

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HON. NELSON GAICHUHIE, CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING, DURING THE OPENING SESSION OF 2020 SDGS NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE HELD ON 15TH AND 16TH DECEMBER 2020 AT SAROVA WHITESANDS BEACH RESORT & SPA, MOMBASA

**Hon. Members of Parliament;
Representatives from Private Sector;
National Government Officials present;
Representatives from the United Nation Agencies;
Representatives from Civil Society Organizations;
Representatives from the Academia;
Representatives from COG and County Governments;**

**Distinguished Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen,
Good Morning**

First, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you to this important forum. I am honoured by your presence today at this important engagement between the Government and the key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. This conference is the third in series of conferences with the first one having been held in 2018 and the second one in 2019. The theme of the conference is **“A Decade of Action, reaffirming our collective commitment to the SDGs and rebuilding from COVID 19 Pandemic”** and comes at a time when the world is really weighted heavily under the burden of COVID 19 pandemic.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I am grateful to the many stakeholders that have come to share their expertise, knowledge, ideas and contributions. It is with your support and collaborative efforts that we as a country will be able to ensure the smooth implementation of the SDGs and running of the economy of this country.

As we dedicate these two days to sharing experiences and discussing on strategies to accelerate the implementation of the 2030 Agenda as well as building back better after the COVID 19, let me state that stakeholder engagement and public participation are integral elements to the State Department for Planning's work in developing, designing and implementing policies and strategies that benefit all Kenyans. It is my wish that this engagement not only bolsters stakeholder relations in the SDGs process, but a means to help build better relationships with the societies in which we operate, ultimately resulting in improved planning and performance.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Since the SDGs came into effect in January 2016, Kenya in collaboration with stakeholders has been implementing the 2030 Agenda and has achieved key milestones. More importantly, the mainstreaming of the SDGs in the planning frameworks at both the National and County levels, the continuous awareness creation and capacity building programmes position the country to better implement the SDGs.

The actions being undertaken in form of various strategies, projects and programmes have resulted in progress in the implementation of the goals, targets and indicators. According to the 2020 Voluntary National Review (VNR), presented by the Cabinet Secretary to the UN member States during the 2020 High Level Political Forum, good progress has been made in SDG 3(Health), SDG 4 (Education), SDG 6 (Provision of clean water and sanitation),SDG 7(access to clean and affordable energy) and SDG 11(ensuring sustainable cities and communities). The Government also continues to implement social protection programmess and affirmative actions programmes across the country with the aim of ensuring that all Kenyans live in dignity and exploit their human capabilities for social and economic development. These achievements are as a result of the collaborative efforts of all the stakeholders. The 2020 Voluntary National Review was prepared

through a consultative process in which most of you were involved. The details of the progress made so far will be presented later in this forum.

However, despite these efforts over the past few years, Kenya is not on track to achieve some of the 169 targets which raises concern. A number of goals, targets and indicators need to be fast tracked as they are still lagging behind. They include poverty reduction, reduction in maternal mortality, malaria and non - communicable diseases, unemployment, some gender related indicators, and environmental degradation among others.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

The successful implementation of the SDGs in Kenya faces a number of challenges. Some of which include; inadequate capacity to implement, monitor and report on SDGs; resource gap in financing SDGs and data gap in terms of its quality, timeliness and level of disaggregation as well as absence of baseline data for some of the indicators among others. Moving forward, more effort will be required to accelerate these goals, targets and indicators. This calls for more ambition and transformative changes to accelerate progress in the remaining decade.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are all ware, the Covid- 19 pandemic abruptly disrupted the implementation of many of the SDGs and, in some cases, turned back years of progress. The crisis has touched all segments of the population, all sectors of the economy, and all regions of the world. In Kenya, Covid 19 has adversely affected several sectors such as education, health, tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and trade among others. This has affected the livelihood of the most vulnerable groups and wiped out many SDGs gains.

This however should not lead us to pessimism and to think that we have lost the zeal to achieve the SDGs. On the contrary, it is essential that we seize this opportunity to work together and forcefully identify the additional difficulties that

the current pandemic presents in achieving the 2030 Agenda. We must redouble our commitment and our effort to ensure that the impact of the pandemic on the SDGs is reversed and the country is on back on the path towards achieving the SDGs. We should all heed the lessons learnt from this wakeup call to formulate the kinds of transitions needed to build a healthier, more resilient and more sustainable Kenya. Only through a multi-stakeholder and multilateral cooperation can we forge the transformative pathways needed to create a more livable country.

The time is now and all stakeholders have an important role in ensuring that our efforts to recover from the serious effect of the Covid-19 are aligned with the 2030 Agenda while ensuring we do not leave anyone behind. We must pursue a truly transformative recovery plan from COVID-19 pandemic that reduces the risk of future crises and equips us to meet the goals of the 2030 Agenda

Ladies and Gentlemen

Achieving that transformation involves a departure from business as usual. This will require more effort to move faster towards the vision of the 2030 Agenda and accelerate our efforts. You will recall that during the United Nations General Assembly held in New York in 2019, the year 2020 was declared a decade for all major stakeholders to set ambitious actions to deliver the goals by the year 2030. The Heads of State and Government committed to do more and faster to implement the 2030 Agenda and SDGs. Moving forward, we need to take the necessary measures to address both the short and long term challenges that hinder the implementation of the SDGs. Financial and technical support for data and statistical systems and innovations are urgently needed for designing the short-term responses and accelerated actions to put our country back on track to achieve the SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

If the SDGs are to be a successful and inclusive development realization, it will be critical that their implementation is adequately funded and that financing is targeted at actions that reach the most marginalized communities. As a result, there should be a deliberate effort to ensure increased funding from traditional and non-traditional sources. There will also be a need to strengthen the Department that is charged with the responsibility of coordinating, tracking and reporting on the implementation of the SDGs in Kenya.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We believe that engaging stakeholders with diverse knowledge and opinions can result in meaningful exchanges as participation allows stakeholders to understand the complexities involved in how SDGs are delivered, and an opportunity to help inform and shape decisions that affect their lives and those they represent. It is for this reason that the Government in collaboration with other stakeholders developed the SDGs engagement framework which we are launching today geared towards providing direction in stakeholder engagement and communication using an accountable and transparent process. It also ensures that stakeholder engagement activities are integrated and undertaken in a coordinated manner to improve the effectiveness of State Department for Planning's engagement efforts. This engagement framework will further provide a broad framework to harmonize efforts by all actors. I take this opportunity to thank all those who contributed towards the preparation of this document.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Finally, let me state that the Kenya Government through the State Department for Planning remains committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The Kenya Government will continue promoting open engagement with all stakeholders as well as creating an enabling environment for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Inter Agency Technical Working Committee co-chaired by the Government through the SDGs Directorate, SDGs Kenya Forum and KEPSA, SDGs Coordination Directorate and all other stakeholders who have worked tirelessly and provided financial support for making this workshop a success.

I wish you a fruitful deliberations and outcomes.

Ladies and Gentlemen, with these few remarks, I now declare this conference officially opened.

God Bless You All