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## THE ECONOMY

### Rain Fed Farming

Rain fed farming is the dominant activity for most of Kenya's population. Eighty percent of the people live in rural areas. They cultivate small farms, known as *shambas*, averaging 1.6 hectares in size (Photo 40). The area suitable for this type of crop production is limited to only one-fifth of the country. Thus as the population of the country continues to grow rapidly, and with limited opportunities outside of farming, the size of farms is decreasing as they are divided when parents die and children inherit the land. This contributes to the problem of widespread poverty in Kenya and over 90 percent of the poor already live in rural areas.



**Photo 40: A typical farm, Meru**  
(Source: Ted Bernard)

Traditionally farmers grew a number of different crops in each field. For example, grain crops such as millet, maize and sorghum would be mixed with beans or cowpeas. This helped maintain

the soil fertility as the beans and cowpeas would add nitrogen to the soil and the grains need nitrogen to grow well. Manure from farm animals also helped maintain soil fertility.

All members of the family contributed to the work on the farm. Men were most responsible for clearing the land and plowing, women for planting and weeding, and children guarded the crops against birds, monkeys, and other animals. They also looked after the family's sheep and goats. At harvest time everyone helped gather the crops.

In addition to crops and animals, farmers often had fruit trees in their fields. The combination of fruits, beans, grains, and meat and milk provided a balanced diet, though in times of drought food supplies dwindled.

Today maize is the most important food crop in Kenya. Maize is eaten as flour made into a porridge-like food known as *ugali* that is served with meat, fish or vegetables and a sauce. Maize is also mixed with beans and boiled. Farmers also grow beans. Other food crops are grown depending upon the rainfall and the quality of the soil. These include white potatoes, sweet potatoes, wheat, cabbages, bananas, and vegetables. Most farmers also keep a few animals, cattle or goats. After Kenya gained independence from Britain in 1963 many farmers also began to grow tea and coffee as cash crops.

A number of factors have led to an increasing inability of farms to provide for the needs of the people. Declining prices for tea and coffee, division of the land into smaller and smaller units as a result of inheritance, the effects of drought, and the movement of many men to cities in search of employment have combined to reduce the viability of many small farms. In response, many farmers tried to reduce their risks by growing a very small amount of a wide variety of crops in the hope that at least some will produce a yield.

The strains felt by small farmers are in contrast to the wealth of those who own large farms. There are enormous differences in wealth between the relatively few Kenyans who own large farms and the vast majority who own little land. This issue has important political and economic implications and threatens the peace of the country.

### **Land Use in Dry Areas**

In the dry areas of Kenya livestock raising is the main occupation. The people who keep livestock are known as pastoralists. There is very little cultivation of crops, except where the rainfall is more reliable and where irrigation is possible at the edges of swamps, along perennial streams or where major projects have been developed on rivers such as the Tana and the Turkwell. An important activity in these dryer areas is tourism, based in the national parks and reserves where abundant wildlife can be seen.

#### *Pastoralism as a Land Use*

There are many pastoral peoples in Kenya. They include the Maasai, Turkana, Rendille, Gabbra, Somali, and the Boran. These people keep cattle and camels, and sheep and goats. Because the rainfall in the dry lands is unreliable and scattered, the pastoralists have to be mobile in order to bring their animals to places where water and grazing are available.

Pastoralists have developed several strategies designed to reduce the negative effects of seasonal rainfall, which is often irregular in time and space, and of recurrent drought. These include:

- *Mobility.* Pastoralists know which areas offer sustenance during different seasons, and move their herds according to the availability of water and pasture. During the rains the herds disperse over the rangelands while in the dry season, and in periods of drought, they concentrate in localities that continue to afford grazing and water resources.
- *Herding a variety of animals.* Most pastoralists herd a variety of animals, a combination of cattle or camels, sheep and goats; each species grazes different ecological niches and has different economic and social value (Photo 41).



**Photo 41: Maasai herd - cattle in background, goats & sheep in foreground**

- *Maintenance of herd size.* Pastoralists need enough livestock to assure their own basic subsistence requirements throughout the year, plus those for trade, social obligations and drought losses. Therefore, they attempt to maintain large herds.
- *Control of grazing areas.* Access to dry-season water and grazing areas is of fundamental importance to the survival of pastoralists within the environmental constraints of the dry parts of the country. These may include swamplands and valleys of perennial streams within the rangelands, hill slopes and other areas at the more humid margins of the rangelands. To protect these areas pastoralists resist, by force if necessary, any attempts by other pastoralists or by farmers to occupy their traditional dry-season retreat areas.
- *Social relations.* Pastoralists maintain a variety of social linkages both within their own group and between themselves and neighboring communities. Families, clans, and age groups mutually support one another to reduce the bad effects of drought, disease or threats from outsiders.
- *Diversification of economic activity.* Contact with the outside world, trade of animals, exchange of animal products for grain, are also important, particularly during periods of drought, as means of supplementing their income and diet.

