

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON. MWAI KIBAKI, C.G.H.,
M.P., PRESIDENT AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE KENYA
DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE LUNCHEON HOSTED IN
COMMEMORATION OF THE 40TH ANNIVERSARY OF UNEP IN
ADDIS ABABA, ETHIOPIA ON SUNDAY, 29TH JANUARY 2012.**

Your Excellency, Chair of the African Union,

Your Excellencies Heads of State and Government,

The Secretary-General of the United Nations Mr. Ban Ki-Moon,

The Chairman of the African Union, Mr. Jean Ping,

The Executive Director of UNEP, Dr. Achim Steiner,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

I am delighted to host you for lunch today to commemorate the 40th Anniversary of the United Nations Environment Programme. Thank you for honoring our invitation.

Excellencies,

Forty years ago, Africa was bestowed with the honor to host the first United Nations body in a developing country. As a result, the United Nations Environment Programme was established in Nairobi, Kenya. For this, Kenya, and indeed the entire Africa, remain most grateful.

I take this opportunity to acknowledge the immense achievements of UNEP to date. Since its establishment, UNEP has become the global voice on environmental issues. Through UNEP's leadership, many international agreements have been developed. It has also galvanized global action in areas such as ozone layer, climate change, chemicals management and biological diversity. It is my hope that UNEP will contribute towards a safer earth for humanity.

Excellencies,

Over the years, as environmental challenges have increased, the international environmental governance has also grown in complexity. The setting up of secretariats in various cities across the world, to address the different agreements has resulted in fragmentation and weakening of UNEP.

Excellencies,

I wish to thank you all for your support for the elevation of UNEP to a specialized UN agency at its present home in Nairobi. I especially thank you for the resolution adopted in Malabo in this regard. I am confident that Africa will continue to underscore the importance of maintaining UNEP in Africa.

Excellencies,

As host to the only UN Centre in the developing world, Kenya is keen to ensure that all the facilities in Nairobi continue to measure up to standards in other host cities.

In this regard, I wish to thank the United Nations Secretary General for his swift implementation of the UN General Assembly resolution, to upgrade the United Nations Office in Nairobi, and for appointing a distinguished African woman as its first Director-General.

Excellencies,

As we prepare for the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development, Rio+20 in Brazil this year, the Government of Kenya calls upon Africa to stand united and speak with one voice. We

must also intensify our lobbying to secure the support of other regions for our Common Position.

In this regard, I commend His Excellency President Nguesso for the role he continues to play in keeping the momentum for an African Common Position to Rio+20. It is also my hope that the United Nations Secretary-General will also add his voice to the African Position.

With those few remarks, it is my honour to propose a toast in commemorating the 40th Anniversary of UNEP in Nairobi, Kenya.

THANK YOU.