



OFFICE OF THE
DEPUTY PRESIDENT

**REMARKS OF H.E RIGATHI GACHAGUA, THE DEPUTY
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE
EL NINO IMPACT MITIGATION STRATEGIC MEETING ON
THURSDAY, SEPTEMBER 28, 2023 AT KAREN, NAIROBI**

Cabinet Secretaries;
Principal Secretaries;
Regional Commissioners;
Excellency Governors;
Chief Executive Officers and Director General Agencies;
The National Drought Response Steering Committee;

Representatives of the North Eastern Development Initiative;

The UN Agencies and Partners;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I thank you all for honouring our invitation to this strategic meeting today. It is a foresight meeting.

We are not preparing to respond to the El Nino disaster; we are consolidating and refining coordination strategy for mitigation. Unlike in the past, we are saving lives and livelihoods before tragedy strikes.

That is why this convening is critical in streamlining our actions as opposed to disjointed reactionary measures.

While it is the responsibility of Government to protect life and livelihoods, inclusion of partners offers well-thought-out actions for better results.

This was evident in the last few months when we worked together in fighting famine and drought.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests;

The weather forecast indicates that more than 20 counties across the country may face one of the heaviest rain seasons in the decades, starting September.

Indeed, as can be confirmed by the Governors and Regional Commissioners, several parts of the country are already receiving rains beyond usual quantities. This may intensify and extend up to early 2024.

Some of the counties that have been identified as possible areas of El Nino include Siaya, Kisumu, Homa Bay, Migori, Kisii, Nyamira, Baringo and Uasin Gishu.

Others are Elgeyo Marakwet, Nandi, Kericho, Bungoma, Kakamega, Busia, Trans Nzoia, West Pokot, Vihiga, Laikipia, Nakuru and Narok.

As you may have noted, these counties are either in the Rift Valley or West of the Rift Valley.

These regions are home to more than half of the country's population, which, therefore, means that with other hotspots identified across the country, El Nino will be devastating if we fail to plan properly.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests;

Our children are preparing for national examinations while their parents are readying to harvest.

The business community is crisscrossing the country in rebuilding the economy as the Government implements

massive infrastructure projects for better service delivery to the people.

All these and more other undertakings will be interrupted.

After a prolonged drought of almost 40 years, we do not wish to lose lives and livelihoods. We do not wish to see the 1997 El Nino situation in which more than 1.5 million people were negatively affected.

We must safeguard the gains we have made since the rains commenced. That is why we must prepare properly together.

We note with appreciation that some counties and partners are establishing structures of mitigating possible impacts.

El Nino is beyond County Governments; El Nino is beyond the National Government; El Nino is beyond our Partners. That is why we must work together by

leveraging our diverse capacities in technical and financial resources.

A synchronised strategy will offer a methodical implementation matrix of the mitigation measures, which we are refining today.

One of the key components of our strategy is sharing of information between our teams as gathered from the early warning systems.

We will also agree on execution of duties and responsibilities for a shared win during and beyond El Nino.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests;

Let me take this moment to also address our people. I wish to start by assuring you that a lot has been going

on in the background, in preparation of the expected abnormal rains.

Today's meeting is a comparison of notes with our partners for better response and most importantly, mitigation in the event of an emergency.

It is very important for us, Kenyans, to take measures to reduce the negative impact of these rains. That is why we are appealing to those living in low lying and flood prone areas to move to higher grounds.

On the other hand, we would like to urge our farmers, especially those with grains to harvest and store their produce early. This will minimise losses.

Further, we also request Kenyans to be proactive in reporting cases of emergency through officials and other channels that would be making public.

In this regard, we invite the media to work with us in timely dissemination of information for the public to remain safe.

Excellencies, Distinguished Guests;

While we strive to build resilience structures, the rains are an opportunity to also grow more trees.

His Excellency President William Ruto is leading the Nation in planting more trees towards meeting the 15 Billion target by 2032.

Improving forest cover will reduce the negative impact of Climate Change by stabilising weather and countering events such as landslides and mudslides.

We encourage our farmers in the less flood-prone areas to grow food. After the El Nino, we will still need food.

On this note, I invite all of us to this conversation and look forward to a solidified march to mitigating the possible impacts of the El Nino.

ASANTENI SANA