



Republic of Kenya

REMARKS BY HON. MWANGI KIUNJURI, EGH, MGH, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE AND IRRIGATION DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2ND KENYA NATIONAL CONSERVATION AGRICULTURE CONFERENCE AT SAFARI PARK HOTEL ON TUESDAY 17TH APRIL 2018

Your Excellency, the Deputy President of Republic of Kenya, Hon. William Samoei Ruto

FAO Representative to Kenya Mr. Gabriel Rugalema

European Union-Head of Delegation Mr. Perr Hubert

Chair of Agriculture committee –Council of Governors, H.E Governor Okoth Obado

Chair of the Org. Committee and Principal Secretary, Crop - Dr. Richard Lesiyampe

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you here today to officially open this year's 2nd National Conservation Conference. The event provides the opportunity for farmers, agro-industry players, service providers and other stakeholders in the agriculture sector to showcase innovations and technologies and also to engage in business networking.

The Conference is also a platform for stakeholders to engage on matters of conservation agriculture ; formulate a practical roadmap and an action plan on how we should scale it up.

Your Excellency,

Allow me to make a few comments on the theme of this year's Conference which is **"Scaling up Conservation Agriculture to sustainably contribute to 100% Food and Nutrition Security"**. This theme puts particular emphasis on agriculture sector's goal of achieving 100% food and nutrition security which a key pillar of the Government's Big 4 Agenda.

The aspirations in Kenya Vision 2030, which aim at transforming our economic status "into a newly-industrialized, middle-income country" and the agriculture sector strategy that the Ministry will soon be sharing envisages a transformed and modernized agriculture sector as a pathway towards this status.

I call on all of you here today and all other agriculture sector players and stakeholders to double their efforts and work together in the development and promotion of viable innovations and appropriate sustainable technologies for this sector.

Your Excellency,

Allow me to make a few observations about the sector including some of the initiatives that the sector players have contributed to, to spur rapid growth in agriculture. First, I wish to state that good agricultural performance has enabled Kenya show resilient growth over the past six (6) years with the growth rate improving from 5.6% in 2015 to an expected rise to 6.5% in 2018.

Agriculture sector remains the largest contributor to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) directly contributing about 26% and another 25% indirectly. The sector further accounts for over 65% of Kenya's total exports, and provides 18% of formal and 60% of total employment respectively. It also contributes 60% of Kenya's income and supports over 80% of the rural population.

Indeed, the economies of most of Kenya's 47 Counties depend on agriculture. Given the sector's critical role, I would like to appeal to all the sector players to put more resources and investments in the sector so as to sustain and create new momentum to achieve the sector goals and more importantly to contribute to the BIG 4 agenda.

Your Excellency,

The country has recently been facing some challenges including the impact of climate change and emerging pests such as the Fall Army Worm. As a country we must therefore make choices that can withstand such challenges. Climate smart agriculture is the way to go. This must include adoption of mitigation measures and practices such as:

- Conservation agriculture,
- Use of drought tolerant crops/pastures varieties,
- Water harvesting,
- Conservation and management,
- Integrated soil fertility management and
- Strengthened early warning systems for disaster preparedness.

It is important therefore that we gather here today, to explore together how we can deepen and scale up one of these climate smart practices - conservation agriculture. Let us make Kenya smart by playing our respective roles effectively in pushing the adoption of Conservation Agriculture a lot further.

With these few remarks, I now have the pleasure to welcome H.E the Deputy President to officially open this year's **2nd Kenya national conservation agriculture conference.**