REPORT ON THE AWARD OF THE BEST MANAGED AND WELL CONSERVED SACRED KAYA FORESTS OF THE MIJIKENDA
The Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman & Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka being shown the destruction of Kaya Chonyi.

Chief Guest, Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman, Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Deputy County Commissioner, Kaloleni Sub-County Mr. Paul Rotich & Kaya elders assemble at Kaya Fungo for prayer.
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## Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Full Form</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CEO</td>
<td>Chief Executive Officer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFCU</td>
<td>Coastal Forest Conservation Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CHDA</td>
<td>Centre for Heritage Development in Africa</td>
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<tr>
<td>DOC</td>
<td>Department of Culture</td>
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<tr>
<td>ICH</td>
<td>Intangible Cultural Heritage</td>
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<tr>
<td>KNATCOM</td>
<td>Kenya National Commission for UNESCO</td>
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<tr>
<td>NMK</td>
<td>National Museums of Kenya</td>
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<tr>
<td>UNESCO</td>
<td>United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization</td>
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<tr>
<td>WHS</td>
<td>World Heritage Sites</td>
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<tr>
<td>WWF</td>
<td>World Wide Fund for Nature</td>
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</table>
ACKNOWLEDGMENT

Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) recognizes various sponsors and participants for this event. We are very grateful to KNATCOM Board for supporting the award of the best managed and well conserved Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda. I particularly thank the KNATCOM Board Chair for finding time to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. We wish to acknowledge our appreciation to the Mijikenda Communities and the Kaya elders for their involvement in the implementation of this project.

I would like to express our great appreciation to the County Commissioner, Kilifi County Mr. Joseph Keter, Deputy County Commissioner, Rabai Sub-County Ms. Rose W. Chege, Deputy County Commissioner Kaloleni Sub-County, Mr. Paul Rotich, the County Governments of Kilifi and Kwale Counties and other partners for their efforts to ensure the success of this event. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the Kaya elders for their good work. It is my hope that this award will deepen our partnership with elders and the entire Mijikenda community as we seek to accomplish these activities and achieve our shared goals.

Finally, let me extend my deepest and special thanks to the General Manager in charge of Environment, Corporate and Community Affairs, Base Titanium Ltd, Mr. Colin Forbes, for sponsoring the event and congratulate all the participants who joined us for this unique occasion.

Thank you and God bless you.

Dr. Evangeline W. Njoka, MBS
SECRETARY GENERAL/CEO
Executive summary

Kayas are forested areas of spiritual and cultural significance to the Mijikenda people. The Mijikenda are nine (9) distinct Bantu-speaking ethnic groups in the coastal Kenya region who speak closely related languages. They include the Chonyi, Duruma, Digo, Giriama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai and Ribe. They believe that their ancestors lived in the forests in fortified villages many years ago and in fact Kaya means home or village in Mijikenda. The sites are characterized by paths and clearings and contain burial areas and shrines. The Kayas are a powerful source of positive identity and well-being especially for the rural Mijikenda. Kaya traditions and practices permeate most aspects of daily lives. The values attached to them have helped in the protection of the Kaya forests and the biodiversity to the present day.

The identity of the Mijikenda is expressed through oral traditions and performing arts related to the sacred forests, which are also sources of valuable medicinal plants. These traditions and practices constitute their codes of ethics and governance systems, and include prayers, oath-taking, burial rites and charms, naming of the newly born, initiations, reconciliations, marriages and coronations.

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) in collaboration with Mijikenda communities and other stakeholders organized for the award of the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda. Prior to the award, KNATCOM organized for tree planting at Kaya Chonyi and prayer rituals for peace and cohesion at Kaya Fungo. KNATCOM provided 500 seedlings, Base titanium 500 seedlings while Athi-River mining gave 100 seedlings. The invited guests led by the KNATCOM Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman and the Secretary General/CEO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, planted commemoration trees. After tree planting, KNATCOM officials, invited guests, Kaya elders and the community representatives went to Kaya Fungo for a prayer for peace conducted by the Kaya elders. After prayers, both the guests and community proceeded to the Kaya shrine. This is a restricted area and whoever enter the Kaya must abide by its regulations. No one is allowed to enter with shoes, firearms or even to take pictures.
On the second day, the award giving ceremony was conducted at Kaya Kambe. All the nine Kayas were represented in colourful songs, dance and exhibitions by the Mijikenda communities. Kaya Fungo emerged the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand (Kshs. 750, 000.00). Kaya Gandini/Mtswakara was second and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Five Hundred Thousand (Kshs. 500, 000.00) while Kaya Ribe was third and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Three Hundred Thousand (Kshs.300, 000.00). The other Kayas who were from number four to nine were each awarded a certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings One Hundred Thousand (Kshs. 100, 000.00). The award giving ceremony was supported by Base Titanium who gave Six (6) wheelbarrows, thirty (30) spades, fifteen (15) rakes, fifteen (15) pairs of safety boots, fifteen (15) pairs of safety gloves and fifteen (15) seedling bags which were shared.

