

**OPENING REMARKS BY SAITOTI TOROME, CBS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR PLANNING, DURING THE WORKSHOP TO LAUNCH
ACCELERATING THE PRIVATE SECTOR DECADE OF ACTION, DELIVERY AND
RECOVERY THROUGH SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT GOALS IN KENYA ON
30TH JUNE 2021**

United Nations Resident Coordinator, Mr Stephen Jackson

UNDP Resident Representative, Mr. Walid Badawi

Executive Director, UN Global Compact Ms. Judy Njino

KEPSA Chair, Ms Florah Mutahi

KEPSA CEO. Ms. Carole Karuga

KEPSA Sector Board Chair, Mr Hillary Onami

**Vice Chair of Environment, Water and Natural Resources' Sector Board, Dr
John Wandaka.**

KEPSA Members in the respective sectors

Government officers present

Representative from Civil Society

All protocols observed

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning

I take this opportunity to welcome you all to this workshop to launch "***Accelerating the Private Sector Decade of Action, Delivery and Green Recovery Through Sustainable Development Goals in Kenya.***" whose main objective is to reignite and revitalize the role of the Private Sector on the 2030 Agenda in Kenya during the

decade of action. This meeting also seeks to enhance collaboration, coordination, reporting and sustainability of SDGs initiatives between the Government and the Private Sector as well as enhance the quality of SDGs reporting.

This workshop comes at a time when almost all the countries are experiencing challenges in their economies due to Covid-19 pandemic that has created the most severe health and economic crisis. We are living in increasingly turbulent times and for the last two years, the impact on our already fragile economy and business is significant. This poses a big challenge in realization of the SDGs.

Ladies and gentlemen

Globally, SDGs implementation is generally low. As a result, in September 2019, the United Nations General Assembly proclaimed the **Decade of Action** for all major stakeholders including private sector to set ambitious actions to deliver the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030. The 2030 Agenda “acknowledges the role of the diverse private sector in the implementation of the new Agenda” and “calls on all businesses to apply their creativity and innovation to solving sustainable development challenges”. This requires getting business to understand that this is about new markets, new business opportunities and models instead of one off corporate social responsibility initiatives.

Ladies and gentlemen

Businesses would provide an extraordinary boost in realizing the SDGs through innovation, investment, a mass customer base and a global labour force. With its on-the-ground networks and its ability to swiftly adapt and innovate, the private sector is well-positioned to bring new solutions to achieving the SDGs and their targets. In addition, there is opportunity to leverage on the resources, skills and knowledge of the private sector to accelerate implementation of SDGs in Kenya.

The recent trend where companies are already taking steps to understand what the SDGs will mean for their business is quite encouraging. The integration of the 17 Goals and their 169 targets into the business operations may provide an opportunity to drive inclusivity and sustainability to the core of the business strategies and models. As businesses rethink their strategies and grapple with how they need to change

their organizations to thrive and grow in today's world, the SDGs can be an opportunity.

Ladies and gentlemen

Acknowledging that COVID-19 pandemic has had very significant impact on a number of SDGs thereby undermining years of development effort, the 2021 high level segment of the Economic and Social Council's theme is ,” Sustainable and Resilient Recovery from the pandemic that promotes economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development: building an inclusive and effective path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda in the context of decade of action and delivery for sustainable development”. This meeting therefore resonates well with the theme of this year's High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Ladies and gentlemen

As you may be aware, the 2030 Agenda calls for follow up and review which is government led. In this regard, the Government has been preparing SDGs progress reports including the 2020 Voluntary National Review. The preparation of these reports is informed by stakeholders' input including national and county government, private sector, civil society, academia and specialized groups. KEPSA as a member and Co-Chair of the Interagency Working Technical Committee on SDGs is responsible for coordinating the reporting of private sector progress in implementation of SDGs in Kenya. Moving forward, it is expected that collaboration, coordination, quality reporting and sustainability of SDGs initiatives supported by the private sector will be enhanced.

Ladies and gentlemen

It is clear from the above that private sector is a key stakeholder and contributor in the achievement of the SDGs in Kenya. In cognizant of this role, the Government is striving for increased private sector commitment in the implementation, tracking and

reporting of SDGs that will lead to greater social, environmental and economic benefits for all during the decade of action.

During the decade of action, businesses can accelerate the implementation and tracking of SDGs through; developing a thorough understanding of how their activities translate into economic, environmental and social impacts in the context of the SDGs; setting ambitious goals to implement the SDGs, including incorporating responsible business practices across strategies and operations; pursuing impactful contributions to the 2030 Agenda through a strong commitment to universal principles in relation to human rights, equality and the environment; developing business solutions to address sustainability challenges; collaborating with peers to develop a collective vision and roadmaps to realize substantial sector transformation; working across sectors to help transform entire economic systems and reporting on SDGs performance and progress.

As I conclude I would like to assure you that, the government is keen to engage as many stakeholders as possible in the development of strategies to implement the SDGs, financing, tracking and reporting. Through working together, we will be in a better position to achieve a world with equal opportunities for all. I therefore look forward to a continued collaboration with all of you.

Thank you