

**TALKING POINTS FOR KWS BOARD OF TRUSTEES CHAIRMAN LT. GEN. (RTD)
WALTER RARIA KOIPATON, MGH,CBS,OGW “ndc” (K) ‘psc’ DURING NATIONAL
TREE PLANTING DAY AT NAIROBI NATIONAL PARK ON MONDAY 13TH, 2023**

1. It is with much pleasure that I join you all today in this tree planting exercise with a heart full of hope and vision for our treasured Nairobi National Park. This exercise symbolizes the collaborative efforts between the Kenya Wildlife Service and various partners and stakeholders, who share a common vision with one goal; to preserve and enhance this park for the betterment of our environment, our people and the wild inhabitants, the very essence for our existence as KWS.
2. KWS strategically conserves biodiversity through national parks, reserves, and sanctuaries, spanning eight Conservation Areas that collectively cover about 8% of Kenya's total landmass. Beyond these protected areas, the Service extends its reach to manage wildlife resources in collaboration with over 170 private and community conservancies and other vital wildlife habitats.
3. Recognizing the need for ecological integrity, KWS actively participates in the Forest Landscape Restoration (FLR) program. FLR aims to restore ecological functionality to degraded landscapes while enhancing the well-being of the communities residing in these areas. This is especially crucial as over 10.6 million hectares of land in Kenya have been

classified as degraded due to a combination of factors, including climate change, overgrazing, and expanding populations.

4. As we are now aware, the Kenyan government has set an ambitious target to grow 15 billion trees in the next decade (2022-2032). KWS is taking a lead role in collaboration with relevant Government Ministries, Departments, Agencies, County Governments, Partners, institutions of learning, stakeholders, and the general public to ensure the realization of this monumental target.
5. To achieve these ambitious restoration goals, KWS is deploying a variety of techniques, including mapping of degraded habitats, establishment of tree nurseries, construction of enclosures to facilitate natural habitat regeneration, and direct seeding in inaccessible areas.
6. KWS has committed to the rehabilitation of 50,000 hectares annually. A key component of this commitment is the goal of planting and growing 50 million tree seedlings annually, with a target to reach 500 million trees by 2032. To support this, KWS is establishing and/or up scaling at least five tree nurseries in each of the eight Conservation Areas, fostering partnerships with communities, landowners hosting wildlife, and conservation partners. These targets have been cascaded to the field and incorporated into staff performance, ensuring alignment and accountability.
7. As I conclude, I wish to reiterate that KWS's proactive engagement in national conservation endeavors exemplifies its unwavering commitment to environmental stewardship and the safeguarding of biodiversity. The holistic strategy, encompassing mapping, nurseries, enclosures, and direct seeding, underscores a dedication to sustainable restoration practices. Collaborative initiatives with communities and diverse partners reinforce KWS's steadfast commitment to realizing ambitious conservation objectives, thereby making

substantial contributions to the enduring ecological well-being of Kenya's diverse landscapes. The integration of these targets into staff performance assessments further underscores the agency's dedication, ensuring accountability across all levels of implementation.

THANK YOU