The award will serve as an incentive and motivation for conservation of the Kaya cultural and natural heritage. It will boost the communities’ capacity in terms of materials required for the continued conservation as well as provide for the motivation of volunteer site caretakers. The award will not only empower communities with the requisite resources for conservation but will as well energize the communities and promote a spirit of competition in conservation. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO intends to have the ceremony to award the best managed and conserved Kaya forest as an annual activity so as to strengthen the communities’ efforts and resolve for better conservation. It is envisioned that the activity will endear KNATCOM to communities, promote its visibility and enhance achievement of its mandate.
1.0 Introduction

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) in collaboration with the Mijikenda communities and other stakeholders organized for the award of the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda. This report gives a brief about the award ceremony for the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda in Kilifi and Kwale Counties. The report covers events undertaken by the KNATCOM team and relevant stakeholders in Kilifi and Kwale counties from 13th -14th July 2017. It gives a background context of the activity, objectives, and its importance. The Report also details the activities undertaken before the event and during the event. It in brief gives highlights of the speeches made by various speakers and explores partners brought on board and their offers. It as well shows in a table form the distribution of prizes. Finally it concludes by laying down some important lessons learnt and suggest way forward.

2.0 Background

Kayas are forested areas of spiritual and cultural significance to the Mijikenda people. The Mijikenda include nine Bantu-speaking ethnic groups in the Kaya forests of coastal Kenya. They include the Chonyi, Duruma, Digo, Giriama, Jibana, Kambe, Kauma, Rabai and Ribe. The identity of the Mijikenda is expressed through oral traditions and performing arts related to the sacred forests, which are also sources of valuable medicinal plants. These traditions and practices constitute their codes of ethics and governance systems, and include prayers, oath-taking, burial rites and charms, naming of the newly born, initiations, reconciliations, marriages and coronations.

Kayas are fortified settlements whose cultural spaces are indispensable for the enactment of living traditions that underscore the identity, continuity and cohesion of the Mijikenda communities. The use of natural resources within the Kayas is regulated by traditional knowledge and practices that have contributed to the conservation of their biodiversity. The Kaya forests are botanically diverse and have a high conservation value, as determined by a number of surveys; undertaken by the National Museums of Kenya (NMK), both funded by World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). More than half of Kenya’s rare plants are found in the coastal region, many
in the Kayas. Each of the nine Mijikenda groups identifies with a specific Kaya or Kayas.

The listing of the Sacred Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda as World Heritage Sites (WHS) under the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the inscription of the traditions and practices associated to the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda on the UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Need of Urgent Safeguarding under the 2003 Convention has led to increased awareness and more concerted efforts to restore the value of this heritage. It is for this reason that a holistic approach for the sustainably management and conservation of the Kaya forests is crucial.

During the Kaya Intercommunity Cultural Festival held at Kaya Kambe in January 2016, the Secretary General/CEO Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, who was the chief guest for the occasion, promised to initiate a programme to award the best managed and conserved Kaya forests of the Mijikenda. In November, 2016, KNATCOM organized a workshop at Makuti Villas Resort in Kilifi, to sensitize the Kaya elders on the award of the best managed and conserved Kayas as well as developed the criteria for selection. The selection criteria was administered to the selected Kaya Forests during the fourth quarter and whose outcome were used to award the best managed and well conserved Kaya forest in the 1st quarter of 2017/2018 Financial Year.

3.0 Objectives

The general objective of the activity is to promote holistic management and conservation of the Sacred Kaya Forests and safeguarding of related living traditions and practices for sustainable development.

3.1 Specific Objectives

I. To sensitize, empower and strengthen the Kaya communities’ efforts on the management and conservation of their cultural and natural heritage.

II. To recognize and compliment conservation efforts of Kaya communities through the award of the best managed and well conserved Kaya forest.
4.0 Importance of the Activity

The awarding of the best managed and well conserved Kaya is a critical approach for the sustainable conservation of the Kaya Forests and for the continued enactment of living Traditions and Practices associated with the Sacred Kaya Forests. The award served as an incentive and motivation for conservation of the Kaya cultural and natural heritage. It boosted the communities’ capacity in terms of materials required for the continued conservation as well as provided for the motivation of volunteer site caretakers. The award ceremony sought not only to empower communities with requisite resources for conservation but to energize the communities and promote a spirit of competition in conservation. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO aims to have the ceremony to award the best managed and well conserved Kaya forest as an annual activity so as to strengthen the communities’ efforts and resolve for better conservation. The event has endeared KNATCOM to the Mijikenda community, the County Governments and has promoted and enhanced its visibility.

