

**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY MR. JAMES MUHATI, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY,
STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, DURING THE
OPENING SESSION OF THE 2ND SYMPOSIUM FOR THE YOUTH IN
CLIMATE CHANGE ACTION, KENYA SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT,
NAIROBI ON 2ND FEBRUARY 2023**

Dr. Rose Ngugi, Executive Director, KIPPRA

**Representatives from Government Ministries, Departments and
Agencies**

Representatives from County Governments

Representatives from Youth-Led Organizations

Representatives from Non-Governmental Organizations

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning

It gives me great pleasure to be part of the 2nd “Youth in Climate Change Action Symposium”. This excellent initiative by KIPPRA avails a platform for the youth and Youth-led Organizations to engage with stakeholders in the climate change space, exchange views on youth in climate change action and explore potential areas for partnerships.

The theme, ***"Reflections from Cop27: Sustaining Youth Participation in Climate Adaptation for Africa's Growth"***, is timely given the prevailing severe drought in the Horn of Africa including Kenya. Indeed, the drought has led to loss of lives and devastation of affected families.

Kenya is committed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC) that came into force in 1994. The Country is a key player in the global climate change governance system and participates in meetings of the Conference of the Parties. The Government acknowledges the critical role

played by the youth in climate mitigation and adaptation thus the need for their continued involvement in the climate action discourse.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Government is committed to mobilizing all citizens to plant 15 billion trees by the year 2032, translating to 300 trees per person annually. Towards this end, His Excellency the President launched a tree planting drive in December 2022 as part of His Climate Change Mitigation Agenda. It is noteworthy that the youth comprise 75 percent of Kenya's population and have a key role to play in helping the Government achieve the above target. I therefore urge youth and youth-led organizations to partner with the Government in this noble agenda.

Furthermore, the Government has made efforts to promote sustainable development through promotion of circular economy; banning of single-use plastic bags; promotion of environmentally sustainable use as well as recycling of plastics. The circular economy provides a variety of opportunities for the youth including waste recycling, research, and development for new circular economy business models and technologies.

In addition, the Government promotes appropriate technologies for delivery of adaptation and mitigation actions, such as water harvesting, climate information services, and clean lighting and cooking technologies. The youth are well known for technological innovations and by their contribution towards enhanced technological capability of the Country. This is a valuable tool in delivery of climate change strategies and must therefore be supported.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Government through support from the World Bank is implementing a 10-year Financing Locally Led Climate Action Program. The program objective is to strengthen local resilience to the impact of climate change, natural hazards, and other shocks. The program is geared towards building local capacity to

plan, budget, implement and monitor resilience of investments in a way that promotes collaborative partnerships between communities, national and county governments. Ninety percent of funding from the program is spent at county and community levels to ensure that support for climate resilience reaches those most at risk, including women, youth, Persons with Disability, the elderly, and other traditionally marginalized groups. This program presents an opportunity for the youth-led Community Based Organizations (CBOs) working on climate action to secure funding for their climate change activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Constitution of Kenya, the Kenya Vision 2030, the National Climate Change Action Plan (2018-2022), and Kenya National Adaptation Plan (2015-2030) recognize the importance of mainstreaming youth into the countries development agenda. The National Climate Change Action Plan 2018-2022 provides for youth engagement and outlines specific actions to be taken to involve young people in the implementation of the plan. These actions include building capacity of the youth on climate change issues, engaging youth in decision-making related to climate change, encouraging youth to participate in national and international climate change negotiations, and promoting youth participation in the green economy.

Youth-led organizations in climate change action are engaged in several activities such as research, capacity building, community engagement, and monitoring and evaluation of adaptation and mitigation projects. The organizations play an important role in community engagement activities, such as awareness-raising and community mobilization, to ensure that adaptation actions are relevant and responsive to the needs of different communities. Youth are also crucial in the implementation of adaptation activities such as tree planting, sustainable energy initiatives as well as in research and innovation to identify new and innovative ways of adapting to climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

That being said, building youth capacity to facilitate youth-led organizations to effectively contribute to climate change action programmes and projects remains a priority. Of importance is building capacity on governance, financial management, project management and risk management. These are essential in empowering the youth organizations to be effective in their climate change activities. The Government is committed to playing its role in building capacity for the youth including through training, mentorship, research, as well as providing opportunities for participation in decision-making process, and facilitating collaboration with other organizations and individuals working on climate change action.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As I conclude, let me reiterate the need for enhanced collaboration between the Government, youth-led organizations, and all other stakeholders towards combating climate change and increasing the resilience of the Country. This is critical in restoring the environment and transitioning Kenya to a green economy.

Finally, I applaud KIPPRA for supporting the youth by organizing this symposium which provides a platform for the youth to showcase their untapped potential in climate action. I also urge other agencies and organizations in the Climate Action space to emulate KIPPRA and support youth-led initiatives.

Distinguished Guest, Ladies and Gentlemen

With those remarks, it is my singular honor and pleasure to declare this symposium officially opened. I wish you fruitful deliberations.

God bless You