

# **REPUBLIC OF KENYA**



**WELCOMING REMARKS BY  
THE REGIONAL COMMISSIONER, EASTERN REGION ,  
MS CLAIRE OMOLLO  
DURING START UP WORKSHOP  
FOR UPPER TANA NATURAL RESOURCES MANAGEMENT  
PROJECT  
ON 29<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2013**

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**The Country Director/IFAD Kenya, Nadine Gbossa ,**  
**IFAD Team members,**  
**Project steering Committee Members,**  
**The Project Co-ordinator, UTaNRMP**  
**Project staff**  
**Representative from implementing Ministries/Departments**  
**All protocol observed.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Let me start by welcoming each one of you to this region and to Embu in particular for this very important start up workshop. Let me also take this opportunity on behalf of the Government of Kenya to thank IFAD and the Spanish Trust Fund most sincerely for agreeing to fund Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project (UTaNRMP).

The Government of Kenya appreciates the assistance given by IFAD towards the improvement of both Mt. Kenya and Aberdare's Ecosystem which are important water catchments in the country.

May I also sincerely thank IFAD for ensuring that there was a seamless transition from MKEPP to UTaNRMP.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

I am happy to note that the overall goal of the project is to contribute to reduction of rural poverty by promoting more equitable and sustainable management of natural resources through two development objectives namely:

- (i) increased sustainable food production and incomes for the poor rural households and
- (ii) sustainable management of natural resources for provision of environmental services.

This is in line with the current government development policy as it directly addresses most of the millennium development goals (MDGs) and will contribute towards the attainment of Vision 2030 which is the current development blueprint of the Government of Kenya.

The project goal is also in line with IFAD's goal of empowering rural poor women and men to achieve higher incomes and improved food security

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

The importance of the Upper Tana catchment need not be overemphasized. As we all are aware, it is the most important river basin in the country as it provides 80% of the country's hydroelectric power, supports livelihood of a big number of people living in the catchment and supplies 92% of all the water used in the City of Nairobi.

With this background, it is important that activities geared towards managing the catchment must be supported by all.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Allow me to briefly mention some of the challenges facing the catchment. Upper Tana catchment has experienced considerable land degradation and drastic reduction of surface water availability. The area also is faced with declining water quality due to high silt load going into our rivers and dams. The area is densely populated with a large

population of poor and very poor people who depend on small land holdings for their livelihood. However, it has also been noted that due to declining land productivity caused by declining soil fertility, soil erosion, reduced tree cover, overgrazing in the lowlands and general poor land management, the catchment challenges will be accelerated if no action is taken.

The above scenario calls for concerted effort by all to arrest the above situation in-order for the communities to continue deriving a livelihood from the ecosystem by reversing forest degradation, inappropriate agricultural practices, high silt load etc . The concerted efforts should be directed to transforming this region economically while conserving the environment.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

It is with this in mind that the Government of Kenya approached the IFAD to support it in addressing some of the challenges the catchment is facing. The Upper Tana Natural Resources Management Project (UTaNRMP) was designed in recognition that high poverty levels contribute to environmental degradation which in turn reduces sustainable livelihood opportunities for communities hence the rationale of the project.

The project borrows heavily from the just completed MKEPP Project in terms of implementation approach (participatory), targeting (river basin and Focal Development Areas (FDAs) and implementation structures. However the project will cover a bigger area (six counties) compared with MKEPP (three counties) and funding level is higher. Communities

will contribute proportionally higher amounts towards supporting projects.

This therefore calls for all implementers and stakeholders to rededicate their efforts in devising ways and means to ensure timely implementation of identified activities and prudent utilisation of resources so that we can meet the goal of the project and aspirations of the local communities.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

Like in MKEPP, I note with satisfaction that the communities will take the lead in prioritizing their felt needs during project planning and implementation through participatory approaches and this will enhance community empowerment and local project ownership which is the core to the success of the project.

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

At this juncture, I want to congratulate the Ministry of Water and Irrigation for successfully putting up relevant structures including the Project Steering Committee (PSC), recruiting the Project Coordinating Team (PCT) and appointment of County Project Coordinators, who will coordinate the implementation of the project activities. Due to the changes brought by the new constitution, county structures are being put into place in consultation with the county governments.

May I assure you that the Chiefs and their Assistants who falls under the National Government will be readily available to assist in community mobilization and conflict resolution during project implementation.

Allow me to express my gratitude to the project for identifying my office to participate in the workshop

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

My main duty today was to welcome all participants in this technical start up workshop which intends to harmonize the understanding of the participants on the implementation modalities of the new project.

Let me therefore wish each and every participant a very fruitful and open discussions so that workable recommendations are made to enable this project realize its objectives and improve the livelihoods of the communities living in the Upper Tana Catchment.

I assure you of the continued support of my office during the workshop and thereafter during implementation in the different Counties.

Let me then once again take this opportunity to welcome all of you to participate in this very important start-up workshop.

God bless you all.

**Thank you.**