



PRESS STATEMENT ON TOTAL BAN ON ALL PLASTIC BAGS

In the Gazette notice No. 2334, of 28th February, 2017, The Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Environment and Natural resources while exercising powers conferred under section 3 and 86 of the Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act (EMCA Cap 387), notified the public that with effect from 6 month from the date of the notice banned the use, manufacture and importation of all plastic bags used for commercial and household packaging.

In Kenya plastics are widely used as a key packing material in several sectors of the economy namely manufacturing, trade, transport, agriculture, hospitality etc. A research done by NEMA in conjunction with United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and Kenya Institute of Public Policy Research and Analysis (KIPPRA), revealed that 100 million plastic bags are handed out annually in Kenya by supermarkets alone.

The purpose of the Government to ban the use of plastic bags is to avoid health and environmental effects resulting from the use of plastic bags. These effects include,

1. The inability of plastic bags to decompose and thus affecting soil quality;
2. the littering of such bags at various parts of the country;
3. The blockage of sewerage and water drainage infrastructure causing floods during the raining season;
4. Damage of ecosystems and biodiversity due to plastics bags,
5. Death of animals after consuming plastic material;
6. Endangering human health when used for packaging food in particular hot food;
7. Poisonous gaseous and when used as fuel to light charcoal; and

8. Air pollution when disposed by burning in open air.

The government extends a six month grace period to manufacturers and importers of all plastic bags used for commercial and household packaging. All stakeholders are required to take reasonable steps to ensure that by 28th August, 2017, the production, importation, sale and use of plastic bags in the country ceases. Manufactures of all plastic bags are encouraged to invest in the production of alternative bags.

Pursuant to section 144 of EMCA, any person who contravenes the provision of the gazette notice shall be liable to a fine of not less than two (2) million Kenya Shillings, and not more than four (4) million Kenya shillings, or imprisonment of a term of not less than one (1) year but not more than four (4) years or to both such fine and imprisonment.

**PROF. GEOFFREY WAHUNGU,
DIRECTOR GENERAL**