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## PRESS RELEASE

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### CLOSING OF THE CULTURAL HERITAGE PROJECT IN KILWA

#### **Promoting Heritage resources in Kilwa-Tanzania to strengthen social and economic development**

**Friday 26 August 2016; Kilwa Market:** The European Union (EU) Representative and Head of Finance and Contracts, Mr. Hans-Juergen Scheck, the French Representative of the Head of Cooperation and Cultural Affairs, Ms. Franca Berthomier, together with the District Planning Officer, Mr. Francis Kaunda on behalf of the District Commissioner of Kilwa, participated in a closing ceremony of the Kilwa cultural heritage project. The event was also attended by officials from the Ministries of Finance and Planning and of Tourism and Natural Resources; other representatives from the local government in Kilwa; the Vice-Chairman of the French urban community of Rochefort-Océan, Bruno Bessaguet and the Chairman of the NGO CRAterre, Thierry Joffroy.

The three year project implemented in Kilwa with the support of the European Union and the Government of France has been completed. Titled "Promoting Heritage resources in Kilwa to strengthen social and economic development", it aims to identify, protect and promote heritage resources in Kilwa, Southern Tanzania. The project has been co-funded by the EU for an amount of 500 000 euros and it is part of a larger programme of 10 million Euro 'support to culture' programme under the 10th European Development Fund.

The project has a fully operational information centre in Kilwa Masoko that is efficiently managed by six well trained tour guides. The project has also built two guesthouses and a bird watching tower. Efforts have been made to make Kilwa better known locally and internationally and therefore a website, illustrated catalogue and other promotional materials have been developed and distributed.

During the ceremony, the EU representative, Mr. Hans-Juergen Scheck, stated that, *"The European Union is proud to be one of the largest investors in the sectors of arts and cultural heritage in Tanzania. The recognition of cultural heritage can contribute to pride, stability, growth, employment and economic development of local communities. Cultural heritage is, in fact, an essential resource for economic growth, employment and social cohesion, offering the potential to promote sustainable tourism that Kilwa people can immensely benefit from."*

In the same vein the French Representative, Ms. Franca Berthomier said that, *"Kilwa is a testimony of the richness of Tanzania's heritage and its sites hold extraordinary capital, both natural and cultural, for the local populations. It is on this capital that the sustainable development of the district is being built to make ownership of the program a daily reality."*

This project was an important step in developing Kilwa district as a tourist destination. Tourism in the south of Tanzania will certainly continue to develop gradually, and local authorities will continue to work on the development of a fair and cultural tourism that remains in line with the local identity.



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### **Background:**

The project started in September 2013, and the first year of the project was devoted to the inventory of heritage assets in the District with various stakeholders. 34 sites were recorded all over the district and 12000 photos taken. This helped to create an illustrated catalogue which is distributed worldwide by Tanzania Tourist Board (TTB). This catalogue can be purchased in Masoko and it is also available on the TTB or CRAterre websites.

The second year of the project implementation focused on the construction of an information centre in Kilwa Masoko which was entirely built with local materials and inaugurated in January 2016. It is now fully operational and efficiently managed by the 6 guides operating in Kilwa. Their activities are centered on promotion (publications, exhibitions, postcards, videos), guiding visitors and helping communities to manage their heritage sites. A leaflet was also produced during year two for distribution worldwide and a website created (<http://www.kilwatourism.com>).

The third and final year was devoted to the equipment of some of the sites identified in 2014. Guesthouses were built in Lihimalyao and Ngea, two villages located away from Masoko, which can serve as base camps to enjoy unexplored destinations. In addition, a bird watching tower was erected, trails were developed, road signs installed and toilets built. During year 3, more efforts were made to make Kilwa better known, both in Tanzania and internationally. Exhibition panels were designed and installed in various places and a video was prepared. It will soon be available on Internet.

The project was supervised by the French NGO CRAterre in partnership with: the Kilwa District Council, the Kilwa Masoko Township authority and the French urban community of Rochefort Océan, a French local authority comprising of 25 towns. The cooperation between the urban community of Rochefort Océan and the district and municipality of Kilwa was a unique opportunity for exchanges and cultural meetings at the scale of local territories. Other key partners joined the project on specific activities, such as the Kilwa Antiquities office or TTB. The 6 tour guides were involved in almost all activities throughout the 3 years of the project and are key in guaranteeing the sustainability of this project in the future.

All the activities achieved would not have been possible without the full dedication of the local population. Nearly 400 people contributed to this project, government officials, guides, craftsmen, teachers, hotel owners, men and women, and Tatu Magina, the local project coordinator.

More information on:

<http://www.kilwatourism.com/>

<http://www.tanzaniatouristboard.com/>

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