PROCEEDINGS

THE GREAT MARA DEBATE
Surviving challenges of conservation and development

21st September 2006, Holiday Inn Hotel, Nairobi

Hosted by:

ECO tourism

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Report - The Great Mara Debate, Holiday Inn, Nairobi

Host
Ecotourism Kenya

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CONTENTS

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY..................................................................................................................4
2.0 DEBATE FORMAT...........................................................................................................................5
3.0 WELCOME NOTE – by Tony Clegg-Butt..................................................................................5
4.0 KEYNOTE ADDRESS- Conservation and developments in Kenya - prospects and challenges: by Dr. R. Leakey .................................................................6
5.0 PRESENTATIONS ...........................................................................................................................9
  5.1 Past management strategies: by G. Masinde .................................................................9
  5.2 Investing in the Mara – options: by Jake Grieves-Cook .........................................12
  5.3 Regulating developments in the Mara ecosystem: by Mr. Njoka ..................18
  5.4 Sustaining local livelihoods - community options: by Francis Nkoitoi ..........21
  5.5 Impacts of land use on wildlife in the Mara ecosystem: ILRI Report presented by Dr. Hellen Gichohi .................................................................22
  5.6 Policy analysis - Land use economics, trade off between agriculture and wildlife conservation: by Mohamed Said ..................................................26
6.0 DEBATE......................................................................................................................................26
  6.1 Key question ..............................................................................................................................26
  6.1.1 Proposed solutions .............................................................................................................27
  6.1.2 Comment and reactions ......................................................................................................28
  6.1.3 Questions ............................................................................................................................29
  6.1.4 Major issues raised .............................................................................................................30
  6.2 WAY FORWARD ......................................................................................................................30
    6.2.1 The Greater Mara management plan ................................................................................30
    6.2.2 Conclusion .......................................................................................................................31
7.0 APPENDICES...............................................................................................................................34
  APPENDIX A: Program for the Great Mara Debate .......................................................34
  APPENDIX B: List of Participants .........................................................................................35
1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The purpose of this debate was to bring together relevant interest groups to discuss the way forward for the greater Mara, and thereby gain consensus on the policy guidelines that would aid in planning the future of “The Mara reserve”.

The objectives of the debate were to:

- Come up with a shared view of implications of past and current trends;
- Generate recommendations that can support policy reforms aimed at management of the Mara and similar biodiversity hot-spots.

A key principle that drove the debate was its focus on generating recommendations to ensure that future developments around and within the Mara ecosystem which are economically viable, socially and environmentally sustainable.

The papers presented covered broad considerations such as past management strategies; investment options in the Mara; and development regulations in the Mara. Other papers focused on sustaining local livelihoods (community options); monitored impacts and recommendations for the way forward.

Among other issues, the following were the key highlights from the debate sessions:

1. The problems highlighted by the participants as facing the greater Mara include; overdevelopment; lack of benefits to the community/returns to land; lack of planning; lack of unity and clarity of vision, quality of products; land use and land tenure issues; poor governance; inadequate policies, weak enforcement of law; destruction of water catchment areas; insecurity; political interference and poor infrastructure.

2. To assist with sustainable income/livelihood and sustainable conservation of the greater Mara, it was a general view of the stakeholders that having a management plan for the Greater Mara was one of the best way forward
in addressing the developments pressures presently being experienced in the area.

3. It was agreed that developing the plan should be an all inclusive process with all stakeholders involved. It was further suggested that besides the stakeholder representations in the steering committee, other technical groups such as ILRI, SNV, AWF, WWF, Serengeti and Mau forest representative to be included for technical backstopping.

4. At the end of the debate, it was the general view of the participants that the initial 20% of the total funding should be solicited from ACC, SNV, Base Camp, AWF, Cheli and Peacock. Ecotourism Kenya was mandated to organize a quarterly meeting to monitor the progress and to deal with issues of economics, institutions and governance.

2.0 DEBATE FORMAT

The morning session consisted of several paper presentations on conservation and development in Kenya; past management strategies; investment options in the Mara; development regulations; and sustainable local livelihoods (community options). Thereafter, there was a debate by participants on issues raised from presentations.

The afternoon session was devoted to plenary discussions and recommendations were made on the way forward in light of the challenges facing the greater Mara ecosystem.

3.0 WELCOME NOTE – by Tony Clegg-Butt

Mr. Tony Clegg-Butt, chairman Ecotourism Kenya welcomed all participants and briefly introduced the purpose of the Great Mara Debate. He mentioned that the Greater Mara ecosystem is so described owing to the large extent of land it covers and the considerable attraction it offers to tourists. He remarked that the debate was necessitated by community frustrations as a result of establishment of new lodges and camps and that the number of the latter currently stands at over 70. He then explained that there has been no neutral forum to bring together
the community, environment and business sectors to address these issues. He further stated that there are issues affecting the Mara that have been raised in other fora and nothing has been done about them so far. He concluded his address by requesting participants to explore and debate on ways of saving the Mara.

