LWF: Conservation in Action

THE MISSION:
To conserve Laikipia’s wildlife and ecosystem integrity and improve the lives of its people by bringing its societies together to conserve and sustainably use the natural resources on which they depend.

THE VISION:
To see a healthy and productive natural environment for people and wildlife.

Laikipia’s Wildlife
Laikipia is an extensive wildlife haven, forming part of the 56,000 km² Ewaso Ecosystem. Here, wildlife is abundant and total numbers are higher than any of Kenya’s protected areas except the Maasai Mara National Reserve. In contrast to most of Kenya, where wildlife numbers have been in decline, the population of wildlife in Laikipia has increased by about 15% in the last 30 years. It is worth noting that Laikipia is not an official protected area – the region’s conservation success is due to the landowners and people of Laikipia.

More than 7,000 elephants migrate within Laikipia and the wider Ewaso ecosystem. This area hosts Kenya’s highest populations of endangered species (large mammals) in the country, including half of Kenya’s rhino population and 37% of the total African population of the Eastern Black Rhino. 70% of the 3,000 remaining global population of the Grevy zebra, and similar numbers of the Reticulated giraffe occur in Laikipia.

The number of lions in Laikipia (between 200 and 250 animals) has been increasing year on year. Laikipia supports the only remaining viable population of the Jackson’s Hartebeest, an expanding population of the endangered African Wild Dog (world’s 6th largest population), and about 400 individuals of the rare Patas monkey.
Dear Members,

The Board of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and the Secretariat are working together to revitalize the membership of the Forum by engaging with, working with and for the membership and although the response has been very encouraging we are still 50% short of the target. Clearly, membership support is fundamental to the future of the LWF if we are to avoid the trap of becoming a donor driven NGO. This is the LWF’s strength, and lends significant support to its credibility and attraction, that it is able to support a significant amount of work through internally raised funds; it is essential for the future success of the organization that this support continues to grow.

LWF capacity has steadily increased over the last 10 years (from 11 employees in 2004 to 30 employees as of today). The increased capacity has enabled us to serve more members and beneficiaries of our work. However the office space has not increased resulting in congestion. Consequently LWF acquired a one acre plot in Nanyuki town where we intend to relocate our offices. The present location is somewhat inaccessible to most members and we believe the new location will enable us to serve you better.

Our activities to meet the objectives as outlined in our Strategic Plan 2010-2015 are on course. Whilst we have eight program areas, wildlife management remains central to the LWF’s conservation effort. In particular we have partnered with the County government of Laikipia to develop a plan for mitigating human elephant conflicts and especially making the west Laikipia fence more effective.

Nonetheless, in the past decade the LWF has taken an increasingly holistic approach to conservation with emphasis on major environmental issues that cut across Laikipia as a whole and affect larger sections of the population. In this regard we have signed a memorandum of understanding with the Colorado State University whereby LWF will provide academic support for experiential learning focused on conservation initiatives in Kenya. Currently 7 CSU students are in Laikipia studying various conservation topics including: an examination of how perceptions of wildlife and local knowledge about natural resources are changing as nomadic pastoralist cultures become more settled; human-wildlife conflict, issues of gender in natural resource management, the role of environmental education in nurturing future conservation leaders and sustainable tourism development.

Water resources management is also a critical theme in our work. We have developed the Laikipia County Water resource Conservation Strategy which aims to use LWF’s strengths to maximum effect on the key WRM issues in a way that is consistent with the overall LWF Strategic Framework. In addition we have also developed a wetlands ecological monitoring guide which will provides users with simple but reliable methods and tools for monitoring the condition of wetlands and water resources in Laikipia County. We will eventually train secondary school students, WRUA members and officials from the County government responsible for Water and Fisheries to undertake regular ecological monitoring of wetlands and river water in Laikipia.

In order to reach out to a wider audience and increase our partnerships that encourage young people to participate actively in conservation matters we have partnered with VSO Jitolee who bring up to 4 Kenyan and British youth to work alongside our programme officers for periods of upto three months. The volunteers also help with day-to-today office routine matters given our lean structure.

We will continue encouraging more partnerships and enhance collaboration with other like minded organisations and County establishments.

Josephat Musyima – Ag Executive Director
Domestication & Research of indigenous medicinal plants for sustainability

Unsustainable utilization of indigenous medicinal plants has been the fiercest threat to conservation of these precious plant species not only in Laikipia but also in the East African region and globally. LWF through its Conservation Enterprise Development program’s Ethno-botanical Research &Development department has identified some of the plant species that are much sought after for their medicinal properties. Four Ethno-botanical trial sites to demonstrate cultivation of the indigenous plants have been established namely; Tigithi, Twala, Loldaiga and Kirisia (Laikipa Central, Laikipia East, Laikipia North and Samburu respectively). One demonstration plant is in the initial stages of establishment in South Marmanet-Laikipia West. Over 30 medicinal plant species have been planted and are being nurtured for research and to demonstrate that it is possible to domesticate the all-important wild species for posterity and sustainability; some of the plants include the endangered Sandalwood, Prunus Africana, Warbugiaugadensis, Olea Africana, Calodendrumcapense, Aloe species among others. Herbal medicine practitioners and the general community in Laikipia are being trained on basic plant identification, sustainable wild harvesting, propagation & domestication of the medicinal plants, Good medicinal plant collection practices and post harvest handling procedures. Laikipia herbalists’ forum has benefitted from this program and is in the process of growing an acre of medicinal plants that will provide raw materials for their herbal medicine enterprises.

The Ethno-botanical research and development section has established a laboratory to carry out research and identify the presence and efficacy of the active plant compounds in the domesticated plants in comparison with the wild species in relation to the indigenous knowledge on medicinal importance and develop new viable nature-based products; food supplements, herbal teas – Seketet & stinging nettle. In addition to this mosquito repellants and beeswax candles have been developed. Laboratory studies have revealed that the domesticated plant species have the same potency with the wild species in reference to the active medicinal compound. This has been a breakthrough in reversing the perception that cultivated indigenous medicinal plants are less effective than the wild ones. Chemical comparison analysis has further shown that the indigenous African nettle in Laikipia has more nutrition than the European nettle (Urticadioca).

Community groups are trained on value addition and developing nature-based products from their cultivated indigenous plants; Nabulu Aloe women group has been successful in producing aloe soaps, body cream, lotion and shampoo. This has increased their income significantly hence improving their...
livelihoods whilst reducing pressure on the wild plants to enhance conservation.

Nixon Elachi; ER&D officer LWF

**Beekeeping Improving Livelihoods in Laikipia**

It is now well accepted that beekeeping can offer people in rural parts of the county a way of generating additional income. However, beekeeping is not always easy. The bees can sting and are often unpredictable. The honey harvest depends on many factors, including the weather and good market.

High value honey must be of good quality.

CEDP/Desert Edge is playing various roles on different levels of the value chain in beekeeping in Laikipia, i.e. production, processing and marketing. For the last two seasons, honey production has increased from 200kgs-1060Kg in Laikipia Central and 0-592kgs in the drier parts of the Eastern Unit, the combs honey were purchased from the farmer at Ksh200 per Kg.

