

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY HON. (AMB.) UKUR YATANI, EGH, CABINET SECRETARY, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING, DURING THE OPENING SESSION OF 2021 SDGS NATIONAL STAKEHOLDERS CONFERENCE HELD ON 15TH - 17TH DECEMBER 2021 AT LEISURE LODGE, DIANI.

Ambassadors Present;

Hon. Members of Parliament;

National Government Officials present;

Representatives from the Council of Governors and County Governments;

Representatives from the United Nation Agencies;

Development Partners Present;

Representatives from Private Sector;

Representatives from Civil Society Organizations;

Representatives from the Academia;

Representatives from Uganda and Tanzania;

Distinguished Guests;

All Protocols observed;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

First, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome you all to this conference. I am honoured by your presence today at this important engagement between the Government and key stakeholders in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. This year's conference, themed, "***Sustainable and Resilient Recovery: Accelerating implementation of SDGs in the Decade of Action***", is the fourth in a series of annual conferences since 2018. It comes at a time when the world is focusing on strategies for building back better a resilient and sustainable socio-economic development amidst the COVID-19 pandemic.

The main objective of this Conference is to come up with short-term, mid-term and long-term strategies that are necessary to both overcome the Pandemic and its impacts and put the Country back on track to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals by 2030.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am grateful to the many stakeholders including those from our neighboring counties who have come to share their experiences, knowledge, ideas and contributions towards the implementation of the SDGs. Your support and collaborative efforts have enabled us, as a country, to realize the SDGs and transform our Country into a more prosperous and inclusive society. We look forward to building back better through your support and collaboration going forward.

In recognition of the critical role played by various stakeholders in the implementation of SDGs, the National Treasury and Planning has a stakeholder engagement framework that guides engagement of various stakeholders in planning, monitoring and reporting on SDGs. This framework not only promotes stakeholder relations in the SDGs process, but also as a means to help build better relationships with our societies, ultimately resulting in improved livelihoods of Kenyans.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Since the adoption of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development, Kenya has recorded progress in a number of goals. According to the UN Sustainable Development Report 2021, Kenya is on track in the implementation of SDG 13 (Climate Action), and there is moderate improvement on SDG 1 (No Poverty), SDG 3 (Good Health and Well-being), SDG 5 (Gender Equality), SDG 7 (Affordable and Clean Energy), SDG 8 (Decent Work and Economic Growth), and SDG 9 (Industry, Innovation and Infrastructure). The report also points out that SDG 2 (Zero Hunger), SDG 6 (Clean Water and Sanitation), SDG 16

(peace), and SDG 17 (partnerships) are not progressing fast enough and are stagnating while SDGs 14 and 15 are facing major challenges and are decreasing.

SDGs implementation 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 gaps in terms of its quality, timeliness and level of disaggregation as well as absence of baseline data for some of the indicators among others. This requires concerted efforts by all in addressing these challenges.

Moving forward, more effort will be required to accelerate the SDGs that are stagnating and decreasing by coming up with solutions to address the various challenges that hamper the implementation of SDGs.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

As you aware, COVID-19 pandemic has cast a shadow in the implementation of the SDGs. The negative effects of COVID-19 Pandemic have precipitated socio-economic challenges that disrupted global supply chains, businesses and economies, eroding the consumer purchasing power. With the Pandemic still raging worldwide, the degree to which SDGs have been knocked further off track is not yet fully known. What is clear, however, is that the Pandemic has already had a very significant impact on many economies, thus undermining decades of development efforts. It has greatly affected lives and livelihoods particularly of the poor and vulnerable groups including women, older persons, youth and children, low wage earners, informal sector workers, Persons Living with Disability (PLWD) among others.

Therefore, we have to fundamentally focus on how to cushion and build resilience for the most vulnerable in our society to present and future shocks so as to ensure no one is left behind. More specifically, we must address the effect of this pandemic on women and girls who are most at risk.

We must make commitments to timely and effective assessment of the SDGs by carrying out rapid assessment or real time monitoring of SDGs. This is critical in ensuring that we adjust policies in good time so as to mitigate the impact of COVID-19. To achieve this, we call for stakeholders' cooperation and support in building capacity of our national statistics office to strengthen collection, analysis, and production of statistical data for SDGs monitoring.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

To mitigate the adverse impacts of COVID-19 Pandemic, the National and County Governments in collaboration with various stakeholders, have come up with a number of policies and strategies. These include; the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP), COVID-19 Economic Recovery Strategy (ERS), County COVID-19 Social Economic Re-engineering Recovery Strategy, and more recently the 2021/22 Budget Policy Statement.

All these measures are aimed at achieving an inclusive, sustainable and resilient recovery from the ravages of COVID-19 Pandemic and promote the economic, social and environmental dimensions of sustainable development, by building an inclusive and efficient path for the achievement of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

A number of recommendations were made from last year's conference. Among them was the sharing of experiences for peer learning in implementation of the SDGs. To this end, the State Department for Planning, in collaboration with Stakeholders, has developed guidelines for identification, documentation and sharing of SDGs good practices. The Guidelines will make selected practices systematically available to other stakeholders in SDGs process in order to avoid re-inventing the wheel. These Guidelines will support annual documentation and sharing of SDGs good practices among different stakeholders, hence accelerating implementation of SDGs in the Decade of Action.

Enhancement of advocacy and sensitization on SDGs was the other recommendation that informed initiatives undertaken by the State Department for Planning, on advocacy and sensitization on SDGs. These include induction of SDGs Contact officers responsible for SDGs mainstreaming in MDAs; development of SDGs website to enhance sharing of information on SDGs; dissemination of SDGs good practices guidelines; and facilitation of various national and county forums in collaboration with different stakeholders.

Further, the private Sector Decade of Action was launched in June 2021 to foster multi-stakeholder engagement as recommended during last year's forum. This would enable businesses to provide an extraordinary boost in realizing the SDGs through innovation, investment, a mass customer base and a global labour force.

The private sector is well-positioned to bring new solutions towards achieving the SDGs and their targets. Thanks to its 'on-the-ground' networks and its ability to swiftly adapt and innovate. Besides, the country has an opportunity to leverage on the resources, skills and knowledge of the private sector to accelerate implementation of SDGs in Kenya.

Inadequate financial resources to implement SDGs was identified as a critical challenge in SDGs implementation. Towards this, and as you may be aware, the Government has already embraced innovative forms of financing programmes and

projects. These include green climate financing mechanisms and digital finance. Alternative forms of development financing such as south-south and triangular cooperation, as well as public private partnerships have been explored towards realization of the SDGs among other reforms.

Ladies and Gentlemen;

It is imperative to come up with innovative strategies to accelerate the implementation of the SDG targets which are lagging behind. To this end, the State Department for Planning has initiated the development of SDGs acceleration strategy. This intervention coincides with recommendations from the 2019 SDGs summit where Heads of State and Governments made a political declaration that stressed the urgent need for concerted efforts, by all stakeholders at all levels, to achieve the 2030 Agenda for sustainable development. The same was echoed in the 2020 High Level Political Forum (HLPF).

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Finally, let me state that the Government of Kenya through the National Treasury and Planning remains committed to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development. We will therefore continue promoting open engagements 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 State Department for Planning SDGs Coordination Directorate, SDGs Kenya Forum, KEPSA, and all other stakeholders who have worked tirelessly and provided support for making this conference a success.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during the three (3) days of the conference.

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

God Bless You All

**HON. (AMB.) UKUR YATANI, EGH,
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