



## **CELEBRATING WORLD CITIES DAY 2021: ADAPTING CITIES FOR CLIMATE RESILIENCE**

Today the World marks World Cities day, established by the United Nations General Assembly Resolution **A/RES/68/239** in recognition of the need to create international awareness on the important role of Cities as the hubs of Global economies and innovation. It underlines Sustainable Development Goal 11 to make Cities inclusive, safe, sustainable and resilient. Cities occupy 3% of earth's land but account for over 60% of Gross Domestic product.

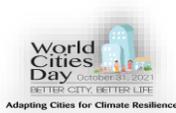
The theme of World Cities Day 2021 “**Adapting cities for climate resilience**” comes at a time when the effects of climate change continue to negatively impact on livelihoods and communities. Cities contribute to over 80% of global energy consumption and 70% of carbon emissions. Over 1 billion people live in informal settlements and The Climate change effects on Coastal cities continue to pose risks for over 600 million people. The need to address climate resilience and adaptation for cities is urgent and requires the International community to implement commitments made under the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction, Paris Agreement in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. It requires international cooperation and funds released to the developing countries in order to provide better planning, building and adopting strategies that will secure a climate safe future.

Kenya has witnessed rapid urbanization trends and currently hosts a population of 5.7 million in its cities. The urban sector comprises of three major cities, Nairobi, Kisumu and Mombasa, and numerous municipalities and towns spread across 47 counties.

The Kenya Constitution of 2010 highlights the right to clean and a healthy environment for all. The Government under the Big Four Agenda on Affordable Housing and Vision 2030 has focused on increasing capacity of national and county government to implement policies, urban development plans and Programmes that foster integrated and equitable sustainable cities and communities.

Nairobi is the most populated city in Kenya with more than 2.7 million people living in the capital and has also been impacted by climate change. Ongoing rural to urban migration has to over 45 % of people in informal settlement. Most industries are in the city ie Manufacturing, leading to high use of electricity, transport fuel and production of waste which all continue to affect city health, air, land and quality of life.

The Government of Kenya in addressing the threats posed by climate change has made considerable progress in mainstreaming adaptation at the national level through its **National Adaptation Plan**, and the county level with support from its Council of Governors (CoG) and county governments. Information on climate risks, hazards, vulnerabilities, and priority adaptation actions are starting to be integrated into County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs), while County Climate Change Funds (CCCFs) are being established to provide financial support to counties to propose, prioritize, and implement necessary adaptation actions. This enables county governments to strengthen and reinforce national climate change policies while delivering on local adaptation priorities. The **Climate Change Act** and



the **National Climate Change Policy Framework** have also been enacted to provide guidance for low-carbon and climate resilient development.

COVID-19 has triggered incredibly positive change in Kenya and the government has almost doubled usable green space in Nairobi. The city has two dense forests (Ngong and Karura forests), an arboretum and an array of parks and open green spaces. Through a Nairobi River Regeneration Initiative, the government and stakeholders undertook a massive rehabilitation of Michuki Memorial Park in efforts geared towards expanding urban green spaces. As a result of the rehabilitation program, a total of 20,000 tons of solid waste was removed, illegal structures were cleared and construction done along the river to mark a clear boundary of the riparian land. A total of 6,357 indigenous trees were also planted.

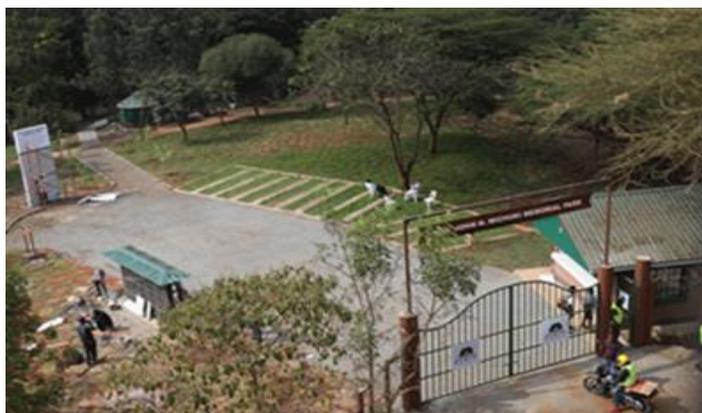
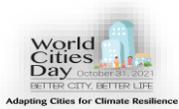
Cities are characterized by increasing car ownership and use and as a result reduced air quality. Across Kenya, city governments are working with different agencies on a number of projects that involve sustainable transportation and pedestrian-friendly infrastructure. This encourages walking and cycling which have next to zero impact on the environment, no greenhouse gases, consume less energy and reduce air and noise pollution.

Effective waste management reduces greenhouse gas emissions, especially methane, from the waste sector. Kenya is applying a circular economy model in managing its waste as well as enabling framework to support its implementation and realization of a zero waste economy. It has developed a national waste policy and put regulations on extended producer responsibility, plastic and chemical management and e-waste. In August 2017, the government initiated a ban on single use polythene bags nationally and single use plastics in protected conservation areas. This has made significant contribution in minimizing solid waste generation making Kenya a benchmark to most countries in the world especially in East Africa.

The government has executed development of renewable sources of energy to promote use of clean energy across the country, for example, the Lake Turkana Wind Power Project. The project is of significant strategic benefit to Kenya, and one of the largest private investments in Kenya's history. It aims to provide 300MW of reliable, low cost wind energy to the national grid, equivalent to over 20% of the current installed electricity generating capacity. This will ensure environmental sustainability by reducing emissions.

Cities need to adapt and improve their resilience to climate hazards that may impact them, both in the short-term and in future climate change scenarios. They also need policies that ensure the world gets back on its ambitious track towards net zero emissions by mid-century, currently dwarfed by the COVID-19 pandemic. By taking the lead and developing proven solutions, cities will continue spurring climate action on a national and global scale to ensure that everyone benefits irrespective of their social and economic differences.

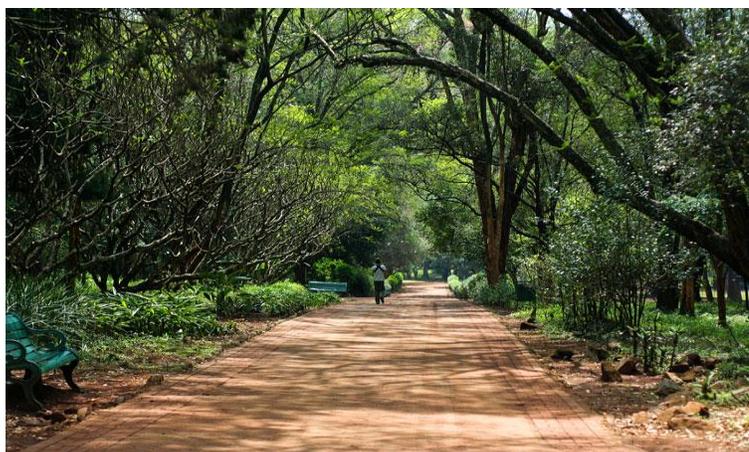
Gallery:



Michuki Memorial Park, Nairobi.



Uhuru Park, Nairobi



Nairobi Arboretum