



Republic of Kenya

CABINET SECRETARY MESSAGE ON INTERNATIONAL DAY OF BIODIVERSITY MAY 22nd 2020

Kenya is a signatory to the Convention on Biological Diversity which we ratified in July of 1994, and which continues to inspire global community's commitments towards sustainable development. Kenya joins the rest of the world in celebrating this year International Day of Biodiversity. This year's theme is "**Our solutions are in nature**" and the day aims to promote and raise global awareness of issues related to biodiversity.

Biodiversity has a fundamental value to human well-being and health including on how we depend on it for cultural, economic and environmental needs. It provides functioning ecosystems that supply food, medicines, fiber, oxygen, clean air and water, pollination, pest control, and wastewater treatment and many other ecosystem services. At least 40% of the global market of goods and services are sustained by biodiversity. Further, biodiversity provides intangible benefits, among them: spiritual and aesthetic values, supporting knowledge systems, education, industrial raw materials and processes and innovation. Hence, biodiversity impacts human livelihoods and lifestyles.

The Constitution Kenya 2010, Vision 2030, and the Government Big four Agenda (food security and nutrition, affordable universal health care, affordable housing and manufacturing) recognizes the vital role of biodiversity as a foundation and an enabler towards their attainment and overall sustainable development. However, these vital resources continue to face unprecedented challenges due to biodiversity loss, habitat fragmentation, degradation, pollution and in some extreme cases extinction. This trend compromises the primary social safety nets that they provide. The rampant destruction of nature and unsustainable utilization

of its components have created a pathway for some of the emerging global crisis such as massive landslides and floods, loss of fertile soils, habitat loss that trigger animal human interactions/conflict leading to cases of zoonotic diseases becoming more frequent. The current COVID 10 pandemic is a classic example.

However, we can save planet earth by using nature based solutions and green recovery interventions to tackle and address nature based disasters, protect well-being and health. Ecological restoration is a nature-based solution which can help mitigate, adapt to climate change, halt and reverse biodiversity loss. Towards this, Kenya has undertaken to implements its 10% tree cover strategy by 2022 which will significantly contribute to ecological restoration.

Biodiversity wealth is not just about the abundance but also the health of the same. Indeed, our solutions are in nature, and we must therefore, keep these vital ecosystems healthy and resilient, in order for them to continue functioning and supporting the well-being and health. As we undertake to bend the curve of biodiversity loss and restore ecosystems using nature-based solution and green recovery interventions, governments, business, local communities and philanthropy need to take concerted effort and actions to bring about transformative change for sustainable biodiversity conservation and management.

In recognition of the interconnectedness between people, animals, plants, and their shared environment and further to support sustainable development and management of Biodiversity including promoting one health approach for safe planet, it is recommended that parties consider;

- i. Strengthening polices and structures to support local, county, national, regional and international efforts to conserve biodiversity and natural capital.
- ii. Nature proof and greening development interventions in order to promote and foster biodiversity safeguards as nations undertake development intervention and investments;

- iii. To integrate Biodiversity in planning and business development strategies and operations through natural capital assessment and valuation to better understand and quantify both business impacts and dependencies on natural capital.
- iv. Strengthen and support effective partnerships, collaboration and synergies including incorporation of local communities in conservation, restoration and sustainable utilization of biodiversity including indigenous knowledge.

Let's all support the on-going negotiations for the development of a post-2020 global biodiversity framework, which builds on the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and sets out an ambitious plan to implement broad-based action towards the 2050 Vision, where biodiversity is valued, conserved and restored. We know that investing in nature is one of the best ways to address climate change and restore our natural life support systems. The renewed targets are a demonstration of our efforts and commitments to protect and restore our ecosystems and building a future of life in harmony with nature.

