

Pastoral communities cry foul over land encroachment

By CHABY BARASA

CONFRONTED with the loss of grazing land due to acquisition of their territory for wildlife conservation and agricultural investments, Maasai, Barbaig and other pastoral tribes have to abandon their ancestral land for new pastures.

The takeovers have seen hundreds of the pastoral community members lately having to migrate elsewhere in search of grazing land, while others have discarded their traditional ways of life and relocated in urban areas to work as watchmen, herbalists or engage in other menial jobs.

A recent study conducted by the Research on Poverty Alleviation (RE-POA) examining the reasons for the migration of Maasai to sedentary lifestyles in rural areas cited loss of grazing land (47.8 per cent) as the major contributing factor to the movement.

The study analysed Dumila, Kambala, Dakawa and Milama villages in Morogoro Region that had recently seen an influx of migrant Maasai. Other reasons cited for leaving traditional lands were loss of livestock due to disease (23.7%), search for peace (15.5%), shortage of land for cultivation (8.5%) and prolonged drought (5%).

"Forget about drought, what has caused us sleepless nights over the years is annexation of our lands by the government and private investors, which has left us battling to live off small pieces of land," says a Loliondo villager Mr Zebedayo Laizer, adding: "The loss of land, apart from disrupting lifestyles, has resulted in increased poverty levels and conflicts among pastoralists and farmers as they compete for scarce resources."

On the other hand, University of Dar es Salaam's Department of Sociology and Anthropology, Head and Senior Lecturer Dr Joyce Nyoni observes that for a long time the Barabaig had lived a nomadic life with cattle being their main source of livelihood.

"However, with investment in agriculture (wheat farms) among other factors there has been an increasing



MAKING a living in a hair salon. Traditionally, the Maasai are livestock keepers but have been forced to look for alternative means of survival. (Photo: Gender Links)

pressure on land. As a result they have been forced to look for alternative means of livelihood, agriculture being one of the options," says Dr Nyoni, adding, however, that the Barabaig have not fared well in agriculture resulting in the migration into urban areas in search for other options of earning an income.

According to the Repoa study, the reduction of grazing lands for pastoral communities was found to have contributed to not only a shortage of pastures but also led to the spread of diseases in cattle and overuse of land resulting in prolonged periods of drought.

"Also, the less land there is, the more families have to compete it, resulting in conflicts between families that can last generations. As a result of these factors, the Maasai settled in other regions to pursue agriculture or alternative livelihood," further reads the Report.

Mr Laizer links the drought currently affecting pastoral communities

in areas of Arusha and Manyara regions, some of them relocating in villages in neighbouring regions and others moving to urban areas.

"In Tanzania there is a lack of data on the long-term effects of government land policies on pastoralist and hunter/gatherer communities. However, one long-term effect that is particularly visible is a growing migrant Maasai population living in urban regions, particularly Dar es Salaam," says Mr Onesmo Ole Ngunumwa.

Having participated in a recent research conducted by the Legal and Human Rights Centre (LHRC) and Livelihood Initiative Support (LIVES), Mr Ngunumwa estimates a minimum average of 1,000 migrant Maasais living in Kinondoni Municipality alone while LIVES has regular contact with around 600 at any one time.

"The study was important due to lack of statistics on pastoralist and hunter/gatherer communities in Tan-

zania, particularly those who have migrated off traditional lands. There is plenty of research focusing on life on traditional lands but little on the increasing migrant pastoralist community in the cities," reads the Report in part.

The Coordinator of the Arusha-based Tanzania Pastoral Community Forum (TPCF), Mr Joseph Parsambezi observes that widespread acquisition of land by the government and private investors is encroaching on the so-called indigenous people's land, forcing them to settle elsewhere.

"Others have made their ways to Dar es Salaam and other urban areas to work as watchmen, herbalists, hawkers and other non skilled jobs," notes Mr Parsambezi.

He says conservation plans eg at Serengeti and Tarangire National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area have overtime all had impact on Maasai and other pastoral tribes, whose nomadic lifestyles have greatly been disrupted.

The Report by LHRC and LIVES indicates that since independence wildlife parks have increased to cover about 70 per cent of the grazing resources of Maasailand.

This has seen land available for grazing cattle becoming smaller every year, pushing pastoralists and hunter gatherers to compete for land or migrate to villages and urban areas.

According to Mr Parsambezi, even recent conflicts between farmers and pastoralists in Manyara and Morogoro regions are a result of squeezing the latter from their ancestral lands, leaving them with no other option except to encroach on farmers' land.

He warns that the village to urban migration wave by pastoralists, not only disrupts well established lifestyles but also increases poverty in villages where young and able bodied men leave behind the elderly, women and children.

"Unfortunately most, if not all of those who move to cities end up as watchmen, hawkers or employed in other lowly paying jobs as they do not have the needed academic qualifications, let alone having trained as

watchmen.

