

STATEMENT FROM THE CONSERVATION ALLIANCE OF KENYA
ON DEVELOPMENTS IN NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK. August 10th 2016

The **Conservation Alliance of Kenya** (CAK) has noted with concern the ongoing development of infrastructure projects within our protected areas. Much as we all as Kenyan's stand to benefit from the development and industrialization of this country, we have also put in place laws which are designed to protect the environment and wildlife, which are such a crucial component of our tourism industry and our identity as a Nation. The protected areas that were created within this country not only serve as tourist attractions but provide us with essential ecosystem services, including clean air, water catchment, etc.

The measures we expect to see for the protection of this natural heritage include compliance of project proponents with the provisions of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act, (EMCA)1999 and the public participation in planning and review EIA/SEA that could have adverse impacts on the environment. Since the first public consultations 2015, we have been observing the development of infrastructure within protected area with concern at the apparently casual manner in which it is being implemented. The Phase 2 of the Standard Gauge Railway has for several months been a source of debate in reference to its anticipated impact on the Nairobi National Park and surrounding environment.

The **CAK** under the Conservation and Development thematic working group and other concerned parties have raised serious and pertinent questions about the way the project and related procedures were being carried out but have not yet received coherent, clear or honest communication on the same from those concerned. Inquiries to the project owner (Kenya Railways Corporation-KRC) have been met by claims that final decisions have not been made on the route, yet there are ongoing preparation and construction work and the impacts thereof are clearly visible within the park. These impacts have also been visible in the recent excursions of wildlife from the park into Nairobi city, putting citizens and wildlife at grave risk. The cursory public participation that has been arranged thus far by the project owner (KRC) have also been below the requirements stipulated under the rights to access information in the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) itself has been prominent by its silence on this matter. As a statutory agency, it has seemed unwilling or unable to state its position on this particular project, leaving the question open to conjecture as to whether it has been compromised, cowed into submission, or entered into some sort of agreement with the KRC on this project. As a state agency, KWS holds the Parks in Trust for the people of Kenya and as such is obliged to state whenever it cedes any park or part thereof to another agency for another purpose within the legal requirement. The National parks are a crucial part of our heritage as a country, and symbolize our commitment to conservation. This is why we even choose to symbolically burn our ivory stocks at the Nairobi National Park, rather than at a refuse dump site or landfill. Whatever decision is taken by our government and statutory agencies about our natural heritage cannot be undertaken without public participation or full disclosure, according to the Constitution of Kenya 2010.

We, therefore, demand disclosure of the EIA report from the KRC; statement from KWS to state its position and decision on the SGR phase two through the park; and National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) to ensure compliance with EIA regulation, on the alignment of the Standard Gauge Railway (Phase 2), its adverse potential impacts on the National Park, and the proposed mitigation measures.

This would enable key stakeholders and the general public to participate in reaching an amicable decision in an informed manner.

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