

**SPEECH BY THE PRINCIPAL SECRETARY FOR HEALTH DR KHADIJAH KASSACHOON AT THE INAUGURATION OF MILLENIUM WATER ALLIANCE KENYA TRUST STRATEGIC PLAN 2014-2018 HELD AT WINDSOR GOLF HOTEL ON 5<sup>th</sup> NOVEMBER 2014.**

**The Third President of Kenya- H. E Mwai Kibaki,**

**PS Water- James TekoLopoyetum**

**US Ambassador Robert Godec**

**Danish Ambassador H. E Geert Aagaard Anderson**

**SWISS Ambassador Mr Jacques Pitteloud**

**Dutch Embassy first secretary- NoekeRuiter**

**Council of Governors CEO- Jacqueline Mogeni,**

**USAID Mission Director - Karen Freeman**

**CEC for Water from Garrisa, Isiolo, Marsabit, Turkana and Wajir**

**✓ MWA Chairman Malcolm Moris**

**Other Government Officers Present**

**NGOs Representatives and all MWA members present**

*Distressingly limited guests*

*Ref of Embassy  
& Secretaries for the  
State*

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

While the Millennium Development Goal (MDG) number 7, target 7C to have more people access to clean water is on track to be achieved before 2015, at the current rate of progress, the goal of reducing the lack of access to sanitation in half will not be met globally until 2049. Unless we set strategies to accelerate this rate, it will take our country Kenya another 100 years to achieve universal access to sanitation which is a human right entrenched in our constitution. Not only is this unacceptable but it also hinders any progress which has been made in other sectors of the MDGs, especially infant mortality, maternal health, universal primary education and combating HIV/AIDS and malaria.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen**

The WHO and UNICEF Joint Monitoring Project Report 2014 indicates that more than one-third of Kenyan households get their drinking water from a non-improved source, mainly surface water from lakes, streams, and rivers. This constitutes 38 percent of households. In rural areas, this number increases to 45% of all households.

The Kenya Demographic and Health Survey (KDHS), 2008-2009 indicates that less than half of Kenyan households (45 percent) treat their drinking water. The report also indicates that water treatment is more common among urban households at 57 percent than among rural households which stand at 40 percent.

Lack of sanitation is a pressing global challenge. In 2014, it was reported that approximately 2.4 billion people have no access to basic sanitation and defecate in the open. Globally, the World Health Organization (WHO) estimates that 1.8 million people die each year from diarrheal diseases mostly related to poor sanitation hygiene. It is estimated that 5,500 children across the world die every day from diseases caused by contaminated food and water and that in Kenya a child dies every 15 minutes due to diarrheal related diseases

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

Currently, only 30% of Kenya's population have access to basic sanitation facilities, 57% still use unsanitary facilities and a further 13%, which represents approximately 6 million people, have no access at all and therefore still defecate in the open. This, according to the Joint Monitoring Programme statistics, results in prevalence of diseases such as diarrhoea, amoeba, typhoid and cholera.

It is worth noting that every year, the country loses close to 30,000 lives through incidents of diarrhea. Diarrhea diseases cause 16 percent of deaths among children below five years in Kenya and are second only to pneumonia in causing the deaths of children under the age of five. Millions of shillings are spent on treatment of diarrhea annually. The pediatric death toll due to diarrheal illnesses exceeds that of AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria combined a situation that can be controlled through provision of adequate sanitation and hygiene.

Beyond the health impact, poor sanitation has a direct impact in other aspects of child development. Research has shown a positive correlation

between poor sanitation and malnutrition, child stunting and lower cognitive ability. This impacts educational and socio-economic outcomes in communities.

In economic terms, according to the World Bank statistics, the country loses Kshs. 27 billion (US\$324 million) annually due to poor sanitation. This is equivalent to 0.9% of the national Gross Domestic Product (GDP). On the other hand, open defecation costs Kenya US\$88 million per year – yet eliminating the practice would require less than 1.2 million latrines to be built and used

The Ministry of Health is committed to deliver quality and accessible health care services to all citizens of this country and at the same time work closely with stakeholders, donors, implementing partners and the beneficiaries to ensure that Kenya achieves its sanitation goals as per vision 2030.

My Ministry, in 2011, launched a national campaign to declare Kenya Open defecation Free. In the past 3 years, we have seen more than 1800 villages certified and a further 1100 villages awaiting verification. This has resulted in more than 750,000 Kenyans living in clean and safer communities. So far, 2 entire sub-counties have been declared open defecation free and working with partners and county governments we are on track in accelerating progress of this campaign.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The Government of Kenya remains committed to achieving the Global Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) as well as national sanitation targets such as Vision 2030 and the constitutional right to sanitation.

At the Sanitation and Water for All (SWA) High Level Meeting held in 2012, the GoK made a primary commitment to have an additional 20 million people gain access to sanitation by 2015, which would bring the proportion of people with access to improved sanitation to a new coverage rate of 82%, more than two and half times the current JMP estimate of 31%.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

My ministry together with sector partners has put in place a number of initiatives for scaling up sanitation and Hygiene provision in the country which is in line with the sector wide approach that is being promoted by the ministry. This includes:

- Development and dissemination of various policies, strategy documents and guidelines on safe water, hygiene and sanitation
- Adoption of the community led total sanitation and sanitation marketing approaches in accelerating sanitation interventions at community level
- Development of strong partnerships both with private sector partners investing in Water, Sanitation and Hygiene AND the inter-agency coordination mechanisms

These measures among others are in line with Vision 2030 which aims at providing equitable and affordable health care to all citizens, by restructuring health care delivery systems to shift the emphasis from curative to preventive and promotive health care.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

These measures are designed to reinforce the call for provision of adequate sanitation facilities for improved health. However, through the National Health Sector Strategic Plan (NHSSP II), my ministry seeks to create and further strengthen partnership and collaboration with both public and private stakeholders to achieve this great task of a country whose citizens enjoy universal access to sanitation.

It is only through supporting and encouraging initiatives such as the one <sup>we</sup> stand here to launch today that together we can move as a nation toward that realization. I therefore take this opportunity to congratulate the board and management of Millenium Water Alliance for taking the important decision to invest <sup>in</sup> and Water, Sanitation and Hygiene. Therefore bringing unimaginable benefits to a projected tens of thousands of people, and with that shared prosperity and an important step in ending extreme poverty, ~~and~~ <sup>and</sup> health.