

# Improved tourism excellent

## way to create jobs

*rhinos are some of the rare animal species found in the world-famous Ngorongoro Crater in Arusha Region*

**By Alpha Nuhu**

DAR ES SALAAM-based prominent lawyer, Dr. Eve Hawa Sinare, says she is convinced the tourism industry in Tanzania is able to generate more jobs than any other sector because of its linkages to the rest of the economy.

She says available data indicates that tourism provides 400,000 direct jobs to Tanzanians and over one million other jobs indirectly.

In the past tourism has been proven to generate nearly one direct job for every additional tourist, says Dr. Sinare, who has been commissioned by the Hotel Association of Tanzania (HAT) to examine the legal impacts of tourism licensing.

Her assertion can be vindicated by the tourism drive in the Arusha region, where the sector is a major employer.

According to Research and Education for Democracy in Tanzania (REDET), tourism is very critical to the economy of the Arusha region as a gateway to several game parks.

According to REDET, tourism and wildlife account for about 20 percent of the Arusha region's Gross Domestic Product. Some

stakeholders in the tourism sector in Arusha believe the sector is the mainstay of their economy and has long surpassed agriculture.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (MNRT) asserts that tourism is rated as one of the fastest growing sectors in the country. Stakeholders in the sector agree with economic analysts stating that tourism can play a greater economic role than is happening at the moment.

Unfortunately on the ground, the business environment has not been able to generate more tourist arrivals, which would translate to more jobs despite a number of reforms in the sector.

Data from the World Tourism Organisation (UNWTO), a United Nations agency dealing with questions relating to tourism, notes out of the total of over 49 million tourists to Africa in 2010, Tanzania's share was only 782,699. This is despite the country's rank as number two worldwide for its natural resources.

The country also is nowhere in the top ten in Africa according to UNWTO's World Tourism Barometer, where Morocco leads the pack with 9.29 million arrivals. It is followed by South Africa, with 8.07

million. Tunisia is third with 6.95 million, Zimbabwe being fourth with 2.24 million tourists.

At the global level Tanzania's share is merely 0.08 % of 940 million tourists recorded. This is despite having world-class attractions. Just compare attractions in Turkey and Tanzania. Turkey ranks number seven worldwide with 27 million arrivals in 2010, yet Tanzania has just as much to offer.

Geographically a small country like the Netherlands gets 10 million visitors annually. Tanzania's official target of one million arrivals limits the nation's great potential. The government should take the industry more seriously and start targeting a higher numbers of arrivals.

To put the nation at the top within a few years in terms of arrivals, which determines the economic impact, holistic improvements of the business environment are necessary.

President Jakaya Kikwete recently appointed Khamis Kagasheki as the new Minister for Natural Resources and Tourism and Lazaro Nyalandu, as his deputy.

Lidwien Appels commends the appointment, saying the duo's strong backgrounds in business and conservation areas gives the

tourism industry a hope for the future.

Nyalandu is a former Board member of Tanzania National Parks (TANAPA).

"It is of our utmost hope that the issues we have been advocating for, will be heard and acted upon," she said. HAT has been lobbying and advocating for an improved business environment for hoteliers and the tourism industry in general.

The Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism directly controls 15 key tourist wildlife parks including Ngorongoro Conservation Area where the famous Ngorongoro Crater is located, and the sprawling Selous Game Reserve - the biggest and most natural wildlife reserve in Africa. It also offers direction on how the country's 31 game reserves are run.

Saumu Jumanne, a lecturer at the Dar es Salaam University College of Education (DUCE) says, if it is true that the tourism sector can offer employment in big numbers if arrivals increase, then there is a need to review the whole sector with a view to fast-tracking investments.

"For example, it should be prudent to simplify and streamline tourism licensing so that all operators and prospective operators can easily enter the business," she

including if the business is locally owned or foreign owned, and the specific nature of the business.

According to the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, in 2011 about 657 enterprises were listed as having a tourism licence. The 2012 list is yet to be published.

Jumanne also says that the authorities must make clear the benefits of a business getting a tourism licence. "After all this licence is an extra requirement for the sector—the same business has to pay for other numerous licenses.

These are issues that should be looked at anew," she said.

She added that when looking for a policy document online in the industry, you get outdated documents.

"For example, the Tourism Master Plan available online was published in 2002. It is clearly outdated. By then Tanzania was getting only half a million arrivals per annum. We know the government has put in place the Tourism Master Plan of 2012 – 2016 but how many stakeholders and academics have seen it?

We don't know how long it will take before they post it online" she said.

Recent media reports indicate the documents need to be uploaded onto the web to market the sector, to maintain an annual growth of 8 to 10 percent. For Jumanne, this is not ambitious enough. "This can be the fastest growing sector if we put our house in order."

said.

According to Jumanne, in order to attract more investments in the sector and bring in more arrivals, the authorities should offer incentives in licensing to all

players in the industry.

"There should be no discrimination—small and medium enterprises as well as big businesses should equally be able to get tourism licences at an affordable cost," she

said.

At the moment tourism operators are charged between 1000 - 5000 USD annually by the Tanzania Tourism Licensing Board (TTLB) depending on various factors