



PRESS RELEASE

FUNDS RAISED FOR THE CONSERVATION OF ELEPHANTS IN KENYA

Amboseli, Saturday, 9th October 2021: The conservation of Elephants in Kenya has received a major boost after the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife announced that it had mobilised 16.5 Million shillings towards this initiative against the target of 100 million within the financial year 2021 - 2022.

This announcement was made during the inaugural Magical Kenya Tembo Naming Festival held at the Amboseli National Park, Kajiado County. During the event, corporates and individuals were allowed to adopt and name selected elephants after donating funds towards the initiative, which is aimed at boosting conservation efforts of the endangered species.

The elephants were adopted and named during the event which was officiated by Tourism and Wildlife Cabinet Secretary Hon. Najib Balala. The CS lauded the initiative as a move towards the inclusion of the public in conservation as well as providing enough resources for the protection of Elephants in Kenya. The elephants named include baby elephants (2020 - 2021), the big tuskers and twins.

“This is certainly a great milestone for Kenya, this initiative will go a long way in ensuring that Elephants are protected in Kenya not only for ourselves, but also for the future generations. We all have a role to play in conservation and I therefore commend the team that has worked tirelessly to ensure that this is a success. I urge other like-minded individuals and organizations to join us in this noble initiative now and in the future,” said CS Hon. Balala.

He also noted that the namers in the 2021 Magical Kenya Elephant Naming Festival had set a precedent that the ministry would be working towards achieving every year going forward. “We have raised Sh.16.5 million so far this year and we plan to hit our target at the close of the financial year; I congratulate all the namers and assure them that the funds will be used to ensure that our majestic elephants are well conserved. We want to look at issues concerning human Wildlife conflict, tracking of the elephants through collaring as well as construction of electric fences and community engagement among other issues”

On her part, Kenya Tourism Board CEO Dr. Betty Radier thanked the sponsors for embracing the initiative, noting the huge role conservation plays in tourism and by extension supporting livelihoods.

“I thank the namers and those who contributed for embracing and being part of this initiative. Conservation of our wildlife resources remains key for us to ensure that future generations enjoy our country’s heritage, natural resources and the incredible species that live within it. With our tourism being largely dependent on our natural resources including wildlife, it is important that we all ensure they are



well protected and maintained. By so doing, we will ensure that tourism continues playing its key role in spurring the economy and supporting the many livelihoods that depend on it,” said Dr Radier.

KWS Director General Brigadier (retired) John Waweru said that the goal of the festival is to secure a future for elephants and their habitats in peaceful co-existence with humans while providing benefits and for posterity.

“As revealed during the recently concluded Wildlife Census, there is an urgent need to conserve our wildlife, especially the species classified as endangered or threatened. While it is important to note that we have made huge progress in this, the continued loss of ecosystem and rising human-elephant conflicts continue to derail our efforts in this regard,” Said Waweru

Kajiado Governor Joseph Ole Lenku, who also graced the festival, urged conservation organisations to involve local communities in wildlife conservation noting they are the unsung heroes in this noble task. The Governor expressed his gratitude to KWS for being fast in responding to cases of human-wildlife conflict.

The Governor said there was need to establish wildlife corridors to enable animals to freely move between Amboseli and Tsavo West and Tsavo East National Parks. This, he said, can be realized through fundraising to meet costs of the dynamics of establishing such corridors.

The population of African savannah elephants has plummeted by at least 60% over the past 50 years, resulting in their classification as "endangered" in the latest update of the IUCN's "danger list". The Amboseli ecosystem is home to about 1,800 elephants with the highest population found in the Tsavo ecosystem, standing at 14,000.

In recent years, elephant poaching has reduced significantly leading to a surge in elephant populations in Kenya. According to the Kenya Wildlife Census Report, Kenya is home to a total of 36,280 elephants, representing a 21 percent growth from 2014, when poaching was at its peak. This increase has been realised thanks to the sustained government crackdown on poaching and illegal ivory trade.

However, the report also notes that human-elephant conflict has increased in many regions within the country as a result of the increasing loss of habitat and competition in land use.

Through the Tembo Naming Festival which will be an annual event, the government seeks to address these challenges with the hope of increasing the numbers of these species.

The 2021 namers Included:

African Wildlife Foundation (AWF), Animal Adoption, Advocacy LLC, Bonfire Adventures, Chandaria Foundation, Digimatt Solutions, East African Breweries Ltd,



East Africa Safari Rally Ltd, Elephant Cooperation, KCB, Ken and Joana Wafia, Kenya Convention Bureau, Kenya Tourism Board, Mr. Mahesh Wanigasekera, Mayleen Corporation, Mediheal Hospital, Oltukai Lodge, Penguins Adventure, Prof. Charles Musyoki, Salil Karim, Tour Operators Society of Kenya, Tourism Fund, Twiga Tours and Versatile Photographers.