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Thursday December 16, 2010

Local News

Urban slum explosion traced to migration

By LEVINA KATO, 6th June 2010 @ 12:10, Total Comments: 1, Hits: 585

ABOUT 85 per cent of people in major urban cities of Tanzania live in improper and informal housing resulting into an explosion of slum housing.

This was revealed by a team of US scholars who were in the country to study women's access to adequate housing in poor urban settlements. Speaking exclusively to Daily News shortly before flying back to New York, the team of scholars from Fordham Law School led by Professor Katherine Hughes, said they had stayed in the country for two weeks since May 6 in a fact-finding mission.

The team highlighted bad inheritance laws, domestic violence, extreme poverty and the prospect for good employment as underlying women migration to urban areas. The four-man team including law students Mari Byrne, Elisabeth Wickeri and Matthew Putorti studied and documented information in Dar es Salaam, Morogoro, Arusha and Kilimanjaro regions.

They were also studying the unique challenges faced by women during their time in urban slums.

"Women's inability to escape discriminatory, cultural and legal norms is also contributory to their increased migration to urban areas," said the team leader Prof Hughes.

The team held discussions with the government leaders, local NGOs, the judiciary, academics, lawyers, inter-governmental organisations and community organisers. It also made extensive interviews with members of the public living in informal settlements and local leaders.

Despite commending the country for having progressive land and housing laws, the team faulted the implementation of such laws, saying translating the laws into practical reality was a big problem.

"It is our hope that the project will translate national and international approaches into urban slum upgrading, encouraging various institutions to incorporate both human rights and gendered perspectives into their programmes," the leader noted.

She also promised to compile a report of their findings to be distributed in Tanzania and internationally. The report will focus on reasons why women migrate from rural areas, including inheritance laws, HIV/AIDS discrimination and gender-based violence, culture and poverty.

It will also highlight the challenges the migrants face when they arrive in urban settlements, including lack of access to adequate housing, credit and basic services.

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