



## REPUBLIC OF KENYA

### MINISTRY OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, THE ARID AND SEMI-ARID LANDS (ASALS) AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT

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**REMARKS BY HON. REBECCA MIANO, MBS, CABINET SECRETARY FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY, THE ASALS & REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT DURING LAUNCH OF WATER TRUCKS FUNDED BY JAPAN INTERNATIONAL COOPERATION AGENCY (JICA) ON 11<sup>TH</sup> AUGUST 2023.**

**Secretary, Embassy of Japan in Kenya, Mr. Masaya Nishimura,  
Senior Representative, JICA (Kenya), Ms Mari Kato and your team,  
NDMA CEO, Lt Col (Rtd) Hared Hassan  
Ladies and Gentlemen**

*Hamjambo nyote!*

1. It is my pleasure to join you today as we flag off water trucks generous donated by the people of Japan through the Japan International Cooperation Agency or JICA. The Government of Kenya receives thoughtful support with gratitude.
2. Access to safe and sufficient water is a big challenge in our arid and semi-arid regions, especially when drought strikes. Water trucking becomes the option of choice to fall back on when droughts happen.
3. The National Drought Management Authority complements efforts by county governments and other partners to provide water to communities affected by drought. The capacity to deliver water to affected communities is critical, more so when demand increases. The 2021 to 2023 extended drought tested our capacity as our aging fleet of water bowsers became more prone to mechanical breakdowns due to wear and tear.
4. Last year, my Ministry, through the NDMA reached out to JICA—as one of our most dependable development partners—with a request to support our capacity to response effectively to the water needs of affected communities. I, therefore, sincerely thank the Government of Japan for availing **Ksh. 26 million** to cover the critical gap that called for redress. The brand new high-capacity water trucks we flag off today are a significant addition to NDMA's water response fleet of trucks and a welcome boost to our drought response capacity.
5. The water trucks will serve some of the counties that suffer the severest water stress during droughts. Towards that end, we have identified two axes that require enhanced water trucking capacity. The first includes Tana River, Garissa, Wajir and Mandera while the second covers Baringo, Samburu, Laikipia, Isiolo and Marsabit. For ease of access in each of the identified axis, one truck will be stationed in Garissa while the other will be stationed in Marsabit County, and both will remain available to support the other counties on need basis.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

6. We are still recovering from the protracted drought occasioned by failure of five consecutive rainfall seasons. That persistent drought is symptomatic of the much talked about pangs of climate change experienced globally in recent times. This generous gesture by the people of Japan is yet another demonstration of the extent to which our international friends are willing to stand with us in the face of the deepening climate risks.
7. Admittedly, drought response interventions such as water trucking are expensive and unsustainable. The Government of Kenya is, therefore, committed to continue investing in long-term resilience building interventions that progressively increase the capacity of our communities to cope with drought. To deliver on this promise, there is need to forge strategic partnerships with those that share our dreams and aspirations.
8. Among our immediate priorities are high-impact multipurpose water projects in the ASALs. These will significantly reduce drought risk while presenting new opportunities for diversified livelihoods and expanded sources of income. In this regard, we look forward to support from JICA particularly in natural resource mapping and planning, an area in which Japan holds unrivalled expertise.
9. The semi-autonomous Government agencies in my ministry, such as NDMA, are viable entities for strategic partnerships aimed at delivering this aspiration. I appreciate that the Government of Japan, through the UNDP, is already supporting initiatives to mitigate impacts of drought and climate change in Kenya.
10. Towards the Government's target to plant 15 billion trees by 2032, my ministry has been tasked with delivering 5 billion fruit seedlings towards that grand initiative. We invite JICA and Japanese corporations with interest in carbon exchange to explore partnerships with our communities for technology transfer, carbon trading opportunities arising from tree planting, as well as market for the fruits to be produced from the 5 billion seedlings.
11. **In conclusion**, I wish to reiterate that my Ministry remains open to partnerships geared towards reducing vulnerability to drought and climate risks.

**It is now my pleasure to invite Mr. Masaya Nishimura, Secretary of Embassy of Japan to Kenya to join me in flagging off the water trucks purchased with the support of JICA Kenya office.**

**Thank You**

