KENYA PARTICIPATES IN THE UNFF16

PRESIDENT OF THE UN GENERAL ASSEMBLY VISITS KFS

K9 SECURITY TO FOSTER FOREST PROTECTION

PROGRESS TOWARDS ACHIEVING AND MAINTAINING 10% TREE COVER BY 2022
As the world continues to grapple with the global unprecedented effects brought about by the pandemic with nations and societies tirelessly striving to re-align and re-think socio-economic linkages for recovery and a better future, I understand that mankind’s best tools going forward entail among others, hope and ingenuity.

The Forester Magazine’s 30th issue has been published with the aim of outlining the efforts of Kenya Forest Service in projecting the central themes of hope and ingenuity over the past 6 months. Key among this include a read on Kenya’s participation in the 16th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF16) where Kenya’s National Focal Point for UNFF, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Julius Kamau outlined to the global audience the steps the country’s forest sector is currently undertaking to aid in the national recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Furthermore, multiple reads in the publication highlight the organization’s partnership approach in actualizing tree planting and regeneration of green spaces which are an essential facet in the recovery phase of the pandemic through wide reforestation within the country. Stakeholder partnerships such as the “Adopt a Forest Initiative” between the Service and the Ministry of Energy, development of green spaces with Uasin Gishu County, tree planting with the Akurinu religious group and a workshop with the United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) in conjunction with Kenya Wildlife Service, among other articles, headline our dedication towards establishing concerted efforts in conservation and management of forests in the country.

Furthermore, an article on the launch of the COVID-19 vaccination drive further augments the efforts KFS has instituted in curbing the spread of the disease.

This publication also outlines the various key international environmental celebrations marked in the course of the year. These include, the International Day of Forests, World Wildlife Day, Earth Day Commemorations, World Wetlands Day and Africa Environment Day/Wangari Maathai Day. The celebrations highlight our resolve as part of a global society in further actualizing and marking milestones in conservation goals despite the challenges posed by the pandemic.

I therefore invite you to interact with our content and relive the experiences and actions of the organization in 2021, which are geared towards playing a part in reshaping and re-defining what is now an inevitable new reality globally whilst placing conservation at the heart of our efforts.

Happy reading.
Ann Kaari, ‘ndc’ (K)
The year 2021 has proven to be a critical year in the forestry sector, both locally and internationally, as the world still struggles with the global COVID19 pandemic. Now more than ever before, the role of forests has occupied a central place in the post COVID19 economic recovery programmes (ERPs) as it has in the mitigation of climate change adversities.

Here in Kenya, 2021 marks the final year as the country strives to achieve a 10% tree cover by 2022 in line with the Presidential directive which brought the date forward from 2030. The Service continues to spearhead this agenda, and pursuant to it developed a strategy in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to guide the process which primarily sets focus on sustainable production of quality tree seedlings to sustain the national tree growing momentum and attraction of stakeholders through the Adopt a Forest Framework to support conservation and restoration activities to raise the national tree cover. So far, KFS has entered into forest conservation agreements with 31 Ministries and State Departments and 26 Non-State actors, and continues to explore more avenues for collaborations with an open-door policy to all like-minded forest conservation enthusiasts/entities.
In the six-month period of this magazine issue, I have steered the Service as Kenya’s National Focal Point at the 16th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF) which was virtually convened by the UNFF Secretariat in New York in April to discuss solutions for global forest protection and the implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF) 2017-2030, as well as launching of the flagship publication on implementation of the six (6) global forestry goals (GFGs).

Through the guidance of the KFS Board, the Service has registered remarkable progress as the lead agency mandated “to provide for the development and sustainable management, including conservation and rational utilization of all forest resources for the socioeconomic development of the Country and for connected purposes.”

The Service through stakeholder engagement and participation continued to implement the Presidential Directive to all MDAs to dedicate 10% of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) budgets towards forestry. This led to the Service scaling up seedling production to supply demand for restoration and rehabilitation of degraded forest areas.

During this period KFS through the Ministry of Environment and Forestry received the approved Human Resource Instruments (Organization and Grading Structure, Career Guidelines, Staff Establishment and Human Resource Policy and Procedures Manual) by the State Corporation Advisory Committee (SCAC). These instruments have as well been approved by the Board for full implementation. Further to this, a Change Management Team has been appointed to oversee the seamless transition of the staff based on the new instruments.

Finally, as we look forward to the remaining half of 2021, the Service is geared towards the short rains tree planting campaign scheduled for the September-December period. I therefore call upon all Kenyans and our stakeholders to come out strongly in support of the 10% tree cover national goal by 2022, which is not only a KFS responsibility but a collective responsibility of all of us as patriotic Kenyans.

Mr. Julius Kamau
Chief Conservator of Forests

“I therefore call upon all Kenyans and our stakeholders to come out strongly in support of the 10% tree cover national goal by 2022, which is not only a KFS responsibility but a collective responsibility of all of us as patriotic Kenyans”
The Constitution of Kenya “emphasizes on the need to ‘work to achieve and maintain a tree cover of at least ten per cent of the land area of Kenya”, while also, the United Nations necessitates for member states to maintain a similar threshold in their respective national tree cover targets. In 2018, His Excellency President Uhuru Kenyatta made a commitment for Kenya to achieve and surpass this constitutional requirement by 2022. Subsequently, the Cabinet approved the 'National Strategy for Achieving and Maintaining over 10% Tree Cover by 2022', to operationalize the directive.

Towards achievement of this National Strategy, since 2017, 374 million tree seedlings have been produced across the country by Kenya Forest Service (KFS), government institutions and private tree nurseries. A total of 78 million tree seedlings have been planted in natural forests during the reporting period and restocking of forest plantation areas was also undertaken on 23,000 hectares of land. Consequently, there has been approximately 65% survival rate of the planted seedlings.

Furthermore, the Service instituted the establishment, refurbishing and expansion of its 155 tree nurseries to cater for the expected increase and demand in tree seedling production across the country and coupled by the drilling of four boreholes in 4 counties. The National Bamboo Policy of 2019 has also given impetus to growing of bamboo seedlings. The National Mangrove Ecosystem Management Plan 2017 -2027 also facilitates for the growing of mangrove propagules and conservation of mangrove resources in the coastal strip to further develop the ecosystem.

To enhance efficient management and timely reporting of seedling production and tree planting, the Service has established an online reporting system and an interactive online portal for registration of all tree nurseries countrywide. Registration of private tree nurseries is vital in guiding the certification process consequently enhancing access to good-quality tree seedlings by the public.

Additionally, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Julius Kamau, attributes the ease in developing and implementing tree seedling maintenance processes through the advancing of strategic partnerships. This for instance has been achieved through the 'Adopt-A-Forest' initiative where 199 partner organizations have been engaged in tree planting and maintenance and a total of 18,000 hectares rehabilitated through the initiative. These strategic partnerships have also enabled fencing of various forest blocks such as Aberdare, Eburu, Mount Kenya, Karura and Ngong Road forests among others. Fencing of forest blocks has proved to be a successful solution to forest conservation and protection by enabling a destruction free environment for natural regeneration with notable improvements in forest cover being observed through satellite imagery.

Furthermore, other areas of collaboration and partnerships at KFS are being undertaken by several organizations. For instance, Africa Development Bank supports forest conservation and community livelihoods in 15 counties through the Green Zones Development Project; FAO supports forests and farmer producer organizations in various forests. FAO and the Global Environmental Facility (GEF) currently support forest management in Kirisia Forest and Integrated Rangeland Management as well as bio–enterprise and community incentives in restoration of arid and semi-arid lands. Kirisia Forest in Samburu County is a successful case of Participatory Forest Management, where, hundreds of families that had settled in the forest chose to voluntarily move out after receiving training on the importance of forestry conservation.

WWF, UNDP and the World Bank, East African Community, African Forest Forum and the African Regional Forest Stewardship Council on forest certification process for Kenya are also contributing to land and forest landscape restoration among other activities.

Additionally, 9,000 jobless youth have also been
engaged in tree nursery activities, cleaning of green spaces and tree planting through the Kazi Mtaani programme. This further adds onto the socio-economic development and employment creation initiatives by the government.

There has been effective engagement of county governments and local communities which has aided in reclamation of over 55,000 hectares of encroached forest land. These include forests in Maasai Mau and Eastern Mau, Kirisia forest in Samburu County, Cheptais forest in Bungoma County, Saboti forest (Makunga block) in Trans Nzoia County, among others. All reclamation processes are guided through a Human Rights-Based toolkit developed in collaboration with UNDP and the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights with emphasis paid on safeguarding the rights of affected individuals throughout the reclamation process.

The Service has continued to protect the existing 2.59 million hectares of gazetted public forests from various ever-present threats. This is achieved through employing various high-tech interventions such as drone technology to support surveillance and monitoring of forest land and, training and equipping forest rangers to improve their operational capacity. Furthermore, the Participatory Forest Management approach has successfully engaged forest-adjacent communities in forest conservation, hence promoting forest protection and security through local vigilance activities.

109,139.48 hectares of new forests have also been gazetted since 2017 and a further 19,836.54 hectares have been identified, surveyed and forwarded for gazettment. The Service in consultation with County Governments has also surveyed an additional 604 hectares of community forests.

In the technological spectrum, KFS has designed the National Forest Monitoring System to track performance in the forestry sector. Furthermore, with support from the UK Space Agency, Kenya has developed a Forest Alert System that enables forest managers to monitor, report and act on changes in forest cover in real-time using satellite imagery information relayed through mobile phones. This prompts response and appropriate action.

Under the Reducing Emissions from Degradation and Deforestation (REDD+) process, Kenya has established and submitted National Forest Reference Emissions Level to the UN Framework Convention on Climate Change (UNFCCC). The National REDD+ Strategy and environmental safeguards information system is currently being finalized and this will contribute to enhancing Kenya's restoration agenda.

Chief Conservator of Forests
Mr Julius Kamau leading a tree planting exercise at Peponi block of Karura Forest. The Service has upscaled tree seedlings production and tree growing activities towards attainment of a 10% national tree cover by 2022.
Kenya Forest Service (KFS) was recently honoured to host the United Nation's President of the 75th session of the General Assembly (PGA) His Excellency Volkan Bozkir at Karura Forest. The PGA was in the country to attend a high level mid-term review meeting of the Committee of the Permanent Representatives to the UN Habitat.

The PGA was received at Karura by the Ministry of Environment & Forestry Cabinet Secretary Mr. Keriako Tobiko alongside KFS Board Chairman Peter Kinyua and the Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau. He then proceeded to plant a tree at the Wangari Maathai Corner in honour of the Kenyan Late Nobel Laureate and environmental conservationist. The President also took a walk inside Karura forest to appreciate one of the world's largest forests fully within a city's limits.

During an interactive session held at the Amani Gardens in Kaura Forest, the PGA noted that recovery of economies in the world during the Covid 19 pandemic should be in line with the Sustainable Development Goals. He further commended the actions of the late Prof. Wangari Mathaai in conservation of forests and nature for future generations noting that her efforts have helped to restore the harmonious relationship between humanity and the natural world.

Speaking during the interactive session, Mr. Keriako Tobiko thanked the PGA for taking time to visit Karura Forest and interact with communities involved in forest conservation. He also noted that the keen interest shown by the President on conservation efforts in the country emphasized the universality of environment. “Environment does not know territorial boundaries as destruction of environment in any part of the world affects everyone.” The CS further noted the spirit of multilateralism in solving environmental emergencies has been instrumental in involving all voices affected by the environmental matters.

