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Environmental problems have a wide range discussion worldwide. In continuation of the previous articles, today I will explain more about the causes of environmental problems in our country (Tanzania).

Tanzania is a large country and has vast natural resources, including forests, water, agriculture and farming areas, wildlife, mineral resources and biological diversity. Agriculture is the main source of the economy and about 55% of the total area has a potential for agriculture, though only 6% is currently under cultivation.

Tanzania is also rich in wildlife. These are both consumptive and non-consumptive values. Most of these resources are found in protected areas, including national parks, game reserves and game controlled areas like the Ngorongoro conservation area.

There are aquatic resources, including marine and freshwater ecosystems, rivers, and wetland that provide the biotopes for a significant part of the population. The extensive national parks, the Eastern Arc Mountains, wetlands, coastal mangrove forests, marine and freshwater systems are outstanding reservoirs of plant and animal species.

Tanzania is faced with several environmental problems. Resources are being depleted with major developmental and environmental implications. The major environmental problems facing Tanzania are land degradation, lack of access to good quality water for urban and rural inhabitants, environmental pollution, loss of wildlife habitat and biological diversity, deterioration of the aquatic system and deforestation.

Biological diversity in Tanzania is generally threatened. Human activities such as agriculture and felling of trees for fish curing, fuel, and timber are major threats to forests. Coastal forests have disappeared at an alarming rate as a result of agriculture, pit sowing, charcoal production and mining salt, limestone and beach sand. Poaching of animals for meat and trophy, particularly in the protected areas, and loss as well as fragmentation of wildlife habitats are also a threat to biological diversity. Biodiversity in wetland is threatened by pollution and human activities. Because of these threats, the future existence of species and the ecosystem is in jeopardy.

By concluding, Tanzania is aware of the inseparable relationship between conservation and economic development. Tanzania is aware that conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity is of critical importance to fulfill food, health, and other needs for her people. The survival of the nation very much depends on how well the biological resources are managed and used. Tanzania is, therefore, responding to the above challenges and will continue with the process of integrating conservation and sustainable use of biological diversity into relevant sectoral and cross-sectional plans, programs, and policies. Tanzania will also continue to develop strategies, plans, and programs for the conservation and sustainable use of biodiversity to balance the long-term needs and short term requirements of the nation.

Tanzania is however faced with several problems which hinder her to achieve the goals of the Convention on Biological Diversity, despite her efforts to carry out policies, plans and programs which are aimed towards conservation of biodiversity. Tanzania receives support from donors to set up the right frame conditions for the implementation of the various conservation programs. There is however need for more support in terms of technology transfer and funding. The activities of NGOs need to be extended and strengthened. They play an important role in managing the environment and spearheading community-based programs. Involvement of the local community in conservation of environment and benefit-sharing is key to the success in accordance to the Biodiversity Convention.

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