LINKING CULTURAL HERITAGE AND ECO - TOURISM IN TANZANIA: REFLECTIONS FROM A CULTURAL HERITAGE POLICY OF 2008

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ABSTRACT

Tanzania is endowed with numerous natural and cultural heritage assets that span from pliocene to present. A number of these such as Oduvai Gorge and Ngorongoro Crater, just to mention a few encompass mosiacs of heritage assets that attract both local and international attention. Integration of such features is advantageous to tourists because they get an exposure to both cultural and ecological heritage at close distance. Therefore it is more fruitful in both time and money. However, despite existence of many features of the kind in Tanzania, such rare advantage has never been taped. In addition, there are no strategies to link cultural heritage and eco-tourism for sustainable socio-economic developments. This paper therefore explores and illustrates how Tanzania can link ecotourism and cultural tourism to promote not only tourism but also conserve both natural and cultural environments.

Key Terms: *Cultural tourism, Eco-tourism, Heritage, Conservation*

Potentials for Developing a Linked Cultural and Ecotourism in Tanzania

As distinguished from many other global nations, Tanzania is very rich in both natural and cultural heritage assets which if well developed shall act as tourist destinations. These assets are diverse, invariably found very close to each other and others are infused into one another. The cultural properties are legally protected through the cultural heritage policy (2008), Antiquities Law (the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964, Amended in 1979 and 1985), National Museums Act of 1980 and the established Rules and Regulations (see Kamamba, 2009; Masao, 2010; Mabulla and Bower, 2010; Isowe, 2012; Mwacha, 2012). The author's personal communication with a few antiquity officials revealed that both the Antiquities laws and regulations are currently being reviewed with the view to include missing aspects to make them more encompassing.

The natural properties such as national parks, conserved areas, forest reserves and marine parks on the other hand are variously legally protected. For instance, the primary legislation protecting Ngorongoro Conservation Area is the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Ordinance of 1959 enforced by the Ngorongoro Conservation Area Authority (NCAA). While the wildlife within the National Parks is protected by the National Park Ordinance of 1959 enforced by TANAPA, those found outside the National Parks and Ngorongoro Conservation Area are protected by the Wildlife Conservation Act of 1974. Forest reserves and marine parks and reserved areas are respectively protected by the Forestry Ordinance of 1957 and Marine Parks and Reserves Act of 1994 and various forestry and fisheries laws and regulations (see Makaramba, 1998; Shauri, 1999; Lissu, 1999). All these legally recognized heritage assets have touristic potentials and if linked shall paramountly result in the socio-economic wellbeing of the Tanzanian communities.

Although there are many cultural and natural heritage sites, we would probably need a separate paper to annotate them all (see Figure 1). The paper will try to briefly explain a few of them and their significance. The major ones discussed here are those listed as the World Heritage Sites including Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara,

Zanzibar Stone Town, Ngorongoro Conservation Area and Serengeti National Park. These assets have outstanding universal values and are recognized by the global community. It is due to their value and their integrated natural and cultural significance. They are discussed in the next sections.

The Ruins of Kilwa Kisiwani and Ruins of Songo Mnara situated on two small island of Lindi Region in southeastern Tanzania are remains of the Swahili Civilization dating to between 9th and 19th centuries (Karoma, 1996; Abungu, 2004; Moon, 2005). During this period, the islands like many other parts of the Indian Ocean World were integrated into international trading systems. For instance, between the 13th and 16th centuries, the merchants of Kilwa dealt in gold, silver, pearls, perfumes, Arabian crockery, Persian earthenware and Chinese porcelain. This maritime trade made the islands rich in both movable and immovable cultural heritage assets.

