

## **HANDING-OVER OF ANTI-POACHING MOTOR VEHICLES AND MOTORBIKES BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR WILDLIFE TO PROJECT PARTNERS IN THE TSAVO AND MAASAI MARA LANDSCAPES**

PS Wildlife Prof Segor today 10<sup>th</sup> January 2022 at KWS headquarters to officially handed over 5 patrol motor vehicles and 20 motorbikes valued at KSh. 35 million to the Maasai Mara and Tsavo landscape Partners as part of a GEF/UNDP Project aimed at ***Combating Poaching and Illegal Wildlife Trafficking in Kenya through an Integrated Approach.***

This Project is financed by the GEF Trust Fund through UNDP-Kenya to the tune of US\$ 3.8 million and also benefits from parallel co-financing by the Kenyan Government, the Narok and Taita-Taveta County Governments and key wildlife associations, resulting in a total project value of US\$ 19 million and is expected to run until 2024.

These two landscapes of Masai Mara and Tsavo are the last frontiers for wildlife and need to be guarded vehemently. In 2016, 61 elephants and 3 rhinos were poached in the Maasai Mara and Tsavo ecosystems. Today, these numbers have reduced to 5 elephants and zero rhinos. This Project will ensure these numbers remain low by strengthening the capacity of Project Partners by providing the necessary equipment and support to protect our precious wildlife.

The Project Partners who we are working together using an integrated approach and who are the beneficiaries of these patrol vehicles and motorbikes Include:

- i. Kenya Wildlife Service who will receive **2 vehicles** and **4 motorbikes** for use in the Tsavo Conservation Area;
- ii. Narok County Government who will receive **2 vehicles** for use in the Maasai Mara National Reserve;
- iii. Maasai Mara Wildlife Conservancies Association who will receive **1 Vehicle** and **10 motorbikes** for use in the Conservancies forming the buffer zone around the Masai Mara National Reserve; and
- iv. Taita Taveta Wildlife Conservancies Association who will receive **6 motorbikes** for use across the Taita-Taveta Ranches.

As part of the establishment of a multi-agency anti-poaching Task Force in the Maasai Mara and two wildlife security hubs in Tsavo, the provision of these vehicles and motorbikes is the first step in facilitating local stakeholders in the regions, with the much-needed resources and increasing their capacity to coordinate pre-emptive and responsive efforts in the fight against poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking.

This initiative is led by the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife as the implementing partner and prescribes a long-term solution in the Maasai Mara and Tsavo landscapes, via a highly coordinated approach within and between wildlife management and law enforcement entities, County governments, as well as wildlife conservancies established by local communities.

The event marks a critical step towards increasing the effectiveness of protected areas, conservancies, and local law enforcement agencies to reduce poaching and illegal wildlife trafficking in threatened species in the important Masai Mara and Tsavo landscapes dominated by wildlife.