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KILOMBERO SUGAR COMPANY RELINQUISHES LAND TO CREATE FOREST RESERVE

Following the declaration to establish the Magombera Nature Forest Reserve, Kilombero Sugar Company (Kilombero), on whose land part of the Reserve has been established, wishes to extend its appreciation to the Government of Tanzania and the many other stakeholders involved in this successful outcome.

The 2 615.3-hectare Reserve - originally known as the Magombera Forest – incorporates approximately 1 226 hectares of land that formed part of Kilombero’s Msolwa Estate, occupied by Kilombero and leased from the Government for sugar cane agriculture. Recognising that local and international conservationists regarded the Magombera Forest as a threatened area of tropical lowland forest, high in biodiversity value with unique flora and fauna, Kilombero has never used that area of its land for large-scale agriculture.

“Given that the forest is home to many endangered species and to other plants and animals not found anywhere else in the world, and the fact that its continued existence was under threat from poachers and illegal tree cutters who used the wood to make charcoal, we decided to play our part by agreeing to relinquish a section of our estate to allow it to become part of the globally unique Magombera forest ecosystem,” says Guy Williams, Managing Director of Kilombero.

The conservation value of the Magombera Forest first became known in the 1970s, but received international news attention through the scientific finding of a new chameleon species, the “Kinyongia magomberae”, a discovery which through global news coverage, became a major incentive for increased donor support and interest in the protection of the forest, along with endangered populations of Udzungwa red colobus monkeys, Verdcourt’s Polyalthia tree and the large-leaved Memecylon tree, among others.

The continued existence of the forest was given impetus in 2007 by Flamingo Land, a UK theme park and conservation zoo, through the establishment of the Udzungwa Forest Project (UFP) in partnership with the University of York and the [Tanzanian Forest Conservation Group](#) (TFCG) – their collective goal was to protect the forest and to conduct research on the unique wildlife and people of the region.

The Magombera Forest is also a vitally important place for local communities who depend on the adjacent land for rice and sugar farming. Without the invaluable ecological services provided by the adjacent forest, this important agricultural region would be under serious threat from floods and soil erosion. The Magombera Nature Forest Reserve is set to break boundaries in forest conservation

in Tanzania, by ensuring that tourist entrance fees will go both to local communities and to the government's managing authority.

Said Mr Williams, the formal establishment of the reserve has followed discussions over many years, culminating in the negotiations in 2016 between Kilombero, local communities, representatives of the Tanzania government and the TFCG. It was decided that the land would be declared as a nature forest reserve (a protected area), under the management of TFCG whose responsibilities include the continued protection of the reserve and the promotion of its conservation value.

"As part of the wider Illovo Sugar Africa group, and in combination with its environmental commitments towards environmental resource protection, we are extremely pleased with the outcome and wish the Government and the TFCG every success in the managing and promotion of this ecologically valuable land," said Mr Williams.

Ends

Notes to editors:

- Kilombero Sugar Company has made significant investments in the business over the past 20 years, totalling around \$166 million and involving various cane and sugar production expansions and the commissioning of a state-of-the-art distillery supplying 12 million litres of high quality alcohol to the local beverage industry
- Illovo Sugar Africa holds 55% of the issued share capital in Kilombero Sugar Company Limited, with 20% held by ED&F Man and 25% by the Government of Tanzania. Kilombero is situated in the Morogoro region in the centre/south of the country. It comprises two adjacent agricultural estates and sugar factories, Msolwa and Ruembe, situated on either side of the Great Ruaha River and linked by a low-level bridge. It produces direct consumption brown sugar under the 'Bwana Sukari' brand name, which is marketed and distributed by the company.
- Kilombero Sugar Company is one of four sugar producers in Tanzania which, at current production levels of just over 300,000 tonnes of sugar, is a net importer of sugar. Further information can be found at: <http://www.illovosugar.co.za/About-us/Tanzania>.