



**WELCOME SPEECH BY REPRESENTATIVE OF THE HON.
MINISTER IN CHARGE OF MINING, FISHERIES, BLUE
ECONOMY, AND MARITIME AFFAIRS IN KENYA**

THE NATIONAL CONSULTATIVE WORKSHOP TO DEVELOP A
MASTERPLAN FOR SUSTAINABLE COASTAL, MARINE TOURISM
AND MINING ACTIVITIES AS WELL AS STRENGTHEN
REGULATORY FRAMEWORKS TOWARDS AQUATIC
BIODIVERSITY CONSERVATION AND ECOSYSTEMS IN KENYA

22-24 March 2023
NAIROBI, KENYA

- ✓ AU-IBAR Ag. DIRECTOR, Dr. Nick Nwankpa/Representative
- ✓ Directors/Representatives of various Ministries, Departments and Agencies in Kenya
- ✓ The Private sectors
- ✓ Non-state actors
- ✓ Experts / Consultants
- ✓ Distinguished participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good morning to you all!

I have the honour and privilege to welcome all of you to this very special, first and one of its kind "***National consultative workshop to develop a masterplan for sustainable coastal, marine tourism and mining activities as well as strengthen regulatory frameworks towards aquatic biodiversity conservation and ecosystems in***

Kenya". Firstly, on behalf of the ministry and indeed the government of Kenya, I sincerely appreciate and congratulate AU-IBAR and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) for this magnanimous initiative to support blue economy growth endeavors in Kenya.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

This meeting comes at a time when the Government has embraced and institutionalized blue economy at national level with integrated approach into planning and development and taken continental leadership in promoting blue economy development initiative. The initiative was manifested by Kenya in collaboration with the governments of France and Canada to jointly organize the first Sustainable Global Blue Economy Conference in Kenya in November 2018.

Kenya has expansive beaches and coastal lines protected by the continental shelf, which are very attractive to tourists from all over the world. Coastal tourism is one of Kenya's most important industries, and has strong economic linkages with transport, food production, hospitality and entertainment that create jobs and generate income. The country also has a range of attractions for recreational activities including Sportfishing, skydiving at Diani Beach, snorkelling at Malindi, windsurfing, Kite surfing etc. There are also abundant wildlife inhabiting in natural habitats, national parks, and game reserves. With good climate, beautiful geographical landscapes, Kenya prides herself for natural heritages and therefore has a duty to protect, preserve, conserve and effectively manage them. The natural resources contribute immensely to the economic development of the country. For instance; in 2021, travel and tourism contributed 5.4 billion U.S. dollars to Kenya's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) significantly with multiplier effect to a block chain of economic and social activities.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Additionally, Kenya recently discovered oil fields and vast minerals including rare earth metals which are now potential resource for contributing to socio-economic development of the country. The government has engaged development partners in the oil and gas industry that are exploring and exploiting these natural resources. Economically, it's estimated that revenues from oil and gas are likely to grow exponentially. With continued effort to explore and extract oil and gas from Kenya's oil blocks in Turkana and Lamu progressively, the country requires proper planning by way of a master plan in order for the resources to be sustainable in the long-term. The exploration and exploitation of oil reserves need to be conducted in sustainable fashion to avoid or minimize the impact of pollution on the environment and biodiversity.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm glad to inform you that coastal tourism and mining activities both stimulate infrastructure development accelerating socio-economic growth by increasing the number of available jobs in the sectors, both directly and indirectly. However, the sectors need to be climate resilient and environmentally friendly. The threats elevated to aquatic biodiversity include urban development and resource-based industries, such as mining, coastal tourism activities, plastic pollution, coastal infrastructure development that destroy or reduce natural habitats; and also, oil and gas exploration where oil deposits have been discovered in highly productive water bodies (e.g. at coastal continental shelves, fishing grounds and the deep-sea areas of the Exclusive Economic Zones (EEZ). It is also critically important to consider the livelihoods of the communities to ensure that the development of tourism and mining activities do not negatively impact on their livelihoods. Therefore, in general, I implore upon delegates at this meeting to consider priority actions for the protection of

communities as well as the benefits that should accrue to the communities from the tourism development and mining activities.

And, in particular, the delegates to take note, that the development and operations of coastal and marine tourism, oil and gas exploration, in addition to threats to aquatic biodiversity, should take into consideration the threats to women's livelihoods and the imperative need to safeguard the vulnerable and marginalized groups. This course of action requires implementing adequate policies and providing compensation schemes.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In line with Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 14 and the African Union African Blue Economy Strategy, the conservation and sustainably use of the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development should be underpinned in national and regional development priorities. Hence, this meeting is a positive STEP towards protecting the most vulnerable aquatic biodiversity and ecosystems for our sustainable development objectives.

Kenya has existing policies and regulatory frameworks that guide the operations in the blue economy related sectors (tourism, fisheries, Aquaculture, energy and mining). With anticipated gaps in these policies, this meeting should therefore identify priority issues and actions for sustainable tourism and mining activities. The outcomes of today's meeting will help to strengthen the existing policies and regulatory frameworks in these sectors generally considered as critical vectors for sustainable blue economy development.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you undertake to deliberate in today's meeting, I bestow my trust in you that all the issues you identify, the priority actions you will recommend for sound policy and regulatory guidelines for coastal, marine tourism and mining activities must be those that truly reflect

the enabling conditions in the context of environmental sustainability and aquatic biodiversity conservation for effective use now and for the future generations.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Finally, I urge the private sector and all investors in the tourism and mining sectors in the discussion today, to endeavor to leverage on several Government-led programmes and policies that take cognizant of the environmental concerns to not only aquatic biodiversity but also humanity while conducting their businesses. Consequently, the private sector must therefore support government's effort to sound policy and regulatory frameworks that allow the sectors to remain sustainable.

Distinguished participants, Ladies and Gentlemen,

In conclusion, allow me to express my appreciation to AU-IBAR and SIDA for choosing Kenya to organize this National consultative meeting in Nairobi as well as all the delegates that are present here this morning. We are very much indebted for your commitment. On behalf of the Minister in charge of the Blue economy, fisheries, mining and maritime affairs and on behalf of the Government of Kenya, I sincerely wish you fruitful deliberations and hereby declare this meeting officially Open!

Thank you for your attention.