

**ADDRESS BY H.E GOVERNOR JOSHUA IRUNGU, CHAIRMAN, NRM COMMITTEE, DURING THE 2<sup>ND</sup> NECSA CONFERENCE, PANAFRIC HOTEL, 3<sup>RD</sup> DECEMBER 2014**

***Distinguished delegates,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,***

***Good Morning***

I would like to first and foremost register my sincere appreciation to NECSA secretariat through WWF for bringing together Key stakeholders for the discourse.

It is an honour and a privilege to be addressing you this day as we mark two years of annual NECSA Conference.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

To acquire the necessary results, Counties understand the need for a defined public participation as envisaged under Article 69 (d) that acknowledges the role of public participation in democratic governance and sustainable development.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Increased climate variability, the growing water crisis, the diminishing soil productivity and fisheries and the unprecedented loss of invaluable biological diversity across our Counties are just a few examples of how the environment on which we all depend is coming under even greater strain.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

The increasing national trend toward decentralization has opened up the political space for CSOs to play a more active policy influencing role.

This avenue has increased the likelihood that policies are appropriate to the needs of the people, feasible and implementable.

This has been witnessed in the discussions on the Natural Resources Benefit Sharing, Draft Forest Conservation and Management, Community Lands and Draft Mining Bills.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

It is hard to overstate the importance of the environmental CSOs in sustainable County development assist is the bedrock on which our success lies. Any programme created without taking the environmental CSOs into account will truly be a house built on sand.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

While there is still much to be done to ensure that the environment features in all planning and decision making by County governments, it can now honestly be said that environment is firmly on the Counties development agenda.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

The credit for that achievement is broadly spread. The civil society and non-governmental organizations have played a large part.

So have the many youth and children organizations within the Counties, through initiatives like Hands off the Elephants, which informed the anti-poaching campaign, the Mazingira Challenge, School Greening Programmes, My Tree, My Life campaigns, Trash for cash initiatives among others.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As the Counties prepare to address the challenges of unsustainable development at local level, with political will reinvigorated by devolution, CSOs work will be essential if we are to successfully attain the goals of a peaceful, prosperous and secure future for humankind

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

The increasing impacts of climate change and urbanization; the impending water crisis; the over-exploitation of the forests, wildlife and other natural resources: all demand innovative thinking, new approaches, and the capacity to implement them.

Sometimes this means strengthening legal and policy infrastructure, sometimes it means developing new institutional frameworks, sometimes it means sharing appropriate technology but the key need is mutual collaboration with a growing family of CSOs in natural resources management.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

Let us highlight environment as a priority for planning and finance, and providing the political case for multi-sectoral engagement.

The Council of Governors Committee on NRM is already in place to provide the formal high-level forum for much-needed strategic policy debate on matters of the environment.

A stable and prosperous Kenya will need more food, more energy and more water, all critical factors of production which directly derive from well-managed natural resource base and environment

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

As a way forward, I propose that we:

- Agree on common definitions, understanding and approach to supporting environment
- Review available opportunities to agree on focused support in wider strategic terms
- Pro-actively strengthen working relationship with key stakeholders
- Build technical capacity on cross-cutting themes.
- Build on strong partnerships to influence on strategic dimensions.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

The challenge, of course, is to translate our engagements into forging difficult political decisions to set strategic priorities where environment is at the very core.

We face unconventional times, and thus the need to seek solutions that break from business-as-usual.

***Ladies and Gentlemen,***

I wish you all the best even as we make the best of this conference

God bless you all.

Thank you.