

THE VALUES AND CHALLENGES OF PROTECTING DIVERSE PARK SYSTEMS: *The Case of Tanzania National Parks*

Paper Presented at the 3rd Summit Conference on Peace through Tourism

2nd-5th October 2005

Royal Cliff Beach Resort, Pattaya, Thailand

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Tanzania National Parks



BACKGROUND

- Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA) manages twelve National Parks totaling 42,000 square km, with two new additional parks to be included in the parks system very soon. Three existing parks are also to be extended to include some identified ecologically important areas.
- The current parks system makes about 4.2% of the total country area, which is quite significant compared to other countries.
- Ecologically, the national parks system is linked with a network of other categories of wildlife protected areas including the famous Ngorongoro Multiple Land Use Protected Area, Game Reserves and Game Controlled Areas
- In executing its functions, TANAPA is guided by a clear vision, mission and mandate



THE DIVERSITY OF NATIONAL PARKS SYSTEM

- Tanzania has a rich and diverse spectrum of fauna and flora, including a wide variety of endemic, rare, endangered and threatened species.
- In order to ensure diversity in the National Parks System, a comprehensive evaluation is always done to ensure;
 - the parks are representative of existing country's ecological systems
 - the parks have an adequate diversity of fauna and flora
 - the parks include rare species and special features that need special protection
 - their size and location ensures long-term ecological viability
 - buffering activities are compatible or can be improved to be environmentally friendly
 - surrounding landscapes and boundaries are ecologically intact
- Based on the above criteria, the National Parks System has a combination of different ecological systems of the country, ranging from coastal ocean and lakes beaches, to the typical mountain temperate systems. .



THE VALUES OF THIS DIVERSITY

Direct (Quantifiable Benefits)

- Revenues generated from tourism, which contribute significantly to the GDP of the country. At present, the tourism industry contributes 16% of the total GDP, and 25% total export earnings
- Maintains a competitive advantage over other destinations through a unique product mix, that meets the needs and desires of different market segments and niches. At present average annual increase in visitor numbers in national parks is between 10-14% annually.
- Ensures potential for more diversification of tourism activities and adding value to products life cycles. This includes potential integration of ecological and different cultural values, as the country has about 120 tribes each with unique culture.
- Reasonably fair distribution of direct tourism impacts through community enterprises
- Provides more room for contributing more to the country's targets of increasing the sectors' contribution of GDP from 16% to 25% and export earnings from 25% to 30% by the year 2010.

Indirect Benefits (Unquantifiable)

- Overall improved biodiversity status and environmental services
- Providing opportunity for scientific research (on site laboratories)
- Ensuring effective protection of water catchments for commercial and subsistence use, hence contributing significantly to the country's social welfare and economy.
- Amenity values
- Despite the fact that all these values are unquestionable, there are divergent views on how local communities should continue to benefit from the existence of these parks
 - the debate can be summarized as revolving around issues of ecological integrity of the areas and sustainable development
 - the two concepts remain vague and slippery, and have different meanings to different people
 - there is no single solution except compromising with local people



WHAT ARE THE CHALLENGES

1/ Community Related Challenges

- Poaching
- Encroachment into national parks
- Increased human population and activities in important wildlife corridors and dispersal areas
- Increased human/wildlife conflicts
- Limited capacity of local communities to venture into tourism enterprises

2/ Tourism Issues

- Increased pressure for over-development
- Difficult access to the southern and western parks, making them sleeping giants
- Very high dependence on international tourism



Ecological/Economic Issues

- Limited scientific understanding of ecosystem dynamics
- Declining numbers of certain wildlife and plant species
- Increased cases of wildlife diseases due to increased interaction with humans or human related impacts
- Monetization of ecological benefits of these parks as a basis for convincing individual decision making process that conservation is more beneficial compared to other forms of land use (influencing individual consumer and production behaviour).
 - Here there is a very strong challenge of reaching consensus on the usefulness of such measures as Willingness To Pay (WTP), Hedonic Pricing, Travel Cost Method (TCM) and Contingent Valuation
- Invasive (exotic species)



Existing Interventions

- Strengthening of the Community Outreach Programme in order to address critical community issues
- Partnering with local and international NGOs to develop capacity for community tourism enterprises
- Development of an Integrated Tourism Master Plan at the National Level in order to map the way forward in tourism activities
- Ensuring adherence to the Development and Action Lease Procedure (DALP) which guides all tourist investments in national parks
- Ensuring existence of General Management Plans/Environmental Impact Assessments (GMP/EIA) documents for each park
- Development of a Strategic Tourism Marketing Plan in order to coordinate tourism activities effectively
- Working closely with the Tanzania Wildlife Research Institute (TAWIRI) in order to prioritize and conduct both scientific and management research



CONCLUSION

- The secret behind success is the right planning and funding
- Well managed tourism ensures the chances of enhancing our environment and protecting our biodiversity.
- In order to appreciate what is present in these national parks, you need to consider what is absent in other national parks of other countries and why
- Of course, **PEACE** in Tanzania is a among the key factors in this success
- You are welcome to visit and enjoy our well managed national parks in a peaceful destination- **TANZANIA**