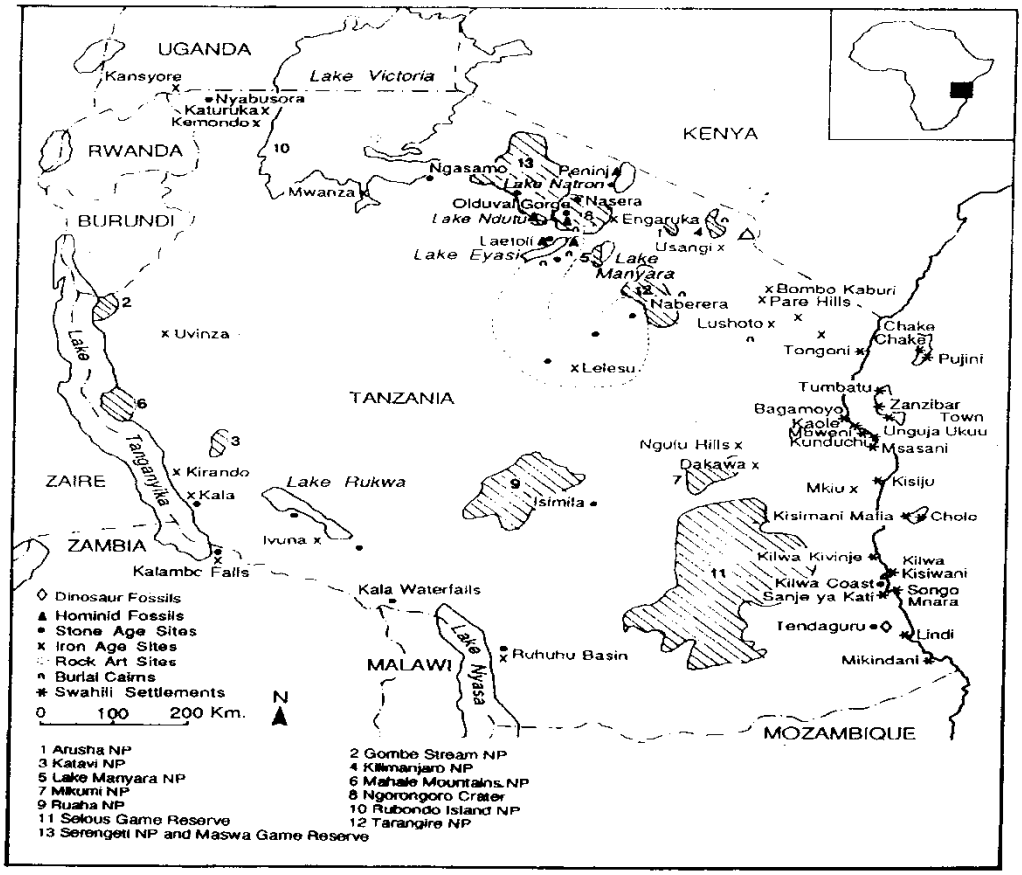


Figure 1: A Map of Tanzania showing Location of Heritage Assets of Tanzania
Source: Mabulla and Bower, 2010

The former consists of archaeological materials such as potsherds, coins, metal assemblage and beads, while the later include standing monuments and buildings such as Husuni Kubwa, Husuni Ndogo, Malindi Mosque, Great House and Makutani palace, to mention a few (Moon, 2005; Chami, 2005; Kimaro, 2006). It was due to such diverse and significant assets, the sites were in 1981 inscribed by UNESCO into World Heritage List under criterion III. The sites provide exceptional architectural, archaeological and documentary evidence for the growth of Swahili culture and commerce along the East African coast from the 9th to the 19th centuries, offering important insights regarding economic, social and political dynamics in this region (http://whc.unesco.org/en/list/144) . In 2008, at its 32nd Session conducted in Quebec City - Canada, the World Heritage Committee extended the properties to include sites of Kilwa Kivinje and Sanje ya Kati with the purpose of improving their conservation (UNESCO, 2008).

More importantly, the sites are very close to the white sandy beaches where travellers and tourists can have different experiences with these beaches. The area offers kilometres of empty white beach sand with no mangrove, rubbish and nobody hassling to try and sell things to visitors unlike many other global beaches. Beaches along Kilwa Masoko and the islands of Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara are peaceful and lovely with captivating reef affording a sense of exclusion and excellent opportunity for basking, swimming, diving, snokerlling, sailing, and other forms of relaxation. At some distances away from the empty beach, the area has a variety of species of mangrove trees and dolphines which can be of interest to scientific travellers and tourists. Thus, the Kilwa beaches which are both beautiful and unspoiled, have high touristic potentials and if linked to the area's cultural heritage shall attract many visitors. Kilwa Kisiwani and Songo Mnara are indicative of the linked cultural and natural touristic potentials found along the coast. Other sites with such similar potentials along the Tanzanian coast include Kunduchi, Bagamoyo, Mbuamaji, Pangani, Kitunda, Mikindani, Sudi and Msanga and Mwitingi (Brown, 1970; Pollard, 2008; Ichumbaki, 2009; 2011; 2012; Masele, 2012).

