



## CONCEPT NOTE

### **“Reflecting on 60 Years of US-Kenya Diplomatic Engagement”**

#### **60 Years of Partnership: Advancing Climate Action and Renewable Energy Together**

**Date: February 11th, 2025: Time: 9:30 am – 12:00 pm**

**Location: Kenya School of Government**

#### **Background**

Over the past six decades, the United States and Kenya have forged a strong and enduring partnership, marked by mutual collaboration in various spheres, including climate action and renewable energy. Kenya stands out as a leader in renewable energy in Africa, with over 75% of its electricity generated from clean sources like geothermal, wind, solar, and hydropower. The United States has played a pivotal role in supporting Kenya's renewable energy sector through financial investments, technical expertise, and climate-focused partnerships.

Initiatives such as Olkaria Geothermal Development where Kenya has partnered with U.S. agencies such as the U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) and the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (now the U.S. International Development Finance Corporation, DFC), have yielded annual production of over 800 MW of clean energy. The Lake Turkana Wind Power Project, which supplies 310 MW which is equivalent to 15% of Kenya's electricity benefits from U.S. collaboration in terms of financing and technology sharing. Through Power Africa, USAID has facilitated partnerships that bring affordable solar home systems to remote communities, improving energy access for over 4 million households. U.S.-led public-private initiatives have also attracted billions of dollars in private capital to Kenya's renewable sector. These initiatives align with the shared goals of combating climate change, fostering economic development, job creation and improving energy access for underserved communities.

From Kenya's adoption of geothermal and solar energy that have become a cornerstone of its renewable energy portfolio, to the United States' support in technology transfer, capacity building, and climate resilience programs, the two nations have demonstrated a shared commitment to sustainable development. The US has also supported Kenya's green mobility initiatives by providing zero-emission vehicle financing to the transportation sector. Electric mobility is in alignment with Kenya's National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP) for the period 2023-2027, which focuses on reducing greenhouse gas emissions. By investing in e-mobility, Kenya seeks to enhance accessibility and support the rapidly growing MSME sector, while also addressing the challenges posed by climate change.

#### **Seminar Objective**

This seminar, organized by the University of Nairobi's Africa Center for the Study of the U.S. (ACSUS) in partnership with the U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section, aims to reflect on the U.S.-Kenya Climate Action and Renewable Energy partnership over the past 60 years. This milestone provides an opportune moment to reflect on the achievements, challenges, and lessons learned from this



partnership, especially in addressing the global climate crisis. As the world intensifies its efforts to transition to clean energy systems, the seminar will explore how this historic collaboration can inspire innovative approaches to achieving Kenya's 2030 renewable energy goals and the global net-zero targets.

- **Highlight Historical Achievements:** Reflect on key milestones in the US-Kenya diplomatic engagement on climate action and renewable energy, including significant projects, policies, and agreements that have shaped this partnership.
- **Foster Collaborative Innovation:** Identify opportunities for advancing joint initiatives in renewable energy, including emerging technologies, capacity building, and knowledge sharing to address current and future energy challenges.
- **Promote Policy and Investment Dialogues:** Engage stakeholders from both nations, including policymakers, private sector actors, and civil society, in discussions aimed at fostering investments, sustainable energy policies, and climate-resilient economic development.

### **Seminar Format**

- **Panel Discussion:** The seminar will feature a panel discussion with five (5) panelists representing key sectors, including US-Kenya government, the business community, academia, and civil society.
- **Opening Remarks:** Each guest speaker will have 5-10 minutes for their opening remarks.
- **Moderated Session:** Following each speaker, the moderator will guide a 30-minute discussion based on the seminar objectives.
- **Q&A Session:** A 20-minute question-and-answer session will be facilitated to encourage engagement and interaction from an audience of about 60 people. The seminar will bring together government officials, energy experts, environmental advocates, private sector representatives, researchers, and international development partners.
- **Duration:** The event will last 2 hours and end with a photosession and networking lunch.

### **About the Program: "Reflecting on 60 Years of U.S.-Kenya Diplomatic Engagement"**

The Africa Center for the Study of the U.S. (ACSUS) was established by the Department of Diplomacy and International Studies (DDIS) at the University of Nairobi on November 11, 2022, with a mission to foster intellectual and cultural exchanges that deepen understanding of U.S.-Africa relations. ACSUS is committed to amplifying African-generated knowledge, empowering scholars, researchers, and students to critically engage with U.S. society, history, and policies. This seminar is part of an ACSUS program sponsored by the U.S. Embassy Public Diplomacy Section (PDS), and is part of the commemoration of 60 years of U.S.-Kenya partnership. It aims to enhance awareness and understanding of U.S.-Kenya bilateral relations, while exploring future opportunities for collaboration in key areas such as trade, investment, climate action, security, governance, and health.