



**STATEMENT BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, DURING THE COMMEMORATION OF THE WORLD DAY TO COMBAT DESERTIFICATION ON 17<sup>TH</sup> JUNE 2017, HULAHULA CATHOLIC CHURCH COMPOUND SAKU SUB-COUNTY OF MARSABIT COUNTY**

- ***Our Guest of Honor, The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources Hon. Prof Judi Wakhungu***
- ***H.E. The Governor, Marsabit County, Amb. Ukur Yattani***
- ***UN Country representatives***
- ***The Chairman, NEMA Board of Management, Mr. John Konchella***
- ***The Director General, NEMA, Prof Geoffrey Wahungu***
- ***The Directors, NEMA Board of Management***
- ***The County Commissioner, Marsabit County***
- ***Distinguished Guests***
- ***Ladies and Gentlemen***

It is with great pleasure I take this opportunity to make my remarks during this day we are gathered to commemorate the World Day to Combat Desertification. The World Day to Combat Desertification is one of the environmental days in the calendar of the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources celebrated under United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD). On this day, countries are called upon to raise awareness about combating desertification, land degradation and mitigate the effects of drought through integrated approaches to enhance sustainable development.

Desertification, land degradation and droughts are becoming a common phenomenon across many landscapes particularly in developing countries where they are creating major challenge to Sustainable Land Management and subsequently sustainable development. In Kenya, the Chalbi Desert of Northern Kenya which presents landscape that can hardly support community socio-economy and is believed to be encroaching in to other neighboring landscapes and experiences extreme droughts. Similarly weather data indicate that the estimated 80% of Kenya's Arid and Semiarid lands are also experiencing more frequent and severe weather condition than ever witnessed before signaling desert emergence. These changes in environmental conditions create changes in natural resources which result in decreased communities' capacity to cope with new conditions. Subsequently, communities abandon these hostile environments to more favorable and productive environments.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen**

It is this emerging tide of migration in search more productive lands due to desertification has made the global community to celebrate this year World Day to Combat Desertification under the theme "***Conserving Our Land for Sustainable Livelihoods***" and slogan "***Our Land - Our home - Our Future***". The theme and slogan draws our attention to the central role productive land can play in turning the growing tide of migrants abandoning unproductive land into communities and nations that are stable, secure and sustainable, into the future.

Under this theme and slogan, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) calls for countries to implement activities aimed at prevention and/or reduction of land degradation, rehabilitation of partly degraded lands and reclamation of degraded lands through National Action Programme (NAP) to be developed by all parties. I am happy to report that Kenya developed her first National Action Programme in 2002. Later owing to emerging issues the document

was reviewed and finalized aligned to the 10 Year Strategic Plan of the convention in 2015. This is the country's second. The alignment took into consideration the tenets of the Kenyan Constitution of 2010 and the Kenya Vision 2030. The revised National Action Programme will officially be launched today and would like to call upon stakeholders to mainstream the provision of this revised National Action Programme to their programmes and projects for making contributions in combating desertification, land degradation and drought in Kenya.

### **Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Over the years, the ministry of environment and natural resources has established strong cooperation mechanisms with development partners at multilateral and bilateral levels for development initiatives in dry lands to increase community resilience with success. Some of the initiatives the ministry has been involved in developing dry lands to turn them to productive lands that serve as home and future for communities' in-line with the slogan is the production of the reviewed of the National Action Programme in 2015 to guide the national efforts in combating desertification, land degradation and drought throughout Kenya. I would like to assure of the Ministry's continued support to the endeavour to combat desertification, land degradation and drought for turning unproductive lands to productive land that play a major role in turning the growing tide of migrants abandoning unproductive land into communities and nations that are stable, secure and sustainable, into the future.

**Asanteni and May God Bless.**