



STATEMENT BY THE NEMA BOARD CHAIRMAN, MR. JOHN KONCHELLAH DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION ON 17TH JUNE 2017, AT HULAHULA CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPOUND, SAKU SUB-COUNTY OF MARSABIT COUNTY

- ❖ *The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Prof. Judi Wakhungu,*
- ❖ *The Principal Secretary, State Department of Environment Mr. Charles Sunkuli,*
- ❖ *The Governor of Marsabit County, Hon. Ambassador Ukur Yattani,*
- ❖ *The senator Marsabit County, Hon Abubakar Harugura Honourable Members of Parliament;*
- ❖ *Director General, NEMA, Prof. Geoffrey Wahungu,*
- ❖ *Directors, NEMA Board of Management*
- ❖ *Representatives of UNEP*
- ❖ *Representatives of UNDP;*
- ❖ *The County Commissioner, Marsabit County,*
- ❖ *Head of Government Departments,*
- ❖ *Chief Executive Officers of Private Companies,*
- ❖ *Distinguished Guests,*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Am glad to join you today in commemorating this year's World Day to Combat Desertification here at Hulahula, Marsabit County. This year's celebrations is guided by the theme "***Conserving our land for sustainable livelihoods***" and slogan "***Our People - Our Home - Our Future***" that was` released by the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) secretariat in Bonn German.

Desertification, climate change and biodiversity loss are the greatest challenges of sustainable development. The 2030 Sustainable Development Goals include the SDG target 15.3 on Land Degradation Neutrality. As a result of the current negative trends in land degradation, our communities and ecosystems are not able to ensure food and water security, generate livable incomes, and cope with the impacts of climate change. Many livelihoods in the developing world are closely linked to the productivity of the land, which in turn defines its capacity for climate mitigation and adaptation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The UN Conventions touching on the environment form part of our legislations including the constitution and therefore we are legally bound to implement them. For example, the UNCCD focuses on the arid, semi-arid and dry sub-humid areas, known as the dry-lands, in which some of the most vulnerable ecosystems and peoples inhabit.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) plays the role of coordinating the various environmental management activities being undertaken by the lead agencies; promote the integration of environmental considerations into development policies, plans,

programs and projects, with a view of ensuring proper management and rational utilization of environmental resources, on sustainable yield basis, for the improvement of the quality of life.

In regard to today's celebrations, the Authority has the mandate to establish and review land use guidelines, examine land use patterns to determine their impact on the quality and quantity of natural resources and carry out surveys, which will assist in the proper management and conservation of the environment. We have also reviewed the National Action Program for Combating Desertification in line with the UNCCD 10 Year Strategy in 2015. We published Sand Harvesting guidelines in the year 2007 and Land Use guidelines in 2011. The latter was handed over to the National Land Commission for implementation when it was established in 2012.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The NEMA Strategic Plan sets a focused approach in the implementation of the Environmental Management and Coordination Act (EMCA) Cap 387. EMCA provides for the establishment of the County Environment Committees under the County Governments whose duties and mandate under the Act are: management of the environment affairs at the county level by developing county Environment Action Plans every five years and any additional functions prescribed under the Act or as assigned by Governor by notice in the official gazette. H.E the Governor of Marsabit is commended for ensuring the gazettelement of Marsabit County Environment Committee. I request that this committee in Marsabit and in the other counties, be supported with adequate resources to undertake their functions of safeguarding the environment. On the same note I

urge the counties which have not finalized the gazettelement process to follow suit and learn from the counties which have gazetted their CECs.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the devolution protected in the Constitution, County governments have all the required authority and resources to reverse all manner of environmental degradation and ensure sustainable development for this country. NEMA will continue to offer Marsabit and other Counties its technical support to ensure all the residents of this County have access to a healthy and clean environment. And as it is in today's event theme: "*Conserving our land for sustainable livelihoods*". Slogan: "*Our People - Our Home - Our Future*", we can conserve our land for sustainable livelihoods. **YES WE CAN.**

THANK YOU