



Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization

REMARKS BY THE DIRECTOR GENERAL, KENYA AGRICULTURAL AND LIVESTOCK RESEARCH ORGANIZATION (KALRO) DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH OF THE KENYA NATIONAL STRATEGY ON GENETIC RESOURCES IN THE CONTEXT OF CLIMATE CHANGE AT THE HOTEL INTERCONTINENTAL ON 27th JANUARY 2016

The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries

The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Mineral Resources

The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Water and Irrigation

Principal Secretaries of Various Ministries

Members of the Diplomatic Corps

Team Leader-Energy, Environment and Climate Change Unit at UNDP Kenya,

Government Officials and Research Scientists,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I would like to welcome you all to this auspicious occasion of the launch of the first Kenya national strategy on genetic resources within the context of climate change.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Kenya's economy is depended on the natural resource base making it highly vulnerable to climate change and variability. This has been exhibited through rising temperatures, and changing rainfall patterns resulting in increased frequency and intensity of extreme weather events such as droughts and flooding hence threatening sustainability of the country's development. Indeed over the last 50 years, the meteorological records have shown increased irregularity and variability in rainfall patterns often posing potential negative impacts on people and their livelihoods. Climate change has resulted in increased variability and intensity of drought and floods, higher temperatures, loss of biodiversity and increased incidents of pests and diseases. Extreme climate and climate variability are already affecting the production of and access to food for different social groups thus rendering domestic agriculture less effective in meeting nutrition and food security needs. The adverse impact of climate change have the potential to significantly negatively impact on the sustainable development of key priority areas not only in Kenya but globally. This calls for urgent collective action by all stakeholders to institute climate change mitigation and adaptation strategies.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The call to action now is to mobilize support and resources to combat the effects of climate change. Towards this end KALRO has focused its efforts through one of its semi-autonomous institutes; the Genetic Resources Research Institute (GeRRI). GeRRI's core function is the *ex situ* and *in situ* conservation of genetic resources for the country and mankind. Currently, GeRRI houses the only long term *ex situ* conservation facility in the country. The Genebank currently holds a repository of 50 000 plant accessions representing 165 families and 893 genera and close to 2000 species.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To effectively mobilize support in conserving and utilizing genetic resources, GeRRI and its partners have developed a national strategy on genetic resources within the context of climate change. The strategy outlines constraints and opportunities and suggests mitigation and adaptation strategies against climate change impacts. We as KALRO would like to call upon our development partners, ministries involved in the management and/use of plant genetic resources and other partners to provide support in operationalizing the strategy being launched today.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

On behalf of KALRO, and on my own behalf, I would like to thank the Benefit Sharing Fund (BSF) of the International Treaty for Plant Genetic Resources and UNDP-Kenya for supporting the development of this strategy. It is this support that has ensured that the first ever national strategy for genetic resources in Kenya has seen the light of day.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my honour and pleasure to invite the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries to make his remarks and officially launch the strategy.

Thank you