

**Statement by Ambassador of Ireland, Anne Barrington to REPOA Annual
Workshop
White Sands, 18 March, 2010**

Hon Prime Minister,
Hon Ambassador of the Netherlands
Hon Executive Director REPOA
Hon chairperson, REPOA Board of Directors
Researchers, Government officials, civil society and workshop participants

Many thanks to the workshop organisers for giving me the opportunity to make some few points about agriculture here today.

I think that it is very significant that agriculture – once the poor orphan in every walk of life – has within one year shot up the agenda so that it is the lead discussion item here today. This is, I think, a real tribute to the efforts of the Honourable Prime Minister Pinda who has taken the lead in advancing this agenda.

When Kilimo Kwanza was launched last year it is true to say that there was a range of reactions from development partners. Some of us were enthusiastic – and I count Ireland among the enthusiasts – on the basis that at last Tanzania was focussing in a holistic way on where eighty per cent of its population was engaged. All of us had questions about what Kilimo Kwanza really meant, how it would translate into policy, how the budget of the various ministries would be reflected in this new priority, how environmental concerns would be addressed and many other questions besides.

On 16 October last the Government and the Tanzania National Business Council held a briefing for development partners including a range of non-governmental organisations. At that meeting the Government and the Tanzania National Business Council explained the thinking behind Kilimo Kwanza and there was a high-level and high quality dialogue between all the interested parties. Those of us who participated left the meeting, I believe, with a much greater sense of understanding of all participants thinking and concerns. And better able to address those concerns. The General Budget Support session in November further advanced our thinking and understanding.

One of the key issues for those of us already in the agriculture sector was the impact that Kilimo Kwanza would have on the Agriculture Sector Development Programme (ASDP). It will be recalled that it had taken nearly ten years to draw up the ASDP and it was just in its third year of operation. Those of us involved in the ASDP – and there are still too few – were concerned that there would be a shift away from the small-holder farmer and an exclusive emphasis on commercial farmers and large holders.

We need not have been concerned. It has emerged from our dialogue that the ASDP is a key means through which the Government will implement Kilimo Kwanza. What Kilimo Kwanza has done is highlight, in addition, the indispensable role the private sector must play in agriculture. It has brought to the fore also the critical need for,

Unnat was producing a high quality fruit product which involved about 10,000 fruit farmers from the Uluguru Mountains in Morogoro region and from the Coast region. These farmers were supplying the factory with pineapples and oranges.

Both of these companies seemed to me to be win-win-win: win for the companies themselves; win for the small farmers and pastoral communities and win for Tanzania both for the consumer and with the potential for regional and intercontinental trade. To me, this seemed to be exactly what Tanzania needed: Kilimo Kwanza in action.

The visiting Heads of Mission were impressed.

I recently enquired how both companies were doing. To my surprise both had ceased production.

We need to know why this happened. On the face of it, the companies were models of what was needed here. Local products from small marginalised farmers were processed, value was added and the product was sold on the national and international market. Now, if these companies remain closed, a key outlet for pastoral communities has disappeared and the farmers' fruit will rot on the trees and in the fields.

I would like to set down a challenge to the research community and to the policy makers.

The research community needs to apply the rigour of its research to finding out why these companies encountered difficulties and using these findings to inform policy. If we don't have answers, and if the policy makers don't act on the findings, it will be very difficult to ensure increased investment, increased income for farmers and to reduce poverty in Tanzania.

and linkages between, rural infrastructure, roads, water and irrigation, agro-processing, markets and for increased financing to agriculture.

The ASDP, we are assured, will continue its small holder focus supporting crop and livestock farmers including pastoralists. It will continue its emphasis on technology generation and dissemination and its support to farmers' organisations.

Another area which was raised in discussion with the Government was the need to promote trade and agribusiness in a regional context. The opportunities that the East African Community provides to Tanzania are real but those opportunities have to be seized. One of the key ways of exploiting those opportunities is creating an enabling business environment. The Tanzanian record on this has been deeply disappointing. This record impacts farmers...including small farmers who are the, often overlooked, backbone of the business community in this country.

At the same time it is very encouraging that the Agriculture Sector Development Programme is, essentially, compliant with Comprehensive African Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) principles and the compact is likely to be signed in the next few months. This will enable the release of significant funding into the ASDP, which is very welcome.

I suppose now that agriculture has moved up the agenda we have to ask ourselves: what for? Of course increased production is critical. However, what is also critical is that small holder farmers achieve three meals a day with reasonable dietary diversity. The figure of 38 per cent of children under five being stunted is staggering. Increased emphasis on Kilimo must also bring increased emphasis on improving nutrition for women especially pregnant and lactating mothers, for children, particularly children under two years of age and for all the people of Tanzania.

This is where the research community comes in. Not only is there a role for researchers to promote farmers' needs based research in crop production and bio diversity but there is also a need for more research on service delivery and outcomes. How can the renewed emphasis on agriculture benefit a woman farmer struggling on a small holding to feed three children with another baby on the way? What are the interventions that are needed and that are sustainable? Are there institutional adjustments that need to be made to put nutrition higher up the agenda? What adjustments to policy are required to ensure that that woman is better fed and that her children reach their full intellectual and physical potential?

Finally, I want to underline another area that requires research.

Last April I led a group of eighteen Heads of Mission and Heads of Agency to Morogoro to look at the Agriculture Sector Development Programme in action. We visited two, what I thought were, model food processing outfits: Tanzania Pride Meats and the Unnat fruit processing plant.

Tanzania Pride Meats was buying cattle from pastoral communities, fattening them up, slaughtering them and selling a high quality product on the market. Pastoral communities, many very marginalised, were significant beneficiaries.