tractors and farm implements spare parts, irrigation equipment and spare parts, milk products and packaging materials were also included. "This decision will help address the problem of overhead costs facing our agriculture

sector hence increase growth," Dr Mgemwa told the House.

"ACT expresses gratitude to the government and the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Water, for responding positively to its call to remove nuisance taxes. Therefore, the ACT urges farmers and livestock keepers to use this opportunity to increase production and quality," Rwechungura said.

There has been a general concern from the public over the wearing away of the consumers' purchasing power largely due to higher prices of essential goods and services. Food, that contributes about 60 per cent of the average change of prices, has remained one of the variables to be addressed.

"Until swift measures are taken to address the crisis of insufficient food supply, inflation will remain to be one of the threats to economic growth to improve living standards," observes Husein Kamote, the Confederation of Tanzania Industries (CTI) Policy and Advocacy director.

Reliance on rainfall

Dependency on rainfall alone will not help the nation get into the next level of increasing agricultural productivity; he thus called for concerted ef-

VAT on dozens of agro-items waived



Entirely, the programmes outlined assume economic growth of 6.5 to 7 per cent in 2012/13 rising to the 7 and 7.5 per cent range over the medium term.



forts from both public and private sectors to put considerable investments into farming activities.

For example, he says the pace of change of inflation to reach single digit has been slow because this year's harvests were not all sufficient to address food supply constraints. In this regard, reaching single digit inflation by December 2012 is uncertain.

The expert urges the government to re-consider the taxes imposed on various commodities like fuel, largely determined by changes in the world market, in order to stabilise and finally help in pulling down inflation to even single digit.

Statistics released by the Tanzania Bureau of Statistics (TBS) recently show that the year-on-year inflation rate slowed to 15.7 per cent in July from 17.4 per cent in June, which is the seventh consecutive monthly fall, thanks to lower increases in the cost of food and energy.

The consumer price index rose 0.1 per cent during July, the same rate as in June. But food and non-alcoholic drink component, which accounts for 47.8 per cent of the basket of goods used to measure inflation, dipped 0.5 per cent in July.

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Over 12 months, the increase in food and non-alcoholic drink prices eased to 20.8 per cent from 23.5 per cent in June. Poor rains, that both hit harvests and local hydropower production, contributed largely to high costs of food and power tariffs.

Inflation: ups and downs

The annual inflation rate, which excludes food and energy for the month of July 2012, has stagnated at 8.8 per cent, as recorded in the previous month. The annual inflation rate for energy has further decreased to 16.3 per cent in July 2012 from 20.5 per cent recorded in June 2012.

Similarly, the National Bureau of Statistics (NBS) first quarter 2012 report portrays that agriculture sector recorded a growth rate of 1.4 per cent in the first quarter of 2012 compared to negative 1.2 per cent of the similar period of 2011.

The performance was on account of good rainfall received in regions that are potential for agricultural production and government efforts of improving farming activities through provision of subsidised farm input.

Planned measures

Moving the 2012/13 budget estimates in June this year in Parliament in Dodoma, Dr Mgemwa said the government in collaboration with the private sector will invest in rice and sugarcane farming in the major valleys of Wami, Ruvu, Kilombero and Malagarasi.

The immediate measures that the government will take at the beginning of this year's fiscal budget include the issuance of sugar and rice imports permits and continue to strengthen the National Food Reserve.

Other measures include continuing to strengthen transport and market infrastructure, agricultural marketing system in high food production areas especially the Southern highlands and border regions.

The programme will also involve increasing productivity and value, transforming agricultural system and promote agro-forestry like effective development of fisheries and livestock farming by improving the investment climate which will all together result into reduction of income poverty.

Dr Mgemwa said further that in order to increase the production of food crops and ensuring food security, the government will strengthen the implementation of Kilimo Kwanza policy by ensuring adherence of all its pillars like providing agricultural inputs on time.

In a separate interview, Tanzania Milk Processors Association (TAMPA) chief executive officer Edmund Marik commended the latest move, but called for more efforts to appreciate and utilize the country's great dairy potential.

Giving details, he said statistics show that even though Tanzania is the third country in Africa, in terms of cattle population with 21.3 million heads producing 5 million litres of milk, only 112,500 litres are processed. Surprisingly, only 3 per cent of milk produced in Tanzania filters through formal markets, compared to 30 per cent in Kenya and 7 per cent in Uganda.

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Green revolution forum to convene global leaders



By Kilimo Kwanza Reporter

TANZANIA'S minister of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives Christopher Chiza and President of the Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA) Jane Karuku recently announced that Arusha City will host the African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) from September 26 to 28, this year.

The meeting is the next milestone in developing African-led food security solutions. At the recent G8 Summit, global leaders including 21 African countries and 27 private sector companies committed USD3 billion to a New Alliance for Food Security and Nutrition, launching the next phase of the global food security effort to raise 50 million people out of poverty over the next 10 years.

