

**THE SPEECH FOR THE DIRECTOR GENERAL KALRO, DR ELIUD KIREGER DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 1<sup>ST</sup> AFRICAN TEA SCIENCE SYMPOSIUM AND EXHIBITION ON 23<sup>RD</sup> MAY 2016 AT ENASHIPAI HOTEL – NAIVASHA**

---

**The Cabinet Secretary MoALF:** Willy Bett

**Principal Secretary MoALF:** Dr. Richard Lesiyampe, CBS

**H.E. Governor Nakuru County:** Mr Kinuthia Mbugua

**H.E. Governor Meru County and Chairman of Council of Governors:** Peter Munya

**H.E. Ambassador Republic of Malawi:** Perks Ligowa

**Head of Trade and Markets Division, FAO-IGG on Tea:** Kaison Chang

**Distinguished Symposium participants**

**Ladies and gentlemen**

It is a privilege for our country Kenya to host for the first time the 1<sup>st</sup> African Tea Science Symposium and Exhibition. I want to welcome all the delegates to this symposium as a precursor to the 22<sup>nd</sup> session of the FAO –IGG Conference on Tea.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

The tea in Kenya is the leading agricultural crop in foreign exchange earnings and a source of livelihood to more than 700,000 households and several others along the tea value chain. Kenya's tea is grown in 18 Counties with altitudes ranging between 1500 to 2700 metres above sea level, with mean temperatures of 16 °C mostly by small scale farmers.

Small-scale farms managed by KTDA account for 61% of the national output while the large estates under KTGA account for 39%. The annual growth of the industry is 5 – 7% hence, it is a critical driver of the economic pillar under Kenya's Vision 2030, and contributes to poverty reduction, employment creation and infrastructural development.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

In 2015, the tea industry earned **Ksh 125 Billion** from exports which was higher than **Ksh 101 Billion** received in the previous year. The increased tea earnings resulted from improved prices during the year, which had an average of **USD 2.98** per Kg compared to **USD 2.16** recorded during the year 2014 although global tea production has been higher than the consumption. For example, in 2015 production was 5.2 Billion Kgs against a consumption of 4.944 Billion Kgs.

This forum will therefore deliberate on tea production, amongst other innovations, that influence management and products development within the global tea industry.

On research and development, it is important to note that the performance of the tea sub-sector nationally is backed by technologies that are generated and disseminated to the stakeholders by Kenya Agricultural & Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). KALRO is the national premier research organization that was established in 2014 after the merger of Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI), Tea Research Foundation (TRF), Coffee Research Foundation (CRF) and Kenya Sugar Research Foundation (KESRF). Its mandate is to:

1. Promote, streamline, co-ordinate and regulate research in crops, livestock, genetic resources, biotechnology and animal diseases
2. Expedite equitable access to research information, resources and technologies and promote the application of research findings and developed technologies in the field of agriculture and livestock

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Kenya is focusing on market based research and addressing consumer requirements in the entire tea value chain.

During the next two days, participants will be exchanging information in form of scientific paper presentations and posters based on concluded rigorous laboratory and field experimentations.

To give an overview, the thematic areas of this Tea Science Symposium covers;

### **1. Quality, trade and policy**

This will include socio-economics, crop diversification, tea quality and related challenges of maintaining what the customer requires as well as sharing of Kenya's success story of the small holder tea production. It is expected this will generate discussions that will inform opportunities of African tea and sustainability of the tea trade.

### **2. Value addition and product diversification**

Over 90 % of Kenyan tea is sold in bulk CTC while only 14 % is sold in the form of value added products mainly as a result of the high cost of value addition. In view of this, the country has opportunities to enhance value addition and product diversification. The presentations on this sub-theme will emphasize on the potential utilization of tea products to generate high value diversified products as well as compliance to standards aimed at producing safe teas. Compliance to standards enables the Kenyan tea to be competitive in the international markets thus enhancing consumption. Conversely, production of specialty teas that are in high demand in some specific markets. This is still being explored and there are some promising potential engagements.

### **3. Innovative technologies in processing and manufacture**

In this session, cutting edge technologies in plant development will be shared. In Kenya so far, innovations developed have raised the industry

to a higher level and for this achievement, the collaborators are acknowledged especially in capacity building that has placed the industry in a level of preparedness to tackle issues that hinge on highly global technological and applications changes.

#### **4. Climate Change**

Globally, climate change is seriously affecting both agricultural and livestock production. In Kenya, climate change is mainly evidenced by frequent poor rainfall distribution, increased temperatures, high soil water deficits, increased incidences of frost and hailstorms. All these freak weather events significantly reduce tea production in various proportions. For example, hail storms are common in 3 tea producing counties and during severe incidences, crop losses are over 2.5 million Kgs of green leaf.

The Kenyan industry has developed adaptation and mitigation measures like releasing tolerant varieties, soil water conservation measures, application of moderate fertilizers, planting shade trees, adopting efficient processing technologies, exploring alternative energy sources and capacity building of farmers.

#### **5. Country Reports**

Country reports will provide an opportunity to share facts between tea producing countries and tea consumers. The International Tea Committee overview will certainly enrich the symposium with global tea

information statistics and also share African tea opportunities for future trends on production, sales and consumer preferences.

## **6. Tea and Health**

Tea consumption has over time been challenged by other competing beverages. However, there is emerging scientific evidence that show that tea contains health enhancing properties. These chemical components; like polyphenols, catechins and anthocyanins have been confirmed to fight cancer, fungi, bacteria and delay the aging process. Based on these evidences, products are being developed to exploit this opportunity. To enhance tea consumption, active promotion and product profiling need to be done to provide information to consumers as well as promoting tea.

### **Ladies and gentlemen,**

This symposium allows all producers, consumers, tea traders, researchers and governments to be on one platform to discuss and share information that could lead to shifts in policy, tea trade and sustainable development of global tea sector.

With these remarks, I wish you success in the symposium and good deliberations.

Thank you and God bless you.