In spite of the challenges involved, field extension officers have worked hard to make sure that the bond between community beekeepers and CEDP/Desert edge is growing stronger.

Honey bees do not compete with other livestock for food as they forage on nectar and pollen which would otherwise get wasted. Bees convert the nectar into honey which is a food and a source of income for the farmer. Due to their large numbers and foraging behavior, honey bees are the most reliable pollinators of entomophilous plants. Honey bees which can be used for the adequate pollination of fruits and oil seed crops should be conserved by all means possible. Therefore to maintain and increase the present beekeeping potentials in the various ecozones, the planting and conserving of multipurpose trees that are prolific nectar/pollen producers should be encouraged.

The current status of beekeeping shows that colonization has dramatically increased from 40% to 75%; this is attributed to the natural bee baits formulated by our R&D distributed to beekeepers. This shows that there will be need in future for bulk honey market, more beekeepers and more hives to hold dividing colonies.

Our honey processing efficiency has gone up to an average of 75%. This has also increased stocks of refined honey and therefore sufficient supply to serve the market. Increased numbers of quality honey producers around Laikipia has gone up as well due to our Organic certification, bee-houses construction and internal control systems trainings. Beekeepers have also had capacity building training to make improvised bee hives and bee suits using locally available material.

Lesowopir Ewan; Bee Enterprise officer
Lwf’s Cedp/Desert Edge Company Scoops 3 Awards In The Mt Kenya Ask Show-Nanyuki 2014

Laikipia Wildlife Forum’s participation in this year’s Mt Kenya branch ASK show that was held in Nanyuki, was exceptionally excellent where the organization managed to scoop 3 top trophies.

The Conservation Enterprise Development Program through its Not-for-profit Company- Desert Edge Biotrading, won ‘The Most striking Demonstration of Locally Manufactured Products; the products exhibited were pure natural organic certified Eco-honey, stinging nettle tea in tea bags and powder, Myrsine Africana (African boxwood) food supplement –commonly known as Seketet, Mosquito repellent beeswax candles, bee baits, handmade Aloe (secundiflora) soaps and Aloe gold body cream. Stinging nettle has been scientifically proven to have high contents of iron hence an excellent blood purifier, it also contains Vitamin E. Stinging nettle has plant compounds which reduce cholesterol absorption into the blood system giving it the potency to reduce susceptibility to High blood pressure. Community groups have been trained on FAO and WHO recommended protocols for sustainable harvesting and post-harvest handling procedures of medicinal plants.

Another plant product is Seketet (Myrsine Africana) which contains Embelin, making it a natural anthelmintic (deworming agent) it has been indigenously used by the Maasai, Samburu and the Kalenjin who also believe that it enhances men’s ‘performance’. Honey is produced by community groups in Laikipia and Samburu who are capacity-built by LWF’s CEDP and the honey is purchased, processed and marketed by Desert Edge.

Desert Edge Company is an initiative of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and African Wildlife Foundation whose mandate is to take up the viable conservation enterprises developed by the Conservation enterprise development program to carry out business by offering market linkages for the nature-based products produced by the communities in Laikipia. This offers an alternative of livelihoods while enhancing conservation.

LWF was also awarded ‘the best organization in community service stand’ and ‘the best Non-Governmental and community Based Organization stand’.

The award giving ceremony was presided by the Governor of Laikipia H.E Joshua Irungu who had personally visited the LWF stand flagged by the Minister of industrialization and Enterprise Development in Laikipia County Ms Jane Putunoi among other dignitaries. Guests were made to understand the link between livelihoods and conservation with tangible results in Laikipia, a model that could be replicated by other counties in Kenya.

Nixon Elachi, Ethnobotanical Research & Development Officer, CEDP-LWF.
World Forest Day Report

The United Nations General assembly has proclaimed March 21 the International Day of Forests and from 2012, the day has been observed each year to celebrate and raise awareness of the importance of forests and trees to all life on earth. World Forestry Day is celebrated around the world to ring a bell among the society about the importance of forests and the scores of benefits which are gained from them.

On this day participants from a diverse range of forest stakeholders, academics and decision makers from around the world come together to discuss key issues that touch on conservation of forests and issues related to it.

The main event of this year’s World Forest Day was celebrated at Brickwoods school on the 21st March 2014. This year’s theme for the World Forest day was “OUR FORESTS OUR FUTURE”—“MISITU YETU—KESHO YETU” and was graced by the presence of the Manager of Ngare Ndare Forest Trust, Mr. Dominic Maringa who was the guest of honor for the occasion. Other distinguished guests included the Director of Brick-woods school Mrs. Mathenge, the chairman of Nanyuki Kahurura CFA Mr. Patrick Kariuki, the secretary Solio CFA Mr. David Mugo, the chairman of Karatina University nature club, Mr. Dedan Ngatia and the former chairman Nanyuki CFA, Mr. Michael Kibera. Also present were the treasurer of Laikipia CFAs Network M/s Hilda Gakii and other officials of CFAs from Solio settlement and Nanyuki Forests Station.

Approximately 370 people took part in all planned events that included tree planting, speeches, poem recitations, traditional dancing, rugby matches & other celebration activities. Two primary schools, two girls’ high schools, three boys’ high schools, two CFAs, one university nature club and a host of other guests took part in celebrating this day. The planned events and activities for this day were directed towards encouraging a sense of inspiration in the general public and their participation was welcome and well appreciated.
In addition to tree planting and entertainments, the two day TAG and contact rugby matches were the main crowd pullers. In the TAG rugby category were invited teams from Brick-woods and St. Christopher’s schools who competed for the coveted trophies of teams under 10, 12 and 14 years respectively. For TAG rugby competition of under 18s girls’ category two teams from Moi Equator and St. Loise Girls were the main participants. Nanyuki, Thingithu and Inooro high schools presented a total of four teams that locked horns for the contact rugby main cup, while the Nanyuki Jackals RFC played an exhibition match between the Junior & Senior teams of the club. All winning teams were presented with trophies ranging from the main cup i.e. to Nanyuki High, TAG under 18 girls’ which was scooped by Moi equator Girls’, TAG under 14 to Brick-woods, TAG under 12 to St. Christopher’s and TAG under 10s to St. Christopher’s. Most valuable players from all teams were also awarded their trophies in addition to team awards in the form of T-shirts and rugby balls.

The two day rugby sport event was coordinated by the senior players and officials of Nanyuki Jackals RFC with support from LWF Forestry program which worked closely with the Tag Rugby Trust-Kenya, Brick-woods school, Nanyuki Sports Club, and Laikipia County Association of CFAs (LAFONET) as well as other well wishers and supporters to bring this day to fruition.

Tree planting was expected to continue in the compounds of participating schools along with the world forest day celebrations from the seedlings procured and distributed specifically for the occasion during the long rainy season.

