



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTRY, HON. SOIPAN TUYA, EGH, AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF UNEA 6 HELD ON 26TH FEBRUARY 2024 AT THE UNEP HEADQUARTERS, GIGIRI, NAIROBI

Minister for Energy Transition and Sustainable Development of the Kingdom of Morocco and President of UNEA-6, Your Excellency Madam Leila Benali;

Secretary General of the United Nations, Your Excellency Antonio Guterres;

Ambassador and Permanent Representative of Chile to the United Nations and President of the United Nations Economic and Social Council (UN ECOSOC), Your Excellency Paula Narvaez, Your Excellency Paula Narvaez;

Ambassador of The Hashemite Kingdom of Jordan to Kenya and Permanent Representative to UNEP and Chair of the UNEP Committee of Permanent Representatives, Your Excellency Firas Khouri;

Excellencies Heads of State and Government;

Colleague Honourable Ministers;

Distinguished Delegates;

Good morning.

1. I am very honoured and privileged to have the opportunity to welcome you to Nairobi, Kenya, the Global Environment Capital and most importantly here at the Headquarters of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP). If my President, His Excellency Dr. William Ruto was the one making this address, he would have also added, **Welcome Home**, since history documents that Kenya is the cradle of Humankind. So, you are all at home – **Karibuni Nyumbani**.
2. His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya will however make his national and welcome statement on the 29th, February and we all eagerly look forward to that Session.

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests,

3. It has been 10 years since UNEA was launched in 2014, and we can look back with pride at the achievements and milestones of this Assembly which has contributed to addressing the planetary crisis of climate change, nature and biodiversity loss, and pollution and waste management. We for instance have seen positive global progress on several fronts in the past few years, including the adoption of the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework, the Global Framework on Chemicals, pollution and waste, and the UNEA 5.2. Resolution to end plastic pollution and forge an international legally binding

agreement by end of this year. These achievements have been realised not because it was easy to do so, but because we collectively realised that the planet is at peril and so is humanity.

4. The flipside of this progress has also been a rather worrying trend. **Scientific assessments continue to provide us with stark evidence that we must do more to address the environmental crisis.** Whether it is the global assessment report of the Intergovernmental Science-Policy Platform on Biodiversity and Ecosystem Services (IPBES) warning us that Nature is declining globally at rates unprecedented in human

history with grave impacts and consequences on people around the world, or the IPCC Special Report on the impacts of global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels, presenting evidence that Global warming is likely to reach 1.5°C between 2030 and 2052 if it continues to increase at the current rate. **The message is the same, consistent and clear. We are not doing too well as the global community. We must change course, and we must do so as soon as possible!**

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests;

5. With only six years remaining towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030, **UNEA 6 comes at a time when the world is also called upon to accelerate the implementation of the UN 2030 Agenda if we are to stay course on sustainable development.** Unfortunately, for millions in the developing regions of the world, including here in Africa, poverty still remains a daily reality while economic inequality is increasing globally. As you all know, the world economy is still struggling to fully recover from the devastating impact of the Covid-19 pandemic amidst disruptive conflicts and wars. **It is against this backdrop that the world will be**

looking to us here in Nairobi this week to renew hope. And HOPE WE MUST PROVIDE as we consider the 17 Draft Resolutions guided by the overall theme of UNEA-6 *“effective, inclusive and sustainable multilateral actions to tackle climate change, biodiversity loss and pollution.”* **A lot of action, hard work, honest negotiations and leadership are therefore needed over the next week if this UNEA is to live to its promise.**

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests;

6. I am also proud to inform you that **in Kenya, we are doing our part to support UNEP and to meet our local and international obligations on environmental management and climate action.** In September last year, Kenya hosted the inaugural Africa Climate Summit in Nairobi, which adopted the ***"African Leaders Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change and Call to Action"*** which carries Africa's climate action aspirations and has since become the continent's guiding document at international fora including the 28th United Nations Conference of Parties (COP28). At the core of the Nairobi Declaration, is Africa's resolve to pursue green growth by

leveraging her immense climate action potential in sectors such as renewable energy, sustainable agriculture, critical minerals and blue economy among others, which are also part of the discussions in this UNEA.

7. As Kenya we are accelerating the transition of our country's linear waste management system into circular economy. We will showcase some of these practical efforts during Kenya's side event on Circular Economy scheduled for 29th February under the title '**Circular economy and Extended Producer Responsibilities in addressing pollution control.**' At the

side event, Kenya will share with the global community potential solutions to plastic pollution. As one of the first countries in the world to enact legislation banning single use plastics, we believe that the world may learn from our experience as we continue to negotiate the Global Plastic Treaty. You are therefore all invited to this Side Event.

8. Further, Kenya is implementing the **National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Programme: Towards Growing 15 Billion Trees** as part of her deep commitment to achieving 30% tree cover by 2032. 30% of the 15 billion trees will be fruit and

fodder species to contribute to our Country's food and nutritional security and household income.

9. As a tradition Kenya grows trees on occasions like this (UNEA). This is why we will grow 2,700 trees this week on behalf of all UNEA 6 delegates. We had anticipated that the delegates would be able to grow the trees themselves but due to the tight programme and broad agenda, kindly allow us to have these trees grown on your collective behalf by volunteers including college students.

10. The above are some examples of the environmental initiatives that we are spearheading as a country. We have more to showcase, and I wish to extend an invitation to you all to visit the Kenya House that has been set up courtesy of UNEP's support and which will be open throughout UNEA 6.

Excellencies and Distinguished Guests;

11. UNEA-6, will, without a doubt, be an intense week of many related activities including the MEAs day, high level dialogues and the leadership dialogues, several bilateral meetings and side events. **As you go through the intense engagement this**

week, I also wish to remind you that 2024 will mark a milestone in global governance within the United Nations System as the world plans for the Summit of the Future in September. At this UNEA-6, we have the singular opportunity to inject optimism and restore faith in a strengthened global environmental governance system underpinned by science based multilateral diplomacy. I therefore look forward to a strong Ministerial Declaration out of this UNEA-6.

12. In conclusion, I welcome all of you delegates to a reception on the 29th evening where, as a host, we will display Kenya's celebrated hospitality. Beyond UNEA, we also have magical Kenya – a variety of places of renowned rich tourism and cultural heritage, including the world-famous Nairobi National Park. Please take time to experience our warm hospitality and the Kenyan spirit!

Thank you very much.