

# Wildlife research park launched in Monduli

By Lusekelo Philemon, Arusha

MONDULI district authority has launched the first ever Africa's Natural Resources, Wildlife and Environment Research Park, which is expected to add value to the country's tourism sector.

Speaking during the launch, the Manyara Regional Commissioner, Erasto Mbwilo said the maiden park will play an instrumental role in fostering tourism in the country.

"This is where science is going to meet tourism and we hope the Eco-science facility will form yet another tourism attraction in Tanzania but this time it will be tourism with a purpose not just the usual leisure travels," he stated.

Mbwilo officially launched the Eco-Science property on behalf of the Arusha Regional Commissioner, Magessa Mulongo whose name has been engraved in the foundation stone's placard.

The Manyara RC further said, "Since this is going to be Nature sciences' study and research centre, we hope it will help discover and possibly help find solutions for the diseases ailing many species of wildlife causing most of them to die."

Monduli district owns part of Lake Manyara National Park and a section of Tarangire National Park.

Jowika Kasunga is the DC

for Monduli, who expressed his satisfaction on the establishment of the new facility in his administrative area.

He said, "This facility, which not only add potential investment and employment opportunities to the area, but the Eco-Science centre will also help transform the Monduli's wild savannah for the better."

Eco-Science which is a hybrid facility comprising of the nature research centre as well as luxury lodge is situated on the North-Eastern border of Tarangire National Park, 20 kilometres south of the village of Makuyuni the main junction at the road to both the Ngorongoro Crater and Serengeti National park.

The Science Centre has been described as a satellite in Maasai land for scientists and students at local and international universities in general, as well as research centres from all over the world.

"Small groups of scientists, researchers and students can stay at Eco-science for their investigations, studies or conferences," said Dr Ben Beeckmans the Eco-Science Director who is also an Environment Scientist, and Physical Geographer.

He explained that the science centre, completely independent from the luxury lodge, consists of 10 extra large tents. The two largest

ones consist of restaurant and conference rooms with a library.

"We invite universities or individual scientists with a keen scientific interest to Northern Tanzania to propose projects which could be important for the local population or beyond it," Beeckmans said, adding that Natural sciences like geography, biology and geology, environmental sciences and agriculture will be the main sectors of the centre even though Eco-science is also open to other domains.

"The centre is also preparing a mobile unit for field work and the conditions to collaborate with Eco-science will be discussed between us and the participants and will largely depend on the nature of the project," he added.

He further explained that part of the collaboration was to be in twofold, "Eco-science will ask some of the scientists to inform visitors of their work, and for every project a report or publication, depending on the importance under our own "Eco-science" label."

"Our aim is to have a mixture of long and short term projects, punctual ones. Scholarships will also be part of the future," he said.

The property will also study seismic forces with an aim of predicting future volcanic activities along the main Rift Valley.