Laikipia Wildlife Forum and Nanyuki Jackals Rugby Football Club wish to thank all partners, collaborators and all who had a stake in the successful organization and preparations leading to the main event of this year’s World Forest day. Much gratitude is owed to Brick-woods school and Nanyuki sports club for allowing use of their sports and other facilities.
Contribution of Efficient Energy Saving Stoves to Conservation of Laikipia’s Forests

Laikipia Wildlife Forum has been working with community forest associations (CFAs) in the area of sustainable utilization of renewable energy sources as part of capacity building for participatory forest management. Firewood collected from forests constitutes the main source of energy to majority forest dependent communities for cooking and central heating. Rational and sustainable use of this vital domesticated source of energy will translate into enhanced regeneration of Laikipia’s natural forests while exploration of alternative viable energy sources is ongoing.

One of the main activities recently conducted by the Forestry program involved supporting CFAs in developing appropriate business plans for acquisition and installation of energy efficient liners. This included a thorough eighteen-days training in strengthening wood fuel user groups for purposes of acquiring ability to procure efficient energy saving liners and consequently installing them in homes within their neighbourhood.

Wood fuel user groups are spread in all the forest blocks where formed CFAs are closely working with LWF and relevant stakeholders to contribute positively to forest conservation after acquiring user rights to extractive use of forests in Laikipia and neighbouring Counties. The training incorporated active participation from forest user groups at Mukogodo, Ontulili, Solio, Uaso Nyiro, Ewaso Narok, North and South Marmanet.

Over six hundred energy efficient liners were procured for the initial installation across the forest villages and one hundred and eight forest dwellers from those villages trained in the art of installation. Four experts comprising a lead consultant/team leader, an entrepreneurship/marketing advisor and two technical staff with speciality in liners installation teamed up with the LWF field officers in accomplishing this challenging task. Three hundred households had by the end of the intensive training benefited from the capacity building sessions with installed liners and rejuvenated wood fuel user groups at hand to further disseminate the outcomes. One particular user group “Aturi bwa Mwitu CBO” based at Ngucishi in Ontulili forest went a step further and could not wait to access financial support from a local small scale micro-enterprising firm. The group utilized the funds to buy more liners for its members and by the time capacity building was concluded in other selected forest zones, it had successfully installed one hundred liners in over fifty households.

The right use of domestic energy efficient liners has all of a sudden become popular with a number of forest adjacent households to the extent that requests for capacity building in developing appropriate business plans for implementation of this forest user right has shot up. Requests for support have been received from Shamanek, South Laikipia Forest Block, Lariak, Ngarendare and Nanyuki Kahurura CFAs. Feedback from CFAs where installation and use of the liners have been accomplished point to the fact that wood fuel users have
reduced their frequency of going to fetch fire wood since consumption has been more reduced and regularized. The users especially the women folk have created more time to attend to other household chores as a saving from what used to be a time consuming everyday undertaking.

Outlined in the table below are the dates and areas covered during implementation of this supporting activity to CFAs in developing appropriate business plans for acquisition and installation of energy efficient liners.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Date</th>
<th>Site</th>
<th>Adjacent villages</th>
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<tr>
<td>10/2/14</td>
<td>Mukogodo forest</td>
<td>Nodung’oru</td>
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<tr>
<td>14/2/14</td>
<td>Naibung’a conservancy</td>
<td>Tiomamut, Musul</td>
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<tr>
<td>12/2/14</td>
<td>Ontulili forest</td>
<td>Ngucishi, Munyi, Mijogene, Mukuri, Kivuru</td>
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<td>Solio settlement</td>
<td>Villages 4, 5, &amp; 7</td>
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<td>19/2/14</td>
<td>North Marmanet forest</td>
<td>Ngoru, Subuko 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>21/2/14</td>
<td>South Marmanet forest</td>
<td>Manguo, Mahianyu</td>
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**World Forest Days;**

Participants from a diverse range of forest stakeholders, academics and decision makers from around Laikipia County on this day come together to discuss key issues that touch on conservation of forests related issues. The annual event is marked on the 21st March 2014. The main planned activities include tree planting, entertainments on theme interpretation, sports, speeches and prize giving. Three events have been held since 2012 with support from EKN with the main objective of building capacity in sustainable natural resource conservation practices.

**Preparation of PFMPs**

Through EKN support two forest management plans have been prepared for gazetted forest blocks and one for forests outside protected areas. Management plans are prepared with the main goal of effective conservation and sustainable natural resource use and management.

A main component of the plan preparation process included conducting a series of sensitization forums around targeted forest dependent communities (12,000 beneficiaries) in order to come up with a critical mass of people who are well conversant with their expected roles & responsibilities in participatory management of their forests.

Implementation of developed Participatory Forest Management plans include building capacities of forest dependent communities in negotiating and signing of forest management agreements with KFS. This gives way to transfer of forest user rights to Community Forest Associations as enshrined in the Forest Act 2005. Through EKN support three CFAs have undergone capacity building for negotiating and signing of three forest management agreements and one agreement has been officially launched for implementation in South Marmanet Forest.

**Formation of Community Based Networks**

Formation of two CBN platforms for Naibung’a conservancy on a needs basis has been accomplished through EKN support with the main objective of addressing emerging common issues & problems in the course of their participation in joint forest & natural resource management. The CBN networks will otherwise be entrusted to their self-survival.

Awareness creation forum on developed PFMPs
and be self supporting through locally proposed activities.

Procurement of Tree Seedlings for Planting

During the long rains planting season in 2014, six schools and twenty one villages around Ontulili forest, North Marmanet forest and Ngobit/Tigithi locations have been supplied with 24,000 tree seedlings for establishment of wood fuel blocks and village wood lots. The main objective is to increase tree cover and ensure efficient utilization of forest resources and promoting interventions that reduce pressure from use of forest products. Through EKN grant approximately 120,000 tree seedlings have been planted in public institutions, villages and gazette forests with over 70% survival rates recorded.

1. Capacity building—organizing exposure visits to learn from best practices in conservation of forests. Four educational exposure visits are organized and facilitated each year with EKN grant support to well managed forest ecosystems for access and adoption of best practices in forest management. This has benefited over 112 beneficiaries drawn from all the community forest associations working with LWF in Laikipia County.

Installation of wood fuel efficient liners in forest adjacent house holds

The primary mechanism to bring about effective management and restoration of forests in a human occupied landscape such as Laikipia is through community based organisations. Building the capacity of the 14 Community Forest Associations (CFAs) LWF Forestry program is working with is an ongoing process aimed at achieving a critical mass of people in each CFA that have a good grasp of the required principles and responsibilities in forest management, reforestation outside protected areas, rehabilitation of fragile ecosystems including water springs & wetlands and development of alternative sources for forest products and services.

In exercising acquired forest user rights during implementation of participatory forest management plans, wood fuel user groups within the CFAs are encouraged to use traditional wood fuel saving stoves as a measure of minimizing extractive use of forest resources for local consumption.

As an initiative towards meeting the increasing demand of energy efficient wood fuel cooking stoves in forest adjacent households six selected CFAs were supported to develop plans for setting up viable business enterprises in affordable energy efficient liners for income generation and creation of employment.

Part of the support included procurement and & installation of sample liners in households as an example for efficient wood fuel utilization.

The overall of this initiative was to build the confidence and skills required by CFAs in sustainable energy use through developed business plans for acquisition of locally available appropriate technologies in fuel efficient cooking stoves.

