



## **URBAN GROWTH IN ESA; OPPORTUNITIES AND THREATS FOR HORTICULTURE**

### **TANZANIA POSITION PAPER**

#### **INTRODUCTION**

The horticultural export sub-sector in Tanzania is generally regarded as having started in the 1950s with the production of bean seed for selling in Europe, mainly through Holland. Perishable horticultural exports to Europe started in the 1970s, following Kenya's lead in this area. In the mid-1980s, a cut rose industry was established, followed by the development of a cuttings industry based on chrysanthemums. More recently, there have been specialized investments in the propagation of hybrid vegetable seeds, higher value fruits and cut-flowers other than roses.

The sector has registered tremendous growth in the past three years most of which are attributed to the presence of the vibrant TAHA. Currently the export sub-sector earns the country more than USD 340 million of foreign income and has registered a growth rate of 8-10% per annum. The sector is therefore recognized as an engine for country's socio-economic growth and a significant contributor in the poverty alleviation mainly in the rural areas.

#### **PRESENT STATUS**

Tanzania's population is estimated to be 45,040,000 with an estimated urban population of 11,883,000 (World Urbanization Prospects 2009). The annual urban growth rate for Tanzania is said to be 4.6% compared to only 2.29% for annual rural growth rate between the years 2005 and 2010. However, it is estimated that between the years 2010 and 2015 while there will be a rise of annual urban population growth to 4.74%, there will be decline of annual rural growth to only 2.2% (World Population Prospects 2009). The high annual urban growth rate for Tanzania comes second among the East African countries after Burundi which has an annual urban growth rate of 5.75%.

Urban centers in Tanzania include Dar es Salaam, Mwanza, Arusha, Dodoma, Morogoro, Iringa and many others. Dar es Salaam is by far the most important urban centre in Tanzania. With more than three million inhabitants and a growth rate of eight percent it now accounts for about one third of the total urban population in the country. Tanzania has neither an obvious history of urban agriculture nor can its development be attributed to rural migrants. It simply appears to have grown in response to need and to the opportunity afforded by a low density urban pattern. Driving through the streets of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, one gets a good idea of what urban farming means. There are cattle and goats grazing behind an industrial complex, and leafy vegetables are grown beside the road. Backyard gardening can be spotted wherever there is space and water. Coconut and mango trees, vegetable plots and cassava fields right beside an emerging construction are a common sight. The latest development in urban agriculture is the introduction of mushroom farming and small scale farming of medicinal plants like hibiscus and aloe-vera plants which is now attracting many urban dwellers.

Urban farming was first observed in Dar es Salaam at the beginning of the eighties, with vegetable production in home-gardens and open spaces as the main agricultural activity. In the peri-urban areas there are farms as big as 2ha while in the urban areas there are home-gardens of 100m size and some open space farms ranging from 750m to 900m. Producers come from all income classes. They are not necessarily urban poor, although the majority belongs to the poorer strata of the population. According to the Tanzanian Bureau of Statistics (1990) seven percent of Dar es Salaam's inhabitants (between the age of ten and 65) are involved in agriculture. Neither ethnic affiliation, gender nor age seems to be important for people taking an interest in agricultural production. It is access to resources which defines the production as well as orientation and magnitude of enterprise.

When it comes to absolute numbers of urban farmers, women are the most numerous group (about two thirds), while in terms of yield produced men are at the forefront. Involvement of women is strong in home-gardening as it can be combined with their traditional role of attending household duties and caring for children and old or sick family members. Only few women have managed to enter the commercial vegetable production areas, where the bulk of the vegetables are produced.

Besides cattle keeping, vegetable production is the most prominent agricultural activity in Dar es Salaam, with a clear focus on green leafy vegetables. There are obvious advantages for the preference of vegetable farming.

- ✓ There is a huge demand for leafy vegetables as they accompany the traditional maize porridge (ugali) as a vitamin supplement. African spinach (*Amaranthus* spp.) is the most popular type of vegetable, and it can be grown almost ten months a year. It is fairly resistant to pests and diseases.
- ✓ Investments in vegetable production are reasonable.
- ✓ Leafy vegetables have a very short vegetation cycle. African spinach, which accounts for almost 75 percent of market-oriented production, can be harvested three to four weeks after sowing, which gives an almost immediate and regular return.
- ✓ Other prominent types such as cowpea leaves, sweet potato leaves, cassava and pumpkin leaves, as well as Chinese cabbage, have the advantage that they can be picked continuously, representing an ongoing supply for the family diet. This makes them an ideal choice for home-gardening.
- ✓ Competition for these products from growers outside the city is minimal. Leafy vegetables are highly perishable and hardly tolerate transport. They have to be grown close to the producer and are often sold directly from the field. Between 80 and 90 percent of the urban demand for leafy vegetables is produced in the city. Therefore intra-urban production is vital to the cities' supply with fresh leaves. Taking the current transport system into account it is not likely that there will be a change in the near future.

