

# National development – but at what price?

Visit by the Committee on the Environment in the German Bundestag to Tanzania from 5 – 11 May 2013

Joint report by the Members of the German Bundestag  
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## Topics of the visit

When we arrived in Dar es Salaam, the banner headline in The African newspaper jumped out at us: "**Tanzania land sold cheap to foreigners**". According to the article, foreign investors were charged 88,000 Tanzanian shillings for a hectare of land, the equivalent of 44 euro. Will this rural development merely provide sites for Saudi Arabia and China to grow crops? When we read the article, we were immediately reminded of Brandenburg (Germany), where international corporations are also buying up land to grow crops for the global market. This process is called land-grabbing and our aim was to find out how it is affecting the local population in Tanzania.



At the same time, the impact of tourism on **water consumption** is becoming an ever more serious problem. We visited the most popular tourist destinations in Tanzania to find out how this challenge can be met.



The conflict over tourism also involves the **land-ownership rights of the indigenous population**. Tanzania has designated 21 percent of its land as nature conservation areas. Tourism is the second largest source of foreign currency in the country after gold mining. Is it possible to combine the old economic systems, which are

adapted to local conditions, with the tourism sector? Since 1959, there have been attempts to do so in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area on the border to Kenya, where livestock belonging to the Maasai is allowed to graze alongside wildlife. So is traditional land use proving compatible with wildlife protection?

## **Problems with drinking water and sanitation**

The Tanzanian population is continually growing. This causes great challenges for the supply of drinking water and sanitation. In particular, the **supply of drinking water** shows a challenging situation: More than half of the people especially in rural areas have no access to clean drinking water. This is the basis for widespread water-borne diseases such as Cholera. Since 2007 there is a national water program which the Tanzanian government and international donors are financing with direct budget support through the state budget. The Federal Republic also promotes bilateral projects in the water sector. Tanzania has set an ambitious goal: by 2015, 65% of the rural population shall have access to clean water. Since the beginning of this program successes are visible: 2.4 million people in the country and 1.8 million in the cities since 2007 have obtained access to drinking water. It appears that the actual improvements are far too underachieved, because the population growth thwarted the development of supply systems. Even in Dar Es Salaam there are regular intermissions in the water supply, which must be absorbed somehow. That means for some quarters that water must be bought in canisters then.

We have learned that in regions where tourism is an important factor, as in the Ngorongoro area, limited water resources are extensively used by lodges and hotels, in contrast to this the local residents sit literally on dry land. Simple water meters and the introduction of a water use fee for the hotels have been proven as important measures in order to promote the economical use of water.

Another huge problem is the burden of untreated sewage, especially in the cities. Dar es Salaam has adjusted its **sanitation** in 2010 according to the expected population, but the population was increased disproportionately again. So the release of waste water clarification was no longer effective for the districts or individual facilities. The consequences for the health of the people are easy to imagine. In this situation, the importance of innovative decentralized projects, funded by individual institutions and self-help initiatives and donor countries is growing. Our delegation has visited on the outskirts of Dar es Salaam a CCBRT hospital (an NGO in the health sector). With support of the Bremer non-profit organization Borda a wastewater treatment plant was installed. First the resulting methane is withdrawn for power generation, then the contaminants are extracted by anaerobic filter. The filtered and purified water can be re-used - except for sterile use. An excellent effect with a relatively small investment! Great potential for distributed problem solving and qualified support is the contribution of knowhow and the training of technicians. We wish great attention and support to this and similar projects in the water sector.



Houses stretch for miles on the island of Zanzibar. The population of Tanzania increased from 23 million in 1988 to 45 million in 2012. Urban-rural migration is a serious problem.

### **The Maasai conflict**

The Ngorongoro Conservation Area west of Kilimanjaro covers approximately 80,000 square kilometres and is home to 60,000 Maasai people spread across 25 villages. This is the only conservation area in Tanzania where the indigenous population has not been resettled to other regions. The government is now afraid that the Maasai population is constantly increasing, thus making the area uninteresting for tourism.



Our first meeting was with the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority, where we spoke with a clearly overwhelmed conservationist, who has been tasked with implementing the ban on crop cultivation on the outskirts of the villages. However, the Maasai Council says that it is not possible for farming families to survive without corn, beans and vegetables. Given the scrubby fields close to the round-hut villages, the accusation that the Maasai are growing crops for the global market in the middle of the conservation area is simply ridiculous. Nomadic pastoralism is the only possible type of land use in the Maasai Steppe, as significant fluctuations in rainfall make regular arable farming impossible.

We then travelled to the village of **Nainokanoka**, which is at an altitude of 3,000 metres and means "foggy village" in Swahili. The Maasai say that even the **name** of the area, **Ngorongoro**, proves their right to live there, as it describes the sound of the cowbells that has always been a feature of the region. We met impoverished people who showed signs of malnutrition, eye disease and tooth decay. The romantic image of herdsmen in brightly coloured robes is deceptive. These people do not benefit financially from tourism. On the contrary, they are affected by the increasing water consumption of the hotels in the conservation area. These hotels attract visitors by providing the highest level of comfort and use most of the spring water. In fact, water meters were only installed recently in the hotels. In contrast, the indigenous population seems to be in an increasingly strong position in neighbouring **Kenya**, where 75 percent of the conservation area staff must come from the immediate region, and local communities receive 60 percent of the park revenue.