Development of business enterprises in affordable fuel efficient stoves was jointly facilitated by an experienced consultant and the Forestry program of LWF in energy conservation at Mukogodo, Ontulili, Solio, South Marmanet, Naibung’ a and North Marmanet forest areas on various dates from 10th February 2014.

Support to development of business enterprises in affordable energy efficient liners was conducted locally at the village level to attract wider local community participation and so creating the desired impact. A total of 300 households in the selected forest adjacent villages benefitted from the installation of efficient wood energy liners. In each site where this exercise was accomplished thirty (30) local community members were trained in installation of the liners and capacity built to wood fuel user groups for self sustenance and benefit of other members. Building the user groups capacity for self sustenance and access to wood fuel liners for the benefit of other local community.
Success story - Tackling pollution of our Rivers

The problem;

Unpolluted water is essential for a healthy environment, prosperity and good quality of life. The commonly perceived view of pollution is discharge of untreated sewer effluent to the rivers, oil spills, and chemical disposal and so on. However in Laikipia, the water quality degradation has been as a result of mainly the vast number of minor incidents such as silage, waste water discharges from human settlements, car washing activities along the riverine, solid waste disposal near water ways, agricultural chemicals and fertilizers among others. LWF has been working with WRUAs and other government partners in addressing this challenge and putting up strategies to control and prevent water pollution among our rivers.

Measures being taken;

Prevent and Control through awareness creation

One of the initiatives taken was an anti-pollution campaign planned by Nyahururu WRUA to clean up Nyahururu River and put up measures to prevent further pollution. Pollution had been identified as one of the major challenges facing Nyahururu River which is an important water source for drinking, maintaining aquatic community of diverse species, support tourism activities among other uses. Through LWF support, the WRUA was able to mobilize stakeholders, partners, water users and academic institution to participate in an awareness campaign that was held during the world environment day. NEMA County director, Laikipia West County Commissioner, WRMA Assistant Technical Coordination Manager (Rumuruti), Catchment Area Advisory Committee member were among the heads of government agents who participated in the event. The great success of the event was the high number of water users (400) who took part in the procession, cleaning up of the river and tree planting.

Surveying and monitoring water quality

WRMA is mandated to regulate and protect water resources quality from adverse impacts.
LWF is investigating the causes of pollution for 3 rivers namely Nyahururu, Nanyuki and Burguret in order to report to WRMA and respective WRUAs on the various causes of pollution and recommend measures to control and prevent this with the aim of protecting and conserving water quality flowing in Laikipia. This being done through a masters student of Nairobi University who in particular is investigating the impacts of land use on water quality and how micro invertebrates can be harnessed and used as bio indicators of ecosystem health.

Equipping communities with Knowledge to monitor aquatic ecosystems using bio indicators

There is need for the WRUAs to be equipped with capacity to monitor and access the impacts of human activities on these critical ecosystems. WRMA and other bodies have traditionally conducted chemical assays and directly measured physical parameters of the environment which entails tedious analysis with high sensitive technologies, at prohibitive costs making WRUAs not able to monitor water quality continuously.

For these reasons, the water programmes has been keen on developing a monitoring guide for aquatic ecosystem health using simple common bio-indicators and further train WRUAs in understanding and using the guide. The use of bio-indicators will not only be easy but also will add a temporal component corresponding to the life span or residence time of an organism in a particular system.

The Programme has been able to collect bio-indicators (biological processes, species and aquatic communities within the Upper EwasoNgiro ecosystem from National Museums of Kenya courtesy of KENWEB. This guide will be distributed to WRUAs and other CBOs working on water conservation.

Construction of Chemical disposal pit

LWF together with the WRUAs has been creating awareness for the farmers from 2 rivers (Upper EwasoNgiro and Ngobit) through open barazas with the aim of making farmers take individual responsibility for reducing chemical and pesticide pollution to soil and water sources. LWF is also supporting the construction of chemical disposal pits for 35 farmers within the riparian areas of each river for as demo in order to conserve our biodiversity and wildlife, maintain and enhance the quality of our water sources and riparian lands, and further protect natural resources (soil and water).

Other stories

1. World wetlands day cerebrations at Rumuruti
2. Celebration for world thematic days; World water day and world wetland day celebrated with 25 WRUAs participating and over 10 partners.
3. Exposure visit to show case best practices on water use management

■ 1 exposure visit undertaken for Enaikishomi women group (20 members of NgareNdare WRUA) to build their knowledge and capacity on water harvesting. Report available
25 Lower EwasoNarok WRUA committee members taken to Ngusishi & Teleswani WRUA for extension education on WRUA management and governance

25 Exchange visit for UEWRUA to Ngusishi & Teleswani WRUAs to

4. WRUA institutional development
- 3 WRUAs (Upper EwasoNyiro, Teleswani and Ontulili receiving technical support to strengthen and build the WRUA institution. Specific areas being looked at include recruitment and renewal of membership, operationalization of WRUA office, MoU with WRMA, financial options to sustain WRUA operations)

5. Development of MoU between LWF-WRMA to formalize LWF supportive role on Water Resource Management
- LWF and WRMA has been working collaboratively in supporting and monitoring Water Resource Users Associations (WRUAs) in management and conservation of water resources and catchments. However, this has been done in an ad hoc manner with no formal agreement and thus no planned structure of cooperation, reporting and implementation of common goals.

6. Feasibility studies & EIAs for proposed common intakes for Likii, Sirimon, Naromoru, Kareminu, Upper Ewaso and Pesi Rivers
- The programme intends to undertake engineering survey for common intakes, and sub-surface with the purpose of location, design, construction, maintenance and operation of engineering

7. Construction and equipping of 5 regular river gauging stations
- Manual gauge reading is the backbone of WRMA WL monitoring process, However the Manual gauge readings are prone to problems relating to data gaps and unreported problems with station controls. These problems make it difficult for WRMA to check on the accuracy of data collected. Various options have been adopted to address these challenges including the introduction of automatic water level monitoring gadgets (Eco loggers) that collect data continuously and stores the data for within its internal memory. LWF is working on installation of 3 of such to support in the monitoring of water levels. Further to this, it is working with RFL, WRMA and CETRAD in developing an app that will integrate gauge reader & WRUA in data collection solution. This will be developed to improve quality checks on WL data, improve frequency of data transfer from gauge reader to WRMA, enable WRMA to know if Gauge Reader or RGS has a problem, and enable digital data entry at field level.

8. Formation of WRUA sub forum within the WRMA sub regions
- The formation of the sub forums will enable LWF and other stakeholders monitor the performance of WRUAs within different sub regions and further provide a platform for WRUAs to learn best practices from each other.
World Wildlife Day

The Wildlife Conservation & Management Programme held an event to mark the world wildlife day and raise awareness on the need for wildlife conservation and the need to guard against poaching of wildlife. This event was held in Ngare Ng’iro centre in Lamuria on 3rd of March 2014 with the main aim of raising awareness amongst the people of Laikipia on the need for wildlife conservation.

