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## **ARCOS Regional Portal launched as new tool made for biodiversity information sharing at the close of the Africa Regional Mountains Forum**

<http://www.arbmis.arcosnetwork.org>

During the closing session of the Africa Regional Mountains Forum held in Arusha from 22 to 24 October 2014; the ARCOS Biodiversity Management and Information System was launched as a new platform to facilitate biodiversity data sharing and information exchange in the Albertine Rift region, the African Great Lakes region and the Africa Mountains region.

Launching the platform; Hon. Lazaro Nyalandu, the minister of natural resources and tourism of Tanzania said: *"I am not a scientist but I believe in the power of science to deliver solutions to our most difficult challenges. We should find ways data and information from science feed into policy-making by developing tools and packaging this information into a language that decision-makers understand. This portal is a good step towards to this goal and we welcome this effort by ARCOS and all its partners who participated in the development of this platform"*.

The development of the ARCOS Biodiversity Management and Information System started with the signing of a regional data sharing agreement and protocol by 5 institutions where ARCOS as a secretariat to the agreement was tasked to develop a platform to facilitate the implementation of the agreement.

*"This portal is an added-value to the large amount of information which is dispersed among various institutions in the region"*, said Dr Sam Kanyamibwa, Executive Director, ARCOS. *"The portal constitutes the crucial step which will catalyse the efforts in mobilizing and consolidating all data and information held in the region to make it available for science, policy-making and public education"* he added.

The launching of the ARCOS Regional Portal coincided with the closing of the 1<sup>st</sup> Africa Regional Mountains Forum, a forum during which Africa mountains champions from all sectors including government representatives, civil actors, researchers and private sector agreed on a roadmap towards a shared agenda in promoting Sustainable Mountain Development on the continent. For more information on this forum, please visit the event's website at <http://events.arcosnetwork.org/arcos/index.php> where all the proceedings and conclusions documents are being posted.

*ARCOS Biodiversity Management and Information System (ARBMIS) was developed with support from The JRS biodiversity Foundation (Albertine Rift Biodiversity Portal), The John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation (Great Lakes Portal), the Swiss Agency for Development and Cooperation (African Mountains Portal) and the Critical Ecosystems Partnership Fund (EIA Portal).*

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