A young Maasai woman wraps the red robe of the village elders around Josef Göppel.

The Maasai in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area are frequently accused of causing environmental damage. It is said that their cow herds leave a **dusty semi-desert** behind them, so we made sure to look particularly closely at the state of the grass and ground as we travelled through the conservation area. We did not see **any signs of overuse** or any hillside damage caused by cattle. On the contrary, we noticed that the wildlife herds tended to stay for longer periods at preferred sites than the livestock which the Maasai herdsmen constantly keep on the move.

Dr. Eliamani Laltaika who has accompanied us through the Ngorongoro crater in his home village Nainokanoka, explained the situation of the Maasai in the reserve and the impact of the demands made by the Protection Authority (NCAA) to the Maasai in the villages, in his view:

"The main problem is bad governance. We Maasai believe that the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA) and the Government of Tanzania in general are unfair to us. Their main concern is to make money with our land through tourism without regard to our rights. Great challenges have emerged, which we must assume very quickly:

1) Hunger: The Ngorongoro Authority says that we are destroying the environment by running small businesses (called "Bustani" in Swahili language) for personal use. In 2008 they have prohibited agriculture. No alternative. Women and children suffer most and least 10 people have died in the last two years of hunger.

2) The destruction of the environment: due to lack of alternatives, some villages have decided to kill animals in order to eat them. Even wood is sold. This has destroyed the nature of the region more than in any other period.

3) Lack of involvement in local communities: The NCA is represented mainly by two boards: the Executive Board, whose chairman is appointed by the President and other members of the Ministry of Tourism and Natural Resources. On this board there is currently just one Maasai represented among 13 members. Also the Deputy Mr. Ole Telele is not a member of this committee. This management team makes for this area decisions from day to day and has not represented one single Maasai. Finally, these executives do not feel the pain of the Maasai.

4) Different Perception: We Maasai have the feeling that we protect our land and this for many years. The government and other authorities believe that we must shift and must allow "conservation". What kind of conservation? "



The idyllic image of people in brightly coloured robes who live close to nature is deceptive. Malnutrition, dental decay and eye diseases are widespread in the area.



The Maasai's herds go to where grass grows. The extreme fluctuations in rainfall mean that this is the only possible type of land use in large parts of Tanzania.

In our view, it is vital that the experts from UNESCO and the Frankfurt Zoological Society include direct statements by the Maasai Council in their regular reports on the area. For example, the suggestion by the state conservationist that the farmers should switch to a cattle breed that would provide higher meat and milk yields is highly dubious from an ecological point of view. Heavier animals would cause more damage to the ground and would be less able to withstand the dry spells.



A Maasai round-hut village in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area. The meagre crop cultivation is supposed to stop in order to protect the environment.



Visit to the Maasai village of Nainokanoka, which is at an altitude of 3,000 metres. From left to right: Maasai spokesperson Eliamani Laltaika; Josef Göppel, Member of the German Bundestag; and Kaika Ole Telele, Member of the Parliament of Tanzania.

Maasai representatives criticise the marked ignorance of many state organisations as regards their semi-nomadic way of life. At the same time, they point out, the Maasai are used as a means of attracting tourists to the area. We could not help but think that there is a lot of truth to this. Apparently, a population of around a million Maasai from a total population of 45 million is not enough to ensure that conciliatory decisions are taken at the political level.



Josef Göppel greeted the Maasai people from the Ngorongoro region in Swahili:

Nakusalimu katika jina la wabunge wa Ujerumani (*Greetings on behalf of the German members of parliament.*)

Tunaunga mkono maisha na haki za Wamasai. (*We support the way of life and the rights of the Maasai people.*)

### **Ngorongoro Crater, a UNESCO World Heritage Site**

Despite the current conflicts over land use, when we saw Ngorongoro Crater, we were extremely impressed by the achievements of the Tanzanian government in terms of preserving this stunning natural beauty for all of humankind. The huge crater has a diameter of 25 kilometres and is 600 metres deep. The soft turquoise light shining on blooming meadows, glittering water and grazing herds made the greatest impression of all on us. It is not surprising that travel guides frequently use terms such as heavenly, peaceful and the Garden of Eden to describe this landscape.



The German delegation from left to right: Marco Bülow, Josef Göppel, Sabine Stüber and Dorothea Steiner.

