



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE
CHANGE AND FORESTRY**

**STATE DEPARTMENT FOR ENVIRONMENT
AND CLIMATE CHANGE**

**KEY NOTE SPEECH FOR DR. ENG. FESTUS K.
NG'ENO, MIEK, CBS, PRINCIPAL SECRETARY
FOR ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE
CHANGE DURING THE OFFICIAL LAUNCH
OF THE KENYA GUIDE FOR STRATEGIC
ENGAGEMENT IN CARBON MARKETS 2026,
ON 5TH OCTOBER 2026 FROM 0700HRS TO
1100HRS IN NAIROBI**

**5TH OCTOBER 2026
SERENA HOTEL, NAIROBI**

-  Your Excellency, Mirko Giulietti, Ambassador of Switzerland to the Republic of Kenya
-  Your Excellency, Kang Hyung-shik, Ambassador of the Republic of Korea to the Republic of Kenya
-  Your Excellency, Ondrej Simek, Deputy Ambassador, Delegation of the European Union to Kenya
-  Your Excellency, Diana Dalton, Deputy High Commissioner, British High Commission
-  Mr. Christian Gahre, Minister Counsellor and Deputy Head of Mission, Royal Norwegian Embassy
-  Representatives of the various Ministries and State Departments, and Agencies
-  Development Partners
-  Representatives of the Private Sector
-  Members of the Fourth Estate
-  Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good morning!

1. It is a profound honor to welcome you to this momentous occasion as we mark a **decisive shift in Kenya's carbon markets landscape.**
2. For years, the promise of carbon markets was discussed in global forums as a future possibility. **Today, that future is here.**
3. As project pipelines expand rapidly and international trading frameworks under **Article 6 of the Paris Agreement** become fully operational, Kenya is taking its rightful place not just as a market participant, but as **a rule-maker and market leader.**
4. Kenya did not stand by as these global rules were written. **Our teams were in the negotiating rooms, championing environmental integrity, market fairness, and the economic interests of developing nations.**

5. Having helped shape the global blueprint for Article 6, our focus turns inward to a fundamental question: **How will Kenya strategically govern its own carbon assets to secure sustainable national development?**
6. This *Kenya Guide for Strategic Engagement in Carbon Markets 2026* is our authoritative answer.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. The contemporary carbon market landscape involves high-stakes national choices. A single authorization decision directly impacts how Kenya accounts for its Nationally Determined Contribution (NDC).

8. When we authorize mitigation outcomes for international transfer under Article 6, we commit to applying Corresponding Adjustments. Consequently, those reduced emissions can no longer be counted toward our own national target.
9. This is not a matter of routine administrative paperwork. It is a matter of **national climate sovereignty!**.
10. Under our updated NDC, Kenya is committed to reducing greenhouse gas emissions by **32% below the Business-As-Usual (BAU) trajectory by 2030**. Achieving this requires an estimated USD 17.7 billion, of which USD 14 billion relies on international support.

11. Our Biennial Transparency Report (BTR), submitted in December 2024, provided a clear reflection of our progress: while we are advancing, our 2022 emissions remained above the projected BAU baseline, leaving a significant funding gap.
12. Governed with vision and integrity, carbon markets provide a vital mechanism to bridge this financing gap. Governed poorly, they risk eroding the very climate targets we have pledged to achieve - Governed well, can help us bridge that gap. Governed poorly, they risk eroding the very national targets we have pledged to achieve. **Kenya has therefore chosen a path of deliberate, high-integrity, and strategic engagement.**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

13. The Guide does not replace the **Climate Change Act (Cap. 387A)** or the **Climate Change (Carbon Markets) Regulations, 2024**. Rather, it operationalizes them, converting statutory frameworks into clear, predictable, and transparent regulatory outcomes through three core measures:

14. **First** - a national carbon budget for trading. For the 2025–2030 period, Kenya has established a cumulative ceiling of **10 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent** authorized for international transfer, representing an indicative allocation of **1.67 million tonnes of CO₂ equivalent annually** across the **energy, transport, industrial processes, and waste sectors.**

