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**M. Lazare Eloundou Assomo**, Director UNESCO World Heritage  
**M. Philippe Allard**, Director-General ICOMOS  
**M. Tim Badman**, Director IUCN World Heritage Program



Strasbourg, 07/02/2024

Subject: Our concerns about the UNESCO, ICOMOS and IUCN observation mission in the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA).

Dear Mr. Eloundou Assomo, Mr. Allard, Mr. Baldman,

We are writing to you today to express our concern regarding the conditions of the official mission organized by your three organizations in Ngorongoro taking place until February 9. Several sources report total control by the Tanzanian government over the progress of this mission, disregarding the consultation of all actors on the ground and first and foremost the Maasai communities of the Ngorongoro Conservation Area (NCA), directly concerned by the situation. We therefore know that the members of the delegation will only have the opportunity to meet actors previously selected by the Tanzanian government.

We also have been informed that the initially planned participation of one of the members of the mission had to be cancelled at the request of the Tanzanian government, raising many questions about the transparency and the independence of this mission. In this regard, we also share the astonishment of the Maasai communities of Ngorongoro and their representatives at not having been warned of the progress of this mission which nevertheless concerns them directly.

The Maasai communities have also expressed their deep concerns since this is not the first UNESCO World Heritage mission to Tanzania. During the previous one, the Maasai communities had not been consulted and no meeting had taken place with them. This resulted in recommendations detrimental to their rights and encouraged and legitimized the actions of the Tanzanian government, in particular in terms of expulsion of the Maasai populations from the NCA.

UNESCO must apply the principles enshrined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, protecting the rights of Maasai communities. The NCA, which was inscribed on the World Heritage List in 1979, is turning into a human tragedy, against which UNESCO must act by listening to all the stakeholders concerned.

As a reminder, on December 13, 2023, the European Parliament voted a resolution carried and co-signed by all political groups, apart from the far-right group “Identity and Democracy”, denouncing the evictions committed against the Maasai communities in NCA. In particular, it called on the Tanzanian government to authorize independent observation visits from the United Nations and EU institutions.

While the missions undertaken by Members of the European Parliament as well as by the UN Special Rapporteur for the Rights of Indigenous Peoples have all been blocked by the

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Tanzanian government, we hope that this UNESCO mission will be an opportunity to a truly independent and transparent investigation. Thus, we ask that:

- immediate measures are taken to ensure that affected communities are heard and consulted;

- if this first condition was not met, that UNESCO and the other stakeholders in this mission put an end to it so that the consultation of the communities concerned can take place in an independent and transparent mission subsequently;

- suspend the designation of Ngorongoro as a world heritage site since UNESCO's human rights obligations are no longer respected.

Best regards,

**François Thiollet**, Greens/EFA

**Claude Gruffat**, Greens/EFA

**Gwendoline Delbos-Corfield**, Greens/EFA

**Benoit Biteau**, Greens/EFA

**Marie Toussaint**, Greens/EFA

**Mounir Satouri**, Greens/EFA

**Caroline Roose**, Greens/EFA

**Lydie Massard**, Greens/EFA

**Pierre Larrouturou**, S&D

**Pascal Durand**, S&D

**Barry Andrews**, Renew