



STATEMENT DELIVERED BY THE CABINET SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND
FORESTRY, DR. DEBORAH M. BARASA DURING WORLD
BAMBOO DAY CELEBRATION ON 18TH SEPTEMBER 2025,
IN KERICHO COUNTY

Governor of Kericho County

*Chairperson Departmental Committee on Environment,
Forestry and Mining*

Senator of Kericho County

Area Members of the National Assembly

Woman Representative

Area Members of the County Assembly

All the Ministry Staff

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and gentlemen;

Good Morning!

*This year's theme, "Bamboo for the People, Planet Earth
and Climate Resilience", is especially meaningful because it*

coincides with the launch of the Kenya National Bamboo Development Strategy and Action Plan (2025–2035). The Strategy gives this celebration a historic significance, for it provides the long-awaited framework to move bamboo from being a marginal crop to a national driver of climate resilience, livelihoods, and industrial growth.

Why This Year is Different

For many years, Kenya's bamboo potential was recognized but underutilized. We knew that our indigenous highland bamboo (*Oldeania alpina*) covered over 133,000 hectares in the Aberdares, Mt. Kenya, Mau Complex, Mt. Elgon, and Cherangany. We also introduced more than 40 exotic species through KEFRI, of which at least 12 now thrive in different ecological zones. Farmers and private enterprises have begun investing, and bamboo has shifted from fencing material and cottage uses to construction, joinery, energy, crafts, and even food.

But progress was slow, fragmented, and lacked policy coordination. Today, with the Bamboo Strategy 2025–2035, we now have a clear roadmap. This makes this year's World Bamboo Day not just a celebration, but a

turning point.

Progress Made in Kenya's Bamboo Sector

1. *Policy recognition: Bamboo was gazetted as a scheduled cash crop in 2020, providing a legal foundation for commercialization.*
2. *Private sector investment: Companies such as Green Pot Enterprises and African Plantation Capital have established plantations, while community groups like Eco Green Kenya are expanding cultivation.*
3. *Value addition: Artisans and SMEs are producing bamboo furniture, crafts, and joinery products, with KEFRI supporting training and technology transfer.*
4. *Research and propagation: KEFRI has successfully validated exotic species, while nurseries across the country are scaling up seedling production.*
5. *Global partnerships: Kenya has benefitted from INBAR and the Dutch-Sino East Africa Bamboo Development Programme, linking our farmers and institutions to international expertise and markets.*

This progress shows that Kenya has moved beyond experimentation. Bamboo is now an emerging industry.

The Promise of the Strategy

The Kenya National Bamboo Development Strategy (2025–2035) builds on these gains with eight strategic objectives, including:

- 1. Expanding bamboo to 150,000 hectares across forests, riparian zones, and farms.*
- 2. Establishing a National Centre of Excellence and 20 county incubation centres for technology and innovation.*
- 3. Creating 750,000 green jobs in the first two years of planting through the National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy.*
- 4. Mobilizing KES 15 billion to drive commercialization, value chains, and carbon credit opportunities.*
- 5. Positioning bamboo as a timber substitute, an alternative source for pulp and paper, furniture, construction materials, textiles, energy, and food.*

With this Strategy, bamboo becomes central to achieving Vision 2030, the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and the Presidential Directive on 30% tree cover by 2032. Most importantly, it ensures bamboo

contributes directly to the 15-billion tree growing programme.

In Closing Ladies and Gentlemen,

This year's World Bamboo Day is not just another commemoration. It is the moment Kenya transitions bamboo from potential to performance. It is the year we match our awareness with action, and our aspirations with a concrete plan.

By embracing the Bamboo Strategy, we will unlock livelihoods, restore degraded lands, create climate solutions, and establish Kenya as a regional leader in the bamboo value chain.

It is now my pleasure to officially declare the World Bamboo Day 2025 celebrations open and to launch the Kenya National Bamboo Development Strategy and Action Plan 2025-2035.

Thank you all.