

## **ABSTRACT**

### Tourism and the Conservation of Biodiversity in Eastern Africa: Experiences from (UNDP-GEF)

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The Global Environment Facility (GEF) provides funding for securing global environment benefits in the broad sectors of biodiversity, climate change, international waters and land degradation. A particular priority for biodiversity support is ensuring the sustainability of protected area systems at national and sub-national levels. Protected Areas (PAs) are the principal mechanism for maintaining large national areas and the wildlife resources they contain.

The conservation of PAs requires considerable levels of funding; the usual sources of revenue, (apart from government and international subsidy/support) is from tourism. The GEF takes guidance from the international Convention on Biodiversity Diversity; which has three main tenets: the conservation of biodiversity; the sustainable use of biodiversity; and ensuring the equitable distribution of benefits from that sustainable use. Creating national parks is the first step; allowing properly regulated tourism is the second; and ensuring tourism revenues feedback into overall society and the local people that may be negatively impacted by park creation is the third.

Responsible tourism therefore is a major revenue source for conservation; but tourism can have many other spin off benefits. These including sharing lessons and concerns, alleviating poverty, and ameliorating conflict or support for peaceful existence instead of antagonism.

This paper draws on experiences of UNDP in implementing GEF biodiversity projects across the Eastern Africa region, with reference to conservation projects that include a tourism element. These experiences; include:

- Jozani Forest on Zanzibar and community conflict reduction.
- Mnazi Bay Marine Park and the Mtwara/Ruvuma Corridor.
- Rwanda and the Montane forests.
- The case of Ethiopia, where tourism has a minor wildlife element.
- Amboseli and Maasai Communities in Kenya/Tanzania.
- Regional interaction in East Africa – ‘Cross-Border Tourism’.