In his address, the KFS Board Chairman Peter Kinyua thanked the government through the ministry for the support in enabling the Service engineer forest management policies to promote sustainable forest management including adoption of modern technologies to enable partners and stakeholders to participate in tree planting and forest protection.

The CCF Julius Kamau made a presentation highlighting approaches the Service has initiated to enhance forest conservation and protection in the country. These include utilizing technological innovations for monitoring and surveillance, adoption of creative financing mechanisms for urban forest restoration and development and engaging forest adjacent communities in forest conservation.
The Ministry of Environment and Forestry (MoEF) has commenced the process for a consolidated review of the National Policies on Forestry Sector in Kenya. The process, which took off in May this year, is supported by the United Nations Development Programme and brings together all semi-autonomous government agencies under the ministry in the development of the policies. The SAGAs include; Kenya Forest Service, Kenya Forestry Research Institute, Kenya Water Towers Agency, National Environment Complaints Committee, National Environment Trust Fund, National Environment Management Authority, and the Kenya Meteorological Department among others.

The Principal Secretary, MoEF Dr. Chris Kiptoo together with the ministry's Chief Administrative Secretary (CAS) Hon. Mohamed Elmi led participating agencies in a three day workshop where technical specialists from the SAGAs including dons from academic institutions providing environment, natural resources and forestry courses converged to review the existing policies, identify gaps and develop frameworks that would inform the review process.

The workshop was attended by all heads of the SAGAs including the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr Julius Kamau. He was also joined by the DCCF (Forest Conservation & Management) Ms Charity Munyasia, Mr. Benedict Omondi (Head Watershed Management) and Mr. Josephat Iganji (Head Planning & Monitoring). At the workshop, PS Kiptoo called for the strengthening of institutions under the Ministry and called for a synergized consolidated approach in finalizing policy review to minimize institutional duplication and overlaps, as well as avoid the formation of new entities. The CAS also reiterated the use of existing institutions to strengthen and enhance service delivery of environment related obligations in the country. He called for harmonization of existing laws and regulations governing the sector if tangible results were to be achieved towards sustainable environmental management.

The workshop identified main features of the revised policy framework for forest conservation and sustainable management which included; main streaming forest conservation and management into national land use, reconfiguration of forest governance...
and management arrangements for efficient running of the forestry sector clarifying the division of responsibilities between public sector institutions, integration of climate change mitigation and adaptation measures in forest management through reduced emissions for deforestation and forest degradation (REDD+) to minimize impacts of climate change and contribute towards achieving forest related National Determined Goals, improving the competitiveness of Kenya's commercial forestry etc.

The review process also highlighted the need for a national bamboo policy which would then provide the legal backing to promote its growing and commercialization. The CCF also pointed to the need for anchoring bamboo growing in the forestry policy. He noted that a vibrant bamboo industry would transform and restore degraded landscapes while supplementing wood biomass from trees as a fast-growing crop. He pointed to this contributing to increase the country's tree cover.

The consolidated review on forest policies aims to provide a framework for improved forest governance, resource allocation, partnerships and collaboration between national and county governments, the private sector and non-state actors. It provides for monitoring and evaluation to enable the sector contribute to the achievement of the country's growth and poverty alleviation goals within a sustainable environment. The policies under review will as well deepen community participation in forest management through elaborate strategies and financing that will enhance benefit sharing noting that forest resources belong to the people and the government holds the resource in trust for the people providing policy and regulation to foster sustainability.

KFS, KENHA PARTNER IN TREE SEEDLING PRODUCTION AND INFRASTRUCTURE BEAUTIFICATION

Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) signed a Framework of Collaboration for the development of a modern tree nursery at the Nairobi Arboretum.

The tree nursery will be established at a cost of 20 million Kenyan Shillings, with the aim of developing its capacity to produce up to 1 million indigenous tree seedlings annually and further augment KeNHA's contribution to the tree cover increment national agenda.

The establishment is further aimed at generating and supplying quality seedlings to Nairobi County residents and also supply seedlings for road-side enrichment and beautification of KeNHA's walkways, urban roads and highway projects.

The project will also leverage the participation of the Nairobi Arboretum Conservancy Community Forest Association (NACCFA) in the management of the nursery while drawing technical support from KFS. In ensuring water security, the project partners have also incorporated efforts from Athi Water Works through the installation of a water borehole for the sustenance of the nursery and provision of water for other needs at the green space.
The 16th Session of the United Nations Forum on Forests (UNFF16) took place over the period, 26-29th April 2021 and was hosted virtually by the UNFF Secretariat in New York, to discuss solutions for protecting and restoring forests globally. UNFF is the only global forum under the United Nations (UN) which convenes regularly to discuss the singular agenda of sustainable management of forests; The major focus of UNFF16 was implementation of the UN Strategic Plan for Forests (UNSPF), 2017-2030; launching of the flagship publication on implementation of the six (6) global forest goals (GFGs); the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on sustainable forest management, means of implementation for UNSPF; Monitoring, Assessment and Reporting of the implementation of UNSPF; the operations of the Forum's Trust Fund; and dates and venues for the seventh session of the Forum and its provisional agenda; Kenya Forest Service (KFS) with support and coordination of the Kenya Permanent Mission to the United Nations office in New York, participated in the UNFF16 and provided numerous inputs to the discussions on the agenda items for the Forum and during the side event which was hosted by FAO on 29th April 2021.

During the opening segment for the Forum on Monday, 26th April 2021 which discussed emerging issues on impacts of COVID-19 pandemic on forests and the forest sector, Kenya National Focal Point for UNFF, the Chief Conservator of Forests, Julius Kamau, informed the Forum of Kenya's participation and provision of inputs to the regional studies on the impacts of COVID-19 pandemic. These studies had been commissioned by the Forum on the forestry sectors, forest dependent people, local communities; and sustainable forest management.

He noted that Kenya, similarly to other Member States to the Forum, has been negatively affected by the COVID-19 pandemic in multiple ways which curtailed the 2020 and 2021 national tree planting campaigns, celebrations for the International Day of Forests (IDF) which could not be conducted due to the restrictions on human interactions and movement and the lockdowns. The CCF also shared Kenya's forest sector experiences and responses to the COVID-19 pandemic and measures instituted to mitigate the impacts of the pandemic.
These include: Development and implementation of the post-COVID-19 Economic Recovery Programme (ERP) from 2020/21 Financial Year; the Kazi Mtaani Programme under which the youths are engaged for seedling production, tree planting and environmental clean-up activities; the Plantation Establishment and Livelihood Improvement Scheme (PELIS) which has provided vulnerable groups with incomes to support their livelihoods. Other emerging experiences in Kenya under the COVID-19 pandemic, for instance, the importance of public forests, particularly those in the cities and urban areas providing healthy green spaces for Kenyans to connect with nature for self-reflection, recreation and emotional healing was also shared with the Forum.

Kenya recognizes that these green spaces will continue to play a critical role in the recovery from COVID-19 pandemic through but not limited to; provision of clean air, safe water, food security, green jobs, and livelihoods especially to the most vulnerable communities. Currently Kenya is working with UNEP towards the development of the Urban Green Spaces Initiative to support the implementation of the aforementioned Government initiative.

Kenya had earlier on been requested by the UNFF Secretariat to share its experiences on implementation of the global forest goal No. 2, “Enhance forest-based economic, social and environmental benefits, including by improving the livelihoods of forest-dependent people”. This was done through a prerecorded video where the Chief Conservator of Forests participated as a panelist.

Kenya also participated in a side event sponsored by UNEP and FAO on 29th April 2021 under the theme, “The Restoration Factory: a business accelerator to achieve the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration goals”. The country was led in its participation by the Permanent Representative (PR) to UN, Ambassador Martin Kimani who delivered a key note speech at the side event. The side event provided an opportunity for exchange in ideas on incubation of viable business concepts and opportunities for training tree farmers and upscaling in readiness for the market. Kenya provided its experiences with the revolving loans which are provided to farmers and farmer groups for establishment of farm forestry enterprises and other early maturing livelihood enterprises supportive of tree growing and landscape restoration activities.

During its deliberations, commitments by Member States to the UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration 2021-2030 also featured significantly. Members recalled that on 1 March 2019, the UN General Assembly declared 2021–2030 the “UN Decade on Ecosystem Restoration.”This call to action has the purpose of recognizing the need to accelerate global restoration of degraded ecosystems, to fight climate change, enhance food security, provide clean water and protect the planet's biodiversity. For these to be achieved, the scale of restoration will be key.

In the concluding statement, the Forum resolved to protect and conserve forests, people and planet. Sustainable Forest Management (SFM) was viewed as the clearest pathway for preventing biodiversity loss in post-COVID recovery. It was noted that to maintain high forest cover there is a need for adequate financial resources and that the forest sector is key in addressing unemployment and mitigation of future pandemics.
MULTI-AGENCY SUPPORT TO RECLAIM MT. ELGON FOREST

Mount Elgon water tower is one among the five water towers in Kenya and covers a total area of 170,983 Ha. The water tower comprises of Mt. Elgon National Park (10,542 Ha), Chepkitale National Reserve (19,768 Ha), gazetted forest area (72,548 Ha), and a 5 kilometres buffer zone (68,080 Ha).

As a water tower, the forest ecosystem is a lifeline to millions of people, not only in Kenya but also in neighbouring Uganda. The natural feature is also an important pillar of Kenya's economy supporting key sectors such as tourism and agriculture. The gazetted forest area, which traverses Bungoma and Trans Nzoia counties, has eight forest stations namely: Cheptais, Kaberua, Kaboiywo, Sosiyo, Suam, Saboti, Kimotho and Kiptogot.

In the past, the water tower has faced immense challenges top of all being insecurity during the infamous Sabaot Land Defence Forces (SLDF) period in which the militia used the forest as a hideout. The militia group terrorised residents living at the foot of Mt. Elgon in a complex conflict that was majorly attributed to land disputes and local power struggles leading to appalling degradation of part of the largest Cheptais forest station.

In May 2008, the Kenyan Government carried out a sting operation led by the Kenya Defence Forces resulting to the collapse of SLDF and its leader Wycliffe Matakwei. By then, sections of Cheptais forest had already been encroached and forest land converted to crop plantations. This led to continued destruction of the forest as more indigenous trees, such as the Elgon Teak, were rampantly cut down to pave way for more spaces for farming. The result of this led to destruction of wildlife habitat and biodiversity, soil erosion, pollution of water sources with dire effects to locals downstream who depended on the forest ecosystem for fresh water among other ecological services.

However, in June 2020, Kenya Forest Service in a move to save the forest from further loss led a multi-agency operation involving the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government (MOICNG), the National Police Service and the Kenya Wildlife Service. The mission of the operation was geared towards stopping further encroachment of Cheptais forest and put an end to the forest illegalities taking place.

The operation was conducted in adherence to a human rights-based approach, where prior to its commencement, MOICNG through local administration structures involving area chiefs and community elders issued a notice to locals carrying out illegal farming in the forest to vacate. The multi-agency team then moved in following lapse of the notice and began destroying shanties that had been constructed to deter wildlife from ravaging through crop plantations. The team also destroyed onion seedbeds, maize and other crops in a move to completely discourage the encroachers from moving back.
Bungoma County Ecosystem Conservator Vitalis Osodo notes that by the end of the operation, over 500 shanties and 1000 onion seedbeds had been destroyed. He further outlined that the operation succeeded without resistance from the community who opted to voluntarily vacate the forest.

The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF), Julius Kamau notes that "Within six months from the commencement of the operation, KFS had successfully reclaimed over 4,000 Ha of Cheptais forest station that had been encroached."

