

**STATEMENT BY H.E. HON. UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H. PRESIDENT
OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE OPENING SESSION OF
THE STOCKHOLM+50 INTERNATIONAL MEETING
THURSDAY, 2ND JUNE 2022**

**Your Royal Highness,
Your Excellency, Magdalena Andersson, the Prime Minister of
the Kingdom of Sweden,
Your Excellencies, Heads of State and Government,
Your Excellency, Antonio Guterres, Secretary General of the
United Nations,
Your Excellency, Abdulla Sharif, President of the General
Assembly,
Your Excellency, Collen Kelapile, President of the Economic and
Social Council,**

**Honorable Ministers,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Let me begin by saying what great pleasure it is to be able to
participate in this most important meeting.** The UN Conference on
Human Environment, which was held here in Stockholm in **June 1972**,
was the first major conference on **International Environmental**
issues.

The landmark conference set in motion a global **discussion** on the **link
between economic growth and development, pollution** of the air,
water and oceans, and the well-being of the people around the world.

Today, **50** years later, we pause during this Stockholm+50 meeting to; **(i) take stock of the progress we have made** in the last 50 years; and **(ii) to reflect** on how best to make the next 50 years consequential for our environment.

It is clear, **Excellencies**, that over the last 50 years, we have deepened our understanding of the grave environmental threat that we all face. **We** also recognize now that **we either stand or fall together** because the threat affects all of us across the globe.

Unfortunately despite this recognition, we have made **less progress** in terms of **designing** and **implementing** bold actions to address this threat.

So his meeting seeks to, therefore, **accelerate action to avert** the environmental crisis and to **define** a pathway towards an **environmentally sustainable future**.

I want to thank Her Excellency Magdalena Andersson, and the Government of Sweden for inviting us all here to this city once again to put this agenda firmly back on the table.

Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya proudly hosts the UN Environmental Programme (UNEP), and it has done so since **1972** when the **27th Session of the UN General Assembly** decided to domicile UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya. **Kenya** has also embraced the environment agenda; and since 1972 all

Administrations have given it **prominence in our national development plans.**

Indeed, Kenya's Founding President, **Mzee Jomo Kenyatta**, captured the essence of the environmental challenge when he made the following statement at the **UNEP Governing Council of 1974:**

*"Your deliberations should touch on matters of critical concern to developing states. You will be discussing drought and desert encroachment in countries bordering the Sahara, erosion of soils and better management of arid land, the dangers of pollution and the conservation of forests, water systems and wildlife. Such topics are **vital to the endurance of this planet and the welfare of humanity.**"*

The endurance of the planet that President Jomo Kenyatta spoke about 50 years ago is now stretched to the limit and **this challenge has, without question, now become a defining issue of our time.**

We, in Kenya, have maintained the **strategic thrust** of previous Administrations and **given high priority** to environmental issues. Towards this end, we have taken several actions to **address** the **threat** to the **environment.**

This includes the **ban on single-use plastics** in **2017** and the **acceleration** of the **generation of renewable energy**, which now accounts for approximately **80%** of our clean energy.

Recognizing the critical role of UNEP as the premier institution on matters environment, we continue to **provide strong support to the UNEP** and the global office in Nairobi and have actively canvassed member states to maintain their support for the works done under UNEP.

It was, therefore, with great pleasure, that Kenya welcomed Member States and other stakeholders to the **5th Session of the UN Environment Assembly (UNEA-5.2) and the commemoration of UNEP@50** earlier this year.

UNEA 5.2 highlighted the **urgency** for the **collective** action to address the **triple planetary crisis**, namely **climate change, pollution, and biodiversity loss**, and the adoption of **pathbreaking Resolution on Plastic Pollution**. **Today we once again urge** all Member States to quickly develop and implement a **legally Binding instrument to end plastic pollution**.

Your Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As we gather here today, at this Stockholm+50, let us together build on the momentum of UNEA 5.2 towards **bolder and more ambitious environmental action** for the next 50 years.

I take this opportunity remind us all that Africa, despite its **relatively limited global emission footprint**, is **suffering disproportionately** from the impact of **climate change**. We are currently facing a **multiple** climate-related **humanitarian crises** in the **Sahel region**, the **Horn of Africa**, and in parts of **Southern Africa** as well as a result of flooding, drought, rising sea levels. **While these crises**

require **urgent** and **collective action**, it is even more important to take **action to forestall more such crises**.

We urge all our partners across the globe today to **honor their commitments to doubling global climate finance**, especially for **adaptation**, to enable **developing countries** to **invest in climate-resilient infrastructure and systems**. **We** have, I believe, an exceptional opportunity to turn climate and environmental commitments into action if we work together as **a community of nations**. **Heightened ambition** in financing and implementation should be at the core of these actions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The environment agenda, and, indeed, the broader triple planetary crisis agenda, is currently at the center of global discussions. **Let us all seize the opportunity** presented by this meeting to change the pace and quality of environment action going forward. **By** the time we head to **COP27 in November this year**, we should all aim to have developed a **comprehensive, holistic and transformative package of environmental actions**.

This should be an integrated package that pulls together the **outcomes of COP26 held last November, UNEA 5.2 in March, Stockholm+50 where we are today and the upcoming UN Oceans Conference to be held in Lisbon at the end of June this year**.

Let me **close** by recalling the profound statement by **H.E. Olof Palme, the former Prime Minister of Sweden**, who stated that, "*in relation*

to the human habitat, there is no individual future, neither for people nor for nations. Our future is common. We must share it together. We should shape it together".

As cohost of this conference, it is now my pleasure to **welcome you** all and to wish each and everyone of us fruitful deliberations as we shape our common sustainable and prosperous future.

I thank you.