- *Flexibility.* Pastoralists move in and out of different activities, taking advantage of new opportunities such as livestock marketing, diversifying into farming, and labor migration.

Since colonization of Kenya by the British, there have been a number of changes in the traditional pastoral way of life. Government development efforts have attempted to modernize the nomadic economy by transforming land tenure arrangements, encouraging the education of children, reducing livestock numbers and by controlling seasonal movements. At the same time, social and economic changes in the nation have brought change to the traditional social norms of pastoralists.

It is clear that Kenya's pastoral societies have been remarkably resilient in the face of these attempts at imposed change. Whether the pastoralists will remain able to control the pace of social and economic change in response to external factors is doubtful. Population increase in pastoral societies, migration of farmers into dry-season grazing areas and the alienation of land for national parks are rapidly altering the balance between the requirements of pastoral societies and the capacity of the environment to meet them. Conflict within pastoral groups has increased because of a shortage of good grazing land.

These conditions have led to a situation where nearly all of Kenya's pastoral people are classified as below the poverty line. Not only are they poor in terms of income, but the availability of medical services and education is much less than in other parts of the country. Only very recently has there been a concerted effort by the government to improve conditions in these areas.

#### *Agricultural Land Use in Semi-arid Areas*

As farmers have moved into less favorable areas at the wetter margins of the rangelands, they have found farming more difficult because of seasonal rains which are erratic in amount, spatial distribution and occurrence. Also soils are often sandy, shallow and infertile except along river courses where water-retentive clays exist, and on slopes of volcanic hills. Much of the farming is

not very productive and farmers often have to supplement their income with off-farm activities.

In these areas of unpredictable rainfall, farmers have adopted a number of practices including: planting crops where soil and moisture conditions are most favorable, for instance along river valleys where water-retentive clay soils exist, or on hill slopes where rainfall is more frequent; inter-cropping - grains and legumes - in the same field as a water and soil conservation measure and as a means of spreading the risk of crop failure; storing grain in good years for use during periods of scarcity; and developing extensive social relations and obligations, a safety net that provides a means of sharing what is available during times of shortage.

Where rivers and streams, or swamps, provide a sufficiently reliable source of water, irrigation is practiced. Areas under irrigation can be very extensive such as the schemes at Mwea and along the Tana River that use water from rivers flowing off Mt. Kenya, or smaller in scale such as along the streams and around the swamps found at the foot of Mt. Kilimanjaro. Irrigation schemes specialize in the production of crops for sale. For example, the Mwea scheme grows rice that is sold throughout Kenya, while those at the base of Kilimanjaro concentrate on vegetables that are sold in the major cities of Nairobi and Mombasa, and some are exported by air to Europe.

#### *National Parks as a Land Use*

Early European explorers reported in wonder about the large and diverse wildlife populations of Kenya. Antelope, wildebeest, lion, elephant, leopard, rhinoceros were all seen. The main reason why wildlife was present in such numbers was that they were protected, rather than hunted, by the African people who lived there. Some hunting would take place, for example as a means to protect cattle or as part of the passage from boyhood to manhood. It was only with the Arab interest in trading ivory and the European desire for big game hunting that severe threats to certain animals arose. Today some animals such as rhinoceros and elephant are in great danger in Kenya and are protected by law.

The first legal actions in Kenya relating to wildlife were taken in 1898. Up to 1945, regulations were concerned with the control of hunting and with the protection of specific species. In 1945 the National Parks Ordinance was passed under which national parks were created for the exclusive use of wildlife, and national reserves were set aside within which wildlife were protected and other land uses carefully controlled by the County Councils. The majority of the area of parks and reserves is in the semi-arid, rangeland areas also used by pastoralists (Map 7).

**Map 7: Kenya National Parks & Game Reserves**



(Source: [http://www.hmnet.com/africa/kenya/ke\\_tourist/kenyatmap.html](http://www.hmnet.com/africa/kenya/ke_tourist/kenyatmap.html))

While the pastoralists had in the past lived in balance with the wildlife, they now face a situation under which they are still expected to live amicably alongside wildlife in the wet season, when the animals are dispersed over the rangeland. In the dry-season, many areas formerly used by both wildlife and domestic herds are now reserved solely for wildlife in National Parks (Photo 42), or wildlife are protected as in National Reserves (Photo 43).

In Kenya, a successful national park or reserve has a variety of habitats to encourage a diversity of wildlife. It also encloses areas that provide permanent sources of dry season water and pasture around which plains animals can congregate providing a pleasing spectacle for tourists and allowing protection of wildlife species. Setting aside such dry-season concentration areas for wildlife imposes restrictions on pastoralists during the dry periods. Some have had to alter their grazing patterns, increasing the pressure of domestic stock at other permanent water holes open to pastoral use. In some cases the Parks have agreed to allow access to water for the livestock.



