

SPEECH BY HON. SAID KALEMBO - THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER FOR MOROGORO DURING THE INAUGURATION CEREMONY OF THE EASTERN ARC MOUNTAINS CONSERVATION ENDOWMENT FUND (EAMCEF) IN MOROGORO ON FRIDAY, 31ST MARCH, 2006.

Hon. Anthony M. Diallo (MP), Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism,
Hon. Regional Commissioners,
Hon. Members of Parliament,
Your Excellencies, Ambassadors and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Regional Administrative Secretaries,
Madam Judy O'Connor - World Bank Country Director,
Hon. Prof. Romanus Ishengoma – Mayor of Morogoro Municipality
Dr. Aloyse Tango – Acting Director of Forestry and Beekeeping,
Prof. Said Iddi - Chairman of the EAMCEF Board of Trustees,
EAMCEF Trustees and Staff,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Honourable Guest of Honour,

First of all, I wish to take this opportunity to welcome you to Morogoro, our wonderful Municipality gifted by nature and unique hospitality of our people. On behalf of the people of Morogoro and on my own behalf, I would like to thank you for accepting to grace this important occasion in the history of our Region despite your tight work schedule. This is a sure testimony of your unquestionable commitment to conservation and your love to the people of Morogoro.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

May I also take this opportunity to thank the EAMCEF Board of Trustees and the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism for establishing and locating the Headquarters of the Endowment Fund for the Eastern Arc Mountains in Morogoro. We value the wise decision and we are greatly thankful.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

Out of the five regions where the Eastern Arc Mountains lie, Morogoro Region is the one centrally located and is endowed with three quarters of the total area of the mountains. Here we are talking of Uluguru, Ukaguru, Nguru, Mahenge, Malundwe, Rubeho and Udzungwa mountains blocks. The physical location of these mountains actually makes Morogoro Region the centre of biological diversity and the hub of catchment richness in Tanzania. Out

of the five Regions the Eastern Arc Mountains lie, Morogoro Region harbours the highest biodiversity richness than the other four.

Furthermore, the giant Ruvu River that supplies water for the major industries and the more than 4 million people of Morogoro, Coast and Dar-es-Salaam Regions originate here in the Uluguru Mountains. Whereas the famous Wami River draws its water from Nguru, Ukaguru and Rubeho Mountains, the Udzungwa Mountains supplies water to the majestic Ruaha River.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

The turbines of the giant Kidatu and Kihansi hydropower stations cannot run without the supply of water from the Eastern Arc Mountains. By contributing more than 50% of the electricity produced by hydropower stations in Tanzania, Morogoro Region occupies a very crucial position in the economy of this country. Unfortunately, Honourable Minister, the natural resources richness notwithstanding, Morogoro is rated one of the five poorest regions of Tanzania. The level of poverty we are experiencing is actually putting a lot of pressure on the important biodiversity resources we have been entrusted with. For example, 50% of the forests in the Uluguru Mountains have disappeared during the last fifty years due to human activities.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

This kind of biodiversity erosion and many other forms of environmental degradation are threatening the very human survival and the situation is worse in the most populated mountainous areas. On recognising the danger of environmental degradation and loss of natural forest cover, our Region is increasingly adopting different strategies for curbing all the root causes. We are now seriously promoting the conservation of natural resources through participatory approaches including involvement of traditional leaders.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

The strong focus in poverty reduction activities being pursued by EAMCEF will help to reduce the dependence of local communities on forests for their basic needs. I'm therefore convinced that, the situation will not be the same after some few years to come. I also believe that, the Fund will continue to innovate different management approaches so that a fair balance between livelihood and dependence on forests ultimately prevails.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

One big challenge to any conservation entity is the ability to tie together the conservation efforts with the understanding of local communities and decision-makers on the value of conservation. It will be of no use and a waste of resources if the local communities and decision-makers will not understand the conservation language. I therefore call upon EAMCEF and other organisations to seriously consider the aspects of local communities' involvement in the conservation of flora and fauna and in finding the long term solution pertaining to their poverty status. Furthermore, local communities' indigenous knowledge in conservation should be applied in order to complement the scientific knowledge in solving some of the conservation problems. It is very important to ensure that the employed conservation efforts are sustainable and the local communities are benefiting at the same time.

Honourable Guest of Honour,

Before I finish my welcoming remarks, may I again take this opportunity to thank the Government of Tanzania, the EAMCEF Board of Trustees and the EAMCEF Secretariat for the good cooperation the Region has so far been receiving from EAMCEF. I wish to reaffirm our unwavering commitment in making sure that the work of EAMCEF becomes a success. We will continue to support EAMCEF and do all that is within our powers to foster the Mission that is being pursued by EAMCEF. Through the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, the Regional Government has already provided office space for EAMCEF and we shall be more than happy to see that all these buildings we are seeing here becomes permanent offices for EAMCEF. It is my hope that you will all continue to support the work of EAMCEF in the Eastern Arc Mountains for the benefit of present and future generations.

**Honourable Guest of Honour,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Lastly, let me use this opportunity to encourage you all to visit our rich cultural sites in the Uluguru Mountains as well as the diverse wildlife we are harbouring in the Mikumi and Udzungwa Mountains National Parks as well as the famous Selous Game Reserve.

Thank you very much.