During an aerial and ground surveillance of the reclaimed area by the CCF and a visit to the KFS operation camp at Cheptais forest station, he observed that following the successful recovery of the forest land, clear signs of the area's healing was evident with an upsurge of shrubs and grasses noted.

While issuing new uniform kits and boots to forest rangers deployed in the forest station, Mr Kamau also noted that after the operation, KFS has actively remained in the region to sustain patrols and ensure no further encroachment activities take place to avoid interference of the natural regeneration of the forest land.

Downstream communities have also welcomed the move by the Service to secure the forest into the future having already experienced benefits such as increased water levels from rivers flowing from the forest area. Communities have also appreciated reduced siltation of the rivers resulting to the re-emergence of wildlife. The Service, through its regional office, is working with conservation partners and environment stakeholders to engage the local communities in conservation of the water tower. KFS teams are engaging youth and women groups in establishing community tree nurseries to grow endemic indigenous tree species to rehabilitate portions of the degraded forest with low seed bank through enrichment planting.

KFS is also seeking partnership opportunities for funding to work with the community in formulating Participatory Forest Management Plans and, establish and strengthen community forest associations (CFAs). Through these associations, the community will work with KFS in restoration, management and protection of the forest while also benefiting through non-extractive income generating activities such as the establishment of apiaries, recreational and ecotourism facilities.

Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau issues new sets of uniform to KFS personnel deployed at the Cheptais Forest Station operation camp in Mt. Elgon Forest
The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has made tremendous progress since the enactment of the Forest Conservation and Management Act of 2016 (FCMA). The Service solidified its position as the leading agency charged with the sustainable management of all public forests in the country following many innovative and progressive policy decisions that saw KFS continue to execute its mandate effectively and in the process support the country’s socio-economic growth agenda.

It was realized that lack of adequate plantable seedlings was affecting the momentum for forest rehabilitation and tree planting that would eventually lead to the realization of the 10% forest cover. KFS therefore began by establishing a robust seedling production programme involving the KFS nurseries and private & community nurseries countrywide.

Internally, KFS has been able to refurbish 142 tree nurseries to enhance the capacity of the Service in seedling production in line with the national goal of attaining 10% tree cover by 2022. The refurbishment was mainly focused on improving efficiency in storage, distribution and security. This also involved drilling of four boreholes to support seedling production in Nakuru, Isiolo, Nairobi and Meru Counties. The Service also provided technical support to institutional and private tree nurseries to enhance production of high quality seedlings required for achieving 10% tree cover by 2022.

The Service was instrumental in enhancing production and planting of bamboo seedlings with various partners including; ENSDA, Upper Tana Project, County Governments of Uasin Gishu and Elgeyo Marakwet. This also included the enhanced production of propagules for rehabilitation of mangrove forests ecosystems at the coast. Cumulatively, a total of 74,864,384 tree seedlings were produced across the country by KFS, government institutions and private nurseries across the country.

It is also during this period that the Service developed and launched an internal online reporting system to enhance efficiency and timely reporting of seedling production and tree planting activities. And in a bid to improve the tracking and reporting of the tree seedling production by the private nurseries and other government institutions in a timely, accurate and efficient manner, the KFS developed an innovative and interactive online portal for registration of the two categories of tree nurseries.

In the very critical area of forest protection and security, a total of 55,884.5 Ha of forest land which had been encroached or irregularly acquired was reclaimed in various parts of the country most notably in Samburu and Narok Counties.

Other protection efforts included the fencing of 50 kilometers boundary of the Maasai Mau forest, surveillance and patrol of Lonyek/Loisaba areas within the common boundaries of Baringo, Laikipia and Samburu Counties to stop charcoal burning and illegal harvesting of sandal wood.

To further enhance forest security, the Service through the forest 2020 project developed the Survey123 computer application technology for monitoring forest offences and especially illegal logging. This technology which is being piloted in Kwale County will also be instrumental in monitoring forest fires, boundaries as well as general forest health. As a result of the acquisition of this technology, forest illegalities have significantly reduced in the piloted areas.

The Service has also received 140 mobile communication gadgets from the National Security Telecommunication Service (NSTS) which have significantly boosted communication between the Service and other security agencies. This is in addition to the installation of 3 repeater stations in Nairobi, Lamu and Nakuru to enhance radio communication.

The Service was very keen to give emphasis to the important role that Community Forest Associations (CFAs) play in the sustainable management of forests. The role of CFAs was further cemented by the appointment of Mr. Peter Wandera to represent their interests in the Board.
The Service therefore embarked on a programme to improve the capacity of CFAs through proper governance by developing the forest level management committee operational framework. The community development and financing framework was also established as well as the automation of a register for all CFAs in the country indicating key activities. The Service also supported development of 750 nature-based enterprises to enhance the livelihoods of CFA members.

These are just but a few of the very many achievements that the Service accomplished. Other accomplishments included the engagement of development partners particularly the African Development Bank in the rollout of the second phase of the Ksh.6 billion Green Zones Development Support project which is undertaking forestry development and community livelihood improvement projects in 15 counties. The other major project was the JICA supported Capacity Development Programme for Sustainable Forest Management (CADEP-SFM) which was piloted in the counties of Embu and Taita Taveta and which has played a major role in building the capacity of the two counties to take up devolved forestry functions.
Kenyforest Service and Uasin Gishu County Government put pen to paper on a framework of collaboration aimed at guiding the planning, designing and development of green spaces within the county.

To further lay mark on this definitive partnership, the Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau and Uasin Gishu County Governor H.E Jackson Mandago led the public in planting 3,200 mixed indigenous tree seedlings to mark the groundbreaking exercise for the proposed Eldoret Arboretum that will be situated along Iten Road next to the Kenya Forest Service North Rift Conservancy offices.

Uasin Gishu county is among the counties that have already signed the Transition Implementation Plans (TIPs). These plans provide a clear roadmap for the implementation of devolved forestry functions by the counties. This gives legitimacy to collaboration between KFS and the county in securing and sustainably managing the 15.6 Ha green space. This collaboration is perceived as a supporting factor in the move to transition Eldoret town to city status. Uasin Gishu is the first county to develop a framework of collaboration of this nature with KFS and this is seen as an opportunity at positively impacting commitments by other counties to further enhance their respective green spaces consequently promoting the development of nature-led development nationally.

Speaking during the ground breaking exercise, Mr. Kamau urged the county government to continue working closely with KFS field officers through sharing and developing technical expertise to further elevate the capacity of county officers in maintaining green spaces and the general ecosystem. He further added that the Service will continue to support the youth insetting up tree nurseries to supplement seedlings production whilst acting as a source of livelihood for them and further develop the green economy and consequently aid the country’s post-pandemic reconstruction efforts.
KFS OFFICERS TRAINED ON CORRUPTION PREVENTION

The KFS Integrity Committee with the support of United Nations Office on Drugs and Crime (UNODC) conducted a series of Corruption Risk Assessment Workshops under a partnership that has existed since 2015. The partnership has seen UNODC support various functional entities of KFS such as Forest Protection / Security and Legal Services.

While addressing participants at one of the workshops held at the KFS headquarters, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau appreciated the support that UNODC has continued to offer the organization. He informed the participants that establishing corruption risk mitigation strategies is a key deliverable for the Performance Contract of the Financial Year 2020/21 that KFS has signed with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and which the Board of Directors and Management are committed on delivering.

Mr. Kamau commended the great work the Integrity Committee was undertaking in preventing corruption at the Service and further cultivating a corruption free culture. The CCF added that the corruption mitigation plan developed by the Integrity Committee with the support of the UNODC will be integrated into the KFS annual plan to ensure adequate resources are allocated to implement the plan. He added that training on corruption prevention will be included in KFS training institutions to ensure KFS staff and students undertaking the courses offered by the institutions are sensitized on the compounding effects of corruption and how to prevent instances and occurrences of the behavior.

The collaboration between the two institutions has resulted in numerous benefits for the Service including training and operationalization of the Container Control Programme (multi-agency enforcement unit for tracking and investigation of forest and wildlife products), development of Wildlife and Forest Crime Digest (manual for investigation and prosecution), development of the Forestry Chapter on the Rapid Reference Guide (guide to charge sheets development), and Training of Trainers (TOT) on the 3rd edition of the Rapid Reference Guide on Wildlife, Forestry and Fisheries Offences in Kenya.

The recent workshops focused on strengthening KFS capacity in corruption prevention and mitigation. The workshops were facilitated by members of Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) Corruption Prevention Committee and a UNODC Consultant. The workshops that took place in November 2020, act as useful contacts for sharing lessons, review of KFS Anti-Corruption policies and strategies, development of corruption prevention tools including corruption risk registers, and corruption mitigation plans.

KFS AND IBER AFRICA TO PARTNER IN REHABILITATION OF CHEPTAIS FOREST

Kenya Forest Service and Iber Africa (EA) Limited signed a Framework for Collaboration that will see the two organizations partner in the rehabilitation of Cheptais forest station in Mt. Elgon through tree growing. The collaborative framework was signed between the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau and Iber Africa’s CEO Mr Henry Kanji. Iber Africa is a thermal generating power company, the first Independent Power Producer (IPP) in Kenya to generate power through the use of heavy fuel oil (HFOs).

The collaborative framework seeks to contribute towards the increment of Kenya’s tree cover as part of Iber Africa’s support of the government in the attainment of 10% tree cover by 2022. The collaboration will also support the company in achieving carbon neutrality, by offsetting the emissions generated during their energy production processes.
Kenya Forest Service entered into a contractual agreement with the Londiani Community Forest Association (LOCOFA) during the launch of the 'Adopt-A-Forest Initiative' campaign at Mount Blackett Forest block in Londiani, Kericho County.

The contract operationalizes a four-year implementation plan between the Ministry of Energy (MoE) and the Ministry of Environment & Forestry (MoEF) through Kenya Forest Service, to rehabilitate 107.6Ha of Mt Blackett Forest which forms part of the catchment area that serves for hydro power production at Sondu Miriu River.

The launch was presided by Cabinet Secretaries Keriako Tobiko (MoEF) and Charles Keter (Energy) and, Kericho County Governor Prof. Paul Chepkwony. The contract was signed by the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau and Londiani Community Forest Association members to ensure joint collaborative efforts towards restoration and rehabilitation of the forest block.

Speaking at the launch, Environment CS Mr. Keriako Tobiko thanked the Energy Ministry for sustained commitment in conservation. He commended the Governor and entire leadership of Kericho County for their dedication in environmental and forest conservation through the enactment of laws and policies that work to secure gains made in forest conservation and protection.
“His Excellency the President directed bamboo be gazetted as a cash crop, and we are happy that the county government is urging residents to replace eucalyptus trees with bamboo in riparian areas,” noted Mr. Tobiko.

Energy CS Hon. Charles Keter noted that the partnership between the two ministries has existed for more than 10 years, witnessed tree planting in more than nine counties and will continue for the benefit of the entire country. He also added that the partnership is key in keeping our country's hydroelectric dependence stable. "We need to keep partnering to adopt forests and plant more trees as directed by The President," underscored Hon. Keter.

He further urged the community to keep working together with the Service in conservation and protection of the forests around them. He added that his ministry, through the Kenya Power & Lighting Company, would install electricity in critical project areas including a forest rangers' camp where the launch took place.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau welcomed the partnership noting that the multi-stakeholder and multi-agency approach signifies a new strategy that the Service is taking towards conserving vital forest resources.

“Our gathering here today is a testimony of success in building synergies among government ministries, departments, and agencies to advance the conservation of critical forest resources which are our national heritage and important water towers,” said Mr. Kamau.