Apart from the ruins of Kilwa, Serengeti National Park and Ngorongoro Conservation area are other potentialities for developing a linked cultural and ecotourism. The two assets located in Northern Tanzania have numerous animal and plant species coexisting with humans and their cultures (Mabulla and Bower, 2010). The properties have rich and diverse cultural heritage which could be linked with the already promoted natural heritage to develop tourism. Although Mabulla and Bower (2010) have well presented the assets, they are briefly presented here. Olduvai Gorge which is found within the Ngorongoro area has numerous fossil records which have significantly contributed much to our understanding about biological human evolution. In addition to fossil remains, Olduvai Gorge offers all Stone Age culture industrial complexes which are of paramount importance in understanding cultural evolution. In addition to Olduvai Gorge, Laitoli is another site with touristic potentials. It is a Plio-Pleistocene site with trails of footprints and over 20 fragmentary remains of an ape-like human ancestor known as *Australopithecus afarensis.* Moreover, within the two properties there are varieties of cultural materials including potsherds, rock art sites, stone artifacts, archaeo-metallurgical assemblages and many signatures of pastoral neolithic traditions (Mturi 1986, 1987; Leakey and Harris, 1987; Rubaka, 2000; Prendergast, 2008; Mabulla and Bower, 2010). Also, the communities living within these two properties may be advised to developed some handcrafts. Some find their way to tourist curios and dot the highways to touristic destinations. Thus, considering the significance of these cultural assets found within these outstanding natural properties, coupled with Masai local culture and skills, there are immeasurable opportunities for developing a linked cultural and eco-tourism.

Another very important but unexplored potential to develop cultural tourism are various cultural heritage assets which resulted from slave and ivory trades. These assets as discussed by John Thomas Biginagwa (2012). They include well-defined caravan trade routes and markets and provisioning centres along the main trade routes. Major three routes [northern route, central route and northern route with their sub-routes] [See Figure 2] were used for transporting both imports and exports.

One of the three mentioned caravan routes used during the ivory and slave trade is that which started in Ujiji on the shore of Lake Tanganyika and ended in Bagamoyo covering over about 1,200 kilometers. Along this slave route are few trade centers that have been identified and documented. These include Bagamoyo, Mamboya, Mpwapwa, Kilimatinde, Kwihara and Ujiji. Among these sites and for the development of a linked cultural and eco-tourism, Bagamoyo is the most significant. This is due to the fact that the center did not only play a significant role in the slave trade but its attractive location on the Indian Ocean Coast with

opportunities sportive activities added to its singular importance.

