



VILLAGERS rushing with rubber and other garden produce to the newly acquired truck bound for Kiunga for the first time. It's truly a relief after the past 40 years of shouldering rubber and other produce as seen in this picture.

OTDF assist farmers with new road, truck

BY PATRICK.T.WUNDAI

OVER 106 registered rubber farmers from Pampanai village, Ningerun Local Level Government (LLG) in North Fly Electorate will no longer carry their rubber in kilograms on the shoulder and walk for 10 kilometres to reach the main road before proceeding to Kiunga.

The farmers are now relieved, at the courtesy of Ok Tedi Development Foundation (OTDF) which has just delivered a 10 kilometre fully constructed road at a cost of K12.1 million.

To complement the road was a new truck and a Lucas sawmill that will enhance rubber growth

and production in terms of easy access and transportation to North Fly Rubber Limited.

OTDF chief executive officer Ian Middleton after presenting the equipment and the vehicle, which was bought by the community through their community mine continuation agreement fund, urged the farmers to be more productive to improve their communities and lives.

Mono Todin, Village planning committee chairman was lost for words on Monday when he saw the vehicle for the first time loading rubber bound for Kiunga.

"I can't believe this has happened in my dying ages. This is long over-

due. I wish I am young enough and have the strength to continue my rubber farming to make use of this great opportunity. But despite this regret, I am glad at last my people will transport their rubber direct to Kiunga loaded from our doorsteps onto the truck to Kiunga," Mr Todin who appeared to be in his late 60s told this reporter at Pampanai on Monday.

The village chairman said his people have been producing tonnes for rubber but due to the non existence of a road link, they had to abandon their rubber farming.

"Apart from little we benefit from OTML, rubber used to be our only source of income until the mine

came into operation. Now we will go into our rubber production," he added.

According to a staff member from North Fly Rubber Limited, the province produces over 150,000 tonnes of rubber earning over K9 million to K10 million a year.

"The entire province produced over 150,000 tonnes per annum with the revenue of K9m to K10m but it varies depending on the price," he said.

However, it was reported and shown after a visit to the rubber factory in Kiunga that tonnes of rubber are lying around the factory premises due to the drop in price of rubber in the world market.