



President of the United Republic of Tanzania
President's Office
Magogoni Road
P.O. Box 9120
Dar es Salaam
Tanzania

13th June 2011

Dear President Kikwete,

Re: Development plans at Lake Natron

We were alarmed to hear that plans for a soda ash plant at Lake Natron have been revived, despite assurances given at the CBD meeting in Nagoya last year and at Ramsar COP 10 in Korea in 2008 that the Tanzanian Government would do all it could to continue protecting this important site. The Director General of NEMC Mr Bonaventure received the World Wetland Network's Blue Globe Award for Africa on behalf of the Government of Tanzania. This was one of only 6 such awards worldwide, for good management of the Lake, and Mr Bonaventure was very positive about the Lake's future under the Tanzanian Government's care.

Lake Natron is a unique site, supporting up to three quarters of the world's breeding population of lesser flamingos, a species classified as 'near threatened' in the IUCN Red Data book. We are extremely concerned that the proposed development would detrimentally affect this critical breeding site and could have a serious impact on the lesser flamingo breeding population. We urge you to continue to conserve this site, which is not only unique but also has a high profile globally.

We naturally appreciate the importance of economic development for the people of Tanzania. However, Lake Natron is not only a national asset but also an internationally important designated Ramsar site. Retaining this site in good ecological condition, with minimal disturbance, is not only important for the lesser flamingo and for delivering Ramsar site management commitments, but also important to many local communities, and to the eco-tourism industry in Tanzania. We commend the

[WWN is a support network for non-governmental organisations \(NGO's\) working in wetland conservation throughout the world. It was officially launched at the Ramsar COP10 meeting in Changwon, South Korea, in 2008 and has over 500 members.](#)

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Tanzanian government's decision to halt plans for the plant in 2008 following worldwide concerns over its environmental impact both from the extraction of soda ash and its associated infrastructure. We are convinced that things have not changed since then, and that the development would be equally damaging and unpopular this time. We hope you will reconsider, and offer our full support for a positive outcome for Lake Natron and its flamingos.

Best regards,

Mr Chris Rostron
Chair of the World Wetland Network

On behalf of the WWN global committee:

Melissa Marin, Neotropics Representative
Esteban Biamonte, Secretary
Peter Lengyel, Technical Expert
Luc Hoogenstein, Europe Representative
Baboucarr Mbye, Africa Representative
Cassie Price, Oceania Representative
Minoru Kashiwagi, Asia Representative
Julie Langenberg, North America Representative

C.C Minister of Environment in the Vice Presidents Office
 Minister for Industry and Trade
 Minister of Natural Resources and Tourism
 Mr Bonventure Baya, Director General National Environment Management Council

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