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(INCORPORATING THE MDGs STUDY CENTRE)

Press Release

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Now You See Them! Tomorrow, You'll Read about the Waterbirds!

Kisumu, 2 February 2009- On the occasion of this year World Wetlands Day, the Rand Institute is warning about the disappearance of flamingoes at the world famous Lake Nakuru National Park. Due to the destruction of the Mau Forest Complex; Kenya's largest and totaling 400, 000 hectares, the damage has already been done to the flamingoes.

The Lake Nakuru, a Ramsar Convention protected site has been affected by human activities upstream. Cultivation of the Mau Forest Complex is not only hastening the process of desertification in the 'water towers' but it has also drastically reduced the level of water flowing into the Lake Nakuru. These have only served to shrink the lake further making it difficult for flamingoes to survive.

Flamingoes require continuous flow of fresh water for survival and to get food. Already, all the rivers that drain into Lake Nakuru have disappeared and as if that's not enough blow, sand and other solid residue is washed downstream due to erosion aggravating the pollution. River Njoro, Makalia, Nashi and Nderit are no more and with the predicted short rains, they can only be seasonal at best.

"If the situation is not arrested now, then we should be taking our last photos of the beautiful waterbirds. That is destroying the tourism industry as no one wants to spend their hard earned money in a place where the scenery has gone with the wind", said Mr. Rading on the shores of Lake Victoria in the Millennium City. "The millions of flamingoes have reduced to countable levels and at times there are no flamingoes as they all migrate to other Lakes. I know they will certainly come back but at the same time we should be researching on why they go with the winds making the Lake Nakuru loose its allure and the potential millions the town of Nakuru can bring in terms of tourism earnings", Mr. Outa added.

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The other problem to arise is that the tourism promotion materials have the beautiful images of the Lake Nakuru with the rising flamingoes immaculately colouring the background with pink. It could be misleading to potential tourist with the tour operators forced to pay damages in courts, cancellation of tour packages and massive refunds bringing the companies to their knees adding on the effects of the global financial meltdown.

The Rand Institute for Policy and Education popularly known as the Rand Institute formerly 'The Uranga Entity Institute' an independent public policy research centre which promotes the view that innovation, culture and ecology are an integral part of environment sustainability as well as being crucial to meet the United Nations Millennium Development Goals (MDGs). The Rand Institute carries out its activities through advocacy, training, policy formulation, legal advisory and information dissemination. For further information, please contact Wilson Rading Outa at : 254 020 2166903 or rand.institute@gmail.com