

**KEY NOTE ADDRESS FOR THE 6<sup>TH</sup> ANNUAL MEETING  
ON SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY FOR “ECONOMIC  
RECOVERY AND GROWTH”**

**BY HON. DR. SALLY J. KOSGEI**

I am please to be participating in this Sixth Annual meeting of the STS Forum at this time of great anxiety in the World Economy.

I thank the organizers for this great honour to speak for Kenya and the other African countries represented by my colleagues in the audience.

May I remind the Forum of what the economist Paul Baran said in the 1960's – in his **Political Economy of Growth**. And I am not quoting him directly. He said something to the effect that when the economy of the

metropol catches a cold, sneezes takes place in third world. With the current economic difficulties African economies face collapse and people are literally dying.

In Kenya, where I come from, and in many African countries when the story of Bears Stern first broke, most people did not pay attention – but when the avalanche caused by the collapse of the Leyman Brothers happened

many people were alarmed. Then the AIG which is present in many of our countries went in to crisis and we clearly understood what to expect. Freddie Mark, Funny May, unemployment, General Motor's etc. convinced us that we too were in serious trouble. The crisis of finance was definitely with us. Soon our exports were losing value among other problems.

As if by conspiracy the years 2008 and 2009 have brought to the Horn of Africa one of the worst droughts this part of Africa has ever witnessed. The result of the drought which is still ongoing is massive crop failure, loss of livestock and terrible famine in most parts of the country. People are dying.

Initially, weather forecasts were that the drought would come to an end by the end of last year and arrangements were made to import food. The drought did not end – it is still with us today and the result of this is that more funds from development budget have to be used to import food. To assist livestock farmers, Government tried to purchase their animals to slaughter and

distribute to alleviate famine stricken communities. Sadly, this too is not working because the drought is too severe.

Three days ago I read a story of a woman in Eastern Kenya who went in search of water – many miles away from home with her donkey. By the time she found water – many miles away from home, her donkey collapsed and

died. She could not carry the water herself because she was too hungry. This is now common place in many parts of the horn of Africa.

At the start of the drought, this woman had a neighbour who was considered wealthy by the standard of that village. He had 150 cows. All of them died by the time the woman lost her donkey. The drought had equalised the

two in extreme poverty. The representative of the two in the National assembly is the Vice President of the country – no less. Despite his best efforts and those of the government the drought won.

The problem of the drought in Kenya is really serious. About 3 weeks ago I dashed out of my house at great speed at dawn and almost crashed in to a water drilling

rig – drilling for water in the middle of the street in Nairobi. Coming out of my car totally shaken, I was assured that this was the only way to get water for this side of the city. We have seen water wars among pastoralists.

Perhaps, it is in the area of Food Security that Science and Technology leads itself most directly in improving the

situation. In Kenya, as in some of the African countries, legislation on Bio-safety is in place and we hope we can work with others around the world to scientifically improve food yields. We are doing what we can to build dams to conserve water as well as expanding our irrigation schemes.

The failure of rainfall and the world financial crisis have caused our already expensive energy costs to escalate. In Kenya we depend largely on Hydro-Electric power and some generators which are oil driven.

Sustainable and affordable energy for development for us – as we see has to come from nuclear sources. For this to be feasible in a safe manner we hope the International

Atomic Energy Agency, with the help of those who already have experience will consider working with clusters of African countries to jointly make energy available and affordable.

Recently, I believe I was not the only one encouraged by the outgoing Director General of International Atomic

Agency in making reference to the problems of Energy for developing countries. He said – and I quote

“Energy is the engine for development and development is life. For many countries, nuclear power with its good performance and safety record is a way to meet their surging demand for energy, reduce their vulnerability to

fluctuation in the cost of fossil fuels and combat climate change”. End of quote.

To deal with our fuel and food needs effectively as an average African economy, we must somehow be in a position to address the major issue of finance. This is not the time for developed countries to go into protectionalism or cut back on ODA. Third world

countries and everyone else must focus seriously on the Copenhagen Climate change to save our planet. Kyoto gave the world the way forward in the Kyoto Protocol on Climate Change but some important actors did not sign.

We hope Copenhagen will be successful. For us in Kenya, we have done our share of damage in the forest cover but now we are working hard to restore our forest cover back.

The current Economic Crisis and other factors have had a negative impact on our efforts to push ahead with the United Nations Millennium Goals. Children are dropping out of schools due to hunger caused by drought. Jobs are dwindling. And most disturbing of all is reduced resources to Health sector. We are witnessing increased cancer due to the AIDS Virus. Early diagnosis would save

more lives. The technology for early detection exists. It is just not readily available for a large part of our population.

In conclusion, it is forecast that the economic recovery may be in a year's time, but in Africa it may take a little longer since the economic situation was already desperate. I end by inviting our partners to increase their

financial support to help us come out of economic crisis. This can also be through scientific collaboration and partnership. As we do this, it is also imperative that socialization of Science and Technology is addressed.

Domo arigato gazaimashitu.