



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

**MINISTRY OF ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE & FORESTRY**  
**State Department for Environment & Climate Change**

Opening Remarks by Dr. Eng. Festus K. Ng'eno, PhD, MIEK  
*Principal Secretary, State Department for Environment, Ministry for Environment, Climate Change, and Forestry*  
*At the Data & Information Engagement Workshop for Protected and Conserved Areas*  
*30th September 2024, RCMRD, Nairobi, Kenya*

Director General of the Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD), Dr. Emmanuel Nkurunziza,  
Distinguished delegates from the European Union, CIFOR-ICRAF, Honourable Ministers, Ambassadors, and distinguished representatives of member states, Representatives from our conservation partners,  
Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is both a privilege and an honor to join you today at the **Data and Information Engagement Workshop** hosted by the **Regional Centre for Mapping of Resources for Development (RCMRD)**. I extend a warm welcome to all participants who have traveled from across Africa to be here, and I commend RCMRD and its partners, including the European Union and CIFOR-ICRAF, for organizing this timely event.

This workshop provides an invaluable platform for us to explore how data and information, particularly **geospatial data**, can help address some of the most pressing environmental challenges of our time. In today's rapidly changing world, the critical role of **accurate and reliable data** in decision-making has become undeniable.

Whether we are talking about **mitigating climate change, managing water resources, or safeguarding biodiversity**, **timely and actionable data** is the bedrock of effective environmental management. The work of RCMRD continues to demonstrate how

geospatial data can provide insights that guide policy formulation, resource allocation, and sustainable development, both nationally and across the region.

Kenya is proud to be a leader in biodiversity conservation in this region. Our nation has a long-standing commitment to global frameworks such as the **Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD)**, and we are actively contributing to the achievement of the **Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework (GBF)** targets, including the ambitious **30x30 goal** of conserving 30% of land and ocean by 2030.

As we gather here today, it is clear that this workshop is a critical milestone in reinforcing how **data** underpins our efforts to address **climate change, deforestation, and biodiversity loss**. The tools provided by RCMRD, including remote sensing and GIS technology, have been pivotal in monitoring environmental changes and enabling us to take informed action. These technologies are empowering **communities and governments alike**, ensuring that we can translate data into actionable knowledge that benefits both people and ecosystems.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Environmental challenges do not respect borders, and therefore, neither should our solutions. **Regional cooperation** and the **sharing of data** are essential to ensure that all African countries are equipped to respond to both immediate crises and long-term environmental shifts. This workshop exemplifies the spirit of collaboration that is needed to address these challenges.

By working together, sharing knowledge, and harnessing the power of data, we can better inform policies that align with our **national development goals** and our **international commitments**, such as the **Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)** and the **Paris Agreement** on climate change.

At the heart of these discussions, we must remember that **data-driven decision-making** is not a luxury, but a necessity. The ability to track environmental changes in **real-time, analyze trends, and predict future scenarios** is vital for making informed decisions that protect our environment and promote sustainable development.

Kenya remains fully committed to supporting institutions like RCMRD, ensuring they have the resources and partnerships they need to continue their excellent work. We recognize that **building a sustainable future** requires not only the right policies but also the right **tools and technologies** to guide those policies.

As we embark on the next five days of discussions, I urge all of you to engage fully with the sessions, share your insights, and learn from one another. Let us leverage this unique opportunity to strengthen our capacities and our partnerships.

In closing, I would like to express my deep gratitude to RCMRD and its partners, particularly the European Union and CIFOR-ICRAF, for their vision and dedication in bringing this initiative to life. I encourage all participants to actively engage in the discussions over the course of this workshop. The challenges we face may be vast, but the **collective knowledge and innovation** gathered here today offer us great hope for finding lasting solutions.

Together, let us leverage the power of **data** to build a **resilient, sustainable, and prosperous future** for our communities, our countries, and our continent.

Thank you, and I wish you all a productive and successful workshop.