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TIP work Hailed by Arusha, K'njaro Peasants

Peasants from Same, Arumeru, Lushoto and Mwanga districts who participated in the Nane Nane Agricultural Fair here, have commended the Traditional Irrigation and Environmental Development Project (TIP) for attaining sustainable improvement of the living standards of the residents of the areas.

Adniel Richard, a small-scale farmer from the Same District, said that TIP had brought about economic and social change since its introduction of the project in 1989, which emphasizes soil and water conservation and gender balance.

"The programme has succeeded to contribute to a durable gender balanced improvement of standards of living in communities in traditionally irrigated areas through sustainable development of water catchments, natural resources management, soil and water conservation, Afforestation, land use planning and organizational development," he said.

Richard said that as a result, production of maize, vegetables, tomatoes, onions, sweet potatoes, watermelon and cabbage was relatively high and stable throughout the year, without depending on rainfall. According to him, the irrigation programme targets groups of small-scale farmers living in the catchment areas of traditional irrigation systems. Their typical characteristic is that they have been constructed by farmers themselves and are farmer-managed.

"Farmers have to conserve the soil before any assistance is provided to improve their irrigation systems," said one Mrs. Sarawo adding, "farmers are assisted in constructing terraces and improving water harvesting techniques and drainage." She said that TIP also trained people in the management of homesteads, tree nurseries and mobilized to plant trees in catchment areas.

The Traditional Irrigation and Environmental Development Project was established in 1988 as a result of research conducted by the Irrigation Department of the Ministry of Agriculture in 1987/88 under the "Freedom from Hunger Campaign" and the Dutch Aid (SNV).

Established as a pilot project in Arumeru, Lushoto, Mwanga and Same in the northern zone, and later extended to Kilosa, Iringa and Mpwapwa district, TIP has its headquarters in Moshi, Kilimanjaro Region.