5.0 Activities preceding the award Ceremony

Prior to the award, KNATCOM in collaboration with the Mijikenda Communities and other stakeholders from Kwale and Kilifi Counties organized for tree planting at Kaya Chonyi and prayer rituals for peace and cohesion at Kaya Fungo of the Giriama. KNATCOM provided 500 seedlings, Base titanium 500 seedlings while Athi-River mining gave 100 seedlings. The invited guests led by the KNATCOM Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman and the Secretary General/CEO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, planted commemoration trees.

5.1 Tree Planting at Kaya Chonyi

The activity took place at Kaya Chonyi on 13th July 2017. During this activity, KNATCOM partnered with Base Titanium, the Coast Forest Conservation Unit (CFCU) representatives from the other 8 Kayas and community members from the Chonyi community to plant approximately one thousand (1000) seedlings of indigenous varieties. The planting of the trees was inaugurated by the KNATCOM
Board Chair Dr. Rashid Aman and the Secretary General KNATCOM Dr. Evangeline Njoka. Others present in this event were the area Chief, Assistant Chief and representatives from Base Titanium in Kwale who provided the seedlings that were replanted at Kaya Chonyi, the Kaya that has experienced wanton destruction.

*The Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman and the Secretary General/CEO, KNATCOM, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, MBS, planting trees at Kaya Chonyi*
5.2 Prayer Session for Peace at Kaya Fungo

After tree planting at Kaya Chonyi, KNATCOM officials, invited guests, Kaya elders and the community representatives went to Kaya Fungo for a prayer for peace conducted by the Kaya elders.

After prayers at the entrance of Kaya Fungo, both the guests and community proceeded into Kaya Fungo shrines. This is a restricted area and whoever wanted to enter was required to abide by its regulations. No one was allowed to enter with shoes, firearms or even to take pictures. The activity was undertaken the same day as the tree planting session at Kaya Chonyi.

Noting that the country had been engulfed by an election mood and remembering the events that happened in 2007 before and after the elections, it was viewed as critical by KNATCOM to provide a platform where divine intervention can be sought for purposes of peaceful elections.
Elders conducting the prayer rituals at Kaya Fungo

Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman and Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Dr. Evangeline Njoka, MBS, observing the prayer rituals
The prayer session was graced by the KNATCOM Board Chair, Dr. Rashid Aman, accompanied by the Secretary General KNATCOM Dr. Evangeline Njoka and a Board member who is the Director of Administration at the Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts, Mr. Wenslas Ong’ayo.

All the nine Kaya communities were present and each one of them led a prayer session for peace. All prayers were conducted in a cultural manner. Others who attended the Prayer session were officers from Base Titanium, Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), the Media, national government representatives led by the office of the County Commissioner, the youth for peace initiative, Coast Forest Conservation Unit (CFCU) Kaya Kinondo Conservation Group among others. During the prayer session all Kaya communities made a resolve to stay cohesive, united and peaceful before and after the elections. This call for peace was supported by all who attended the event. Later, the guest had a guided tour of Kaya Fungo being led by Mzee Dadu Kituku - a Kaya Fungo. Elder.
6.0 Award Giving Ceremony

On the second day, the award giving ceremony was conducted at Kaya Kambe.
The awards for the best Managed and well conserved Kaya forest were in form of cash prizes, a trophy and certificates. Besides these prizes the best managed Kaya, first and second runners up were also given tree planting equipment donated by Base Titanium from Kwale County.

The activity took place at Kaya Kamba on 14th July 2017. The Chief Guest was Dr. Rashid Aman KNATCOM Board Chair. The activity was attended by over 600 people drawn from all the nine Kaya communities, National Government officers from Kilifi County, County Government officials, Representatives from partner organizations including Base Titanium and Athi River Mining, Representatives from Coast Forest Conservation Units (CFCU) from Kilifi and Kwale Counties, World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF), Ministry of Sports, Culture and the Arts Officers, Centre for Heritage Development in Africa (CHDA), local communities and the KNATCOM fraternity among others.

All the nine Kayas were represented in colourful songs, dances and exhibitions by the Mijikenda communities.