4.0 KEYNOTE ADDRESS- Conservation and developments in Kenya - prospects and challenges: by Dr. R. Leakey

Dr. Leakey commenced his address by noting that not so much has changed over the last 20 years as far as conservation and development issues are concerned in Kenya. The same people, same players and same problems persist to-date. The problem he said, is not talking but it is listening that people get into debates and meetings with an intension of sticking to their own corners with a defensive attitudes and mind sets and are never willing to listen to other people views.

He said he was addressing the meeting from the viewpoint of a landowner and not as a wildlife or tourism expert. He further commented that the concept of ecotourism has been presented by proponents as a ‘green’ and good entity while in reality, ecology would be best served without tourism” where nobody goes anywhere near wildlife habitats”. “He warned that no authority should ignore the ability of people to demand and get change” He commented that people have personal, corporate and political interests in the Mara reserve. The creation of National Environment Management Authority - NEMA, though young, untested, lacking in capacity and top-heavy could be the saving grace of Kenyan wildlife future. The authority can be used by wise policy makers to act as triggers and trip wires that can coarse and force development action that are decorporatized and depersonalized but which have in mind the greater good of Kenya and its ecosystem. He said that such authorities have been established in other countries with good success. Dr. Leaky said that the conflicts between biodiversity ecosystem/ natural pristine land beauty with land rights is not unique
to Kenya and has been witnessed in others countries such as US (Yellow stone) and in Europe.

He reminded the participants that the Greater Mara reserve like any other protected area in Kenya was never demarcated to survive on its own without the involvement of interest groups, and therefore unless local land owners are guaranteed a regular income for setting aside their land for conservation, the challenges of conserving the Mara will remain the same. The Mara’s sustainability is dependent proper management of the buffer zones surrounding it. Many species of animals move in and out to these dispersal area at certain seasons of the year. He also said that the Mara reserve is the jewel in the crown for Kenyan tourism and should remain mobile in the southern front occupied by the Serengeti and the northern front occupies by individual group ranches. The northern region has communities that have lived there for centuries and will continue living there for sometime. This same rule applies to Tsavo and Samburu conservation areas.

He dwelt on the issue of land ownership, land use and land rights at length and that NEMA should come up with a national land use policy that would enable land owners to sale certain rights in their land such as trees, water etc, while an till retain ownership of the land. Land use restriction around a protected area cannot succeed unless landowners can genuinely gain from the use without depending on the market forces in the tourism sector. He commented that this has succeeded very well in urban areas e.g. control of factory emission and this can be replicated in rural area. He however, was skeptical of the government’s ability to deliver change in the Mara, when governments was known to resort to easy ways, like land adjudication, each time it was faced with land use challenges. He stated the present challenges to tourism as bird flue, terrorism and global warming among others. He concluded the keynote address by saying that the Mara has to be made better and improved, and that we either be selfless and do something for the future of the Mara or be selfish and have no future.
Questions and Reactions on the Keynote Address

Q 1. Is it possible for you to synthesize your recommendations on actual steps to take when leasing land?

ANS. Protected areas should have buffer zones/dispersal areas, as these are critical component of the broader ecology. There is need to find a way in which the land owner has long term guarantee of income that is not totally dependent on the vicissitudes of tourism and good will. The concept of the national conservancies has been a success story in Europe and USA, where land rights are sold and not the land itself. Land is a critical instrument for collateral in the money market in Kenya and owners cannot easily sell ownership. No protected land has any future unless the issue of buffer zones is addressed.

Q 2. Sharing the revenue with the community was your recommendations to NCC when you were KWS directors, do you consider this a lease program?

ANS: The revenues from parks have been shared widely until the local people don’t get anything. In some cases it is giving money to the ‘Wazees’, which do not trickle down to community households. The country councils that manage the parks themselves get less than 50% of the revenue and so the concept of revenue sharing has not worked. This is because revenue flow is dependent on factors such as tourism abundance. The Mara reserve is bigger than Narok district, Kenya and east Africa. It is an African and international Jewel that must be preserved at all cost. There is therefore a need for binding document that will guarantee the flow of income to the landowners irrespective of tourism.

Q 3. The value of land is dependent on the owner’s ability and the resources that one has to invest in it. How would you determine the value of what you can harvest from a piece of land, considering that land outside reserves has significant value, some of which is yet to be picked up in the cause of time?
**ANS:** I suggest that with the existence of NEMA should, restrictions should be put on land use activities for the whole country. Independent valuation should be done to put a realistic value on what the land can produce. A national ban on certain activities around protected areas should be considered and the value of the land set in view of these bans.

**5.0 PRESENTATIONS**

**5.1 Past management strategies:** by G. Masinde

An overview of the Maasai Mara ecosystem

**Background:**

- Covers an area of approx 6,000 sq Km
- Forms the northern part of the world famous Serengeti-Mara ecosystem - 25,000 square km
- Population in the Mara basin is about 500,000 people
- Vegetation mainly Savannah biome, with several distinct habitats: grassland, bush land, riverine forest and rocky hillsides.

