Resettling Displaced People in a Coastal Zone Mining Project: Evaluating the Agricultural and Land use Potential of the Proposed Resettlement site – A Case of Titanium Mining in Kenya

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This research was financed by Tiomin Inc. Kenya Limited. The contribution of Mohamed Mzingirwa and Samuel Bibuzi from KARI, Mtwapa for the field work in this research are also acknowledged.

Abstract

Preparations to mine titanium in Maumba and Noma areas of Msambweni District, Kwale County are in progress, and farmers affected by the project are to be resettled in another area. The displaced people have made it a condition that they should be settled in areas where their farming activities are enhanced; and that adequate land is availed for social infrastructure. The identified site for resettlement site lies between latitudes 4° 028' and 4° 32’ South, and between longitudes 39° 16’ and 39° 20’ East, and extends from Kiruku and Mwangwei to Kigombero. It receives an annual rainfall of 1,200-1,400 mm and is therefore suitable for rain-fed agriculture. About 75% of the land is low-lying and 50% of this is prone to flooding. Both communities are worried about the land allocation process, fearing about the quality and size of the land to be allocated to each, and the likely disintegration of existing socio-cultural structures. As good practice in integrated coastal zone management, the proposed resettlement site was evaluated to assess its suitability for crop and livestock production to sustain the livelihoods of the communities. The results of the evaluation show evidence of soil; the nitrogen, phosphorous, potassium, and organic carbon contents in the soils were generally low. To reverse the situation, inorganic and organic fertilizers should be used for crop and forage production to encourage build up of nutrient and organic matter levels in the soil. Drainage canals should be reconstructed to control flooding. Due to the low lying topography of the resettlement site, the portion on raised ground should be set aside for the homesteads. And other social infrastructure as demanded is be availed so that the communities continue with their life, despite the displacement.

Key words: Titanium Mining, Displacement of Communities, Resettlement