



AAK | PROMOTING EXCELLENCE
IN THE BUILT ENVIRONMENT

Architects
Engineers
Town Planners
Interior Designers
Quantity Surveyors
Landscape Architects
Construction Project Managers
Environmental Design Consultants

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

16th October 2026

AVERT THE LOOMING ENVIRONMENTAL CRISIS

The Architectural Association of Kenya (AAK) is appalled by the persistent, widespread destruction of our natural environment nationwide. From our forests and water towers to our urban streets and public green spaces, trees are increasingly being treated as expendable obstacles to development, infrastructure expansion, and the demand for timber and land. This must stop.

Recent reports of tree felling across the country are deeply troubling. In Nairobi, trees have been removed along transport corridors, including Uhuru Highway and Mombasa Road during the construction of the Nairobi Expressway, as well as along State House Road, Kenyatta Avenue and Valley Road. In Nakuru, felling mature trees along Oginga Odinga Avenue has stripped the city of a defining feature of its urban landscape. The recent tree cutting along the Mau Summit-Rironi highway further raises questions about how infrastructure development is planned and executed, and whether adequate safeguards are in place to protect the natural environment.

Beyond our urban centers, the country has also seen extensive logging in critical ecological areas this year alone, including the Aberdare ecosystem, Kapchemutwa Forest, Saboti Forest, Karura Forest, and Imenti Forest. These ecosystems are essential ecological assets, not expendable timber reserves awaiting development. Their contribution to our collective well-being cannot be overstated: Flood prevention and water regulation by intercepting rainfall, promoting infiltration, and slowing surface runoff, hence reducing the risk and severity of flooding; Climate change mitigation by absorbing atmospheric carbon; Capturing particulate matter and absorbing gaseous pollutants, helping to improve urban air quality in cities already grappling with pollution; Biodiversity preservation by providing food, shelter, and breeding habitats for birds, insects, and other wildlife; Providing shade, reducing the urban heat island effect, and making walking, cycling, and other forms of non-motorized transport more comfortable.

This destruction therefore directly threatens public health, climate resilience, biodiversity, livelihoods, and the safety of present and future generations. We are witnessing a slow-moving environmental pandemic whose consequences are already being felt. This stands in stark contrast to the Government's 15 billion Tree Growing Program, which aims to restore 10.6 million hectares of degraded landscapes and increase Kenya's national tree cover to 30% by 2032. It also undermines Kenya's climate commitments under its Nationally Determined Contributions, which target a 32% reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by 2030. We cannot credibly commit to restoring our landscapes and combating climate change while allowing the avoidable destruction of the very ecosystems that underpin these ambitions.

Nature does not negotiate with development plans, political declarations or economic ambitions. When we undermine the ecosystems that sustain us, the consequences return to our homes, livelihoods and communities.

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AAK recognizes that infrastructure development, housing delivery and economic growth are essential to Kenya's progress. However, development must not be pursued at the expense of the environmental systems on which human settlements depend. We therefore call upon the National and County Governments, the Kenya Forest Service, the National Environment Management Authority, and all relevant government agencies and stakeholders to take the following urgent and decisive action:

1. Immediately halt tree felling and investigate reported incidents of ecological destruction across the country. Those responsible must be held accountable.
2. Make tree preservation mandatory in infrastructure planning and development approvals.
3. Implement environmental safeguards throughout the project cycle, not merely as a procedural requirement before construction begins.
4. Require mandatory tree inventories by developers before breaking ground. This identifies heritage, or high-value native species that must be integrated into the site plan.
5. Require credible restoration and replacement programs that prioritize indigenous, ecologically appropriate species; survival rates; long-term maintenance; and adequate replacement for the ecological value lost.
6. Involve experts in establishing best ways of tree transplanting rather than felling down of trees that could be saved through transplanting.
7. Promote transparent public reporting and accountability by meaningfully involving communities in decisions affecting their environmental assets.
8. Provide public green spaces within neighbourhoods to help improve on urban tree cover and therefore promote air circulation.

As the national association representing professionals in the built and natural environment, AAK remains committed to advancing development that respects ecological limits and serves the public interest.

To destroy nature is to undermine humanity's own survival.

-End-

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