

A call for Community engagement in the Wetlands restoration and environment Conservation



Figure 1 Deputy Governor Nandi County Dr. Dr Yulita Chebotip Cheruyiot far left with county officials.

Kenya: On February 2, 2023, the Kenya Platform for Climate Governance (KPCG) in partnership with the County Government of Nandi, NEMA, Kenya Forest Service, International Crane Foundation held a commemoration event on World Wetlands Day in **Upper Kingwal Swamp, Kapkong'ony, Nandi County**. Kingwal wetlands, Kingwal swamp is an extensive high-altitude wetland located north of the Nandi Hills

World's Wetlands Day is celebrated on February 2nd, which also marks the Anniversary of the Ramsar Convention on wetlands, adopted as an international treaty in 1971 at Ramsar in Iran to which Kenya is a signatory.

Speaking to participants, Anne Tek, the coordinator of Kenya Platform for Climate Governance (KPCG) called the Nandi County on engaging Civil Society organizations, women and youth in the process of environment conservation, and climate Change.

Upper Kingwal Swamp, is known as a breeding site for the rare and endangered Sitatunga antelope (*Tragelaphus spekii*) and habitat of for a significant crane bird population and the Water Berry. It has been used by communities as hub for medicinal search, a lace for firewood and others. These human activities degraded significantly the swamp over the years.

The Deputy Governor of Nandi County Dr Yulita Chebotip Cheruyiot led the celebrations which brought together community members from different areas including youth, women. In her speech she recognized the need to continue to raise the awareness of communities on matters of Wetlands and the importance to conserve, restore and protect them above all to be conscious of the climate crisis that we are facing in the world.

The Wildlife population in the County is erratic due to intense and extensive human settlement coupled with intensive agricultural activities. Stakeholders in the region conducted zonation exercise in order to protect the biodiversity. The deputy Governor assured participants that the government will conduct a survey of the wetlands in the region and take adequate measures to ensure that civilians do not encroach and further destroy the wetlands. In her call to action to the community the governor promised to plant 53 seedlings in the near future.

The County Director of National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) in Nandi County Mr. Simon Tanui reiterated the need to stop polluting wetlands and encroaching on the land interfering with the drainage and movement of the wetlands. The carbon sinks are a crucial moving part of the ecosystem and they have to be protected.

Youth Representative Noeline Maru challenged the youth to join environmental clubs to educate themselves and to be part of the solutions for climate change. In the same breath, she recognized that the county and national government can utilize the youth to be involved in matters related to achieving climate change citing that they are willing and able.







Figure 2 Anne Tek- KPCG National Coordinator giving her remarks at the Celebration