



For Immediate Release

Airforce and Nanyuki Combined top seeds at Laikipia and beyond Unity Football Cup

Tree planting and Conservation agriculture key themes in Central Laikipia

Nairobi, 8 June 2010... As the world's attention focuses on South Africa this Friday with the start of the month-long FIFA World Cup™, the communities in Central Laikipia District will be gearing themselves for their own football fiesta - the inaugural Laikipia and beyond Unity Cup (LUC).

Starting on Friday, 11 June, a few hours before the Official Opening Ceremony at Soccer City, Johannesburg and the first match between host nation South Africa and Mexico, top seeds Laikipia Air Base and Nanyuki Combined will take the field in the first of four regional tournaments, at Nyakio Primary School, Lamuria from 11am. This will be preceded by an Opening Ceremony to be addressed by acting South African High Commissioner, Thulani Nyembe, a partner of the event and the Honorable Mwangi Kiunjuri, MP Laikipia East.

With the aim of creating unity and understanding amongst the diverse communities of Laikipia and raising awareness of environmental issues amongst Kenyan youth, tree planting and conservation agriculture will be the main theme for the environmental activities that have been planned for the eight teams and communities this weekend.

Pool A is headed by Laikipia Air Base and includes Ol Pejeta, Mutara and Tigithi Combined. Nanyuki Combined will head Pool B and will play against Lamuria Combined, Segera and Sirima Combined to qualify for a place in the semi-finals, Sunday.

The Semi-finals play off will decide the teams for the finals, after which a composite team will be selected to represent the Central Unit to be pitted against Mathare Huruma, making a guest appearance.

Matches will start on Friday morning, with a half-day set aside on Saturday for tree-planting and demonstrations of conservation agriculture methods. All the pool matches will end on Saturday afternoon. Environment talks and activities will be interspersed with mini-football for children throughout the weekend co-ordinated by the Laikipia Wildlife Forum and United Nations Environment Programme. (UNEP) And to tie-in with Africa's celebration of the World Cup, the organisers have arranged for live screening of the matches during the regional events.

Conceived by the Zeitz Foundation and sponsored by Safaricom, the Laikipia and Beyond Unity Cup it is being organised to unite the district's communities through football and environmental activities for the next six weeks, under the patronage of Cameroon Football captain, Samuel Eto'o, who will attend the finals at the Nanyuki Municipal Stadium on 21 and 22 July 2010.

Members of the Laikipia Wildlife Forum are hosting the regional events, starting at Lamuria for the Central Unit. The Western Unit tournament will be held from 18-20 June at Sosian Centre; whilst the Uaso Nyiro Unit tournament will take place from 2-4 July at Kimanju Primary School with the last of the four event to be held at the North Kenya Polo ground from 9-11 July.

The Laikipia and beyond Unity Cup is also supported by other institutions, including the British Army who are providing the infrastructure for the players accommodation and pitches; the Kenya Airforce base and Nanyuki District Hospital are running free medical camps at each tournament.

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Note to Editors

The Laikipia and Beyond Unity Cup is an invitational event. A total of thirty two teams will compete at the four events for regional honours, with each region then selecting the best players from the eight teams within their region to form a Combined Team to represent the region in the Finals in Nanyuki. The teams are drawn from rural communities, local institutions, local government authorities and commercial ranches. Also invited are the Mathare Youth Sports Association who will send a team to each region to play the Combined Regional team in an exhibition match. The visiting teams from Nairobi will be treated to game drives to experience wildlife and wilderness on a firsthand basis.

Laikipia District has one of the most diverse, cultural and tribal groupings in the country. The unique Laikipia ecosystem encompasses unblemished wilderness, the mighty Mount Kenya, arid drylands savannah and forest and thus provides unique football venues.

The Zeitz Foundation

The Zeitz Foundation for Intercultural Ecosphere Safety (I.E.S.) is inspired by a vision of the Ecosphere - our planet and all of its life-sustaining regions - maintained in the healthiest possible state, and is committed to promoting an inclusive, holistic paradigm of conservation that enhances livelihoods and fosters intercultural dialogue.

The mission of the Foundation is to create and support sustainable, socially and ecologically responsible projects and destinations around the world to achieve long lasting impact and sustainability through the holistic balance of conservation, community, culture and commerce (the 4C's) in privately managed areas.

The Laikipia Wildlife Forum (LWF)

LWF is a member driven organisation that brings together land owners and resource users of all kinds including large-scale ranchers, small scale farmers

and pastoralists to tackle the challenges in the Laikipia ecosystem. They work together to achieve a common goal: *Conserving the integrity of the Laikipia ecosystem, by creatively managing it's natural resources to improve the livelihood of its people.*

Laikipia Wildlife Forum is the first institution of its kind to develop a significant capacity to foster development and conservation goals on a district-wide level in Kenya.

