

THE TANZANIA COMMISSION FOR SCIENCES AND TECHNOLOGY



PRESS RELEASE

Launching of Biodiversity Information Programme in Tanzania

The Tanzania Commission for Science and Technology (COSTECH) in partnership with The Global Biodiversity Information Facility (GBIF) will launch a project titled “Capacity Enhancement Programme for Developing Countries (CEPDEC)” in Tanzania. The launching ceremony will be officiated by the Danish Ambassador to Tanzania, His Excellency Bjarne Sorensen at 02.00pm on 13th March 2007 at MovenPick, Royal Palm Hotel, Dar es Salaam.

The launching event will be preceded by the project partners meeting in the afternoon of Monday 12th and morning of 13th March 2007 at COSTECH building. The aim of the meeting is to discuss a plan for a sustainable biodiversity information system in the country. Project partners include policy makers, scientists and conservators of the environment in Tanzania.

The main objective of CEPDEC project is to develop capacity and tools to aid Tanzanians to access and use biodiversity information held in world natural history collections, databases and literature for conservation and utilization of biodiversity as well as advancement of science.

The Capacity Enhancement Programme for Developing Countries is a tool promoted by GBIF to aid Tanzania gain access to, and learn how to utilize, information about biological diversity held within the country as well as in the rest of the world.

The Global Biodiversity Information Facility is an international organisation whose mission is to make the world's biodiversity data freely and universally available via the Internet. To date about 120 million biodiversity records are available through GBIF's data portal. Despite Tanzania's known rich heritage of biodiversity, at present these include only about 145,000 records based on specimens collected or observations made in Tanzania, but these are being made available by institutions outside the country. It is therefore the intention of GBIF, COSTECH and the Danish funders to improve Tanzanian capacity to organize our information system so that these data can be utilized by Tanzanians—the existing data will be “repatriated”—and to network Tanzanian institutions to enable them to share and use biodiversity data.

Mr. Theophilus E. Mlaki
Director for Information and Documentation,
COSTECH
March 9, 2007.