

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY SAITOTI TOROME, CBS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNING, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING, DURING THE CLOSING CEREMONY OF THE 2020 NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> AND 16<sup>TH</sup> 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 evening**

**Ladies and Gentlemen,** I am delighted to deliver the closing remarks at this important forum that was convened to share experiences in the in the implementation of the SDGs and also discuss strategies to accelerate their implementation.

Let me begin by thanking you all– speakers, moderators and participants for the very engaging, thought-provoking, informative, discussions in the past two days focusing on how to deliver a transformed and prosperous Kenya. The valuable information that you have shared, regarding the SDGs and the impact of COVID-19 in their implementation has provided an important overview of challenges and possible solutions to ensure that post-pandemic we are able to build back better.

You will agree with me that the various speakers as well as across several panels, there was strong and consistent acknowledgement of the importance of the SDGs in poverty reduction and improving the livelihoods of our people. There was also a

broad recognition that we have to double our efforts in the implementation of the SDGs especially during the remaining period of the decade of action.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** While the focus of some interventions was that we must accelerate current efforts over the remaining period, it is also very clear that significant challenges to implementation still remain. These include data gaps, inadequate financing for SDGs and effects of climate change among others all of which are key barriers to progress. In addition, the onset of Covid -19 pandemic, governance and accountability systems continue to impede progress.

During this forum, it was highlighted that if we are to implement the SDGs and other policies effectively, we must use all the tools we have as well as working together in partnership. We also need to leverage on the decade of action to accelerate progress on the SDGs. It was also highlighted that grassroots support and community buy-in is crucial, including full engagement of all stakeholders to ensure no one is left behind for effective implementation. Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) as key means of implementation of the SDGs was also emphasized. It was also highlighted that ensuring quality and regularly updated disaggregated data to monitor progress is critical.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** There was also a clear message on the importance of engaging different stakeholders not only to implement, but also to monitor progress in SDGs implementation. It is important to ensure the voices of specific groups such as women, youth and persons with disabilities are heard. Clearly, participation of all stakeholders is key at all levels in order bring together diverse expertise and resources to increase impact and ensure the much-needed progress of the SDGs in this Decade of Action. In addition, many speakers stressed the need to prioritize engaging other key partners.

Participants also stressed the importance of robust institutions that can promote implementation and coordinate the accelerated actions.

**Ladies and gentlemen;** As we just heard, adequate and sustained resourcing is absolutely critical to accelerate progress towards the SDGs. It is now time to also

start looking for innovative ways of increasing funding to the SDGs related sectors especially post COVID -19 if we want to see real progress in achieving the SDGs and ensure that development gains and achievement of rights are equally enjoyed by all without leaving any one behind.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** I am pleased that the participants have left here with one coherent message that is to ensure Kenya achieves the SDGs in ten years. Not a single person said that we cannot meet the goals – we all agreed that we can. It is my hope that the same positive and confident spirit will help us work in a coordinated and integrated manner to implement and realise the transformation that we all seek.

This Forum has demonstrated that we all need to revisit our approaches, seek way to scale up actions that work, bring on board new partnerships and seek strategic alliances to drive transformation. The outcomes of the forum will also inform the development of the SDGs accelerated strategy.

Let me thank all of you for taking time to be present here with us for the two days. This meeting would not have been successful without you. Thank you for your interest in the SDGs process and also for your valuable contributions.

I encourage all of you to remain committed to the task of making this a reality in which **we leave no one behind**. It is my hope that the relationships and trust built will continue in our bid to scaleup efforts to achieve targets of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We count on all our partners to build an empowered, inclusive, equal, transformed and prosperous Kenya. We must act and act collectively. If we invest just part of our resources in the many successful initiatives and programmes that governments, civil society, private sector and UN agencies are implementing, we could achieve the targets within a decade.

**Ladies and gentlemen,** Let me conclude by expressing my sincere thanks to SDGs Kenya Forum and their partners, KEPSA, Council of Governors, Parliamentary

caucus on Business and SDGs and of course the State Department for Planning for making this event a success. I also appreciate the support and hospitality extended to us by the management of the hotel. Much has been done to ensure we have a successful meeting in a friendly environment.

Let me wish you safe travel home. I also take this opportunity to wish all a Blessed Christmas and Happy 2021. **God bless you all and God bless Kenya.**

**Thank you.**