FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS (FAQs) ON THE RECLAMATION PROCESS OF MAASAI MAU FOREST (WATER TOWER)

1. What is Maasai Mau Forest?

Maasai Mau Forest (Water Tower) is one of the 22 Forest Blocks within the Mau Forest Complex (MFC) under the Narok County Government (NCG). It is registered as a trust land under the Trust Land Act (Cap 288). This is the most threatened block of the MFC (Water Tower).

The Maasai Mau Forest (MMF) is located in Narok County, about 17 km North of Narok Town. It lies between Latitude 0°40’ and 00°55’ South and Longitudes 35°35’ and 35°55’ East. The Maasai Mau Forest covers approximately 46,278 ha and is surrounded by 13 Administrative Locations namely: Ol Posimoru, Olokurto, Naituyipaki, Naisoya, Nkareta, Ereteti, Ololulunga, Ol Shapani, Melelo, Enabelibel, Sogoo, Sagamia n and Tendwe.

2. What is the importance of Maasai Mau Forest (Water Tower)?

Past studies have estimated the Total Economic Value of three Forest Blocks in the Maasai Forest Complex (Maasai Mau Forest, Transmara Forest and the Eastern Mau forest) at Kshs 17 Billion by the Lake Victoria Basin Commission, 2011.

The Mara Serengeti transboundary ecosystem relies profoundly on the Mara River whose origin is the Mau Forest Complex, with the largest tributary, being the Amalo whose origin is the Maasai Mau Forest. The ecosystem supports wildebeest migration, a renowned tourist
attraction phenomenon classified under UNESCO as a world heritage site and the eighth Wonder of the World.

The benefits of MMF are **Ecological, Economic and Social**.

**Ecological importance include:** Carbon sequestration, Soil erosion control, Microclimate regulation, Habitat for biodiversity among others.

**Economic Importance include:** Agriculture for communities residing downstream, Tourism and International importance, Ecosystem goods for surrounding communities

**Social Importance include:** Cultural, spiritual, tourism, recreational among others.

3. What are the threats and challenges facing Maasai Mau Forest block?

These include:
- Encroachment for settlements
- Poor agricultural practices
- Charcoal burning
- Forest Fires
- Reduction of water volumes (reduction in river flows) and loss of biodiversity
- Illegal Logging activities
- Bush meat hunting

4. What is the genesis of the issues and challenges facing the Forest?

In the 1970s the Government declared five adjudication sections adjacent to Maasi Mau Forest (Water Tower) and Olposimoru namely: Illmotiok, Ololulunga, Nkareta, Nkoben and Naisoya. Others include Olposimoru A and B, Kamurar, Kilapa and Olkurto. This led to increased pressure from the adjudication sections.
In 1999, the leaders from the group ranches applied to the Local Land Control Board for consent to subdivide the group ranches. The affected ranches were Sisiyan (Ilmotiok Adjudication Section), Nkaroni, Enosokon and Enakishomi (Ololulunga Adjudication Section) and Reiyo. After consents were issued, Government officers, private surveyors and influential people irregularly increased the sizes of the Group Ranches far in excess of their registered areas. During these sub-divisions, title deeds were irregularly issued beyond the group ranches boundaries originally in the adjudication sections.

Encroachment into the Maasai Mau Forest (Water Tower) due to ‘ballooning’ of Group Ranches, led to loss of 17,101 hectares of the forest land as illustrated in the Table below:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Group ranch</th>
<th>Adjudication section</th>
<th>Original No. of parcels</th>
<th>Registered area (Ha)</th>
<th>Increased area (Ha)</th>
<th>Excess area (Ha)</th>
<th>No. of illegal parcels in forest</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sisiyan</td>
<td>Ilmotiok</td>
<td>375</td>
<td>443.5</td>
<td>1,215.6</td>
<td>772.1</td>
<td>340</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nkaroni</td>
<td>Ololunga</td>
<td>188</td>
<td>1,097.5</td>
<td>5,082.5</td>
<td>3,985</td>
<td>676</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enosokon</td>
<td>Ololunga</td>
<td>110</td>
<td>155.0</td>
<td>653.0</td>
<td>498.0</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enakishomi</td>
<td>Ololunga</td>
<td>115</td>
<td>1,275.5</td>
<td>9,271.5</td>
<td>7,996</td>
<td>452</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reiyo</td>
<td>Nkoben</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>26.0</td>
<td>878.6</td>
<td>852.6</td>
<td>336</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td>822</td>
<td>2,997.5</td>
<td>17,101.2</td>
<td>14,103.7</td>
<td>1962</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Source:** Mau Taskforce report, 2009

The “ballooning” of areas beyond group ranches led to massive encroachment and degradation, hence the genesis of the current land ownership crisis. Since then there has been continuous influx of people and human settlement arising from increased population, land
subdivisions and speculative squatters. This has led to further encroachment into the forest.

5. What efforts have the Government undertaken in resolving the problem of ballooning in the Maasai Mau Forest?

Past Government efforts have led to constitution of taskforces, commissions, public hearings as well as Scientific and Socio-economic Assessments.

All these task forces agreed on one thing, “that those who have encroached in the forest must be removed and the original boundaries restored”.

Phase I reclamation exercise was carried out in July 2018. The operation covered all the areas from Nkoben River along the Narok North boundary up to Kosia which saw the recovery of approximately 4,500 hectares of forest land which is being rehabilitated and other areas are undergoing natural regeneration.

6. What is the much talked Phase II all about?

Maasai Mau Forest (Water Tower) Phase II reclamation process will cover an area commonly known as “Status Quo”, measuring approximately 17,101 hectares comprising Kamwengoi, Siera leone, and Kipchoge that borders Olposimoru forest. The reclamation process will follow the Ole Ntutu Boundary Commission which informed the boundary alignment in 2009 by the Mau Taskforce Report 2009.
7. How many households will be affected in the Phase II reclamation?

A Profiling exercise undertaken within the Status Quo area of MMF established three categories of land ownership as illustrated below:

i. **712** Households have title deeds which were irregularly acquired;

ii. **4,531** have unauthenticated sale agreements which were never processed into title deeds;

iii. **2,746** have no documentation whatsoever.

8. Will there be compensation for the affected settlers?

No. This position is underscored in Article 40 (6) of the Constitution which provides that protection of right to property does not extend to any property that has been found to have been acquired unlawfully. The same is reinforced by section 61 of the Trust Land Act which provides that a person who unlawfully occupies Trust Land in any manner whatsoever shall be guilty of an offence.

However, Government may / may not consider Ex-gratia assistance for settlers after vacating the forest land.

9. Will the reclamation exercise affect schools and National examinations?

No. The schools in the encroached areas are established to lower primary level and are not registered with the Ministry of Education as examination centers since they don’t have the requisite title deeds.
10. What is the long term plan for the vacated area after reclaiming the forest land?

Implementation of the long-term plan will be undertaken immediately after reclamation. An elaborative rehabilitation and restoration program of the degraded area is in place. In addition, alternative community livelihood projects will be established for the surrounding communities to reduce pressure on the Forest (Water Tower).