



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE NATIONAL TREASURY

REMARKS BY BONFACE B. MAKOKHA, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY, STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ECONOMIC PLANNING, DURING THE 4TH CHINA-AFRICA CONFERENCE ON 19TH NOVEMBER 2025 WESTON HOTEL NAIROBI.

Principal Secretaries present

The Ambassador of China in Kenya

Board Chair, National Council for Population and Development

Board Members, National Council for Population and Development

Director General NCPD, Dr. Mohamed Sheikh

Chief Executive Officers present

Development Partners present

All invited guests

It is a great honour for me to join this distinguished gathering at the China–Africa Conference on Population and Development, where we reflect on how health, our most essential component of human capital, can enable sustainable and inclusive population development across our two regions. On behalf of the Government of Kenya, **Karibuni sana, Welcome.**

Allow me to commend the Government of the People’s Republic of China, and the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) for their collaboration with Kenya in convening this timely dialogue.

Distinguished Guests,

China has been a steadfast partner in Africa's development journey. The Forum on China–Africa Cooperation (FOCAC) has provided a valuable platform to deepen collaboration in areas such as health systems, infrastructure, industrialization, human capital development and poverty reduction.

Over the years, Kenya and China have built a robust relationship grounded in shared goals and mutual respect. This partnership has translated into significant infrastructure projects, enhanced trade relations, and capacity-building initiatives such as training of African medical professionals, joint research and health technology transfer; and support for public health interventions during pandemics and emergencies, among others. This initiative has propelled our economy forward.

As we engage in this conference, we envision even deeper cooperation between China and Africa in the following areas:

- Strengthening national statistics systems and demographic data sharing for evidence-based policy;
- Scaling up joint programs to enhance access to quality reproductive health commodities and services;
- Leveraging China's experience in technical and vocational training to equip African youth for the modern economy;
- Learning from China's urban management to guide Africa's rapidly expanding urban centers; and
- Promoting digital tools for health, education, and population data management.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The COVID-19 pandemic exposed vulnerabilities in our health and social systems, but it also demonstrated the strength of international solidarity. Kenya appreciates China's support in health cooperation, capacity building, and technology transfer during and after the pandemic.

In this regard, I once again commend China's support for Africa's health sector and the ongoing cooperation through public health institutions, capacity building, and vaccine technology transfer.

Kenya's Human Development Index (HDI) stands at 0.628 as per recent data in 2023/24. While this ranking places us in the "medium human development"

category it's lower than in many other medium-developed countries. There is therefore need for sustained collaborations so that this is improved further

We must continue to build resilient health systems, strengthen social protection mechanisms, and integrate population issues into climate adaptation and environmental policies. The challenges of our time; climate change, migration, and inequality require a coordinated, people-centered approach.

Distinguished Guests,

Population is not merely about numbers, it is about people: their aspirations, their dignity, and their right to thrive. As policymakers, we must ensure that every child born grows up with access to education, healthcare, opportunities among access to other rights.

Africa stands at a historic demographic crossroad. Our continent's population is young, vibrant, and full of potential. By 2050, one in every four people in the world will be African. This demographic reality presents us with an unprecedented opportunity; **the demographic dividend BUT** only if we invest wisely in our people.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya recognizes that population and development are inseparable from health and human capital. We have made significant progress in expanding access to reproductive health services, reducing maternal and child mortality, and promoting gender equality.

Our National Population Policy for Sustainable Development (2023) emphasizes empowering women and youth, ensuring access to family planning, and strengthening population data for planning and decision-making.

These efforts are aligned with the International Conference on Population and Development (ICPD) Programme of Action, and we remain committed to its principles, putting people first, promoting human rights, and leaving no one behind.

As the State Department for Economic Planning, we recognize that health cannot be addressed in isolation. Achieving the demographic dividend requires coordinated investment across sectors; health, education, labour, agriculture, and infrastructure, all anchored on sound economic planning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Kenya stands ready to work closely with our Chinese partners, fellow African nations, and global institutions to ensure that population and development remain central to the global sustainable development agenda. Together, let us build a future where demographic potential becomes demographic power, a future where every person counts, and every nation prospers.

The future we seek will be built through deliberate policies and partnerships that recognize people, not as numbers, but as the drivers of change. Together, China and Africa can build societies where every child is educated, every woman is empowered, every youth is employed, and every citizen has access to quality healthcare and a sustainable environment.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let us reaffirm our commitment to the principles of the ICPD and the Sustainable Development Goals. Let us strengthen the South–South cooperation as a bridge to prosperity for our peoples.

I once again express my gratitude to the Government of the People’s Republic of China, for their hospitality and leadership. May this conference deepen the bonds of cooperation between China and Africa, and reaffirm our shared commitment to sustainable, inclusive, and people-centered development.

Thank You. Asanteni sana.