"Bad governance and non inclusion of pastoral communities in decision making are to blame for the endless frictions we have witnessed recently," remarks Pastoralists Indigenous NGOS Forum's Gender and Public Relations Officer, Ms Carolyn Kandusi.

Ms Kandusi says it is bad governance when authorities refuse to acknowledge the lifestyle and appreciate the important contribution of pastoralism to the nation's economy.

She says the Forum is not against the government declaring a piece of land a national park or conserved area, the bone of contention is when this is done without consultation or blessings of the surrounding communities, which have a right to reap the rewards of such moves.

The champions of pastoral communities' rights also point out to the legal instruments that they claim have allowed the government to favour agriculture and investors over pastoralism.

"Several legal instruments actively discourage pastoralism. For example, the National Land Policy of 1995 clearly and explicitly prohibits nomadism. Similarly, the Strategic Plan for Implementation of Land Laws requires land users to settle down and actively discourages nomadism.

"The Investment Act and Village Land Act both have the potential to discriminate against Pastoralists and hunter/gatherer communities because there is the opportunity to categorize land used by these communities as unused land, making it open to sale or development by the government," states the LHRC and LIVES study.

Mr Nangiria on the other hand punches holes into the Wildlife Management Act of 2009, which he says discriminates against pastoralists as it stipulates that no grazing of animals may occur in areas designated as game controlled areas.

He cites Loliondo where of late there was conflict between the government and Maasai following plans by the government to announce a new 'conservation' area on Maasai lands, which Mr Nangiria says would spell the end of the Maasai and the Serengeti ecosystem.

The situation has since calmed down following intervention by the Prime Minister, Mr Mizengo Pinda. However, Mr Nangiria warns that trouble could erupt again unless the government abandons the plan altogether or fulfills its pledge to institute land use plan for the area.

To avert the looming crisis, the

ministry of Lands, Housing and Human Settlements Developments is currently working on the issue according to Dr Selassie Mayunga- the Deputy Permanent Secretary. The Ministry is undertaking land use plan for the area, that would properly consider pastoralists' needs for grazing land.

"Actually the way forward is for such exercise to be conducted national wide," said the deputy PS, noting that the plan is already underway in Mvomero District in Morogoro Region.

The Deputy Minister for Livestock and Fisheries Development, Mr Kaiko Saning'o Telele says land use plan for pastoral communities would go a long way towards guaranteeing them adequate grazing land.

He observes that the government appreciates the contribution of livestock sector to the country's economy and was making deliberate efforts to improve the welfare of pastoral communities, including consulting them on land use plans.

"It is true climate change and land acquisitions for agricultural investments or national parks have had devastating effect on pastoralists, hence the need to urgently review their situation," noted the deputy minister who also is the Member of Parliament for Ngorongoro.

He says the government would also continue to encourage pastoralists to 'harvest' their animals to capitalise on the lucrative market locally and abroad. With its commitment to promote livestock sector questioned, the Ministry of Livestock and Fisheries Development commissioned a study to formulate a Livestock Sector Development Strategy (LSDS) for operationalising the National Livestock Policy (NLP) of 2006.

"Land use conflicts between farmers and pastoralists persist in several districts in the country in spite of government efforts to resolve them, mainly because the issue of land allocation for pastoralist has not been matched with secure land tenure rights and infrastructure development.

"The Policy recognizes that commercialization of the livestock sector will require among other things 'proper arrangements to allocate land and give ownership of grazing areas according to traditional or legal procedures,'" reads in part the LSDS.

It now remains to be seen how the government can strike a balance between conservation of wildlife and agricultural investments on one hand and recognition and preservation of Maasai and other pastoral communities' lifestyles on the other.

Delayed land compensation sparks fury among villagers

By CHABY BARASA

A CRISIS that loomed large in Muheza District, Tanga Region following delay in allocating alternative farmland to villagers evicted from Derema Forest may have been averted, but for Mr Mashaari Hamis, officials cannot escape blame for mishandling the issue.

The IBC Msasa villager accuses the officials of having dragged their feet over the matter for more than a decade before finally stirring to action recently and only when the villagers threatened to force their way back to the forest.

Hamis says the villagers were barred from engaging in agricultural activities around the forest in 2001 but it was not until 2008 that the government completed the exercise to dish out money to the victims, being compensation package for their crops.

"However, it took another five years before the villagers could be allocated the alternative land for farming promised to them when they were being evicted from the forest," he observed, adding, "the delay frustrated villagers' patience to the limit."

He on the other hand commended the regional and district commissioners, Chiku Gallowa and Subira Mgalu for their latest efforts to ensure the farmers are allocated new plots, but still wondered why such commitment had not been shown earlier.

Hamis who preferred to use of a pseudo name for reasons he would not want to reveal, possibly summed up the views of many villagers when he said: "We were waiting with bated breath for alternative pieces of land for farm-



A VILLAGE located near the Eastern Usambara Mountains. Farmers have complained of delayed and unfair compensation after eviction from the forest reserve.

me, are supposed to get three acres each, this is not fair at all," he noted. He, however, said he could not continue crying over spilt milk and would just have to accept the reality.

