

STATEMENT BY
JAMES W. MACHARIA, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF TRANSPORT, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING,
URBAN DEVELOPMENT, AND PUBLIC WORKS
DURING
THE NATIONAL OBSERVANCE OF WORLD HABITAT DAY
2021 AT THE OLKARIA GEOTHERMAL SPA, IN NAIVASHA,
NAKURU COUNTY ON 4TH OCTOBER 2021

- **Cabinet Secretaries Present:**
 - **CS Keriako Tobiko from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry and**
 - **CS Monica Juma from the Ministry of Energy**
- **Hon. Lee Kinyanjui, the Governor of Nakuru County;**
- **Madame Maimunah Mohd Sharif, Under Secretary General and Executive Director of UN-Habitat;**
- **Madame Inger Andersen, the Executive Director of the United Nations Environmental Program;**
- **Amb. Jean Kimani, Kenya's Permanent Representative at the Kenya Permanent Mission to UN-Habitat;**
- **Mr. Charles Hinga Mwaura, Principal Secretary in the State Department of Housing and Urban Development;**
- **Mrs. Rebecca Miano, the Managing Director and CEO of the Kenya Electricity Generation Company;**

- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It gives me great pleasure to join you in this year's observance of World Habitat Day. This day accords us a unique opportunity to reflect on the state of human settlements, and to chart the way forward in addressing emerging challenges in the built and natural environments. At the outset, I would like to appreciate the Kenya Electricity Generating Company for their gracious hospitality in hosting this year's celebration.

KenGen has made a significant contribution to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by investing in renewable energy sources such as geothermal power. These efforts have been recognized internationally, and I would to congratulate KenGen for recently receiving additional carbon credits from the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). It is encouraging to see an energy company take such bold steps to fight climate change, and I encourage all private and public institutions to join this movement and make climate actions central to their day-to-day operations.

The theme of this year's World Habitat Day observance: **"Accelerating Urban Action for a Carbon-Free World,"** sets the stage for discussions aimed at addressing the effects of climate change on urban centers. The world is experiencing unprecedented weather patterns that are characterized by record-breaking temperatures, extreme rainfall, and severe droughts. The effects of these weather patterns are exacerbated in urban centers where large populations are concentrated in small areas.

More than half of the world's population of 7.9 billion people live in towns and cities, and this is expected to increase to 60% by 2030. Buildings, transportation, energy use, and waste management, which are major sources of carbon emissions, are all concentrated in urban centers. Cities and towns have thus become major contributors to greenhouse gas emissions as they account for about 75% of the world's energy consumption, and over 70% of global greenhouse gas emissions. Local governments and urban planners therefore have a critical role to play in addressing climate change. The way cities are planned, built and managed is key to reducing carbon emissions and keeping global warming within limits set by the Kyoto Protocol of 1997, and the Paris Agreement of 2015.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Cities, municipalities, and towns need to develop strategies and initiatives geared towards addressing the causes and effects of climate change. These must translate to better and sustainable urban environments that are characterized by improved air quality, sustainable ecosystems, cleaner energy, reduced energy consumption, and improved waste management.

The Government of Kenya has put in place major policy, legislative and programmatic measures to accelerate urban action for a carbon-free world. Our urban development policy framework prioritizes the development of urban resilience plans and strategies that are aimed at equipping cities, municipalities, and towns to manage the impacts of climate change. Further, we are revising the building code to include provisions that promote the use of designs and construction methods that optimize resources, and reduce energy consumption and waste.

The Government also promotes the use of Appropriate Building Materials and Green Technologies. Our objective is to enhance the use of eco-friendly and cost-effective building materials that are made from locally available natural resources.

The Development Framework Guidelines of the Affordable Housing Program also articulate the importance of integrating green design and construction methods in current and future developments. In 2020, the State Department for Housing and Urban Development approved the use of Green Building Certification systems in the Affordable Housing Program. These are rating tools that assess a building or construction project's performance from a sustainability and environmental perspective. The adoption of these systems will contribute to sustainable construction, and avail green financing as a funding option for developments under the Affordable Housing Program.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government of Kenya has made great strides in implementing sustainable and eco-friendly solutions in the transport sector. During the presidency of H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, the Government has built more than 10,300km of new tarmac roads across Kenya, which have contributed to improved fuel efficiency and reduced pollution. The Standard Gauge Railway, one of the President's flagship projects, has also reduced pollution by facilitating rail cargo haulage, which is less energy intensive. The Standard Gauge Railway has also reduced congestion on the Northern Corridor, and the attendant noise and air pollution.

Additionally, we are implementing the Bus Rapid Transit system and expanding the Nairobi Commuter Rail Network, both of which will go a long way in decongesting roads, and reducing fuel consumption, as these are more energy-efficient modes of passenger transportation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government is executing a comprehensive approach to enhance the wellbeing of our citizens, and to protect our environment for posterity. We are implementing strategies to mitigate the causes and effects of climate change across all sectors of our economy including agriculture, energy, manufacturing, and ICT.

Cities and towns continue to be a major contributor to greenhouse gas emissions. As I conclude my remarks, I urge you to take full advantage of this forum to engage openly and proactively, with the ultimate aim of transforming urban centers to become the solution rather than the cause of climate change.

THANK YOU!