**Wildlife:**

- It hosts the largest herds of grazing mammals (237 herbivores/km2) and a biomass density of 29.9 tons/km2
- It is one of the most productive natural ecosystems in the world with over 450 mammalian species and 540 avian species.
- Famous for the 1million + wildebeest migrations in the Mara-Serengeti ecosystem.

**Tourism:**

- Tourism supports over 80% of the annual budget for Narok/Trans Mara County Council.
- About 231,000 visitors visited Mara in 2002
- Narok County Council survey 2005, indicate over 50 tourist facilities with a total bed capacity of 4000. This figure has risen to almost 70 facilities.
- The area generates Kshs. 500-600 million annually from tourism
- 70% of the tourist facilities are found outside the protected area
- 19% of the revenue of the two councils is distributed to the communities bordering the game reserve.
- At 80% revenue collection efficiency, there is a potential of collecting Kshs 1.8 billions

**Trends:**
- Human population has increased from 0.8 people/km² in 1950 to 14.7 people/km² in 2002.
- There is an increased settlement at Mara Rianta, Talek, Sekenani Oloolamutia, Aitong and oldonyo Rinka. The closest boma is only 1km from the Reserve boundary.
- Area under agriculture (mainly wheat farming) has increased from 4,875 ha in 1975, to 11,000 ha in 1985 and to 50,000 ha in 1995.
- Wildlife numbers have been declining for the past 25 years
- However about 60% of the wildlife species are more abundant in the reserve than the group ranches.

**Human & Wildlife trends**

![Human and non-migratory wildlife population densities in Mara](image-url)
Challenges and Concerns:

- Water catchment degradation
- Lack of effective institutional framework
- Poor governance
- Lack of management & investment plan
- Poor infrastructure and facilities
- Reduction of wildlife dispersal area
- Benefit sharing mechanisms
- Human – wildlife conflict

Interventions:

*Maasai Mara Management Association (MMMA) formed in 1996:*

- Conserve integrity of Mara
- Improve infrastructure (roads)
- Improve security
- Improve revenue collection
- Minimise harassment of wildlife
- Land use planning (effected moratorium)

Community initiatives:

*Community based wildlife trusts - SIANA*

- Established conservation area (10,000ha) with assistance of Kshs 14million from EU-BCP
• Management by conservation committee

• Revenue collection from several camps (32)

• Benefit sharing remains a big challenge causing creation of 4 splinter groups

• Trust proposes to hand over management to an independent body

Way forward:

• Bring together all stakeholders to collaborate on charting out the future of the Mara.

• Development of ecosystem management plan

• Formation of a regulatory body at regional level – Mara ecosystem.

• Review the Wildlife & Land use policy to safeguard the catchment area and wildlife habitats outside protected areas.

5.2 Investing in the Mara – options: by Jake Grieves-Cook

1. The present challenges

2. The tourism products

3. The way forward - options

Present Challenges:

1. TOURISM Pressures on the “park” from increasing numbers of lodges and camps.

2. ENVIRONMENT Loss of habitat and reduced wildlife numbers both inside the park and in the Mara ecosystem outside the MMNR.

3. LOCAL PEOPLE many community members and individual landowners feel they receive little benefit from tourism.

Challenges – Tourism:

• The Mara ecosystem – world famous, a “must-see” for all safari tourists in Kenya.
• It should be a priceless national asset but in danger of being degraded if current trends continue – over development of camps and lodges concentrated along Mara River or park boundary and increasing settlement, cultivation and killing of wildlife in dispersal areas.

• High density of vehicles in some areas spoils the visitor experience.

• Mass-market tours v. exclusive wildlife safari. “vans”, “street cars”

• Quality of driver-guides?

• Management issues in the park: state of roads, off-road driving, rubbish at picnic sites

Challenges – Environment:

• Loss of wildlife habitat in the Mara ecosystem outside the gazetted reserve due to increased human settlement and more cultivation.

• In 1950 less than 1 person per sq km in the Group Ranches.

• Today 12 people per sq km. More homesteads, more livestock, more maize shambas, more wheat fields.

• More human settlement and changing land use leads to increasing human-wildlife conflict.

• In last 25 years wildlife numbers down by 70% across the Mara eco-system

• Resident wildebeest only 20% of what it was and big decline in major species.

• Reduction due to loss of rangeland – conversion of grazing areas into wheat, settlements, more intensive livestock rearing, killing of wildlife for bushmeat and to eliminate predators, nuisance animals

• The Group Ranches surrounding the MMNR – vital wildlife dispersal areas and a buffer zone to take pressure off the park.

• Loss of wildlife habitat outside the MMNR means reduction in wildlife to be seen in the park.
• Lack of incentives for communities outside the MMNR to conserve wildlife and to concentrate on livestock and cultivation means increasing human-wildlife conflict.

Communities: sub-division:

• In the early 1990s the Government of Kenya embarked on the subdivision of the group ranches to the north of the MMNR.

• Most of the western and northern sections of the Koiyaki Group Ranch have been subdivided into plots ranging from 60 to 150 ha which have been allocated to title deed holders; subdivision of the eastern part of the Group Ranch is currently ongoing.