![Image of people dancing during the award giving ceremony.](image-url)
Guests join the performing group during the award giving ceremony at Kaya Kambe

6.1 Remarks by the Director of Culture

The Director of Culture, Dr. Kiprop Lagat, thanked KNATCOM for having spearheaded the conservation of the Kaya forests. He noted that Kayas are recognized world over as World Heritage Sites and any effort to conserve them is commendable.
He indicated that efforts by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO to conserve the Kayas should be supported and he said that the Department of Culture (DOC) will partner with KNATCOM in the subsequent events through offering additional prizes to enhance conservation. He thanked the elders for the effort they are putting in making sure the forests are not destroyed.

6.2 Remarks by the Director of Administration, State Department of Culture and the Arts

The Director of Administration in the State department of Culture and the Arts, Mr. Wenslas Ong’ayo thanked the elders for conserving the Kayas to world heritage status and said that the Kayas are a common resource property owned by the whole community and that elders were trusted to manage and conserve them and their related traditions. He underscored the need to involve all members of the community in conservation efforts.

He congratulated those who had emerged winners in the event and challenged the rest to borrow a leaf from the winning Kaya. He urged the elders to ensure that destructive activities are addressed by among other avenues, opening up the Kayas to the rest of the community members. He noted that this would give an opportunity for all to appreciate what is going on in the Kayas and to support conservation efforts.
6.3 Remarks by the Secretary General/CEO, Dr. Evangeline Njoka, MBS

The Secretary General of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Dr. Evangeline Njoka welcomed all to the occasion and gave a brief statement on the mandate of KNATCOM. She noted that KNATCOM not only promotes local cultures but supports the use of cultures as vehicles for the promotion of peace and sustainable development. The Secretary General told the gathering that culture is an enabler and a driver of sustainable development and an important factor for social inclusion in poverty eradication, providing sustainable economic growth and job creation, economic resilience and sustainable use of resources.

On conservation of the sacred Kaya forests, she noted that KNATCOM intends to promote the protection and conservation of Kenya’s only cultural forests listed as World Heritage Sites. She said that the objective of the event is to contribute to the sustainable conservation of the Kaya forests and to promote holistic safeguarding and
protection of the Kaya forests and related cultures. She indicated that KNATCOM will have the event as an annual activity and challenged the elders to up their game in terms of putting more effort in conserving the forests. (A full excerpt of the speech is appended with the report)

6.4 Speech by the Chief Guest, KNATCOM Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman

The Chief Guest, Dr. Rashid Aman (Board Chairman) thanked the Mijikenda Community for the warm reception and congratulated the Kaya elders for their resolve and effort to conserve the Kayas and to safeguard their living heritage. He said that Kayas are protected under the Museums and Heritage Act, 2006 since they are gazetted as National monuments. In his speech, the Chief Guest underscored the many benefits arising out of conserving the Kaya forests. He said that it was out of the benefits accruing from conserving the forests that KNATCOM felt obliged to support efforts to promote the
communities’ resolve to conservation and promotion of the living heritage. He reiterated that culture is our identity and therefore, we should conserve the Kaya forests to sustain our culture. He noted that UNESCO had been supporting the conservation of the Kaya forests and now that the project came to an end, KNATCOM has come in to continue supplementing UNESCO’s efforts to safeguard and conserve the Kayas through innovative approaches.

The chief guest indicated that KNATCOM was going to offer cash prizes for the best managed and well conserved Kaya forest. He said that the cash prizes given should work to motivate the elders and the community to put more effort in conserving the Kayas. He suggested that such prizes should be utilized for paying volunteer site care takers as well as buy equipment that will promote bee keeping and tree planting as reforestation initiatives.

The chief guest urged partners especially the corporates to each adopt a Kaya as a new approach to conservation. He promised to work with such partners in a bid to have the kayas conserved and protected to safeguard the living heritage of the Mijikenda community. He finally, thanked all those who had participated in making the event a success and wished all well. (A full excerpt of the chief guest speech is appended with the report)

7.0 Partnerships

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO has an internal policy of working with partners in all its projects. The project to award the best conserved and well managed Kaya forest benefited from generous contributions in terms of equipment and tree seedlings from two corporate partners. These partners are: Base Titanium from Kwale County and Athi River Mining from Kilifi County.

7.1 Base Titanium

The partner donated tree seedling for the replanting of Kaya Chonyi which tops the list of the Kayas heavily destructed either by illegal logging and forest fires. The tree
seedlings were delivered at Kaya Chonyi where the company participated in the tree planting exercise.

The partner also donated to the winner, the first and second runners up, equipment to help them raise tree nurseries. These included wheel barrows, jembes, spades, rakes, and gum boots among other equipment. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) appreciates the support extended by Base Titanium and looks forward to work with them in future to further conserve the Kaya Forests.

