



SPEECH DELIVERED BY PROF. WILSON KIPNGENO, DURING WORLD ENVIRONMENT DAY HELD AT UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA ON 15TH JUNE, 2022

Mr. Victor Nyaga; CEO Lake Region Economic Bloc

Deputy Vice-Chancellors,

Members from all institutions,

Students from all institutions,

Various entrepreneurs,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I'm most delighted this morning as we mark World Environment Day which is the United Nations day of encouraging awareness and action for the protection of the environment. It is celebrated annually on 5th June since 1974.

This year's celebrations fall within the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration (2021-2030), a global mission to revive billions of hectares, from forests to farmlands, from the top of mountains to the depth of the sea. The World Environment Day boosts growing global movement to restore damaged ecosystems and is an opportunity for youth movement to rise and fight poverty, global warming and live in harmony with nature.

The majority of Kenya's tea-growing regions are found in the Kenyan Highlands, on both sides of the Great Rift Valley. To the western side, Lake Region Economic Bloc made of 14 Counties, from which nine (9) have large areas under tea crop. The Bloc is dominated by a youthful population with low employment rate. The Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) has tea factories in all tea growing regions, and through KTDA Foundation continues to heavily invest in corporate social investments.

The World Environment Day 2022 global campaign, under the hash tag: #OnlyOneEarth, calls for transformative changes to policies and choices to enable cleaner, greener, and sustainable living in harmony with nature. It focuses on the need to live sustainably in harmony with nature, and our possibilities for shifting to a greener lifestyle through both policies and individual choices.

In this context, KTDA Foundation is mobilizing partners to commemorate World Environment Day at University of Kabianga Main Campus by hosting a seminar and exhibition under the theme: ***Empowering Youth in Tea Growing Communities for Successful Green Entrepreneurship in the Lake Region Economic Bloc***

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The seminar aims to foster an exchange among stakeholders policy makers, development partners, the private sector, youth and women organizations, civil society organizations, research and academia on knowledge and best practices regarding youth employment in green entrepreneurship from strengthening existing initiatives and developing new ones, the business enabling environment, the development of business and job opportunities, and to the role of young people in sustainable green business. The discussion will focus on the most effective ways to support and empower youth, enabling them to contribute to and benefit from sustainable green entrepreneurship on the following major themes:

A. Youths' role in transitioning to Clean Cooking

This dialogue will focus on how the young workforce can support the clean cooking transition in the Lake Region Economic Bloc.

B. Innovations to overcome agriculture value-chain related constraints

This will focus on technological solutions that support youth-related innovation and modern production technologies in agriculture/agribusiness.

C. Future of youth in green entrepreneurship

The seminar will culminate with a dialogue on a framework and roadmap that will transform work for youth in green

businesses and share the future of work we want. This lays a broad framework and course of action towards steering the course of future interventions and a call to action to the National and County governments on the future of youth in green entrepreneurship.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Other side events parallel to the seminar will include:

A. Exhibition of innovative products and services

This is in line with the theme by youth and youth-led organizations from across Kenya that will be organized, as well as a networking/match making space for the youth and potential investors.

B. Experts Round Table

This will be jointly organized by University of Kabianga which is the LREB Research and Outreach Centre of Excellence in Water, Environment and Climate Change. The overall purpose of the side event is to exchange lessons and experiences on what is working in various counties in the LREB block and how to possibly replicate it in other counties.

C. Exhibition Partners

True stories of Entrepreneurship & employment by:

- a. Former students
- b. Forestry and Agro Forestry Entrepreneurs
- c. Improved cook Stove Entrepreneurs

- d. Organic Farming Entrepreneurs
- e. Waste Recycling Entrepreneurs
- f. Agri-business Entrepreneurs (Value-addition)
- g. KTDA Managed Factories

Ladies and Gentlemen,

With the foregoing remarks, it is now my humble duty to declare this World Environment Day commemoration celebrated here at UoK officially opened.

Thank you and may God bless us all as we endeavor towards green and cleaner environment.

PROF. WILSON KIPNGENO, (Ph.D., MBS)
VICE-CHANCELLOR
UNIVERSITY OF KABIANGA