

Policy Implication in the Restoration Conservation of the Maasai Mar Game Reserve Mau Forest Complex and: Challenges and Opportunities

By

Dr. Jepkemboi R. Choge – PhD

Prof. Tabitha Sewe – PhD

Prof. Mary Walingo – PhD

Ms. Nancy Adagala

Mr. Khadoi Isalambo

Abstract

Maasai Mara Game and the Mau Forest Complex have been classified as the fragile eco-systems which require agent interventions for their survival. The Mau Forest Complex forms the largest closed-canopy forest ecosystem of Kenya, Standing at 400,000 hectares, it is the single most important water catchment in Rift Valley and western Kenya, and is natural asset of national importance whose condition has a major impact on the agriculture, energy, and wildlife and tourism sectors. This critical ecosystem helps secure the provision of water supply to urban areas for domestic and industrial use and supports to the livelihoods of millions of people living in the rural areas, not only in Kenya, but also in neighboring countries. Most importantly is that Maasai Mara Game reserve depends on it for its water supply. Despite its critical importance for sustaining current and future economic development, the Mau Forest Complex has been impacted by extensive irregular and ill-planned settlements, as well as illegal forest resources extraction that have reduced cover by more than 25% in the past 15 years. Since 2008, the government of Kenya has cultivated a sense of public urgency and political awareness to conserve and rehabilitate the Mau Forest Complex which has permeated all aspects of Kenyan society. The purpose of this paper is to present the challenges and opportunities in the policy formulation and implementation in the conservation of the Maasai Mara Game Reserve and Mau Forest Complex. The primary data, on the other hand, was generated through interviews and focused group discussions (FGDs). These was conducted on the residents of Chemare and Chematich sub-locations both in Kiptororo location Kuresoi South Sub-county in Nakuru , , Bomet and Narok Counties. the KFS staff, D.O, Chief and Assistant Chiefs, officials of CFAs and NGO, one timber merchant/logger, one charcoal maker merchant and the opinion leaders. The respondents were identified through probability and non-probability sampling methods while the data obtained was analysed and presented in descriptive method. The study found out that there exist policies on environmental conservation. Consequently, from the findings, the study concluded that the policies on environmental conservation in Kenya are adequate and clearly spelt out in the conservation of the Mau Forest Complex. However with the presence of good policies notwithstanding the implementation in the conservation of the Mau Forest Complex is still wanting as it faces a myriad of challenges. The study further concluded that there is a thin line between politics and Mau Forest Complex conservation in Kenya

Key words: Policy Formulation, Policy Implementation, Conservation, Mau Forest Complex