15. This cap protects our NDC targets and mitigates the risk of overselling. Every authorized credit will therefore be tracked against our remaining balance within the **Kenya National Carbon Registry**.
16. **Second** - a standardized assessment criteria at every stage. Project developers will benefit from **explicit, predictable standards across every phase: No-Objection, Approval, and Authorization**. These criteria, detailed in the Annexes, eliminate ambiguity and guarantee an equal standard for all market participants.
17. **Third** - a whitelist signaling high-priority national activities:
- **Distributed solar, mini-grids, and utility-scale solar with battery storage**
 - **Geothermal, hydro, and wind energy infrastructure**
 - **Industrial energy efficiency improvements**

- Electric mobility and modal shifts in freight and passenger transit
- Landfill gas recovery, composting, and anaerobic digestion with energy recovery

18. The whitelist acts as a strategic indicator rather than an automatic approval. Being listed does not guarantee authorization, nor does being unlisted close the door. It simply requires a stronger justification of national value!

Ladies and Gentlemen,

19. To support this framework, I outline four firm commitments on behalf of the Government of Kenya:

- a) **Predictability:** Administrative decisions will be made strictly on published, objective criteria and communicated through formal channels.

- b) **Uncompromising Integrity:** Every credit issued in Kenya must be real, additional, measurable, permanent, and independently verified, backed by robust protections against double-issuance, double-use, and double-claiming.
- c) **People Before Carbon:** Where project activities interact with land, local livelihoods, and community rights, Kenya demands genuine Free, Prior, and Informed Consent (FPIC), equitable benefit-sharing, and lasting community value. A nominal signature or a benefit-sharing agreement that exists only on paper will not satisfy regulatory standards.
- d) **Value Beyond Carbon:** Carbon revenue is a catalyst, not the final objective. We prioritize investments that transfer technology, build local skill sets, generate sustainable employment, and create local

value. At the Approval stage, every project will answer one core question: *What tangible benefit does Kenya gain beyond the carbon credit?*

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. I wish to recognize the diplomat leaders present today representing Switzerland, the Republic of Korea, the European Union, the United Kingdom, Norway, and Singapore.

21. Your engagement demonstrates trust in Kenya's regulatory leadership. The Guide is structured to align our bilateral agreements seamlessly with national regulatory requirements.

22. Where bilateral treaties stipulate additional parameters, we will apply them strictly within our national legal framework, NDC ambition, and Article 6 integrity standards.

23. To our project developers and financiers - an **authorization is a regulatory act of sovereign accounting.** It is neither a **commercial guarantee nor a substitute for risk management.** Developers must maintain thorough due diligence and construct commercially viable, bankable projects.

24. To the Designated National Authority (DNA), the Climate Change Directorate, sector regulators, and County Governments: we must **administer this Guide with discipline, efficiency, and speed.**

25. A regulatory framework achieves value through fair and timely execution. Let us demonstrate the institutional efficiency needed to deliver on these commitments.

26. The Guide is designed to evolve. It will undergo formal review every two years. Within 18 to 24 months, we will issue a consolidated update reflecting implementation data, market developments, and evolving international regulations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

27. I wish to express my gratitude to the technical teams across the **State Department** and the **National Carbon Budget Committee** who developed this document, under the leadership of the **Director of the Climate Change Directorate - Dr. Pacifica Ogola**.

28. My deepest gratitude goes to all our bilateral and multilateral development partners who have walked alongside Kenya on our climate action and carbon markets journey. Your support has been

fundamental in taking us from policy conceptualization to the operational framework we launch today.

29. In Particular, I recognize the **Global Green Growth Institute (GGGI)**, represented by **Ms. Nagnouma Kone**, for their steady technical support throughout this process. I also extend our appreciation to our international partners supporting the **Carbon Transaction Facility** including **Sweden, Norway, Singapore, and the United Kingdom**. Your steadfast commitments continue to catalyze our climate ambitions.

30. Finally, I acknowledge **Dr. Mamo B. Mamo** and the team at the **National Environment Management Authority (NEMA)**, who are Kenya's Designated National Authority, for their institutional

oversight in all our carbon markets processes.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

31. Carbon markets, governed with transparency and integrity, serve as a vital bridge to a resilient, low-carbon future. Today, we lay the foundations of that bridge. Kenya has defined the framework, set the standards, and established the path forward. Let us now execute this mandate together with integrity.

32. It is now my distinguished honor to declare the *Kenya Guide for Strategic Engagement in Carbon Markets 2026* officially launched.

Thank you.

God Bless You