

Speaking points for the opening remarks at the KNCHR Regional Conference – 7th December at Hilton Hotel (9.00 to 10.00 am)

- I would like to commend KNCHR and the Network of National Human Rights Institutions for convening this regional conference on the very important topics of human rights, good governance and the rule of law in the region.
- This conference is an important milestone in the build up to this years' international human rights day on 10th December, which will mark the 50th anniversary of two key human rights instruments: the ICCPR and the ICESCR.
- The topics of human rights, rule of law and good governance are significant to the Netherlands and central to our development cooperation strategy. Netherlands will continue to cooperate with Kenya in its efforts to strengthen its governance sector including the fight against corruption.
- In Kenya, the Netherlands supports and works in partnership with key Constitutional Commissions, the Judiciary, UNDP and NGOs to enhance observance of human rights, the rule of law and the fight against corruption thereby contribution to improved democracy and good governance in Kenya.
- Of specific importance to the Netherlands is creation of an enabling environment and protection of Human Rights Defenders who undertake important work in fighting corruption, enhancing awareness of basic rights and safeguarding fundamental freedoms that are central to a democratic society.
- I therefore urge you to remain at the forefront in supporting Human Rights Defenders in the face of everyday challenges that they encounter.
- I wish to acknowledge the very important and good work done by the KNCHR, which has been and remains a strong partner of the Embassy in its human rights promotion and protection work. I similarly acknowledge the work of all other NHRIs represented in this forum.
- The Embassy strongly believes that independent institutions such as the KNCHR and NGOs need to be supported and be provided with enabling space to implement their mandate, which ideally complements the Government's efforts towards consolidating good governance in Kenya and the region.
- With the very progressive Kenyan Constitution, much however still remains to be done in entrenching a culture of constitutionalism. I challenge you to take up the role of fostering constitutionalism through your various mandates, as a key step in promoting and consolidating good governance in Kenya and the region.
- I assure you of the support of the Embassy and the Kingdom of the Netherlands in your continued efforts to promote observance of human rights, rule of law and promotion of good governance, which are our mutually shared ideals.
- I hope that the experience sharing on best practices in human rights work shall extend beyond the region to include, for example, the Netherlands Institute for Human Rights.
- I look forward to the outcome of the conference. Thank you.