

**KEYNOTE SPEECH BY HON. DR. ASHATU K. KIJAJI (MP), MINISTER OF STATE,
VICE PRESIDENT'S OFFICE (UNION AND ENVIRONMENT) OF THE UNITED
REPUBLIC OF TANZANIA, AT THE 11TH MEETING OF THE CONFERENCE OF
PARTIES TO THE NAIROBI CONVENTION FOR THE PROTECTION, MANAGEMENT
AND DEVELOPMENT OF THE MARINE AND COASTAL ENVIRONMENT OF THE
WESTERN INDIAN OCEAN REGION (COP 11) ON 22ND AUGUST, 2024 AT
ANTANANARIVO, MADAGASCAR**

His Excellency Max Andonirina Fontaine, Minister of Environment and Sustainable Development, Republic of Madagascar;

His Excellency Kavydass Ramano, Minister of Environment, Solid Waste Management and Climate Change, Republic of Mauritius;

His Excellency Flavien Joubert, Minister of Agriculture, Climate Change and Environment, Republic of Seychelles;

Her Excellency Khadija Mohamed Almahzumi, Minister of Environment and Climate Change, Federal Republic of Somalia;

Ms. Elizabeth Mrema, United Nations Assistant Secretary General and Deputy Executive Director of the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP);

Ms Susan Gardner, Director Ecosystems Division, United Nations Environment Programme;

Mr. Youssouf Elamine Mbechezi, Director General of Environment in Comoros;

Mr. Ghoussé Gaffar, Representative of the Minister of Environment in France;

Mr. Festus Ng'eno, Permanent Secretary, State Department for Environment and Climate Change, Republic of Kenya;

Mr. Watela Paulo Jone, General Inspector, Ministry of Land and Environment Republic of Mozambique;

Ms. Radia Razack, Chief Director, Oceans and Coasts Department of Environmental Affairs, Republic of South Africa;

National Focal Points to the Nairobi Convention;

Ladies and Gentlemen; (All Protocols observed).

GOOD MORNING

First and foremost, I would like to join the previous speakers in thanking the Almighty God for enabling us to meet here today in **Antananarivo, Madagascar** for the eleventh Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention (COP 11) meeting, dedicated to the Protection, Management, and Development of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region.

It is an honor to stand before you today as we gather here to reaffirm our commitment to the Protection, Management, and Development of the Coastal and Marine Environment of the Western Indian Ocean (WIO) Region. This convention represents not only a commitment to environmental stewardship but also a promise to future generations that we will safeguard the natural heritage of our oceans and coasts.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

In a very special way, I would like to convey a warm heart-felt greetings from **Her Excellency Dr. Samia Suluhu Hassan, President of the United Republic of Tanzania** to Nairobi Convention Secretariat, Contracting parties and development partners present. On the same note, on behalf of the government of the United Republic of Tanzania, I also wish to express my sincere and deep appreciation to the Nairobi Convention Secretariat for organizing this meeting and the Government of the Republic of Madagascar for hosting the eleventh Conference of Parties to the Nairobi Convention. **Thank you (Asante Sana).**

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

Nairobi Convention indeed plays a significant role in protecting and preserving the marine environment and promoting sustainable development in our countries." Among the major achievements includes:

- Promoting collaboration among member countries and implementation of marine and coastal elements within the environmental programs of regional organizations and partnerships;
- Supporting countries in their commitment to achieving the 2030 Agenda and the Sustainable Development Goals, particularly Goal 14;
- Providing technical support and capacity-building to Contracting Parties for the signing and ratification of various conventions and protocols including the BBNJ treaty.
- Promoting integrated management of coastal areas to safeguard coastal habitats and mitigate physical alteration of these habitats; and

- Contributing to building regional capacities for the integrated management of the coastal and marine environment.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

Tanzania is proud to be a signatory to the Nairobi Convention, recognizing the critical importance of our marine and coastal environment to our economy, culture, and biodiversity. The Western Indian Ocean region, including the coasts of Tanzania, is home to some of the world's most diverse and productive marine ecosystems, from the coral reefs of Mafia Island to the mangrove forests of the Rufiji Delta. These ecosystems sustain livelihoods, provide food security, and support tourism, contributing significantly to our national development goals.

