



OPENING ADDRESS

BY

MR. MOHAMMED A. M. WA-MWACHAI, CBS

PERMANENT SECRETARY,

MINISTRY OF FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE

AT THE OPENING CEREMONY OF THE AFRICA-WIDE TRAINING

ON FORESTRY AND WILDLIFE LAW ENFORCEMENT AND GOVERNANCE HELD

AT THE KWS TRAINING INSTITUTE, NAIVASHA

ON 21ST MAY, 2012

The Director of Lusaka Agreement Task Force

Representative of the Director of the Kenya Wildlife Service

Principal of the KWS Training institute

Members of the media fraternity

Guests

Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen,

It gives me great pleasure to address you all at the opening of this Training on Forestry and Wildlife Law Enforcement and Governance. On behalf of the Government of the Republic of Kenya and on my own behalf, I warmly welcome you all to Kenya and particularly those coming from outside the country.

The decision to host this training in Kenya demonstrates the commitment of our Government to environmental conservation. This is complemented by the increased regional efforts of our forestry and wildlife law enforcement agencies. We are always proud to be associated with the Lusaka Agreement of which Kenya is a Party.

We will always support the building and strengthening of the capacity of the LATF States and particularly the National Bureaus and other partners in carrying out effective law enforcement operations. Therefore, by holding this training in Kenya, we believe are contributing to fulfilment of one of the key obligations under the Lusaka Agreement.

Ladies and gentlemen

The most serious challenges facing our continent today are illegal logging, illegal wildlife hunting and illegal trade in timber and wildlife products. The multi-scale nature of these threats is in large part worsened by inadequate knowledge and skills of conservation authorities

including law enforcement agencies. Thus the main objective of this training is to impart knowledge and develop skills on issues of governance, management and multi-agency wildlife and forest law enforcement.

I expect this training to empower you to deal with the multi-scale and complex environmental crimes that face our respective forest and wildlife law enforcement agencies. By doing so, you will make your contribution to the restoration and maintenance of the integrity of our diverse ecosystems.

Today and for the rest of the week, you will be here to enrich your skills and learn from one another as custodians of our rich biodiversity which our continent is generously endowed with. This biodiversity is what sustains our livelihoods and economic prosperity. It is our responsibility to preserve it for the present and future generations.

The government of Kenya will always be committed to the enforcement and effective implementation of international treaties aimed at enhancing cooperation among states in environmental and wildlife conservation. This commitment stems from our realization that international cooperation creates the necessary synergy for attainment of broader

conservation and development goals. In particular, cooperative enforcement activities in fighting wildlife crime in Africa will continue to be at the core of our strategic focus in wildlife conservation. Indeed, organized cross-border wildlife crime poses a major challenge to the conservation and protection of wild fauna and flora which we must all strive to surmount.

Kenya realizes that one key challenge to effective law enforcement in Africa is the inadequacy of the requisite knowledge and skills among law enforcement personnel. This situation is compounded by inadequate cooperation among agencies and states as well as insufficient resources

to effectively safeguard our environmental heritage against illegal exploitation. To effectively mitigate the negative effects occasioned by climate change and environmental degradation, we need to pragmatically enforce our applicable laws and regulations as stringently as possible. As such, I believe there is urgent need to develop the law enforcement capacity of our agencies in addressing these threats in Africa.

Distinguished Guests, Participants, Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are all aware, Illegality in our protected areas is a crime that cannot be tolerated. For instance illegal logging contributes to deforestation and by extension global warming causes loss of

biodiversity and undermines the rule of law. These illegal activities jeopardize responsible forest management. They encourage corruption and tax evasion thereby depriving our economies enormous revenues that would have otherwise been invested in sustainable development. Illegal logging has serious economic and social implications for the poor and disadvantaged.

Wildlife crime on the other hand is increasingly becoming a complex and dynamic phenomenon. This complexity poses a big challenge to law enforcement agencies in terms of both their skills, resource and information requirements.

Given the prevailing levels of wildlife crime in the continent, there is need to improve the capacity and enhance collaboration amongst law enforcement agencies through increased surveillance and information sharing. In the last twelve months alone over 20 tonnes of ivory originating in Africa have been seized in Asia.

Fighting wildlife crime successfully requires us to work together and pool our scarce financial, human and information resources for concerted operations. Our Government recognizes that sharing of intelligence is one of the most important prerequisites to effectively fight the ever-increasing sophistication in wildlife crime.

This regional training provides you with an opportunity to develop your skills, techniques and knowledge required for building an effective network for collaborative forestry and wildlife law enforcement.

Ladies and Gentlemen

It is the wish of the Government of Kenya and other Parties to Lusaka Agreement that, upon completion of this training, participating agencies will be able to effectively contribute to the fight against the escalating levels of illegal trafficking in forest and wildlife specimens. We need the technical and moral support of all law enforcement agencies to effectively fight this scourge.

I encourage the participants to make maximum use of the training to strengthen the already existing relationships among the participating agencies.

As I conclude, may I take this opportunity to thank the United Nations Environment Programme, the Kenya Wildlife Service and the Lusaka Agreement Task Force for their financial and technical support that has contributed to the success of this training.

We are also grateful to our partners, the INTERPOL Regional Bureau, CITES, World Customs Organization- Regional Intelligence Liaison Office

for Eastern & Southern Africa, African Forest Forum, Directorate of Public Prosecutions-Kenya, the United Nations University-Japan and the ITC of the University of Twente in the Netherlands, all who have provided resource persons to this important training.

For our guests, I wish to invite you to visit and sample some of our rich environmental, scenic and cultural diversity here in Naivasha and other places of interest in the country at large.

With these few remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare this training workshop officially opened and wish you all a fruitful training and pleasant stay in Kenya.

THANK YOU.