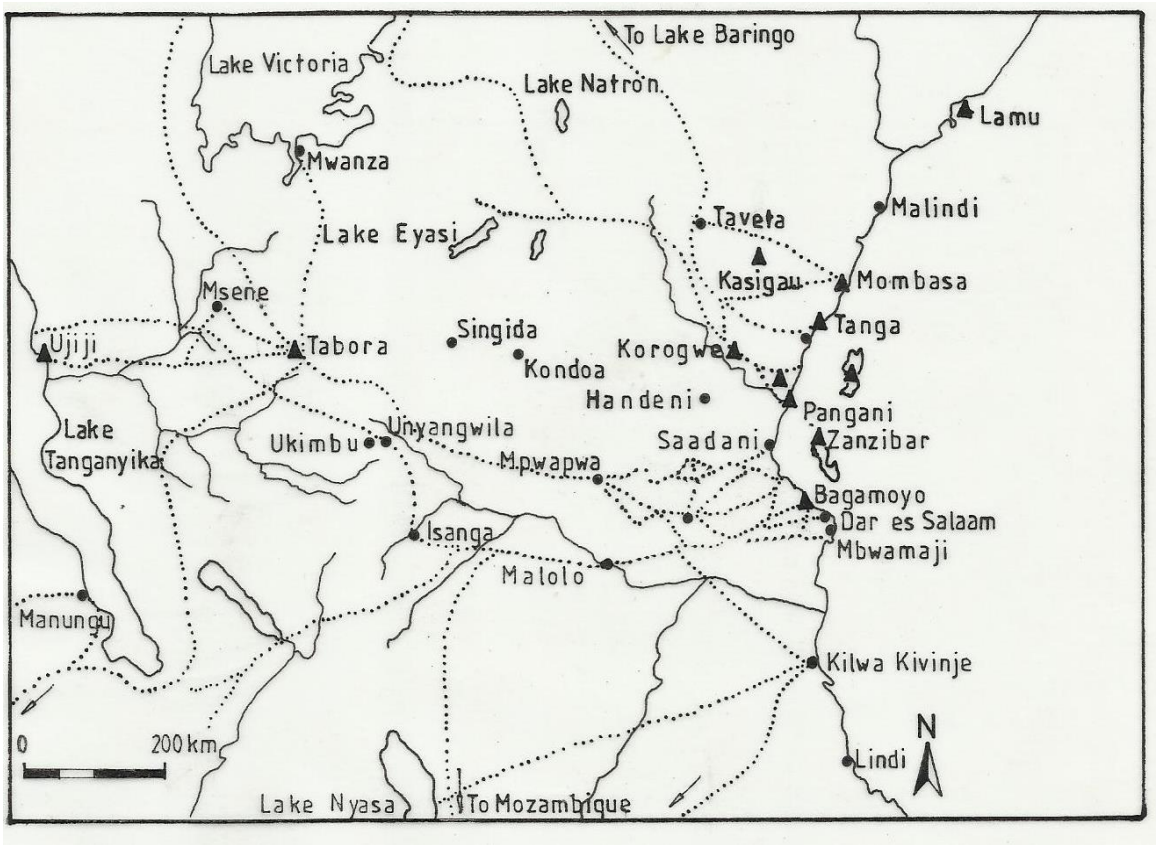


Figure 2: Map Showing Slave and Ivory Centers that Could be Developed for Tourism Purpose.
Source: Modified by the Author from Lane, P. J. 2011: pp. 285

For the past five years, the author has examined the practicability of linking cultural and eco-tourism at Bagamoyo Historic Town and its beautiful beaches and it worked. He has done this several times with his certificate, diploma and undergraduate students of cultural heritage management and tour guidance. It was always a one day program but which yielded tourism fruits at low costs. The itinerary started at Kaole where students get an opportunity to learn the history of Kaole and observe the ruins and old fort. Thereafter, the group visited the mamba site and got informed about many issues pertaining to the life of crocodiles. The itinerary continued to the Old Fort and Caravan Serai at which students got informed on both slave trade and the colonial administration. Issues of how Christianity spread and the struggles towards the abolition of slave trade are experienced at the Roman Catholic Church Museum. In the afternoon after lunch, students went to the beach for various activities. We normally conduct various activities at the beach which include swimming, rope pulling competition, chasing chickens, running in sacks, and playing beach and handball football (See the pictures in Figure 3). For five years we have been doing this. The response from the students indicates that they appreciate the program and have requested having such tours many times. Although the closeness of these cultural and natural heritage assets of Bagamoyo contribute a great deal for this linking, it is believed that such a cultural and eco-tourism linked program could be developed at other sites located along the coast.

Figure 3: Pictures Showing Students Who Visited Bagamoyo Cultural and Natural Touristic Attractions. (a) Students listening a lecture at Kaole (b) Students visiting the Kaole ruins (c) and (d) Students engaging into rope pulling game (e) Students at the beach getting a lecture on mangrove species and (f) Students involving into running with sacks.

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b 

c 

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Source: Photos by Ichumbaki, E. B. and Biginagwa T. J.

Bagamoyo and the above mentioned centers have a potential for developing a linked cultural and eco-tourism as they are "places of memory" for human suffering and humiliation caused by slavery and the slave trade and the imposition of European and Arabic colonialism (URT, 2006). Slave trade evidence found at Bagamoyo which is also important for cultural tourism are buildings such as Caravan Serai, the Von Wissman block, the Old market, the Customs House, the Old Fort as well as the Roman Catholic Museum. At the remaining centres there are

important historical landmarks including descendants of slaves and slave traders, a graveyard, remains of churches, villages with Arabic houses, German administrative houses, coins and domestic utensils used during the slave trade (see Deustch, 2011; Lane, 2011). All these historical landmarks need to be developed and linked with the natural environment, with the purpose not only to develop a linked ecotourism and cultural tourism but also improving the socio-economic status of the respective communities.

