



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
STATEMENT ON WORLD POPULATION DAY (WPD)
CELEBRATIONS
KAJIADO COUNTY
11TH JULY 2022

HON. AMB. UKUR YATANI, EGH
CABINET SECRETARY, THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND
PLANNING

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government,

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health,

Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education,

Cabinet Secretary, Public Service, Gender, Senior Citizens Affairs and Special Programmes,

Mr. Saitoti Torome, Principal Secretary, State Department for Planning,

Mr. Wilson Wanyanga, County Commissioner Kajiado County,

Dr. Abdisalan Mohamed Noor, Board Chairman, National Council for Population and Development (NCPD),

NCPD Board Members,

Dr. Mohamed Sheikh, Director-General, NCPD,

Mr. Anders Thomsen, United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) Representative in Kenya,

Development Partners present,

Implementing Partners present,

Invited Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good morning!

I am glad to join you today in Kajiado County as we commemorate the 2022 World Population Day. This is indeed an important day both at the global level and for Kenya. The theme for this year's celebration is **'ending new HIV infections, teenage pregnancy, and GBV among adolescents for a**

resilient future.' Recent statistics by the Ministry of Health ranks Kenya 3rd highest Globally in teen pregnancies as 98 adolescents get infected with HIV weekly makes this theme accurately pertinent to Kenya.

In 2011, the world reached a population of 7 billion. This year's world population is expected to hit 8 billion compared to a world population of 7 billion in 2011. This growth has been fueled by an increase in the proportion of individuals who have reached reproductive age, with significant changes to the average number of children born per woman.

According to the United Nations Population Division (UNDP), Sub-Saharan Africa's population will continue to grow rapidly in the coming decades. Proper planning therefore needs to be done to cushion future generations from the social and economic impacts of the population pressure on available resources.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As the world population grows perpetually, we have been able to witness noteworthy advancements which have stood out as the marvels of this age. Technological advancement, breakthroughs in new generation medical science, development of vaccines, advocacy and sensitization campaigns have led to a significant reduction in infant mortality rates, enhancement in gender equity and equality, and improvements in longevity. However, the world has not realized these gains uniformly. Some parts of the world have glaring inequalities. In some regions and countries, an disturbing number of women still die while giving birth simply because they belong to the wrong side of the digital divide, and have less rights than men.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Final survey data from the 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census indicates that Kenya's population stood at 47.6 million in 2019. This represents more than a four-fold increase to the population size enumerated in the first post-independence census of 1969.

The population of Kenya is changing not only in size but also in age structure, with more people entering the working age population as older persons increase in numbers. The population aged 35 years and below represents the largest population segment, constituting 75 percent of Kenya's total population. Youth age (18-34 years) comprise 29 percent of the total population while children (Under18 years) make 47 percent of the total population. For Kenya to be prosperous, therefore, we need to put in place diligent plans for the future of this **under-18** population segment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The changing age size and structure come with implications on the social and economic development of our country, hence that need to review plans on continuous basis. According to current projections, Kenya will have about 82.5 million people by the end of 2063. This is the year set for the achievement of the African Union Agenda 2063 on "the Africa we want".

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Statistics play a critical role in helping us identify issues that require programme and policy action to alleviate the plight of various population groups. However, Statistics only tell half the story hence the danger of reducing people to statistics in an act that robs people of their dignity. I wish to urge all of us to desist from focusing too much on statistics at the expense of the many human lives behind the statistics. This will help us to formulate

programmes and policies that enhance human dignity, such as quantitative poverty assessment.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have made strides in improving most of our population indicators. The number of children per woman has declined over the years. However, the elephant in the room is adolescent pregnancy where children are giving birth to children. Data from the last Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (2014) shows that One (1) in every Five (5) girls between 15-19 years of age are either pregnant or are already mothers. More than 13,000 adolescent girls drop out of school annually because of pregnancy making them and their babies vulnerable to poverty and other social deficiencies like illiteracy and cultural impropriety.

We need to address adolescent pregnancy as a matter of urgency!