He noted that through the Adopt-A-Forest framework of collaboration, a total of 6,607 Ha had been adopted out of which 5,000 Ha had already been planted.

The Adopt-A-Forest Initiative is part of the strategic master plan by the Ministry of Environment and Forestry to increase the country's tree cover to 10% by 2022 in accordance with a Presidential directive for all ministries, state departments and SAGAs to collaborate towards the course. Towards this end, the MoE through this initiative has adopted 107.6 Ha of Mt. Blackett Forest and 100 Ha in Muringato forest, Nyeri County.
The General Conference of Akurinu Churches Assembly (GECACA) launched a one-million indigenous trees planting initiative to mark 100 years of Akurinu faith and heritage as part of their centenary celebrations held at the Nairobi Arboretum green space.

The celebrations were presided over by the Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry Keriako Tobiko, who was also joined by his counterpart Ministry of Water, Sanitation, and Irrigation Cabinet Secretary Sicily Kariuki. The KFS Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kinyua, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau and NEMA Director-General Mamo B. Mamo were also present to host the faith leaders at the green space where GECACA consecrated and planted a total of 67 indigenous seedlings to kick start the one million tree planting exercise set to be completed in the span of 100 days.

The target of the initiative is to plant the trees across 20 counties while at the same time distribute fruit seedlings and set up at least 100 tree nurseries to contribute to the attainment of 10% tree cover in Kenya. The initiative has set objectives to establish 20 forest sanctuaries in 20 counties, plant over 100,000 fruit seedlings for economic empowerment of the forest-adjacent communities, establish over 100 tree nurseries for future tree planting endeavors, train the community on environmental conservation and nurture the trees to maturity.

Speaking during the launch, CS Tobiko commended the Akurinu fraternity for being the first faith group to take a conservation initiative through tree growing. He further urged the group to spread the conservation initiative in ASAL areas which needed reforestation interventions the most.

Also speaking during the launch, the CCF underscored the role of KFS in providing technical support to groups delving in forest conservation, He pointed out on the historical nexus of forests(trees) and the Akurinu church, citing that most of the early established churches held religious proceedings under trees and, also highlighted the prominent use of wooden sticks by the denomination as musical acoustics. Mr. Kamau also noted that the denomination is associated with five indigenous tree species which he said would increase forest ecosystem biodiversity through the one million centenary tree growing initiative countrywide.

Elsewhere, the Service is also partnering with the Presbyterian Church of East Africa (PCEA) to explore partnership opportunities in tree growing and contribution towards the attainment of 10% forest cover.

The CCF and representatives from the church met at the KFS headquarters to discuss possible ways of entrenching a tree growing culture in the church programs across all PCEA parishes and local churches in the country. The church which has a membership of approx. 4.8million people, plans to grow one million trees through a project dubbed 'PCEA One Million Trees Project', drawing technical support from the service.
In an effort to strengthen its capacity in forest protection and enhance conservation and management, Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has integrated canine security within its Enforcement and Compliance Division (ENCOM) as one of the central strategies to complement existing security apparatus in the organization's setup.

The Service has now incorporated the use of dogs, enabling ENCOM (the division in charge of forest security and protection), to adequately deal with and remain responsive to the ever-changing dynamics of human-related forest crimes and threats facing the vast forest resources in the country and installations under KFS jurisdiction.

While launching the canine (K9) unit at KFS Headquarters earlier in April, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr Julius Kamau noted how the complexities of crimes and threats posed to sustainable forest conservation, management and protection in the modern era have necessitated interventions such as the use of security dogs to help deter human related vices on forest resources.

Mr Kamau inspected a newly constructed dog kennel and received the first batch of K9 officers (dogs) whom he noted will be deployed to undertake forest patrols alongside forest rangers trained as dog-handlers. He also pointed out that the Service had already successfully trained two forest rangers who undertook a K9 Security Training Course and further stated that another team of eight rangers would be joining various disciplined services with canine capacity to undergo further training as trainer of trainers and upon completion cascade the program within the Forest Law Enforcement Academy.

The CCF also pointed out that the Service will be expanding the K9 Unit within KFS jurisdictions such as border points and along checkpoints on critical transit areas countrywide to strengthen monitoring and enforcement of regulations on trade and movement of timber.

He added that K9 officers will also be instrumental in curbing cases of poaching and illegal trade of forest produce such as the highly endangered sandalwood which is banned for trade in the country to protect the species from extinction. The unit will comprise both sniffer dogs and work dogs.
The Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry Keriako Tobiko together with the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau marked the World Desertification and Drought Day (WDDD) by visiting Njukiini forest in Embu County. In line with this year’s theme restoration, land and recovery, CS Tobiko was led through a brief on the status of forest conservation in Eastern Conservancy which predominantly comprises Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) counties namely; Makueni, Kitui, Embu, Tharaka-Nithi, and parts of Meru.

WDDD is an annual event set aside by the United Nations under the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification (UNCCD) for sensitizing the global, national and local communities on desertification, land degradation and drought; and is commemorated every 17th of June.

During the visit, CS Tobiko also met with members of Community Forest Associations (CFAs) from Tana River and Lamu counties who were on a visit to the upper catchment areas from which the rivers that sustain their livelihood emanate. The Coastal CFAs were visiting their counterparts in the highlands to appreciate the connectivity between forest conservation practices and their implications on degradation and draw joint solutions on how they can influence behaviour change and actions to mitigate desertification, degradation and drought in Tana Delta.

CS Tobiko applauded the nexus between upstream and downstream communities in enhancing forest conservation and protection noting that when the two are connected and are aware of how their actions affect each other’s livelihood, gains in conservation and livelihoods will be guarded.

In his address to the CFAs, the CCF Mr. Kamau acknowledged exposure visits by CFAs as the best tools to promote awareness and capacity development in forest conservation. He further encouraged the Head of Conservancies to open CFA discussion forums so that they can share information and learn from each other by strengthening participation in forest management.

Meanwhile, the Kenya Forest Service, together with the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) and all agencies in the Ministry of Environment & Forestry (MEF), marked the World Desertification and Drought Day 2021 at Korolle Oasis in the Chalbi Desert, Marsabit County.

The ceremony whose theme is ‘Restoration, Land & Recovery’ was led by the Chief Administrative Secretary MEF, Hon Mohammed Elmi who represented the Cabinet Secretary Hon Keriako Tobiko. The event was also graced by His Excellency Mohamed Ali, Governor Marsabit County, the County Senator Hon Gordana Hargura, NEMA Chairman John Konchellah and NEMA DG Mamo Mamo, area leaders led by the host Laisamis MP Hon Marselino Malimo Arbelle among other local leaders.

Community members plant trees at Kargi Town in Marsabit County during the Word Desertification and Drought Day
The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau was represented at the function by Dr Clement Ng'oriareng (Head Dryland Forestry) who led a tree planting session to commemorate the day which aims to raise awareness on desertification and drought while highlighting solutions whose key tools lay in strengthened community participation and cooperation at all levels.

This year's celebration focused on restoring and rehabilitating the Korolle Oasis as a critical water source serving communities and livestock living in the Chalbi desert. The day also sensitized members of public on collaborative environmentally conscious actions geared towards addressing desertification and drought. MEF SAGAs collectively collaborated in donating water tanks to schools within the region to enhance water security. Food items were also donated to the communities.

Kenya Forest Service and the Nairobi Arboretum Conservancy Community Forest Association (NACCFA) have received a boost in the conservation and management of the Nairobi Arboretum through support from MPESA Foundation who have injected Ksh 12.4 million towards further upgrading of the green space.

KFS & NACCFA set to use the funds towards basic restoration of the old colonial Chief Conservator of Forests residence, installation of CCTV, and other security enhancements including installation of an electric fence around the perimeter of the arboretum. Nairobi Arboretum green space is a forest within Nairobi City, managed by Kenya Forest Service in collaboration with the forest adjacent community under the umbrella body, NACCFA.

The historic green space is situated along the State House Road and is famous for its wide array of over 365 tree species which date back to the colonial era when the first Chief Conservator of Forests introduced new tree species in the country in a bid to find out the best species that would serve to provide woodfuel for the steam engine during the construction of the Kenya-Uganda railway.

The green space is an ecological gem within the city metropolis and has been receiving many visitors trooping in to experience nature especially during this COVID19 pandemic.

KFS & NACCFA jointly manage the Nairobi Arboretum in accordance with the Forest Conservation and Management and Conservation, 2016 which provides for participation of members of the public (through CFAs) in conservation and management of public forests.

During the World Environment Day (marked annually on 5th June) of 2020, Nairobi Arboretum played host to Kenya’s national celebrations which was graced by His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces. On that day, the President witnessed the signing of the Forest Management Agreement KFS & NACCFA.

The Arboretum has also received support from the Radisson Blu Hotel to spruce up the arboretum with an aim of making it more comfortable to visitors by paving the walk ways and constructing additional ablution blocks. The Arboretum also boosts of a borehole that was installed through support from the Athi Water Works.
Kenya Forest Service has partnered with Eden Reforestation Projects (EDEN) in rehabilitation and afforestation of different forest blocks around the country. The main focus is raising tree seedlings, planting in terrestrial and mangrove forests, agroforestry, infrastructure development and capacity building of forest adjacent communities. EDEN has eight tree nurseries that produce an average of ten (10) million tree seedlings annually, which are planted in sites that include stations in the Aberdares, Mt Kenya, Mau, Arabuko Sokoke and Tana River Delta. EDEN has also commenced on rehabilitation of Gwassi Hills in Nyanza Conservancy.

EDEN Project works to develop tools geared towards offering the dignity of fair employment to people living in impoverished communities, who become transformational agents of global forest restoration. Towards this, the Project has 500 permanent employees who consist of community members.

The organization started working with local communities to restore and protect Kenya’s forest ecosystems in 2019 and is currently active in 2 distinct regions within Kenya which are aptly named Terrestrial (Inland) and Marine (Mangrove/Coast). Key to their community program, is the partnership with Kenya Forest Service in conserving the mangrove ecosystem and developing a sustainable mangrove economy for the betterment of communities along the coastal strip.

The target sites in the mangrove region stretch from Lamu to Mtwapa. Mangroves are exceptional; they stand along sheltered coastlines and form forests that are not only home to unique biodiversity, but also provide many ecosystem services that are essential for human beings. Among others, they provide the basis for many coastal fisheries and work as natural shields against storms.
Mangroves are among the most productive and at the same time most threatened ecosystems. Without mangrove forests, countless animal and plant species that breed and live in these niche-rich ecosystems would become extinct.

The intervention is formulated through the “Employ to Plant” methodology aimed at benefiting the members in the local communities by planting through steady employment. Impoverished community members can begin to afford basic necessities and the intervention is achieved through working with Community Forest Associations and other partners to establish a connection with the communities and elevate their living conditions.

Employment of members of the communities from the surrounding project areas, adds to the project’s employment creation opportunities for forestry graduates. A further 200 collectors and planters are employed in the mangrove region resulting in over 8 million propagules being planted since June 2020. Additionally, a thorough monitoring and evaluation plan has been developed to access the reforestation impact and importantly document the social, environmental and economic viability of the intervention.

EDEN intends to plant trees on larger landscapes in the upcoming months. In addition, the Project has procured nine boats which will be utilized along the coastal mangrove forests to enhance surveillance and protection.

By Abby Kuria
Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau leading the Kenya Forest Service Senior Management team in a tree planting exercise at Karura forest (Peponi block) during his 2nd year anniversary since taking helm of office as the CCF.

Marsabit Governor Hon Muhammad Ali Plants a tree at Korolle Oasis in the Chalbi Desert during the World Desertification and Drought Day.

Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau and His Excellency Francis Kimemia, Governor Nyandarua County join residents of Nyandarua County in celebrations during the signing and launch of the Nyandarua County Transition Implementation Plan.

The President of the 26th United Nations Climate Change Conference (COP26) His Excellency Alok Sharma during a visit to Kenya Forest Service where he was hosted by Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry, Hon Keriako Tobiko and the Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau (right) leading a commemorative tree planting.

Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau (centre at mid-ground) during the National Youth Service (NYS) Pass-out Parade that was graced by His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander-in-Chief of the Defence Forces, at NYS College in Gilgil, Nakuru County.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau at Nairobi City Park green space which hosts a variety of biodiversity including the Sykes monkeys. The CCF was appointed a Honorary Warden by Kenya Wildlife Service.
Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau presents a copy of the Forest Management Agreement signed between KFS and Chepalungu Community Forest Association.

Ministry of Environment and Forestry Principal Secretary Dr. Chris Kiptoo during a tree planting exercise in Kiambu County.

Students taking part in a tree planting exercise during the long rains tree planting season.

The President of the 75th Session of the United Nations General Assembly H.E Volkan Bozkir (centre) being taken on a guided tour of the Hon. John Michuki Memorial Park by Environment and Forestry CS Mr. Keriako Tobiko and the CCF Mr. Julius Kamau.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau during a courtesy call on Archbishop Anthony Muheria of the Catholic Diocese of Nyeri to discuss forest conservation partnership opportunities with the Catholic Church.

Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau speaks to 257 newly recruited staff who include Forest Management trainees at KFS Headquarters.
ASSESSMENT OF TREE NURSERIES COUNTRYWIDE

A section of a KFS tree nursery showing different growth stages of seedlings under production.
Kenya Forest Service is mandated with the role of overseeing the conservation, management and protection of approximately 2.5 million hectares of public forests across the country. Its role also extends to working with county governments to support the same on 1.79 million hectares of community forest lands while also supporting private forestry programs through extension services.

As the country draws near the deadline for the Presidential directive of attaining a minimum national tree cover of 10% by 2022 from the current registered 7.2%, KFS has rolled out massive tree growing campaigns as one of its strategies to achieving this objective.

In the same strength, the Service has also scaled up tree seedlings production within its network of 174 tree nurseries across the country. Cognisant of the enormous role ahead, the Service developed an online portal for Voluntary Registration of Institution and Private Tree Nurseries which seeks to benefit private and institution tree nursery enterprises by assessing the quality of seedlings produced while having them registered on a national tree nursery database. Through the database, the Service is able to link interested seedling buyers who mainly comprise of conservation stakeholders, individuals and corporates to the nurseries where they can directly procure seedlings for growing. The portal is aimed at promoting the buying of certified high-quality seedlings by stakeholders partnering with the Service and has also benefited nursery enterprises with ready markets thereby improving livelihood of women, youth and community owned tree nurseries.

To attain the tree cover target, the Service also continues to ensure existing forest ecosystems are well protected by working closely with the forest-dependent communities through community forest associations (CFAs) as the first social fence against any forms of forest illegalities.

During the period January 2021 to June 2021, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr Julius Kamau conducted expansive forest and tree nursery assessments to monitor a raft of measures implemented by KFS towards attaining the national goal.

Early in the year, the CCF conducted an expansive tour of the Nyanza Conservancy where he visited Koguta, Kodera, Wire, Godjepe, Asogo, Urianda, Samanga, Rabuor, Ruri, Lambwe, Homa and Gwasi Hills among other forest stations within the region which covers six counties. In his visit, Mr. Kamau held meetings with forest station managers, rangers and the local community living adjacent to the forests as he sought to strengthen collective conservation efforts and, revamp and motivate public participation in conservation of the resources.

Furthermore, Mr Kamau was also joined by KFS Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kinyua on a joint tour of the Ewaso North Conservancy where they assessed the status of conservation of forest ecosystems in Marsabit, Isiolo, and Samburu Counties.

The CCF also conducted impromptu visits to Ontulili (Meru), Chepalungu (Bomet), Zaina & Kiandagoro (Nyeri), Uplands & Kereita (Kiambu), and Nthange (Kibwezi) tree nurseries to assess seedlings production processes ahead of the long rains tree planting season. Through the visits, Mr Kamau encouraged forest station managers to scale up and meet their production targets noting how nurseries have received a boost to generate to their capacity. The assessment also identified that over 1,500 tree nurseries had so far been registered.

By the end of February, an assessment made on the status of seedlings production in the country revealed as tabled below;

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Category of tree nursery</th>
<th>Total available seedlings</th>
<th>Plantable seedlings</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>KFS Tree Nurseries</td>
<td>40,381,195</td>
<td>13,487,387</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institution Tree Nurseries</td>
<td>6,288,507</td>
<td>2,675,499</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CFA &amp; TMA Tree Nurseries</td>
<td>4,048,079</td>
<td>906,586</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private Tree Nurseries</td>
<td>51,286,969</td>
<td>25,269,518</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grand Total</td>
<td>102,004,750</td>
<td>42,338,990</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The assessment also identified that over 1,500 tree nurseries had so far been registered.
The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau presided over the graduation ceremonies of two Kenya Forest Service (KFS) Ranger cohorts following the completion of an intensive fourteen-day specialized security course at the GSU Recce Company training grounds.

The training was aimed at equipping the rangers with modern tactical approaches in security operations, thus sharpening their operational skills in combating the ever-evolving threats posed by different actors in the organization’s mandate to protect the country’s ecological assets.

While congratulating the graduates for their fervent performance and successful completion of the course, the CCF noted that training and capacity building is one of the core functions of the service that goes a long way in affirming forest sector reforms and effective service delivery. “I am informed of your hard and tireless training and today we join you in celebrating the fruits of your discipline and hard work during the course. Having seen your demos earlier, I am convinced that you form part of an elite group that will enhance security arrangements in your areas of jurisdiction,” noted Mr. Kamau in his keynote address.

The CCF urged the graduands to make good use of their gained knowledge to serve the country while inspiring their colleagues to execute their duties underscoring that to whom much is given, much is expected.

He further conveyed his appreciation to the Officer Commanding GSU Recce Company, AIG Mr. Godhard Kamau and Mr. Samuel Ng’eno (GSU Staff Officer Training) for hosting the two cohorts of KFS Rangers.
who benefitted from the training curriculum. He also thanked the GSU Commandant, Mr. Douglas Kanja, for the cordial partnership developed between the two agencies.

In celebrating the graduation, the CCF led a commemorative tree planting activity at the training grounds. Furthermore, an assessment for site preparation was done across the installment where KFS would support the greening of the GSU Recce Camp to conserve and develop a conducive microclimate across the establishment.

The greening program came into realization at a later date where the two organizations conducted a tree planting exercise at the facility which saw over 10,000 indigenous trees planted by officers from the two services.

The activity was presided over by the CCF and the GSU Commandant Mr. Douglas Kanja. During the exercise, Mr. Kamau appreciated the leadership within different government institutions and the private sector for supporting KFS efforts through tree growing and urged members of the public to join in on the efforts by taking advantage of the ongoing March-May long rains to grow and nurture trees.

Mr. Kamau also appreciated the power of the private sector in seedling production by providing adequate stocks to support the government towards accelerating afforestation efforts within the country. He encouraged private tree nursery owners to register their nurseries in the organization’s database thus enabling quick dissemination of quality certified tree seedlings.

On his part, the GSU Commandant acknowledged the importance of environmental and forest protection during this pandemic period and encouraged all National Police Service officers to embrace tree planting as a collective responsibility in the execution of their duties.
Kenya Forest Service (KFS) together with various partners engaged in a series of tree planting activities during the long rains tree planting season across the country in a bid to achieve the 10% tree cover.

At Central Conservancy, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau led a tree planting exercise with players and supporting staff of the Sporty Football Club at Tambaya stadium in Nyeri County where 500 indigenous tree seedlings were planted around the stadium.

Principal Secretary Ministry of Environment and Forestry Dr. Chris Kiptoo conducted a tree planting exercise at Gatare Forest in Muranga County where 8,000 seedlings were planted and distributed more than 13,200 assorted. KFS and Kiambu County Government conducted tree planting exercise where 6,000 tree seedlings were planted at Ngubi area, Uplands Forest Station, in Kiambu County.

At the North Rift Conservancy the KFS team spearheaded tree planting exercises across the region as follows: In commemoration of the International Day for Biological Diversity, the PS Ministry of Environment & Forestry Dr. Chris Kiptoo and the Elgeyo Marakwet Governor H.E Alex Tolgo in collaboration with KFS and Kerio Valley Development Authority (KVDA) conducted a tree planting exercise at Kipkabus Forest Station in Elgeyo Marakwet County and a total of 2000 bamboo seedlings were planted. On the eve of the Biodiversity Day, 2,000 seedlings were planted at Kapsabet Girls High School. At Kessup Forest Station, a total of 19,500 seedlings were planted and 2,000 seedlings were planted in Nandi County.

In West Pokot’s Kapenguria Forest Station, 400 tree seedlings were planted. In Uasin Gishu County, 2,500 seedlings were planted at Turbo Technical and Vocational College.

In Nyanza Conservancy, the KFS team led a tree planting exercise in Wakondo Primary School where 400 seedlings were planted. The exercise conducted in Suba North Sub county was part of the Enhanced Greening in Rusinga Island through planting in private farms and schools. 4,000 seedlings were planted in Kodera Forest Station while 300 tree seedlings were planted at Bonge Primary School. Gembe CFA, World Vision, Kirambo Primary School and the public planted 6,000 seedlings at Gera Catchment Area. The team proceeded to plant a total of 3,000 seedlings at various other sites in Ndiwa, Homabay County namely; Ndhiwa Hospital Primary School, Civil servants' quarters, DCCS compound, Kobama trading centre, Kitoto Village, Kobodo ACC’s compound, Pala Divisional headquarters and Nyarongi Primary School.

In Coast Conservancy; Tana River County’s Kipini Mangrove Swamp, a total of 263,712 tree seedlings were planted. Still in Tana River County, 382,878 Mangrove seedlings were planted at Kilelengwani Mangrove Swamp and 40,000 mangroves were planted at the Chara Mangrove area. 25,000 mangroves were planted at the Kipini mangrove swamp.

In Munje area of Boni forest, 500 seedlings was planted while at Bonje 4,600 mangroves were planted all in Lamu County. KFS in collaboration with the Insurance Regulatory Authority (IRA) continues to plant mangroves at Mikindani (Ghana Hola site) where so far up to 10,000 propagules have been planted. In Taita Taveta, the team planted 51 seedlings at Voi River’s Mnaoni. In Kilifi County, a total of 5,000 tree seedlings were planted and in Kwale County, 4,000 Mangrove seedlings were planted at the Bombo Creek Station.

In the Ewaso North Conservancy, the KFS team conducted tree planting exercises at different locations within the County. In Marsabit County, a total of 5,000 seedlings were planted at Marsabit Boys Secondary School and St. Paul's Secondary School. The team together with the office of the County Commissioner and other partners were the main stakeholders. In Samburu County, the Kazi Mtaani Youth in collaboration with the KFS team and the County government planted 5,000 trees at Samburu Mixed Secondary School.