**Photo 42: Amboseli National Park: Elephant and Mount Kilimanjaro**



**Photo 43: A herd of wildebeest and zebra in the annual Masai Mara migration**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)

The major economic benefits of wildlife conservation and national parks come from tourism. The second largest earner of foreign exchange, tourism brought Kenya over \$500 million in 1994. Over 600,000 tourists visit Kenya annually, most coming from Tanzania and Uganda in Africa, and Germany, Britain, and the United States outside Africa. Beaches and wildlife are the most important attractions.

Many of us have seen scenes of Kenya on television in programs about wildlife and at the movies, in films like *Born Free*, *Out of Africa*, and *The Lion King*. Of all the countries of Africa south of the Sahara, Kenya is the one that Americans are most likely to visit. In 2007, more than 100,000 Americans visited the country. The same year, Kenya welcomed more than 1 million international tourist arrivals from around the world. Many tourists are from the United Kingdom and Germany, while growing numbers are visiting from East Asian countries such as Japan, China, and Korea.

Wildlife viewing and coastal tourism are the primary activities. Tourists wishing to see wildlife usually travel on a *safari*, a Swahili word meaning journey. Most *safaris* last between 4 and 14 days and visitors will travel in a small bus that carries about 7 people (Photo 44).

Usually they will visit two or three parks and reserves, though the longer ones take in many of Kenya's sights. While on a *safari* visitors usually stay in luxurious accommodations, built overlooking watering holes where wildlife congregate at night. The watering holes are floodlit so that visitors can easily see the animals (Photos 45 and 46).



**Photo 44: A close-up view: Elephant and tourist minibus, Amboseli National Park**



**Photos 45 and 46: The Treetops Hotel, Kenya**

The buses also take the visitors out into the parks to view animals (Photos 47-50).



**Photo 47: A herd of giraffe, Masai Mara**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)



**Photo 48: Impala, Masai Mara**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)



**Photo 49: Hippos, Amboseli**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)



**Photo 50: Cheetah, Masai Mara**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)

The best time to see them is early in the morning and just before sunset. At these times many buses travel along roads in search of interesting wildlife (Photo 51). When animals such as lions (Photo 52) are found the vehicles gather around them, often in such numbers that there are more buses than lions!



**Photo 51: A wake of vultures scavenging a wildebeest, Masai Mara**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)

Click on the arrow below to play the vultures video. Right click on the video screen and select Disable Content to close the video.

**Video Credit:**  
**Owen Campbell**



Vultures scavenging



**Photo 52: Off the road: A tourist vehicle and lioness**

Click on the arrow below to play the lions video. Right click on the video screen and select Disable Content to close the video.

**Video Credit:**  
**Owen Campbell**



A pride of lions eating their prey

The presence of so many buses can disrupt the animals' hunting and mating behavior, threatening their long-term survival. The tourists' vehicles can also damage the environment, particularly when they leave the roads to get a closer look at the wildlife (Photo 53), is of concern to wildlife managers and controls will be needed to prevent this unique resource being ruined by over-use of the facilities.



**Photo 53: A pair of young male lions, Masai Mara**  
(Source: Owen Campbell)

The growth of international tourism has provided a boost to the Kenyan economy. However, it is often difficult to ensure that tourism activities benefit the rural communities that are most in need of additional sources of income. Also of concern is that the tourism business varies from year to year depending on events in Kenya and world economic conditions. For example, the number of tourists visiting Kenya declined in 2008 following the disputed elections. It has been estimated

that as many as 20,000 Kenyans lost employment as a result of the downturn in economic activities related to tourism during that year.

*Conflict Between Land Use Systems: Rural Livelihood Systems and Wildlife Management*

While wildlife conservation and management are vital to the lucrative tourist trade of Kenya, these activities have had profound impacts upon other economies, particularly those of the farmers and pastoralists. The impact of reserves and parks on the herding economy happened at the same as many detrimental government policies, and has been made more difficult recently by the movement of farmers into the pastoral domain. Wildlife also has adverse effects on these farmers, particularly in times of drought, as antelope, buffalo, elephant, and giraffe cause considerable crop damage for which the farmers are seldom compensated.

These conflicts between different users of the land are common. When we see films of wildlife on television, and look in wonder at the abundance and variety of wildlife in East Africa we are in awe. Most of us who will ever visit East Africa are likely to go as tourists and expect to see wildlife close up. We have to understand that for local people wildlife are an important part of their environment, they appreciate them, but they also have to bear the costs when crops are destroyed or domestic animals are killed.

People concerned with wildlife conservation, and the organizations and government agencies that manage wildlife are increasingly aware of these issues. They recognize that for future wildlife conservation to be successful in maintaining Kenya's wildlife heritage, attention will have to be paid to the needs of the communities who live with the wildlife. It is those communities that have allowed wildlife to flourish up to now, and they will have to be provided incentives and economic returns to wildlife if their support is to continue into the future.

