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Irrigation Projects Benefit 29,000 Small Farmers

The Traditional Irrigation and Environmental Development Organization (TIP) has supported more than 29,000 small-scale farmers in four selected traditional irrigation districts of Northern Zone in the context of sustainable agriculture and natural resource management.

Briefing the Arusha Regional Commissioner, Mohamed Babu, who officiated at the 11th Northern Zone agricultural show held at Thembi Hill grounds, here on Monday, the TIP Director, Dr Ibrahim Kawa, said TIP package has been disseminated in Lushoto, Same, Mwanga and Arumeru districts. Dr Kawa revealed before the RC that since TIP started in 1988, it has trained 29,800 small-scale farmers, created and registered 564 water user groups and a total of 43,500 hectares, which are currently under traditional irrigation system in the four districts.

"In assisting water user groups dealing with irrigation, TIP always starts with organizational development, gender mainstreaming and soil and water conservation activities," Dr Kawa told the RC.

On the irrigation system improvement, Dr Kawa said TIP provides technical assistance to water user groups in regard to the improvement of their existing traditional irrigation system.

"Improvement of traditional irrigation system is however, not limited to the improvement of civil structures and canal lining only," he pointed out adding: "Male and female farmers are also trained in water management in order to make more efficient use of the most limited natural resource."

In soil and water conservation and Afforestation, Dr. Kawa said farmers have an obligation of leading the way in the undertaking before any assistance was extended to enable them to improve their irrigation systems. Through trained farmers, other villagers are assisted in building terraces and improving water harvesting techniques and drainage systems, the TIP director said.

"For the protection of the water resources, farmers are trained in the management of homestead tree nurseries and mobilized to plant trees within the catchment area," he contended.

Addressing farmers when officially opening the agricultural show, Babu called upon them to visit TIP so as to learn more about sustainable and natural resource management if the show was to attain its vision.

"If we are serious and really want to benefit with Nane Nane (Farmers show), TIP is a better place where farmers who are a major focus of this show can visit so that they can learn more about the traditional irrigation technology," Babu noted.

TIP has been registered as an NGO in Tanzania since August 1999. The NGO was established to institutionalize the achievements and experiences of the previous TIP programme 1988-2000 and to ensure the continuation and quality of its integrated approach.