

Environment: Kenya Urged To Emulate Prof. Wangari

First Lady Margaret Kenyatta has challenged Kenyans to change their attitude and rise up to conserve the environment in its entirety.



Noting that forests and trees are part of the Kenyan heritage, the First Lady on Sunday said every person must embrace nature in its diversity, beauty and wonder. The First Lady was speaking when she officially opened Karura Forest Environmental Education Centre Auditorium and launched an Architectural Design Competition for the centre at the heart of the forest in Nairobi. Quoting extensively from the Nobel laureate Prof. Wangari Maathai, the First Lady asked Kenyans to propagate her legacy of environmental conservation for the benefit of present and future generations. Citing the success story of a German 15 year old youth and Chief Executive Officer of Plant for the Planet Felix Finkbeiner, who received his inspiration from environment icon, the First Lady expressed hope that many young Kenyans, like Finkbeiner, would emulate Prof. Wangari in the campaign for environmental conservation. The First Lady said through the Plant for the Planet, Finkbeiner had influenced 17 million children in planting 12 billion trees in Kenya and other parts of the world. In regard to the Karura Environmental Education Centre, the First Lady welcomed the Architectural Design Competition and the construction of the centre noting that it will capture the essence of environmental sustainability. Speaking during the event, Kenya Forest Service Director Mr. David Mbugua said Kenya's forest cover now stood at 6.9 per cent contrary to common belief that it was only at 3 per cent. He said KFS would replicate the successes of Karura Forest community initiative in other parts of the country to promote tree planting in line with the Kenya Forest Act of 2005. Others who spoke were Friends of Karura Forest (FKF) chairman Prof. Karanja Njoroge, Cabinet Secretary for Water, Environment and Natural Resources Prof. Judy Wakhungu.