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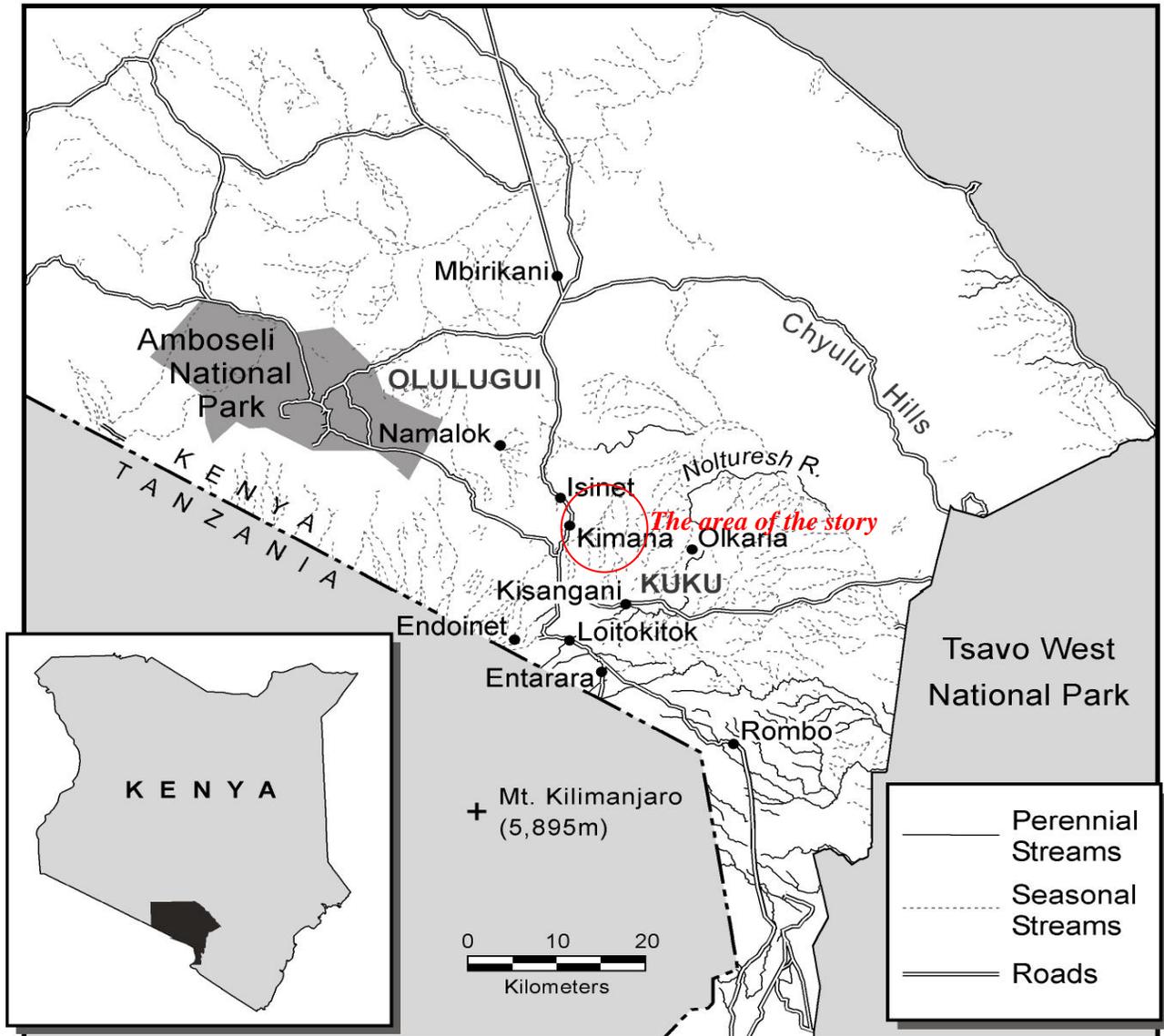
**BOX 4: WILDLIFE CONSERVATION – CONSERVATION OF WHAT AND FOR WHOM? A STORY OF A PERSON WHOSE CROPS WERE EATEN BY ELEPHANTS**



