

Kenya calls for more efforts on environmental rehabilitation

LIONS CLUB OF KENYA HOST BANQUET IN HONOR OF DR. WING-KUN TAM, INTERNATIONAL PRESIDENT OF THE LIONS CLUBS AND PRINCE HUSSEIN AGA KHAN

NAIROBI (*Xinhua*) -- Kenyan Vice President Kalonzo Musyoka has called for concerted efforts in environmental rehabilitation and conservation to mitigate against global warming and adverse effects of climate change.

Musyoka also emphasized the need to intensify research aimed at ensuring the right tree species are planted in their suitable ecosystem and climatic zones.

"Kenya has one of the greatest rates of deforestation in Africa, with severe effects being felt in recent years.

Visit Mt. Kenya one of the country's water towers and you won't believe it," he noted on Wednesday evening in Nairobi, during celebration banquet hosted by the Lions Club of Kenya in honor of Dr. Wing-Kun Tam, International President of the Lions Clubs and Prince Hussein Aga Khan who are visiting Kenya.

Musyoka commended the Lions Club international and the Aga Khan Development Network (AKDN) for signing MOU committing the two organizations to plant 1.5 million trees in Kenya by June 2012.

He said the initiative is a step towards the right direction advocated by the late Nobel Laureate and environmentalist, Professor Wangari Maathai, through the contribution she made in addressing environmental degradation and poverty.

"The work of Green Belt Movement and of this great icon whose demise should embolden each one of us to continue with her good work and intent," VP added.

Musyoka noted that besides rehabilitation of the environment, planting of trees, he said, would provide livelihood option for many Kenyans, particularly in rural areas.

The Vice President added that trees enrich soil and conserve water besides providing Kenyans with income, food and medicines.

Musyoka said the government is committed to setting up reforestation programs through the Kenya Forests Service, adding that the Aga Khan Foundation and the Lions Clubs could assist in mapping of tree species for Kenya's diverse climatic zones.

The VP also expressed government's appreciation for the services rendered by the two organizations in environmental conservation, healthcare, disaster management, humanitarian assistance and education.

The Vice President said the work of the two organizations have served in empowering communities to attain quality living standards thus making a difference to millions of people.

"The government recognizes the importance of AKDN and Lions and their tremendous contribution to overall development in the country," Musyoka said.

Dr. Tam assured that Lions club International will continue to work closely with Governments and other Non-governmental agencies in social development spheres and ensure improved living standards in the society.

The Lions President said the organization attaches great importance to environmental conservation and it targets to plant about 3.5 million trees worldwide in the next four months.

Prince Aga Khan said over one million people benefit directly and indirectly with the work undertaken by the AKDN in the country.

He expressed confidence that partnership between Lion Clubs and AKDN will continue to be strengthening to benefit even more people particularly the less fortunate in the society.

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