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Irrigation Brings Wonders to Arumeru

Some small-scale farmers at Nduruma village in Arumeru district, Arusha, have expressed gratitude to the Traditional Irrigation Improvement Project (TIP) for attaining durable improvement of the living standards of the population in the arid areas.

Hamisi Gumbo, a peasant from the arid area, said TIP had brought about economic and social changes since its introduction in 1994, given its emphasis on soil and water conservation. He said the project had also led to improved irrigation infrastructure and the skills of targeted groups, particularly on gender. As a result, he said, production of maize, vegetables, tomatoes, sweet potatoes and watermelons was relatively high and stable throughout the year without depending on rainfall.

The District Agricultural Officer, Lebaratus Lokisa, said that in the past seven years of the project, at least 7,500 hectares in the arid area had been irrigated in Arumeru district alone. Lokisa said achievement was reached due to integration of the two organizations, saying TIP identified the farmers while the Small Enterprises Project (SEP) trained them about market opportunities and agricultural economics.

"After the integration of TIP and SEP, the way is clear to revive the old glory of relatively high standards of living and achieving the desired expectation of the over 400,000 Arumeru population," said Lokisa.

Lothi Sareyo, another Nduruma peasant, told the delegation that The Netherlands Ambassador in Tanzania had visited the TIP recently and suggested that the project could be established all over the country and throughout Africa by using Arumeru district as a model.

Traditional Irrigation Improvement Programme 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 organization, SNV.

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