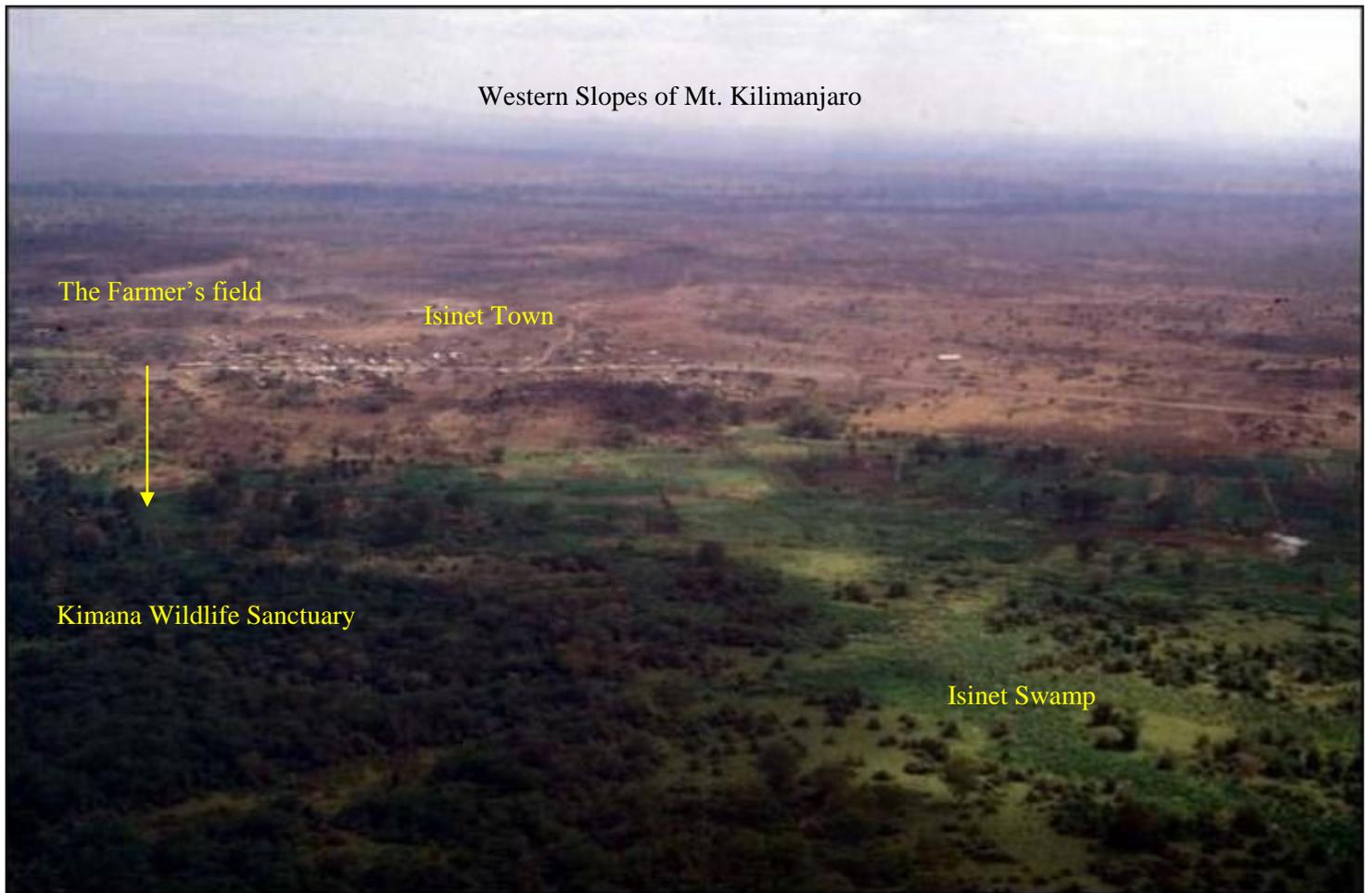
In 1996 David Campbell was doing research in the area around Isinet Swamp, just north of Loitokitok in Kajiado District. This is an area where the waters of the swamp are important to a number of different land use groups: herders for whom the water in the swamp is important to the survival of their livestock particularly during dry seasons and droughts, farmers who irrigate food crops and cash crops at the edge of the swamp, and tourists who stay at the local lodges such as in the Kimana Wildlife Sanctuary that is owned by the local community, and come to view the wildlife who water in the swamps.

I spent the night at Kimana Lodge before interviewing farmers at Isinet. The lodge is located on the southern side of the Isinet Swamp. During the evening there I went on a drive around the Sanctuary. The drive took me through some very dry areas with little or no vegetation, and to the edge of the Isinet Swamp where we were able to see clearly a large herd of elephants eating and drinking in the swamp. I was also able to see a number of wildlife, including antelope and zebra. That evening after dinner, there was a surprise for the guests. The staff at the Lodge had deliberately hung a dead goat in a tree where guests would have a fine view of a leopard were one to come to claim its supper. This was very much appreciated by the guests at the Lodge as the leopard is less frequently seen than many other species.

The next morning, after a full breakfast, I set off to interview farmers at Isinet Town. I parked my jeep in front of the shops that ran along both sides of the road, and set off towards the swamp to talk with farmers who grow maize for their own food, and vegetables that are collected by trucks and sent to markets in the capital city of Kenya, Nairobi, as well as being flown to markets in Europe.



**Box 4 Map: Location of experience discussed in Box 4**



**Box 4, Photo 1: A view of Isinet Town and adjacent swamp**

One of the first farmers I met had a sorry tale to tell. He had a field where he grew maize for food, and he had some orange trees. He was not a wealthy man and the maize he grew was the principal source of sustenance for his family. Like other farmers at Isinet, he was aware of the presence of wildlife nearby in the swamp and the Sanctuary, and was worried about the potential damage they could cause to his fields. As the maize crop was coming close to harvest, he had built a temporary shelter where he would rest in the day and sleep at night in order to guard his crops. During the night before my visit, the elephants that I had been so pleased to observe during my evening drive, had come to his farm and completely destroyed his crops. He told us that he had lain in his shelter, terrified that were he to move he would be trampled and injured, or killed.

