



# Welcome to Tanzania

## Geography

Officially *the United Republic of Tanzania*, the country lies immediately south of the equator and covers an area of 945,000 square km of which 217,350 square km is allocated to natural reserves.

Facing the Indian Ocean on the east, Tanzania is bordered by Malawi and Mozambique in the south; Zambia, DRC, Burundi, and Rwanda in the west; and Uganda and Kenya in the north. The outlying territories comprise the islands of Zanzibar, Pemba, and Mafia.

The country has a spectacular landscape of mainly three physiographic regions namely the Islands and the coastal plains to the east; the inland saucer-shaped plateau; and the highlands. The Great Rift Valley that runs from north east of Africa through central Tanzania is another landmark that adds to the scenic view of the country. The valley is dotted with unique lakes which includes Lakes Rukwa, Tanganyika, Nyasa, Kitangiri, Eyasi and Manyara. The uplands includes the famous Kipengere, Udzungwa, Matogoro, Livingstone, and the Fipa plateau forming the southern highlands. The Usambara, Pare, Meru, Kilimanjaro (5,895m), the Ngorongoro Crater and the Oldonyo Lengai, all form the northern highlands.

## Climate

The climate of the coastal plain is tropical with average rainfall between 500mm and 1000mm; elsewhere the climate is moderately tropical, with average temperatures of around 26C and with annual rainfall varying from 500mm to 1250 mm.

In the highlands, temperatures range between 10°C and 20°C during cold and hot seasons respectively.

## Population

The population is on the verge of reaching 41 million people. 44% of them are under 14 years of age. The population growth rate is 1.72%.

Tanzania remains one of the least urbanised African countries; urban population is only one-third of the total.

With a population of almost 300,000 (1998) Dodoma which is located at a distance of 309 km west of Dar es Salaam, is the country's political capital. Dar es Salaam is the country's commercial capital. Other big urban centres include Arusha, Moshi, Tanga and Mwanza to the north of the country, Morogoro in the east; Mbeya and Iringa, to the west.

There are 120 tribes on the mainland; none of them exceeds 10% of the population. Tanzania is a multicultural society. There are

many religions, the main ones being Christianity and Islam. Kiswahili and English are the official languages.

## Political Environment

The Government of the United Republic of Tanzania is a unitary republic formed by the union of Tanganyika and Zanzibar in 1964. The Government is currently led by President Jakaya Kikwete.

All state authority in the United Republic is exercised and controlled by the Government of the United Republic of Tanzania and the Revolutionary Government of Zanzibar. Each Central Government has three organs: The Executive; Judiciary; and The Legislature that have powers over the conduct of public affairs. In addition, Local Government authorities assist each central government.

Since the adoption of multiparty political system in July 1992, the Government has maintained a disciplined adherence to democratic principles and governance. There are 13 permanently registered political parties in Tanzania.

Currently the country is divided into 26 administrative regions, 6 are on the islands and the remaining 20 are on the mainland. ■