

INVESTMENT

Contested land is public property, according to Lands ministry

'Dar land sharks target key deal in Bagamoyo'



Prof Anna Tibaijuka, Lands minister



Mr Ahmed Kipozi, Bagamoyo District Commissioner

The company plans to produce 130,000 tonnes of sugar annually for the local market, up to 10 million litres of ethanol and 100,000 MWh of electricity per year

By The Citizen Reporter

Bagamoyo. A powerful syndicate of land speculators based in Dar es Salaam are behind individuals who claim the right of occupancy over public land earmarked for massive investment in Bagamoyo, district leaders have claimed.

An investor, Agro Ecoenergy, entered into a land-for-equity partnership with the government in 2006 to start and agro-industry based on the modern Brazilian model on a state-owned cattle ranch in Bagamoyo. The firm formed a special-purpose company called Bagamoyo Ecoenergy Limited to

as a threat to their lucrative business.

According to Agro Ecoenergy executive chairman Per Carstedt, the company plans to produce 130,000 tonnes of sugar annually for the local market, up to 10 million litres of ethanol and 100,000 MWh of electricity per year. Also, the project would create 4,000 jobs including sugarcane out-growers in the surrounding villages.

The government which holds 25 per cent stake in the project committed to and handed the lease of occupancy for the 24,000-hectare former Ranch of Zanzibar in Bagamoyo (Razaba) to the investor in May last year.

But as the project began to take shape, some individuals who claim to have been using the land for years came forth,

with one group demanding compensation and another swearing not leave even with compensation, according to Bagamoyo District commissioner Ahmed Kipozi.

According to minister for Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Development Prof Anna Tibaijuka, the pilot project whose early works is set for launch this Saturday is bound to continue because the land is public property and there are no villages registered there.

However, Mr Kipozi said a team of government valuers is at work in the area assessing the value of permanent crops and will recommend due compensation only to genuine locals who have been using the land before 2011.

"We are going to give them honorarium; a compensa-

“ We are going to give them honorarium; a compensa-

We are going to give them honorarium; a compensation of compassion,"

MR AHMED KIPOZI,
BAGAMOYO DISTRICT
COMMISSIONER

mojo Ecoenergy Limited to undertake the \$500 million (Sh800 billion) project).

In January, *The Citizen* reported that villagers in the project area had refused to be compensated for their land sold to an investor who was out to grab the customarily-owned land.

But the government maintains that it owns the land and sees most of the so called 'villagers' as mercenaries hired by a group of wealthy land speculators hoping to milk free money and a network of sugar importers who consider the fruition of the sugar plantation and factory

BACKGROUND: WHAT TRANSPIRED IN MATTER

In January, *The Citizen* reported that villagers in the project area had refused to be compensated for their land sold to an investor who was out to grab the customarily-owned land.

But the government maintains that it owns the land and sees most of the so called 'villagers' as mercenaries hired by a group of wealthy land speculators hoping to milk free money and a network of sugar importers who consider the fruition of the sugar plantation and factory as a threat to their lucrative business.

honorarium; a compensation of compassion," he said.

Mr Shukuru Mbatto, the chairman of Bagamoyo District Council, said the authority has established that majority of the claimants were paid by sugar importers and land speculators who eye the key sector and whenever they learn of a potential investment anywhere in the country, they move quickly before the project takes off, fabricate ownership documents or simply collude with locals on the ground to initiate make-believe activities to justify compensation claims later.