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Forum



LIAISON AND FAMILIARISATION VISIT TO SIMANJIRO DISTRICT

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Introduction

On 28th March 2007 to 1st April 2007, the community liaison officer for TNRF together with a representative from a partner NGO carried out the field visits in six villages namely Emborreti, Narakau, Lobossireti, Kimotoro, Makame/Ndedo and Ndaleta located in Simanjiro and Monduli districts. The main objective of the visit was to do the familiarisation with partner NGOs, CBOs, traditional community leaders, local communities, village leaders and attend some social gathering to discuss the key conservation and development issues.

In this trip, the Liaison Officer had accompanied with Ole Nessele-the member of steering committee from TNRF.

1.0 The key issues emerged during the field visits.

1.1 Meeting at Lobossireti village

On the same date upon arriving at Emborreti, we had an opportunity of participating in the meeting organised by the village government. Apart from having the representatives from villages, ward and divisional levels, they were other representatives from civil society, the meeting was also attended by some various government officials including- The RC from Singida region, honourable MP from Simanjiro constituent, DCs from Simanjiro, Longido and Ukerewe. The key agenda of the meeting was to discuss the fate of Simanjiro plain as a result of encroachment. Since it has been observed that, the plain has been heavily encroached by people who undertake the large scale cultivation of both cash and food crops such as maize. It was revealed in the meeting that, most of the encroachers were people from outside the village and even others coming from outside the Simanjiro district.

It was claimed in the meeting that, some few, unfaithful and corrupt village leaders have been alleged to be responsible for illegal allocation of Simanjiro land to the outsiders. Nevertheless, although it was not clear the actual size (in terms of Ha) of the plain that has been encroached for cultivation the truth remains and that is the rate of encroachment in the plain is still increasingly. This poses a great threat in the disappearing of this important ecosystem.

1.2 Meeting resolution.

- The seven villages (which surround the plain) have been instructed to prepare the independent land use plans. This must be done within the three months period.
- Agricultural activities within and at the vicinity of the plain have been strictly forbidden and stern measures will be taken against those who go against the instruction.

- All areas used for grazing must be protected by the village authority and should be granted with the rights of occupancy.
- The unknown village boundaries should be surveyed, demarcated and respected to avoid the land conflict.
- All derelict areas within the village should be retained to the village council, which then would return the areas to the pastoralists.
- All protected areas in the village should be known by entire community and must be respected by everybody in the society.
- Training on various disciplines such as good leadership, good governance etc should be done so as to increase their technical capacity and level of understanding in order to provide good services to community.

1.3 Other issues arose during the meeting.

The DC from Longido introduced an idea of establishing the WMA in Simanjiro plain. He highlighted that by establishing the WMA in Simanjiro plain:-

- There will be an increase in the direct economic benefits to the communities due to the presence of wildlife.
- WMA will increase the responsibility and authority of local communities for wildlife management decision in their respective WMA.

2.0 At Kibaya Kiteto

Our field visit took us up to Kibaya-Kiteto where we visited some of the potential CBO like KINNAPA (acronym of six villages in which some people from six villages have joined together to form the Community Based Organisation). Principally, KINNAPA is concerned with the conservation and management of natural resources like forests, development of livestock sector and other related activities.

3.0 Lesson Learnt

- During our visit we learnt that some areas especially near Kiteto district have been severely affected by shifting cultivation and this has resulted into land degradation.
- The gradual decline of livestock productivity as a result of various factors such as animal diseases, poor veterinary services etc are some of the forces that incite some Maasai people to shift from their traditional mode of life that is from pastoralist to agro-pastoralist.

4.0 Conclusion

The field visits was fruitful, since I did manage to share the experience with various stakeholders at different levels (hamlet, village, ward and district) Moreover, I made observation to some key issues such as mode of agricultural activities and I realised that shifting cultivation is still practised (in some areas) and it has potentially contributed to the degradation of environment thus lowering productivity hence increasing poverty. There is a necessity to collaborate with a responsible authority and other stakeholders to develop the sound intervention strategies to ensure that in long run we achieve the environmental sustainability.