The Secretariat is extremely pleased to announce that the United Republic of Tanzania has

named its fourth Wetland of International Importance, entitled Rufiji-Mafia-Kilwa Marine Ramsar site (08°08'S 039°38'E), a complex of coastal and marine habitats covering 596,908 hectares, comprising the delta of the Rufiji River; the Mafia Island about 25 km offshore and surrounding smaller islands, sandbars, and coral reefs; the Songo-Songo Archipelago to the south; and adjacent waters, i.e. the Mafia Channel and waters between Mafia and Songo-Songo. A large part is composed of mangrove forests (an estimated 55,000 ha) as well as extensive intertidal flats, seagrass beds, and sandbars, all thought to be ecologically interlinked with the flow of the river. Songo-Songo

has a highly diverse and extensive coral assemblage with records of 49 genera of hard and 12 genera of soft corals. Five species of globally threatened marine turtles have been recorded, including Green Turtle and Hawksbill, as well as a small population of Dugong dugong. A count in the delta alone in 2001 recorded 40,160 waterbirds of 62 species at a minimum. The delta's artisanal fishery of about 7,000 fishermen produces about 4,500 tonnes of finfish per annum, as well as prawns, and thousands of families in Songo-Songo and on Mafia similarly make their livings from fishing. Fishing and extraction of other coastal and mangrove resources, as well as cultivation (especially rice), seaweed farming, and tourism are the major activities within the site.

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