• Following the subdivision of the Mara group ranches, much of the landscape has changed dramatically as the rangelands and wildlife dispersal areas have within a short period of time turned into smallholder farms. Recently the way forward to preserve the Greater Mara Ecosystem has been the subject of much debate.

Two approaches have been suggested:

1. The first imposes a moratorium on all development inside the MMNR and in its surrounding ranches and sub-divided plots, until a management plan is developed and implemented.

2. The second proposes the formation of community-owned conservancies where wildlife populations are able to disperse and tourist accommodation can be hosted – this would entice tourists away from the core MMNR area, relieving the Reserve of some of its present congestion.

The second option provides a more immediate solution in that it can prevent, or at least slow down, the process of rangelands and wildlife dispersal areas being converted into maize or wheat fields.

• The development of another new management plan is time consuming. It was first mooted in April and it is September now…
• Besides, the key issue here is its implementation. A management plan for the MMNR was prepared in 1983 on behalf of the Narok County Council where 74 recommendations were made, including zoning of the reserve and its adjacent areas and allowing for areas where limited or no development should be undertaken. Few, if any, of the recommendations were implemented.

• A Natural Resources Management Plan for 2001-2005 was prepared under guidance from the Africa Conservation Centre, but this too has not been implemented.

• NEMA has recently requested various stakeholders to participate in the preparation of a strategic plan for the Masai Mara Ecosystem; but this process too will take time before any recommendations are implemented and in the meantime landowners are likely to seek other ways to use their newly allocated plots which will mean further fragmentation and loss of habitat.

Challenges – communities:
The crux of the matter is that an individual landowner has several options:

• to sell part of his land to farmers / developers,

• to put up new housing developments,

• to fence the land and farm it himself,

• to lease it out for cultivation of maize or wheat,

• to have a tourist accommodation facility for tourists to

• stay in while visiting the nearby park,

OR to amalgamate his land with his neighbours to be part of a wildlife conservancy where there would be low-impact, low-density tourism in a properly planned development. Whatever gives the landowner the best financial return will be the option that is likely to be chosen.
Conclusions

- The current situation in the Greater Mara Ecosystem calls for immediate action to curb the conversion of rangelands within the Group Ranches into agricultural smallholdings.

- If this trend continues, the wildlife dispersal areas to the north of the Masai Mara National Reserve which are a critical component of the Mara Ecosystem will shrink, as will the buffer zone between wilderness and cultivated lands.

- The conservancy concept offers a solution to this problem. It is hoped that as a result of this initiative, the neighbouring communities will also set up similar conservancies, adjoining Olare Orok, so that a substantial wilderness area is created, providing a large wildlife dispersal area in one of the most spectacular ecosystems on earth.

- Problems with revenue distribution avoided as each landowner receives an income based on his acreage.

Ecotourism:

- Landowners putting their land into conservancies can earn an income without needing to have a camp on their own plot of land, so a lower density of beds / vehicles is needed.

- Partnership between landowners who earn income from the conservancy and tourism operators who generate the income from tourism.

- High yield visitors, paying higher rates for more exclusive wilderness experience.

- Low density of beds / vehicles.

- Walking, cultural interactions, quality guiding, 4x4 safari vehicles not vans.

- A better image for Kenya’s tourism
• A community or group of people owning or occupying land with Ecotourism may lack capital and business management experience.

• Ecotourism as a successful business enterprise normally involves some form of partnership or agreement between the community and a commercial safari operator or tourism management company

• Use of community-owned land for Ecotourism can generate benefits for landowners through guaranteed income and job creation.

• It offers an opportunity for rural land-owners to take advantage of a natural resource particularly in semi-arid areas where there are few alternatives.

• This is a business and a commercially experienced business partner is vital if the community lack these skills.

• The right partnership can bring lasting success!

A new approach:
1. Conservancies:
How the landowners earn a guaranteed income
2. High –yield tourism can generate higher returns for landowners and investors
The individual landowners earn a fair return

Conclusion
It is absolutely essential that tourist numbers are controlled and that the development of tourist facilities is properly planned to avoid the overcrowding of some areas by minibuses and safari vehicles or the haphazard development of lodges which has been common inside the MMNR and along its periphery. However where tourism stakeholders come forward with proposals for low impact developments that result in the establishment of wildlife conservancies owned by the landowners then this should be supported and encouraged.

The Way Forward
• Use NEMA and existing legislation effectively
• Ensure that all tourism projects submit EIAs, are approved by NEMA and comply with health and licensing requirements

The way forward to control and regulate developments
Through KTF and Ecotourism Kenya and ENSDA, have a two-pronged approach:

1. Oppose (all inappropriate developments – such as big lodges next to the park boundary and low quality accommodation units, which fail to meet basic standards.

2. Support APPROPRIATE development, such as where wildlife conservancies are established by landowners putting their parcels of land together to form a conservation area with small-scale ecotourism camps operating “low-density” tourism in order to generate an income for the landowners to make it worth their while to set their land aside as part of a bigger conservancy instead of developing it for agriculture or housing.

