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Kenya Launches a Bold Strategy to Mark this Year's Clean up the World Campaign

The Keep Kenya Klean (3K) campaign will be inaugurated tomorrow at Dandora in Nairobi as the global community celebrates the Clean up the World weekend

Nairobi, 15 September 2006- Nairobi dwellers will tomorrow witness the launch of a new strategy aimed at undertaking “aggressive” clean-ups in order to redeem the environment of the existing waste. This initiative, dubbed Keep Kenya Klean (3K) campaign, is part of the activities that will mark the Clean up the World on Saturday 16 September 2006 at Dandora Phases I and II areas.

The event will mobilize UNEP through its Regional Office for Africa, in collaboration with the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources through the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA), the Nairobi City Council, several environmental groups and schools under the theme “Proud of a clean and healthy environment”, in line with the 3K campaign.

In an effort to manage and improve the quality of the environment in Kenya, NEMA has developed a strategy dubbed Keep Kenya Klean (3K) campaign, which is aimed at undertaking “aggressive” clean-ups in order to redeem the environment of the existing waste.

The Dandora site, which harbours about 300,000 residents spread across five “phases”, has been selected by the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) due to its relevance to waste management issues in Kenya and particularly as it houses the open dumpsite for Nairobi City. The dumpsite, which was established by City Council in the mid 1980s, has expanded; while the estate has grown closer to it. Over the years, some informal structures (slum) have been erected near the dumpsite.

The dumpsite is approximately 30 solid acres of garbage with no separation of waste; it's all heaped onto the already-existing mounds of trash through which people, mostly women and street children, search for items they might salvage and turn into a source of income. To make matters worse, the Nairobi River runs its course just meters downhill from the dumpsite and provides a source of water to some residents. In addition, Dandora's sewage system is so poor that most of the sewage flows directly into the river.

It is hoped that the clean up will contribute to educating and sensitizing the residents of Dandora to advocate for proper disposal and management of garbage in the area. It will also help in sensitizing the residents on the dangers of using the water from the nearby Nairobi River.

“Clean up the World mobilizes people around a powerful idea – taking the challenge of environment and sustainable development to our front doors, our backyards, and everywhere else around the globe. It comes with another idea that UNEP strongly believes in: that what we consider waste and rubbish today could become a resource for tomorrow,” said UNEP Executive Director Achim Steiner.

The Clean Up in Nairobi will be one among a number of similar events planned throughout the country. There will be activities in Mombasa, Kisumu, Nakuru and other major towns. Wildlife Clubs of Kenya will also be having activities in other towns where they are active.

Across the world, over 600 members, mobilizing over 35 million volunteers from 122 countries, will participate in this year's Clean up the World Weekend.

Note to editors

The Clean up weekend will comprise a general clean up in the morning, followed by a public gathering where the Minister for Environment and Natural Resources, Hon. Prof. Kivutha Kibwana will address the public as the Chief Guest.

Dandora estate faces serious environmental problems, in particular solid waste management and sanitation issues. A lot of garbage is spilled along the streets in this area by trucks taking garbage to the dump site. The clean up does not directly target the dumpsite, rather it is to contribute to ensuring that there is proper disposal of garbage to the dumpsite without spilling most of the garbage along the way and in the estate.

In addition, as a result of having successfully carried out previous Clean Up events in Kangemi, Globe Cinema round about and Jogoo road, tremendous improvement has been achieved around these areas. It was therefore thought that having a similar exercise in Dandora estate and its environs could spur some improvement in the area, including addressing, in the long run, the concerns experienced due to the presence of the dumpsite in the area.

The Clean up the World Campaign, held in conjunction with the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP), has grown steadily since the inaugural event in 1993. Activities range from cleaning up small villages to overhauling entire countries. Across many regions communities also implement recycling and educational programmes, as well as water and energy conservation projects.

Since the start of the campaign, Clean up the World members worldwide have collected an estimated 3,574,991 tonnes of rubbish – enough to fill 5,710 Olympic size swimming pools. Plastic, glass, metal and cigarette butts are among the most commonly found rubbish items every year.

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