

PRESS STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, NATURAL RESOURCES AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITIES, PROF. JUDI WAKHUNGU, DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE PREPARATIONS FOR ELEPHANT IVORY AND RHINO HORN BURNING IN APRIL, 2016

March 30, 2016

I am here today to officially launch site preparations for the historic burning of elephant ivory and rhino horn in line with my earlier announcement on February 26th. As you are aware, the Government of Kenya led by His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta, will on April 30th set ablaze the world's largest stockpile of elephant and rhino horn ever to be burnt.

I was here with the President barely a week ago to inspect site preparation and we are satisfied with the ongoing work. As a government, we are attaching great significance to this State Event and the President looks forward to hosting his peers and other dignitaries from all over the world who will come to express solidarity with our conservation efforts.

The poaching of elephants and rhinos and illegal wildlife trade is a major problem across much of Africa, it threatens the very survival of these iconic species. Poaching is facilitated by international criminal syndicates and fuels corruption; it undermines the rule of law and

security and in some cases, provides funding for other criminal activities. This not only harms the sustainable economic development of local communities but also national economies.

Kenya has in the past three years redoubled its efforts and relentlessly implemented a number of measures directed at combating elephant poaching and the illegal trade in elephant ivory within and across its borders. Such efforts include,

- a) The implementation of a National Ivory Action Plan (NIAP) focusing on the formulation of effective wildlife legislation with heavy penalties and its efficient and effective enforcement mechanism as a deterrent to wildlife crime,
- b) national inter-agency wildlife law enforcement cooperation and collaboration,
- c) international and regional wildlife law enforcement cooperation and outreach,
- d) public awareness and education.

These actions have resulted into seizures of contraband ivory at our major entry and exit ports and reduced the levels of poaching. We have made remarkable progress in curbing poaching and trafficking in wildlife. In 2014, 164 elephants were poached in the country which significantly reduced to 96 in 2015. In 2014, 35 rhinoceroses were illegally killed compared to 11 in 2015.

Another key milestone we have achieved in our conservation efforts is carrying out in 2015, a national audit of our stockpile of the

elephant ivory and rhinoceroses horn for enhanced monitoring and management, at which we recorded 135.8 tonnes of elephant ivory and 1.5 tonnes of rhino horns.

In the spirit of the upcoming Ivory and Rhino Horn Burn, I would like to offer a 21-day amnesty for the surrender of any wildlife trophies which are held without a Permit issued by the Kenya Wildlife Service. The amnesty is effective from today March 30, 2016. Anybody holding any ivory, rhino horns or any other wildlife trophies or jewelry or trinkets made from these materials should surrender them to the KWS Director General at the KWS Headquarters.

These items can also be surrendered to the Assistant Directors at KWS Regional Offices in Mombasa, Voi, Nyeri, Marsabit, Kitale, Nakuru, and Meru National Park. Those who take advantage of this amnesty will not be punished.

Kenya remains committed to ensuring that Elephants and Rhinos are accorded the highest level of protection. Although the destruction of ivory and rhino horn will not in itself put an end to the illegal trade in these items, it demonstrates Kenya's commitment to seeking a total global ban in the trade of ivory and rhino horn.

THANK YOU