

Chairperson's Annual Report 2006
Delivered Friday 9th February 2007,
at the First TNRF Annual General Meeting, Hotel 77

INTRODUCTION

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to deliver the first Chairperson's Report for TNRF. I must say that it's a little bit of a special occasion for us – we are a young organisation – having only been registered in 2006, with much potential, but still a lot to learn and achieve. I trust that this report leaves you with a strong desire to debate and to discuss the work that TNRF is here to do, but most of all to participate in it and make it your own.

Before proceeding, I believe it is important that first I tell you why I am standing in front of you as Chairperson of TNRF.

I think that TNRF has set itself a difficult goal, but also, I think, a remarkable way of going about it.

I know I can speak for very many of us here, when I say that we all would like to see the governance of our rangelands, our forests, our wildlife, our

freshwater and marine fisheries, and our lands, much improved in a way that benefits us all fairly. TNRF exists to help us do this. Yet I must say that the challenges that lie ahead of us are considerable, particularly when we begin to put together the complexity of environment and development and when we see changes such as population growth, climate change, and continuing high levels of poverty.

Our country's economy and its future is based on natural resources – our growing livestock industry, our flourishing tourism industry, our fisheries, and our forests and our agriculture. And yet, all too often we – as the users and managers of these resources - don't have the opportunity we need for helping to develop sound natural resource management policies and practices. In my mind this too often means we don't manage our wonderful land and natural assets in a way that is best and benefits us all fairly. TNRF is here to provide a practical forum through which all of us can work collaboratively to help make this happen. We are all aware of the different challenges that we face individually and collectively in our own communities and in our daily work and lives. But if we are able to come together to work collaboratively on these natural resource challenges, and in doing so be open-minded, fair and encompass each other's perspectives, then we can use our combined ingenuity and energy to bring about change for the better - for us and for the natural resources and environment on which we depend.

Some might say, but is this not the job of government? Yes, but I think it is clear to very many of us that government is only one part of the equation. We, as civil society, are the other part – a part that has been absent too long in holding the Government accountable. It is time for us now to use our knowledge – as local users, managers, scientists and business people – in

moving for better policies and laws, and being a key part of better managing and benefiting from our natural resources.

So I see this first Chairperson's report as a little step for us as a growing organisation in finding the road ahead that will lead us to our vision for improved natural resource management based on:

- **Sound Governance** - far more accountable and transparent government;
- **Better policy and law** - a much more responsive and better functioning policy and legal environment that enables sound management and fairly supports our rights as citizens, and particularly those of rural communities;
- **Strong rural communities** - who are empowered, skilled and accountable resource users and managers;
- **Vibrant formal enterprise** - profitably operating through fair partnerships with rural people for better rural livelihoods and sustained local and national development;
- **Healthy landscapes** - that are well managed ecosystems which generate sustainable services and the values needed by a diverse range of people and interests.

I now give you my report on the past year for TNRF.

REPORT

Members, ladies and gentlemen,

The year 2006 has been one of foundation-laying, transition and growth. In February 2006 we became an independent organisation registered under the NGO Act of 2002. In celebrating this, I would like to warmly acknowledge and very much thank the Wildlife Conservation Society of

Tanzania for having provided an institutional home and helped nurture the beginnings of TNRF. Asanteni sana.

Our independence was a necessary step for developing the enabling environment as forum in which a broad range of people and interests can participate, and one in which I hope the Wildlife Conservation Society of Tanzania continues to be a strong partner.

The early part of the year was a difficult time for the Secretariat as they struggled with the usual growing pains of a newly fledged organisation. In addition to holding general meetings and steering committee meetings, the Secretariat prepared for two poverty and environment trainings for people from different walks of life from across the country that were carried out for the Ministry of Economic Planning and Empowerment, in partnership with the World-wide Fund for Nature.

However, the Secretariat made it through the initial difficult months, and I would like to share with you some of the highlights of the year.

In May, we had the opportunity of making a presentation to the Development Partners Group – which comprises all the major bilateral donors – on the state of governance of the wildlife sector in Tanzania. We were candid and forthright, in the belief and hope that providing a clear and uncompromising assessment might help create the space for change for the better.

Also in May, we had our first interaction with the Parliamentary Natural Resource and Environment Committee, as part of briefing sessions arranged

through a parliamentary support programme run by the State University of New York.

