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## **Moshi NGO Faces New Challenges**

The Moshi-based Traditional Irrigation and Environmental Development Organization (TIP), which has been operating as a donor-supported project for the last 12 years, is set to face new challenges as it undergoes a transformation into a full-fledged non-governmental organization (NGO).

The NGO, which was registered in August 1999 and evolved from the Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme (TIP), started its first phase in 1988 under the Netherlands Development Organization (SNV) with financial support from the Netherlands government.

TIP operated in partnership with seven districts in the northern and central zones where traditional irrigation was being held. The districts are Arumeru, Same, Lushoto, Iringa, Mpwapwa and Kilosa. However, according to TIP environmental advisor, Mr. Hans Keijzer, the NGO's activities will be confined in the northern zone in the next two years. The second phase of the programme (1992-1997) concentrated on the consolidation of the programme and building capacity of collaborating district council staff and support staff in order to enable them to implement programme activities.

Phase three of the programme, which lasted for three years from 1997 to 2000, saw the transition towards a service organization providing technical and financial support to districts implementing TIP. During this phase, gender mainstreaming was adopted as one of the key elements of implementation.

Programme interventions have been implemented in Same, Mwanga, Kilosa and Iringa whose funding from Royal Netherlands Embassy was phased out on June 30, 1999.

The establishment of the NGO will ensure continuation and quality of the integrated TIP approach. It will also ensure the expansion of TIP services to other areas and development of new ones with the objective of attaining sustainable land use and water in traditional irrigation areas.

TIP, as an autonomous self-sustaining organization, was committed to contribute to a durable and gender balanced improvement of standard of living of communities in traditionally irrigated areas in Tanzania through sustainable development of catchments with regard to irrigation, natural resources management, soil and water conservation, afforestation, land use planning and organizational development. According to Mr. Keijzer, TIP target groups are small-scale farmers living in the catchment areas of traditional irrigation systems in Tanzania. He added that characteristic of the traditional irrigation systems is that they have been constructed by farmers themselves and are farmer-managed and operated.

On TIP main components, Mr. Keijzer said, improvement of traditional irrigation system was not only limited to improvement of civil structures and canal lining, but male and female farmers were trained in water management techniques to enable them to use it more efficiently. He added that farmers were reached through existing water user groups. In line with the tail-to-mouth and economic bias approach, farmers have to conserve the soil before any assistance was provided to improve their irrigation systems. Farmers are assisted in constructing terraces and improving water harvesting techniques and drainage. They are also trained in the management of homestead tree nurseries and mobilized to plant trees in the catchment areas.

On participatory land use planning, Mr. Keijzer said government policies in Tanzania have increasingly focused on decentralization and increased stakeholder involvement, citing a

new guideline on participatory village land use planning published by the national land use planning commission in December 1998 as a living example. By using those guidelines and by creating awareness on the new Land Act, which gives equal rights to men and women in owning land, TIP tried to improve the status of women in regard to the access and control over land and water, he said. At the same time, Mr. Keijzer added, those guidelines were used as a tool for sustainable management of the natural resources, including land, soil, water and forest.

He said through workshops and training of local government staff, TIP tried to improve the management of natural resources at village level.

As regards to organizational development, farmers of water user groups were mobilized to organize themselves further into water user associations. TIP tried to stimulate the process of empowerment in order to enable the farmers to play their role in the negotiation process.

TIP, which took over all assets and functions of TIP since August last year, aims at becoming a leading NGO in the provision of services towards improved irrigation infrastructure and strengthening of the organizational and institutional capacities of water user groups, comprising both men and women, in selected areas of rural Tanzania within the context of sustainable agriculture and natural resources management.

Based on TIP success story, district-based partnership and step-wise approach to implementation of project activities are some of the key elements contained in the package of services provided by TIP, Mr. Keijzer said. He mentioned other elements as integration of gender issue, soil conservation measures combined with rehabilitation of irrigation infrastructure empowerment of Water User Groups (WUGs) through organizational strengthening and legal registration assistance as well as technical capacity building at district and WUGs levels.

The NGO's environmental advisor noted that since this is the first full operational year of TIP, efforts will be made to further establish the organization through recruitment of key staff, training of board members and staff, empowerment of WUGs through registration and various training events as strategy toward poverty alleviation.

He said apart from working with the present partner districts –Arumeru, Lushoto, Mwanza and Same – TIP will fully integrate three more districts – Hai, Moshi Rural and Rombo – into its programme. Partnership agreements of the four partner districts will be reviewed in line with the performance orientation of TIP, he revealed.

Assistance to the districts will depend on demand-driven proposed activities and on the financial and material input from district and WUGs, Mr. Keijzer pointed out, adding that activities in the new districts will be mainly training of WUG members, para-professionals and district technicians. An increased involvement of the private sector is foreseen in construction activities, while monitoring of project activities at district level will be improved through effective reporting and the introduction of collection and data management systems.

Reviewing performance of TIP, Mr. Keijzer said there was a steady upward trend in all the four main service groups – irrigation, organizational development and gender, capacity building, and soil and water conservation.

According to records, socio-economic impacts of TIP's intervention include significantly improved farm yields, economic empowerment of farmers, better land use and improved environmental protection.

TIP's five-year strategic plan beginning this year focuses on promoting and transforming traditional irrigation systems and skills in the context of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management with a view to improving the economic well-being of poor men and women in rural Tanzania.

During the same period TIP will provide technical and material support towards strengthening of institutional and organizational capacity of target groups, comprising both men and women on selected areas of rural Tanzania and ensuring sustainability of the

programmers of the said groups.

The NGO will also promote effective communication on best practices in traditional irrigation and natural resource management through demonstration sites, printing, publishing and disseminating information on the organization's activities.