

Zanzibar moves to promote SMEs trade globally

By Mohamed Kazingumbe

THE Government of Zanzibar is no exception when it comes to overall revamping of Tanzania's economy. Improvement of the Isles' economy also fuels growth of the economy of the United Republic as a whole.

This was said by a senior industrial officer in the Zanzibar ministry of tourism, trade & investment, Shabaan Bakari Saidi.

Speaking in an exclusive interview with the *Business Times* in Dar es Salaam last week, Saidi said, "the Zanzibar Government is serious about improving people's welfare through the creation of more job opportunities."

The officer was speaking during the 30th Dar es Salaam International Trade Fair (DITF) that ended in the city recently. He was the manager of

the pavilion that accommodated exhibitors from Zanzibar.

The Revolutionary Government has been spending over Tsh10 million a year on facilitating participation of small and medium entrepreneurs from the Isles at the DITF.

The Zanzibar pavilion was a centre of attraction for visitors who were clearly impressed by what was on show, including various handicrafts, spices, as well as locally concocted perfume and cosmetics made from cloves.

In this regard, the Zanzibar minister for tourism, trade & investment, Samia Suluhu Hassan, called upon the participants from the Isles to learn from other exhibitors at the fair. The minister toured the pavilion on July 4.

Retired President Ali Hassan Mwinyi also visited the pavilion on July 8, and called on exhibitors from the Isles to promote at the interna-

tional level products that earned the Spice Islands its long trading pride in the world.

Exchanging views with traditional herbalist Dr Abdulkarim Mambo Saleh, Mwinyi quizzed him why Pemba produced honey of such great value. Dr Saleh answered, "The Pemba honey is highly valued because the bees there eat clove flowers, which are also a good source of medicines."

The people of Zanzibar are encouraged to produce more honey and other bee-keeping products for export so as to earn foreign currency for the country.

Speaking to the *Business Times* at the pavilion, Dr Saleh said the Government of Zanzibar had empowered small scale entrepreneurs to improve their businesses, hence, their standard of living.

However, Saidi wanted the Union and Zanzibar Governments to focus more on the education sector. Currently, he noted, Tanzania has a dearth of people

specialised in the major sectors of the economy, including agriculture, mining, construction and fisheries.

"Such experts, coupled with appropriate motivation, would transform the economy of the nation for the better," he said.

Saidi stressed that the country has vast tracts of arable land with many rivers and other water bodies that are largely unexploited due to lack of experts in agriculture. He gave the example of Rufiji Basin research which, he said, has shown it could feed the whole of Africa if it were fully utilised.

Saleh deals in herbal medicines made from the clove plant for treating various fungal and other diseases as well as ulcers.

Other products that were showcased at the Zanzibar pavilion were assorted spices, charms and household facilities