

Conservationists hope World Bank funds will help save Selous

Conservationists believe that part of \$150m (about Sh330bn) offered by the World Bank for boosting tourism in the southern circuit can be used to mitigate effects of economic projects planned within the Selous Game Reserve.

They argue that if used appropriately, the money would ensure that the country attains economic gains while at the same time ensuring that the Selous, the largest reserve in Tanzania, continues to be home to millions of wildlife species.



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Those who spoke during a recent seminar opined that the project should be conducted in such a way that it protects the natural wildlife sanctuary.

Development projects a concern

Their worries stem from various development activities that the government plan to implement within the reserve. They include the envisaged uranium mining and Stigler Gorge hydroelectricity project. Due to that, they are of the view that the project should be conducted in compliance with Chapters 104 and 105 of the Environmental Management Act of 2004.

The aforementioned chapters state that whenever public policies, programmes and development plans are promulgated, they must include a strategic environmental assessment statement on the possible effects of such regulations, public

policies, programmes or development plans may have on the environment.

"This is why we believe that the programme, which was launched recently in Iringa, might provide a solution to some problems," said a source - who works with wildlife conservation organisation - but preferred to be anonymous. He said part of the money earmarked for Selous can be used to put in place infrastructures, which will ensure that water flow in the lower part of Rufiji River is not affected by the project.

Atilio Tagalile, who works with World Wildlife Fund (WWF) Tanzania office says what is important is to conduct Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA). "It is only SEA, which will give us correct inputs as far as effects of Stigler project is concerned. From that, we will be able to deduce what should be done to mitigate the effects," he says.

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