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Today marked the beginning of yet another journey in creating positive impact to the community living near Mt. Kenya forest between rivers Sagana and Tigithi in Nyeri county.

The construction of a 60 Kms solar powered human-wildlife control fence was launched by Hon. Sicily K. Kariuki (Mrs), EGH, the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry Of Water, Sanitation And Irrigation at Ngonde in Kabaru forest station.

The fence construction will be implemented through a partnership between the Upper Tana Catchment Natural Resources Management Project (UTaNRMP), KWS, KFS, Rhino Ark Foundation, Mt Kenya Trust and the respective Community Forest Associations.

It is expected that the fence will be completed by October 2022 at an estimated cost of KShs. 280Million.

In her speech, the Hon cabinet secretary noted that the Upper Tana Catchment was a region of critical importance since it provides about 80% of the country's hydroelectric power, supplies over 90% of all the water used in the city of Nairobi and supports livelihoods of about 6million people living in the catchment.

The area MP, Hon Kanini Kega on his part thanked the Government for the initiative noting that the community around the forest area had for long lived in conflict with wildlife. This he said perpetuated the poverty cycle due to loss of livelihoods and had a negative effect on the mountain ecosystem.

UTaNRMP's project Coordinattor Ms. Faith Muthoni Livingstone noted that 60kms of a similar fence had been constructed in the eastern side of Mt Kenya forest from River Thuchi (Tharaka Nithi County) to river Thingithu in Meru County. A lot of outcomes and impacts had been registered from this phase of the fence construction and that similar impacts were expected from the Nyeri phase of the fence.

On behalf of the community, the Hombe Community Forest Association (CFA) chairman reported that the community had for long been denied peace and livelihoods due to regular crop-raiding by wildlife from Mt. Kenya Forest, the most notorious of these being elephants. Single and two strands fences that the community had attempted to construct in some sections to mitigate the conflict had little success if any in keeping the elephants away from the farmlands. He noted that the community's hopes were on the comprehensive fence that had been launched by the Cabinet Secretary.

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