

US backs fund for sustainable safaris in Africa

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A wild giraffe grazes next to a quarantine area for elephant calves at Reteti Elephant Sanctuary in drought-hit Samburu, Kenya in October 2022.

The United States is committing support to promote sustainable safaris in Africa, hoping to prevent environmental destruction as the tourism

sector recovers, officials said Thursday.

The US Agency for International Development (USAID) made the announcement at a three-day summit that brought nearly 50 African leaders in Washington.

The nascent Africa Conservation and Communities Tourism Fund, led by investors and conservationists, aims to raise \$75 million to fund safari operators across the continent.

USAID said it was committing \$2.5 million to reduce risks and jumpstart the fund, which it estimated would benefit 44,000 people.

The fund will work with safari operators in Botswana, Kenya, Namibia, South Africa, Tanzania, and Zambia.

A notice on the project earlier this year by advisors Impact Align said that ecotourism operators had been devastated by COVID-19, which shut down international travel.

"The fate of millions of acres of wildlands and wildlife hangs in the balance," it said.

"If operators fail to financially recover, once protected wildlands will be at high risk of destruction which would worsen planetary health, exacerbate [climate change](#) and deprive local communities of employment and management opportunities."

The United States during the summit has laid out some \$55 billion in funding over the next several years including to improve health infrastructure, promote green energy and stave off hunger.

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