



*SPEECH BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF
ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND FORESTRY DR.
DEBORAH M. BARASA DURING THE INAUGURAL MT.*

*ELGON DAY CELEBRATIONS HELD ON 7TH NOVEMBER,
2025, BUNGOMA COUNTY*

*H.E. George Natembeya, EBS, Governor Trans Nzoia
County*

*H.E. Kenneth Makelo Lusaka, EBS, Governor Bungoma
County*

Principal Secretaries Present,

Senators,

Members of National Assembly present,

Women Representatives,

County Commissioners,

Chief Executive Officers,

Development Partners,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Good Morning

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you all to inaugural Mt. Elgon Day celebrations. This is a special gathering where we want to focus our attention on the restoration of one of our key water towers—Mount Elgon. To underline its significance, in 2023 the UNESCO Man and the Biosphere (MAB) International Coordinating Council designated the Mount Elgon Ecosystem as a

Transboundary Biosphere Reserve (TBR), the second of its kind in Africa.

This remarkable achievement opens numerous opportunities, in funding, conservation projects, sustainable livelihoods, research, and scholarship, among others not forgetting carbon projects. However, this

designation is not permanent. Continued degradation of Mount Elgon could lead to the degazettement of its Transboundary Biosphere Reserve status.

As you are all aware, Mount Elgon has suffered the effects of deforestation and unsustainable land use practices, leading to biodiversity loss, declining water

levels, erratic rainfall, landslides, flooding and human-wildlife conflicts reminding us that the cost of environmental destruction is too high to bear. If this degradation is not addressed, we risk losing the Transboundary Biosphere Reserve status.

In response, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry has enhanced the protection and management of ecosystem by increasing the number of personnel in Bungoma County and Trans Nzoia Counties.

In partnership with Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-GEF-7 the Ministry is implementing a five-year

Integrated Landscape Management for Conservation project in Mt. Elgon ecosystem. The program constitutes three major components; Restoration of 10,000 Ha of forest and habitat; Integrate landscape management in 50,000 Ha; and promotion of sustainable agricultural production.

The Ministry has also launched various policy documents to support forest conservation and management in all forests including Mt. Elgon forest. These include the National Forestry Policy 2023, National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy 2023- 2032, National Agroforestry Strategy 2025- 2035, National Bamboo Development Strategy and Action plan 2025- 2035,

Kenya Industrial Wood Sector vision 2050, Kenya Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Monitoring Framework amongst others.

Further, my ministry has designated 7th November as Mt. Elgon Day as a national event to be celebrated annually. The purpose of the Day is to raise conservation

awareness in the country and mobilize various stakeholders, partners, conservationists, and local communities towards the restoration of this vital ecosystem.

For the day to achieve the above outcomes, the ministry has designated a son of the soil as a Patron and

Champion for the Restoration of the Mt. Elgon Ecosystem and adjacent farmland. As a local, we believe that he is best placed to offer leadership and local solutions that are sustainable.

The Ministry invites your partnership and collaboration with the patron to prioritize the restoration of 103,000

hectares of degraded Mt. Elgon Ecosystem. This is in line with the Presidential Directive to grow 15 billion trees by 2032 to increase our forest cover to 30%, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and the National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP).

We remain committed to working closely with all partners to enhance coordination, promote restoration, support sustainable livelihoods, and ensure the long-term protection of the Mt. Elgon ecosystem.

Let Mount Elgon rise again — green, vibrant, and full of life.

Thank you. Asanteni sana.