



INSTITUTION OF SURVEYORS OF KENYA

PRESS STATEMENT

5th November 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE PRESS RELEASE

CONDOLENCES MESSAGE AND CALL FOR STRONGER ACTION FOLLOWING THE DEVASTATING LANDSLIDES IN ELGEYO MARAKWET COUNTY

The Institution of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK) extends its deepest condolences to the families, friends and relatives, who have lost their loved ones, those injured, and the many who have been displaced or left without shelter and livelihoods. The tragedy in Elgeyo Marakwet is a painful reminder of the growing vulnerability of communities living in landslide-prone regions and the urgent need for coordinated national action on disaster preparedness and sustainable land management. It is notable that Kenya has recorded over 120 landslide events in the past decade (source: NDOC/UNDRR), with Elgeyo Marakwet being among the top five high-risk counties.

It is regrettable that despite the early warnings issued by the Kenya Meteorological Department, lives were still lost due to limited evacuation planning, poor infrastructure, and the absence of designated temporary shelters for residents in high-risk zones. This situation demonstrates a critical gap in our disaster management framework, where early warnings are not consistently followed by effective preventive or mitigated measures.

As professionals in the land and built environment disciplines, the Institution of Surveyors of Kenya observes that deforestation, unsustainable land use, and poor settlement planning have significantly increased the frequency and severity of landslides in Kenya. Forests continue to be cleared for farming, grazing, charcoal burning, and settlement, weakening soil structure, destabilizing slopes, and compromising the natural drainage systems that prevent such disasters.

While the Government's plan to plant 15 billion trees by 2032 through the National Tree Growing Restoration Campaign is commendable, this effort must go hand in hand with strict enforcement of land-use planning,

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forest conservation, and settlement control measures. Otherwise, these noble goals will remain unattained aspirations.

In light of these developments, ISK recommends the following actions:

- 1. Mapping and Zonation of Landslide-Prone Areas:** The Government, through relevant ministries, departments and agencies, should work with professional bodies like ISK to conduct detailed geospatial mapping to identify, classify, and monitor high-risk areas across the country.
- 2. Enforcement of Land-Use and Settlement Controls:** County Governments should strictly prohibit human settlement and development in identified high-risk zones and enforce buffer zones along slopes, rivers, and forested areas.
- 3. Strengthening Disaster Preparedness and Response:** National and county disaster management units must operationalize early warning systems by linking meteorological alerts to immediate community-level actions, including evacuation and provision of temporary shelters.
- 4. Restoration of Forest and Catchment Areas:** Intensify reforestation and afforestation programs, enforce anti-logging regulations, and promote sustainable agricultural practices to stabilize soil and protect watersheds.
- 5. Community Awareness and Capacity Building:** Educate residents in vulnerable areas on environmental conservation, disaster response, and safe settlement practices to empower communities to take preventive measures.

The Institution reiterates its commitment to collaborate with the national and county Governments, development partners, and other stakeholders to advance sustainable land management and disaster risk reduction in Kenya. We must treat this tragedy as a wake-up call to prioritize environmental conservation, proactive planning, and responsible land use, not only to honour the lives lost but also to prevent such avoidable disasters in the future.

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The Institution of Surveyors of Kenya (ISK) is the professional body that brings together professionals who provide services in the Land built sector. The professionals fall within eight major disciplines of the surveying profession namely Land Surveying, Valuation, Building Surveying, Land Administration Management, Engineering Surveying, Geospatial Information Management, Estate Agents and Property Management. Our membership of over 6,500 is widely spread across the Country.

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