Different stakeholders participated in the event including; Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS), County Administration, Ol Pejeta Conservancy, Solio ranch and the community groups.

The KWS Senior Warden Mr. Chepkwony mentioned that it was important to conserve wildlife because it highly contributes to the Gross Domestic Product of Laikipia County. He noted that the community also benefit from employment in the conservancies. He was keen on security matters and also urged the community to help in the battle to fight poaching and participate in conservation.

The Ol Pejeta conservancy and Solio ranch were highly appreciated for their contribution in the conservation of rhinos. Laikipia Central Deputy County Commissioner asked the participants to conserve wildlife not just for income but also as a legacy for posterity. He also emphasized on the need for communities to take responsibility for wildlife protection and asked them to report suspected poachers.

Amboseli Community Exchange Visit

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum puts a lot of effort in raising awareness and capacity building for the community to understand the need for wildlife and how to co-exist with it. The forum in partnership with the Kenya Wildlife Service took a group of people from Naibunga Community Conservancy to Amboseli for an exchange visit between the 8th and 11th of April 2014. The main aim of this trip was to educate and raise awareness to the people of Naibunga on how they can co-exist with the wildlife parks/conservancies, how they could benefit from wildlife conservation by accessing conservancy resources like water, pasture, firewood without illegal actions.

Amboseli is a good model for farmers/pastoralists co-existence with private conservancies. Pastoralists and their livestock have been an integral part of the Amboseli ecosystem for more than three thousand years. The Maasai communities around the Amboseli Park have developed an agreement with the park for accessing the park resources without causing conflict between them and the park management. This is an idea which can be adopted in Laikipia. Amboseli National park was gazetted in 1974 and covers an area of 390 km2. This is located within the expansive 9,200km2 Amboseli ecosystem. There is a high degree of similarity between the Amboseli ecosystem and the Laikipia ecosystem, this is both in eco-climatic conditions and also in the economic activities of the people as most of the people there are pastoralists.
Some of the problems faced by the Amboseli communities include Human-Wildlife Conflict; this involves elephants, hyenas, lions, jackals and hippos. Water problem; there is scarcity of water for people, livestock and wildlife. There is loss of habitat, loss of species, loss of livelihood, encroachment of wetlands by people among others. Land use patterns are also a challenge in the area because there are people settling along the border of the park.

The Laikipia community had a talk from the senior research scientist on the management of water and wildlife. The warden spoke on the mitigation measures that Kenya wildlife service is taking to enhance a good community relationship.

One of the community benefits from the park is the construction of water intakes in the park and then piping the water to the households.

The Governor’s task force for resolving human-wildlife conflict.

Education and awareness raising on wise use of water and habitats is one of the key measures of ensuring there is environmental sustainability in the Amboseli ecosystem. The Amboseli Park management also helps to restore the habitat by providing tree seedlings to the surrounding communities.

Wildlife

Learning on community livestock watering project in Amboseli.

Amboseli Park management developed a memorandum of understanding with the community on allowing livestock to drink water in the park, this MOU allows the people to bring in their livestock into the park’s water between 10am and 2pm when most of the park visitors are resting. KWS also allows the community women to sell their products just at the gate entrance of the park.

The Predators Consolation Fund (PCF) is one of the projects that is helping the communities in the area in terms of mitigating human-wildlife conflict. This project is funded by the Maasai Preservation Trust with a lot of financial contribution from the National Geographic. When a cow is eaten by a predator, the owner is given Kshs 20,000 as a consolation. In case of a goat being depredated, the farmer gets Kshs 3,000 from the project. The group ranches contribute 30% of this money while 70% comes from the National Geographic. There are predator scouts equipped with motorbikes, cameras and GPS for verification of these cases.

Other ways in which the Amboseli community is benefiting from wildlife conservation is by getting schools built for them through the Amboseli CSR, Education bursaries, cultural tourism through introduction of cultural bomas and community lodges. One of the major community lodges in the area is the Satao-Elerai lodge.

Education and awareness raising on wise use of water and habitats is one of the key measures of ensuring there is environmental sustainability in the Amboseli ecosystem. The Amboseli Park management also helps to restore the habitat by providing tree seedlings to the surrounding communities.
Mitigating Human-Wildlife Conflict in Laikipia

The Wildlife Conservation & Management Strategy for Laikipia County is very clear on the issue of human-wildlife conflict. Our objective is to minimize the cost of living with wildlife. This will make people view wildlife as an asset rather than a liability. In the previous years, the West Laikipia Fence has faced a lot of challenges due to lack of proper maintenance and vandalism of fence materials. The Pesi area along the ADC Mutara section of the fence is one of the areas which had faced the highest number of crop raiding. LWF upgraded this section of the fence by installing the short elephant fence along the main fence.

This fence is one meter high with outriggers to deter the elephants. This design has been proved to be the best for controlling elephants; this has worked in other areas of Laikipia like Lolldaiga, Borana and Ol Pejeta Conservancies. After the installation of the short fence in Pesi, we have had a 70% reduction in crop raiding.

Governor’s Task Force for Resolving Human-Elephant Conflict

One of our targets in implementing the Wildlife Conservation Strategy is that by 2030, responsibility for managing the hard boundaries that separate land committed to conservation from land where wildlife is not tolerated is clearly defined and designated. The only way of meeting this target is to create a centralized body to oversee location, design, and management of hard boundaries. A specific action is to have a central fencing committee encompassing technical, ecological, and socio political expertise.

In collaboration with other conservation partners and the County Government, we have formed a task force to oversee the management of fences to mitigate human-elephant conflict in Laikipia. This task force comprises of the Laikipia County Governor (Chair), the County Executive in charge of Agriculture and Natural Resources, Laikipia Wildlife Forum, Space for Giants, Ol Pejeta, British Army Training Unit in Kenya (BATUK), Laikipia Nature Conservancy and KWS.

So far the task force has assessed and surveyed the West Laikipia Fence at ADC Mutara, Ngorare & Laikipia Nature Conservancy to determine the status and the requirement for upgrading of those sections. We have had constructive discussions on the
Bus Excursions

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum bus excursions are meant to nature the seed of conservation in the young generation as early as primary and secondary school level. It is the mandate of the program to be able to take all schools in the county to various conservancies and other conservation sites so that they can experience first hand what true conservation is all about and why it is important to conserve an eco-system.

The excursions as mentioned above are open to all schools both primary and secondary. Once an application for an excursion is made to the LWF office through the education program of the organization, a school is slotted into the program’s calendar. The program runs through the school learning term and halts once schools are closed to resume when schools reopen.

In the excursions the students get to learn about wildlife conservation, environmental conservation, how an eco-system works, what happens when an eco-system breaks down and interdependence or various plant and animal species.

It is from the same bus excursions that students on internship at the organization get to learn new things in conservation as you will read below a note of appreciation from our last intern who was attached to the education program:

“My familiarity in the education program was incredible, when I heard of participating in taking students for environmental educational excursions it was an exciting idea I could finally exercise the much theory learnt in previous years. The excitement in the students’ faces was obvious, everyday and every school offered a different experience and the students were never disappointing. They had a lot of questions about the animals they had seen and others they had never seen and anyone could see the thrill as they learnt facts about wildlife identification, interdependence, social structures and their adaptation. It was gratifying as we concluded each day and they could finally relate the environment around them as a life supporting ecosystem. It was an amazing period that narrows back to how much effort we need to direct into creating environmental education from the younger generation and instill the ethics and importance of maintaining a healthy environment and to demystify myths and the negative attitude towards certain species within our communities in order to protect our heritage.”

