

SPEECH BY MAJ (Rtd) WILLIAM KAMUNGE - KTF CHAIRMAN
AT THE LAUNCH OF THE ER SAFARI ON 28TH MARCH 2006

The Chairman of AAR, Dr. Frank Njenga
Managing Director AAR, Mr. Steve Maina
The Chairman KATO, Mrs Mia Dunford
Chief Executive Officer KATO, Mr Fred Kaigwa
Distinguished Guests
Industry Colleagues
All Protocols Observed

It is with great pleasure that I stand before you here today at the launch of the AAR ER-Safari product.

Having been in the industry as long as I have and more recently at the helm of KTF, I have been privileged to be privy to most of the issues that affect tourists on safari. Being a tour operator myself, I also do on occasion have issues that would affect my own clients. I can therefore speak with authority when it comes to the issues of launching a product designed to offer emergency evacuation to tourists.

I would first like to dispel a mis-conception that may exist. The creation of an elaborate emergency evacuation scheme is not an indication of the dangers that exist on safari.... It is a sign of our commitment to ensure that clients can safely enjoy their safari with complete peace of mind, knowing that in the unlikely event that their safari will be disrupted, there is a mechanism in place to ensure that their discomfort will be minimised. It is a fact that there are a vast number of problems that can disrupt a safari and these range from natural illness (from pre-existing conditions such as a bad heart or stroke), accidents (whether during adventure safaris on or the road) and so on.

It is never known when an incident can occur and whereas the vast majority of safaris have proceeded without a hitch, there is that extra

peace of mind when one knows that the clients are covered. With this in mind, Kenya was the first country in Africa to create a private sector operated “Safety and Communication Centre” manned 24hrs a day specifically to offer facilitation to members when the need arose. This has worked out very well and a **seamless evacuation cover** will blend in very well with the aims and objects of the KTF –Safety Centre.

With the above in mind, the question arises ... why have this type of insurance? Are the clients not already insured? For those who have experienced an incident requiring evacuation, the answer to this question is easy.

The truth of the matter is that no matter what type of overseas insurance the client has, it will not be activated immediately at the point of the incident. The first 24 hours have been noted to be extremely difficult for any operator concerned as he/she has to manage the emergency from their own resources and seek compensation from the insurance later. Similarly, whenever there is an emergency call to the KTF Safety Centre regarding an incident that requires evacuation, it is not possible at that point to activate an overseas insurance. This invariably leads to the need for some form of commitment by somebody at local level before services are rendered. In other words, certain actions that cannot wait have to be taken and this do not necessarily have any relation to the presence or absence of overseas insurance.

The ER-Safari is therefore a very welcome development as it will allow tour operators to cover the risks. In addition, the web-based interface allows covers to be bought from the comfort of our own offices, hence minimizing administrative hassles. The geographical coverage of the whole of East Africa is an additional benefit since many members are increasingly selling multi-destination packages.

I would like to thank the management of AAR for designing a package specifically for the industry and more so only for KATO registered companies. This is very much in line with the KTF stand that industry players need to be members of their respective sector association so as to enhance ethics in the sector.

I am further gratified to note that AAR ER-Safari will support the KTF Safety Centre with part of the proceeds and this will also go a long way towards improving and enhancing the level services provided by this important institution.

In conclusion, I urge all members of the industry, and specifically KATO, to seriously consider the risks associated with the concept of “self-insurance” and take advantage of the new product. As the cover becomes more and more popular, I am sure there will be some scope to reduce the price even further. The ultimate objective should be to institute an automatic cover for all clients who book a safari.

Thank You.