AGRF 2012 sets the stage for Africa's leaders to drive the initiative by promoting investments and policy support to increase agricultural productivity and income growth for African farmers. During the forum, hosted at Arusha's Ngurdoto Mountain Lodge, global leaders will tackle leadership policy, revolutionising African agricultural finance models, strength-

ening markets, and transforming African agriculture through innovative partnerships.

"Tanzania has long known farming is at the centre of our economy," said Chiza. "We are pleased to welcome leaders from across the continent and around the world to find new ways to scale the success we've seen in our own agricultural breadbasket".

As the host nation, Tanzania's recent agricultural growth represents a case study of what is possible. In the Kilombero district of Morogoro, the yields for maize have recently increased for some smallholder farmers from 1.5 to 4.5 tons per hectare; the yields for rice have increased from 2.5 to 6.5 tons per hectare.

"The goal of the government is to transform Tanzania into a middle-income country by 2025, fuelled, in a significant part, by growth in its agricultural sector," Chiza added.

The forum brings together African Heads of State, ministers, private agribusiness firms, financial institutions, farmers, NGOs, civil society organizations and scientists to discuss and develop concrete investment plans for scaling agricultural development success in Africa.

Tanzania will welcome notable



Tanzania has long known farming is at the centre of our economy...We are pleased to welcome leaders from across the continent and around the world to find new ways to scale the success we've seen in our own agricultural breadbasket

guests including Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation Co-Chair Melinda Gates, IFAD president Dr Kanayo Nwanze, Nigerian Minister of Agriculture Dr Akinwumi Adesina, World Food Prize Laureate Prof Gebisa Ejeta, and Yara International president & CEO Jørgen ole Haslestad.

Following recent discussions at WEF Africa, the G8 and David Cameron's Hunger Summit, the African Green Revolution Forum will continue to look for ways to unite the power of the public- and private-sectors in the global food security efforts.

"Public- and private-sector leaders are joining forces in unprecedented ways to ensure a more food secure future," said Yara president and chief executive officer, and co-chair of the forum, Mr Jørgen ole Haslestad. "We have seen great success when players come together and invest strategically – we hope to build on new momentum and work together to transform agriculture in Africa."

The forum will remain focused on unlocking Africa's agricultural potential by empowering smallholder farmers across the continent. By collaborating with farmer's organizations, civil society and other partners, the discussion will explore new ways to provide

resources, overcome challenges and improve yields for the millions of farmers who are working less than two hectares of land across the continent.

"Smallholder farmers are at the centre of all we do," said AGRA president Jane Karuku. "Our approach is clear and proven – if we provide African farmers the tools they need to grow more and improve their incomes, they will help lead us all into a more prosperous future".

About AGRF

The African Green Revolution Forum (AGRF) (<http://www.agrforum.com>) focuses on promoting investments and policy support for driving agricultural productivity and income growth for African farmers in an environmentally sustainable way.

The forum is a private-sector led initiative which will bring together various stakeholders to discuss and develop concrete investment plans for achieving the green revolution in Africa. Principle strategic partners include AGRA (<http://www.agra-alliance.org>), Yara International (<http://www.yara.com>), the Africa Union (<http://www.au.int>) and NEPAD Planning and Co-ordinating Agency (<http://www.nepad.org>).

Are cooperatives the answer to food insecurity, poverty?

This side of Africa

By Nicolas Begisen



SURELY, all cooperatives and farmer associations want to believe that they are the answer to ending hunger and at the same time enhance socio-economic development in impoverished regions, but that doesn't always mean we should jump into bed with all this cooperatives that spring up every day without taking time to evaluate their legitimacy.

The year 2012 has been declared as "The International Year of Cooperatives" by the United Nations. According to the UN, co-operatives are business enterprises that are owned and controlled by the members they serve.

The UN declaration aims to direct attention to the potential for cooperatives to contribute to socio-economic development. This is particularly significant for farmers because agricultural co-operatives are amongst the most common around the world (world-watch.org).

In spite of this initiative by the UN, many vital studies and reports are constantly being ignored by our reportedly corrupt leaders and governments. This said governments are, to a large extent, influenced and infiltrated by those very same cooperatives.

This leaves us wondering and asking ourselves whether they are actually there to help us or just to fatten their own pockets. Studies carried out by the UN have established a contradiction between campaigns and projects created by these cooperatives and those formulated by the UN itself. Many at times we witness calculated efforts of certain elites meant to mislead us that they are creating humanitarian covers for their agenda of radically decreasing the population with unworkable and toxic large-scale agricultural programmes.

One way or another, someone has to ask the difficult questions and have the guts to stand up to those responsible and accountable for ensuring our

sion that is employed to try and sell their legitimacy, but maybe this is just an opinion that is not well placed. However, most of these organizations and cooperatives rarely live up to their mandates.