However, the Tanga RC said authorities had addressed most of the villagers' grievances and encouraged the forest evictees to take up the alternative plots earmarked for them at Kibaranga Estate.

"We have done our best to ensure villagers get adequate land for farming and now it is upon them to assume their daily activities and stop blaming us, when they had plenty of time to register their complaints with district au-

thorities," said the DC noting, however, that the over 5,000-acre Kibaranga farm is in the process of being changed from its estate status, a move that requires Presidential endorsement.

"All the necessary procedures had to be adhered to before the land could be allocated to farmers," observed the DC and apologised for the delay but insisted that authorities always had farmers' interests at heart.

Late last year some of the villagers, apparently after having run out of patience, threatened to resume farming activities around the forest from which they were

now assured of getting alternative fields for farming, the DC noted, such threat is unlikely to materialise.

Ms Mgalu further revealed that talks with various stakeholders had started aimed at ensuring that basic social services such as road infrastructure were put in place at Kibaranga to allow human activities in the area.

Five villages, Kisiwani, Msasa IBC, Kwezitu, Kwemidimu and Kambai, lie around the edges of the Derema corridor and in 2002 there were 1,567 farmers with cardamom plantations within the Derema forest.

According to the Tanzania Forest Conservation Group

agrieved due to compensation delays.

"They (villagers) depend on the land for agriculture and having to wait for more than five years was something painful and one which was holding back their economic development," he observed.

He, however, said there were new hopes following clear effort by the district, regional and other partners to ensure the affected people get their land as promised by the government.

He said the Derema corridor links the Amani Nature Reserve in the East Usambara Mountains with the Kambai Forest Reserve to the north and hence helps

to be a forest reserve and the villagers were consulted. He said the government in collaboration with other stakeholders sought money to compensate all the people who were affected by the exercise.

He said TFCG, has partnership with villagers in various areas to design alternative projects which will help the area economically and thus reduce dependence on forest products, for example a butterfly project, which has seen several families benefit by selling them in Europe and America. Others are beekeeping and fish projects which have helped improve livelihoods and reduce dependency on the forest.

"The policy requires villagers' involvement and as an organization we have been insisting that the policy be implemented properly. But we have also participated to help in transmitting the country's national forest policy."

To ensure sustainability of the forest, Mr Meshack emphasizes on the need for public involvement in forest management.

"Villagers must actively participate in conservation efforts," he insisted.

Indeed a research by a Norwegian university student Kels Miller on establishing the Derema Corridor revealed thus, "the official narrative was that there was involvement of villagers around Derema, however, in practice the process of creating the Derema corridor was top-down: the government, international donors and NGOs primarily followed an agenda separate from the local people's interests.

"The Village Environmental Committees (VEC) adjacent to the corridor were expected

Construction of Farkwa Dam, is it the death of Bahi?

Matajila Farming Scheme secretary Yona Chigundu
PHOTO | THE CITIZEN PHOTOJOURNALIST



MORE INFO: DODOMA

According to the 2012 national census, Dodoma Region had a population of 2,083,588, which was lower than the pre-census projection of 2,214,657. For 2002-2012, the region's 2.1 per cent average annual population growth rate was the twentieth highest in the country. It was also the seventeenth most densely populated region with 50 people per square kilometre. With a size of 41,311 square kilometres (15,950 sq mi), the region is slightly larger than Switzerland (41,284 square kilometres (15,940 sq mi)). The region produces beans, seeds, grain, peanuts, coffee, tea, and tobacco. Cattle are also raised and marketed.

The government has announced that it is going to build a dam at Farkwa in Chemba District in Dodoma, some 70 kilometres north of Bahi along the way to Kondoa

By Esther Mngodo
The Citizen Reporter

When President Jakaya Kikwete visited Bahi District during the 2010 presidential cam-

paigns, he promised the Bahi residents he would build them a dam. The Secretary of Matajila Farming Scheme, Mr Yona Chigundu is among those who cheered. The irrigation scheme

he oversees is among five that operate in Bahi, namely Matajila (450 hectares), Bahi Sokoni (2040 hectares), Nguvumali (160 hectares), Mtazamo (165 hectares) and Uhelela (134 hectares) covering a total of 2,949 hectares of surveyed land. "This would mean that we would be able to harvest at least twice a year. We are only able to har-

vest once because we depend on seasonal rains" he said. The people's hopes were up.

But three years later, after waiting patiently and being occasionally reassured by Bahi MP Baduel Omari (CCM) that the government was going to keep its word, minister for Water Prof Jumanne
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"We are not well informed about the government's decisions. The only thing we know is what we have heard that the dam will supply water for Dodoma municipality. We wonder what will happen to us."
MR YONA CHIGUNDU, MATAJILA FARMING SCHEME SECRETARY

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Distance in kilometres that the dam will be constructed north of Dodoma city along the way to Kondoa.

I. S. force