



**Media Press Brief by Hon. Dr. Alfred Mutua, EGH, Cabinet Secretary,  
Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife on the recent successful translocation  
of 21 black rhinos to establish a founder breeding population in  
Loisaba Wildlife Conservancy**

**Venue: Loisaba Wildlife Conservancy**

**Date: Monday 12<sup>th</sup> February 2024**

**Time: 10:00 AM – 12:00 PM**

**Kenya celebrates successful implementation of a major rhino translocation to a new rhino sanctuary in Loisaba and attainment of 1,000 black rhinos as at end of 2023 for the first time in 4 decades!**

1. On Tuesday 16<sup>th</sup> February 2024, I officially launched the translocation of 21 black rhinoceros, three from Nairobi National Park, six from Ol Pejeta Conservancy and twelve from Lewa Wildlife Conservancy to establish a founder breeding population in Loisaba Conservancy. Loisaba becomes the 17<sup>th</sup> black rhino breeding sanctuary in Kenya.
2. During the launch, we assured Kenyans that, we had undertaken meticulous planning to successfully undertake the translocation exercise with comprehensive measures having been put in place to mitigate against any potential risks and uncertainties which might have occurred during the translocation process. The translocation was implemented in adherence to

the IUCN Translocation guidelines and; Immobilisation and Translocation Protocol for Black Rhinoceros and White Rhinoceros in Kenya of 2019 while learning from previous experiences.

3. Today we mark a significant moment to celebrate the successful translocation which took 18 days to execute. It is a process that was professionally executed with all the 21 individuals having been successfully captured, transported and released into Loisaba Conservancy where we are today. I note with gratification and satisfaction that, a comprehensive and robust monitoring system is in place through application of novel technologies using Long Range (LoRA) network, Unmanned Aerial Systems (UAS), aircrafts and well trained and equipped personnel to ensure all the rhinos are secure and have settled well.
4. I thank Kenya Wildlife Service Board of Trustees, and management for prudent leadership and the technical teams which undertook this translocation for their diligence. The success of the activity is a reassurance to the conservation community that we learnt valuable lessons from the setbacks of 2018 and are now adequately prepared to take our leadership position in the conservation journey and in the recovery efforts of critically endangered species of wildlife.
5. I am delighted to note that, Kenya as a range state for the black rhinoceros, has made remarkable progress over the last three decades since establishment of Kenya Wildlife Service in 1989 when the black rhino population had declined to approximately 384 individuals from 20,000 in 1970's due to poaching for rhino horns. I am glad to announce that Kenya's black rhino population has now crossed the 1,000 mark for the first time in the last four decades and is now estimated at 1,004 individuals as at the

end of 2023. 1,000 individuals is halfway to our long-term vision of having 2,000 black rhinos by 2037.

6. Kenya's black rhinos population ranks 3<sup>rd</sup> after South Africa and Namibia with Kenya being a stronghold of the eastern sub species of the black rhinoceros. We host approximately 80% of the population. Further, the southern white rhinos continue to thrive, having increased from 50 individuals that were imported into the country from South Africa in the 80's and 90's to reach the current population of 971 individuals as at the end of 2023
7. The Government through my Ministry is committed to providing the required legal and policy support and resources to enhance wildlife conservation and enhance recovery of populations of critically endangered species of wildlife such as the rhinoceros. We will make deliberate efforts to build requisite capacity to acquire additional secure space for rhinos in National Parks, National Reserves, private and community conservancies in collaboration with stakeholders.
8. As we celebrate this milestone, I wish to thank Loisaba Conservancy management and their partners for choosing to walk this journey with us after 50 years of absence of rhinos within this landscape. The introduction of rhinos within the landscape will not only enhance biodiversity conservation, but also increase tourist visitation and community livelihoods through direct and indirect job opportunities
9. I am glad to note that, Loisaba conservancy has a robust community program which directly supports community livelihoods, education and health programs. I am also informed that, extensive community engagements were undertaken during the rhino translocation planning process to enhance community ownership and support. I want to assure you

that, we shall walk with you in this journey and provide the required support to ensure the newly translocated rhinos are secure and eventually contribute to the national meta-population.

10. Finally, I am aware that, human-wildlife conflict is a major issue of concern which negatively impacts on community livelihoods. My ministry is doing everything possible to come up with long-lasting solutions to minimize human-wildlife conflict and ensure timely compensation to affected individuals. We are also committed to harmonious co-existence between people and wildlife in connected landscapes while ensuring benefits to the local communities.

**THANK YOU**