

**SPEECH BY FARIDA KARONEY, OGW CABINET SECRETARY,
MINISTRY OF LANDS AND PHYSICAL PLANNING DURING
THE RCMRD INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE (RIC 2018), IN
NAIROBI, KENYA ON 15TH AUGUST 2018 AT RCMRD**

- The Hon. Members of the RCMRD Governing Council here present;
- Your Excellences the High Commissioners and Ambassadors from RCMRD member States;
- The Director General of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD),
- Representative from USAID Kenya and East Africa;
- Representatives from RCMRD member states;
- Government of Kenya officials,
- Distinguished Delegates;
- Ladies and gentlemen.

It is my pleasure to preside over this official opening of the 2nd RCMRD International Conference being held here in Nairobi. Allow me to thank the RCMRD Management for inviting me to preside over this event. To all our regional and international guests, I say *Karibu Kenya*, please take some time off to enjoy Kenyan hospitality.

It is gratifying to see delegates from around the world converging here at RCMRD to exchange notes on the current state of development in the area of

space science and how these advancements can be harnessed for the benefit of mankind.

The presence at this workshop of different stakeholders drawn from the academia, applications and software developers, hardware manufacturers, geospatial data producers and vendors, researchers, policy makers and media is a wonderful opportunity to promote synergies and complementarities that are essential to transforming science to actual benefits that our citizens can enjoy.

I am therefore thankful to RCMRD and their partners, particularly USAID and NASA for organizing this conference.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The choice of the theme of this year's Conference '*Space Science for Sustainable Development*' is timely. This year (2018), the world is celebrating the 50th anniversary of the United Nations Conference on the Exploration and Peaceful

Uses of Outer Space at a time when every nation is pre-occupied with the implementation of Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). Science and Technology will play a central role in attaining these development goals.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We are privileged to live in era of unprecedented advancements in science and technology, which are increasingly becoming major drivers and clear game changers in our development aspirations. We have a responsibility to further

harness these developments and ensure their application in areas and sectors that can directly transform the lives of our citizenry such as agriculture, high-speed global telecommunications, land use planning and disaster monitoring and early warning.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

As you may all be aware there have been several reviews and publications showing the critical importance that space science and earth observations can

play in virtually all the 17 SDGs. In addition, the capacity developed to acquire, analyze and utilize earth observation data and geospatial information to support SDG implementation can provide our member States and other regions with increased opportunities to use data to enrich policy.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Besides importance to SDGs, the Government of Kenya considers earth observations and space science products and applications as critical in

implementing its Big Four Agenda, more specifically in agriculture and food security as well as ensuring access to decent shelter by all Kenyans.

In all these endeavors, land remains a critical resource. Sustainable management of land and land based resources can only be enhanced by understanding it better through mapping and the appropriate policy interventions.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Land is a finite resource and as policy makers we must continue to encourage sustainable land use planning and management. To this end, the Government of Kenya recently launched a National Land Use Policy as well as the National Spatial Plan that, among other things, sent a clear message to all Stakeholders about the need to balance human settlement, food security needs with responsible exploitation of our environment. We have made mistakes in the past and we must now call for fidelity to the law and our policy guidelines

The National Land Use Policy gives a context within which we must anchor our development aspirations both at the National and County levels. Along with the the National Spatial Plan, the policy will streamline land use across the Country. The implementation of the spatial plan and particularly monitoring compliance will require input from earth observation technologies and applications. I count on this gathering and RCMRD in particular to come up with tools and methodologies help us in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Alongside the spatial planning efforts, we are also actively engaged in modernizing our land administration platforms as well as streamlining processes and procedures to ensure efficient and effective delivery of land services to citizens and investors in Kenya. We aim to enhance transparency and ease of doing business in Kenya. All these developments call for more skills and ability to deploy the technologies that this conference will be presenting. It is my hope that RCMRD and their partners at this conference will continue to

work with us to ensure these skills and capabilities are transferred to our personnel both at national and country government levels.

Indeed, we expect to see enhanced opportunities for employment and wealth creation for our youth, sustainable use of land and land based resources, safe and livable cities as well as food and economic security.

IN CONCLUSION,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me reiterate what I just outlined above with respect to the importance of land and natural resources in the realization of both national and global development agenda as articulated in the SDGs. In both cases, space science and earth observation technologies and applications are going to be critical in implementation and tracking. This conference is therefore timely as it will

provide an opportunity to narrow the gap between the science and policy so that we reap the full benefit of advances in science and technology.

I would like to reaffirm the commitment of the Government of Kenya to supporting our Centre (RCMRD) together with the other member States because the reasons for its founding seem even more pertinent now than they were four decades ago when it was established.

Ladies and Gentlemen, it is now my my pleasure to declare the 2nd International Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RIC) Conference officially opened.

Thank you