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LEGISLATION IN BRIEF

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A Summary of the Beekeeping Act [Cap. 157 R.E. 2023]

The legal framework governing the conservation, management, development, and sustainable use of bee resources and bee products in Tanzania.

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INTRODUCTION

The Beekeeping Act [Cap. 157 R.E. 2023] is a legal framework that governs the conservation, management, development, and sustainable use of bee resources and bee products in Tanzania. It recognizes beekeeping as an important activity for biodiversity conservation, environmental protection, and economic development through honey, beeswax, and other bee products.

The Act provides rules for establishing bee reserves, regulating beekeeping activities, protecting bee habitats, and controlling the quality and trade of bee products.

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LONG TITLE

The long title of the Act is generally stated as:

"An Act to make provision for the management, development and sustainable use of bee resources and products, to regulate beekeeping activities, and to provide for related matters."

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REASONS FOR ENACTMENT

The Act was enacted for several key reasons:

- a) To promote sustainable beekeeping and conservation of bee resources
- b) To protect forests and natural habitats where bees thrive
- c) To regulate production, processing, and marketing of bee products
- d) To prevent environmental degradation caused by improper beekeeping practices e.g., bush burning
- e) To enhance income generation and rural livelihoods
- f) To support pollination and ecological balance in agriculture
- g) To provide legal control over bee reserves and protected areas

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AMENDMENTS

Over time, the Act has been influenced by amendments through related environmental and forestry legislation. Key updates include:

- Strengthening environmental conservation provisions under the Environmental Management Act
- Alignment with forest conservation policies
- Updates in regulations regarding licensing and control of bee products
- Institutional reforms shifting management roles to forestry and wildlife authorities

There is no single major standalone "Beekeeping Amendment Act," but rather incremental legal adjustments through sectoral reforms.

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CONSOLIDATIONS

The Act has been consolidated in revised editions of Tanzanian laws, commonly:

- a) Revised Editions of the laws of Tanzania
- b) Integration with forest and wildlife conservation statutes
- c) Consolidation of beekeeping regulations under forestry governance frameworks

This ensures that beekeeping law is read together with environmental and natural resource laws.

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REPEALS

The Act and its framework have led to the repeal or absorption of earlier fragmented colonial-era or regional beekeeping regulations that were inconsistent or outdated.

Some provisions of older forest and wildlife ordinances that conflicted with modern beekeeping governance were repealed or replaced.

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REPLACEMENTS

Certain outdated administrative systems were replaced by:

- Modern licensing systems for beekeepers and traders
- Bee reserve classification under forest governance authorities
- Updated inspection and certification systems for honey and bee products
- Community-based Forest and bee management approaches

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OFFENCES UNDER THE ACT

The Act identifies several offences, including:

- a) Keeping bees without authorization in protected or restricted areas
- b) Destroying or damaging bee colonies intentionally
- c) Setting fires in or near bee reserves
- d) Harvesting honey using destructive or unapproved methods
- e) Illegally trading or exporting bee products
- f) Disturbing bee reserves or bee habitats
- g) Failure to comply with licensing requirements

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SANCTIONS UNDER THE ACT

Penalties for offences may include varying fines depending on severity of the offence, imprisonment for serious violations such as destruction of bee reserves, confiscation of illegally obtained bee products, revocation of beekeeping licenses, compensation for environmental damage and court orders prohibiting future beekeeping activities in certain areas.

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CONCLUSION

The Beekeeping Act of Tanzania plays a vital role in regulating and promoting sustainable beekeeping practices while ensuring environmental conservation. It balances economic benefits from honey production with the protection of ecosystems and biodiversity. Through its enforcement, Tanzania supports rural livelihoods, agricultural productivity, and ecological stability.

REFERENCES

The Beekeeping Act [Cap. 157 R.E. 2023]