

Tanzania:

Sisal Firm Lauds

New Agriculture First Initiative

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The management of Katani Sisal Company Limited, has lauded the latest government's initiative to revitalise the agricultural sector, saying it would help enhance the firm's operations.

The firm believes that the introduction of Kilimo Kwanza, would help resolve bottlenecks inhibiting growth in the sector.

The managing director of company, Mr Salim Shamte, said the decision to introduce an Agricultural Bank, would enable farmers access long-term loans to boost productivity.

"Long-term financing is one of major problems affecting production of perennial crops like sisal. Kilimo Kwanza would enable sisal farmers to get long-term loans," Mr Shamte noted, saying the establishment of an agricultural financing window, is a step in the right direction.

Mr Shamte is one of members of a team selected by the National Business Council to prepare the Kilimo Kwanza concept.

"Other benefits include removal of tax on agriculture produce. Kilimo Kwanza will address main problems inhibiting productivity in agriculture.

Meanwhile, Katani Limited has entered into partnership with Oxfam to Promote sisal farming in Kishapu District in Shinyanga Region.

He said under the partnership, Katani would initially produce the crop along a smallholder system, as it did in its five estates it acquired from Tanzania Sisal Authority (TSA).

The sisal smallholder and out growers scheme was introduced in the five estates in Tanga Region in 1998, with Katani Limited allocated more than 12,000 hectares of land that it handed over to 2,500 farmers and their families, to produce the cash crop.

The company provided the farmers with back up services in land preparation, seeds, transportation and extension services.