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June 29, 1990

MEMORANDUM

From : Paul Andre DeGeorges, REDSO/ENG
To : Bob Rose, ESA/ENG
Subject : Trip Report-Uganda: May 29-June 22, 1990

A TDY was made to Uganda as part of an evaluation team to assess the Development Through Conservation Project (DTC). This project is funded by USAID and is complementary to another USAID project, the Impenetrable Forest Conservation Project (IFCP). The IFCP project is studying gorillas in the Impenetrable (Bwindi) Forest and around Mgahenga Forest. The DTC project is conducting ecological and timber surveys in the forests and working with the people around the forests to improve agricultural production through agroforestry, soil conservation and improved seed production. It is also promoting grass roots planning and environmental education. The hope is to eventually develop an interactive management plan for Bwindi and other important forests that will allow the rural community to sustainably exploit forest products while protecting the ecological integrity of the area. A copy of the evaluation is attached.

A visit was also made to the Rwenzori Mountain Services at the base of the Mountains of the Moon. This is a grass roots NGO established with the help of USAID to guide backpackers and mountain climbers. This employs a significant number of the young people in the area. A percentage of all profits return from the RMS operation to the community. So far this has helped expand the school and to construct a health facility. Plans exist to open a hotel/restaurant, develop radio links to tourist agencies in Kampala, and to open up new areas of the mountains for nature tourism. A copy of observations from this trip is attached.

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MEMORANDUM

Date : June 21, 1990

To : Gary Bayer, USAID/UGANDA/AGR/NR .

From : Paul Andre DeGeorges, Regional Environmental
Advisor, USAID/REDSO

Concerning : USAID PL-480 Funding of the Rwenzori Mountain
Services (RMS)

Contacts : Bwambale M. Johnson, Project Manager, Chairman
Rwenzori Mountain Services

Mwanamwolho M. Stanley, Assistant Project Manager,
Secretary Rwenzori Mountain Services

Baluku M. Elisha, Tourism Officer Rwenzori
Mountain Services

John Matte, First Chairman of RMS in 1987

Agustin Barouku, Biology Teacher, Rwenzori
High School

Kule Muranga Joseph, Headmaster Rwenzori High
School

Maserena A. Johnson, RMS Tourist Officer, Kasese

A reconnaissance mission was made on June 19-20, 1990 to discuss USAID PL-480 funding of activities associated with the Rwenzori Mountain Services (RMS), an indigenous grass roots non-governmental organization, started by guides and porters who lead tourist expeditions to the "Mountains of the Moon" or the Rwenzori Mountains. Based on collaborative interaction with this group, a Draft Terms of Reference for an environmental assessment is attached as requested by USAID.

To say the least, the RMS operation and its link to community development is very impressive. To date they have undertaken the following activities:

*Employ 22 permanent staff, 63 guides/porters who do piece work and 100 laborers helping in construction and renovation of headquarters and trail shelters. These people are drawn from four subcounties and many families. Most of this is undertaken with USAID, PL-480 money.

*Construction of Headquarters.

*Construction of a dispensary, with some money from the German Government.

*Expansion of the Rwenzori High School. The community makes the bricks and RMS helps in hauling sand, cement and provides tin roofing, nails and timber. The school and its grounds are quite impressive.

Activities planned for the future for which USAID PL-480 monies are desired include:

*Construction of a hotel/restaurant next to headquarters for which the foundation is finished.

*Hook into the Mobuku water shoot (that drives turbines of power plant) to supply water to RMS facilities and to establish standpipes for the community.

*Run an electrical power line from the Mobuku Power Station to RMS headquarters, hookups to the community including the dispensary.

*Radio links to tourist agencies in Kampala, and in the mountains in case of a medical emergency.

*Conversion of some PL-480 money to U.S. dollars in order to purchase basic mountaineering supplies for the guides/porters including but not limited to polyfill jackets and sleeping bags, rain gear, backpacks, climbing shoes, crampons and ice axes. This is believed to be important since currently guides and porters are so poorly equipped that they risk exhaustion from exposure to the elements, decreasing their ability to act responsibly and react rationally in an emergency situation. Most of them lack the above-mentioned basics required to go into sub-zero climates with freezing rain and snow.