In Mau Conservancy, a total of 102,550 indigenous tree seedlings were planted in Baringo County, at Narasha
forest station through the Kazi Mtaani Youth Initiative with support from KFS Green zone Development Support Project II (GZDSP II): KFS also planted 16,000 tree seedlings at Kiptuget forest station in Bomet County, KFS planted 37,000 tree seedlings at Chepalungu forest station through collaboration with WWF and 25,200 tree seedlings were planted in Maasai Mau forest (Narok County). In Kericho County, KFS partnered with the Ministry of Health in planting 2,800 seedlings on a woodlot at Kipkelion Sub-county hospital, and 500 seedlings at Kamugen Dispensary. KFS and (MOICNG) through the Kazi Mtaani Youth program planted 450 tree seedlings at Kericho Police Station. In Narok County Maasai Mau forest station, KFS planted 6,600 tree seedlings.

At the Western Conservancy, Vihiga and Busia Counties, KFS planted a total of 10,000 tree seedlings at Funyula and Kibiri forest stations. The team together with KFS Vice Chairman Mr. Peter Wandera planted 8,000 seedlings at Port Victoria forest station. The Service also planted 11,200 seedlings at Kakamega forest station and 1,600 tree seedlings were planted at Malava forest. A total of 14,260 tree seedlings were also planted at Nzoia forest station.

In Busia County 5,000 tree seedlings were planted at the Busia GK Prisons and 1,500 seedlings at Akide Primary School in the same county. The Service also planted 5,000 indigenous tree seedlings Maragoli Hills forest station in Vihiga County. In Bungoma County; planted 5,000 trees at Sangalo Technical and Vocational Training Institute and partnered with Matili Technical College, Kimilili in planting 5,000 tree seedlings at the college.

At the North Eastern Conservancy, Mandera County, the Head of Conservancy Mr. Mohamed Mohammed led KFS in planting over 600 drought-resistant tree species at the Mandera Municipality Compound and neighbouring community. The North Eastern Conservancy conducted a 1,000 indigenous tree seedlings planting exercise along the roadsides of Mandera South Municipality The team also partnered with the GSU in planting 320 tree seedlings at the GSU Camp, and a further 200 drought-resistant tree seedlings at the KDF Camp in Mandera County.

In Nairobi Conservancy, The Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Julius Kamau, in marking two (2) years at the helm of office as CCF and Service Commander led members of the KFS Senior Management Team (SMT) in a tree planting exercise at Sigiria Block Karura forest where 3720 trees were planted. The activity also saw the SMT adopt the planted forest block to ensure full survival and maturity of the indigenous tree seedlings.

The KFS Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kinyua joined the Friends of Karura (FKF) and Magnet Ventures in a tree planting exercise at Karura Forest, Sigiria Block where total of 1,000 assorted indigenous tree seedlings were planted. KFS hosted the Rotary Club of Karen at Ngong Road Forest, Lenana Block where they planted 1,000 seedlings in an aim to raise 10,000 seedlings by the end of the year.

Kenya Forest Service in partnership with the National Youth Council (NYC) conducted a tree planting exercise at Lenana Block of Ngong Road Forest. A total of 1,600 mixed indigenous seedlings were planted. The partnership between KFS and NYC has availed 470,000 seedlings to be planted all over the country throughout the rainy season. Foreign Affairs CS Amb. Raychelle Omamo, Foreign Affairs CAS Hon. Ababu Namwamba led officers from both government entities in planting 1,100 tree seedlings at the adopted 1 ha forest block in Ngong Hills Forest, Kajiado county.

In Eastern Conservancy, the Environment and Forestry Cabinet Secretary Keriako Tobiko carried out a tree planting exercise at Jeremiah Nyaga Technical Institute in Embu County. The event saw over 2,000 seedlings planted as part of a Tree Growing Initiative by The Council of Governors for the upcoming 7th Annual Devolution Conference in which they target to grow two million seedlings before the conference.

The Kenya Forest Service Board Chairman Mr. Peter Kinyua with the MEFECAP Community Forest Association, Mount Kenya Trust and KFS officers from Meru County restored a seven hectares section of the forest that had been invaded with Lantana camara through a tree planting exercise where 7,000 indigenous tree seedlings were planted at the Upper Imenti Forest in Meru County.
Kenya Forest Service joined the world in celebrating World Wildlife Day at Shimoni, Kwale County. The focus of the celebrations was aimed at highlighting the importance of restoring mangroves and their centrality on the well-being of wildlife and communities across the ecosystem.

The Day has been marked globally since 2014 on every 3rd of March to celebrate and raise awareness on the world’s wild fauna and flora. This year’s event was marked under the theme “Forests and Livelihoods: Sustaining People and Planet” to highlight the central role of forests, forest species and ecosystem services in sustaining the livelihoods of hundreds of millions of people globally, and particularly of indigenous and local communities with historic ties to forested and forest-adjacent areas. This aligns with UN Sustainable Development Goals1, 12, 13 and 15, and their wide-ranging commitments to alleviating poverty, ensuring sustainable use of resources, and on conserving life land. (Source: United Nations)

According to a report titled ‘Livelihoods, Natural Resource Entitlements and Protected Areas: The Case of Mt. Elgon Forest in Kenya’, between 2.5 and 3 million people live adjacent to forested areas in Kenya, relying on the various ecosystem services provided by forest and forest species for their livelihoods and to cover their most basic needs, including food, shelter, energy and medicines.

In this regard, KFS has instituted participatory approaches with multiple partners and Community Forest Association groups across the coastal strip, in protecting the 9 mangrove species that harbor a wide variety of marine wildlife and play a vital role in the balance of the marine ecology. Furthermore, there has been the development of value-addition systems for mangrove products to ensure livelihood sustenance for the communities living adjacent to the mangrove ecosystems.

With wildlife and forestry existing in a continuum, the interconnectedness of wildlife and forestry conservation activities by Kenya Forest Service span on a further much wider range to mangrove conservation and restoration. For instance, KFS and Kenya Wildlife Service collaborated in the launch of a fencing project of Mawingu Mountain Bongo Breeding Sanctuary at Mt. Kenya Wildlife Conservancy. The 776 acres Sanctuary spans a section of Nanyuki and Ontulili forest stations. The collaboration is vital in ensuring the protection of the Mountain Bongos which are a critically endangered antelope species with only 100 remaining in the Kenyan wild.

Furthermore, the two Organizations have also partnered in conserving Lambwe Forest Station in Homa Bay County which is a water catchment area with 3 rivers (Lambwe, Ruma & Onyenda) that serve Ruma National Park. The Park is home to the endangered Roan antelopes (Hippotragus equines) that presently stand at a population of 15 in the whole country.

Additionally, in further augmenting the nexus between forestry and wildlife, the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau was through a gazette notice appointed as an Honorary Warden under the Wildlife and Conservation Act, 2013 for 3 years. The recognition gives an Honorary Wildlife Warden the main duty of assisting the State organization responsible for wildlife conservation (Kenya Wildlife Service) on measures to deal with poaching, preventing destruction of wildlife habitat and, identification and selection of suitable areas to be declared as sanctuaries, national parks or closed areas.

The Honorary Warden also promotes the message of conservation to people and enlists public support for nature and wildlife conservation. The efforts are further directed towards communities living near or in the declared wildlife reserves.

This year’s World Wildlife Day covered forest-based livelihoods and seeks to promote forest and forest wildlife management models and practices that accommodate both human well-being and the long-term conservation of forests, forest-dwelling species of wild fauna and flora and the ecosystems they sustain, and promote the value of traditional practices and knowledge that contribute to establishing a more sustainable relationship with these crucial natural systems.
Participatory Forest Management (PFM) was realized with the enactment of the Forest Act 2005. Through this act Kenya embraced Participatory Forest Management as an approach to achieving sustainable forest management.

The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau (CCF) on 2nd June, 2021 led Kenya Forest Service in launching the Chepalungu Forest Participatory Forest Management Plan (PFMP) and signing of its Forest Management Agreement (FMA) between the Service and the Chepalungu Apex Community Forest Association.

Chepalungu Forest Station comprises of two forest blocks (Kapchumbe and Siongiroi) that form part of the Bomet County’s forest stations which also include Mara Mara, Itare and Ndoinet.

While signing the FMA which will then operationalize the PFMP, the CCF noted the centrality of forest adjacent communities in the conservation and protection of forest ecosystems across the country as the first social line of defense against forest illegalities. He noted that KFS works closely with the communities and has already developed 165 PFMPs and signed 112 FMAs countrywide to enhance collaborative conservation involving County Governments, conservation stakeholders and members of the public through CFAs.

Bomet County which currently has a 15% forest cover is working towards attaining 22% and is among the 36 counties to have signed the Transitional Implementation Plans (TIPS), which now provides an avenue through which KFS collaborates with the county on forestry development.

Kamau appreciated the partnership between the Service, USA Forest Service, Bomet County Government, ISLA, WWF, Bomet University and Kass FM in the restoration of Chepalungu forest.

The CCF underscored that the Service has already developed infrastructure to support the conservation of the forest by constructing a rangers’ camp and deploying a forest station manager at the station which did not have one for the past 13 years.

He also appreciated Bomet County’s support in the ongoing construction of a forest station office for Chepalungu where he visited for a progress inspection.

The Maramara PFMP which had also been signed in 2019 paved the way for better collaboration efforts between KFS and the County Government of Bomet to carry out forest conservation activities.
Kenya Forest Service (KFS) and the County Government of Nyandarua have signed a Transition Implementation Plan (TIPs) that will see the two levels of government collaborate in the conservation of forest resources and ecosystems within the county.

This is in compliance with Section 16(3) of the Transition to Devolved Government Act 2012 provides for transition planning for devolved functions. This is in line with schedule four (4) of the constitution 2010 distributed functions between the national government and the county governments; part 2 specifically deals with the functions of County Governments, and among the functions and powers devolved to the county governments is implementation of specific national government policies on natural resources and environmental conservation, including soil & water conservation, and forestry.

Nyandarua County, which has a forest cover standing at 20%, now becomes the 36th County Government to sign TIPs with KFS which sets in motion collaboration between the two levels of government in forestry matters which is a devolved constitutional function to counties. KFS will offer technical support to the county administration to enable them carry out all forest-related roles.

Speaking to the county residents during the ceremony, the Chief Guest Mr. Kamau registered his appreciation to the county government for the agreement which he noted will see the two levels work collaboratively to increase forest cover, conserve and complement one another in all forestry matters.

The signing and launch of the County's TIPs was officiated by the Chief Conservator of Forests Mr Julius Kamau and His Excellency, Hon. Francis Kimemia Governor of Nyandarua in a colourful ceremony attended by conservation stakeholders and members of the public at the Ol' Kalou Arboretum in Nyandarua.

Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau and Nyandarua County Governor, His Excellency Francis Kimemia during the launch of the Nyandarua Transition Implementation Plan.
He noted that with KFS having a huge mandate of overseeing 2.59 million Ha of public forests and is also constitutionally mandated to support counties in managing a further 1.79 million Ha of community forests within county jurisdictions, TIPS between county governments enable cooperation and ease the role of the Service. He thus pointed to the signing of the implementation plan as a win-win for both entities.

"I wish to reiterate that Kenya Forest Service shall remain committed to ensuring a smooth transition of the devolved forestry function to Nyandarua County and also support in capacity building as may be required from time to time in the course of implementation of the forestry function as required by the constitution," noted the CCF.

The CCF also articulated that through the TIPs, implementation of the national forest policy, legislation and the rules and regulations developed under the Forests Act and other relevant statutes will be realised, adding that it will also enable the country to implement both the national as well as county forestry programs to support the growth of the forestry sector, create employment, better livelihoods and increase tree cover.

