

UN Special Procedure
Office of the United Nations High
Commissioner for Human Rights
Geneva
Switzerland

8 April 2022

**Culture Sector
World Heritage Centre**

Ref: CLT/DIR/WHC/22/05

Dear UN Special Rapporteurs,

I am writing in reference to your joint communication of 9 February 2022, addressed to the World Heritage Committee, regarding the World Heritage site Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA).

UNESCO is grateful to the eight Special Rapporteurs who have prepared this joint communication to the World Heritage Committee, making ten observations and requesting additional information, raising their concerns regarding the displacement of the Maasai people in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area.

Allow me, at the outset, to clarify that neither the World Heritage Committee – the intergovernmental body of 21 elected States governing the World Heritage Convention – nor the UNESCO Secretariat have at any time asked for the displacement of the Maasai people.

UNESCO fully appreciates the importance of meeting the development needs of local communities. In this regard, I wish to recall the World Heritage Committee [Decision 44 COM 7B.171 adopted in July 2021](#), which stated that “*there is the need for an equitably governed consultative process to identify long term sustainable interdisciplinary solutions (...) with participation of all rightsholders and stakeholders, consistent with international norms and the policies of the Convention*”.

The Organization is fully aware of the challenges faced by the local communities and the Maasai people living within the Ngorongoro World Heritage property boundaries. These are long-standing and date back long before the inscription of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area on the UNESCO World Heritage List. Indeed, as early as 1996, the General Management Plan (GMP), prepared by the United Republic of Tanzania, had already proposed a Multiple Land Use Model (MLUM) to address the multiple objectives of the human development of the local residents, the conservation of the natural heritage values, and tourism.

I would like to reiterate that UNESCO remains ready to support the United Republic of Tanzania and site management authorities to find sustainable solutions. To this end, please note that UNESCO:

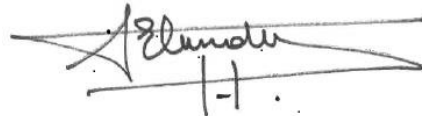
- (i) Reiterates its readiness to assist in the review of the MLUM and to provide any other technical assistance to the United Republic of Tanzania for the management of the property and to help determine the way forward; and,

- (ii) Reaffirms its proposal to dispatch a World Heritage advisory mission to support the ongoing dialogue with the relevant stakeholders and rightsholders.

Finally, we look forward to our fruitful exchange with you, the eight Special Rapporteurs, along with the Advisory Bodies to the World Heritage Convention (ICCROM, ICOMOS, and IUCN), to further discuss this matter.

Thanking you for your co-operation and continued support in the implementation of the World Heritage Convention, I remain,

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Lazare Eloundou Assomo', is written over two horizontal lines. The signature is stylized and somewhat cursive.

Lazare Eloundou Assomo

cc: International Council of Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS)
International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN)
International Centre for the Study of the Preservation and Restoration of Cultural Property (ICCROM)