To say the least the Rwenzori Mountain Services, which was started in 1987, is one of the more impressive grass roots development schemes that the reviewer has seen. USAID can certainly be proud that they have helped nurture the development of a grass roots community-based enterprise. Currently, 6,000 shillings is required of all tourists that is automatically destined for community development. This, along with fees to porters and guides is expected to be raised in the near future. RMS earned US\$ 6 million between June 1989 and March 1990 (See Attachment).

The RMS realizes that the failure of small businesses, as their own, is often due to mismanagement of funds. They have an accountant and assistant accountant to assure that all funds are properly managed and accounted for. All decisions about RMS business ventures are made by an executive committee elected by the members. The executive committee determines the salaries of all associated members, of which there are 300. Since this is an NGO, all profits go back into the business or into the community,

not to individuals.

Since this is a community business, there is close cooperation and a vested interest is seen by everyone in developing the business and in protecting the Rwenzori Mountains. Already, farmers in the area have donated their lands, situated between RMS and the national forest boundary, to be given over to Uganda National Parks for their headquarters, if and when this area is gazetted as a park.

They have already met with Eric Edroma, Director of National Parks. They feel that he is honest and straight forward with them. They and the community wish this area to become a park. They are very displeased with the Forest Department which they claim has undertaken nothing in the field to manage this area and which has tried to hamper their business from developing. They have discussed with National Parks, the idea of their having exclusive rights to mountain guiding in the area so as to coordinate the staggered departure of climbing groups. This is important, not only to assure that the groups have a "One with Nature" experience without falling over other trekking parties, but also to assure that the parties are staggered in a way that there are not conflicts with more than one party using the same shelter, where space is limited and the shelter is required to escape the elements. The hope of RMS is that everyone can benefit from such an agreement, and most importantly, the tourist will end up with a pleasant experience. Their hope is that benefits will be accrued in the following manner:

- *Rwenzori Mountain Services and the Community benefit from exclusive rights to organize and guide trekking expeditions.

- *National Parks gains from gate fees charged to each individual.

- *Tourist agencies benefit from arranging tours to be guided by RMS.

Their relationship to the Mountain Club of Uganda was discussed. Both Johnson and Stanley are members. They explained that the origins of the club were mostly expatriates. With the political turmoil of the last 15 years, the club, until recently has been in disarray. Most of the original records are lost. The Club did place the original camping shelters in the Rwenzoris, but for the most part the shelters are run down and it is this renovation that the RMS is undertaking. It appears that there are more and more Ugandans in the Club. The Club is not a business organization. Its main role is to promote hiking and climbing. They feel that the Club backs what they are trying to accomplish and that they have an excellent rapport with the Club.

With regard to the present hotel site, there appears no reason, USAID willing, why this should not be funded. Currently, there is no place for trekkers to spend their first and last days of

climbing. This hotel would mean additional revenue and employment to the local community, both in service/management jobs but also in buying local agricultural produce for the proposed restaurant. It was recommended that any new pit latrines/shower facilities be located further from the river than the current facilities in order to minimize the risk of polluting this pristine body of water. It was recommended that the civil engineer help properly locate such facilities, as well as the location of a solid waste disposal site. Although, this may seem irrelevant at the moment, if tourism picks up as expected, this could pose a very real problem. In the Caribbean, from where the reviewer has just come, this is the major problem affecting the environment that is associated with tourism.

An option to avoid any chance of stream contamination, would be to abort the current building site. They are not so far along that this would result in a major loss of revenue. They have a very nice site on the opposite side of the road in a huge field that could accommodate a larger hotel restaurant, which they eventually envision, and which would avoid any chance of stream contamination.

It should be noted that this stream already contains what are believed to be German Brown Trout. There is a possibility that a small hatchery could eventually be constructed and the stream managed for trout fishing as in the Abedares in Kenya. This would be a perfect Peace Corps Project. The possibility was also discussed of constructing a small stone path to the river, and using stones or logs to slightly enlarge and deepen a natural pool as a swimming hole for bone weary hikers and travelers.

