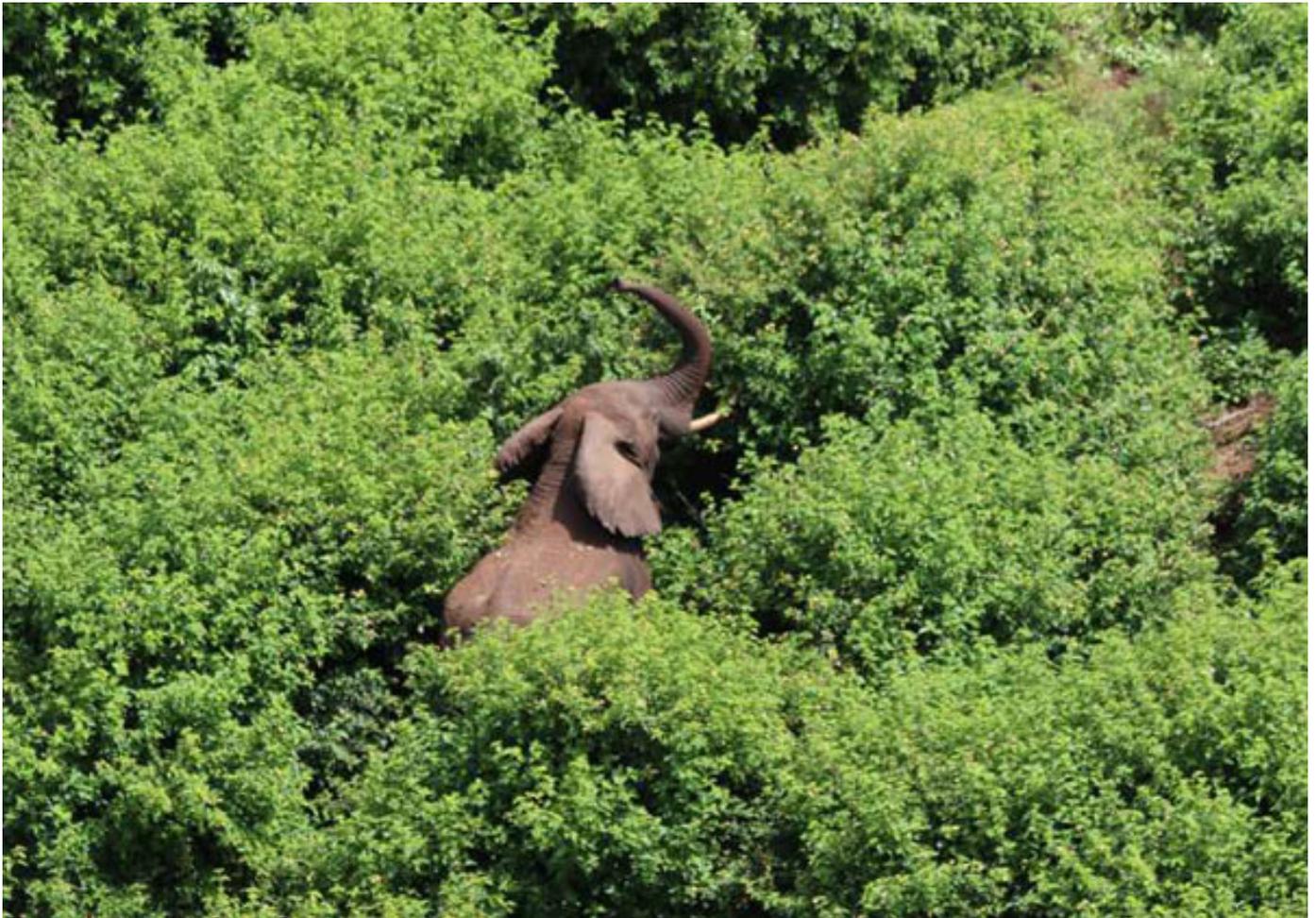


Leave wholesome planet better than you found it for our successors

THURSDAY JULY 11 2019



Elephants in Imenti Forest in Meru on January 9, 2016. We have to integrate the protection of wildlife and wild lands into national and regional planning so as to secure the economic, cultural and environmental value of Africa's unique natural heritage. PHOTO | KENNEDY KIMANTHI | NATION MEDIA GROUP

In Summary

- The government, the commercial sector and civil society all have a responsibility to create an environment of interacting forces for development.
- Kenya has shown continuous and unwavering efforts to protect the environment and preserve its natural resources
- The AKDN is a private network of 11 commercial as well as not-for-profit agencies that has a 100-year legacy in Kenya.
- Man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth.



