

**MINISTRY OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE & HERITAGE**

**OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

**TALKING NOTES BY HON. PENINAH MALONZA, OGW, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE & HERITAGE, DURING THE FLAGGING OFF OF THE EAST AND CENTRAL AFRICA ELEPHANT CAMPAIGN WALK AT THE NATIONAL MUSEUM OF KENYA, ON 29TH JULY 2023**

**The Principal Secretary, State Department for Wildlife, Ms. Silvia Museiya,**

**The Principal Secretary, State Department for Culture & Heritage, Ms. Ummi Bashir,**

**Members of the Diplomatic Corps present,**

**All CEOs of parastatals present,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**Good-Morning.**

* Today, we gather here with great honor and pleasure to join the Elephant Neighbors Centre (ENC) in a renewed campaign against elephant and other endangered species poaching and trafficking.
* This walk signifies a crucial step in amplifying public education and awareness, especially in a country like Kenya, where 50% of the populace are youths—a well-educated and youthful population that holds the key to reducing poaching and protecting our wildlife.
* The ENC's walking campaigns aim to raise awareness about the plight of African elephants, engage local communities in wildlife conservation, and enhance our understanding of the Wildlife Conservation and Management Act 2013. Such initiatives are vital for sustaining our conservation education campaigns.

**Ladies and Gentlemen**,

* Today's road walk is unique and exciting as the team will traverse the least understood Mt. Elgon Conservation Area (MECA), Mbale, and Soroti in Uganda—a region where elephant populations were once decimated due to political instability but are now showing signs of recovery. The team will also pass through other parks in Uganda, including Murchison Falls and Kidepo National Parks, as well as venture into the Democratic Republic of Congo, a country with enormous biodiversity conservation potential and eco-regions.
* The ENC's efforts are aimed at increasing space for wildlife conservation across East and Central Africa, aligning with the recent idea of developing the East African’s Community (EAC) wildlife conservation strategy. Wildlife knows no political boundary, and we wholeheartedly support initiatives like these that expand space for conservation beyond borders.
* I commend the ENC for its relentless efforts in promoting conservation educational services, which remain a priority for our ministry. Diminishing space for conservation poses a challenge to sustainable wildlife management due to human-wildlife conflicts. We must continue to partner and collaborate to sustain conservation efforts and campaigns.

 **Ladies and Gentlemen**,

* I call upon all conservation partners and communities to join hands in conserving wildlife as our natural heritage. The Kenyan government is committed to wildlife conservation and is revising laws to recognize wildlife conservation as a land use and develop a wildlife conservation policy, which has been a missing link in our efforts for decades.
* Improving wildlife conservation efforts will not only protect our natural heritage but also generate more job opportunities and support grassroots businesses, aligning with our government's Bottom Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).
* Before I conclude, I want to commend Mr. Nyamu and his team for their inspiring efforts in protecting African elephants. Your walk of over 21,456km across continents is truly commendable, and we hope it will inspire others and be replicated elsewhere.
* Thank you all for your support and dedication to preserving our precious wildlife. Together, let's ensure a brighter future for both wildlife and humanity.
* With these remarks, I hereby officially flag off this exciting and demanding elephant education campaign initiative by the ENC.

**God bless you all!**