5.3 Regulating developments in the Mara ecosystem: by Mr. Njoka

Abstract:

• Statistics of development in the Mara ecosystem
• Negative effects of development
• Challenges that NEMA as an authority is facing
• Possible practical solutions.

Introduction:

• Maasai Mara ecosystem consists of Maasai Mara National Reserve and surrounding group ranches that fall within three eco-regions, i.e. 1) Mara, 2) Loita and 3) Suina.
• It’s ranked among the top five tourist attractions in the world (according to World Wildlife Fund, WWF).
• Supports comparatively unique portion of biological diversity
• Main source of revenue to several county councils.
• Mara ecosystem and adjoining areas indicate sharp decline in the population numbers of ungulates.
• There is need to secure this heritage for posterity.

Problem statement:
The Mara ecosystem is bestowed with a lot of natural resources the chief being land, and others wildlife and forests. The current major issues of concern in the ecosystem are:

• Conflict in land use practices.
• Increasing population growth.
• Environmental degradation.
• Land ownership.
• Mushrooming of tourist facilities among others.

Problem justification:
• Land use conflicts
• National Reserves are not ecologically self-sufficient.
• Clearing of natural forests.
• 2000 drought.
• River regime fluctuation.

Broad objective:
To integrate environmental conservation and economic development to provide sustainable development for posterity.
Specific objectives:

i) To give statistics of the current development in the Mara.

ii) To assess negative impacts of development on Mara ecosystem

iii) To outline the challenges that NEMA faces as an authority.

iv) To give recommendations on what can be done.

Statistics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Project Reports submitted to NEMA for review</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>From Narok District in 2005 and 2006</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camp proposed projects</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Others (irrigation, BTS, boreholes, etc)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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The negative effects of development:

- Mushrooming of unplanned tourism facilities.
- Deforestation.
- Land use conflicts.
- Disturbance of wildlife.
- Noise pollution.
- Air pollution.
- Off roads and over speeding.

Challenges that NEMA is facing:

- Lack of general management plan.
- Political pressure and the associated investor rush.
- Attitude towards EIA process.
• Inadequate finance and human resource capacity.

• Lack of public participation.

Recommendations:

• Development of general management plan.

• Better land use programmes.

• Appropriate zoning of the Mara.

• Establish the carrying capacity of each zone.

• Improvement and development of a definite infrastructure.

• Funding for the implementation of the five-year management plan.

5.4 Sustaining local livelihoods - community options: by Francis Nkoitoi

Challenges:

• Many NGO’s and organizations with no or little local community participation;

• No community benefits in terms of revenue from the Mara;

• Un-improved health and education facilities, high level of poverty incidence in the communities in the Mara;

• Land use and land tenure problems;

• Sub-division of the wildlife migratory corridors around the Mara;

• Over-developments of camps and lodges in the Mara;

• Encroachment in of the dispersal areas by crop-based agricultural activities i.e. wheat fields;

• Decline in livestock population.

Way forward:
• Regulate the sale of the land to the outsiders/ foreign investors;
• Promote community based conservancies;
• Develop the a management policy that promote conservation activities;
• Ensure that the revenue generated from the Mara trickle back to the community members;
• Improve the infrastructures for example schools, health facilities and roads;
• Establish livestock compensation kitty for each animal lost outside the conservation area;

Questions:
The following questions were raised by the presenter:
Q 1. How much could the participants assist to reduce the conflict, of animal and wildlife loss?
Q 2. Are there current research reports on the Mara ecosystem?
Q 3. How best can we own the regulatory framework enforcements in the Mara?
Q 4. If we have many NGO thinking about the Mara, how can we coordinate together to save the Mara?

5.5 Impacts of land use on wildlife in the Mara ecosystem: ILRI Report
presented by Dr. Hellen Gichohi

Outline of the Presentation:
• Key questions we need to ask ourselves on the trends on changes of land use and its impacts on wildlife at both regional, national and local scale (in this case the Mara)
• Where are the large in mammals in Africa and in particularly in Kenya
• Description on a framework on causes of wildlife loss and its consequences on wildlife population and environment
• What are the major land use changes and regional and landscape level.
• Wildlife population trends in the Mara ecosystem
• Potential impacts of land tenure and climate on wildlife distribution and population.
• Policy analysis - Trade-offs between agriculture, livestock keeping and biodiversity conservation
• The future of Mara – without action

Focal questions at three scales

Regional:
• Do wildlife and land use trends differ across savanna ecosystems in Kenya (Mara) and Tanzania (Serengeti)?
• Do trends differ inside and outside reserves?

Landscape:
• How is land use changing and how has this affected the number and distribution of wildlife populations, wildlife habitat and important migratory routes at the ecosystem scale?
• What are the mechanisms behind the interaction of people (cropland, settlement, conservation areas, and livestock grazing) and wildlife at fine scales?
• What are the trade-offs

Local (across pastoral to protected area boundaries):
• How does the population structure of particular species of wildlife differ between parks and pastoral lands?
• How do different forms of land use affect forage quality, predator risk, and water availability for wildlife and other species?
• What are the impacts of climate on wildlife population dynamics?

