

Pemba's bright future: Building green and smart cities for sustainable growth



▶ CHRISTINE GRAU

enhancing green infrastructure and stimulating local economic growth across Tanzania. Our focus is particularly on the cities of Mwanza, Tanga, and Pemba, where the need is great, and the potential for transformation is even greater.

In Pemba, our work is centred on three crucial projects—KIJANI PEMBA, PURE, and INCLU-CITIES. These projects, totalling with a combined budget of Sh175 billion (6 million euros) are being implemented by the NGOs LVIA and OIKOS, alongside the Belgian development agency ENABEL.

These projects are designed to meet the island's unique needs, improving urban infrastructure, essential services, and creating economic opportunities for youth, women, and small businesses in selected urban areas, including Wete and Micheweni in the North, as well as Chake Chake and Mkoani in the South Region.

At Micheweni Primary School, we are spearheading efforts to improve the school's water, sanitation, and hygiene (WASH) facilities. The Green and Smart Cities SASA programme will facilitate the construction of 12 new toilets and rehabilitate existing, a crucial step toward eliminating open defecation in the region. Additionally, a new water supply system will be installed, boosting the school's water storage capacity to 22,000 litres and ensuring a reliable water source

year-round.

Yet, our vision for Micheweni extends beyond the school. The nearby sports field, currently prone to flooding due to inadequate drainage, will be transformed into a vibrant public space. This area, now underutilised, will be developed into a community hub catering to women, children, and students from surrounding schools, including secondary and pre-primary institutions. These improvements will provide the community with a safe and functional space for recreation and gatherings, enhancing the quality of life in Micheweni.

A similar approach will be adopted in South Pemba, around Madungu Primary School in Chake Chake, where planned activities to improve water supply, sanitation, and waste collection at the school will be complemented by broader infrastructure improvements. These will include public spaces, markets, footpaths, and more in the surrounding urban areas, fostering a more connected and vibrant community.

Beyond these schools, my visit also highlighted other key sites set to benefit from the Green and Smart Cities SASA Programme. One such site is the Pujini Incubation Building which will be rehabilitated to become a centre of excellence for the seaweed, sardine, and essential oil value chains. This facility, implemented by the Belgian

development agency ENABEL, will not only provide a physical space for local entrepreneurs but also build their capacity, enabling them to penetrate local and international markets. The Kizimbani Incubation Centre in Wete will undergo similar upgrades, further solidifying Pemba's role as a hub for sustainable economic activity.

During my visit, I was introduced to some of the excellent products coming from Pemba, such as the delicious bungo juice, along with spices, honey, and seaweed products, just to name a few. These products exemplify the rich potential of the island's local industries, which the SASA programme aims to bolster through infrastructure improvements and capacity building.

Our efforts aim to create long-term economic opportunities and foster a culture of innovation and entrepreneurship on the island. Pemba is poised to redefine its identity—not merely as a picturesque tourist destination but as a model for sustainable, inclusive urban development in the region. By focusing on green infrastructure, economic empowerment, and community engagement, we are supporting the groundwork for a brighter, more resilient future for Pemba. The commitment of the people of Pemba, combined with the support from the EU and our partners, assures me that we are on the path to meaningful, lasting development.

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