

**CLOSING REMARKS BY DR. EVANGELINE NJOKA, SECRETARY GENERAL, KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO DURING THE 3<sup>RD</sup> KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO (KNATCOM) NATIONAL CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS ON 22<sup>ND</sup> SEPTEMBER, 2018 AT JOMO KENYATTA SPORTS GROUND, KISUMU COUNTY**

The Chairperson, Council of Governors, Hon. Josphat Nanok,

Our Host, the Governor of Kisumu County, Hon. Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o,

Vice- Chancellors present,

Representatives of Government Ministries present,

Our partners from the private sector,

Colleagues and friends,

Kenyans,

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure and satisfaction to have been part of the planning and implementation of this very successful National Cultural Celebrations. The theme for these celebrations is "***Enhancing National Cohesion, identity and pride***".

This theme was well presented through the exhibitions and performances and delicacies that we have all enjoyed in the past few days. I particularly enjoyed the different performances and exhibitions of different cultural practices, some of which reminded me of similar practices from my community. This similarity in some of the cultural practices is a testament to the impact of celebrating our diverse and at times similar cultures, beliefs and practices. The Celebrations have no doubt made us understand and appreciate each other better. Needless to say that, what you understand, you appreciate, what you appreciate you help protect and what you help protect has a prosperous future. This is in line with our national values and

principles as enshrined in the constitution of Kenya, our vision as a country and UNESCO's belief that a culture of peace starts in the minds of men and women through dialogue, cultural diversity, intellectualism, innovation and sustainable development. This can only be achieved if we are alive to the diverse socio-cultural and economic contexts that exist in our society.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I wish to congratulate the winners of the various categories well done for your outstanding performances! I urge all who participated in the competitions and all Kenyans that are in the Arts and Culture industry to keep innovating and developing more pieces that express our collective Kenyan values and remind us all, why we are Kenyan and why we must appreciate Kenya. I hope that the viewing of the legendary snake Omieri, which has a direct attachment to the people of Nyakach, has been an awakening call to all other Counties in Kenya, to embrace, uphold, restore and preserve their culture for the sake of their identity and pride.

As I conclude, I wish to thank the Cabinet Secretary for the Ministry of Education, Principal Secretaries, Chair of the Council of Governors, Senators, Members of Parliament and Ambassadors for having graced these celebrations and for their commitment to national cohesion and development in Kenya. I also wish to take this opportunity to thank the county government of Kisumu led by our host, Hon. Prof. Anyan'g Nyong, Asante sana for supporting and hosting the celebrations.

To the residents of Kisumu County, asanteni sana for stepping up and showing up. I was truly impressed by your participation and engagement in the celebrations.

I thank you all and God Bless you.