He had listened to the elephants chomping on his crop, and had realized that he would have to harvest to feed his family.



**Box 4, Photo 2: A view of the Wildlife Sanctuary and adjacent swamp**

This experience brought home to me the fact that while there is a great deal of attention paid to conserve wildlife, and the tourist industry earns Kenya a great deal of money, there are costs. The Kimana community obtains revenue from tourists, and from people like me who stay at the Sanctuary, but this poor farmer told us that he would not be compensated for the loss of his crop to the elephants that the tourists had taken great pleasure in seeing the previous day. Herders

I spoke with had similar stories of losing their cattle to attacks by lions and hyena, or of their cattle becoming sick from diseases carried by wildlife such as the wildebeest. They too complained that they were not compensated.

**END OF BOX 4**

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To address local concern about the effects of wildlife on farming and herding communities, the government is attempting to bring direct benefits from wildlife activities to these landholders. These include the payment of fees to compensate herders for the loss of grazing taken by wildlife, and the direct involvement of landholders in tourism through the ownership of hotels and tented camps. It is hoped that such policies will make wildlife, seen by many as a global treasure, more acceptable to those people whose way of life is directly affected by the daily presence of these animals.



**Photo 54: Discussion of land use issues, Loitokitok Division, Kajiado District.**  
Led by Daniel Somoire (standing at vehicle) and Paul Ntiati (sitting on stool, back to camera)

The problem of appropriate resource use, particularly at the intersection between pastoral and farming economies, is significant and is currently being addressed by the government. A recurrent theme in dry areas of Kenya is competition over critical resources. Since World War II there has been an increasing struggle between pastoralism, wildlife and cultivation in Kenya's drier areas, particularly over access to water. This competition can be seen in physical violence, in demands for access to resources enclosed in National Parks, and in the government's responses, compensating landowners for the depredations of wildlife and involving landowners more directly in wildlife management (Photo 54).

The intensity of competition for these resources in dry areas represents the most volatile effects of unequal access to resources in Kenya. The government will have to act boldly to prevent a worsening situation. Left to itself, the problems will inevitably become worse as population pressure imposes a greater demand upon scarce resources. The open conflicts between herders and farmers will become more frequent, and the demands by herders for access to the water and grazing resources in the wildlife reserves will become more strident.

## **The Modern Economy - Industry, Education, Cities and Towns**

### *Industry*

Industry is important to Kenya's economic growth because the more it produces for itself the less it has to spend on imports from other countries. Kenya has a diverse private industrial sector that employs over 350,000 people. Among the most important industries are food processing, beverages, textiles and clothing, printing, petroleum and plastics, and transport.

Many foreign-based companies operate in Kenya. They include American ones such as Firestone, Japanese ones such as Toyota, and British companies are heavily involved in banking and the tea industry. The government is also a major source of employment. Over 1,000,000 people are employed in the public sector in such activities as community and social services, and agriculture and forestry employ over 300,000.

## *Education*

Most people realize that their children will face severe competition for jobs. An education is seen as improving a person's chances of getting one. As a result, education is highly prized in Kenya. Out of all children in Kenya about 85 percent of children attend primary school, 24 percent of children attend secondary school, and 2 percent attend higher institutions. Primary education in Kenya has witnessed phenomenal growth since the National Alliance Rainbow Coalition (NARC) government came into power in 2002. In 2003, the government abolished school levies and introduced free schooling. The number of primary school pupils rose dramatically from 5.9 million in 2002 to 7.2 million in 2003 to 7.4 million in 2005. Although the national figures have gone up exponentially, there are regional imbalances. Some regions like the North Eastern Province, parts of Coast, Rift Valley, and Eastern Provinces and urban slums have generally lower enrolments, which is even worse for girls since their education is less valued. Some of the challenges facing primary education include; large numbers of pupils in classrooms, inadequate facilities in schools to meet the needs of increased enrolments, shortage of teachers, and inadequate places in secondary for primary school leavers.

The government of Kenya provides schooling for children from primary school through university. Not all communities rely on the government and many private schools exist. Primary education is open to all children in Kenya at schools supported by the government. While primary schooling is supposed to be free of charge, many schools charge small fees and expect the children to wear uniforms to school. The costs of the uniforms and other fees are sufficient to keep children from the poorest families away from school. Early education is in the home language of the students but as they get older they are taught in English. Secondary education is available in government and private schools. Secondary education is more expensive than primary education, and many families cannot afford it.

The curriculum is similar to that of American schools. Children study mathematics, reading and writing, science, geography, and history. Sports are important. Kenyans are famous for their long

distance runners who have won many medals at Olympic Games. Boys also play soccer and girls are excellent volleyball players, with Kenya having a world-class national team.

The number of people admitted every year to Kenya's five universities is very limited. Admission is competitive, and is based upon how well people do in entry examinations.