By AZIM LAKHANI

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There is a photograph of a tree in my office, taken by Prince Hussain Aga Khan and used in a campaign where the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) planted more than 10 million trees in Kenya to support the government's pledge to increase forest cover.

70,000 FARMS

It often reminds me of my presentation at a World Bank consultative meeting in Johannesburg on its "World Development Report 2000/1" on values, norms and poverty themes. Among the AKDN ethics and values I covered was stewardship, collective responsibility to leave the planet better than we found it.

I came across many more examples of how this notion is reality, not rhetoric, within AKDN in Kenya. For example, 40 years ago, Serena Hotels pioneered a form of tourism combining meeting development objectives with economic sustainability, viability and conservation of the environment. Releasing over 50,000 hatchlings into the sea to protect turtles, maintaining a butterfly house to protect species and launching Kenya's first fully solar-powered, off-grid lodge at Kilaguni are testimony to this. Recently, the Aga Khan University's Graduate School of Media and Communications produced four seasons of *Giving Nature a Voice*, a documentary series by eight-time Emmy Award winner Andrew Tkach that has been aired weekly on NTV.

A pioneering initiative by Property Development and Management, Vienna Court, is the first green building in the region, with Leadership and Environmental Design certification from the US Green Building Council.

The Industrial Promotion Services (IPS) ensure over 70,000 farms benefit from sustainable farming practices, for example, through over 10,000 water pans used to harvest and store rainwater for irrigation. IPS demonstrate the 'circular economy' — waste from one initiative becoming an input for another.

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FRAGILE BEAUTY

Schools of the Aga Khan Education Service and the Aga Khan Academy in Mombasa ensure that future generations are prepared for stewardship, through engagement. Examples include a biodigester that processes gray water from showers

and toilets to maintain their gardens; research projects that address air pollution, water purification and global warming; sustainability initiatives like the study of hydroponics and affordable container housing; and science projects that address food-waste management and rainwater harvesting.

Kenya has shown continuous and unwavering efforts to protect the environment and preserve its natural resources, as exemplified by the Ban Plastics and the Clean Seas Campaigns; co-chairing of the UN General Assembly Working Group on the Sustainable Development Goals (SDG); and hosting the international Sustainable Blue Economy Conference.

AKDN and the Ismaili Community have shown solidarity with these efforts, for example by hosting Fragile Beauty, an exhibition of Prince Hussain's marine photographs depicting the hidden beauty that is at risk underwater; and the Aga Khan Council hosting Kenya's creative and innovative Flip Flopi dhow (a seaworthy vessel, made from waste plastic, that sailed from Lamu to Zanzibar) at its premises in Parklands.

Others include an expert panel discussion, "How do we preserve our natural assets while building the economy?", in the presence of the Cabinet Secretary of the Ministry for the Environment and Forestry.

STEWARDSHIP

The government, the commercial sector and civil society all have a responsibility to create an environment of interacting forces for development.

The AKDN is a private network of 11 commercial as well as not-for-profit agencies that has a 100-year legacy in Kenya, reaching millions of Kenyans annually without regard to gender, race, ethnicity or religion. It has a presence in the health, education, social development, finance, economic development, media, hospitality, culture, heritage and research sectors in over 33 counties. It directly employs over 16,000 staff, with just under one per cent expatriates.

His Highness the Aga Khan is the Imam (spiritual leader) of the world's Shia Ismaili Muslims, and the Founder and Chairman of the Aga Khan Development Network. In Washington, D.C., in January 2005, on receiving the National Building Museum's Vincent Scully Prize, he said: "In Islam, the Holy Quran says that man is God's noblest creation to whom He has entrusted the stewardship of all that is on earth. Each generation must leave for its successors a wholesome and sustainable social and physical environment."

