

**PRESS STATEMENT**

**CS MUTUA ATTENDS THE COMMONWEALTH FOREIGN AFFAIRS MEETING IN LONDON**

On March 15, 2023 in London, Foreign and Diaspora Affairs Cabinet Secretary, Dr. Alfred Mutua attended the 22nd Commonwealth Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting (CFAMM) that took place at the Commonwealth Headquarters, Marlborough House where Ministers and representatives from across the Commonwealth converged to discuss joint responses to shared challenges. The meeting was CS Mutua’s maiden meeting in his capacity as Kenya's Foreign Affairs Minister.

This year’s CFAMM focused on enhancing the resilience of Commonwealth countries in times of crisis and provided a platform for members to apprise each other on the challenges faced by their countries such as the effects of Climate Change, Covid-19 pandemic and high food and energy costs that risk impacting Peace and Stability.

Speaking during the meeting, the CS said that, the convening of the CFAMM was a welcome opportunity for the Commonwealth to continue being a global leader in offering ambitious and practical solutions to global challenges.

CS Mutua proposed various areas of concern that the ‘Family of Nations’ could work jointly on, including; the need to take unprecedented action against Climate Change, Pollution and Biodiversity Loss,matters of Regional Peace and Security – including Countering Violent Extremism, Debt Management and the issue of Elections and National Cohesion. He commended Kenya for holding peaceful and fair elections as was validated by both regional and international election observer missions.

The Cabinet Secretary apprised the Ministers on Kenya’s commitment to supporting African leadership in addressing the triple planetary crisis, which includes Climate Change, Pollution and Biodiversity Loss, as well as Kenya’s role in advancing a cleaner, greener and more sustainable environment. He highlighted that Kenya’s President H.E. William Ruto, is advocating for the planting of 15 billion trees by 2023, aimed at increasing Kenya’s tree cover from 13% to 30%.

The Cabinet Secretary also called for a review of the Global Financing System that would help in easing and better management of debt among Commonwealth Member States.

In urging for a Commonwealth that was fit for purpose, Dr. Mutua called for the removal of trade barriers that restricted movement of goods and people amongst the member states, such as the restrictive visa regimes, noting that elimination of such visa requirements and other non-trade barriers would play a part in leveraging intra-Commonwealth trade.

The Cabinet Secretary reaffirmed Kenya’s commitment to positive multilateralism, to the values and principles of the Commonwealth and to mutually beneficial partnerships that will safeguard and advance the welfare and wellbeing of our respective peoples

The Foreign Affairs Ministers Meeting is held annually to discuss matters of collective interest to the Commonwealth such as the implementation of Commonwealth Heads of Government Meeting (CHOGM) mandates, current global issues affecting the Commonwealth, briefing on territorial disputes as well as on the work of the Commonwealth Secretariat.

On the sidelines of the CFAMM, The Cabinet Secretary held a bilateral meeting with the Foreign Secretary of the United Kingdom H.E James Cleverly where they discussed issues of mutual interest and underscored the need for peace and stability.

The CS requested for a quota of additional 20,000 nurses to work in the UK, 10,000 jobs for seasonal agricultural workers in the UK farm sector and support to access as many as 8,000 seasonal Labour jobs in construction, hospitality and health in the Isles of Jersey and Guernsey

On regional peace and security, they both agreed to collaboratively explore ingenious pathways to silence the guns in the DRC, Somalia and South Sudan. UK appreciates and lauded Kenya’s commitment to improve peace, security and prosperity in Kenya and in the Region

The Ministers updated each other on the ongoing projects and agreements signed at COP 27 in Egypt and Kenya. In this respect Kenya and UK trade and development programs are set to grow to higher heights.

The Ministers also discussed increasing scholarships to Kenya from the current 40 Chevening and 20 Commonwealth scholarships. CS Mutua observed that doubling of the number of scholarships offered to Kenyans would be ideal.

**MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AND DIASPORA AFFAIRS**

**MARCH 15, 2023**