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Wanted efforts to boost co-operative entities

From PETER TEMBA in Moshi

KILIMANJARO Regional Commissioner (RC), Ms Monica Mbega has expressed misgivings over the slow disintegration of some co-operative entities in the region and she has called for renewed efforts to reverse the trend.

Addressing a historic meeting here yesterday, which was attended by representatives

from 430 co-operative entities based in seven district councils in the region, she said the co-operative movement plays a pivotal role in maintaining sustainable economic growth and boosting the regional gross domestic product. The entities also promote unity among various producers.

The RC said 'unity is strength' was a philosophy which was adopted by our forefathers to motivate people

to achieve high productivity, adding that the philosophy has been undermined after dishonest leaders had infiltrated co-operatives for selfish ends.

Ms Mbega informed some 1,290 delegates to the meeting that she has received written complaints from various people in the region, complaining that they did not benefit from the co-operatives due to rampant theft and sabotage perpetrated

by greedy leaders of such entities.

She said following those complaints, he convened the gathering for delegates to brainstorm and resolve on measures to be taken to restore a vibrant and viable co-operative movement in the region.

Assistant Registrar of Co-operatives in the region, Mr Cassian Alex made an impassioned plea to the

delegates to seriously revive the spirit of co-operatives to unite and motivate farmers to improve production.

He mentioned financial mismanagement and misuse of assets as major causes that have weakened growth of some co-operative entities in the region.

Mr Alex informed the meeting that because of the noted weaknesses, members of co-operatives have shunned

attending annual meetings, an eventuality that made co-operative leaders indulge in keeping wrong, forged or non-existent financial records.

One of the delegates, Rajab Nkya from Hai district, has requested the government to set aside some funds which will be compensated to farmers in case of fall in prices in the terminal markets.

Lazaro Massawe from Kirima village informed the

meeting that some farmers have been discouraged from cultivating coffee due to unattractive prices offered in the markets, which did not meet production costs and instead they have diversified their farms to cultivate fast maturing crops, such as tomatoes and vegetables to make quick money in the local markets.

Timothy Peter proposed for a by-law that will compel

youths who have migrated to urban centres to go back to the rural areas to help their ageing parents and grand parents to tend the coffee crop and other cash crops.

Of the 430 co-operative entities in the region, three are co-operative unions, 118 agricultural marketing co-operative societies, 226 savings and credit co-operative societies and 83 other co-operatives.