Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

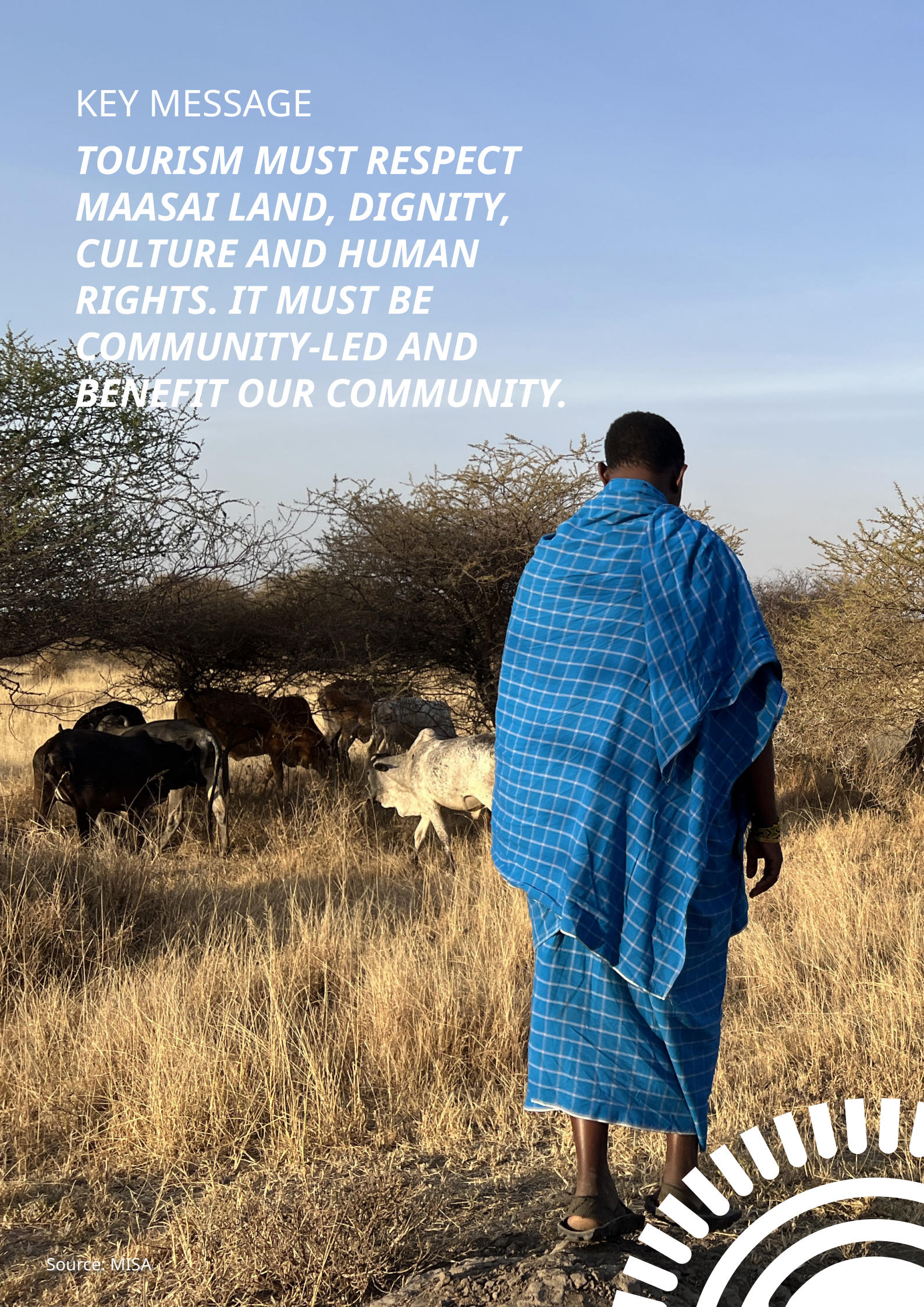
SAFARI TOURISM **WITHOUT EXCLUSION AND DISPOSSESSION**

Our Land, Our Life, Our Future:
A Model for Just and Fair Tourism in Tanzania



KEY MESSAGE

TOURISM MUST RESPECT MAASAI LAND, DIGNITY, CULTURE AND HUMAN RIGHTS. IT MUST BE COMMUNITY-LED AND BENEFIT OUR COMMUNITY.



Source: MISA

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Tourism in Northern Tanzania is commonly presented as a national success story. Visitor numbers rise, revenues grow, international awards are won and new attractions are promoted. Ngorongoro and Serengeti lead this game of international tourism campaigns and prestige. Yet, these headlines do not show what really happens to lives and livelihoods of the people whose land is turned into tourist destinations.

They fail to expose who controls and grabs the land, who makes the decisions, who benefits and who bears the social, political and environmental costs. For Maasai communities across Ngorongoro, Monduli, Simanjiro and Longido, the central question is not simply whether tourism generates revenue. It is whether tourism promotes and protects the rights and livelihoods of the people whose lands and stewardship underpin the tourism industry. Tourism in Northern Tanzania, be it safari tourism or hunting, exists because we have protected this land for generations and the wildlife that thrives on it. How did tourism become a financing machine for displacement, evictions and misery?

