

**TALKING POINTS FOR HON. DR. HAMISI A. KIGWANGALLA
(MP), MINISTER FOR NATURAL RESOURCES AND TOURISM
AT THE STAKEHOLDERS MEETING AT AMANI LODGE, ARUSHA
12TH MAY 2020**

INTRODUCTION

TOURISM Sector has been highly affected in Tanzania due to the global health pandemic (COVID-19) caused by Corona Virus. The sector started to feel the impact of this pandemic even before the pandemic entered the country. This is when bigger source markets of our tourism were hit the most (late 2019 early 2020). These markets are European countries, Asian countries as well as Americas and the Middle East. Majority of these big markets closed their borders, locking their citizens down as a measure to contain the spread of the disease. In addition, majority of airlines also halted their services as a measure to protect the world from the disease which was rapidly spreading by March of 2020.

In March 2020, Tanzania announced its first case of COVID -19 and several measures were put in place by the government to fight the spread of the disease in the country. Some of these measures that the Government has undertaken were targeting sectors that contribute to the economic growth of the country, tourism sector being one of them. As a Minister in the sector, it is my role to advise the Government accordingly so that it can adopt appropriate recovery strategies within the sector in order to elevate and protect it while

the world waits for scientist to come up with vaccination / cure for the disease.

Tourism sector is vital to the contribution of the economic growth of this country. For example, in 2017/2018 the study conducted by the World Travel and Tourism Council revealed that about 1,092,500 employment opportunities were created in Tanzania from the sector. It is believed that for every single tourist that visits Tanzania, about twelve employment opportunities are generated in different sectors across the country. From this reality, I thought it was necessary for us in the Ministry to call for this meeting with stakeholders in the sector and others from within the government that are responsible to facilitate tourism, to debate and deliberate on specific measures for re-opening the tourism sector so we can continue to operate as Destination Tanzania. Main objective of this deliberations is to protect Tanzanians working in the sector as well as tourists visiting Tanzania as we open up again for safaris and tourism business. I am happy to announce that this meeting has been very fruitful and productive.

OUTCOME OF THE MEETING

In this meeting we have managed to come up with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), among other things, which will be tabled within different levels in the Government so that it can be adopted as measures to protect the industry and businesses during this difficult period. It is our hope that these SOPs will provide

strategic direction on how to operate tourism activities in the country during and post Covid-19 period in the country. We came up with these measures because as a country we are not sure when the world will become safe again, but what we can do is to gather our strengths and resources and open up again the tourism sector while taking great caution to protect ourselves and tourists that we so highly value.

In addition to the above mentioned measure, I have directed my Ministry to work on the following issues which came up during our two-days deliberations: -

- i. To establish a Tourism COVID-19 Response Team which will among other things, deal with cross - cutting issues such as creating a communication strategy, to explain to the world safety measures taken towards promotion of destination Tanzania. The team will also conduct a review of business bylaws within the sector to include insurance policies that will enable a tourist to be evacuated in case of a health emergency. The team will also review prices for destination Tanzania that will be competitive enough to promote tourism during this time. These elements were highlighted because as a country we do understand that in order for us to recover from this era we have to have these two elements; competitive price as well as safety of tourists that visit destination Tanzania.

- ii. To develop Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that will guide tourists from the time they do their initial bookings, to their arrival at the airports, hotels, tourism destinations and eventually depart the country. These comprehensive SOPs have already been developed and after being approved with relevant authorities in the government, we will announce them to the world.
- iii. To conduct training to all those who are working in tourism and hospitality industry on how to receive and cater for tourists during this Covid-19 pandemic. We must ensure that all necessary precautions are being taken to protect both our staff and tourists as well.
- iv. To conduct meetings with our colleagues from the Ministry responsible for labour and employment and others, to come up with strategic ways of protecting their jobs during this time.
- v. Similarly, the Ministry should have meetings with all our institutions to come up with ways of protecting tourism businesses in Tanzania.
- vi. Last but not least, the Ministry should establish mechanisms to review and revise the execution of all these matters and review its implementations periodically in accordance to directives of the World Health Organization (WHO) with regards to Covid-19.

MESSAGE TO FINANCIAL INSTITUTIONS

I wish to express my appreciation to financial institutions that have taken step that aim to protect businesses., Special word of Thanks to CRDB Bank. CRDB Bank through their Loan Unit should provide a break to our tour operators from servicing their loans for a three-months period until the industry picks up again. This is a big break especially for our local businesses as they try to get back to their own feet with their businesses. The break will not only important to assist them to remain in business but it has also sustained the industry economically. On behalf of the government, I sincerely thank CRDB Bank for this gesture. I call upon other financial institutions to give consideration for their business loans and come up with such break in order to revive the sector together as Tanzanians.

Let me also take this opportunity to thank all of you stakeholders who have participated in this important meeting. We have discussed candidly and deliberated fairly on ways to combat this current situation for the betterment of our country Tanzania. In a special way, I want to take this opportunity to thank TATO, HAT and other trade associations who have been present here throughout this meeting. I thank MS. Nuralisa Karamagi, CEO of the Hotel Association of Tanzania and the convener of this meeting. I want to thank our host Mr. Edward Mrosso, the CEO of Amani Lodge and Restaurant for the kind hospitality accorded to us for these two days. Participants from other government institutions, namely Ministries of Health, Finance, Home Affairs (Department of Immigration) and other

technical experts whose participation has enriched this process tremendously.

I wish to thank my Brother Hon. Mrisho Gambo, the Regional Commissioner of Arusha and his entire team for the support and valuable contributions to this process. As you are all aware, Arusha Region is the major gateway for some of the best tourism destinations in the world such as Serengeti, Ngorongoro, Manyara, Tarangire and Mt. Kilimanjaro National Parks. All those from the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism, I congratulate you for the job well done in addition to thanking you. There is still a lot of work to be done ahead of us. Let us continue to work together and forge forward in tourism despite the Covid-19 challenge. Thank you all for your participation.