

SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF LANDS & PHYSICAL PLANNING PROF. JACOB KAIMENYI DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 51st GOVERNING COUNCIL MEETING OF THE RCMRD, ON THURSDAY 16TH NOVEMBER 2017 at 9.00 AM AT THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR MAPPING OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT (RCMRD) IN NAIROBI, KENYA.

THE CHAIRPERSON RCMRD GOVERNING COUNCIL,

MEMBERS OF THE GOVERNING COUNCIL,

DIRECTOR GENERAL OF THE REGIONAL CENTRE FOR MAPPING OF RESOURCES FOR DEVELOPMENT (RCMRD),

REPRESENTATIVE FROM THE UNITED NATIONS ECONOMIC COMMISSION FOR AFRICA (UNECA),

MEMBERS OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE,

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN.

It is my great pleasure to warmly welcome you all to Nairobi and Kenya. On behalf of the Government of The Republic of Kenya and in particular the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning.

I am very happy to join you this morning during the opening ceremony of the 51st meeting of the Governing Council of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD). Kenya is greatly honored to be one of the founder member states of RCMRD and also its host since 1975 when it was established.

Distinguished delegates,

I wish to express my profound gratitude to RCMRD Management for hosting this 51st Governing Council meeting and to all of you for having accepted the invitation to come for this very important meeting.

Distinguished delegates

The ideals upon which RCMRD was established by our countries include the spirit of Pan-Africanism, desire for regional integration and mutual support through pooling of scarce resources from our respective countries to have a centre of excellence that would in turn avail us with technical support, capacity development programmes and project implementation in the fields of geo-information and natural resources management.

Indeed, the need for our countries to establish secure and authentic land tenure systems, to create robust national spatial data infrastructures and national land information management systems cannot be overemphasized. These are platforms upon which our countries can make strategic informed development decisions, inspire investor confidence and engender harmonious co-existence of our peoples through sustainable land reforms.

Let us challenge ourselves to find solutions to turn domestic land challenges into opportunities; opportunities to determine optimal use of land and create wealth.

In the conversations and deliberations that you will hold I would like to encourage you to also deliberate in detail how we can harness more the geo-information available today as well as advanced earth observation technologies to improve

food security issues in our countries, disaster management, resource monitoring as well planning our urban areas. I believe we share these common concerns in all our Member states and yet possess varying capabilities and expertise that the RCMRD fraternity can facilitate sharing in terms of practical solutions.

My Ministry has during the last decade put in a lot of effort to make various reforms in the land sector through National Land Policy formulation, Constitutional changes in 2010 and enactment of a number of legislations such as the Land Act 2012, Land Registration Act 2012, National Land Commission Act 2011, Environment and Land Court Act 2011 and the Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011. All these are aimed at making land administration and management more efficient and transparent. Efforts to reform and modernize our land record management systems, mapping and registration of titles to land are on course. In addition Kenya is now well on the road towards digitization, mapping and completion of the national spatial data infrastructure. Indeed, we are prepared to share whatever experience we have in some of these areas with you all for mutual learning.

We are indeed proud of a number of member states who have made great strides in achieving global standards as per the World Bank Doing Business Indicators and urge you to utilize the centre to adopt a common development approach such that we may literally carry one another along, to ensure region-wide standards and create a formidable regional block. Indeed this is the one sector that may well contribute to the true spirit of Pan Africanism.

Distinguished delegates

I urge RCMRD member states to take advantage of the existing excellent facilities and expertise at this Centre and optimize the use of the available services. It is my hope that during this meeting, delegates from different member states will take time to look at possible programs that they can work on in conjunction with RCMRD to help our countries address the many challenges facing us. This should be pursued concurrently with efforts to further develop the capacities of our national surveying and mapping institutions to improve geospatial information services delivery in our respective countries.

Let me take this opportunity once again to remind you that the deliberations of this important meeting require passion, leadership and innovation. This is the sector that may propel each of our countries to greater economic growth hence every support should be given to the Centre, to provide the services that are much needed, to link strategic programs with strategic technical expertise and to ensure best practice, quality and standards.

Distinguished delegates

I would like to once again assure you that Kenya remains committed to supporting RCMRD and to champion the resolutions of this meeting.

Let me take this opportunity to wish you all a wonderful stay in Kenya and to declare the 51st Governing Council meeting officially open.

Welcome all; Karibuni Kenya