



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT BY CABINET SECRETARY DURING THE  
COMMEMORATION OF 50 YEARS OF UNEP AND THE 50<sup>TH</sup>  
ANNIVERSARY OF THE UNITED NATIONS CONFERENCE ON THE  
HUMAN ENVIRONMENT**

**Madam President of the Conference and Chairperson;**

**Honorable Ministers,**

**Executive Director of the United Nations Environment  
Programme, Ms. Inger Andersen**

**Representative of the African Union Commission;**

**Distinguished participants,**

**Ladies and gentlemen;**

1. Let me begin by thanking UNEP Secretariat led by the Regional Office for Africa for the outstanding preparations and organization of this conference, being held virtually under the theme “**Securing People’s Well-being and Ensuring Environmental Sustainability in Africa**”. In addition, I pass my sincere gratitude to all the experts who have been involved in the excellent preparatory work for the meeting, and especially for convening this special session to discuss UNEP @50 commemoration and Stockholm +50 process.
2. We take note of the exceptional circumstance in which we have had to converge. The COVID- 19 pandemic continues to ravage the world over, and in the process, there has been an unpredictability on when physical meetings can resume. This pandemic has become the defining global health crisis and hence as we commemorate UNEP @50 the idea that a thriving natural world is essential to human health, societies and economies which has always been central to the work of UNEP must be re-emphasized.
3. It is in this premise that the Government of Kenya shares the objective that UNEA 5.2 and UNEP @ 50 should be held in an in- person format. We are seized to follow closely the situation of COVID- 19 in the country and will continually provide updates regarding the related guidelines and protocols of holding such meetings. However, given the situation at the time, a well-defined hybrid format could be considered.

## **Honorable Ministers;**

4. Commemorations of UNEP @ 50 will be a time to reflect on the past decades and noting the critical role UNEP has played in successes of environmental governance particularly in multilateral agreements and for being the environmental conscience of the UN and the world. Further, envisioning the future amid existing and emerging challenges

5. During the kickoff event of commemorating UNEP @ 50, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta underscored the importance of the event in light of the myriad environmental challenges of climate crisis, loss of biodiversity, land degradation, pollution and waste threats and the need to address the soaring levels of environmental degradation, food insecurity, poverty and unemployment. The commemoration only serves to remind us the critical role a clean, healthy and sustainably used environment serves humanity.

6. The government of Kenya is committed to ensuring that the UNEP @50 commemoration which will take place in Nairobi will be a successful one, with the focus on implementation and the strengthening of the UNEP Headquarter function here. We look forward to working together with other collaborating stakeholders in making UNEP in Nairobi once again the only global authority on environment.

7. We take note of the fact that Algeria will be representing Africa in the Committee of Permanent Representatives Bureau, and as such we will work closely in preparation for the UNEP @50 commemoration. In that regard, we urge that Africa insist on preparing a theme for the celebrations that focuses on implementation and strengthening of UN headquarter function in Nairobi, Kenya.

**Madam Chairperson;**

**Distinguished Participants;**

8. Recalling that it was agreed during UNEA 5.1 that throughout 2021 until the resumption of the second part of UNEA, the UNEP @50 commemoration would be given prominence in conjunction with high profile multilateral environmental meetings of the high- level political forum on sustainable development and of multilateral environmental agreements.

9. Together with other Ministries and State Agencies, the government is initiating several topical areas in which we can base the different meetings, independently or on the sidelines of other high- level meetings. We will be seeking partnerships with member states and diverse stakeholders in these events which are aimed at creating awareness and encouraging wider participation. This is in tandem with the communication and outreach plans for the commemoration.

10. Kenya would wish to expand and lead on other fronts in pursuance of SDGs and to reinvigorate the role of UNEP in environmental governance specifically in;

- a. Ecosystem, biodiversity and protection of nature
- b. Environment, industrialization and biodiversity
- c. Blue Economy
- d. Science technology and innovation and
- e. Combating desertification

11. We urge all stakeholders to work in close cooperation to ensure a successful commemoration and an impactful outcome. This is a grand opportunity that we have to celebrate the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary since the establishment of UNEP, and especially under the UNEA presidency of Africa. It is the time that we enhance our togetherness and champion for the only UN headquarter in the global south and make Nairobi stronger and more visible.

**Madam Chairperson;**

**Distinguished guests;**

12. Kenya and Sweden have been working together on the Stockholm +50 process since the beginning, and it has been a long way coming. We express our gratitude for the efforts that both our teams and UNEP have put in, to make the high level meeting all inclusive. As we approach the finish line, we insist that its complementarity to the UNEP @50 process is shown, and the continued support from UNEP, UNEA and CPR in Nairobi is included. Kenya, both in Nairobi and New York continues to give its support as the co- facilitator.

13. As I conclude, I wish to thank you madam chair and all participating Ministers and their representatives. May we have a successful session and a promising outcome. I am honored to be given this opportunity to speak, and look forward to welcoming you all in Nairobi.

THANK YOU