In July, together with our partners PINGOS and Oxfam, we met with the Minister for Livestock – in an effort to develop stronger links to the Ministry with regard to rangeland policy and management. The result of this meeting was the creation of a high-level reference group, with direct access to the Minister. We then worked hard to formalise and give momentum to the reference group. However, as can be expected in life, the then Minister was moved to another post in a cabinet reshuffle in October, and we have since not been able to re-engage – a challenge for this year!

In August, together with our partners, and as part of the Rangelands and Livelihoods Task Force, we held a seminar for the Parliamentary Committee on Natural Resources and Environment, and the Parliamentary Committee on Agriculture, Livestock and Land on the future of pastoralism in Tanzania. The seminar was held in the context of a new livestock policy stating that pastoralists should settle and become sedentary – in effect leading to parcelled lands, and the end of open rangelands. The aim of this seminar was to provide an opportunity for MPs to become more aware of the complex issues surrounding rangeland livelihoods and rangeland management, and to make a strong case that pastoralism, if properly supported, would be the best use of the rangelands – a case based on contemporary science. In addition, open and locally mobile rangeland use would provide an opportunity for much more diversified land use and livelihoods, including wildlife. MPs expressed a marked sympathy and awareness of the plight of pastoralist peoples and the rangelands, but equally were very uncertain, and rather unclear about tangible solutions and

the way forward. We will be working with them this year to help improve their understanding of these issues and provide them with the information they need.

In the same month, we facilitated a workshop with the Forest and Beekeeping Division as part of the process for developing Joint Forest Management guidelines under the Forest Act of 2002. Joint Forest Management is a key way forward for the better management of the government's large forest estate. The Forest and Beekeeping Division has realised that if it is to continue to retain its forest reserves, then it needs the support of local communities and the formal business sector to do so. The guidelines will result in the development of regulations which will set out cost and benefit sharing arrangements for developing joint forest management arrangements. We worked with leading lawyers and over 20 forest managers from across Tanzania and senior forest staff and advisors in this process.

In November, we again worked with the Parliamentary Natural Resource and Environment Committee in taking them on a study tour of the community conservancies of north-west Namibia. Our aim was to show them that alternative approaches to wildlife management outside protected areas could really work. Our Namibian partners showed them that by fully devolving wildlife rights to rural communities, wildlife populations had been turned around and direct levels of income to rural communities had been transformed. This is why Namibia is perhaps the only country in Africa with increasing wildlife populations in rural areas outside protected areas. This achievement has been made possible through partnerships between communities and formal business, facilitated by a vibrant NGO community and with the tacit support of central government and parliament. Although

challenges still remain in the areas the MPs visited, Namibia left a strong and indelible impression on the parliamentary committee. The MPs could not help notice how much Namibia was doing with the near desert and scrub that covers a vast proportion of the country. Nor was it lost on them how much more Tanzania could do with its much richer resources.

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now go on to review TNRF's growth as an organisation, and the challenges which it faces in the coming year.

Early on in the year we realised that if TNRF was to begin to reach its potential and provide sustained outputs, our small secretariat needed to grow to meet member- and partner-driven demand. So the Secretariat began fundraising and working to develop new funding partnerships. Although the TNRF Treasurer will say more on the subject, I will steal a little of his fire and say that we have now begun to successfully diversify our funding base, and currently have almost tripled our income in less than a year.

Before continuing, I would like to say that much of this achievement has been due to my friend and colleague, Liz Singleton, TNRF's first Coordinator, who left us at the end of May. As Coordinator, Liz had the uneasy and unenviable task of setting up TNRF and laying the foundations for others to build on and take forward. So I would like to say a great thank you to Liz, as she has moved on to further studies, too far away from us.

As part of ensuring TNRF's future, we also realised that we needed to change as an organisation, to review where we had come from, and to think

carefully about where we wanted to go. We realised that we need to change from being very small and highly entrepreneurial, to becoming more established and professional, yet still retaining that entrepreneurial and accountable spirit. In November last year, we held a review and planning meeting, to which we invited key partners and advisors. We were candid about where we felt we had weaknesses, and together we thought through the issues and came up with a straight-forward strategy and plan. I will briefly outline this plan to you now, as I think that it is important that you have the opportunity to think about it, and to provide your comments and suggestions on it.