He also commended the county under the Governor’s leadership for the establishment of the Ol' Kalou arboretum in line with the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016 Section 37. (1) which directs county governments to establish, and maintain arboreta, green zones/spaces or recreational parks for use by persons residing within its area of jurisdiction and also ensure the housing estate developers within its jurisdiction make provision for the establishment of green zones/spaces at the rate of at least 5% of the total land area of any housing estate intended to be developed.

In his remarks, Governor Kimemia welcomed the momentous occasion citing benefits that come with it to the livelihood of communities living adjacent to forests, and to the county's economy with regards to enhancing the tourism potential of the county and water security which strongly depends on the health of the existing forest resources. With that, the county used the forum to also officially launch the Nyandarua Tourism Association.

The Governor appreciated forest ecosystems in the county which play a cultural role dating to historic times, and also serve as important bird areas making the region an attraction.

He reiterated his commitment to forest conservation as the Chair of water, natural resources and forestry within the Council of Governors. Additionally, he stated the benefits that the TIPs would bring to youth in the county through livelihood improvement through the tree nursery enterprises.

The two leaders also commissioned the construction of the Ol'Kalou Arboretum Solar-Heated Swimming Pool, which upon completion would make the green space more attractive, as KFS & the County Government set to spruce up the green space with desired tree species.
The Capacity Development Project for Sustainable Forest Management (CADEP-SFM) is a technical cooperation project between the Governments of Kenya and Japan through Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA). The project conducted an induction training of newly employed forest officers for Embu and Taita Taveta Counties.

The objective of the training program was to make the officers better suited in handling devolved forestry functions to enable them effectively carry out their mandate as county foresters.

Speaking at the launch of the training program, the Chief Guest, Taita Taveta County Executive Committee Member (CECM) in charge of Environment Esther Mwanyumba urged the trainees to take the induction course very seriously and get the right knowledge to develop forestry at the county level. "In partnership with KFS we hope to train more foresters in the future," she said. The CECM pledged to ensure Taita Taveta county adopts forestry policies geared towards improving the forest sector and work towards increasing their forest cover above 20%. She also appreciated the role KFS through CADEP-SFM played in development of Participatory Forest Management Plans in Taita Taveta County.

The Eastern Region Head of Conservancy Beatrice Mbula while addressing the same function congratulated Embu and Taita Taveta Counties for embracing forestry as a bedrock for development. She further noted that other counties should take up the task of employing foresters to supplement the National Government’s efforts in forestry and forest conservation.

She added that the efforts of CADEP-SFM in training county foresters was laudable and should be replicated in other regions as well. She reiterated that KFS officers in Eastern Conservancy will always be available to offer support to the foresters as the aim of attaining 10% forest cover is an agenda tasked to every sector of Government and the citizenry.

The CECM in charge of Environment for Embu County Ms Jayne Mugambi urged the participants to spearhead forestry and environmental development in the sub counties where they had been posted by collaborating with other stakeholders in the sector.

The launch was also attended by the JICA Deputy Chief Administrator Mr. Kaitsuro Saito, KFS Forestry Extension experts, Embu and Taita Taveta County Environment Department officers among other stakeholders.

The foresters were trained on new extension methodologies, governance, farm forestry, climate change, REDD+ among other topics. This was the first training of its kind geared towards capacity building of forest officers at the county level to enable counties effectively implement devolved forestry functions.
The Green Zones Development Support Project Phase II prioritized tree growing activities during the Western Rainfall regime. The Chief Conservator of Forests Mr. Julius Kamau inaugurated the drive to grow a total of 5 million tree seedlings during the April-June rain season at a colorful ceremony held at Rutune block, Irangi Forest Station, Embu County in May, 2021.

A total of 4,000 bamboo seedlings were planted at a function attended by KFS staff and a wide range of stakeholders at the national and regional levels. GZDSP II aimed to establish 2,445 Ha both within and outside gazetted forest areas during the long rains season.

“Specifically, we are rehabilitating 650 hectares of degraded natural forest, establishing 1140 Ha of industrial plantations and rehabilitate 109 Ha using bamboo in gazetted forest”, notes the Project Manager Mr. Jerome Mwanzia.

He says the project’s tree growing intervention outside gazetted forest includes establishment of 300 and 140 Ha of agroforestry and woodlots respectively, establish 95 Ha of fruit orchards and 10 Ha of hilltop afforestation.

In readiness for this drive, the project has supported propagation of 6,443,748 tree seedlings in various KFS nurseries.

To consolidate these efforts, protection for natural regeneration was also rolled out. The project is utilizing fencing off areas and, community scouts and KFS rangers to secure areas that are moderately degraded, to accelerate nature regeneration. A total of 56,160 Ha. has so far been secured since June, 2019.

Community participation is a centerpiece of the project engagement strategy. For the communities who are engaged in forest conservation work, the project has supported them with income generating activities (IGAs) not only as an incentive for their conservation work, but also as a way of providing alternative incomes, thereby reducing pressure on forest resources. IGA support ranges from bee keeping to poultry farming and dairy farming among others.

In line with this, the Chief Conservator of Forests handed over four fish ponds to Njukiini East CFA in May 2021. The project will invest a total of KSh. 15 million annually to fund communities in livelihood support initiatives. Communities have also been assisted with certified crop seeds to enhance food security with special focus is on maize and potato crop.
A significant engagement by the project has been technical assistance and capacity building of the County government department responsible for implementing forestry. This aims at strengthening the counties’ capacities to take up their rightful role in forest conservation as outlined in the Transitional Implementation Plans (PIMs). The project has conducted capacity building in the counties targeting County and KFS staff, an initiative that has been appreciation by all stakeholders.

With regards to infrastructure support, the project procured four trucks for tree seedlings distribution and two mini-buses for community and KFS capacity development in March 2021. This is in addition to 26 double cabins earlier delivered in April 2020. The ultimate aim is to replace the aging fleet of KFS vehicle complement. The project has also initiated procurement of 26 single cab for forest stations, 15 nursery tactors and trailers and 45 motorcycles.

Statistics indicate that 80% of rural energy requirement is met by wood fuel, which has led to degradation of forest resources. The project has embarked on a two-prong approach to reverse this, through establishment of fast growing on-farm trees for wood-fuel and promoting alternative energy sources.

In Nyandarua County, a community group has received support to procure a briquetting machine to produce briquettes from crop residue and sawdust for cooking purposes. Further, in Kericho and Kisii Counties, community groups are in the process of developing biogas energy sources. These initiatives together with energy efficient technologies will be rolled out in the coming phase of implementation.

“We are rehabilitating 650 hectares of degraded natural forest, establishing 1140 Ha of industrial plantations and rehabilitate 109 Ha using bamboo in gazetted forest”

Jerome Mwanzia.
KENYA FOREST SERVICE WELCOMES NEWLY RECRUITED STAFF

KFS has welcomed 257 new staff members who were recruited following a rigorous and successful recruitment exercise. This is one of the reform measures KFS has instituted to ensure succession, efficient and effective delivery of its mandate of protecting, conserving and managing forest resources in Kenya. The new team comprises of forest officers management trainees, forester trainees, record management assistants, plant operators and drivers.

While addressing the new staff, the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr. Kamau commended the Standing Committee on Recruitment and Promotions, which was chaired by the Principal Deputy CCF Monica Kalenda, for the commendable job they did in overseeing the recruitment of new staff into the Service.

The CCF congratulated the newly recruited staff for prevailing following a rigorous interview process that had attracted over 13,000 job applications. He advised the team to adhere to the code of conduct stipulated by the Public Service Act and the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) policies and guidelines on integrity, duty, diligence, non-discrimination, and impartial service to all.

Mr. Kamau also noted that working at KFS was a divine calling that required dedication and commitment, as by protecting and conserving forest resources, they will be supporting lives and livelihoods of the great people of Kenya and beyond.

He also pointed out that as a succession planning measure, KFS will continue to replace retiring staff and those exiting through natural attrition annually noting that the Service has an aging workforce.

While being congratulated and welcomed into the Service the new staff were also dedicated to God in prayer as they were being deployed to their respective work stations.

The new staff members were urged to develop good working relations with the existing staff members and extend the same to community members living and depending on forest resources for livelihood.
PROGRAM TO MITIGATE ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE ABUSE

TOBACCO SMOKING IN AND AROUND THIS BUILDING IS PROHIBITED

Substance abuse occurs when an individual uses alcohol, prescription medicine and other legal or illegal substances more than is required or in a wrong way. In simpler words, it is a pattern of destructive use of any substance for purposes of altering one's mood. However, substance abuse differs from addiction in the sense that majority of the people experiencing problems related to abuse of substances have the ability to quit or transform their unhealthy behaviour. On the contrary, addiction means that an individual cannot stop using the substance despite the harm caused by this condition. Alcohol and substance abuse is common at the workplace and its effects on the health, safety and performance can curtail both productivity and competitiveness.

As a result, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has established policies and measures to curb such effects. The organization has put in place an Employee Assistance Program for the purpose of addressing personal issues affecting employees such as substance abuse, mental health challenges, emotional problems and various addictions among others. Upon identification, the member of staff is put on rehabilitation. In cases where the victim’s condition persists, KFS in conjunction with government health facilities such as the Mathare Mental Hospital admit the patient for further medical attention and rehabilitation which is paid for by the institution.

KFS has also set up measures, through its Alcohol and Substance Abuse policy to forbid or restrict availability of alcohol and drugs at the workplace environment. For instance, members of staff are expected to report to the office free from the influence of alcohol and substances. Besides, their consumption within the workplace premises is prohibited. Furthermore, the “No Smoking” signs are well distributed around the office reinforcing the prohibition of substance abuse at work.

At KFS, information about staff members who are affected by alcohol and substance abuse is regarded as highly sensitive and therefore treated with utmost confidentiality. The information can only be accessed by authorized people on condition that strict confidentiality is maintained by all those involved as per the principles of medical ethics. Moreover, there is absolutely no discrimination towards these employees and there is no termination of employment based entirely on problems related to alcohol and substance abuse.

KFS creates awareness on alcohol and substance abuse together with counselling to its staff members and new recruits during orientation. Furthermore, KFS reports to NACADA on a monthly and quarterly basis to ensure there is consistent monitoring and implementation of policies related to alcohol and substance abuse. Therefore, KFS acknowledges that the well being of its staff members is paramount for performance delivery and execution of the Service's mandate.
Kenya Forest Service is at the forefront of the fight against the spread of COVID-19 and has already instituted measures across all its forest stations and green spaces in line with the Ministry of Health guidelines to help curb the spread of the disease. In light of this, the Service launched the voluntary COVID-19 vaccination drive for its staff across the country.

Speaking during the commencement of the vaccination drive at the KFS headquarters, KFS Chairman Peter Kinyua who was the first to receive the jab, thanked the Ministry of Health for enlisting KFS as one of the institutions to have its staff vaccinated, noting that the organization is an essential service provider mandated with the management and protection of forest resources in the country hence it being vital to protect the front line personnel against the health effects posed by the disease.

While also addressing the staff during the exercise, the Chief Conservator of Forests Julius Kamau who also received the jab, attributed the success in mitigating the effects of the pandemic on organizational functions, to the expeditious formulation of an ADHOC committee to coordinate KFS response to the transformational nature of the virus.

He noted that the committee was the link between the service and the agencies tasked with the management of the disease in the country. He thanked the committee for carrying out preventive measures which included introducing hand washing stations and temperature monitoring as well as creating awareness and surveillance of the disease among staff. The committee also developed protocols for conducting tree planting activities which have enabled the service to continue executing its mandate of increasing the country’s forest cover albeit at a slower pace.

The Chairman of the KFS ADHOC Committee on COVID-19 Mr. Patrick Kariuki pointed out that while the service had recorded several confirmed positive cases among the staff, there were no fatalities across the organization.