The RMS seems set on constructing a cement/brick building. Personally, the reviewer does not find such facilities very attractive, and feels that a rustic lodge of wooden walls and floors would be much more appealing, blending in with the surroundings and adding to the "Natural" experience which most tourists would prefer coming from the "cement jungles" of Europe and North America, or even Africa's capitol cities. Even headquarters would be more attractive if it had a false wooden facing. The DTC project coordinator's wooden brown stained house is an excellent example of such a facility. All wood would need to be termite proofed. Ultimately, the choice belongs to RMS, this being only a recommendation.

With regard to the Rwenzori Mountains becoming a park, the RMS favors this. The RMS has already prepared an official paper on their views of the area becoming a national park (Attached). It is interesting, that they have already taken into account the needs of the local people. They feel that there is more than enough forest for everyone. Most of their tourism occurs high up in the Rwenzoris where few villagers go. Most of the traditional use of the forest is within an easy walk of the villages. They have recommended that the current national forest boundary be extended downhill by 5 kms. Within this area, there would be a

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core area in the upper ranges for tourism and a multiple use area in the lower ranges.

They are aware of the WWF project, but have never been officially approached by WWF to participate. Only, P.C. Howard passed through as a tourist in which RMS provided guides and porters. They did not participate in the conceptualization and design of this project. It is recommended that the WWF project use the RMS and their community development activities as a focal point in their project.

They are very interested in having the reviewer and possibly IFCP scientists, come to the Rwenzoris to conduct an environmental assessment of the areas into which they hope to expand. These areas include:

*Expansion of trails in the existing central range, or Central Rwenzori.

*In the south, of proposed trail improvement and construction of camping shelters at Nyamwamba and Nyamugasani. This area has beautiful lakes, elephants and chimpanzees.

*In the north of proposed trail improvement and construction of camping shelters at Rwagimba, famous for its curative hot springs.

A terms of reference is attached. Basically, it would be for a two week period, ideally in September, to visit the areas planned for expansion in the Central Rwenzori. This would take one week, possibly longer. In the time remaining, the RMS suggests a visit to the villages around the other areas planned for expansion, to obtain oral history on the ecology of the area, and the views of the people on managing these areas as parks/multiple use zones. It is likely that the WWF project would eventually have to conduct the detailed ecological surveys into the other areas. This would require about 10 days per zone for a rapid reconnaissance survey, if what is happening on the IFPC project is any indication of the required effort. This would be followed by more detailed ecological inventorying at a later date.

A word of caution is to be presented. During interviews with the IFCP/DTC staff, the DTC evaluation team was warned that Uganda has only a few highly qualified ecologists. With the sudden thrust into natural resources management and tourism, there will be a need for the donors to determine how fast they might go before, the time of these ecologists is saturated. If the WWF project is to be successful, there will have to be close collaboration with the IFCP/DTC projects not only in modeling their efforts on these projects which are proving successful, in learning from the successes/ failures of these projects (e.g. conflicts with game guards and the people of preliminary public relations and the community are not involved in establishing

management guidelines), but most importantly in sharing the ecologists being trained and working in the IFCP/DTC projects. So far there has been no contact. If the Tropical Forest Conservation and Development Studies institutes are formed, it is likely that much of the coordination on using both natural and social scientists can take through these institutes.

It is highly recommended that Johnson and Stanley pay a visit to both the DTC and IFCP projects, as they have much to learn from these projects, but also because in many ways, especially in community development, they have much to teach the DTC/IFCP projects. All parties would benefit if the collaboration could begin as soon as possible.

Another area that RMS feels they and other tourism enterprises need help in developing is a Tourist Guide Training School, which would train and set standards for the tourist trade. For example, until recently, older RMS guides/porters could speak very little english. People followed them but could not communicate with them. As a result, the rapport between guide and client was often one of distance, diminishing the pleasure of the experience for everyone. All new RMS porters/guides are required to have achieved "O" levels. They hope to begin teaching them about the natural history of the area. It would not hurt if they had some exposure to rudimentary spanish, french and german languages. If the Institute For Development Studies is initiated, this type of training might be considered, along with short courses in small business management.

Inclosing, the reviewer was impressed. The question that must be asked is if these young people can accomplish what they have, why can't USAID and the GOU help similar entrepreneurial efforts at a community level become initiated around the other parks that are being planned in the country? This will help to make these areas parks for Ugandans run and operated by Ugandans. This will help to keep foreign exchange in the country, give the rural community a vested interest in these parks, promote rural development and give the young people an option to running off to Kampala where for most of them shanty towns and unemployment are waiting. The donors and the GOU should take a close look at the RMS. It is certainly worth trying in other parks.



DRAFT

TERMS OF REFERENCE

ENVIRONMENTAL ASSESSMENT

RWENZORI MOUNTAIN SERVICES PL-480 PROJECT

1. Purpose. Assure that PL-480 funds requested from USAID for expansion of trails and shelters in Central Rwenzori is sound. Conduct a preliminary survey:

*In the south, of proposed trail improvement and construction of camping shelters at Nyamwamba and Nyamugasani. This area has beautiful lakes, elephants and chimpanzees.

*In the north of proposed trail improvement and construction of camping shelters at Rwagimba, famous for its curative hot springs.

2. Time Period.

*7-10 days surveying proposed area of expansion in Central Rwenzori.

*7 days conducting preliminary surveys in the proposed expansion in the northern and southern areas.

*7 days to prepare reports, edit video. This could involve using UTV video editing facilities.

3. Products.

*Production of a report and a video film of the area planned for expansion in Central Rwenzori, with recommended mitigation so that PL-480 funding can be forthcoming.

*Production of a report with recommendations for more detailed rapid reconnaissance missions of 10 days each in the zones proposed for mountaineering development in the Northern and Southern Rwenzoris.

4. Team Members.

*Bwambale M. Johnson, Project Manager, Chairman
Rwenzori Mountain Services

*Mwanamwolho M. Stanley, Assistant Project Manager,
Secretary Rwenzori Mountain Services

*Agustin Barouku, Biology Teacher, Rwenzori
High School

*Andre DeGeorges, Regional Environmental Advisor

*IFCP staff, as available. Of special importance in the Central Rwenzori Mountain area is to have the services of Tony Kitende, botanist.

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RWENZORI MOUNTAINEERING SERVICES
CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF TOURIST
FACILITIES ON MOUNT RWENZORI PROJECT

P.O. Box 33, Kasese (UGANDA)

Date.....

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:..... TOURIST RECORDS JAN. 89 - 4th. June, 1990.

COUNTRY	NUMBER OF PERSONS
FED. REPUBLIC OF GERMANY	137
U.S.A.	64
U.K.	153
AUSTRIA	39
SWEDEN	24
FRANCE	31
AUSTRALIA	31
UGANDA	24
HOLLAND	15
CANADA	18
JAPAN	15
BELGIUM	18
NEW ZEALAND	18
NORWAY	09
DENMARK	08
ITALY	10
PHILIPPINE	03
ISREAL	01
SPAIN	01
MEXICO C. AMERICA	01
TAIWAN	01
YUGOSILIA	01
SWITZERLAND	02
Total	618 PEOPLE

NB.

Of the total 618, 129 were females while 489 were males.

F. FUTURE ANTICIPATIONS

(i) With improved facilities in the mountains, the number of tourists is hoped to step up. Hence more income for the R.M.S. between June 1989 and March 1990 more than U shs. 6 millions has been earned from collections i.e. mountain facilities - maintainance fee, area development fund and 5% contributions from guides and porters and other employees under R.M.S. This

RWENZORI MOUNTAINEERING SERVICES

P.O. Box 33, Kasese (UGANDA)

19th February, 1990

Our Ref: RMS/RPE/1

Your Ref:

RMS VIEWS ON ESTABLISHMENT OF A NATIONAL PARK ON THE RWENZORI MOUNTAINS.

1. (a) Rwenzori Mountaineering Services is a non-Governmental organisation which was formed in 1987 with two major aims.
 - (i) Conservation of the physical and biological environment of the mountains so as to preserve the existing gene pool of unusual high-altitude equatorial species, conserve the mountains' vital function of water catchment for the surrounding countryside and the River Nile; and preserve its recreational capacity and beauty for posterity.
 - (ii) Encouragement of tourism by performing the following:-
 - (a) Receiving tourists from Kasese, Kampala or directly from abroad and guide them through the mountains and back.
 - (b) Providing tourist facilities like Huts, Bridges, Latrines, Essential Commodities - Food, maintain Rock shelters and provide guides and porters to all tourists visiting the Rwenzori mountains and also avail other services regarding tourism on the mountains.

Therefore, establishing a National Park on the Rwenzori mountains is very welcome to us for:-

1. Our natural beauty on the Rwenzori shall be fully protected.
2. Our physical facilities on the mountain ie. Tourist Huts, Bridges etc. shall be protected.

RWENZORI MOUNTAINEERING SERVICES

P.O. Box 33, Kasese (UGANDA)

Date.....

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

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3. We are hopeful that RMS shall come closure to the Ministry of Tourism and Wild Life, hence more benefits mainly in form of training in fields concerning tourism e.g. Mountain guiding, Public Administration, Catering.

2. REQUESTS AND PROPOSALS:

(a) We propose that the National Park boundary be extended further up the current boundary of the forest reserve. This we propose for the following reasons:-

(a) Traditionally, the people living on the Rwenzori ranges collect a variety of items from the forest which is not itself part of the touristic attractions found higher up on the mountain. These items include creeping plants used for weaving baskets, firewood, honey, rafters and bamboo for building purposes.

We feel therefore, that if the National Park boundary is extended for more than 5 kms from the present demarcation of the forest reserve, people will still carry on these traditional activities, while tourism goes on in the upper ranges.

(b) SOLE TOUR OPERATORS ON THE RWENZORIS

We request that the coming National Park management or Uganda National Parks management allow Rwenzori Mountaineering Services to be chief organiser of tourist guides and porters for tourists visiting the mountains. RMS has experienced mountain guides and we hope that with the co-operation of the National Park our knowledge in guiding tourists shall be advanced.

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RWENZORI MOUNTAINEERING SERVICES

P.O. Box 33, Kasese (UGANDA)

Date.....

Our Ref:.....

Your Ref:.....

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In this case any other Tour operators or travel agents shall bring the tourists to the office of the RMS which shall then organise their visit in the mountain.

We currently have over 60 mountain guides and every youth as a member of RMS is a fast walker in the mountains. Between June 1989 and this February we have received and guided over 430 tourists from all over the world.

(c) EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES.

We request the National Park management to give us priority when recruiting employees of the National Park; we also request for as many chances of training as possible.

(d) OWNERSHIP OF TOURIST FACILITIES IN THE RWENZORI NATIONAL PARK.

We propose that a committee shall be set up to discuss ownership of the current mountain tourist facilities - Huts, Bridges etc. Some of these facilities were erected by the Mountain Club of Uganda while RMS has built some and is still building others. The same committee we hope shall recommend where new structures shall be erected and by who.

(e) NATIONAL PARK REVENUE.

A. National Park is an income generating Institution. While tour operators are paid directly for their services rendered to tourists. We request that Rwenzori Mountain National Park shall consider to contribute a certain percentage of its income to Kasese District Administration for the development of the area.

RWENZORI MOUNTAINEERING SERVICES
**CONSTRUCTION AND IMPROVEMENT OF TOURIST
FACILITIES ON MOUNT RWENZORI PROJECT**

P.O. Box 33 Kasese, (UGANDA)

Tel.....

Date.....

Our Ref:-
Your Ref:-

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(P) NATIONAL PARK HEADQUARTERS.

We suggest that the Ruwenzori Mountain National Park Headquarters be situated somewhere in the Mubuku valley near RMS. In this valley we have the leading tourist route to the high peaks of Ruwenzori. RMS shall co-operate in all ways possible to establish the Headquarters.

WE WISH YOU A SUCCESSFUL SURVEY.

Report compiled by:

Report confirmed by:

J. S. Mwanamwoliho
Mwanamwoliho M. Stanley
SECRETARY RMS.

Bwambale M. Johnson
Bwambale M. Johnson
CHAIRMAN RMS.

For: RMS EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE.

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