**INTRODUCTORY REMARKS BY DR. ALLY SIMBA, EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, EACO, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 7TH REGIONAL AWARENESS CONFERENCE ON SUSTAINABLE E-WASTE MANAGEMENT IN THE EAST AFRICAN REGION, 24TH – 26TH MARCH 2025, NAIROBI, KENYA**

**Honorable Guest of Honour, Hon. William Kabogo -** Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Information, Communications & the Digital Economy.

**Eng. John Tanui, MBS,** Principal Secretary - State Department for ICT and the Digital Economy, Ministry of Information, Communications & the Digital Economy.

**Mr. Emmanuel Ndorimana –** Permanent Secretary Ministry of Environment, Republic of Burundi

**Ms. Mary Mungai, CBS** – Chairperson of the Board, Communications Authority of Kenya.

**Mr. David Mugonyi, EBS** – Director General of Communications Authority of Kenya.

**Mr. Stanley Kamanguya**, OGW- Chief Executive Officer, ICT Authority.

**Mr. Mamo Boru Mamo, EBS**, Director General, of the National Environment Management Authority of Kenya (NEMA), Presented by Dr Macharia.

**Dr Kennedy Okong’o**, Telecommunications Advisor, East Africa Community

**Mr. Federico Magalini,** Director Sustainability, dss+

**Mr. Boniface Mbithi,** Chief Executive Officer, WEEE CENTRE, KENYA

International and Regional Partners,

Government and Private Sector Partners,

Members of EACO WG07 and Regional Steering Committee,

Distinguished Delegates,

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

**Good morning! Bonjour! Habari za Asubuhi**

On behalf of the **East African Communications Organisation (EACO)**, and on my own behalf, I extend my deepest gratitude to our **Guest of Honour** for gracing this important conference despite a demanding schedule. Your presence here reflects the commitment of our region to tackling one of the fastest-growing environmental challenges—**electronic waste**.

I also take this opportunity to thank the Government of the Republic of Kenya through the **Communications Authority of Kenya (CA)** for their invaluable partnership in hosting this conference and for their unwavering support of EACO’s programs and initiatives. To all distinguished guests, experts, speakers, and participants, whether present physically or joining virtually, I warmly welcome you to this gathering of minds and solutions.

**Honorable Guest of Honour**

This conference is special. **It is not just another conference—it is a homecoming.**

Exactly **ten years ago, in 2015, right here in Nairobi**, we held the **very first EACO E-Waste Awareness Workshop**. It was a bold step forward, bringing together stakeholders to discuss, for the first time, the urgent need for sustainable e-waste management in East Africa. That workshop led to the formation of the **EACO Regional E-Waste Steering Committee**, which later inspired the creation of **national e-waste steering committees** across EACO member states.

Today, as we return to Nairobi for the **7th edition of this conference**, we are not just gathering to discuss the problem—we are celebrating the **tremendous progress we have made together**. We have **come full circle**.

Over the past decade, we have achieved **significant milestones**:

* **Awareness has grown tremendously.** More citizens across our region understand the environmental and health risks of improper e-waste disposal and the importance of working with licensed handlers.
* **Our legal and policy landscape has transformed.** Kenya, Rwanda, and Tanzania have **enacted E-Waste Regulations** and **Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) frameworks**, while Uganda and Burundi have adopted national **E-Waste Policies**.
* **Infrastructure for e-waste management has expanded.** Rwanda is home to the **largest E-Waste Recycling Plant in the region**, Tanzania has established an **E-Waste Facility**, Uganda has launched an **E-Waste Collection Center**, and Kenya has **three new e-waste facilities and an additional collection center**—some of which delegates will visit during this conference.
* **Our knowledge base has grown.** Almost all EACO countries have conducted **e-waste surveys**, and the in collaboration with the **ITU, we have conducted pilot E-Waste Data Studies in Kenya and Burundi**.
* **Education and capacity building have taken root.** Six universities and a technical institution in Kenya, as well as a university in Rwanda, have introduced **e-waste management courses**, ensuring that the next generation is well-equipped to tackle this challenge.

These achievements show what is possible when we come together with **determination, collaboration, and shared vision**.

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

Even as we celebrate, we must acknowledge that **e-waste remains the fastest-growing waste stream in the world**. The numbers are staggering:

* In 2022 alone, the world generated **62 million tonnes of e-waste**—a number expected to **reach 82 million tonnes by 2030**.
* Only **22.3%** of that waste was properly collected and recycled, meaning millions of tonnes of valuable materials are wasted, while hazardous substances continue to threaten our environment.
* In Africa, **2.9 million tonnes of e-waste** were generated in 2019, and yet our continent still lacks sufficient **recycling infrastructure and repair services** to address this challenge effectively.

The situation demands urgent action. We must not only **continue what we have started**, but **accelerate** our efforts.

This is why EACO has developed **Regional E-Waste Management Strategies** in 2017 and 2022, laying out a roadmap for our region. These strategies focus on:

* **Holding producers accountable** through Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) policies.
* **Promoting a circular economy** where products are repaired, refurbished, and recycled instead of discarded.
* **Harmonizing policies and legal frameworks** to enable efficient cross-border collaboration in e-waste management.
* **Striving for zero negative impact by 2030**, ensuring that our policies and actions truly protect our environment and future generations.

We are not alone in this journey. The world is watching, and global partnerships will be key in achieving our goals. This conference presents an opportunity to **strengthen cooperation, explore innovative solutions, and chart a path toward a more sustainable future**.

**Honorable Guest of Honour, Ladies and gentlemen, this is not just another conference for me—it is a deeply meaningful moment. This will be my last conference to participate as EACO Executive Director.**

As my tenure as Executive Director of EACO comes to a close this July, I look back with immense pride at the journey we have taken together. If there is one area that makes me walk away with my head held high, it is **our collective efforts in e-waste management**—the policies we have shaped, the awareness we have built, and the platforms we have created, including this very conference.

It has been a privilege to serve and to witness the incredible dedication of everyone in this room. I am confident that the momentum we have built will continue, and that EACO will remain at the forefront of driving **sustainable e-waste management** in the region.

As I bid farewell to this role, I do so with **gratitude, optimism, and an unwavering belief** that the work we have started will not only continue but will **flourish** in the years to come.

Once again, I extend my deepest gratitude to our **Guest of Honor**, all distinguished guests, and every one of you for being part of this journey. I wish you **insightful discussions and fruitful deliberations** during this conference.

**Together, let us build a future where e-waste is no longer a burden but an opportunity for sustainable growth and environmental protection.**

**Ahsanteni Sana.**