

SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MoU) BETWEEN EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF UN-HABITAT AND DIRECTOR GENERAL NAIROBI METROPOLITAN SERVICES

On 14th July 2021, a Memorandum of Understanding for Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative between Nairobi Metropolitan Services and UN-Habitat was signed in a colorful ceremony at John Michuki Memorial Park, Nairobi. The Memorandum of Understanding was signed by Ms.Maimuna Mohd Sharif, Executive Director UN-Habitat, and General Mohammed Badi, Director-General Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS).

Among those in attendance included Kenya's Cabinet Secretary (CS) for the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation, Hon. Sicily Kanini Kariuki, Kenya's Permanent Representative to UN-Habitat Amb. Jean Kimani, Kenya Forest Service Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau, National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Director General Mr. Mamo Boru Mamo, Former Mayor of Nairobi Mr. Joe Aketch, Mr. Fred Nyongesa from Water Resource Authority (WRA), among other officials.

Ms.Maimuna Mohd Sharif, Executive Director UN-Habitat in her address noted that the project provides a unique opportunity to kick-start city-wide urban regeneration, transform informal settlements create sustainable jobs, and build urban safety and security. She reiterated the need to reclaim and restore green & public spaces in the city and steer Nairobi's commitment to a sustainable, inclusive, resilient, and healthy urban future.

General Mohammed Badi, Director-General Nairobi Metropolitan Services (NMS) stated that the Nairobi river system suffers from dumping of human, medical, and industrial waste which negatively affects the quality of services and groundwater provided to the local people. The resulting environmental degradation and public health impact lead to high mortality and morbidity, poor school attendance, and performance. He noted that the delivery of safe and adequate sanitation services in Nairobi needed sustainable measures to protect the natural environment, including river corridors.

Hon. Sicily Kariuki, CS for the Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation lauded the efforts between Nairobi Metropolitan Services and UN-Habitat, Intergovernmental

agencies, Non-governmental actors together with the environmental youth groups in the city for their collective effort in the rehabilitation and restoration in reclaiming the city's three main rivers to support a better urban environment for fresh and improved quality of life for Nairobians. She urged for a multi-agency approach to the cleaning of rivers in Nairobi.

Amb. Jean Kimani, Kenya Permanent Representative to UN-Habitat noted that the implementation of great projects by the Nairobi Metropolitan Services and other relevant partners has transformed the livelihoods of Nairobi residents. These efforts have presented quick solutions to challenges faced by city dwellers. She acknowledged Kenya's Permanent Mission to UN-Habitat's commitment to avail itself as a formidable partner in the realization of a greener, safer and cleaner Nairobi.

Mr. Mamo Boru, Director General NEMA pointed out that through Urban Rivers Regeneration Programme, the Authority has focused on the plight of urban rivers working in collaboration with state and non-state actors. He stated that they are working on controlling upstream pollution and to date, they have identified and stopped 143 illegal discharge points majorly in the informal settlements.

Mr. Julius Kamau, Chief Conservator of Kenya Forest Service noted that trees have a great role in enhancing the health of river systems from upstream to downstream. Through collaboration with other partners, Kenya Forest Service has been able to restore the Nairobi river section by growing bamboo and indigenous trees along the banks for stabilization. It has also constructed gabions to safeguard meandering parts of the rivers from silting. The rehabilitated river has enhanced biodiversity at Michuki Park.

Mr. Fred Nyongesa, Water Resource Authority noted that our water resources are greatly threatened by pollution from solid and liquid waste. He noted that as an Authority they are undertaking riparian reserve mapping to better manage water resources.

The signing ceremony was capped with the Changing Faces Competition (CFC) award, an annual award-winning initiative, sponsored by UN-Habitat, aimed at mobilizing youth teams to take responsibility for managing public spaces around them to find the cleanest, greenest and safest spaces.