With a desire to explore these questions, in 2026, we travelled across Maasai land and spoke to 652 people from 24 villages across the districts of Ngorongoro, Monduli, Simanjiro and Longido. We gathered the views of women (217), Morans/youths (234), and elders, traditional leaders and village council representatives (201). We asked our community what their experience of tourism has been over the last decades, and how they would like to see tourism evolve. Here is what we found.



Source: MISA

THE 4 BIGGEST PROBLEMS ASSOCIATED WITH TOURISM ARE:

1 Safari tourism contributes to land alienation and restricts access to grazing areas and key strategic resources

- Tourism is putting Maasai land under pressure. Safari tourism leads to land grabs and finances the eviction of our communities.
- Safari tourism relies on fortress conservation, which brings restrictions on grazing areas and limits livestock mobility. Safari tourism is responsible for the loss of access to water, grazing areas, homes, sacred sites and spiritual areas. This threatens not only pastoralism but also food security, culture and livelihoods. The people of Ngorongoro are starving while tourists spend hundreds of USD a night on their land.
- Tourism is destructive to the environment, to wildlife and to pastoralism while the government is spreading false narratives unjustly accusing us of destroying nature. Environmental impacts are linked to poorly planned tourist infrastructure or hunting blocks, and include excessive water use, waste, vehicle traffic and disturbance of wildlife.
- Overtourism is responsible for exacerbating livestock confiscations, harassment of herders, violence and weak accountability.

2 Trophy hunting grabs land and violates human rights: it raises serious moral, ethical and environmental concerns.

- Trophy hunting induces land grabbing, through the establishment of **Game Reserves (GR), Game Controlled Areas (GCA) and Wildlife Management Areas (WMA).**
- It is undertaken without our Free, Prior and Informed Consent (FPIC).
- It makes wildlife more aggressive towards people, threatening coexistence between pastoralists and wildlife.
- It serves commercial interests over rights, cultural values, livelihood and wildlife protection.

3 Tourism is taking place without our community consent.

- Decisions regarding tourism investments and nature conservation are frequently made without any involvement of our affected communities.
- Information on tourism projects, contracts and revenue is not accessible to the Maasai community or village governments. Investors frequently bypass village structures, which have legal authority over the land.
- Tourism activities take place without our FPIC. Women and youth are left out of decision-making.
- Hotels are frequently built in areas that are most critical for pastoralism and biodiversity to thrive. Community opinions on where to build tourism infrastructure based on traditional knowledge are ignored, leading to negative impacts on biodiversity, wildlife, livestock and livelihoods.
- Maasai culture, knowledge and images are commercialised without adequate community control.

4 Our community is not benefiting from tourism

- Tourism generates 17% of Tanzania's GDP, generates 25% of total foreign exchange earnings[1] and brings substantial revenue to national and international tourist businesses, whilst Indigenous communities receive only a small portion of this or nothing at all as in the case of Ngorongoro. We have safeguarded this land for centuries and preserved our culture, yet the community is not benefiting. At the same time, we are losing land and our traditional livelihoods and are falling into poverty.
- Maasai have very limited access to jobs in the tourism industry and these jobs tend to be very precarious, poorly paid and insecure. Meanwhile, tourism profits and control are concentrated in the hands of investors or state actors.

[1] *Source:* https://www.tanzaniainvest.com/tourism

OUR 4 KEY DEMANDS FOR A DIFFERENT TOURISM MODEL ARE:

1 No Land Grabbing, No Tourism Without Coexistence

- Tourism should not lead to land grabbing. Tourism is possible on community lands. Communal land and village lands must be protected. There should be no forced resettlement and no reclassification of communal land or village land into other protection categories.
- Grazing lands, livestock routes and access to water must be protected.
- Land already taken for nature conservation, tourism or hunting must be returned if this was done without FPIC.
- Tourism in Maasai land must respect, protect and support pastoralism. Pastoralism must be explicitly recognised and supported as a legitimate form of land use worthy of protection and serving as a means of livelihood.

2 No Trophy Hunting

- Tanzanian laws should be changed to totally ban trophy hunting.
- Trophy hunting import bans should be passed internationally.



Livestock poisoned by NCAA in 2017. Source: MISA



Person injured during Loliondo eviction in 2022. Source: MISA

3 No Tourism without Consent

- We should exercise full control over our lands and tourism development. This requires full community participation and involvement, information and genuine processes to obtain FPIC.
- A genuine FPIC process includes the right to say 'no'.
- Communities should be able to decide for themselves whether, where and under what conditions tourism takes place on their land.
- Women, youth, and all community groups must be truthfully and honestly consulted and must consent.

4 No Tourism Without Community Benefits

- We need a different model of tourism: community-led, community-owned and with fair benefit-sharing.
- Tourism should be organised in a fundamentally different way: communities should be leading economically and organisationally, receive a substantial and transparent share of the revenue, and become greater owners or co-operators of tourism offerings.
- Jobs should be local, fairly paid and provide social security.
- The tourism experience should change: from exploitation to real, meaningful encounters.



Source: MISA

Maasai International Solidarity Alliance

To contact us: *maasaiinternationalsolidaritya@gmail.com*

Our website: *misasolidarity.org*

To follow us on LinkedIn: *https://www.linkedin.com/company/misasolidarity/*

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