

Vegetable farmers decry poor irrigation infrastructure

By Guardian Correspondent, Tanga

VEGETABLE growers in the north eastern coastal city of Tanga have decried the dilapidated irrigation infrastructure, asking for government intervention to address the problem.

The highly affected farmers are those based in Kiomoni Ward located on the outskirts of the city.

The 73-man group of farmers aired their complaints over the weekend when speaking to Tanga Urban MP Mussa Mbarouk, who visited the ward to explain his efforts to understand key challenges facing farmers in the area.

They also asked the government and other development stakeholders to

chip-in and offer them modern farming gear, including tractors for them to expand their farm sizes and refrain from hand-hoe farming.

"We have been using traditional farming gear, which haven't taken us far, that's why we're asking for support," said Yunus Mwakatwila, the spokesperson of the Golani Shutashuta farmers' group. He also suggested the need for the government to improve road infrastructure in their farmlands so that it can be easy to ferry their produce to the market.

He also asked Tanga City Council to consider the group's potential as it had created employment in the vegetable value chain. "We're saying this because

the city council doesn't see them as farmers who need to be supported, particularly when it comes to supplying subsidized farm inputs," he said.

The MP, however, pledged to address some of the challenges facing farmers in the area, so that their farming activities could be productive hence help them to stamp out of poverty.

"I understand challenges facing farmers in the region and I will make sure I am working to address some of them for your benefit," the MP said.

For his part, the Deputy Mayor for Tanga City Council, Mohamed Haniu, said the council will also address all challenges facing farmers to boost productivity.



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