7.2 Athi River Mining

Athi River Mining Company has a history of working with Kaya Kambe elders in the conservation of the forest. The partner donated tree seedlings that were planted at Kaya Kambe in Kilifi County. The representative of the company pledged to work with KNATCOM in future to promote conservation efforts for the Kayas. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) appreciates the support extended by Athi River Mining Company and looks forward to work with them in future to further conserve the Kaya Forests.
8.0 Award of the Best Managed and well Conserved Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda

Kaya Fungo emerged the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Seven Hundred and Fifty Thousand (Kshs. 750, 000.00). Kaya Gandini/Mtswakara was second and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Five Hundred Thousand (Kshs. 500, 000.00) while Kaya Ribe was third and was awarded a trophy, certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings Three Hundred Thousand (Kshs.300, 000.00). The other Kayas who were from number four to nine were each awarded a certificate of participation and a cheque worth Kenya shillings One Hundred Thousand (Kshs. 100, 000.00). The award giving ceremony was supported by Base Titanium who gave Six (6) wheelbarrows, thirty (30) spades, fifteen (15) rakes, fifteen (15) pairs of safety boots, fifteen (15) pairs of safety gloves and fifteen (15) seedling bags which were shared.

8.1 Awards by Kenya National Commission for UNESCO

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Ranking</th>
<th>Name of Kaya</th>
<th>Cash Prize/Kshs.</th>
<th>Trophy/Certificate</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Kaya Fungo</td>
<td>750,000/=</td>
<td>Trophy and Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Kaya Gandini/Mtswakara</td>
<td>500,000/=</td>
<td>Trophy and Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Kaya Ribe</td>
<td>300,000/=</td>
<td>Trophy and Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>Kaya Kauma</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Kaya Rabai</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>Kaya Jibana</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>Kaya Kambe</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Kaya Kinondo</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>Kaya Chonyi</td>
<td>100,000/=</td>
<td>Certificate</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
8.2 Awards by Base Titanium

Base titanium limited is based at Ukunda in Kwale County. After fruitful discussion with the General Manager in charge of Environment, Corporate and Community Affairs, Mr. Colin Forbes, he gladly accepted to donate the following items which were presented by Ms. Georgina Jones on behalf of Base titanium limited.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Position</th>
<th>Wheelbarrows</th>
<th>Spades</th>
<th>Rakes</th>
<th>Safety Boots(Pairs)</th>
<th>Safety gloves(Pairs)</th>
<th>Seedling bags</th>
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<td>5</td>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Ms. Georgina Jones from Base Titanium in a conversation with KNATCOM Board Chairman, Dr. Rashid Aman
The Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Dr. Evangeline Njoka, MBS, awarding Kaya Ribe elders.
The Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Dr. Evangeline Njoka, MBS, awarding Kaya Ribe elders

The Deputy County Commissioner Rabai Sub County, Ms. Rose W. Chege, awarding Kaya Gandini/Mtswakara elders
The Chief Guest, Dr. Rashid Aman (Board Chairman), awarding Kaya Fungo elders
9.0 Lessons Learnt

- There exists good will from relevant stakeholders with regards to the conservation of the Kaya forests together with the safeguarding of its related living cultures.

- Corporate partners are willing to complement efforts by the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO in Conserving the only cultural forests listed as World Heritage Sites as demonstrated by the gesture by Base Titanium and Athiriver Mining Company. There is need to look for more partners for the project.

- The concept of ‘adopt a Kaya’ needs to be further explored by talking to as many corporates as possible. This could provide one of the sustainable approaches to conserving the Kaya forests

- The event elicited a spirit of competition and motivation among the Kaya elders and communities surrounding the Kayas to boost their efforts towards conservation.

10.0 Way Forward

The sustainable conservation of the Kaya forest faces major challenges especially related to illegal cutting down of trees and encroachment of the Kayas for agricultural purpose. In order to provide a lasting sustainable solution to the challenges identified, it is proposed that re-surveying of the Kayas is crucial in order to re-establish the buffer zones. This should then be followed by fencing off the land belonging to the Kayas. Partners should therefore be sort to assist in undertaking the project. The National Museums of Kenya, the County Governments of Kilifi and Kwale, the Forest and Surveys Departments are potential partners for this project from the government side. Corporates could as well be approached to provide support for the project. A proposal could as well be done and sent to World Heritage Fund seeking financial assistance towards the project.
11.0 Vote of thanks by Kaya Mtswakara Elder, Shaban Ndegwa

Elder Shaban Ndegwa of Kaya Mtswakara in Kwale County thanked the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO for initiating the award of the best managed and well conserved Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda. He was very grateful to KNATCOM Board for finding time to grace the occasion as the Chief Guest. The elder appreciated Base Titanium Ltd for their contribution and support to the conservation initiatives.