Unfortunately, as relatively few new jobs are created each year, many of those with an education are unemployed. Even university graduates find it difficult to obtain work. The presence of large numbers of educated people who do not find a job commensurate with their level of education leads to great disappointment. Such dissatisfaction feeds the political dissent already present over the unequal distribution of land.

The government and the private sector realize that the demand for employment outside of family farms will increase in the near future. Nearly half the population is under 15 years of age and as these people come to seek work, the existing rate of growth in jobs will be insufficient to meet the demand. Many will try to farm, but many more will move to the towns and cities. Kenya urgently needs to expand its economy to make more jobs available for its citizens. One strategy the government is using is to turn over some government-run industries to private investors.

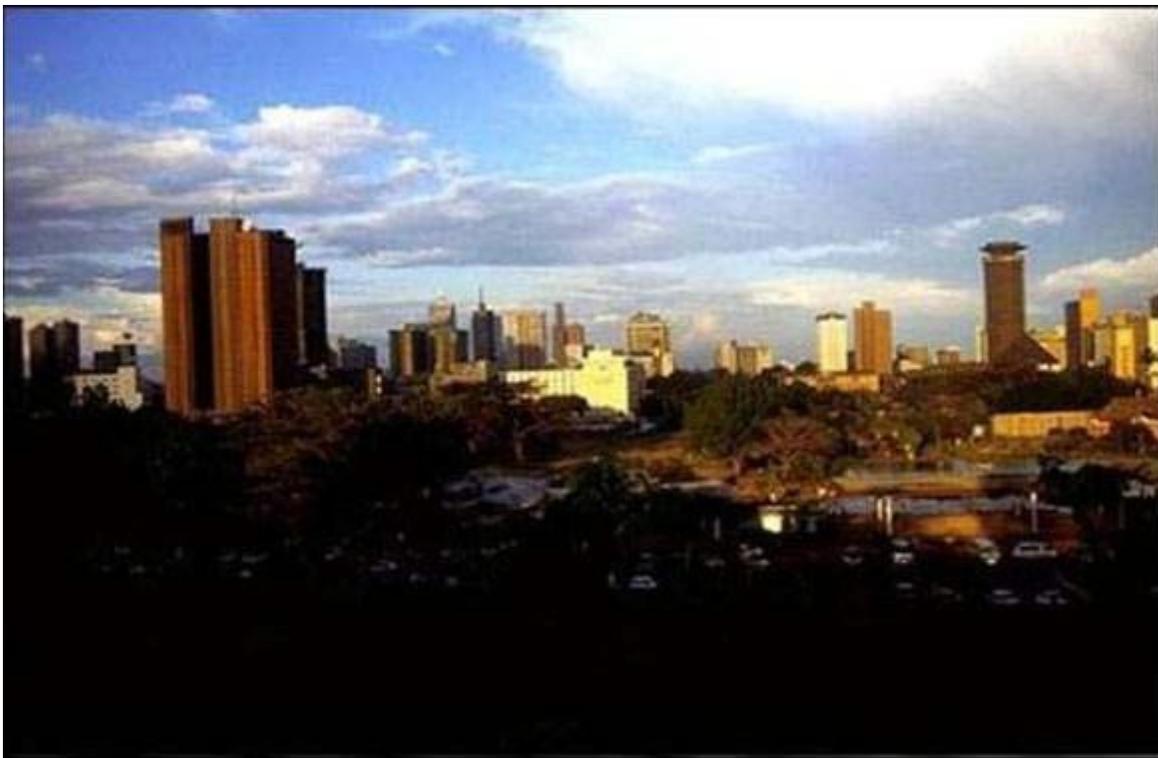
### *Cities and Towns*

There are four major cities - Nairobi, Mombasa, Kisumu, and Nakuru - and many towns in Kenya. The cities and towns have about 20 percent of Kenya's population, but they have almost all of the government investment in hospitals, electricity, and government facilities. Further, wage employment and services such as banks are found almost entirely in towns. There is a great incentive for people, particularly those with some education, to leave rural areas and move to towns to seek jobs and obtain access to services. This means that while the rural population has been growing rapidly over the past 30 years, the number of people in towns has grown even faster.

The largest city in Kenya is Nairobi. It is the most populous city in East Africa, with an estimated urban population of between 3 and 4 million (Photos 55-61). According to the 1999 Census, in the administrative area of Nairobi, 2,143,254 inhabitants lived within 684 km<sup>2</sup>. In 2002, Nairobi was the 12th largest city in Africa. For an excellent description of Nairobi see:

[http://na.unep.net/atlas/KenyaAtlas/AtlasDownload/Kenya\\_Screen\\_Chapter5-End.pdf](http://na.unep.net/atlas/KenyaAtlas/AtlasDownload/Kenya_Screen_Chapter5-End.pdf)

Nairobi was established in 1896 during the building of the railway to Uganda. It became the capital in 1907, replacing Machakos. During the colonial period Nairobi served as the center of administration for the British Colonial Government, not only for Kenya but also for Uganda and Tanganyika (now Tanzania), that together made up British East Africa.