Tanzania as distinguished from many other African countries is a home of all four major linguistic groups: Bantu, Khoisan, Nilotes and Kushites (Nurse, 1997). These major linguistic groups which are divided into many tribes or ethnic groups are well distributed in Tanzania. The current research conducted by linguistic scholars of the University of Dar es Salaam under the Languages of Tanzania (LOT) Project shows that Tanzania has over 120 tribes. All these tribal groups have many and varying customs, traditions, food stuffs and different cultural traits. These cultural traits are strategically located. They are found at niches which are attractive for tourism. Thus, the combination of these cultural traits and natural ecological niches is fruitful enough to develop a linked cultural heritage tourism and ecotourism. Getting opportunity to visiting Tanzania and spend some times with few local communities is equal to visiting the entire African continent. Considering that rural and volunteer tourisms are growing considerably and that these local cultural traits and beautiful ecological niches which are unique potentialities for developing a linked cultural heritage and ecotourism, then Tanzania stands a good chance of developing them. Despite the fact that their multi-ethnicity or multi-linguistic nature is more of an anthropological interest than touristic, there is a need to work on this so that the touristic potential of multi- ethnicity comes out.

Reflections from a New Cultural Heritage Policy of 2008

A policy is a course of action or plan which shows how something should be done. In the heritage sector, a heritage policy is a guideline or document prepared with the purpose to direct the conservation and management of heritage assets for their long life survival. However considering the diversification of the heritage sector, it is probably quite impossible to have a single policy and body to monitor and guide its conservation and management. That is why various heritage institutions including antiquity, museums, archives, art councils and tourism board are led by different directorships and guided by self imposed policies under different laws and regulations. The present policies include the Cultural Policy Statement of 1997, Tourism Policy of 1999, Museum Policy of 1980 and the upcoming archive policy (it is now a draft). Their relevance notwithstanding, policies are not legal documents but rather guidelines; something which marks the need for regulations. The available heritage legal documents working alongside the mentioned policies are the Antiquities Act No. 10 of 1964 (amended by Act No. 22 of 1979) and Museum Act No. 34 of 1965 (amended by Act No. 7 of 1980). Other regulations which are indirectly protecting the cultural heritage assets are the Wildlife Act No. 5 of 2009, the Tourism Act No. 29 of 2008 and the Environmental Management Act No. 10. of 2004. As previously suggested (Ichumbaki, 2012), all these policies, laws and their respective directorship would operate successfully if merged together. This is therefore another call for action. Despite the lack of good will to implement this longtime suggested idea, there is a need to merge them. In this section, the author will briefly review the cultural heritage policy of 2008 and derive some conclusions on how the cultural heritage could be linked to ecotourism to bring socio-economic development.

The Tanzanian Cultural Heritage Policy of 2008 was prepared by the Ministry of Natural Resources and Tourism (according to the document itself) after consultation with various heritage stakeholders. This policy, which came out as a result of the need to articulate the changes in time,

technology, political atmosphere, environment and socio-economic developments, is organized into seven chapters. The first part is an introduction which covers important concepts used and the second section describes the status of cultural heritage in Tanzania. Various cultural heritage assets ranging from pliocene to the recent past are presented in this second chapter. Chapter three covers the significance and objectives of cultural heritage. As presented in this chapter, the overall goal of the policy is to increase the contribution of cultural heritage to the country's economy via tourism. Despite their relevance, the author regrettably noticed that nevertheless none of the outlined specific objectives falls within the stated overall goals.

Chapter four is all about the policy statements on cultural heritage matters including research, conservation, documentation and cultural tourism, to mention a few. While the central objective is to increase the assets' contribution to the economy through cultural tourism, the policy statements on cultural tourism remain more or less silent about this issue. It speaks about enabling the stakeholders to understand the available opportunities and make sure those developmental projects are preceded by impact assessment without outlining the means on how the cultural heritage should be treated to bring socio-economic development. The cultural heritage crosscutting policy issues and institutional and legal structures are respectively covered in chapters five and six. The last part which is a conclusion provides a synthesis of matters presented in chapters 1 – 6. In general, the 2008 cultural heritage policy aims at guiding actions towards a sustainable management of Tanzania's cultural heritage assets. With effective implementation of this policy, the Government of Tanzania anticipates sustainable conservation of the country's cultural heritage, creating public awareness, confidence and national pride as well as expanding investment opportunities in the cultural heritage tourism sector.

There is no mention of means to achieve it, although as previously discussed, one of these policy objectives is to do all possible to make cultural heritage contribute to the country's economy through tourism. This concern corresponds with the country's poverty reduction strategy, MKUKUTA II, which recognizes the importance of cultural heritage for both the tourism industry and entrepreneurship. If well implemented, this idea is viable because cultural heritage assets are resources in their own rights. They can have long life and survive when productive rather than when they are stagnant. In making the assets productive, the policy recognizes that the cultural heritage assets are part of the current environmental landscapes. It states that "cultural heritage resources constitute part of the environment to the extent that in many cases it is difficult to separate conservation of cultural heritage from environmental conservation" (URT, 2008:3). This is a good move in environmental conservation while promoting cultural tourism and making cultural heritage a stronger and more self-reliant creative industry. The author strongly supports this move and in the next section he provides strategies that Tanzania can adapt to develop a linked cultural and ecotourism.