## Land sale

We spent an entire day investigating the leasing of large areas of land to international corporations. We found a typical example in **Kisarawe District**, which is located southwest of Dar es Salaam. Delegates from Sun Biofuels first visited the villages of **Marumbo** and **Mhaga** in 2006. They lobbied the village councils to transfer common land to the investment company, which wanted to grow jatropha trees for environmentally-friendly biofuels. In return, the villagers would receive financial compensation of 42 euro per hectare. The idea was that local farmers would grow the jatropha trees and then sell the seeds to the company on a regular basis. Sun Biofuels also promised to provide funding for the school, send medical supplies to the clinic, install water wells for the entire community, supply new farming machinery and invest in road construction. The company also said that the contract farming could create many well-paid jobs.



There is great interest in Germany. Lazaro Saitoti, mayor of Ngoile, (centre), asked Josef Göppel how much it would cost to produce solar electricity for his village.

Eleven village councils held a joint meeting in 2007. With the encouragement of their local member of parliament and the district authority, they unanimously agreed to lease their common land to Sun Biofuels for 99 years (!). A notarial contract on the lease has never been signed. Instead, the lease is merely based on the minutes of the meeting between the village councils. Sun Biofuels actually wanted to lease all of the eleven villages' common land, that is, 19,000 hectares. However, the district authority only allowed it to lease 9,000 hectares.

The company began clearing the land for jatropha farming in 2008. The area around Marumbo and Mhaga is relatively flat. Bushes and small trees had been planted on the common land for use as firewood. Many villagers had also planted fruit trees on this land and ate the fruit themselves or sold it at street markets. Now external workers arrived. They cleared the land and burnt the vegetation. Bulldozers levelled uneven land. Seven hundred local men were employed as seasonal workers at this stage. In the beginning, they earned 2.30 euro per day. Later on, they were paid around 50 euro per month. While the plantation was being set up, the villages received 16 euro per hectare of the promised 42 euro per hectare.

Jatropha trees had been planted on around a third of the 9,000 hectares by 2011. But then the project came to a standstill. The seasonal workers were dismissed and no more trees were planted. However, security guards were posted at the gates to the land and the villagers were denied entry. The ripe jatropha seeds have not even been harvested. There were rumours in the villages that Sun Biofuels had gone bankrupt and had been taken over by a company called Thirty Degrees East. At any rate, no further payments have been made since then. It is not hard to imagine the villagers' anger and disappointment. They set up an interest group and elected **Ibrahim Mohad** from Marumbo as chairman. For two years now, this interest group has been trying to get the company to keep its promises or return the land – but so far, it has been unsuccessful.



A large light-green rectangle can be seen in the middle of a small corridor to the west of the Usambara Mountains. International corporations lease common land in fertile regions, bulldoze the area, and grow crops for the global market.

The German delegation was strangely moved by the conduct of the district commissioner in Kisarawe. During our courtesy visit, she said outright that no land has been leased to international investors in her area of jurisdiction. Only non-governmental organisations such as

Oxfam and the Tanzania Women Lawyers Association (TAWLA) are now helping the cheated villagers.



The executive commissioner of Kisarawe District, Fatma Kimario, vehemently denies that land has been leased to international companies.

### **Electricity for Tanzania**

At a reception hosted by the EU representation during our visit, the Tanzanian Energy Minister **Sospeter Muhongo** agreed to meet the German parliamentary delegation at short notice. Professor Muhongo is a geologist who did his MSc and PhD in Germany. We spent over an hour with him discussing Tanzania's serious energy problems and the development opportunities afforded by renewable energies. Only 21 percent of Tanzania's 45 million inhabitants currently have access to electricity, and this figure drops to a mere seven percent in rural regions. On average, there are losses of 20 percent in existing electrical installations.

There are now great hopes for the **natural gas reserves** close to Songo Songo Island in the Indian Ocean. A new pipeline to Dar es Salaam, which has a population of four million, should make it possible to set up gas-fired power plants on the island. Muhongo sees Tanzania's **coal reserves** as the second most important energy source. He pointed out that Tanzania's carbon emissions are only 0.2 tonnes per capita – one fortieth of the European average.

The minister told us that hopes for using **hydropower** to generate electricity have been dashed. The country has five dams, but they are almost always dry. This leaves the other renewable energies of solar power, wind power, geothermal energy and biomass. Minister Muhongo is

focusing on solar and wind power, as these sources can be used autonomously and decentrally. His team of advisors was extremely interested in comments by the German delegation on how renewables can create value added and generate development in rural regions. At our suggestion, Minister Muhongo immediately agreed to join the network of countries working on energy-system transformation that has been set up by German Environment Minister **Peter Altmaier**. This is to be confirmed in writing before the German general elections in September 2013. For its part, the parliamentary delegation promised to campaign for a **priority programme for the development of decentralised solar and wind power plants in Tanzania**. Muhongo, who proved to be extremely well informed on energy matters, including detailed technical issues, regards German solar and wind power technology as the best in the world. He said that the reliability of turbines and solar panels was a vital criterion for a country like Tanzania.



"Mungo Kuwa na wewe!" (God be with you!)

The Maasai bid farewell to the German delegation. The local people's trust in their German visitors was deeply moving.

Photographs by Maria Wenk