**Photo 55: View of downtown Nairobi**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 56: Nairobi city skyline from Nairobi National Park**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 57: The Kenya International Conference Center**



**Photo 58: The Library at the University of Nairobi**



**Photo 59: City Market - fruit stands**



**Photo 60: City Market - basket stands**



**Photo 61: Scene from a slum area**

(Source: UNEP 2009. Kenya Atlas of our Changing Environment. Page 152.)

[http://na.unep.net/atlas/KenyaAtlas/AtlasDownload/Kenya\\_Screen\\_Chapter5-End.pdf](http://na.unep.net/atlas/KenyaAtlas/AtlasDownload/Kenya_Screen_Chapter5-End.pdf)

Over time Nairobi has grown to be the major center of industry, government services, diplomacy, and lately of United Nations and Non-Government Agencies. It is also the hub of regional transportation linkages. It has the major international airport of eastern Africa, and is the center of the region's rail and road network.

These activities have made Nairobi an attractive alternative to the widespread poverty of rural life. Millions have migrated to the city in search of opportunities. The city covers more area each year, as people build houses and industry expands.

Unfortunately the majority of migrants fail to find jobs that match their hopes, and many find no jobs at all. Around the city there are shanty towns, areas where people live in crowded rooms or have built shelters with whatever they could scavenge - cardboard boxes, flattened metal drums,

newspapers. These shantytowns have a life of their own with people providing services for each other, bartering the terms rather than being able to pay cash. The majority of residents are men though a large number are women, many of whom have left their rural families because of divorce, domestic violence or other stress.

**Mombasa** is Kenya's second largest city (Photos 62-65). It is an ancient port on the Indian Ocean. In 1999, the population of Mombasa city was estimated to be around 900,000 inhabitants. Mombasa also has a major port and an international airport. Over decades, Mombasa has served as the centre of the coastal tourism industry. It has been important to trade across the Indian Ocean since early times and is mentioned in reports of Greek traders from 2000 years ago. In the early days, Mombasa was an important Arab trading center and later was captured by the Portuguese who were trading across the Indian Ocean. The Portuguese built major fortifications, including Fort Jesus, but were never able to subdue the Arab traders who forced them to leave in 1728.

Mombasa's more recent history is dominated by its role as the major port for the British colony of Kenya. The British interest became firmly established in 1895 and Mombasa's role was made more important by the building of the railway from Mombasa to Uganda.

Today it is the most important port on the east coast of Africa. The area it serves is huge, including Eastern Zaire, Burundi, Rwanda, Uganda, and southern Sudan as well as Kenya. The city extends over a number of islands and its industrial, commercial, and residential districts are spread over them. The main industries include an oil refinery, ship repair, cement making, and the processing of agricultural products. It is also the center of the country's coastal tourist trade and its airport has direct charter flights from Europe.



**Photo 62: Downtown Mombasa**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 63: Street scene, Mombasa**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 64: The Port of Mombasa**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 65: Passenger and car ferry, Mombasa**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)

**Kisumu** is the third largest city with a population nearing 400,000. It is a port on Lake Victoria, the world's second largest fresh water body. It is also the western terminus of the railway in Kenya. It is located in one of the country's most productive farming areas and serves as a market and processing center for products such as sugar, grain, corn, peanuts, sesame, and rice. It is the commercial and administrative center for western Kenya. Its industries include a brewery, a variety of food processing firms, fishing and ship repair.

**Nakuru**, in the central Rift Valley region, is Kenya's fourth city with an estimated population of 300,000 inhabitants. It is the provincial capital of Kenya's Rift Valley province. It developed as a market and administrative center for the European settler community in the rich agricultural lands of the Rift Valley. It has excellent communication links, being on the main railway line and as an important road junction. Its main industries are food processing, clothing and leather production, and light engineering. The Nakuru National Park, with its famous pink flamingos and Rothschild giraffes, is a major tourist attraction.

Apart from Mombasa, other coastal towns such as Lamu and Malindi also have long histories as ports in the Indian Ocean trading network. Away from the coast, however, towns are of recent origin. They were built during the past 100 years to meet colonial needs for administrative and market centers. Since Independence the government has deliberately focused development activities on these towns in order to provide people throughout the country better access to services such as schools, health care, and markets. Many are now large commercial and industrial centers, including Nyeri, Meru, Thika, and Eldoret, while others are small market centers (Photos 66-67). The problems of urbanization in Nairobi are found in all towns. Slums, homeless children who are forced to beg and steal to survive, AIDS, unemployment, and domestic violence are among the problems that confront many thousands of Kenyans. These are people who have been unable to enjoy the benefits of the economic expansion that has occurred over the past forty years. Together with the landless and the poor in rural Kenya, they represent an important challenge for the country - to be able to provide for the fundamental needs of the population.



**Photo 66: Embu Town**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)



**Photo 67: Shopping street in Embu Town**  
(Source: Jennifer M. Olson)