

Working towards a green economy in Tanzania

The Uluguru Mountains support a rich cloud forest that is home to plants and animals which are found nowhere else in the world, including the Critically Endangered Uluguru Bush-shrike *Malaconotus alius*. They are also the main source of water for two major towns in Tanzania, Morogoro and Dar-es-Salaam. The Ulugurus, however, are under threat from a growing population which is placing increasing demands on the forest. Unsustainable farming practices are spreading up the steep mountain slopes causing soil erosion and a deterioration in water quality and quantity. With UKAid funding, the Wildlife Conservation Society Tanzania (WCST; BirdLife Partner) is supporting communities to reduce their dependency on the forest. We are working with the local river basin board, WAMIRUVU, and the water company MORUWASA, to pilot a Payment for Watershed Service Scheme. The aim is to establish a mechanism that incentivises farmers to improve their agricultural methods so that water quality and quantity are improved for the benefit of water users down stream. Recognising the vital contribution that the Uluguru mountains make to the green economy in Tanzania, on Tuesday June 5th, the project in collaboration with the government authorities and project villages celebrated World Environment Day. Prior to the event, representatives from the main project partners formed a panel of judges to undertake a school audit and assessment of environmental conservation activities in the Project villages. The judges included representatives from the Uluguru Nature Reserve (UNR), WAMIRUVU and the Morogoro Municipal Council. The best primary school was Mbete which impressed the judges with their greening activities around the grounds, including a well-managed tree nursery. The greenest village was Kisosa because of their extensive tree planting. The celebration was held at Mbete village, one of the project villages. During the event there were performances from several primary schools and traditional dancing from the Uluguru tribe. Mr John Kassambili, Hydrologist from WAMIRUVU, said 'WAMIRUVU recognises the vital contribution the Uluguru Mountains make to the green economy of Tanzania through the provision of water. We are delighted to be celebrating WED and to be working with WCST to demonstrate the contribution a 'Payment for Ecosystem Services (PES)' scheme can make to the conservation of the catchment area by incentivising small farmers to improve agricultural methods'. Mr Deo Gamassa, Chief Co-ordinator of WCST, commented that 'The cloud forest in the Ulugurus plays a very important role in producing water, particularly during the dry season. It is also a haven for some unique and endangered wildlife. We hope the project will encourage the Tanzanian government to fulfill its commitments to developing a 'green economy' by producing regulations for Payment for Ecosystem Services schemes at the national level. It has the potential to benefit both people and wildlife'.