

## Rufiji district, Tanzania – historical and current contexts for biofuel investments (Stockholm, May 2009)

Kjell Havnevik, senior researcher, the Nordic Africa Institute, Uppsala

### Critical features of Rufiji district

- Floods and famines; floods beneficial and destructive
- Agricultural system (dry and wet/flood season – carefully tuned to Rufiji river flood regime – drawing water for irrigation on higher ground potential conflict)
- Ujamaa (1969/dialogue and 1973/force) and location of people in relation to agricultural potential
- Village (about 90) and governance structure (village assembly, council and committees, e.g. land, LGRP)
- Resource endowment, spatial variation and complex agro-ecological systems
- Economic diversification, rapid since crisis in 1970s – charcoal, logging, fisheries, crafts, small industries

## Critical feature continued

- Migration (since colonial times) and population growth (very slow – adaptation)
- Closeness to Dar es Salaam and major markets
- Improved main roads between Dar es Salaam and Rufiji district; Mkapa bridge across the Rufiji river in 2003 – increased forest exploitation on south side of Rufiji river

## Historic and major attempts to extract resources from Rufiji District

- Mangroves for Arab countries and Zanzibar (thousand year trade; "Sons of Sinbad" 1940)
- Mangrove concessions (colonial) and cutter cooperatives (post-colonial period) – different uses, building houses, boats, bark, medicine etc.
- Forced cotton cultivation by colonial regime led to Maji Maji uprising 1905-1907, 75 000 killed
- Hydropower at Stiegler's Gorge (FAO, USAID, Japan, NORAD) plans for construction in 1979 and 1983 (failed funding due to single purpose planning and economic crisis)

## Historic and major attempt contd.

- Stiegler's Gorge hydropower top priority in current Tanzanian national energy strategy
- Tractor mechanisation in Rufiji flood plain (1970s, failed)
- Charcoal and timber exploitation from 1970s onwards, excessive (north side of Rufiji river)
- Off shore Rufiji delta shrimp fishing (from 1980s), trawlers and migrant fishermen
- Rufiji delta shrimp farms (early 2000, failed when entrepreneur went broke, government taken to court by villages, global campaign to stop it)

## Rufiji resource extraction contd.

- Recent livestock movements to Rufiji district, new land uses and conflicts
- Current oil exploration in Rufiji delta (Chinese)
- Plans for biofuel investments (sugar cane/SEKAB and others)
- Tourism and wildlife (wildlife management areas)

## Accessing village land (according to laws and regulations)

- Land tenure regulated by Village Land Act and Land Act of 1999 and amendments (2004/2006)
- 11000 villages holding 70 % of the land, 28% reserved land (forest/wildlife) and 2% general land (title)
- Investors need to access village land, but cannot get land directly from villages, long & cumbersome process
- Investors shall request land from Tanzania Investment Center (TIC). TIC assesses 2 mill ha available for biofuel investments (contested - category 'unoccupied land' differs in the Land Acts)

## Accessing village land contd

- Foreign investors cannot own land, but can get access to village land for specified activity & period
- Sec. 20 of Land Act gives authority to Commissioner of Land to provide land to TIC
- BEST project 2003-08; implementation and pilots related to Land Acts of 1999 ("Report on implementation of Village Land Act July 2007-June 2008", June 2008)
- By June 2008 only 853 villages of 11 000 had received land certificates (which requires village survey and village land use plans)

## Access to village land contd

- By June 2008 14046 certificates of customary rights of occupancy issued (mainly in Mbuzi, Babati, Iringa and Kiserawe districts)
- **Process to acquire village land**
- Identification/VLAC and decision in village assembly
- Decision in district land allocation committee
- Forwarded to and decision by Commissioner of Land (CoL)
- CoL forwards to president for decision where land allocations can compromise food security

## Access to village land contd.

- President makes final decision and informs Commissioner of Land
- Commissioner of Land provides the land to TIC that presents Letter of Offer to investor specifying conditions for access in the Derivative Rights of Occupancy
- As of Feb. 90 SEKAB deals with 13 villages in Rufiji district – focus on where land use plans (LUPs) are in place
- In 4 villages Village Assemblies have approved to provide land to SEKAB (current adjustments of LUPs)
- SEKAB expects first Letter of Offer for land in fall 2010

## Major challenges for biofuel investments

- To mobilise and involve smallholders, outgrowers, private sector/entrepreneurs and villages in genuine benefit sharing (e.g. employment, profits & infrastructure) according to laws, Acts and regulations (ongoing, SEKAB states it promotes rights perspective)
- To understand the impact of biofuel plantations on changes in water and land use for agriculture, forestry and the agro-ecological systems along the Rufiji valley, the Rufiji delta and beyond (not known, new studies required and use of existing knowledge, RUBADA, IRA, UDSM, SUA others)
- To analyse the impact of a possible Stiegler's Gorge dam/hydropower on water availability and ecology in areas targeted for biofuel production (not done, feasible to have both hydropower and sugar cane plantations?)

## Challenges contd

- To locate biofuel production optimally based on discussions and decisions in relevant local and national governance structures and guided by a national strategy (not existing)
- Use democratic structures to mobilise development from below (village and district governance). For sustainability reasons (ecological, social and economic) such structures must take the lead (SEKAB states it promotes sustainability)
- To develop biofuel strategy for Tanzania based on accumulated and new knowledge that take account of complexities of the intersecting of food, energy, land, environment, climate, livelihood issues. The Tanzania biofuel guidelines developed currently with Sida/NORAD funding is only one step in this direction. (led by Ministry of Energy - biofuel seen primarily as an energy issue?)