## **NATIONAL INITIATIVES**

In a bid to improve on the economy, in the 1970s and 1980s, the government introduced policies which encouraged urban agriculture with an aim of supporting urban dwellers to attain food self-sufficiency and grow food to combat the rising rates of inflation of those times. These are also the times when the political elite came with strategies, declarations slogans and campaigns to support agriculture including urban agriculture. The declarations and strategies included *siasa ni kilimo* (politics is agriculture) of 1972, *kilimo cha umwagiliaji* (irrigated agriculture) of 1974, *kilimo cha kufa na kupona* (agriculture for life and death) of 1974/5 and *mvua za kwanza ni za kupanda* (first rains are for planting) of 1974/4. Extension workers from the Ministry of Agriculture and Food Security also provided extension services and trainings to urban dwellers in the same spirit. The government also introduced urban agricultural

extension services in the 1970s under the same ministry in a bid to encourage urban dwellers to produce their own food.

The introduction of a decentralized approach in managing agricultural issues in Tanzania has not only reduced efforts of the government in supporting urban agriculture but also left urban farmers in lots of confusions. Urban agriculture is governed to a large extent by municipal by-laws which are formulated and enforced at the local government levels. For instance, the by-laws regulate the height of crops to be grown, the distance from the road reserve that farming can be done, the distance from the river banks and water sources that farming is allowed and sometimes the designated areas that some types of farming can be done. All this is defined in the city or town master plan which is administered by the planning departments of the municipalities.

All the above is done in very good faith, from researched and informed perspectives and with very good interests of the municipalities. However, due to the rapid growth of these urban areas and the rising population, conflicts of interests have always left urban farmers suffering as the losers. For instance, parcels of land in the peri-urban areas which acted as the agricultural reserves in some towns in Tanzania have now been developed into housing estates and private universities. In others, areas that were demarcated for crop nurseries and demonstration plots have now been developed into government offices, commercial blocks or even market places at times even doing away with mother crops which have existed for quite some significant time.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Food Security and Cooperatives through its Agricultural Sector Development Program (ASDP) has decentralized the support to the local government level through its District Agricultural Development Program (DADP). Through this program, there are financial allocations that are disbursed to the district and municipal councils with an aim of addressing specific challenges that the farmers are faced with at the local government level. This is a special window to urban farmers to address certain challenges to their farming activities. However, urban horticultural farmers are yet to maximize their benefits from this program

There are other initiatives by different stakeholders which support urban agriculture. The Tanzania Agricultural Productivity Program, a USAID funded project has also earmarked urban areas like Dar es Salaam and Arusha as some of its target locations. It offer support like capacity building on good agricultural practices and market linkages to the farmers. The Tanzania Horticultural Association which is

a member based organization also includes farmers in urban areas in its membership. Other supporting organizations include Care International, Oxfam, Gatsby Trust and World Vision. The demands for horticultural produce in the urban areas is a fact that has encouraged farmers especially in the peri-urban areas to invest in more farming activities. Gatsby Trust for instance, is supporting women in Zanzibar to grow vegetables for the booming tourism industry in the isles. The World Vegetable Centre in Arusha has also specialized its research on leafy vegetables and further offers small garden training kits for the farmers. This will help the urban farmers who to a large extent grow leafy vegetables whose demand is very big in the urban areas.

In conclusion, urban farming in Tanzania has had a vibrant past. However, it has gradually degenerated with time. The rapid urban growth offers both an opportunity and challenge for urban farmers. Much as the growth means the growth of a market for commercial horticultural farmers who produce in the peri-urban areas, it also poses a threat in the competition of land for a variety of uses. It also poses a threat of access to the limited resources at the disposal of the municipal authorities. There is therefore a need for more appreciation of urban agriculture by both the authorities both at the national and local government levels and deliberate strategies at the municipalities drawn to support urban agriculture.

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