Elder Shaban Ndegwa condemned the indiscriminate cutting of trees in Kayas and requested for subsistence support to the community guards to stimulate their engagement in protection. He further requested the Deputy County Commissioners to assist in making regular patrols to Kaya forests to diffuse these threats. He assured KNATCOM of the commitment by the Mijikenda Communities and the Kaya elders for their involvement in the implementation of this project.
12.0 Closing prayers

The award giving ceremony ended with prayers conducted by a Kaya Fungo elder, Dadu Kituku. Thereafter, all the participants/attendants were served with late lunch. Everyone left saying the function had been superbly staged, entertaining and educative.
ANNEXES

ANNEX 1

PROGRAMME FOR TREE PLANTING, PRAYER FOR PEACE AND AWARD GIVING CEREMONY ON 13TH AND 14TH JULY, 2017.

THURSDAY, 13TH JULY, 2017 - TREE PLANTING PRAYER FOR PEACE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
<th>ACTIVITY</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.00 – 9.30 am</td>
<td>Assemble at Kaya Chonyi</td>
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<td>9.30 – 12.00 pm</td>
<td>Planting of trees by invited guests, Kaya elders and community representatives</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.00 -12.30 pm</td>
<td>Assemble at Kaya Fungo</td>
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<tr>
<td>12.30 – 2.30 pm</td>
<td>Prayer for peace by Kaya elders</td>
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FRIDAY, 14TH JULY, 2017 - AWARD GIVING CEREMONY

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<tr>
<th>TIME</th>
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<tr>
<td>10.00- 10.30 am</td>
<td>Assemble at Kaya Kambe</td>
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<tr>
<td>10.30 – 12.30</td>
<td>Viewing of exhibits at the Venue</td>
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<td>Planting of commemoration trees by Guests</td>
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<td>Entertainment</td>
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<td>12.30 pm</td>
<td>SPEECHES</td>
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<td>Remarks by Representative of the Kaya Elders.</td>
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<td>Remarks by Representative of local leaders</td>
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<td>Remarks by Representative of County Governments</td>
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<td>Remarks by the Director of Culture</td>
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<td>Remarks by Mr. Wenslas Ong’ayo Board Member, D.A. I, Ministry of sports,</td>
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<td>Culture and the Arts</td>
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- Remarks by Deputy County Commissioners
- Remarks by County Commissioner
- Remarks by Dr. Evangeline Njoka, Secretary General/CEO Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
- Speech by Guest of honour, Dr. Rashid Aman, Board Chairman, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO
REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL DR. EVANGELINE NJOKA, MBS, DURING THE AWARD GIVING CEREMONY OF THE BEST MANAGED AND WELL CONSERVED SACRED KAYA FORESTS OF THE MIJIKENDA ON 14TH JULY, 2017

The Board Chairman, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Rashid Aman,

The County Commissioner Kilifi County,

The Deputy County Commissioners, Kaloleni and Rabai Sub-Counties,

County Government Representatives,

Kaya Elders,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure and honour to join you today during the award giving ceremony of the best managed and well conserved Kaya forests of the Mijikenda community. On behalf of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) and my own behalf, may I take this opportunity to welcome you all to this very important occasion. As you are aware, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) was established in October 1945 after the Second World War with an aim of building peace on the basis of humanity’s moral and intellectual solidarity. UNESCO strives to build networks among nations that enable this kind of solidarity through its fields of competence namely; education, natural science, social and human science, culture, and communication and information.

Kenya became a 73rd Member State of UNESCO on 7th April 1964 in accordance with Article VII of UNESCO’s Constitution after a Cabinet decision on 25th March 1964. Subsequently, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) was
established in the same year and placed under the Ministry of Education as a department. On 25th January 2013, KNATCOM became a State Corporation through the enactment of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO Act, 2013.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The mandate of KNATCOM is to link UNESCO with relevant Government Ministries, Agencies, Individuals and other stakeholders interested in the work of the organization in Kenya. KNATCOM is dedicated to ensure that we not only promote our local cultures, but that we also use our cultures as vehicles for peace and sustainable development. As custodians and transmitters of our local cultures, it is our duty to ensure that we collectively work towards the reconciliation of our cultures as we work towards national unity and cohesion, besides using cultures as one of the vectors for economic development.