What is happening at a regional scale?

• Changes in land use - Most of our parks are now being encircled by agriculture especially in high agriculture potential areas.

What is happening at a local scale?
• Changes in land use - The southern Maasai land has a rich landscape of mountains, scarps, plains, habitats, wildlife and the rainfall varies across the landscape increasing from south east to north west;
• There is expansion of settlements in Koyiaki and Lemek after land tenure changes –settlement more than doubled in the last 20 years;
• There is decline in woodland cover in Koyiaki and Mara Reserve;

**Vegetation Loss** - The loss of vegetation and wet season range occurred in Kenya, while in Tanzania the Serengeti was buffered or cushioned the game management areas.

• Mechanised agriculture in the Mara ecosystem increased almost by 10 fold (5,000 ha in 1975 to about 50,000 ha in 1995).

Forest destruction of the water towers of the Mara - Large destruction of forest, which is already having a huge impact on the distribution of both wildlife, livestock and human settlements. As we continue with the destructions what are the potential impacts on the ecosystem in the next 10, 20 or 50 years?

**Wildlife population trends in the Mara Ecosystem 1977 – 2002:**

• Higher declines in the large herbivore population with exception of the zebra and elephant, moderate declines in smaller antelopes such as Grant’s gazelle and impala.
• Decline of the resident wildebeest population from about 150,000 to 40,000 in the last 25 years – heavy declines in the Loita plains.
• Higher declines in outer group ranches compared to the inner group ranches

**Impacts of agriculture on the wildebeest population:**

• Rate of decline was significantly higher in areas encroached by agriculture;
• Areas encroached by agriculture had significantly higher prior wildebeest densities;
• Agriculture selectively encroached optimal wildebeest habitat.

Asking the right questions:
1. Who cares? Who loses? Does anybody win? Are the negative effects big enough to capture the attention of policymakers?
2. So what? Is it a policy problem? What are the trade-offs?
3. What can be done? Do we know enough to act? Will it work? What are the risks? What will it cost?

Develop workable policy levers that effectively influence the ecological issue of interest.

Scenario – if we do not act now without serious intervention, here is what the Mara may well look like:
• Farms will border the Game Reserve on at least two sides.
• The Maasai way of life, and Maasai livestock, will remain only as a remnant.
• Wildlife populations will crash as the majority of their territory—the buffer zone—is no longer range.
• Game Reserve will have insufficient territory to support major numbers or diversity of wildlife.
• Wildlife income crashes too, as tourists have little reason to visit the Mara.
• However, with important wet-season and calving territory no longer accessible to wildlife, the Serengeti-Mara migration will also decline steeply. So will populations within the Serengeti itself.
• Ironically, the industry that destroyed wildlife tourism will also be in peril, since by then many areas will no longer be able to support intensive cultivation. These large barren areas will also be incapable of supporting wildlife or livestock.
5.6 Policy analysis - Land use economics, trade off between agriculture and wildlife conservation: by Mohamed Said

- For wildlife to compete with agriculture or livestock production we need to increase wildlife rent.
- The wildlife industry needs to pay significantly more to land owners to keep land free from development – the wildlife is competing with other land uses.
- The local communities need to be part of industry – they are partly the custodian of the wildlife outside the parks

Innovative ways for sustaining biodiversity:

- Making information available and accessible to all
- Payments of ecosystem services
- Equitable sharing of wildlife revenue amongst the community and other stakeholders.
- Community as equal partners in the conservation of biodiversity
- Manage lands through land use plans

6.0 DEBATE

Coordinator: Dr. Hellen Gichohi

6.1 Key question

The coordinator of the debate emphasized need for the key question before the discussion. The question was how do we improve the Mara ecosystem for the long-term well-being and interest of the present and future generations? In terms of:

I. Sustainable income and livelihood and;
II. Sustainable conservation?
6.1 Problems in the Mara

Several common problems emerged from the plenary discussion. These included:

1. Overdevelopment of tourist facilities such as camps and lodges;
2. Land use and land tenure problems – unclear land tenure status, and grabbing and sale of land is on the increase;
3. Lack of benefits to the community/returns to land: the local community are not getting value for their land in terms of benefits from tourism activities;
4. Poor governance by the relevant institutions and corruption in the sector;
5. Inadequate policies on land, tourism, wildlife, local government etc. The policies developed for the sector have been ad hoc, unimplementable and without consistency, continuity, or a long-term focus;
6. Deterioration in the quality of tourism products and poor pricing of products;
7. Destruction of water catchment areas caused by vegetation clearing for charcoal production; trampling and overgrazing by livestock; illegal harvesting of forest products; water pollution by agriculture and domestic activities.
8. Enforcement problems - widespread impunity and the slowness of law enforcement bodies working in the Mara;
9. Managements - lack of unity and clarity of vision because the industry actors and activities are not adequately coordinated;
10. Political interference and lack of political will for the Mara conservation;
11. Insecurity; escalating insecurity and crime due to the unemployment;
12. Poor infrastructure as a result of poor road conditions.

