



**KENYATTA
UNIVERSITY**

**BELMONT
FORUM**

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Date: 8th December 2021

OPENING SPEECH BY VICE CHANCELLOR –KENYATTA UNIVERSITY DURING

THE STAKEHOLDERS' WORKSHOP ON THE SUSTAINABILITY OF NAIROBI CITY SCHEDULED ON 10TH DECEMBER 2021 AT KUCC AT 9.00AM

Salutations and Greetings!

Good morning, ladies and gentlemen. It gives me much pleasure to attend this one-day workshop on sustainability of Nairobi City. This workshop is part of a bigger project aimed at ensuring sustainability of African cities, which are experiencing a myriad of sustainability challenges. It is imperative to note that this important project, that is, **Building Urban Community Networks for Sustainable Cities in Africa**, aims at focusing on the sustainability of six (6) African cities namely, Kumasi City in Ghana, Lagos in Nigeria, Kigali in Rwanda, Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, Mombasa and Nairobi in Kenya. I am delighted to note that the aim of this project is to develop novel networks and communities of practice that address the inter-linkages, synergies, and trade-offs among social, economic and ecological needs of city residents. This will therefore ensure development of resilient cities.



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Project partnership

Ladies and gentlemen, allow me to appreciate the eight (8) partnering organizations namely; the Kwame Nkrumah University of Science and Technology in Ghana, Georgetown University in the USA, Nature Cares Resource Centre in Nigeria, University of Rwanda in Rwanda, University of Dar es Salaam in Tanzania, and South Eastern Kenya University, University of Embu and Kenyatta University, in Kenya for developing the proposal that led to its selection among the 13 successful projects funded by the Belmont Forum as per the 2020 call for proposals. Therefore, allow me also to thank the funding organisation, the Belmont Forum, for allocating the resources that ensure timely implementation of this important project. I wish to note that the funding of this project could not have come at a better time.

Challenges facing African cities

It is important to note that most African Cities continue to face challenges such as: rapid population growth, increased crime incidents, traffic congestion, pollution (air, effluent discharge, solid waste), reliance on non-renewable energy, scarcity potable water especially in the informal settlements, land use changes, violation of zoning plans, encroachment of riparian areas and loss of biodiversity among others. Over the next 40 years, Africa will have the fastest growing cities in the world. About 800 million people in the continent will be living in urban areas in the next four (4) decades. According to the United Nations, by 2050 Africa's cities and towns will be inhabited by nearly 1.5 billion people, accounting to 60% of the continent's projected population. Therefore, the urban challenges must be addressed if the lives and



livelihoods in the cities have to be protected and safeguarded for the current and future generations. For example, with Africa experiencing a rapid urbanization rate of about 3.3% per annum and 43% of the population currently living in urban areas, it is paramount to embrace the principles of sustainability for the current and future generations. Personally, I am concerned of the future of Nairobi City and other cities Kenya. For instant, Nairobi City is currently experiencing an urbanisation rate of over 4%, way above the continental average. Indeed, we need to deliberate and act together.

Collaborative action

In this one day workshop, I hope, that participants gathered here will endeavor to focus on, if not all, deliberate on some of the following questions:

1. What are the key sustainability challenges facing Nairobi city?
2. What is the best way to handle the identified challenges and what are the specific actionable or practical steps to address these challenges?
3. Who are the key actors to walk with through this journey of ensuring that Nairobi city develops along the sustainability path?
4. What policies and legal frameworks should be formulated to address sustainability of Nairobi city moving forward?

The way forward

Allow me to note that tackling the issue of sustainability will require a multidimensional approach bringing together key stakeholders such as: policy makers,



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urban residents association, city planners, national and county officials, government agencies, private sector, civil society, media and other key actors. It is my believe that by adopting the transdisciplinary approach suggested in this project, tangible outputs will be realized. Finally, allow me to make a submission that it is time now for a global cooperation regarding sustainability of our cities. Nations must therefore rise to address the associated challenges. I hope this workshop will concretely inform us on how to move forward. Personally, I look forward to the proceedings of the workshop to learn the way forward towards the sustainability journey.

It is now my singular honour and duty to declare this workshop officially open and to wish you a very fruitful day.

Thank you.

Prof. Paul K. Wainaina (PhD)

Vice-Chancellor, Kenyatta University