

SPEECH BY HIS GOVERNOR EVANS KIDERO, GOVERNOR OF NAIROBI COUNTY DURING THE 24TH SESSION OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL OF THE UN-HABITAT - UNITED NATIONS OFFICE, GIGIRI, NAIROBI 15TH APRIL, 2013

**The President of UN-HABITAT Governing Council,
The Director General of the United Nations Office at Nairobi,
The Executive Director, UN-HABITAT, Dr Joan Clos,
Honourable Ministers,
Members of the Diplomatic Corps,
Distinguished delegates,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Good morning. Allow me to begin with a thank you to the Executive Director and a very busy UN-Habitat Secretariat for extending this invitation to me.

It is an honour to stand before you today and to welcome you to City of Nairobi which is in the new County of Nairobi whose people have given me the enormous privilege of serving as their governor.

The last few years have been a time of momentous and historical change in Kenya. We promulgated a new Constitution in 2010 that ushered in devolved county governments.

The major aim of this fundamental change in our governance structure was to allow for public goods and services to be more responsive to local priorities and needs. This, in a nutshell, is a requirement for sustainable development, a goal that is appropriately a part of this conference's theme.

Its implementation means that the County Government will be more responsive to the needs of its residents and institutions. The importance of the decent jobs and investment created by the presence of UN Offices in Nairobi cannot be overstated.

But it is not only the positive impact on our County's economic life that counts. Hosting the headquarters of two leading UN organizations – Habitat and UNEP – and the only UN Headquarters in the Global South means that Nairobi can rightly call itself one of the leading diplomatic hubs.

Nairobians are proud to make this contribution to the world and are keenly aware of their responsibility to ensure that the noble work done in this compound continues and in fact grows.

It must not be left unsaid that your presence here surely counts as a plus to the major multinationals that are increasingly choosing to locate their headquarters in Nairobi with all the economic benefits that brings.

I therefore consider it a major part of my responsibility as Governor to support the work and effectiveness of all United Nations organizations. The

direct and indirect benefits from this focus is fundamentally linked to my administration's highest priority of increasing opportunities for young graduates and business people, and the know-how of our students and researchers.

The needs of the people of Nairobi in the delivery of improved safety and security; urban planning that responds to evolving needs and realities; proper sanitation; sufficient transport links; and adequate infrastructure dovetail well with UNON's needs. They are also extensions of the mandate and work of UN-Habitat.

Distinguished delegates,

Nairobi County under my leadership will work closely with the leadership of the United Nations Office in Nairobi, UN-Habitat and UNEP. We will commit an official liaison to work with the National Government on programs and initiatives that positively impact the UN and its staff.

In our planning work, we will seek out the expertise of UN-Habitat, and will ensure that our strategies remain profoundly conscious of UNON's needs and presence.

In our operations, we shall strive mightily to respond in a timely and positive manner to those incidents and emergencies that come within the remit of the County Government.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

You have a busy week of deliberations ahead of you, and mine was really to welcome you and stretch out a hand of partnership to all UN organizations and programs present in Nairobi, and to the diplomats accredited to them.

Nairobi hails your presence here. We are proud to be a city on the world stage and conscious of the responsibility this entails. The government of Nairobi County – working closely with our National Government, and especially the Kenya Permanent Mission to UNON – will be your partner and champion in the months and years to come.

With those few words, allow me to express my gratitude for this opportunity to spend time with you. I wish you all the best in your important deliberations. Thank you and good day.