

Blessings upon Blessings: Making Natural Gas Discovery and Extraction of Equitable and Sustainable Benefits to Tanzania

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Abstract. Tanzania is a developing economy but rich in natural resources not yet fully exploited to contribute to economic growth and development. Of recent, vast quantities of natural gas potential for commercial extraction have been discovered and further exploration activities are ongoing to establish the actual natural gas potential of Tanzania. Official figures indicate that Tanzania's confirmed natural gas reserves stand at over 43.1 trillion cubic feet (TCF). The discovery has generated great optimism, especially in the government cycles, that Tanzania will soon be an exporter of energy generated from natural gas and fulfils its Vision 2025 of becoming a middle income country by 2025. This paper problematises the optimism and euphoria that comes with the discovery of natural gas in Tanzania. It argues that, although the discovery of natural gas has the potential of making Tanzania achieve its resource based development strategy, it is obvious that equitable and sustainable benefits will largely depend on how the sub-sector becomes inclusive of the needs, aspirations and expectations of the majority. The argument is therefore not what the government authorities think is best to do with natural gas but what the public expects from the extraction of natural gas. Thus the involvement of people in the design and implementation of all plans and strategies for natural gas extraction is crucial for the sub-sector's development.

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