However, we also acknowledge the challenges facing our marine and coastal environments, such as climate change, unsustainable fishing practices, pollution, and habitat degradation, which threaten the health and resilience of these ecosystems. The effects of these pressures are felt by coastal communities who depend on marine resources for their livelihoods. Therefore, it is necessary to take significant measures to preserve the life of our natural resources in the region.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

In response to these challenges, Tanzania remains committed to the Nairobi Convention, as demonstrated during the implementation of the 2022-2024 programme of work. We have taken significant steps to strengthen marine protected areas, promote sustainable fisheries management, and enhance our capacity for marine pollution prevention and response. Our efforts are aligned with the Sustainable Development Goals and the African Union's Agenda 2063, recognizing the interconnectedness of environmental conservation with broader development objectives.

Looking ahead, Tanzania calls for renewed commitment and collective action. The government has intensified efforts to address plastic pollution, improve waste management practices, and promote sustainable tourism along our coasts. Additionally, there is a focus on empowering coastal communities through education, capacity building, and inclusive decision-making processes to ensure their voices are heard in conservation efforts.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

Let us use this opportunity in Madagascar to reaffirm our shared commitment to the Nairobi Convention for the Protection, Management, and Development of the Marine and

Coastal Environment of the Western Indian Ocean Region. Let us work together across borders and sectors to protect our marine and coastal environments for current and future generations.

Tanzania stands ready to collaborate with other Contracting Parties to the Nairobi Convention, our regional partners, civil societies, and the private sector to achieve our shared vision of a healthy, thriving Western Indian Ocean region.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

Through our commitment to the Nairobi Convention, Tanzania has implemented robust measures to protect and manage our marine resources. These actions are aligned with our national development goals and contribute to the overall health and resilience of our marine ecosystems.

Tanzania continues to emphasize the importance of utilizing its resources, exemplified by the launch and implementation of our National Blue Economy Policy of 2024 for Tanzania Mainland and Zanzibar's Blue Economy Policy of 2020. Furthermore, Tanzania has made progress in Marine Spatial Planning, focusing on organizing and managing its coastal and marine resources more effectively. Guidelines for the development of Marine Spatial Plan (MSP) of 2023 are also in place.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

In response to environmental degradation, Tanzania has implemented various policies and strategies, including the adoption of the National Environmental Policy of 2021 and the National Master Plan for Strategic Interventions for the period 2022-2032 which among other matters, provides comprehensively on the conservation of the coastal and marine ecosystem. Moving forward, Tanzania has adopted the Agreement under the United Nations Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS) on the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Marine Biological Diversity of Areas beyond National Jurisdiction (BBNJ treaty) and the ratification process is currently in progress. This commitment signifies Tanzania's recognition and dedication to conserving and sustainably managing marine biodiversity in areas beyond its national jurisdiction. In September 2023 here in Madagascar, Tanzania adopted and signed the Integrated Coastal Zone Management (ICZM) Protocol, and currently ratification process is also in progress.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

Furthermore, Tanzania appreciates the support from the Nairobi Convention Secretariat for awarding a total amount of \$967,941 to various institutions to implement key environmental projects including;

- Sustainable mangrove restoration in the Rufiji Delta;
- Enhancing the Msingini wastewater treatment facility in Pemba;
- River catchment management and restoration across Tanzania;
- Updating marine and coastal ecosystem data;
- Supporting community-based fisheries management in the Pemba Channel;
- Conducting oceanographic surveys in northern Tanzanian waters; and
- Enhancing Ecosystem-Based Management Approach for Improved Livelihood to Fisheries Communities in Mkinga District.

These initiatives highlight our commitment to environmental sustainability and development.

Dear Ministers and Esteemed delegates;

In conclusion, I would like to highlight that our country has made significant progress in developing regulations for the acquisition and distribution of benefits from the use of genetic resources. The Country also has in place Carbon trade guidelines and regulations that are key in tapping blue carbon potential as well as enhancing the country's contribution towards greenhouse gases emission reduction efforts.

The URT looks forward to fruitful discussions, bold initiatives, and concrete actions that will undoubtedly shape the future of our WIO region and beyond.

ASANTENI SANA!!