

REMARKS BY THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY – THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE 2020 GLOBAL HUMAN DEVELOPMENT REPORT 13TH JANUARY 2021

The Principal Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry;
The Economic Planning Secretary State Department for Planning;
The Vice Chancellor University of Nairobi;
The Resident Representative UNDP;
Invited guests;
Ladies and Gentlemen;

Human development is all about human freedoms. Freedoms to realize the full potential of every human life in every corner of the world now and in the future. The pursuit of human freedoms is a noble venture. Clearly, actualization of the pursuit has over the years become an important concern for development purposes. Human development has enriched human lives—but unfortunately not all to the same level. It is thus not by chance but by choice that world leaders have committed to a development journey that leaves no one behind—a central premise of the 2030 Agenda.

Mirroring that universal aspiration, it is timely that the 30th Global Human Development Report was devoted to the theme of *expanding human freedoms in balance with the planet*. In line with this, and as speakers before have highlighted, the country is undertaking proactive measures to reduce emissions, vulnerability and enhance resilience in line with the Kenya Vision

2030 long-term development blueprint towards realization of balanced development.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Before the COVID 19 Pandemic, Kenya was at the threshold of a period of potentially accelerated development given the implementation of reforms in various sectors. The real GDP growth averaged 6% annually for the past five years, as Kenya begun to gradually realize its enormous potential. Indeed, the Government commitment to political and socio-economic reforms continued to stabilize the economy and promote social cohesion, helping Kenya maintain preeminent status as a regional economic powerhouse.

While growth in national production is absolutely necessary to meet all essential human objectives, what is important is to study how this growth translates - or fails to translate into a balance in human development and environmental conservation. Ecological economists are arguing increasingly that countries should consider developing and reporting measures of human well-being that better account for environmental and social costs of resource use.

Having achieved the middle-income status, efforts are now focused on a post COVID recovery strategy that will see the country spin back into the track of economic development. To do that, the country will need to jumpstart the stagnated sectors, provide more jobs for the youth, tackle corruption, forge strong partnerships with investors and development partners, and revamp

the declining tourism and agricultural sectors among other priority strategies.

Notably, the recovery strategy will prioritize policies, programs and projects which generate broad based inclusive economic growth, as well as foster job creation, reduce of poverty and inequality, take into account climate change impacts, and meet the 17 Sustainable Development Goals and the goals of African Union Agenda 2063.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Let us ponder on the question of whether economic growth is a threat to environment conservation. As you think about this, take keen consideration that economic growth may include the increased consumption of non-renewable resources, higher levels of pollution, global warming and the potential loss of environmental habitats.

In essence, environmental protection itself contributes to economic growth, and if well managed, better well being for the people. That said, the idea of sustainable development cannot be mere rhetoric; it must be accompanied by transparent, participatory mechanisms that allow for meaningful discussion of the development paths that make growth truly sustainable.

Ladies and Gentlemen

To ensure human development for everyone, the Report that we are launching here paints a picture of the challenges the world faces and the hopes humanity has for a better future. Whatever the nature or reach, these challenges have an impact on people's well-being in both present and future generations. That is why the calls for a just transformation that expands human freedoms while easing planetary pressures. I wish to note that the report organizes recommendations not around actors but around mechanisms for change—social norms and values, incentives and regulation, and nature-based human development. Arguably, each mechanism of change specifies multiple potential roles for each of us, for governments, for financial markets, for political and civil society leaders.

Ladies and gentlemen

It is my hope that as I officially launch the report in Kenya, implementation of the recommendations will accelerate Kenya's transition to net-zero emissions and improve long-term economic and financial prospects. I urge all stakeholders to continue forging new and strategic partnerships so as to bring afore new ideas and bolster financing for attainment of the agenda 2030. Let me reiterate that Government of Kenya appreciates the role of development partners in complementing the UN Agencies efforts towards the attainment of our National Development Agenda.

With these few remarks, I wish to proceed to Launch the 30th Global Human Development Report.