

**OPENING ADDRESS BY H.E HON. KALONZO MUSYOKA VICE PRESIDENT  
REPUBLIC OF KENYA (ON BEHALF OF THE PRESIDENT) DURING THE  
SECOND WORLD CONGRESS OF AGROFORESTRY AT GIGIRI N NAIROBI  
ON MON, 24<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2009**

**Distinguished Guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I am pleased to be with you today during this very important World Congress of Agroforestry. The theme for this congress “Agroforestry – the future of Global Land Use” is fitting for this occasion and at this particular point in time, when the world is experiencing the adverse effects of environmental degradation and the climate change.

I thank the World Agroforestry Centre for selecting Kenya as the venue of the Congress. It is always an honour for us to host visitors in our country. I therefore welcome you all to the city of Nairobi and I hope you will find some time to visit our touristic sites and interact with Kenyans in the countryside.

I also recognize the important role played by World Agroforestry Centre in its through efforts to improve the rural livelihoods through research and application of tree-based innovations on farmers’ fields. The organization’s goal of ensuring food security and raising incomes through Agroforestry is in line with my governments Agricultural Sector objectives.

While Agroforestry has been part of the global farm practice for a long period in our history, it did not gain prominence until the 1970’s when the World Agroforestry Centre was established here in Kenya. Since then, the relevance of Agroforestry to solve problems related to land degradation and increasing soil erosion, decreased soil fertility, medicinal needs, surface and ground water pollution and decreased biodiversity has continued to gain popularity. We are therefore proud that we took the decision to host this important International Centre 35 years ago. I assure the Board of Trustees and the management of this centre of continued support by the Government.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

We have come together to discuss the agenda around the bold proclamation that Agroforestry can be the future of global land use. This will, open doors on the growing and real potential of Agroforestry to continue to address the challenges that both developing and developed countries face. I must however remind you that the most serious challenge now is poverty and food insecurity particularly in Africa. With over one billion people- most of them in sub-Saharan Africa and South Asia, living below a dollar a day, this is truly a serious challenge.

Climate change is now a reality as demonstrated by more frequent floods and drought. We need to be able to quickly help buffer the negative effects that are brought by the planet becoming warmer and part to stabilize carbon emissions globally. Agroforestry offers an important opportunity to serve both as the adaptation and mitigation of climate change

because trees help to buffer extremities in climate by absorbing carbon and regenerating the environment. Trees also produce fruits and other products for income generation. Kenya is already experiencing the vagaries of climate change. We have received less than adequate rains during the last three years resulting in severe famine. Millions of our people now have to depend on relief food and livestock face starvation. Consequently, we have devised both medium and long term measures in which emphasis is being placed on irrigated food production and increased fertilizer application. Agroforestry certainly has a critical role to play in these interventions. Indeed, as we invest in irrigation schemes, we also plant trees to safeguard our watersheds and sustain water flows. We also expect to work closely with you to develop Agroforestry systems that are appropriate for irrigated agriculture.

With regard to soil fertility management, Agroforestry is one of the low cost mechanisms of supplying organic fertilizer to crops which in turn boosts productivity. I therefore expect that we will work together to ensure these packages form part of our fertilizer price reduction interventions.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It is estimated that globally, there are more than one billion rural stallholder farmers growing trees for fruits and other products on farms. Curiously, while forests are on the decline, the number of trees on farms is increasing. It is therefore imperative that we work together to develop both national and regional markets for the various types of tree products so as to create more income opportunities for the rural populations.

In Kenya, demand for tree products is rapidly growing and farmers are responding positively to this demand. For example, timber has become an important smallholder commercial crop. Farmers are also responding to the depletion of our natural forests by growing both indigenous and improved species of timber trees on their farms.

Against this background, the government is in the process of developing an appropriate legislation to ensure that 10% of agricultural land is put under farm forestry. We have also commenced an aggressive reforestation campaign of all our natural forests. These interventions require a lot of seedlings as well as sufficient resources to enforce the legislation. We therefore need to work together to develop the appropriate systems and meet the demand on seedlings.

In conclusion, **Ladies and Gentlemen**, I wish to urge that we sustain partnerships and collaboration in Agroforestry with a view to addressing the challenges of climate change including food scarcity, and poverty. I therefore encourage the World Agroforestry Centre to continue providing leadership in this critical area and also sustain the good work that it is already doing.

It is now my pleasure to declare the 2<sup>nd</sup> World Congress of Agroforestry officially opened and I wish you fruitful deliberations.

I thank you.