



20th March 15

**THISDAY**  
:: The voice of transparency ::

## ActionAid Bagamoyo report false, misleading - Agricultural Council

---

### Sylvester Domasa

The renowned international organisation ActionAid, is accused of lobbying to prevent Tanzania from achieving economic independence in a bid to keep the country dependent on donor support particularly in food production.

The allegation was raised yesterday in Dar es Salaam by the Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) which backed the government's recent disapproval of last week's report by ActionAid that purported the investor Bagamoyo EcoEnergy and the government, are grabbing land from the people of Bagamoyo.

The government and now ACT have denied the legitimacy of the report and described it as false and misleading.

The ActionAid report titled, "Pulling back from the Brink: Stopping Eco Energy from Land Grab in Tanzania," was published early this week and stirred up controversy whose dirt is yet to settle.

The report was strongly opposed by the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlement and also by the Presidential Delivery Bureau (PDB) both saying the research is very flawed in its claim that the government has pushed out rural communities in order to lease some 20,000 hectares of land to the investor.

Following launch of the report, ActionAid announced in its latest media communiqué that it is to conduct a public petition to stop the alleged land grabbing.

Speaking to press yesterday in the city, ACT Chairman Dr Sinare Y. Sinare made it clear that the council does not support any international NGOs that according to him want to turn the nation into a hostage and food importer.

"We don't support the idea of humiliating small scale farmers," he said.

"We have requested for a full report on the matter because ActionAid involved ACT during the preliminary findings however, when the research was completed we were not involved in interpretation of the finding or preparation of the final report," he said.

"Tanzania can only develop into an economic giant if a fully transformation of agricultural sector is made," he went on to say.

"But it seems that some development partners and NGOs aren't happy with government initiatives to improve the sector," said the ACT Chairman.

"The agriculture sector has the potential of spearheading our economic growth and poverty reduction 40 times more than any other sector including the natural gas and tourism sectors," he noted again emphasising that the sector cannot be left under developed and the country donor dependant.

The chairman explained that the project to be implemented in Bagamoyo is for the betterment of the agriculture sector as well as assuring market for small scale sugarcane farmers.

"Since independence, there have been no new sugar plantations established and the demand for the product has increased from 100,000 metric tonnes to 480, 000 metric tonnes per year yet local production does not correspond to the demand," he pointed out.

"This automatically forces the country to rely on sugar importation," the ACT Chairman decried.

Subsequently, the council has advised the government to develop a national comprehensive programme for the survey and mapping of all the country's land using digital satellite technology in a bid to reduce land disputes.

Until the paper went to press, attempts to reach ActionAid officials for comments were unsuccessful.

**THE GUARDIAN**