

PRESS RELEASE ON THE BAGAMOYO ECOENERGY PROJECT IN BAGAMOYO, COAST REGION, TANZANIA

On September 2014, the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania received information from the Bagamoyo EcoEnergy (BEE) Tanzania Ltd., a company developing a sugar investment project in Bagamoyo District in the Coast Region, that Action Aid Tanzania has undertaken a research and came up with a report alleging that the land allocated for sugarcane production to BEE has been grabbed from the villagers. The report is titled ***“Pulling Back from the Brink: Stopping EcoEnergy’s Land Grabbing in Tanzania”***.

Since most of the information in the report is not correct, on the 13th October, 2014, the Government invited the management of the Action Aid Tanzania and shared the government’s position on the report. Subsequently on 4th November 2014 the Government organized a second meeting involving key stakeholders for the purpose of providing a forum for consultation and agrees on the way forward. In those meetings the following issues were observed:

- (i) That the research process was flawed and did not involve representatives of the farmers in the villages in the project area and also the local government leadership in Bagamoyo District nor the Government in particular the Ministries of Land Housing and Human Settlements and the Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives;
- (ii) The report has not been shared with the relevant authorities in the Government and therefore is not informed on what is the actual situation on the ground; and
- (iii) The research was not cleared by the necessary authorities as per the requirement of the law of the land and therefore pre-disposed to errors and mistakes.

Based on the above observations, the Government and Action Aid leadership agreed to observe the following:

- (i) That AA will follow the law of the land in conducting its research and therefore allow a wider representation and transparent way of conducting its research.
- (ii) Action Aid will share its research terms of reference with key stakeholders including the government
- (iii) That AA will involve the farmers in the relevant villages in a non discriminatory way, the local government in Bagamoyo and the relevant ministries in particular the Ministry of

- Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Lands Housing and Human Settlements;
- (iv) That AA will share its research findings with the relevant parties including the village governments in the project areas, the local government in Bagamoyo and the relevant Ministries in particular Ministry of Agriculture Food Security and Cooperatives and the Ministry of Lands Housing and Human Settlements.

Despite of the above observations and agreed way forward, to date the Government and its institutions in particular the farmers and villages governments in Bagamoyo District, the Bagamoyo District Council and its Ministries in particular the Ministry of Land Housing and Human Settlements have not yet received feedback on the AA research findings. However, the Government is aware that on the 17th February 2015, AA conducted a workshop in which it shared a PowerPoint presentation on its research findings in Bagamoyo EcoEnergy Project in Bagamoyo.

The Government is acutely aware that Action Aid is continuing with its research and through the Workshop of 17th February 2015 (at Double Tree Hotel) that Action Aid has started to share its research findings through its key stakeholders as agreed above. The Government believes in dialogues but it observes a strange behavior of Action Aid attempting to avoid dialogue and consultation a process that would have enriched its findings and make it non partisan.

Through this communication the government is again inviting Action Aid to continue dialoguing with the relevant villages, ministries and departments as well as farmers in the established village governments. The government also wish to share the fact that, land allocated for BEE investment belongs to the Government of Tanzania and wasn't NOT given to villagers. Currently, land is underdeveloped and it is government's desire in collaboration with BEE company to develop an inclusive opportunities with the surrounding villagers.

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