



SPEECH FOR H E SUSAN KIIHIKA NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE 2ND EDITION OF THE MAU CONSERVATION MARATHON AT SAROVA WOODLANDS, NAKURU ON 4TH MAY 2026

The Principal Secretary, State Department for Environment and Climate Change,
Distinguished National Government Officials,
Development Partners,
Community Leaders,
Athletes,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning.

1. It is a true pleasure to join you this morning as we launch the 2nd Edition of the Mau Conservation Marathon—an initiative that continues to prove, in very practical terms, that conservation and community progress can move forward together.
2. Let me begin by expressing my sincere appreciation to the Government of Kenya, through the Ministry of Environment and Climate Change, for the foresight behind the Mau Forest Complex Integrated Conservation and Livelihood Improvement Programme (MFC-ICLIP). Under the leadership of His Excellency President William Samoei Ruto, this programme has set a solid and inspiring foundation for restoring one of our most critical ecosystems while improving livelihoods for our people.
3. In a special way, I wish to commend the Principal Secretary for your steadfast leadership and personal commitment to this cause. Your consistency, passion, and hands-on engagement continue to drive real, measurable impact on the ground.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

4. The Mau Forest Complex is not just important to Nakuru County—it is vital to Kenya and significant far beyond our borders. As one of our main water towers, it sustains rivers, supports biodiversity, regulates climate, and underpins millions of livelihoods. Protecting it is not a choice; it is a duty we all share, requiring coordination across county, national, and global levels.
5. The progress made so far under the MFC-ICLIP Programme is both encouraging and commendable. The restoration of over 1,200 hectares of degraded forest land, alongside the planting of more than one million tree

seedlings, marks a major step forward. Just as important are the community-focused initiatives that are already changing lives in tangible ways.

6. Through the Community Livelihood Improvement Programme, many households have benefited from dairy support, access to certified seeds, and the promotion of high-value crops such as avocado, coffee, and pyrethrum, as well as beekeeping. These efforts are strengthening incomes while reducing dependence on forest resources—an approach that is both practical and sustainable.
7. The establishment of tree nurseries, expansion of agroforestry, and adoption of sustainable land management practices are also helping communities build resilience. It is especially encouraging to see young people and women stepping into green enterprises, creating livelihoods that are aligned with conservation.
8. As the County Government of Nakuru, we have taken deliberate steps to complement these efforts. Through our countywide greening programme, we have planted millions of trees across schools, farms, public spaces, and riparian areas. We have strengthened community tree nurseries, promoted farm forestry, and restored degraded landscapes, all while working closely with local communities to ensure ownership and long-term sustainability. These efforts are part of our broader commitment to increasing forest cover and safeguarding our environment for future generations.
9. We reaffirm our full commitment to working closely with the National Government and all partners to scale up these gains. We will continue to support community-led conservation, promote climate-smart agriculture, expand environmental education, and invest in initiatives that protect ecosystems while improving livelihoods.

At the same time, we will ensure that the necessary policies and institutional frameworks are in place to sustain and grow these interventions over the long term.

10. Looking ahead, I am pleased to reaffirm our full support for the Mau Conservation Marathon scheduled for 3rd July 2026, as well as future editions of this important event. We are committed to working with all stakeholders to grow it into a flagship conservation and tourism event—not just for Nakuru County, but for the entire country and beyond.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

11. The Mau Conservation Marathon is a powerful and unifying platform. It brings together sport, environmental awareness, and community engagement in a way

that is both inspiring and impactful. The success of the first edition, which attracted over 1,000 participants, shows clearly that this initiative has captured public interest and sparked a shared sense of responsibility.

12. I therefore encourage our local communities—especially our youth, women, and institutions—to register in large numbers and take part in the marathon on 3rd July 2026. This is more than a race; it is an opportunity to stand up for your environment and your future.
13. To our partners and stakeholders, I urge you to continue supporting this important work. Your contribution is not only restoring ecosystems but also transforming lives. To our communities, let us continue to embrace conservation as a shared responsibility. The success of these programmes depends on each one of us. Together, we can secure the future of the Mau Forest Complex. And to our athletes, you carry a special message. You are ambassadors of a cause that goes beyond sport—running not just for competition, but for conservation and sustainability.
14. In conclusion, let us stand together in protecting the Mau Forest Complex—our heritage, our lifeline, and our future.

With those remarks, it is now my pleasure to officially launch the 2nd Edition of the Mau Conservation Marathon.

Thank you,

H.E. SUSAN KIIHIKA, EGH

GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY