

TALKING NOTES FOR PROF NJUGUNA NDUNG’U, CABINET SECRETARY, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND ECONOMIC PLANNING, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE NATIONAL TREE GROWING RESTORATION CAMPAIGN IN KIAMBOGO, GETA WARD, KIPIPIRI SUB-COUNTY, NYANDARUA COUNTY ON WEDNESDAY 21ST DECEMBER, 2022

- The National Tree Growing Restoration Campaign is a national project initiated by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. (Dr.) William Ruto, as part of planting and restoring

tree cover to 10.6 million hectares of environmentally degraded areas;

- This programme seeks to plant approximately 15 billion trees in five years. Today, each of the 47 Counties participating in this launch will plant a minimum of 5600 trees, provided by the Kenya Forest Services;
- When completed, in the five-year period, this programme will improve tree cover improve to over 30%;
- I am glad that Nyandarua has a tree cover of approximately 27% which is among the highest in the Country. I urge the County to expand this cover to even surpass the national set target of 30%;

- Kenya is a critical player in the regional and global environment and conservation, and hosts the headquarters of UNEP hence must take a leading role in mitigating against effects of climate change and global warming through proactive approaches and programmes like this;
- Further, as a member of the Global South nations, which have become most affected by these effects – through drought and resultant fiscal pressures and conflicts – we have an obligation to work towards restoring our environment and forest/ tree cover;
- This programme is also in line with the resolutions of the CoP 27 (Conference of Parties) - and the previous 26 conferences - which

seeks to slow down global warming and escalating effects of climate change by cutting down on Green House Gases and also creating carbon sinks through planting and conserving trees; The world has become warmer by 1.5 degrees.

- Mitigating against climate change is both a collective and individual responsibility; effects of climate change continue to ravage across regions and our country is just coming out of a debilitating drought which has claimed lives of people and livestock, while at the same time threatening livelihoods of millions of Kenyans. Therefore, climate change is no longer a foreign concept but a real phenomenon with us at individual and societal level; In fact, food security and

climate change has become a critical pillar in our development discourse.

We have seen how poverty, inequality and social conflict has increased with drought.

- This programme, while environmental in nature, has major economic effects – in the long-term – because resources which would otherwise have been devoted to drought mitigation will go into other sustainable economic activities;
- But it is also a conflict-prevention mechanism where restoration of the environment and mitigation of its resultant calamities, like droughts and competition for pasture and water, will help in

preventing climate-driven conflicts between communities, and between human and wildlife. This exercise is therefore a natural restorative mechanism which is also in line with the SDGs on sustainable and clean environments - both as a human development intervention as well as a human rights issue;

- I urge Kenyans to continue this exercise beyond the launch and indemnify the future generations against the climate conflicts and threats which result from climate change effects and rise in global temperatures. We must make planting trees and reclaiming back our environment a patriotic duty of every citizen.

- But above, we have to nurture the trees we plant today so that they grow. The next time we will choose a new location.