6.1.1 Proposed solutions

After a hot debate, various participants proposed the following as possible solutions to the problems facing the Greater Mara;
- Develop a general management plan for the Mara; have an appropriate zoning system and establish the carrying capacity;
- Have a comprehensive land use policy;
- Increase the park’s fees;
- Consolidate various small conservancies into one management unit;
- Have an autonomous body to focus and coordinate various stakeholders working in the Mara;
- There is need for a scientific evidence on which the players can base their activities;
- There should be a comparative study between the management of the Serengeti and the Mara as tourist destinations;
- Central government should support the income of the community by bringing tourists to Kenya;
- Discourage development of lodges and camps inside the reserves and instead construct them in the private group ranches;
- Stop deforestation in the Mau Forest;
- Ensure there is sustainable income and livelihood for local communities (agricultural activities to be regulated in the area).

6.1.2 Comment and reactions

The comment and reactions during the plenary discussion by the participant’s were as follows:

- It was highlighted that there are so many uncoordinated NGO’s presently working in the Mara at the expense of the local communities;
- There is a need for an autonomous body to advocate and help the community to get a leasehold on the land;
- The stakeholder should focus on the livelihood of the local people and come up with pro-poor avenues to assist the local people;
- Emphasis has to be put on how local people can benefit from the tourism activities for it to be sustainable;
- Stakeholders to come up with mechanisms to maximize the linkages between the community and operators; and minimize the leakages;
- Participants to come up with joint venture partnerships guidelines which all stakeholders can subscribe to;
- Majority of community institutions are wanting and need strengthening;
- There is need for education and capacity building for the community institutions;
- NEMA has a major role to play in environmental management of the Mara;
- The second world of civil societies, tour operators and investors need to have unity of purpose to enable them integrate the third world of the community and the first world of the government and local authorities;
- The Mara and the Mau ecosystems need to be addressed together/ in the greater Mara management plan.

6.1.3 Questions

A number of questions emerged from participant’s deliberations during the plenary. The questions were:

Q. 1 Are stakeholders working with the right leaders of the community?
Q. 2 Who has the legitimacy of the Mara? Who should make the decision on how the Mara is developed and conserved?
Q. 3 Why is the community not involved in the management and sharing of the revenue from the Mara?
Q. 4 How is the money/revenue from the Mara being apportioned to the community?
Q. 5 The community is benefiting from about 19% of the total revenue from the Mara, is the money trickling down to the household?
Q.6 Why are we selling lodges and camps instead of the wildlife and natural sceneries?
Q.7 Can the community, investors and all of the stakeholders work together to push an issue?
Q. 8 How do we bring the issues of livelihood and tourism together for mutual benefit of the people?

6.1.4 Major issues raised

The facilitator guided the participants to narrow down their discussion to the recurrent issues in the debate which included:

a. Development of a management plan for the Mara - the process, outcome and implementations needs
b. Overdevelopment of tourist facilities
c. Returns and community benefits from the Mara revenue
d. Policy regulations and legislations

6.2 WAY FORWARD

a) Development of a management plan

Participants raised a number of questions to be clarified on the development of a general management plan for the Greater Mara reserve.

i. Do we propose single management?
ii. How do we ensure that returns to land is addressed?
iii. Do we want the plan for the global good, national good or local good?
iv. Do we have the policy backing to implement the plan?
v. Are the community institutions strong enough to implement the plan?
vi. What is the capacity of the institutions already planning to develop the plan? What are their mandates and terms of reference (TOR)?
vii. Who are the members of the steering committee?
viii. Do we have the funds to develop the plan?
ix. Will NEMA recognize the ENSDA plan?
x. Do we need technical support other than the consultants?

The participants felt it was necessary to work towards completing the general management plan being spearheaded by Ewaso Nyiro South Development
Authority - ENSDA and expressed the need to have a technical group for technical backstopping.

6.2.1 The Greater Mara management plan

During the discussion participant’s sought to know about the Greater Mara management plan being developed? A clarification about the process and key players were given as follows:

- Ewaso Nyiro South Development Authority (ENSDA)- is spear heading the developments of the plan;
- The process of preparing the plan is to be funded by Tourism Trust Fund (TTF); ENSDA have asked for 3-years to do the plan at a tune of Ksh 25 million;
- African Conservation Centre (ACC) is the secretariat for the steering committee;
- Steering committee is being constituted.

On funding: parties present felt that it was not clear when funding would come through hence stakeholders suggested the need for commitment in pre-financing pending signing of contract between TTF and ENSDA. However, participants wanted to know if the pre-financing was a loan or grant?