LWF intern,
Mercy N. Waithira
Extra Bus for Excursions

The LWF bus program for taking schools and communities to areas of environmental education importance received a major boost after EELP signed an MOU with Olpejeta conservancy to allow an extra bus to access OPC for environmental education purposes. Ol Pejeta Conservancy (OPC) in conjunction with Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF) have initiated an additional bus programme for neighboring schools visits to OPC to run co-currently with the existing LWF environmental education bus programme. It is envisaged that this program will benefit 40 schools, among them 29 which neighbor OPC.

This program is in line with the strategic plans of the two organizations. At OPC, the plan includes increasing interaction between neighboring schools and the Conservancy. OPC has therefore offered free entry to these schools to enable learners acquire important knowledge on wildlife and conservation as a critical start point to influencing communities in the long term. We envisage this additional bus will:

- Increase output on the number of schools / communities able to benefit from our bus program
- Address the question of numbers considering EELP education bus is a twenty-two seater and can only benefit a limited number of students
- Ease pressure on our education bus created by overwhelming booking received.

The on-going program will entail 40 envisaged schools visiting Ol Pejeta Conservancy for educational excursions with the aim of exposing young learners to wildlife and conservation and in turn reaching to the communities the learners come from.
Domestic Tourism Consumer Campaigns

The Domestic Tourism Unit at KTB is currently running consumer campaigns that are aimed at increasing tourism revenues and bed nights from the domestic segment throughout the year, and especially to take advantage of the current low season offers. As part of the campaign, we have an ongoing Integrated Consumer campaign being carried out on several platforms including Television, Radio, Print and social media and this will run for another month.

Members of LWF are encouraged to take advantage of these opportunities to promote their facilities and services and the respective local destinations by sharing consumer offers focused on the Domestic Travelers. Please keep the domestic consumer in mind when submitting the offers; we have received offers in the past that were great but off the mark when it came to the pricing.

Please send us your special offers for the domestic market which will be uploaded on www.magicalkenya.com/tembea by filling out the attached form (offers will also be uploaded on our social platforms). The same can be emailed to tembeakenya@ktb.go.ke and copied in to Alphonse Munguti at amunguti@ktb.go.ke and Jonathan Koinange at jmbiyu@ktb.go.ke

We appreciate your continued support in our destination marketing efforts and we trust that you will find this campaign beneficial in our efforts to grow sales from the domestic market.

Courtesy: Eco Tourism Kenya

KTF Statement 24th May 2014

Dear All,

As you are all aware, a number of measures were announced yesterday by H. E. the President in support of tourism recovery.

The KTF Chairman wishes to clarify as follows:

1. The measures were arrived at following TWO consultative meetings between H.E The President, The Governors from tourism Counties, Tourism CS Kandie, Treasury officials, KTB management and KTF Executive Board members.

2. The consultative meetings discussed and proposed a wide range of recovery measures, some of which were unfortunately not captured in the final announcement by H. E. the President. A number of reasons were given for this omission and a way forward identified.

3. Removal of VAT on tourism services and Conservation fees was the No. 1 request in the recovery proposals presented by industry with an 18-month reprieve expected to be factored in to assist recovery efforts. While the meetings initially agreed on the need for the reprieve, the President at the final meeting explained that this was not possible IMMEDIATELY as it required further consultations with Treasury and a Parliamentary process to approve. Negotiations will continue under the auspices of the Task Force.

4. Park Fees were to immediately reduce to a maximum of $80. While this may not be much of a decrease, the opportunity exists for direct discussions with park authorities regarding specific incentives that can be developed. A series of meetings

Laikipia listings

SMALLER LODGES
- Borana
- El Karama Ranch
- Il Ngwesi Lodge
- Keja Starbeds
- Lewa Wilderness
- Lisaha Wilderness
- Mukutan Retreat
- Ngobit River Lodge
- Ol Galibi Community Lodge
- Ol Malo
- Rutundu Log Cabins
- Saluk Lodge
- Sasaab Lodge - Samburu
- Sirikoi
- Solio Lodge
- Sosian
- Tassia

RANCH HOUSES
- Kifaru House
- Laragai House
- Lewa House
- Lelldaiga Hills
- Mukima House
- Mutamaiyu House
- Ol Pejeta House
- Pelican House

CAMPSITES
- Bobong
- Il Polei Conservancy
- Kapuria Community
- Kari Kari Group Ranch
- Morupoi Group Ranch
- Mukogodo Forest Reserve
- Ngare Ndare Forest
- Nkororiti Group Ranch
- Tiematim Group Ranch

TENTED CAMPS
- Elephant Watch Camp
- Ezemorit
- Kirkiche Camp
- Kitch Camp
- Lemarti’s Camp
- Lewa Safari Camp
- Makena’s Hills
- Ol Pejeta Bush Camp
- Porini Rhino Camp
- Sangare Ranch Tented Camp
- Sarara Tented Camp
- Sweethotels Tented Camp

HOTELS
- Mt. Kenya Safari Club
- Thomson’s Falls Lodge
- Sportsman’s Arms Hotel

ADVENTURES
- Crane Experience
- Karisia Walking Safaris
- Kenya Treks
- Nanyuki River Camel Camp
- Northern Frontier Ventures
- Offbeat Safaris
- Ol Lolokwe Nature Trails
- Ol Maiser Camels
- Riding Wild
- Rift Valley Adventures
- Walking Wild

AIR CHARTERS
- Tropic Air

Tourism Sector Support
tourism@laikipia.org
Statement by President Uhuru Kenyatta on the Tourism Sector, Issued at State House, Nairobi, 23rd May, 2014

Fellow Kenyans,

As Kenyans are aware, the Tourism sector plays an important role in our economic development, both directly and indirectly. Since last year, the sector has experienced some challenges, which have impacted negatively on its performance.

After growing strongly and steadily between 2001 and 2007, tourism sector suffered its worse when the international arrivals declined by 31 percent due to, among others, the election related challenges and impact of international economic and financial crises.

Last year, international arrivals dropped further due to security related challenges. With the recent advisories from some in our traditional source market that account for about 46 percent, tourism sector is likely to continue facing difficulties.

In view of the importance of the tourism sector in Kenya’s economy, especially its multiplier effect on various sectors, the Government and stakeholders have agreed measures to get the numbers back into our hotels, and growing it on a sustained basis to at least 10 million visitors annually in a decade.

I now turn to the specific measures to stimulate tourism sector recovery

1. First, under Tax measures, the Government, with effect from 12th June 2014, will allow all corporate and business entities to pay vacation trip expenses for their staff on annual leave in Kenya and deduct such expenditures in their taxes.

