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Land Law Reform in Tanzania: Impact of Village Land Law on the Customary Land Tenure System.

The Case of Mbozi District

In attempt to eradicate poverty and transform rural economy after independence a number of programs such as nationalisation, villagisation, decentralization etc. were initiated by the Tanzanian government but most of these strategies were unable to affect rural livelihoods. In 1995 a new land policy was realized and new land laws were passed by parliament in 1999 and came into force in May 2001. The two pieces of legislations are the Land Act No. 4 and the Village Land Act No. 5.

This study evaluates the impact of the Village Land Act on the customary tenure system. It examines its efficiency in terms of providing security of tenure and its contribution in improving rural livelihood. It further examines how the new village land law responds to the legal status of women and other vulnerable persons with regard to access to land.

The study applied the institutional theory combined with property rights discussions through literature review supported by data collected in four villages in Mbozi District. Qualitative research technique was applied. The study focused on the responses on the

impact of the new law on rural livelihood. It explored the opinions and feelings of the individuals/ community with regard to the changing environment on customary tenure.

The results indicate that the Village Land Act has introduced fundamental reforms in ownership and disputes resolution. However there are some constrains such as financial and technical support to enable the rural population takes advantage of the new opportunities. The findings show that issue of titling by itself is not sufficient to raise output and productivity. The study also reveals that intervention and collaboration with sectors such as financial institutions and other sectors are missing.

In the light of the conclusions made, recommendations are geared to enhance the multiple dimensions of land issues which require a careful and well implemented approach within the broader political, social and economic context.

Key words: Land law reform, customary tenure, rural livelihoods, women's access to land, Land Act No. 4, Village land Act No. 5, Tanzania