

## **STILL NO EASY WAY TO FORMALIZATION PROGRAMME IN TANZANIA AMID OVERWHELMING OPTIMISM**

Fierce criticisms overwhelmed the evening discussion on formalization programme in Tanzania during the session organized by the leading national land rights organization in the country in Bagamoyo town March 2007. It was a pre Annual General Meeting session for members of the Land Rights Research and Resources Institute LARRRI or HAKIARDHI as popularly known organized to, among other things, discuss and put forward deliberations on the essence and implications of the national Programme on formalization of business and properties of the poor to small producers. The session which the Institute organizes every year under different themes, also serves as a self reflection and awareness raising to members and invited supporters.

This year's session attracted two special personalities from a newly established unit in the President's Office dealing with formalization of properties and business of the poor branded in Swahili as MKURABITA. Mr. Stephen Rusibamayila, a Programme Officer for MKURABITA made a presentation on the theme drawing some lessons from Handeni district where the Pilot project for the programme had been undertaken. Before his presentation, Mr. Ladislaus Salema the national Coordinator for the Programme made a provocative introductory remark on MKURABITA generally conceding the fact that not many people have had an opportunity to even grasp what the programme is all about and what it entails to achieve for Tanzanians. For the dual, that was an opportunity to engage with a wide range of members of the civil society and get them acquainted with the basics of the programme.

Mr. Emmanuel Mvula a programme Officer for HAKIARDHI was a discussant. In his reaction to the presentation, he threw very critical castigations against the programme nullifying its rationale before concluding that it is doomed to fail as it is build on false premises. He underscored the fact that, MKURABITA puts much emphasize on Individualization, Titling and Registration of properties which is primarily detrimental to the whole idea of communal rights to common resources and the rights to land of pastoralists who use land communally for grazing. Mr. Mvula challenged the programme as top down driven as it emerged from international economic consultants and not local people's demands and interests.

A barrel of critics were leveled against the programme during plenary discussion where most participants were optimistic that the programme will fail because it is ill designed, it lacks adequate consultations of the people and a decentralized bureaucracy for its administration.

Furthermore, the too much emphasis on use of land and other properties as collateral for financial credits was equally challenged as Tanzania, like many other African and Third world countries lack rural based financial credit facilities which appears to be the target of the formalization programme. In other words, that is where the poor are basically found. Some contributors went as far as commenting that, Tanzania's formalization programme lacks coordination with other similar national level programmes and in other

areas, it has even proved to be redundant to other ongoing reforms in the land and other sectors. Citing an example, HAKIARDHI member who has been actively involved in land rights training in villages, said, there is no difference between MKURABITA and the actual implementation of the village land act, which means one of the two, is useless.

Responding to the critics and questions raised the two officials from the Programme management Unit, insisted that, most of the questions and critics were baseless but mere reflection of the fears and doubts that are fabric of the monolithic regime the country passed through in the last for decades. They were optimistic that, it will take time for people to change but eventually, they will find a value in the programme as benefits trickle down from pilot districts. As for lack of participation, the officials conceded that it was initially impossible to bring in all the actors due to lack of facilities and necessary infrastructure and resources. Now that the programme is getting into its reform design stage, most of the people will be consulted.

In 2004, Tanzania launched a multibillion national Programme on formalization of properties and business of the poor. Since its inception, this programme has been facing fierce criticisms from development practitioners both within and outside the country as conceptually flawed and irrelevant in the context of country like Tanzania. The programme is a brain child of the famous Peruvian Economist Professor Hernando De Soto whose moving title the mystery of capital postulates why capitalism triumphs in the west and fails elsewhere. For him, the problem is that of failing to establish a formal system that regulates utilization of resources and turn them into capital. As result, most people own dead capitals, operate outside the formal economy and cannot be taxed or earn their countries income.

Tanzania commissioned the Institute for Liberty and Democracy to carryout a study to assess the value of the informal sector in the country and advise the government accordingly. The findings and involvement of ILD and the Norwegian government in funding the programme plus its real impact for the targeted poor Tanzanians have converged into stiff deadlocks that development practitioners are still pushing and pulling to get the right direction. What do you think? Read more from other links below. [www.landrightswach.net](http://www.landrightswach.net), [www.policyforum.co.tz](http://www.policyforum.co.tz), [www.pbft.go.tz](http://www.pbft.go.tz)