2. Through this measure, we shall directly give at least 25,000 Kenyans a chance to go for a week’s holiday every month at the expense of their employers, bringing to total over 300,000 additional Kenyan guests in our hotels throughout the country.

3. Second, with effect from 29th May 2014, all air ticketing services supplied by travel agents shall be exempt under the VAT Act, 2013 so as to enhance our competitiveness in the region.

4. Third, all outstanding income tax related refunds amounting owed to the tourism industry players will paid out by Kenya Revenue Authority not later than next Thursday 29th May 2014. We expect this measure to improve sector liquidity and cash-flow;

5. Fourth, to further encourage local guests in our National parks and attract both regional and international tourists, all park fees currently set at USD90 per non-resident and KShs.1,200 per resident guest shall be reduced to USD.80 and KShs.1,000,
respectively, effective 12th June 2014.

- Fifth, to encourage both local and international flights into Moi International Airport and Malindi Airport, the Government has reduced, with immediate effect, the landing charges by 40 percent and 10 percent, respectively.

- Sixth, Government has, with immediate effect, revoked the National Treasury Circular restricting the public service from holding conferences and other meetings in private hotels. It will now be possible for the public sector to hold conferences and meetings in private hotels throughout the country as when the need arises;

- Seventh, the Government has allocated adequate resources to expand Malindi Airport to international standards to allow for larger commercial aircrafts to land. This will encourage growth of charter tourism.

- Eighth, all budgetary resources, at the National Government, earmarked for foreign travel will, in Supplementary II, be reallocated to domestic travel to further give impetus to tourism sector recovery. Similarly, we urge Parliament and the Judiciary to do the same.

- Ninth, the National Government urges the County Governments to reallocate all their foreign travels budgets to domestic travels in order to spur growth of domestic tourism and sustain employment.

- In addition, the industry has identified a raft of measures, which will complement Government’s initiatives. In particular:

  - First, The industry will offer better vacation package to Kenyans compared to what they offer international package tours, estimated at about USD 60 daily per person on full board;

  - Second, The Government and Industry will develop an interactive Kenya Tourism Portal, within a week, to promote and manage booking and distribution of domestic guests under the Tourism Stimulus Program

  - Third, The Government and Industry will, within two weeks, develop a comprehensive promotional campaign program to popularize both international and domestic tourism.

And for the Medium to Long Term measures, the Government will shortly reconstitute a Task Force with a mandate of developing a strategy to address underlying challenges and positioning Kenya as the preferred destination for safari, commercial, educational and health, conferencing and professional services in Africa, attracting at least 5 million guests in the next 5 years.

Thank you and God bless youn a rare departure from norm, one of Kenya’s most respected senior industry leaders gave his read on the current situation.

Jake Grieves Cook, one of Kenya’s most respected senior industry leaders draws a realistic picture concerning Kenya’s current security situation.
Kenya Tourism Security: Travel industry leader speaks out

As a result of the latest British government travel advice which warns against non-essential travel to Mombasa and its environs, two of the largest British tour operators using charter flights to Mombasa have been obliged to stop operating holidays to the affected beach resorts listed in the new advisory and consequently have had to cancel all their charter flights between now and October as the bulk of their passenger bookings were to those resorts. Their last flight was yesterday and all their customers on holiday in Kenya and booked on their charter flights were obliged to come back on that flight and to curtail their holidays regardless of whether or not they were staying in the areas affected by the non-essential travel advice.

Tours of other international airlines continue operating their scheduled flights as normal to Nairobi and Mombasa.

The present British Foreign and Commonwealth Office (FCO) advice against non-essential travel can now be summarized as follows:

Avoid all non-essential travel to the following:

- areas within 60km of the Kenya-Somali border
- Kiwayu and coastal areas north of Pate Island
- Garissa District
- the Eastleigh area of Nairobi
- low income areas of Nairobi, including all township or slum areas
- Mombasa island and within 5km of the coast from Mtwapa creek in the north down to and including Tiwi in the south (this area does not include Diani or Moi international airport)

The change to the British Travel Advisory on Kenya comes about following several recent incidents of small home-made explosive devices being set off in Mombasa and Nairobi by the Al Shabaab terrorist organisation resulting in a number of deaths and injuries to our fellow Kenyans with the latest today in a crowded market place at Gikomba near the Eastleigh area of Nairobi.

A number of attacks have taken place over the last two years of small home-made explosive devices being set off in Mombasa and Nairobi by the Al Shabaab terrorist organisation resulting in a number of deaths and injuries to our fellow Kenyans with the latest today in a crowded market place at Gikomba near the Eastleigh area of Nairobi.

A number of attacks have taken place over the last two years at remote towns in the north-eastern province and also in some of the populous low-income housing areas of Mombasa and Nairobi in places such as bars or eating-houses, on public buses heading out of Nairobi from one of the big bus terminals and crowded markets. They have all involved small home-made devices aimed at ordinary Kenyans, apart from eight months ago when there was an attack by a number of terrorists at an up-market shopping mall in Nairobi which received wide international media coverage.

During the last three years Kenyan troops have been actively pursuing al-Shabaab in southeastern Somalia and have driven them out of their strongholds all along the Somali border with Kenya, including the port of Kismayu. As a result, Al Shabaab has been weakened in Somalia and the security situation in the area has stabilised and improved with incidents of Somali piracy in the last twelve months having virtually ended. In response to the Kenyan intervention, al-Shabaab and its sympathizers have conducted retaliatory attacks
against civilian and government targets in Kenya and have issued threats with the aim of trying to put pressure on Kenya to abandon its campaign against Al Shabaab in Somalia and to hand the area back to the terrorists. President Uhuru Kenyatta has confirmed that the Kenya government will not weaken in its resolve to stand up against terrorists and has expressed his disappointment that the British government is allowing terrorist threats to disrupt travel by British citizens to some parts of the Kenyan coast.

It is interesting to note that the latest British MI5 and MI6 assessment of the terrorist threat within mainland Britain itself is now rated as substantial (meaning an attack is a strong possibility) and these comments appear on their websites: The most significant terrorist threat to the UK ... comes from Al Qaeda ... and their affiliates and supporters. The threat is becoming more diverse as groups affiliated to and inspired by AQ develop more autonomy in directing operations. As such we are likely to see a more unpredictable picture in the future, potentially with more frequent, albeit less sophisticated attacks.” This underlines that terrorism is a global threat and not unique to Kenya, with similar risks evident in Britain, so it is to be hoped that the British government will give its backing and support to Kenya in standing up to the global terrorist threat.

The tourism stakeholders in Kenya have expressed their deepest sympathies to their fellow Kenyans who have been caught up in the recent incidents and have reiterated that the safety and security of our international visitors will continue to be the highest priority with very careful attention being given to see that they are well looked after while in Kenya and that they are taken only to places considered safe and where security is not considered to be at risk.

The safari areas and other tourist resorts are unaffected by these incidents and life is actually continuing very much as normal in Kenya apart from enhanced security being in place in all the areas frequented by tourists. The latest returning tourists all confirm that they have been having a very enjoyable time and that they experienced nothing but a friendly welcome from Kenyans and the general approach seems to be that terrorist threats should not be allowed to disrupt the lives of people in the free world.

ake Grieves-Cook ~ Managing Director Gamewatchers Safaris &Porini Camps

Kenya Says Tourism Industry At Stake Over Unrest

Kenya on Thursday unveiled a campaign to lure more tourism as it warned the crucial sector was facing a massive slump following a wave of deadly Islamist attacks.

