

- Sisal -

Energy and Natural Resource Chances and Challenges

Tanzania is one of the leading nations regarding the production of sisal perhaps the most important one. Now it is going to be the country which as the first one producing biogas and bio fertilizer out of its waste.

The production manager of Katani Ltd. said, one will built at the Kwaraguru-Farm (Tanga-Region) a plant which produces 30 MW electricity. The costs of 1,5 Mio. US\$ will be borne by UNIDO and by Amboni Ltd., the private parastatal of the Tanzanian sisal authority. The region needs 30 MW, which means it will be autarkic at a later stage. The farm itself does not need more than 25 % of the electricity produced. 75 % will be for the benefit of the national net. As a by product fertilizer will be produced in different kinds. It increases the capability of the soil to withhold rainwater, increases the activity of the microbes and will bind heavy metals.

State minister Kgodha said as he laid the foundation for the project that the power plant will be a success. Government he explained will help to select which regions should be further developed in this regard. In different regions it will develop further projects to generate energy.

From 1998 – 2004 in Tanzania and Kenya a sisal development project had been carried out. Now it has been followed by a 3-days international workshop. Delegates from the most important sisal producing countries participated. Besides host Tanzania Brazil, Mexico, Cuba, China, South Africa and Kenya participated.

The General Director of the Tanzanian sisal authority said, one is developing a development programme which promotes the sisal farming for small farmers. Sisal should be planted at slopes and protect farmers against soil erosion. On top of this one will promote the mechanisation of producing sisal fibres and their processing. Farmers of the region of the Lake Victoria do plant sisal hedges around their farm houses as a protection against animals; they still process sisal by hand and sell it because of short access and the demand to Kenya.

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Comment: Not long ago sisal had been the most important export product of Tanzania. Now innovative and cooperative efforts are necessary if one wants to revive production and processing of sisal. At a workshop on sisal production and marketing the regional Commissioner of the Tanga region stressed, that the development of new material which could replace sisal and will jeopardize the sisal industry. All producers have to make use of the whole plant not only the 2% which is utilized by now. Small farmers i.e. which are the suppliers of big scale sisal producers should be integrated into the development process.

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Source: <http://detaf.de/downloads/INF0105.pdf>