Strategies to Develop a Linked Ecotourism and Cultural Tourism

Well developed and linked ecotourism and cultural heritage tourism would be a major attractive package to enhance the development of tourism industry in Tanzania. However, this will not be very productive unless there is a balance among the visitors' interests and the needs to protect natural environments and conserve cultural heritage resources. In this section, therefore, the author proposes a wide range of strategies which, if well implemented, shall result in the development of a linked ecotourism and cultural heritage tourism. These strategies include establishing an updated database for both ecological and cultural heritage, viable touristic attractions and the ways of linking them, and establishing new cultural heritage centres with good quality cultural heritage tourism facilities for people of all walks of life. These first two strategies will work properly if there shall be effective planning and

marketing within the local communities, tourism partners and other local and international tourism related institutions and organisations.

Establishing an Updated Database for Tourist Attractions

As previously discussed, Tanzania is a home of both natural and cultural heritage assets which are neither documented nor promoted. These assets are widely distributed and only known to local people. Before they are used to bring socio-economic development, these assets need to be documented. The documentation must involve a fully reporting of the asset types, location, state of conservation and their socio-cultural and economic significance. Important information for this purpose must include short texts, maps, images and plans. Tanzania lacks such an updated inventory of both cultural and natural heritage assets, their location and socio-cultural and economic significance. The available data have been developed just based on approximations and little has been done on projects whose objectives were something else. There is no reliable database to inform us on the number of archaeological sites, sites with historic maritime associations within the coastal environment, historic buildings and structures of significance to the local and regional community. Also, there is no information about the faunal and botanical heritage sites. The proposed updated inventory database shall be of much assistance if it is linked to the country's geographic information system (GIS) to plot site locations and survey coverage alongside other data such as property boundaries.

Having such information for all heritage assets of Tanzania shall result to an updated database for the heritage resources of Tanzania. Also, from this database it will be easy to produce relevant maps showing the locations of these assets. In addition, the database shall assist in guiding the tourists to know what kind of heritage asset (touristic attraction) is available and where such a resource is found. Moreover, if this database is made available to tour operating companies, it will be easy for them to develop itineraries which are linking both natural and cultural touristic attractions. Based on the developed inventory database and itineraries, investors shall be stimulated to develop touristic accommodations and other related facilities. However, the establishment of these infrastructural services should be positioned such that they allow tourists to get an opportunity to visit both cultural and natural touristic attractions.

Establish Cultural Heritage Centers

Someone may not think it is true, but in many districts and regions of Tanzania (if not all) have no cultural centers. As distinguished from Tanzania, it is quite normal for other countries to have cultural centers. It is at such centers where people (both citizens from other regions and foreigners) can experience the uniqueness of the community' cultures and the supporting ecology. The establishment of such centers in Tanzania shall result in offering a variety of programs that share the respective region's history and culture with that of all visitors. To make the established centers and programs live, either Government or private investors must think of establishing a simple open air museum, heritage inn restaurant, library and gift shops. Where appropriate and viable, the cultural center should be open to the general public seven days a week. From such centers, simple and accommodating tour itineraries of not more than one day must be prepared, promoted and sold. These itineraries should be prepared such that visitors have the chance to experience both the natural and cultural environment of the region. It is thought that if this strategy is implemented, visitors from different parts of the country and other nations would have a wonderful cultural experience.

CONCLUSION

In this paper, the author has presented the strategies to be implemented to develop a linked effective eco-cultural tourism. However, these strategies will work successfully if there is good infrastructure to make the heritage sites accessible as distinguished from the present situation. For instance, while there are equally attractive

rock art sites in Singida and Iringa in central Tanzania, only those of Kondoa have received publicity and this is due to poor accessibility. The living heritage should be pivoted on multi ethnicity as well as plastic and performing arts as many tourists cherish being treated to multi-ethnic performances and not just to the Maasai performances in touristic lodges as it so often happens. While the proposed eco-cultural tourism link will result in various socio-economic gains, it is important to note that, as is always the case, tourism is a two edged sword that the proposed strategies to develop a linked eco-cultural tourism should be aware of.

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