

**Statement by Hon. Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, EGH, MP, Minister of State for Planning, National Development and Vision 2030, Republic of Kenya, on Green Economy Panel Discussion during African Regional Preparatory Conference for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (RIO +20) – 24<sup>TH</sup> to 25<sup>TH</sup> October 2011, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia**

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**Chair Person,  
Excellencies,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Let me take this opportunity to thank the Government and people of the Federal Democratic Republic of Ethiopia for their hospitality and warm welcome. Kenya is also grateful to the organizers of this important Panel Discussion on Green Economy and Sustainable Development.

**Chairperson,** at the onset, I would like to note that as we proceed with this discussion, we should constantly remind ourselves that Green Economy has emerged as a useful framework for focusing development on a basis that ensures the environment is sustained for our future generations to depend on. In addition, the concept suggests that indeed we can undertake development and attain targeted economic growth without compromising the quality of the environment. More fundamental is the reality that Green Economy does focus our attention to the fact that unsustainable exploitation of our natural capital as a result of resource-use inefficiencies is a major contributor to climate change; a phenomenon that literally threatens to wipe out life off the planet if not properly managed.

**Excellencies,**

As you are aware, Africa's economic growth and development heavily relies on natural resources. This underscores the importance of environment and associated natural resources in employment creation and poverty reduction in Africa. However, the environment sector in Africa has not received the necessary focus in national planning and sufficient budgetary allocations. Africa still continues on the business-as-usual development path which compromises its prospects for achieving environmental sustainability. Consequently, development and growth targets are often missed because environmental aspects are not given due recognition in the national planning and budgeting processes. In Kenya for instance, during the last 10 years, allocation to the Ministry for Environment has been below 2% of the national budget. I am sure this may be significantly different in many of the other African countries.

**Chairperson, Excellencies, Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Given the gravity and risks associated with this development path, African countries need to embrace the Green economy framework at the highest level of political leadership. In Kenya, we recognize that without a well thought-out national program that defines strategic actions for transformative development towards green economy, low-carbon growth is not attainable. In this regard, we have adopted macro-economic policies and financial instruments to support the Green Economy in selected sectors including agriculture, water, energy, housing, transport and tourism.

**Excellencies,**

At the global level, the success of Green economy will in part depend on global commitments to low-carbon development and that despite challenges associated with lack of consensus on a post Kyoto protocol regime, every African country should develop and promote macro-economic policies that supports low-carbon

growth, encourage direct private sector investment in renewable energy industries and programs that can eradicate poverty.

**Chairperson, Excellencies, Distinguished Delegates,**

I wish to conclude with a few policy recommendations to this discussion:

1. Given that the environment is a common global public good which can easily suffer we need to ensure that globally, we have a coherent, effective and efficient environment governance system. It is only through such a system that a global partnership can be nurtured to ensure that developing countries have access to environment friendly technologies as well as adequate and predictable financial resources to support the use of green technologies.
2. As agreed during the AU Summit in Malabo, to adequately address Africa's needs in matters of the environment, sustainable development and climate change, there need to strengthen, consolidate and transform the Nairobi-Based UNEP into an international specialized institution for the environment.
3. The issue of international and cross-border collaboration in advancing green economy is very vital. There is need for African nations to work together through the Regional Economic Communities (RECs) in order to transition to green economy and identify existing projects that are not green for carbon-proofing while at the same time ensuring that future cross-border programmes are environmentally clean and efficient.
4. Spearheading this transition will require establishment of appropriate national and regional institutions to specifically coordinate issues of green economy and climate change. To this effect, I am happy to note that some of the RECs have made progress in this area. The East African Community (EAC), for example, has inaugurated a Sectoral Council on Environment and Natural Resources Management, a protocol on Sustainable Development of Lake Victoria Basin, a

Climate Change Policy and a Regional Guideline on Environmental Impact Assessment of shared ecosystems in East Africa among other issues.

5. At the national levels, we need to re-assess our governance system to support the Green Economy. In this regard there is need to:
  - a. Establish enabling policies, regulatory and institutional frameworks to transition to Green Economy. This requires active participation and involvement of all key stakeholders;
  - b. Strengthen mainstreaming of environmental issues into national planning and budgeting;
  - c. It is critical that the mindset is changed not to view green economy as an impediment to development in Africa.

**THANK YOU FOR YOUR KIND ATTENTION**