

Our generous co-hosts of this first-ever Global Conference on Sustainable Blue Economy: the Governments of **Canada** and **Japan**;

Eminent co-sponsors from Governments, organizations and the private sector,

Colleagues and participants;

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. Thank you for accepting our invitation, and for making the time to join us at this important Conference on “**Sustainable Blue Economy**”. Please feel welcome to Kenya. As we say in Kenya, **Karibuni**.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

2. It is with great pleasure that I join you all for this historic gathering that seeks to harness the promise and address the vulnerabilities of the blue economy.

3. Like all of you, I am excited by the enormous economic prospects of the blue economy. **At the same time,** I am also deeply concerned about the challenges of sustainable use of this critical resource.

4. The Blue Economy binds us to a common destiny. Oceans are the heart of our planet, they contain **97 percent** of the Earth's water, supply nearly half the oxygen we breathe, absorb over a quarter of the carbon dioxide we produce and regulate the weather and temperature.

5. Further, oceans, seas and lakes support livelihoods, food security and nutrition, employment, 90% of maritime trade and transportation, and counteract the impacts of climate change as carbon reservoirs.

6. Unfortunately, Ladies and Gentlemen, we have paid inadequate attention to the impact of human action on the health and productivity of our waters.

7. As a result, many of the ocean systems are under immense stress. Their ability to act as a climate regulator and as a key engine for economic growth and sustainable development, is progressively being eroded.

8. We are already feeling the impact of plastics in oceans. The eight million tons of plastics that enter the sea each year are transformed into microplastics that enter into the food chain and impact ecosystems as well as animal and human health worldwide.

9. We are already experiencing the impact of climate change, which risks triggering rising temperatures that would flood and destroy large sections of our coastal economies.

10. But we have also witnessed how **progressive actions**, by some of the **countries** represented here, to sustainably use, nurture and protect marine resources (**Canada** and **Seychelles** are good examples) have enabled these countries to develop **vibrant, diversified** and **inclusive economies**.

11. We have convened here today to commit to innovative and transformative ways of using and sustaining our **oceans, seas, lakes and rivers.** We know unless our environmental riches are protected, there can be no lasting prosperity for any of us.

12. But such action must be collective. Two-thirds of global waters lie beyond national jurisdiction. **Action** in one sea will have a positive or negative effect on other seas.

13. Success in managing our global aquatic resources for sustainable global development, therefore, critically hinges on us **working together.**

14. To this end, therefore, **I am here to make a personal pledge.**

15. I am convinced that for the sake of the **present** and **future generations** and for the continued **viability** of our **ecosystems**, we have to envision a different future and, therefore, a different model for the blue economy. **I** pledge to envision that future and do my part to promote it.

16. I make this pledge in recognition of the need to:

- (i)** Adopt appropriate policies, strategies and mechanisms to **harness the blue economy** to re-energize our national economies and create greater opportunities and jobs for our people;
- (ii)** Confront, head-on, the challenge of **waste management and plastic pollution** that is compromising the **health of our people** and **oceans, seas and rivers** as well as threatening food security and the biodiversity on land and at sea;

(iii) Ensure responsible and sustainable fishing to conserve the endangered species and high value fish stocks, on which millions of people depend for their livelihoods.

(iv) Ensure safety and security in the high seas so that global trade, connectivity and all businesses can thrive unhindered and unfettered.

17. On the basis of these imperatives, I pledge that in Kenya, I will lead from the front. **First,** as a Government, we will take steps to build on and expand **institutional governance** mechanisms that are already in place to enhance coordinated management of the blue economy. **These** include the Blue Economy Implementation Standing Committee as well as State Departments for fisheries and maritime logistics and transport.

18. Secondly, we are taking measures to revive our maritime transport, by building and expanding our ports, and shipping facilities and partnering with global shipping lines to extend our maritime reach.

19. Third, we are enhancing our capabilities for Kenya sea farers to work on ships across the vast oceans by, inter alia, **upgrading the Kenya Maritime School.**

20. Fourth, we have adopted a programme to accelerate the development of our fisheries, by increasing aquaculture, fish processing and storage capacities and related blue economy industries, thereby creating employment opportunities for our people. Last week, I commissioned a new **fisheries complex jetty** to **enable docking of large fishing and patrol vessels** and announced the establishment of a **Fishing Corporation**. **Kenya** has already ratified the **Port State Measures Agreement** that will ensure vessels flying the Kenyan flag comply with measures contained in that Agreement.

21. Fifth, we are aggressively combating illegal, unregulated and unreported fishing, and have taken measures to enhance security and safety of our collective waters. **I** in this regard, I launched last week the **Kenya Coast Guard**.

22. Six, in **2017,** we banned the use of single use plastics as part of our commitment to sustainable development.

23. Seven, we have adopted a housing programme to provide decent and affordable housing in our coastal cities, as part of a **broad programme for the greening of our cities.** **We** shall further **re-develop lake front cities** and **towns** and release their great touristic and sustainable industrial potential.

Excellencies,

Ladies and Gentlemen:

24. Kenya is committed to contribute to a better and prosperous world.

25. I, therefore, invite all of you to work with my Government – and with other Governments on the continent, to build these key areas I have highlighted. **Some** of the steps you could consider include availing financial resources, transfer of technology and innovations as well as capacity building in all these key areas.

26. I remain optimistic, **working together**, the journey we have **begun** today will **succeed**.

I THANK YOU....0000000.....0000000.....