**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY DR. ALLY SIMBA, EXECUTIVE SECRETARY, EACO, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 6TH REGIONAL WORKSHOP ON SUSTAINABLE E-WASTE MANAGEMENT IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION, 11TH – 13th MARCH 2024 AT IMPERIAL PLAZA HOTEL, JUBA, SOUTH SUDAN.**

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**Minister of Information Communication Technology and Postal Services of the Republic of South Sudan, Hon. Michael Makuei Lueth.**

**Director General, National Communication Authority (NCA)**

**Mr. Napoleon Adok Gai**

**Government Officials from South Sudan,**

**Chairperson of EACO Working Group 07 – Ms. Anita Hodari,**

**Members of EACO WG07 and Regional Steering Committee.**

**Distinguished Delegates,**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good morning,**

**On behalf of the East African Communications Organisation, and on my own behalf, I would like to take this opportunity to thank our Guest of Honour, Minister of Information Communication Technology and Postal Services of the Republic of South Sudan, Hon. Michael Makuei Lueth, for agreeing to come and preside over this important workshop despite his busy schedule.**

**In a special way, I want to extend my deep appreciation to NCA, for not only agreeing to partner with EACO in organizing and hosting this workshop in this beautiful city of Juba, but also for their commitment and support to EACO’s programmes and activities.**

**On the other hand, I want to recognize and thank those organizations represented here today, and also those participating online, together with the various speakers, presenters, and moderators who have agreed to associate themselves with EACO in this workshop.**

**It gives me much pleasure on behalf of EACO to welcome all of you to our 6th e-waste awareness Workshop with the theme; “Sustainable Strategies for e-waste Management in South Sudan and EAC region: A holistic approach”.**

**Our Guest of Honour, Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**This workshop has brought together experts involved in the sound management of electrical and electronic equipment waste (E-waste) from the East African Community Partner states and International organizations to share knowledge from a holistic approach on sustainable e-waste management strategies.**

**Fellow Stakeholders,**

**Growing consumption of Electric and Electronic Equipment (EEE) is increasing on a daily basis. Emerging economies show fastest growth rates in EEE consumption. For instance, in most countries, 48% of households have a computer, 7.7 billion are mobile cellular subscribers and over 80% of the world’s population is covered by a mobile broadband signal. Expansion of networks, more internet usage, increased online businesses, multiple device ownership, growth in cloud computing, short replacement cycle of electronic equipment, are some of the drivers for e-waste.**

**E-waste is the fastest growing waste stream in the world. Reports have shown that 67 million metric tons of electrical and electronic equipment were put on the global market in 2013, and about 53.6 million metric tons e-waste are disposed off worldwide, in every year. For example, for the last 5 years sub– Saharan Africa has had the fastest mobile growth rate in the world. Mobile phone subscribers have hit a Billion mark in Africa. Mobile phones In Africa will increase 20-fold in the next five years; double the rate of growth in the rest of the world.**

**Distinguished delegates,**

**E-waste is a global challenge, not only due to EEE production being subject of a network of global supply chains and the increasing generation of ewaste worldwide, but also because its proper treatment and prevention require the active engagement of a diverse set of actors, often spanning national borders and continents. Considering that only 6.5 Mt of the 41.8 Mt of e-waste are documented and recycled with the highest available standards, the full potential of e-waste prevention, collection and treatment has not been fully explored. About 2.9 Mt of e-waste was generated in Africa in 2019, with the highest e-waste generating countries, also being major population centres identified as Egypt, South Africa and Nigeria.**

**E-waste Stakeholders,**

**Just to mention, the EACO databank, in June 2023, recorded the following statistics; Mobile Cellular subscription rate at 96.7% for the region (189.2m subscribers out of 195.6m population), Mobile internet subscription rate at 59.36% 116.14m ( internet subscribers), Mobile Money subscription rate at 62.04% (121.38m subscribers), Mobile Broadband subscription rate at 37.98% (74.3m subscribers)**

**Additionally, findings from the National E-Waste Statistics Report, 2019 (NEWSR, 2019) indicated amounts of EEE put on the market in Tanzania Mainland had increased from 21,692 tonnes in 1998 to 47,504 tonnes in 2017, with much of the increase observed from 2005 to 2017. EEE put on the market per inhabitant had also slightly increased from 0.72 kg/ inh to 0.93 kg/ inh over the same period. The findings also indicated large equipment account for the bigger share in the composition of EEE put on the market; however, small equipments are increasingly becoming prominent in recent years. The findings further indicate that, E-waste generated had increased from about 2000 tonnes in 1998 to 35,755, tonnes in 2017. E-waste generated per inhabitant had also been on the raise, from 0.01 kg per inhabitant (kg/inh.) in 1998 to 0.70 kg / inh. in 2017**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**Further, the World Economic Forum reported an estimated waste stream of 48.5 million metric tons in 2018 and an estimated generated tonnage of 61 million by 2023. The increase in generation of E-waste is the result of the short replacement cycles of ICT devices such as mobile devices due to various reasons such as personal lifestyle and the need to replace as well as technological advancements. Today, disused computers, mobile devices, and server main frames are routinely thrown out and discarded into the environment, while some are kept in home storage with the hope of repair, donate and replace parts. There is need to integrate appropriate mechanisms for safe e-waste disposal management and recycling to ensure safety of persons and sustainability of the environment.**

**It was in recognition of the above e-waste challenges and the imminent danger that was likely to result from the absence of a sustainable e-waste management system in the EAC region, that EACO adopted a "Regional E-waste Management Strategy", through which the following has been achieved.**

1. **Establishment of Regional and National Steering Committee, whose members are from the Ministry of Environment and other Environmental Agencies is one of the key success of EACO in implementing the Regional E-waste Strategy**
2. **Collaborative frameworks have been established with key regulatory bodies and other relevant stakeholders for the proper management of e-waste in EACO member states;**
3. **The strategy has supported the operations and functions of the Regional Steering Committee for effective coordination of the implementation of Regional e-waste Strategic plan;**
4. **A Resource Mobilization Strategy has been developed for effective implementation of EACO e-waste Management Strategic Plan which has resulted in technical and financial support to e-waste management;**
5. **An analysis was conducted for e-waste management infrastructure requirements for the EACO member states; and**
6. **Formulation and alignments of national policies, guidelines and standards to develop regional policies, standards and guidelines for EACO region.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**I have no doubt that this multi-stakeholder forum will not only create awareness about the e-waste challenge but will give us a good opportunity to benchmark, share experiences and above all come up with a regional approach that will guide all key stakeholders to move in one direction in dealing with the e-waste challenge in a concerted manner. One thing which is clear to us is that e-waste still remains a global challenge, and as such, we have a duty to continually do research and sustain awareness on this subjectto enhance understanding to a holistic approach of sustainable e-waste management in the region and beyond. We must therefore rope in our diverse stakeholders in order to attract the much-needed goodwill and synergy if we have to make quick gains in this area.**

**I want to once again thank the Guest of Honour and all of you for accepting our invitation and wish you very fruitful deliberations during this workshop.**

**Thank you for your attention.**