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PRESS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Tuesday, 04/06/2024

ARCOS and the Bezos Earth Fund Launch a Project Restoring the Lake Kivu and Rusizi River Catchment

June 4, 2024 - The Albertine Rift Conservation Society (ARCOS) and partners are launching the "**Landscape Restoration for Sustainable Socio-Ecological Systems and Resilience to Climate Change**" also shortened as **Kivu-Rusizi Catchment Restoration** project with financial support from Bezos Earth Fund. This project was announced at the Africa Climate Change Summit held on the 5th of September 2023 in Nairobi, Kenya as one of the projects to accelerate the restoration of two African landscapes critical for carbon sequestration, biodiversity and human wellbeing: The Greater Rift Valley in Kenya and the Lake Kivu and Rusizi River Basin in the Democratic Republic of Congo, Rwanda and Burundi.

With a five-year budget of \$3 million, the project target is to engage 9,000 households and benefit over 60,000 people across Rwanda, Burundi, and the DRC in the establishment and management of three (3) restoration learning model sites on 3,000 hectares and their surroundings. Led by ARCOS, the initiative seeks to create a lasting impact on landscapes while building the capacity of local actors, including governments, NGOs, CBOs, and communities. Thanks to ARCOS' BEST Approach, which emphasizes community empowerment and ownership, the project will focus on building leadership, enhancing environmental resilience, promoting sustainable business solutions, and inspiring others to join the cause.

Dr Sam Kanyamibwa, ARCOS Founder & CEO, expressed his enthusiasm about the launch, stating, "*We're excited to embark on this transformative journey alongside the Bezos Earth Fund. With our decades of experience in community-led land restoration, ARCOS is committed to fostering sustainable practices that benefit both people and nature in this landscape.*"

Emily Avera, Program Officer for Land Restoration at the Bezos Earth Fund, echoed this sentiment, saying, "Africa is showing the rest of the world that grassroots, people-powered restoration is not only possible, but an essential path forward out of the climate crisis. We are privileged to partner with ARCOS and the ANAES coalition to transform landscapes and livelihoods across East Africa."

Additionally, the project will benefit from the expertise of the African NGOs Alliance for Environmental Sustainability (ANAES), a collaborative initiative dedicated to addressing socio-economic and environmental challenges in Africa. Through Trainings of Trainers (ToT) with members based in the Lake Kivu and Rusizi River Basin, ANAES will play a crucial role in catalyzing environmental sustainability and community well-being in the targeted landscape.

The launch of the "**Landscape Restoration for Sustainable Socio-Ecological Systems and Resilience to Climate Change**" project marks a significant step forward in the global effort to combat climate change and promote environmental sustainability.

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About ARCOS

ARCOS was founded in 1995 with the sole focus on the Albertine Rift region (Rwanda, Uganda, Democratic Republic of Congo, Tanzania to Zambia), and in the last fifteen years has up-scaled its geographical scope to Africa Great Lakes and Africa Mountains. With two decades of experience in community-led land restoration, ARCOS supports a network of over 70,000 farmer households in landscape restoration and nature-based community livelihoods.

About the Bezos Earth Fund

The Bezos Earth Fund is helping transform the fight against climate change with the largest ever philanthropic commitment to climate and nature protection. Jeff Bezos has committed \$10 billion in this decisive decade to protect nature and address climate change. By providing funding and expertise, we partner with organizations to accelerate innovation, break down barriers to success and create a more equitable and sustainable world.

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