

To: Ipanel@worldbank.org
Date: 04/21/2009 02:59 PM
Cc:
Bcc:
Subject: The Export Processing Zone, Athi River, Nairobi, Kenya

Dear Sir/Madam:

The EPZ, located in Athi River, Nairobi, Kenya, was funded by the World Bank, sometime in 1994. Until that time, a strong and viable migration of wildebeest and other wildlife utilized that area and the surrounding Kitengela plains for grazing. Pastoralist communities coexisted peacefully. Since then, environmental and social conflicts continually arise and persist. Water sources are vastly meagre. Electricity supply remains poor. Manufacturers have abandoned operations. The EPZ lies waste after crippling and helping to destroy the Kitengela wildlife ecosystem. The local communities are becoming increasingly hostile over government plans to urbanise marginal lands.

Today, the Minister for Trade of the Government of Kenya, announced plans to increase industrial development along the current Export Processing Zone. However, organizations including the Kenya Wildlife Service, the International Livestock Research Institute, and the African Wildlife Foundation, are working exhaustively to insure the area is protected for the still healthy populations of wildlife. The game census records strong numbers of giraffe, lion, buffalo, eland, zebra, dik-dik, warthog, gazelles, and scores of other wildlife which inhabit the area marked for urbanization and industrialization, a condition generated by the flawed planning by the World Bank of the EPZ.

I have been serving Friends of Nairobi National Park since 1995. When the EPZ was constructed east of Nairobi National Park, there was no stakeholder consultation. NNP is the oldest protected area in East Africa, gazetted in 1946. The Director of KWS has determined that protected areas must be managed as open ecosystems for sustainability. Fenced parks, such as Lake Nakuru National Park, are dying terribly. The current EPZ serves to block not only the open-ecosystem of Nairobi National Park, but also that of Amboseli National Park, because of its extending encroachment into wildlife areas.

I request the Inspection Panel of the World Bank to urgently investigate this matter. Kenyan ministries of every function are busily studying strategies to develop the Kitengela. UNEP and many environmental bodies have published extensive research that the only viable and sustainable use for the Kitengela is pastoralist and conservation. Environmental tragedies are escalating throughout the region. It is yet time to avoid the complete ruin of the Kitengela open ecosystem and wildlife corridor.

Regards,

Mrs. Joan Sikand
Vice Chair
Friends of Nairobi National Park