Since its establishment in 1964, KNATCOM has sought to promote our collective culture’s expression and preservation in Kenya, and for generations to come. It is through the Commission’s efforts and the line Ministries responsible for Culture that we have sought to deepen this engagement. Culture is an enabler and driver of sustainable development. It is an important factor for social inclusion in poverty eradication, providing sustainable economic growth and job creation, economic resilience and sustainable use of resources, as well as sustainable tourism. Culture contributes to quality education, sustainable urban development and greater environmental sustainability through local and traditional knowledge, as well as gender equality. Culture further reinforces the ownership of development policies and effectiveness in their implementation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Like UNESCO, the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO seeks to promote the advancement of peace in the minds of men and women as we head towards the 2017 General Election as well as encourage communities to conserve and safeguard their natural and cultural heritage. Informed by the United Nations Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and responding to goal 11, 15 and 17 addressing issues of protection and safeguarding of worlds cultural and natural heritage, resource mobilization, conservation and reforestation and partnerships; KNATCOM intends to
promote the protection and conservation of Kenya’s only cultural forests listed as World Heritage Site (WHS). The objective of the event is to contribute to the sustainable conservation of the Kaya forests and to promote holistic safeguarding and protection of the Kaya forests and its related cultures.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is for this reason that KNATCOM came up with the idea of awarding the best managed and well conserved sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda. Selection and awarding of the best managed and conserved Kaya is a critical approach for the sustainable conservation of the Kaya Forests and for the continued enactment of the Traditions and Practices associated with the Sacred Kaya Forests. The award will serve as an incentive and motivation for conservation of the Kaya cultural and natural heritage. It will boost the communities’ capacity in terms of materials required for the continued conservation as well as provide for the motivation of volunteer site caretakers. The award will not only empower communities with the requisite resources for conservation but will as well energize the communities and promote a spirit of competition in conservation. KNATCOM intends to have the award giving ceremony of the best managed and well conserved Kaya forest as an annual activity so as to strengthen the communities’ efforts and resolve for better conservation.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As I conclude, allow me to re-iterate that this is not just a KNATCOM event; this is OUR event as Kenyans. In this celebrations we are working towards building a better and greater Kenya on the basis of our diverse cultures. I would like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the County Commissioner, Kilifi County Mr. Joseph Keter, Deputy County Commissioner, Rabai Sub-County Ms. Rose W. Chege, Deputy County Commissioner Kaloleni Sub-County, Mr. Paul Rotich, the County Governments of Kilifi and Kwale Counties and other partners for their efforts to ensure the success of this event. I would also like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the Kaya elders for their good work. It is my hope that this award will deepen our partnership with elders and the entire Mijikenda community as we seek to accomplish these activities and achieve our shared goals.
Finally, it is now my pleasure to invite the Chairman, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO, Dr. Rashid Aman, to address the audience.

*Karibuni sana.*

Thank you and God bless you.
SPEECH BY THE BOARD CHAIRMAN, DR. RASHID AMAN, DURING THE AWARD GIVING CEREMONY OF THE BEST MANAGED AND WELL CONSERVED SACRED KAYA FORESTS OF THE MIJIKENDA ON 14TH JULY, 2017

The Secretary General/CEO, Kenya National Commission for UNESCO,

The County Commissioner, Kilifi County,

Deputy County Commissioners present,

Representatives from the County Government,

Participants,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It gives me great pleasure to be with you this afternoon to preside over the award giving ceremony of the best managed and well conserved Kaya forests of the Mijikenda community. This is an historic event because it marks the first time an initiative of this magnitude and nature has been organized primarily to promote management and conservation of the sacred Kaya forests which are recognized by UNESCO as World Heritage Sites and their traditions and cultural practices recognized as Intangible Cultural Heritage in need of urgent safeguarding.

The Sacred Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda are very distinct from other forests because of their spiritual and cultural significance to the Mijikenda people. Kayas are fortified settlements whose cultural spaces are indispensable for the enactment of living traditions that underscore the identity, continuity and cohesion of the Mijikenda communities. It is these traditions and practices that protected the Mijikenda communities and guaranteed their harmonious coexistence with the natural
environment and their entire ecosystem. The use of natural resources within the Kayas is regulated by traditional knowledge and practices that have contributed to the conservation of their biodiversity.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

The listing of the Sacred Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda as World Heritage Sites (WHS) under the 1972 World Heritage Convention and the inscription of the traditions and practices associated to the Kayas in the sacred forests of the Mijikenda on the UNESCO’s List of Intangible Cultural Heritage (ICH) in Need of Urgent Safeguarding under the 2003 Convention has led to increased awareness and more concerted efforts to restore the value of this heritage. It is for this reason that a holistic approach for the sustainably management and conservation of the Kaya forests is crucial.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Kaya forests are important to the World, to Kenya and to the community in many fronts. As World Heritage Sites, they have Outstanding Universal Values to humanity which the whole world recognizes. They as well attract rainfall which is beneficial to us in many ways significantly contributing to achievements of SDGs. Being known world over, they have become tourist attraction sites where tourist just do not come to appreciate the forest but also to enjoy the rich cultural traditions embedded in them. The forests are also home to many forms of biodiversity as well as harboring some of the endangered plants, birds and insect species of the world. Indeed, these are some of the reasons that KNATCOM feels obliged to support efforts to conserve the Sacred Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda.