During the Nairobi Summit on ICPD25, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta led the country in making seventeen commitments which include the elimination of adolescent pregnancy and Gender-Based Violence. In his statement, he clarified that Our vision to be a middle level income country with a high quality of life can only be achieved if our youth are healthy, appropriately educated and have the right skills for the job market.

Motherhood in childhood is therefore something that we should eliminate in our society. We need to arrest this vice if Kenya is to harness the demographic dividend. Adolescent pregnancy is a red flag on the girls' prospects for good health, education and economic opportunities, in addition to perpetuating the cycle of poverty. In addition to this, many adolescents in Kenya are experiencing Gender-Based Violence (GBV) in the form of physical or sexual

violence which, in some cases, results either into temporary and life-long injuries if not death.

Distinguished Guests,

On a positive note, Kenya's life expectancy is rising, though disproportionately for males and females, implying that the proportion of older persons is also likely to increase as Kenyans are now living longer. According to the Kenya Population and Housing Census of 2019, the current life expectancy at birth in Kenya is 61 and 67 years for males and females respectively. This is an improvement from 2009 where life expectancy at birth was 58 for males and 61 for females.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Since independence, we have experienced a lot of socio-cultural changes in our communities. Some of these changes have had a positive impact while others have produced a negative impact.

It is sad to note that the family is the unit that is mostly affected by the changes that have produced a negative impact. As a result, the modern family's identity has been lost, and the most prominent effect of this is the inability of parents to impart values to their children.

During the Madaraka Day celebrations on 1st June, 2022, His Excellency the President highlighted the need to strengthen the family unit in Kenya because this is the basic unit of our society. In the same vein, I am therefore glad to inform you that in response to this concern, my Ministry through the National Council for Population and Development is undertaking a pilot study on the state of families in Kwale and Murang'a counties.

This study will bring out the key issues affecting families with recommendations on how they can be addressed.

Based on the outcomes, the pilot study will be extended to other counties with the aim of developing National and County-specific evidence-based responses to the emerging crisis in families.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Our urban population has been growing steadily from about 1 million in 1969, representing 9.8 percent of the total population, to 14 million in 2019, which constitutes 31.2 percent of the population. The number of urban centres have increased from 47 in 1969 to 372 in 2019. As you drive from Nairobi to this place, you can easily see the urban configuration building up on the land mass between Nairobi and Kajjado. These new configurations are spatially connected and are functionally bound by their economic and environmental linkages. This therefore calls for proper planning to ensure we minimize human-wildlife conflict, especially in the Kitengela wildlife migration corridor.

We have to preserve our wildlife for future generations.

Ladies and gentlemen,

The Kenya Population Policy for Sustainable Development was approved by Cabinet in May, 2022 and will soon be presented to Parliament for adoption as a Sessional Paper. This policy is very progressive and has incorporated issues of human settlement and climate change as well as migration and urbanization, which were not well articulated in the previous population policies. The goal of the policy is to attain a society in which all the people are secure, healthy, broadly educated, empowered for improved quality of life for current and future generations. No doubt, this new policy will add to the

impetus of development programmes and policies in addressing the pressing needs of the country's population.

Ladies and gentlemen,

As I conclude my remarks, I wish to appreciate our development partners without whom the milestones we have made would not have been achieved.

The goal of the new population policy is to attain a society in which all the people are secure, healthy, broadly educated, and empowered for improved quality of life for current and future generations. As we roll out this policy today, my appeal to you, our esteemed partners, is to contribute to its full implementation.

Just to mention a few, the Government has signed a United Nations Sustainable Development Cooperation Framework with the United Nations in Nairobi, that will be implemented in the next 4 years. Additionally, the Government and the UNFPA has developed the 10th GOK/UNFPA Country Programme for the next 4 years.

This programme will play a key role in implementing the new Population policy for sustainable development and implementation of the Kenya ICPD25 commitments.

Finally, Ladies and Gentlemen, as we reflect on the population and development milestones we have made, I wish to take this opportunity to wish you a happy 2022 World Population Day.

Thank you!