The national tourist board said Kenya’s “brand equity” as a top safari and beach destination was at stake, with western nations issuing new warnings advising travellers to avoid many parts of the country due to the threat of attacks by Islamist militants.

It also said rampant poaching of elephants and rhino, together with high crime, was also proving to be a major tourism turn-off.

“In light of recent insecurity incidents affecting the destination, Kenya’s reputation as a safe destination has been compromised,” said Muriithi Ndegwa, managing director of the Kenya Tourism Board.

“There has been quite an effect, especially on the coast,” he added, a week after Britain, France, Australia and the United States urged their nationals to avoid all but essential travel to the coastal city of Mombasa, the scene of a string of recent bombings and shootings.

Last week two British tour operators evacuated hundreds
of tourists from resorts near Mombasa.

Tourism is a crucial part of Kenya’s economy: according to the most recent figures from 2011, the sector directly or indirectly accounted for 14 percent of economic output and roughly 12 percent of the workforce.

But the number of foreign visitors to Kenya slumped by 11 percent in 2013, when the country was gripped by fears of election-related political violence.

The current year is expected to also see a similar if not worse slide, particularly in the wake of the September 2013 attack on the Westgate shopping mall in Nairobi that was claimed by Somalia’s Al-Qaeda-linked Shebab rebels and left at least 67 dead.

Kenya has been targeted by the Shebab since sending troops to war-torn Somalia in 2011 to fight them.

The new scheme was unveiled on the same day as a top Shebab chief vowed to bring their war to Kenya.

Tour operators have also complained that last year’s introduction of VAT has also pushed up prices, reduced margins and has left Kenya’s safari and beach offerings far more expensive than those of neighbouring Tanzania.

The Tourist Board said it would be spending 200 million shillings ($2.23 million) to market the country and “put Kenya’s tourism firmly on a recovery path”.

Measures planned include a “global online reputation management campaign” -- with the notable aim of trying to get positive news about Kenya score higher in search engine results.

“I wish to assure the international community that Kenya remains a safe destination,” Ndewga said.

Part of the plan also involves trying to lure more tourists from China -- already a major investor in the country. Earlier this week the government said it wanted to attract a million Chinese tourists a year, up from 45,000 at the moment.

“Courtesey: Daily Nation

Kenya targets Chinese tourists to save industry

China has promised to bring more tourists to

Cabinet Secretary for East African Affairs, Commerce and Tourism Phyllis Kandie will next week visit China as part of the deal to woo Chinese tourists to Kenya.

MsKandie met the Vice Chairman of the China National Tourism Administration Zhifa Wang, the Chinese ambassador to Kenya Liu Xianfa and other officials Monday.

The CS described the meeting as a “follow-up” to the matters Kenya agreed to with the Chinese Premier Li Keqiang, who was in the country about a week ago.

In 2004, the China National Tourism Administration and the Kenya Tourist Board signed the Memorandum of Understanding on the implementation plan for organised group travel by Chinese citizens to Kenya.

MsKandie said the MOU was signed by the previous government and she plans to see follow up the agreement.

Kenya even as the West maintained travel warnings that the country is not a safe destination.

“The Chinese government is very interested to see Kenya tourism sector and its promotion and
Last week, The Kenya Tourism Board launched an aggressive marketing and awareness campaign to woo tourists from China following enhanced bilateral relations between the two countries.

KTB Managing Director Muriithi Ndegwa said they are expecting more tourists from China.

He said tour operators selling Kenya in the Chinese market have reported positive forward bookings for this year.

However, KTB figures showed a decrease in the number of tourists from China as well as other source markets last year. China declined by 10.3 per cent to 37,062 visitors from 41,303 in 2012.

The tourism industry is currently experiencing a myriad challenges most of which are regulatory and policy issues, such as Prohibitive taxation on the industry, underfunding of tourism marketing and damage to destination image due to security incidents.

The industry has continually raised these issues for redress, including a press conference held by KTF on 16th May calling for government intervention to resolve the crisis facing the sector and by extension, the entire economy, owing to tourism’s significant multi sector linkages.

Engagements with senior government officials and with the President, led to the constitution by the President of the ‘Tourism Recovery Task Force’, to identify measures to steer the sector back on the recovery path.

A budget allocation of Kshs200 million in the just ending financial year was announced by the government for implementation of the recommendations of the team. In anticipation of the funding, the recovery committee, in consultation with the industry,

development,” she said adding that during the meeting Monday, they agreed to boost tourism numbers by linking the players in the both markets with each other to exchange ideas.

The MOU gave Kenya “Approved Destination Status” from the Chinese government.

The Chinese officials said China has about 10 million tourists visiting other countries every year.

The tourism sector received a major beating last week when the US, UK, Australia and France asked its citizens to avoid visiting Kenya.

On Sunday while speaking to a crowd in Kikuyu, Kiambu County after attending a thanksgiving service at Alliance High School, President Kenyatta told off Western countries that have warned their nationals against visiting Kenya for fear of terrorist attacks.

He said Kenya will remain an attraction to other tourists who will visit the country.

Tourism Recovery Faces Many Huddles

The tourism industry is currently experiencing a myriad challenges most of which are regulatory and policy issues, such as Prohibitive taxation on the industry, underfunding of tourism marketing and damage to destination image due to security incidents.

The industry has continually raised these issues for redress, including a press conference held by KTF on 16th May calling for government intervention to resolve the crisis facing the sector and by extension, the entire economy, owing to tourism’s significant multi sector linkages.

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A budget allocation of Kshs200 million in the just ending financial year was announced by the government for implementation of the recommendations of the team. In anticipation of the funding, the recovery committee, in consultation with the industry,
identified a number of short term and long term recovery measures, with the short term measures earmarked for implementation using the Kshs200 million budget. The agreed short term market recovery measures include:

- Destination perception management through media engagement to manage reporting, media campaign and endorsement by local celebrities
- International media Familiarization trip
- Reassurance visits to the traditional source markets

However, the implementation of the short term recovery measures is pending to date as the recovery funds have yet to be released, even as the financial year comes to a close.

As the industry continues to seek government redress over the regulatory issues, the industry, under the umbrella KTF is currently mobilizing its input into the recovery process, with one of the goals being to conduct audit to establish the contribution of the entire tourism value chain into the national economy, and based on these figures justify the calls to government to review the current prohibitive taxes levied on the industry; as well as support the ‘Why I Love Kenya’ campaign being spearheaded by KTB to promote a positive online image of the destination. Whereas these recovery measures are expected to temporarily ease the challenges arising from factors such as price un-competitiveness and security incidents, conclusive redress requires government intervention in support of tourism by review of the current taxation regime on the sector, improvement of security and increased engagement with the foreign missions in the country to keep the negative travel advisories in check.

Author: Immelda Ndomo
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