

**U.S. EMBASSY NAIROBI, KENYA**

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**PRESS RELEASE**



## **U.S. Government Launches New Partnership with the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) in Coastal Kenya**

**Nairobi, November 14, 2016** – To secure Kenya’s natural resources and improve livelihoods for Coastal communities, the U.S. Ambassador to Kenya Robert F. Godec launched a new U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) program in support of seven community conservancies across Coastal Kenya.

The program is part of a new 5-year, Ksh 2 billion (US \$20 million) partnership with the Northern Rangelands Trust (NRT) to help expand NRT’s operations in 33 conservancies in Kenya’s Coastal and Northern regions, covering 10.8 million acres (44,000km<sup>2</sup>). The conservancies benefit 480,000 members representing 15 different ethnic groups in 11 counties. Ambassador Godec made the announcement at Pate Conservancy, in the ancient port of Lamu, the headquarters’ for NRT’s Coast Region Program.

USAID has partnered with NRT since the organization was established in 2004 with a shared mission to develop resilient community conservancies that will help ensure peace while conserving Kenya’s natural resources. Kenya is one of the most important partners in the world for the United States on biodiversity conservation and counter-wildlife trafficking, particularly under the new USAID Biodiversity Policy and the U.S. National Strategy for Combatting Wildlife Trafficking.

*“We care about NRT’s work in Coastal and Northern Kenya because it is led and governed by communities with a shared vision of protecting ecosystems and promoting peace for a better future,”* said Ambassador Godec.

NRT has developed a model for how local communities can successfully implement anti-poaching, rangeland-management, livelihoods-development, and peacebuilding efforts, all of which will be advanced in this new grant. In Coastal Kenya, the grant will

support the work of community rangers, conserve wildlife and fisheries, improve livelihoods and advance women's enterprises.

USAID's past partnership with NRT in Coastal Kenya has supported increases in populations of endangered wildlife, including the hirola, which has declined by almost 90% and is now Africa's most endangered antelope. The partnership has led to an increase in the number of hirola from 48 in 2012 to 120 in 2016 in Ishaqbin Conservancy.

*"The USAID grant gives us invaluable support for a sustained program. It allows us to partly fund new conservancies in partnership with county governments. It also allows us to build up our long-term sustainability plan – which includes expanding government support, increasing commercial revenues, and creating a Conservation Trust Fund,"* said Ian Craig, NRT's Director of Conservation.

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