

August 29, 2017

**Press statement on the plastic ban in Kenya
“Every Kenyan has a right to a clean and healthy environment”**

In a February 28th notice published in the Kenya Gazette, Prof Judy Wakhungu, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment and Natural Resources, ordered plastic bags commonly used to wrap foodstuffs and shopping done away with by August 28, 2017. The Cabinet Secretary banned the use, manufacture and importation of all plastic bags used for commercial and household packaging which fall into two categories: carrier bags and flat bags.

The Green Belt Movement (GBM) commends the Ministry of Environment, in particular the CS Prof. Judi Wakhungu, for this bold and critical step in ensuring the long term sustainability of our environment.

The long-awaited ban is timely. We wish to thank the Government and the Ministry of Environment and Natural Resources and the 11th Parliament for passing this great law. It will contribute greatly to reducing the effects associated with the use and improper disposal of plastics. Besides the littering problem which is apparent in most Kenyan urban centers, plastic waste, air pollution, habitat destruction, human health problems, that include lung and respiratory disorders, human and animal deaths, are but a few of the other complications.

The Green Belt Movement's Mottainai campaign, initiated by Professor Wangari Maathai, has been advocating against plastic waste through the three R's – Reduce, Reuse and Recycle. To instill this value amongst our tree nursery groups and rural communities, GBM has been raising awareness through community trainings on the environmental and health impacts of plastics.

GBM's award-winning approach to environmental conservation, community empowerment and livelihood improvement, that spans four decades, has laid a foundation that is solid and sound. It is on this platform that the Green Belt Movement in partnership with the Ministry of Environment and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) is mainstreaming waste management. Through this partnership we are sensitizing communities and different stakeholders on the 3 R's, the effects of open burning of waste and behavioral change in relation to use of polythene bags.

The Green Belt Movement is calling on all Kenyans to embrace this noble course that guarantees a cleaner and healthier environment to the citizenry of future generations. In Professor Maathai's words, “we owe it to ourselves and to the next generation to conserve the environment so that we can bequeath our children a sustainable world that benefits all.”

For further information, please contact:
Mercy Karunditu, Interim Director - Programmes
mkarunditu@greenbeltmovement.org