

ACT: President Kikwete supports Green Revolution

Press release from ACT:

Agricultural Council of Tanzania (ACT) Applauds the President

Agricultural Council of Tanzania – ACT would like to take this opportunity to congratulate the President of the United Republic of Tanzania, Hon. Jakaya M. Kikwete for his great concern about the welfare of the citizens which came out vividly in his address to the Parliament yesterday in Dodoma. ACT is delighted because his speech touched on issues pertinent to challenges to be addressed in pursuance of our economic and social development.

His far reaching speech which he delivered to the Parliament on 21st August 2008 dwelt on challenges and achievements of the Forth Phase Government. He underscored the fact that the success in many areas has been guided by the CCM Election Manifesto. It is obvious the Government is moving on the right track in boosting the agricultural sector.

ACT applauds the President and his Government for his resolve to bring about Green Revolution in agriculture. In this regard, he touched on the following areas:

(a) Agricultural Bank:

The Government will increase its funding to the Tanzania Investment Bank in order to enable farmers access long term credit with low interest rate for agricultural related activities. Currently loans extended by the country's commercial banks aim at mostly financing trade and not production. These loans are offered at very high interest rates which farmers/ livestock keepers cannot afford. Green Revolution will come about if we have the right financial product. This will be a prelude to establishing an Agricultural Development Bank.

(b) Agricultural Subsidy:

The Government will strive to increase its annual budgets allocated to agriculture. This will enable our farmers/ livestock keepers access the necessary agricultural inputs such as seeds, fertilizers, agrochemicals veterinary drugs that will contribute to enhancement of production and productivity.

(c) Fertilizers

The Government will guarantee financing of all the purchases and distribution of Minjingu Rock Phosphate. Minjingu Rock Phosphate will serve as an alternative source of phosphorus minimizing the use of imported fertilizer whose import prices are skyrocketing. Furthermore, plans are underway to build another factory in Mtwara utilizing the natural gas which is abundant in that area. This will lead to self sufficiency internally, as well as export the excess.

(d) Extension Services

The Government is resolved to increase the number of agricultural and livestock extension staff to a point of placing these experts in every village in Tanzania. This will enable our farmers/ livestock keepers to acquire relevant technology for improved production.

(e) Services to Facilitate Agricultural Development

The Government will work tirelessly to establish the necessary infrastructure for the agricultural development. For example: improving rural road network, small scale processing plants to facilitate value addition, and expand market outlets.

(f) Enhancing the Private Sector

Once again, the Government has proved its realization that the private sector is the key to agricultural development. In this regard, it will empower and guide farmers' organizations to attain their production goals. Farmer group and societies must reach a point of being credit worthy.

ACT is profoundly delighted by the President's historic speech. Indeed if all these issues are realized we shall achieve the agriculture green revolution we are craving for.

J. Bitegeko

Executive Director