TNRF is at heart about:

- Improving communication;
- Sharing information;
- Promoting collaboration; and
- Supporting collective action

We will develop an effective **communications programme** for members and partners that will include;

- Providing timely, relevant and targeted information on developments in the natural resource sector useful for members and partners;
- Providing special seminars and informational opportunities on useful issues at the request of our members and partners;
- Holding regular general meetings to promote information exchange between our members, as part of building partnerships and collaboration;

and

- Collaboratively developing targeted training and informational materials and programmes on natural resource management and governance – for example, for rural communities and formal business;

But communications and information alone are not sufficient. We will facilitate member involvement in natural resource policy and management issues.

TNRF will do this through supporting the development of member- and partner-driven **working groups** and their programmes of developing and advocating for appropriate policies, laws and best practices. Working groups have begun to provide tangible opportunities for members to become directly involved in the issues that affect them, in a way that is collaborative, minimises the perception of risk, and enables them to tap into TNRF's growing resources and network of partners. Our two currently active working groups are the Rangelands and Livelihoods Task Force, and the Forestry Working Group.

TNRF will provide increasing opportunities for **liaising with Central Government and Parliament** on the issues raised and the information developed by working groups. In better understanding central government and parliament, and through developing strong professional relationships, TNRF will improve the two-way flow of information needed for change and improvement in natural resource management.

In addition to the planning meeting in November last year, the TNRF Secretariat also worked with two working groups in October and December – the Rangelands and Livelihoods Task Force, and the Forestry Working Group – to enable them to develop clear ways forward in their work, and to identify the human and financial resources required for their success.

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I now would like to talk briefly about the status of our secretariat and our steering committee.

In the coming year, TNRF will strengthen its Secretariat in order to follow through on the strategic plan we have developed. The Secretariat's communications capacity will be much strengthened, we will have more staff in place to support member working groups, and we will continue to work hard to develop our interactions with government. As an organisation, we have just professionalized our administration and accounting systems to international standards. In the coming month, we will develop our capacity in strategic fund-raising as part of the process of ensuring that we are financially sustainable and are able to grow as needed.

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our steering committee has served TNRF well, and I would like to profusely thank them for their voluntary and unpaid work. They have frequently made time in their busy schedules and provided sound and insightful guidance for TNRF. As Chairperson, I would ask the membership to consider asking current members to continue for a further one year term. We need that continuity as an organisation, and their experienced advice and guidance to succeed. We have three open positions on the steering committee, and I would ask the general assembly to use these positions to bring new people on board. If I may say so, Tanzanian women remain under-represented, and we need and we would be delighted to have more on the Steering Committee!

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

And now to consider the year ahead of us.

In trying not to set myself up for a fall, this year will be pivotal for TNRF. We will need to be proactive in engaging with some key policy and law developments – not least the forthcoming – and delayed – Wildlife Legislation, and the forthcoming Rangelands Management Act. In addition, the TNRF Secretariat will work hard to keep you informed of other developments – such as the recently started Wildlife Management Area review. Additionally, we hope that this year will see member working groups really taking off. The Rangelands and Livelihoods Task Force will shortly have its own programme officer. We have high hopes for emergence of a Tanzania Forest Working Group, from the current Forest Working Group supported by Mr Cassian Sianga, our forest programme officer. We hope to see other working groups coming together too – such as a human and wildlife conflict group and a community-based tourism group – as members and partners have expressed their interest and desire to form these groups.

But perhaps most importantly, TNRF needs to work to develop a country-wide network of natural resource users and managers at the grass-roots level. We will develop these linkages by supporting and working through a growing number of partners working at community level. In this regard, I would like to welcome Mr Julius Achiula on board, our new Community Liaison Officer. Through working with our partners, he will be responsible for developing TNRF's support to rural communities in a growing programme of information provision, training and out-reach across the country.

Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In summing up, I would like to leave you with the following thoughts.

TNRF has endeavoured to be demand-driven from the outset. We are here for our members, and we pride ourselves on that membership being

increasingly broad-based, inclusive and free. As members and partners, I invite you to participate and to be part of a collective effort that helps improve the way we manage our natural resources. We will continue to work hard to provide the enabling framework and the opportunities for you to become involved, but it is up to you to participate. By participating I mean sharing information, asking for support from the Secretariat, taking part in – or even starting a working group, asking questions or making points at meetings, letting us and other members know what you need and the challenges you face.

Some may think that this initiative is rather naïve - after-all there are often conflicts of interest between natural resource users, and sharing information is often not in everyone's interests. But I have never known a conflict – or conflict of interest – that does not have significant cost and lasting damage. If we learn to become more open, if we can resolve our outstanding conflicts of interest, if we can work together for a better and common future, we will all benefit as civil society, and our wonderful natural heritage and environment will too.