



**MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND WILDLIFE
OFFICE OF THE CABINET SECRETARY**

STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF TOURISM AND WILDLIFE, HON. NAJIB BALALA, EGH, ON WORLD NATURE CONSERVATION DAY

Nature Conservation is of utmost importance to all living things and especially to human beings-the most destructive of all creatures on earth. The air we breathe, the water we drink, the food we eat, the land we step on, etc. are all part of nature. When we look around, nature surrounds us from every corner. That is why the 28th of July is set aside to commemorate World Nature Conservation Day. On this day, people are made aware of the significance of natural resources and encouraged to pick up practices that utilize natural resources sustainably.

In Kenya, natural resource range from forests, wetlands, dry-lands, aquatic and marine resources. Most of these natural resources are what tourists flock to see in our country. So, as the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife, it is vital for us to recognize this day and that is why our vision is to have '**A vibrant and innovative tourism industry supported by sustainable wildlife resources.**' This is key in ensuring that Kenya is not only a world class tourist destination, but also a global role model towards the transition to a Green Economy.

Out of the 17 Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), 7 of them are directly linked to nature. The 7 goals are:

- Goal 6: Clean Water and Sanitation
- Goal 7: Affordable and Clean Energy
- Goal 11: Sustainable Cities and Communities
- Goal 12: Responsible Consumption and Production
- Goal 13: Climate Action
- Goal 14: Life Below Water
- Goal 15: Life on Land

As a Ministry, we have taken a number of measures to ensure that the above goals are reached and that we contribute to a sustainable environment. One of the measures we have taken is the implementation of the ban on single use plastics. On 5th July 2020, the Ministry banned the use of single-use plastics in all our protected areas including beaches, national parks, forests and conservation areas. This goes to show that we are in the forefront of promoting sustainable tourism and conservation of our natural resources.

A clean environment is not a one man's job. It is a job for all of us. It is one thing for the government to put something into law, it's another for us to enforce it. I urge all Kenyans to ensure that we have a major paradigm shift on how we handle our natural resources. A healthy environment is key to a healthy and sustainable nation. Therefore, it is our duty to ensure that we have an environment that is safe and clean for all.

Some of the threats that nature faces are; illegal wildlife trade, pollution, chemicals, plastic use, deforestation and many other factors. It is therefore important that we protect nature and keep these threats to a bare minimum, in this way, we will have conserved our natural resources for posterity.

Some of the measures that we can adopt to conserve our natural resources are; planting more trees, use of alternative energy such as solar, wind power and proper use of water by avoiding wastage, and usage of recyclable products etc.

The late Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wangari Maathai said, "You cannot protect the environment unless you empower people, you inform them, and you help them understand that these resources are their own and that they must protect them." It is therefore the duty of each one of us to educate ourselves on nature, and look for ways of conserving natural resources without inflicting any harm on them.

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