



MINISTRY OF TOURISM & WILDLIFE

**SPEECH BY ZEINAB A. HUSSEIN, CBS, PRINCIPLE
SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND
WILDLIFE, DURING THE TREE PLANTING EVENT AT
WILDLIFE RESEARCH AND TRAINING INSTITUTE,
NAIVASHA ON 19TH MAY 2022**

- The Director WRTI, Dr. Patrick Omondi
- Deputy County Commissioner, Naivasha Sub-County
- Kenya Forest Service Representation
- Staff from the State Department for Wildlife
- Staff from WRTI and KWS
- Our Local Community Members
- Members of the Fourth Estate
- Ladies and gentlemen

Good Morning

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this occasion geared towards protecting our environment by planting trees. This is my first visit and event at this Institute - KWSTI since I was added the responsibility of PS State Department for Wildlife and I am delighted to see colleagues from State Department for Wildlife, KWS, WRTI and members of the public all here for this important occasion. I take this opportunity to appreciate your presence and thank you for sparing your valuable time to attend this great event. We all need to regularly remind ourselves the connections we have with nature and our planet.

The health of our planet is indispensable to our own health and wellbeing, and to our future and trees are an essential part of it.

Ladies and Gentlemen

This tree planting event is not only a yearly ritual but as a Ministry, we have made it a reality that has to be undertaken as part of our commitment to preserve our environment. In the last financial year the State Department for Wildlife planted 15,000 seedlings; 5000 in Tsavo East National Park, 5,000 in Aberdare National Park and 5,000 in Kamnarok National Reseves. This year ending June we intend to do 20,000 seedlings, and we we have already done 7,000 seedlings in

Aberdare and we intend to plant at this Naivasha Wildlife Sanctuary 10,000 seedlings and finish up with the remaining 3,000 in Aberdare in June 2022.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We are all aware of the government's commitment to preserve our forests and increase forest and tree cover. Additionally, we are implementing a presidential directive that requires that all Government Ministries implement a program of "*Adapt a tree initiative*", where every employee needs to plant a tree and take care of them with the goal of achieving the National Strategy for 10% tree cover by 2023. I am so proud of my staff from State

Department who are here and planting the trees in person in implementing the Presidential directive. The Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife takes pride to be part of the government's intentions to increase forest cover in this part of the Country. Such yearly practice to plant trees should be viewed with seriousness as it remains the cornerstone of preserving our country from environmental degradation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

On the World perspective, global warming has become a threat to all humanity because of anthropogenic activities that continue to impact the ozone layer. The natural and the

seasonal pattern of weather have drastically changed over time. The rains hardly come in the expected season and amounts. Droughts and flooding have become more common and their cycles of occurrences have become shorter and more frequent. These uncertainties happenings around us should serve as a warning that we need to take care of our environment and particularizes plant trees. Planting trees does not only conserves environment but it sustains life and enhances peace and hope towards the future. The Late, Prof. Wangari Maathai, a celebrated environmentalist once said *“when we plant trees, we plant the seeds of peace and hope”*. A tree, therefore is *“a symbol of hope for us. It remains strong through*

dry seasons hoping for a rainy tomorrow. It aggressively amasses the wind which eventually results to rain-thus trees are a source a brighter future. The more you plant trees around you the more you grow your hope for the future."

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Trees also are important for a variety of reasons, including:

- As a source of food to our wildlife, provide shelter and refuge to our wildlife;
- The lungs of our planet - drawing in carbon dioxide and breathing out oxygen;

- Filtering the air and remove harmful particles in urban areas; and
- Filtering and regulating water, preventing flooding and protecting watersheds;

In conclusion Ladies and Gentlemen

I urge you all with this symbolic gesture of today, to remind ourselves that we need to do everything we can, not only for a healthy planet but also for human dignity safeguard in a healthy planet.

I hope that the WRTI Director and staff will continually water the seedlings that we shall plant today to make sure they grow well considering that we have provided you with a water tank to help with water storage. I regularly be checking on these seedling during my next visits to WRTI.

Thank you