Members of the steering committee

The stakeholders were informed by ENSDA delegate that the proposed representation in the steering committee is presently drawn from:

- Ministries i.e. Wildlife, tourism, forestry, natural resource, planning etc.
- Narok country council
- Trans-Mara country council
- Community representative
- Land owners
- Kenya Association of Tour Operators (KATO) and other private investors
- Ewaso Nyiro South Development Authority -ENSDA
- Kenya Wildlife Services - KWS
- National Environment Management Authority - NEMA
- Kenya Tourism Board - KTB
- Non-Governmental Organization - NGO

All the participants came up with a shared view in the plenary discussion that a technical group to be constituted and should include representatives from:

- SNV
- International Livestock Research Institute- ILRI
- UNEP-Trade, economics and environment- Dr. Rotich
- African Wildlife Foundation - AWF
- Serengeti
- World Wildlife Fund - WWF
- Kitengela community

6.2.2 Conclusion

Proposed time frame - it was a general view of the stakeholders that the Greater Mara management plan being spearheaded by ENSDA be finalized within a year. However, a section of participants felt this would be stressful to the committee and the locals.

Funding – Tourism Trust Fund (TTF) will provide full funding for the management plan amounting to Ksh 25million. Although the contract between TTF and NEMA/ENSDA is yet to be signed.

Pre-financing -20% of the total plan cost will be solicited from willing partners. The following committed to support the pre-financing: ACC, Base camp and Cheli and Peacock. Contribution towards pre-financing is open to all stakeholders.
Quarterly meetings - Ecotourism Kenya was mandated to organize quarterly meetings to monitor the progress of the plan and to structure these meetings to address topical issues related to the plan such as issues of resource economics, institutions and governance.
# 7.0 APPENDICES

**APPENDIX A: Program for the Great Mara Debate**

## PROGRAM

**The Great Mara Debate**  
21<sup>st</sup> September 2006 Holiday Inn - Nairobi  
08.30am - 4.00pm

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Time</th>
<th>Activity</th>
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<tr>
<td>08.30 – 08.45</td>
<td>Registration &amp; Coffee</td>
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<td>08.45 – 08.55</td>
<td>Welcome Note</td>
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<td>08.55 – 09.15</td>
<td>Opening Address</td>
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<td>09.15 – 09.45</td>
<td>Keynote address: Conservation &amp; Development in Kenya - prospects &amp; challenges - Dr Richard Leakey</td>
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<td>09.45 – 10.15</td>
<td>Mara Overview</td>
<td>ILRI/ACC</td>
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<td>10.15 – 10.30</td>
<td>Tea Break</td>
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<td>10.30 – 10.45</td>
<td>investing in the Mara-options</td>
<td>Jake Grieves-Cook</td>
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<td>10.45 – 11.00</td>
<td>Regulating developments in the Mara</td>
<td>Mr Mbegera-NEMA</td>
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<td>11.00 – 11.15</td>
<td>Sustaining local livelihoods-community options</td>
<td>Francis Nkoitoi</td>
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<td>11.15 – 13.15</td>
<td>DEBATE</td>
<td>Dr Helen Gichohi/ AWF</td>
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<td>13.15 – 14.00</td>
<td>Lunch &amp; Ecotourism Kenya Presentation</td>
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<td>14.00 – 15.00</td>
<td>DEBATE</td>
<td>Dr Gichohi / AWF</td>
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<td>15.00 – 15.15</td>
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<td>15.15-15.45</td>
<td>Recommendations- way forward</td>
<td>Dr Gichohi / AWF</td>
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<td>15.45-15.55</td>
<td>Vote of Thanks</td>
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### APPENDIX B: List of Participants

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Organisation</th>
<th>Email</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Grammaticas</td>
<td>Governors Camp</td>
<td><a href="mailto:aris@governerscamp.com">aris@governerscamp.com</a></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Abraham Muthogo</td>
<td>KTDC</td>
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<tr>
<td>Alan Dixson</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alistair Addison</td>
<td>Ecotourism Kenya</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Anthony Cheffins</td>
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<tr>
<td>Aru Willets</td>
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<td>Becha H. B</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bela Bali- Sharma</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ben Malasi</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bernard Leperes</td>
<td>MMMA</td>
<td>0735579200</td>
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<tr>
<td>Brian Heath</td>
<td>Mara Conservancy</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>Charles Ole Kantai</td>
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<tr>
<td>Chris Wood</td>
<td>Sekenani</td>
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<td>(Facilitator)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Clare Corrone</td>
<td>Campi ya Kanzi</td>
<td><a href="mailto:clare.corroone@gmail.com">clare.corroone@gmail.com</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. Joseph Otuni</td>
<td>Councilor</td>
<td>0735445766</td>
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<tr>
<td>Cllr. Lemein</td>
<td>Councilor</td>
<td>0736543988</td>
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<tr>
<td>D. Grammaticas</td>
<td>Governors Camp</td>
<td><a href="mailto:dominic@governerscamp.org">dominic@governerscamp.org</a></td>
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<tr>
<td>Daniel S. Ole Nkere</td>
<td>County Council Of Narok</td>
<td><a href="mailto:nkered@narokcountyCouncil.org">nkered@narokcountyCouncil.org</a></td>
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<td>Daniel Karira</td>
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<td>Dickson M. Njora</td>
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