In 2009, UNESCO approved a total of 126,580 USD to support the conservation efforts of the Kayas as well as safeguard the intangible cultural heritage associated with them. This support was channeled through the Department of Culture in the Ministry of Sports Culture and the Arts. The fund was utilized to raise awareness about the safeguarding of the intangible cultural heritage as well as for the conservation of the forests. I am reliably informed that the fund was used to procure materials for income generating activities such as tree planting and bee-keeping. In
order to support conservation of the forests, the fund paid volunteer site caretakers for a period of 2 years totaling to approximately two (2) Million Kenya shillings. It is with this inspiration that the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO decided to pick from where UNESCO had left and has come up with this initiative of conservation through innovative approaches. During last financial year, Rabai Cultural Village wrote a proposal to KNATCOM requesting for financial assistance to facilitate the construction of an access road to the village and we provided them with Kenya Shillings Ninety One thousand Five Hundred (Kshs. 91,500.00) for the expansion of an access road to the village.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The general objective of this activity is to promote holistic management and conservation of the Sacred Kaya Forests of the Mijikenda and safeguarding of their related traditions and practices for sustainable development. The cash prizes we are giving today will motivate the Kaya volunteer site caretakers, purchase tree planting and bee keeping materials in order to conserve and enhance the continued enactment of the Traditions and Practices associated with the sacred Kaya forests of the Mijikenda. I will be happy as the chairman of KNATCOM Board to receive from our partners numerous offers for adoption of the Kaya forests. We as KNATCOM have nine Kaya forests that we work with. Two of these sites are in Kwale County with a twin for Kaya Gandini and Kaya Mtswakara of the Duruma. The other seven Kaya Forests are in Kilifi County. I therefore appeal to our partners to embrace this new approach in enhancing conservation of the Kaya forest. KNATCOM will embrace your efforts and together work with you to have the Kayas better conserved.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As I conclude, may I challenge the Kaya elders and communities living around the Kayas to open them up for our youth and children to visit and learn from the elders. Teach the youth and the children your cultures and traditions. Let the youth and children understand how to safeguard the living traditions and cultures that have given the Mijikenda a sense of identity and continuity. Make them understand the value of the forests for them and for generations to come. Let them appreciate the
need to conserve the forests and be part of the solution to the many challenges facing your conservation efforts. I wish to announce that the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO with the support of partners, will have such a ceremony on an annual basis where we shall all celebrate and recognize efforts of those communities who will have made great impact on conserving their Kaya forests and safeguarding the living cultures and traditions.

The success of today’s ceremony has been a concerted effort by various stakeholders. Allow me to acknowledge some of them. I acknowledge Base Titanium from Kwale County for providing the tree seedlings that we planted yesterday at Kaya Chonyi and for their support for the conservation of Kaya Kinondo and other forests in Kwale County besides supporting festivals meant to safeguard our rich cultural heritage. I recognize Rhino Cement for their generous support towards the conservation of Kaya Kambe and support for the Kaya Kambe Council of Elders. I also appreciate Corrugated Sheets mostly known as Mombasa Cement for their support towards this ceremony. To these organizations, I say A BIG THANK YOU. May I call upon other like-minded organizations to join us in this noble duty as we give back and appreciate the societies where our organizations exist. “We exist because they (societies) exist as well”.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen,

May I thank you all for having turned up in large numbers to grace today’s ceremony. I thank you for the efforts you have put in conserving the forests and making sure that your intangible cultural heritage have continued to thrive at a time where many Kenyans have long lost their cultures. I recognize the efforts of the office of the County Commissioner for working with us to ensure this ceremony succeeds. May I take this opportunity to thank the Kaya Council of Elders and the Mijikenda community for being at the fore front to make sure that the Kaya Forests are conserved and the cultures and traditions kept alive despite the many challenges that the elders go through. The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO will always endeavor to support your efforts through mobilization of resources from like-minded partners who share with KNATCOM this great vision to conserve the Kaya complex.
‘Nawapa Pongezi kwa juhudi zenu’. I also recognize our partners for the good job they are doing in working with the kaya elders and the entire Mijikenda communities in conserving the forests. And to all of those who have participated in one way or the other to the success of this event, be assured that as KNATCOM, we appreciate you and value you. Asanteni Sana.