Dr. Omar Salim who was leading the Ministry of Health vaccination team, commended the service for setting up a committee to deal with the disease outbreak from the onset, which aided in suppressing the spread of the disease. He urged the staff to observe proper nutrition, exercise, and have regular medical checkups to ensure optimum health.

He assured the staff of the safety of the AstraZeneca vaccine which has undergone successful clinical trials and has met all the requirements that entail a safe vaccine set out by the World Health Organization.

The Service has also directed all visitors to forest areas to strictly adhere to COVID-19 pandemic prevention guidelines which include observing social distancing, washing hands with soap and running water on provided water points, and wearing masks correctly at all times.
When the word “gender mainstreaming” is mentioned, often it's the woman that comes to mind. The reason behind this is that, before the 18th and 19th centuries, the kitchen was the place of the woman. Women were eschewed from the key spheres of social life as men remained in the public domain. It was no different for environmental conservation as women were seen to play no role in the preservation of the environment. However, over time, gender mainstreaming has become a bone of contention and women are now more enlightened about their rights as well as responsibilities in various realms of life. Moreover, they are now actively taking part in conservation and have developed a voice against degradation. The Chipko Andoland of India (Tree Huggers) together with Professor Wangari Muta Maathai are great examples. Well; gender mainstreaming is not just about the female category. It is an approach to policy-making that reckons both women and men's interests and concerns with an intention of realizing gender equality.

The Kenya Forest Service (KFS) is a gender sensitive organization whose structures are transformed to accord a strong voice to women as well as men. There is a great representation of both genders in all the cadres from senior management to the support staff. For instance, there are eight women in the senior management which brings about a great balance in the decision making processes.

THE Human Resources Department at KFS has put in place a gender policy that demonstrates the organization's dedication to enhance assessable outcomes of gender equality with respect to representation, safety, significance and acknowledgment of members of staff. The policy has streamlined recruitment processes to accommodate both genders in the sense that job advertisements call out for both women and men to apply. The interview panels also consist of both genders to avoid biasness during recruitment. Forums such as staff orientation are used to create awareness to the employees on matters gender sensitivity. In regards to employee advancement, there is authentic access to different positions and levels of leadership, based on merit and not gender.

Furthermore, the policy dictates equal pay for equal work for both women and men. Merits and appreciation are not biased but instead they are based on participation and performance of the different individuals. The conditions of employment and benefits such as hospital insurance and pension schemes at KFS are equal despite the gender. For these policies to remain functional, the organization has put in place systems for monitoring and evaluation of gender equality.

It is now evident that gender mainstreaming is not about involving a woman in an existing activity. It is way beyond increasing the participation of women. It actually refers to bringing the skill, knowledge and interests of men and women on the development agenda. Therefore, KFS is at the forefront of ensuring this is implemented through strategies and actions that allow both women and men to influence, contribute in and gain from developmental processes thus ensuring gender equality.
In the pursuit of its mandate and execution of its duties, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) has faced several accusations of transgressing human rights especially during evictions of citizens living illegally in forested areas. As a consequence, the capability of KFS to efficiently execute its mandate has been crippled in certain regions of the country. This state of affairs has in a negative way affected the cordial relationship between KFS and its development partners together with communities living adjacent to forests. The deferment of projects by the development partners has resulted in loss of resources thus affecting the counties.

Following this turn of events, there arose a dire need for a lasting solution which propelled the CCF and the CEO (Kenya National Commission on Human Rights) to create a united taskforce which would lead the mainstreaming of a Human Rights Based Approach (HRBA) in forest conservation, protection and management in Kenya. The approach has an overview of conserving forests while observing human rights.

The joint team developed the HRBA Training Curriculum and HRBA Training Manual each containing five modules that cover the broad sector, the overview of KFS as an entity and duty bearer together with the human rights based concepts as applied in forest conservation, protection and management with a focus on KFS officers and other stakeholders in the forestry sector. These documents were reviewed by the senior management of both entities and approved by the full KFS board.

The UNDP through the Ministry of Environment and under the Forest Carbon Partnership Facility for REDD+ readiness accorded both financial and technical support for the venture.
The world of sports brings together scores of people in stadiums, field tracks, and behind television screens in various places as fans catch up on their favourite sporting activities. Major corporates have identified that during such moments when teams play; be it athletics, football, golf, all forms of motor sports et cetera, it also provides the perfect opportunity to market and relay information on products and services. This goes to show the huge potential that the world of sports offers for businesses and services.

Kenya Forest Service, in carrying out its role of forest conservation, management and protection of forest resources has also tapped into the world of sports, especially during a time when it is spearheading the national agenda of attaining a 10% tree cover by 2022. The Service has leveraged sports as one of its strategies implemented towards the attainment of this national goal with the Chief Conservator of Forests (CCF) Mr Julius Kamau giving momentum to the KFS sporting fraternity when he commissioned the rehabilitation and upgrading of the KFS Sports grounds at the KFS Headquarters in 2020. This he noted would serve to provide the KFS workforce at the headquarters a means to keep healthy while also enabling the KFS football, volleyball, and athletics teams to enhance their training as the main ambassadors of forest conservation in the sporting arena.

Currently the KFS volleyball team, which plays at the Kenya Volleyball Federation League (KVFL), has profiled a tree growing culture within the league by leading tree planting sessions with other participant teams in all regions where fixtures are held. For instance, the team planted over 300 indigenous trees at the Nanyuki Stadium in February 2021 while playing with teams comprising of the Kenya Army, Rift Valley Prisons, and the General Service Unit.
The team manager, Corporal Wachira Gatuiria notes that beyond the team being a challenging opponent on court, it also challenges all other teams to take up tree growing and promote forest conservation through the sport by rallying fans to embrace the culture.

KFS athletics team has also promoted the same message on forest conservation while participating in key marathon events held to raise awareness on environmental protection such as the annual Ndakaini Half Marathon, Chebara Dam Half Marathon, and the annual Eldoret City Marathon.

The Service has also identified the mobilization potential of Kenya’s sports icons in athletics and has already partnered with the current World Record Marathon Champion Dr Eliud Kipchoge, who has adopted a 125 acres degraded portion of Kaptagat forest for rehabilitation. Through his influence, Dr Kipchoge has complimented KFS efforts in creating awareness on the need to grow trees and protect forested areas to mitigate climate change. He reckons that Kaptagat forest has been instrumental in his sporting career as one of the best training grounds due to its tranquility necessitating his passion to give back to society through conservation and creation of awareness on tree growing.

The CCF in the month of May led a tree planting exercise where players and supporting staff of Sporty Football Club planted 500 indigenous trees at their training grounds in Tambay Stadium, Nyeri County. During the activity, Mr Kamau noted that the Service has instituted an open door policy for collaboration and partnerships with all entities, both public and private, as a strategy towards attainment of the 10% national target. While encouraging more sports teams to mainstream tree growing within their sporting activities, the CCF underscored the benefits derived from trees to the health and well being of sportsmen and women such as oxygen.
Located in the North Rift Conservancy in Trans Nzoia County, Kitale Township Forest (1.011944413185, -35.02583312988) which covers a total of 402.8 Ha, is a gazetted forest divided into 4 compartments (labelled: 1, 2, 3 & 4) which are separated by hard infrastructures (i.e., Roads and residential houses) enabling carbon sequestration and consequently promoting a favorable micro-climate for adjacent dwellers.

Flora
The forest was established as a plantation forest consisting mainly of Eucalyptus tree species and two plantations of Exotic Cypress that cover a total land area of 234.9 Ha. There is also a considerable composition of 98.7 Ha of indigenous forest mainly found along the streams. The dominant tree species found in the forest include Albizia gumifera, Croton macrostachys and Ficus spp.

Fauna
The forest is home to a variety of Old-World monkey species with the common ones being the black-and-white colobus monkeys, De Brazza’s monkeys (endemic in riverine and swampy forests) and the Sykes’ monkeys.

The forest also has a recorded total of 103 bird species, with the commonly found species in the locale being the:- Blue-spotted Wood-Dove, White-crested Turaco, Eastern Plantain-eater and the Madagascar Cuckoo. (Source: Exotic Birding)

Water Bodies
The forest area has several swamps within compartment area 1 & 4 and a spring valley stream that flows from neighboring farms into compartment 2.

Tree nursery establishment and maintenance
The forest station has a 600,000 tree seedlings capacity tree nursery centered on raising exotics such as Eucalyptus and Cypress with the help of the National Tree Planting Campaign program. Furthermore, the nursery draws its workforce from locals thus promoting livelihood development and job opportunities for the youth.

Community & Stakeholder participation
There is an existing Community Forest Association (CFA) named the Kitale Township CFA registered in 2017 and currently in the process of formulating and implementing a Participatory Forest Management Plan with the help of the area forester. The community group has so far identified various potential user rights within the forest which include:- Ecotourism (Picnic & Arboretum), Bee Keeping, Herbal medicine, Tree nursery, grazing and fuel wood.

Partners involved recently in tree planting and conservation activities include:- Kitale Prison, Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government through the County Commissioner's office and Manor House Agricultural Centre.
Color the picture

From the Archives

Rain Forest Word Search

AMAZON
DEFORESTATION
GREENHOUSE
MAMMALS
PRESERVATION
TEMPERATE

BIODIVERSITY
ECOLOGY
JUNGLE
NITROGEN
PROTECTION
UNSPOILED

CLIMATE
FOOD CHAIN
CANOPY
OZONE
SUSTAINABLE
VEGETATION
The 8,715.3-hectare Eburu Forest in Nakuru County is one of the 22 blocks of the Mau Forest Complex. It is a gazetted public forest that is managed by Kenya Forest Service. The forest is characterized by scrublands that are open or dotted with Acacia in lower altitudes and mixed indigenous forests of Dombeya, Podocarpus, Olea, Prunus and other tree species higher up.

Eburu Forest is a geologically active hilly forest and the eastern side is characterized by craters and steam jets (fumaroles) from which came its Maasai name of OlDoinyo Opuru meaning the mountain of steam. It rises to 2,855 metres above sea level which provides scenic views of the surrounding Rift Valley landscape including Lake Naivasha, Lake Elementaita and Lake Nakuru.

The forest has more than 60 species of mammals including buffalo, colobus monkeys, blue monkey, giant forest hogs, bush pigs, leopards, hyenas and duiker. It is one of the few forests that host wild populations of the critically endangered mountain bongo antelope in Kenya. It also has 188 known bird species which gives it the richest bird life among all the blocks of the Mau Forest Complex.

Eburu Forest is easily accessible, with one turning off at Morendat junction along the Nairobi-Nakuru highway and driving for 22km to get to the main entrance.
Jacaranda Mimosifolia is a deciduous tree that grows up to 20m high. The bark is pale grey and smooth. The leaves are fern-like and feathery with numerous tiny leaflets which are pointed at apex. Its flowers are mauve-blue and bell shaped in clusters. Mature fruits are brown to black, flattened round woody capsules about 7cm in diameter, splitting on the tree to release numerous light seedlings with transparent wings.

ECOLOGY AND DISTRIBUTION
The species is native to Brazil and grows up to 2200m. The tree grows in most soils except for waterlogged areas and is very common in Nairobi.

FLOWERING AND FRUIT DEVELOPMENT
The tree flowers in October/November while its fruits take about 6-8 months to mature. The seeds can be collected between March and May.

SEED COLLECTION
The mature fruits are collected from the crown by spreading a net or canvas under the tree and shaking the branches to release fruits.

END USES
The wood of this species is used for poles, carvings and bee forage.