The state of food security is not being alleviated as fast as it is supposed, poverty levels keep rising, HIV/Aids re-



...at times, I am perplexed by the number of cooperatives, CBOs, NGOs and all other societies some hurriedly put together and some come together after painstaking deliberations

farmers are getting all they deserve. I have to admit, at times, I am perplexed by the number of cooperatives, CBOs, NGOs and all other societies some hurriedly put together and some come together after painstaking deliberations, not to forget government institutions, mushrooming up every day.

Intolerance comes in many forms; arrogance and ignorance are some of the ways, as is dismissing the realities on the ground as being prejudiced rather than drawn deeply to different principles and priorities aimed at finding lasting solutions.

There is always a mandate or vi-



Minister for Agriculture, Food Security and Co-operatives Hon Eng. Christopher Chiza

lated deaths are on the increase, focus on large industrial plantation is hurting small scale farmers, as this is driven by bringing in large profits at the end of the day at the expense of socio-economic development in marginalised areas.

Numerous studies point towards small scale farming being the answer to feeding our world. High food prices and market instability will keep on rising if efforts are not shored up and focused on ensuring that farmers are able to till their lands and produce quality farm products that will give them the returns they deserve.

The UN Special Rapporteur on the right to food Olivier De Schutter authored a report outlining the importance of giving it back to small scale farmers. He says by the year 2050, feeding close to 9 billion people would require an urgency that has never been seen before.

According to his report, "there is a need to take up the most efficient farming techniques available in today's world." He further adds that, "today's scientific evidence demonstrates that agro-ecological methods outperform the use of chemical fertilisers in boosting food production in regions where the hungry live".

In countries that heavily rely on agriculture and their land as a natural resource such as Tanzania, being able to harness this resource to stabilise their economy is very imperative. This brings us to the issue at hand, are co-operatives our long lost savior? In one way or another, they just might be, if handled the correct way.

Small scale farming, as compared to large scale [commercialized] farming, is the best way to go.

But small scale farming will only be highly viable if ways are found to creating working cooperations between farmers to make it easier for them to carry out farming activities without feeling the burden.

Through this cooperatives, farmers get seeds, fertilisers, farm implements, trainings, workshops and much more at very affordable rates which is enabled by members pooling together to achieve common goals. Cooperatives also get grants and support from government institutions, donors and other private organisations.

Another major issue being debated is whether genetically modified organisms (GMOs) or small scale farming are what we need, but whether GMOs are the answer to combating food crisis is another tale. At the moment my opinion is that small scale farmers look a much more promising answer to our food problem in the coming future.

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Water and Environmental Sanitation Projects Maintenance Organization (WEPMO) Tel: +255 22 2410738, 716 099959	
Ministry of Water Tel: +255 22 245 1448	
INDUSTRY SUPPORT AND ASSOCIATIONS	
Small Industries Development Organization (SIDO) – Email: dg@sido.go.tz, info@sido.go.tz	
ANSAF - P.O. Box 6370, Dar es Salaam	
CNFA - info@cnfatanzania.org	
Tractors Limited Cells: +255 784 421606, 786 150213	
Consolidated Holdings Corporation (CHC) Tel: 255 (022) 2117988/9	
Vocational Education and Training Authority (VETA) – Tel: +255 22 2863683/2863409	
Export Processing Zones in Tanzania (EPZ) Tel: +255 22 2451827-9	
Agricultural Economics Society of Tanzania (AGREST) – Tel: +255-23 260 3415	
Tanzania National Business Council (TNBC) Tel: +255 22 2122984-6	
Tanzania Agriculture Partnership (TAP) Tel: +255 22 2124851	
Tanzania Milk Processors Association (TAMPA) Tel: +255 222 450 426	
Rural Livelihood Development Company (RLDC) Tel: +255 26 2321455	
Tanzania Cotton Board Tel: +255 22 2122564, 2128347	
Horticultural Development Council of Tanzania (HODECT) Cell: +255 789 222 344; Fax: +255 27254 4568	
TATEECO Ltd – Tel: +255 784 427817	
AGRO-PROCESSING	
ERTH Food - Tel: +255 22 2862040	
MUKPAR Tanzania Ltd Tel: +255 28 250038/184	
ASAS Diaries Limited - Tel: +255 26 2725200	
Tanga Fresh – Tel +255 27 2644238	
NatureRipe Kilimanjaro Limited Tel: +255 22 21 51457	
EQUIPMENT	
Gurudumu Tatu Limited Tel: +255 22 2865632 / 2863699	
National Service Corporation Sole (SUMAJKT) Cell: +255 717 993 874, 715 787 887	
FINANCE	
Private Agricultural Sector Support (PASS) Tel: 023-3752/3758/3765	
Community Bank Association Tel: +255 22 2123245	
Bank of Tanzania P.O. Box 2939, Dar es Slaam, Tanzania	
AGRO-INPUTS	
Minjingu Mines & Fertilizers Ltd Tel: +255 27 253 9259 250 4679	