



REMARKS BY THE SECRETARY GENERAL/CEO, KENYA NATIONAL COMMISSION FOR UNESCO, DR. EVANGELINE NJOKA, MBS, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 3RD KNATCOM NATIONAL CULTURAL CELEBRATIONS AT JOMO KENYATTA SPORTS GROUND, KISUMU ON 19TH SEPTEMBER, 2018

The Chief Guest representing His Excellency the President, Hon. Uhuru M. Kenyatta, Amb. Dr. Amina Mohamed, Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Education,

Hon. Prof. Peter Anyang' Nyong'o, Governor, Kisumu County,

Hon. Governors Present,

Hon. Senators Present,

Hon. Members of the National Assembly Present,

Cabinet Secretaries present,

Chief Administrative Secretaries present,

Principal Secretaries Present

Director, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa,

Excellencies and Members of the Diplomatic Corps,

**University Vice-Chancellors and representatives of the Academia,
Chief Executives present,
Senior Government Officials Present,
Distinguished guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

It gives me great pleasure and honour to welcome you to the official opening ceremony of the 3rd KNATCOM National Cultural Celebrations at Jomo Kenyatta Sports Ground, that is starting today Wednesday, 19th September, 2018. On behalf of the Kenya National Commission for UNESCO (KNATCOM) and my own behalf, may I take this opportunity to most sincerely welcome you your Excellency the President and thank you for having found time out of your busy calendar to come and officially open the 3rd KNATCOM

National Cultural Celebrations. And to all of us I say *arwakou un duto*. I would like to take this opportunity to express our great appreciation to the County Government of Kisumu and its leadership for partnering with KNATCOM to host this forum. I also extend my appreciation to National Museums of Kenya, UNESCO Regional Office for Eastern Africa and Tuskys Supermarket and other partners for the support they have given to this event. To County Governments and Institutions represented here, I thank you all for finding time to participate in this very important Cultural Celebrations.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The 3rd KNATCOM National Cultural Celebrations, held under the theme, **“Enhancing National Cohesion, Identity and Pride”**, has brought together all

the 47 Counties, relevant Ministries, Universities, Agencies, NGOs, Civil Society and the private sector and will seek to further advance UNESCO's mission of building peace in the minds of men and women while advancing the Government's goal of building national cohesion. National cohesion and peace building among Kenyan citizens has been elusive over the years. KNATCOM therefore considers coordination of national cultural celebrations involving all counties and other relevant stakeholders a flagship project.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Kenya National Commission for UNESCO which is the focal point for all UNESCO programmes and activities in Kenya works with various Ministries, Departments, Agencies, Institutions, Organizations and individuals working for the advancement of Education, Natural Sciences, Social and Human Sciences, Culture and Communication and Information to promote the fulfillment of UNESCO's Mission. KNATCOM is dedicated to ensuring that we not only promote our local cultures, but that we also use our cultures as vehicles for peace and sustainable development. As custodians and transmitters of our local cultures, it is our duty to ensure that we collectively work towards the rapprochement of our cultures as we work towards national unity and cohesion, besides using cultures as one of the vectors for economic development.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To promote peace building and national cohesion in the Country through culture, KNATCOM organized the 1st National Cultural Celebrations from **21st** to **24th October, 2014** at KICC, Nairobi. The 2nd KNATCOM National Cultural Celebrations were held from **1st** to **3rd September, 2016** at the Machakos Peoples' Park.

The 3rd KNATCOM National Cultural Celebrations will feature cultural performances as well as the youth extravaganza, benga night, fashion show and cultural exhibitions including the legendary Omieri.

The key objectives of these national cultural celebrations are to:

- i. create a platform for counties and institutions to showcase various aspects of their culture hence promoting conservation and preservation; and
- ii. promote harmonious co-existence, tolerance, reconciliation and peace building for national cohesion.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The foregoing cannot happen if we do not have a platform to meet and celebrate each other's diverse ways of life, material culture and expressions. This platform is exactly what we wish to provide at the 3rd KNATCOM National Cultural Celebrations.

This is not just a KNATCOM event; this is OUR event as Kenyans. In these celebrations, we will be working towards building a better and greater Kenya on the basis of our diverse cultures. It is my hope that these Celebrations will deepen our partnership as we seek to accomplish these activities and achieve our shared goals.

Finally Ladies and Gentlemen,

It is now my pleasure to invite the Principal Secretary, State Department of Early Learning and Basic Education Dr. Belio Kipsang to address the audience and take over the programme.

Karibuni sana.

Thank you and God bless you.