

Nairobi, Kenya, October 26 (Infosplusgabon) - The Kenyan government plans to plant over 10 million trees in Mau Forest, the country's water tower, an official source told Infosplusgabon on Saturday.

Environment Cabinet Secretary Keraiko Tobiko announced the plans just five days before the expiry of the 90-day ultimatum the government gave illegal settlers to vacate the forest.

The government wants to restore the forest, which is the source of lakes and rivers in Kenya.

Big rivers in western Kenya, among them Nyando, Yala and Sondu Miriu, drain into Lake Victoria which straddles the borders of Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania.

Lake Victoria, the second largest freshwater lake in the world, is one of the two main sources of River Nile. The other source is the Ethiopian highlands.

Tobiko said the exercise was aimed restoring the forest cover.

The government will plant 10 million indigenous tree seedlings during the exercise set to kick off November 1.

So far, close to 2,000 people vacated the forest in the second phase of the forest re-generation exercise.

Those who fail to beat the deadline face forceful eviction.

Inviting members of the public, institutions and corporate entities to take part in the exercise by donating seeds, Tobiko added that out of the 10 million indigenous trees targeted for plantation, 3 million were aerial seedlings.

Nairobi houses two United Nations agencies headquarters - United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and United Nations Human Settlement body (UN-Habitat).

Kenya wants to lead by example by increasing the country's forest cover from the current 7 percent to 15 percent by 2022.

The UN recommended tree cover threshold is 10 percent.

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