As we mark the 62nd year in office, the Ismaili Imam, by His Highness today, these examples highlight stewardship by AKDN's 175 initiatives in Kenya.

Dr Lakhani is the Diplomatic Representative of the Aga Khan Development Network in Kenya.



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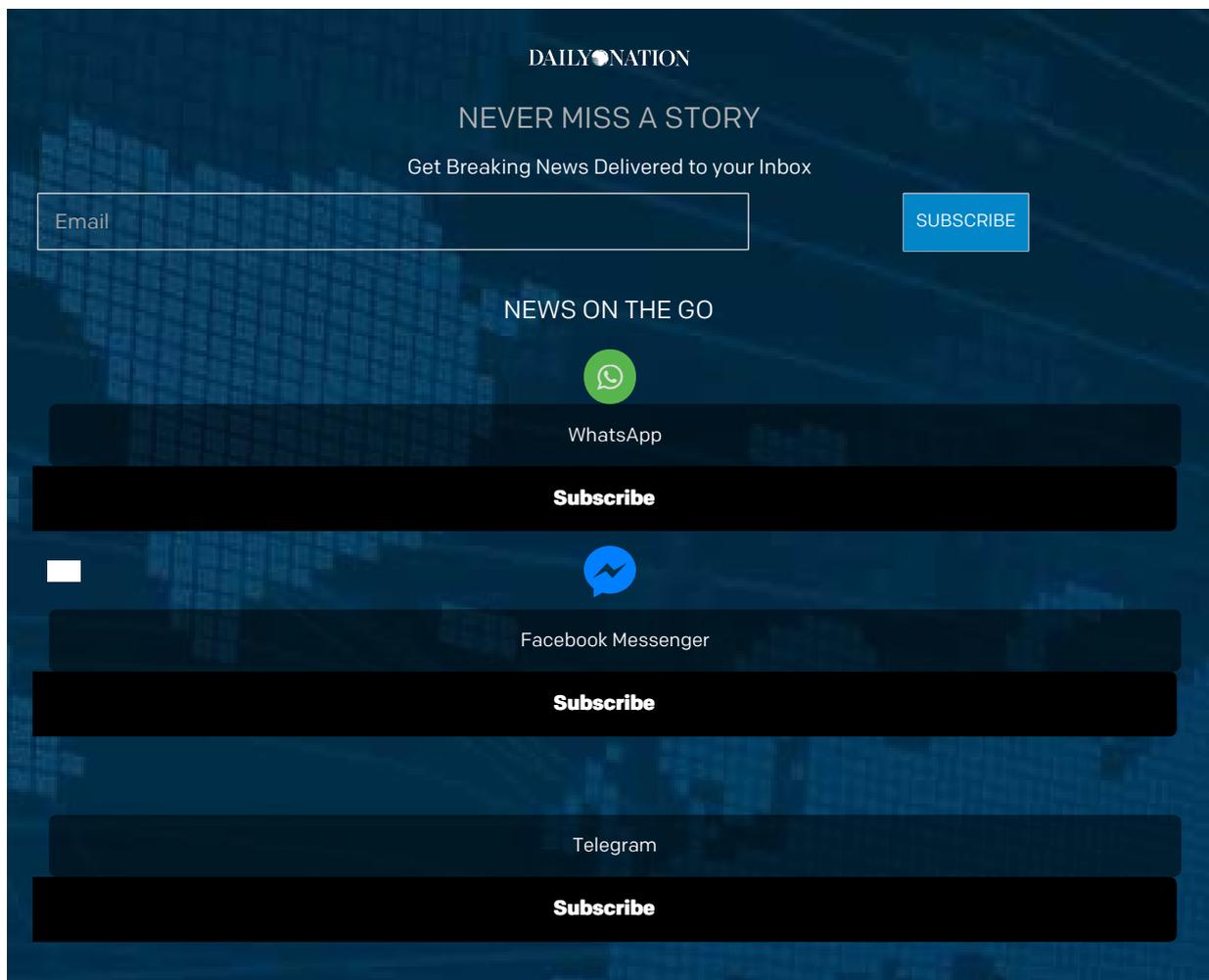
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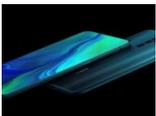
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