

## Bagamoyo Town

The conference will be held at the Stella Maris Hotel in Bagamoyo. Located north of Dar es Salaam (65 km) along the coast, Bagamoyo historically started as a coastal Swahili fishing village that grew to become pivotal during the Arab settlements on the coast of Tanzania in the 13<sup>th</sup> century and later the first German colonial capital during the European colonial settlement in East Africa in 1888 to 1891. Bagamoyo was a gateway during the Ivory and Slave trade where many unfortunate Africans from as far as Congo and Malawi were kept imprisoned before they were shipped to Zanzibar to be sold. As a trading town during the East African Slave Trade, Bagamoyo also known as “*Bwaga-Moyo*” literally translated as “*Lay down your heart*” or “*Give up your Hope*”, Bagamoyo attracted traders, missionaries, and colonial powers from the Persian Gulf (Shiraz), Mongoles, Asia, and Europe.

*“...Be happy, my soul, release all cares, for we soon reach the place you yearn for  
The town of palms, Bagamoyo!  
When you were far away, how my heart ached when I thought of you, you pearl  
Your place of happiness, Bagamoyo!  
The women wear their hair parted; you can drink palm wine all year through  
In the gardens of love of Bagamoyo!  
The dhows arrive with streaming sails to take aboard the treasures of Europe  
In the harbor of Bagamoyo!  
Oh, such delight to hear the drums and the lovely girls swaying in dance  
All night through in Bagamoyo!  
Be quiet, my heart, all cares are gone. Let the drumbeats rejoice:  
We are reaching Bagamoyo!” Traditional Swahili porters’ song*

Today, this Swahili town with a population of about 35,000 inhabitants is a multicultural town



*Site of the Caravan Serai and Antiquities Offices in Bagamoyo*

and a capital for Bagamoyo District in Pwani Region. The town is on UNESCO’s tentative list as part of the East African Slave Trade Route (Caravan Serai). Towards the end of the 18<sup>th</sup> century Muslim families, descendants of the *Shamvi la Magimba* from Oman settled in Bagamoyo and established the town as a Caravan Serai.

Bagamoyo has a rich history as a major maritime trading center in East Africa, where salt, ivory and slaves were shipped to Zanzibar. Linking Bagamoyo town is Kaole village, about 5 km south which was

founded in the 12th century and was an important link in early trade routes. In 1256, Kaole was invaded by the Mongoles who did not establish settlements but contributed to the decline of the



*The Kaole Islamic Ruins*

village. Today one still can visibly see the ruins, which are still in use for offerings. In the 1800s, the town became the site for the first German headquarters in East Africa. Relics from all periods remain and form the basis for historical and cultural tourism in the area.

In 1868 missionaries “Fathers of the Holy Ghost” established the first mission in East Africa, and later on in 1892 they received a parcel of land where they formed school for

multiracial education. Bagamoyo was also a springboard for European explorers such as David Livingstone, Henry Morton Stanley, Richard Francis Burton, John Hanning Speke, and James Augustus Grant just to name a few. This historic town sports various attractions including:

**Old Fort:** A provision house, built in 1856. This is the oldest surviving building in Bagamoyo, which was used by the Arabs until 1870s then later on used as a German military camp, a British prison, and as a customs office and police headquarters. Its original function was to hold slaves before they were shipped to Zanzibar. Now it is used as headquarters of the Department of Antiquities.

**Caravan Serai:** This is a place where caravan parties rested and prepared for journeys to and from the hinterlands. It is said that caravan porters gave Bagamoyo its name as the place where “one’s heart came to rest and relax after a long journey.”

**German Boma:** A German administrative building, which was built in 1897 to replace Liku House as a German government’s colonial administration headquarters and residence.

**Old Bagamoyo Tea House:** One of the town’s oldest buildings, notable for its authentic carved door, thought to have been a place where the rich Muslim families in Bagamoyo gathered for a cup of tea.

**Slave Port:** a waterfront area currently serving as a fish market, where slaves were transported to Zanzibar.

**German Customs House:** The first customs house built in 1895 to serve the German administration. The structure is still in use as a customs house.

**Mwambao Primary School:** Built in 1896 by the Fathers of the Holy Ghost, was the first multi-racial school in what is now Tanzania. Still in use.



Map of Bagamoyo town showing historical buildings and sites of attractions.

**The Hanging Tree:** This is a scaffolded gallows where leader of the Bushiri rebellion may have been executed in 1889.

**German Cemetery:** the cemetery for German soldiers killed during the Bushiri War and other battles. The site features twenty graves dating from 1889.

**The Kaole Ruins:** situated about 5 km south of Bagamoyo, they include ruins of two mosques and 22 tombs as part of an early Shiraz settlement. The village was founded in 13th century, and it is thought to have one of the oldest mosques on East African mainland.

**The Holy Ghost Mission and Catholic Museum:** A Catholic complex including a museum, located at the old Sisters' House. It was originally built in 1872. The complex also includes the old fathers' house, the new Holy Ghost Church (constructed just before WWI), the cemetery for early missionaries, and a grotto built in 1876 by emancipated slaves living at the mission.

**Cross by the Sea:** located on the waterfront close to the Anglican Church, this monument marks the establishment of the first Roman Catholic church in East Africa, in 1868.

**Anglican Church:** a church donated by the Anglican parish in 1974 (100 years after the death of Dr David Livingstone), whose body was carried on the church's door from modern-day Zambia before shipped to Zanzibar for transport back to the UK.

**Liku House:** Built in 1885, the house served as the German headquarters in East Africa until 1891 when the capital was transferred to Dar es Salaam. Afterwards, it served as the German regional headquarters until offices moved to the Boma in 1897. Now houses immigration department.

**German Block House/ Dunda Tower:** this tower was built in 1889 as a defense tower to protect Bagamoyo during the Bushiri War.

**Manna Makuka Cemetery:** Muslim cemetery with oldest tomb in Bagamoyo dating from 1793.

**Chuo Cha Sanaa:** Bagamoyo College of Arts and Culture, which provides short and long courses in music/dance/theatre/art. Conducts frequent local performances; organizes and hosts annual Bagamoyo Arts Festival.

**The Fish market:** A waterfront location where fish are landed daily and sold fresh as well as cooked.

**Bagamoyo Salt Works:** a privately owned and run salt mining operation. Visitors are welcome to visit and observe but are not guided.

**Kaole Mamba Ranch:** a privately owned and run farm raising crocodiles for export (meat, skin, and alive) but with tourist viewing as a secondary business.