



OFFICE OF THE  
DEPUTY PRESIDENT

**REMARKS OF H.E RIGATHI GACHAGUA, EGH, THE  
DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA,  
DURING THE OFFICIAL CLOSING OF THE 8TH  
DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE, AT THE ELDORET SPORTS  
CLUB, UASIN GISHU COUNTY, ON AUGUST 18, 2023**

---

***Theme:***  
***10 Years of Devolution: The Present and the Future***

---

**The Speaker of the Senate, Amason Kingi;**

**The Cabinet Secretaries;**

**The Principal Secretary, State Department for  
Devolution Teresia Mbaika;**

**Other Principal Secretaries;**

**The Chair, Council of Governors, Anne Waiguru;**

**Honourable Governors and Deputy Governors;**

**Honourable Senators;**

**Honourable Members of the National Assembly;**

**The Chair of Devolution Donor Working Group, Amb. Ole Thonke;**

**The Representatives of Constitutional Commissions and Independent Institutions;**

**Heads of Missions and Members of the Diplomatic Corps;**

**Members of the County Assemblies;**

**Distinguished Guests;**

**I join you for the 8<sup>th</sup> Devolution Conference and the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference as we celebrate a devolved, but complementary system of governance.**

**Over the last four days of this convening, which was opened by President William Ruto on Wednesday, we have appreciated the transformation of investing resources at the BOTTOM of the pyramid- where they belong.**

**As staunch believers in sparking grassroots economies, we have picked good practices and lessons for better, bolder and broader steps into the next decade of devolution.**

**That is why the sub-theme: *Driving Transformation from The Local Level: County Governments as the Centre of Economic Development*, is apt.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**At the start of our Administration, President Ruto was criticised for scrapping off the Ministry of Devolution.**

**But less than one year into Office, he has shown commitment to delivering on the Devolution dream because it is aligned to the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda.**

**We have no room for a failed Devolution because it is the anchor of the Kenya Kwanza Transformation Agenda. We are keeping the promise. In our first year in Office, the National Government owes no County a penny.**

**On the other hand, the President elevated Devolution and placed it under the Office of the Deputy President. In this regard, Devolution enjoys a direct ear to President Ruto from his Principal Assistant.**



**Besides being the Chair of the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council, I am the bridge between the National Government and the County Governments: in short- I am your representative at the decision-making table of the Executive.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**This Conference is an important forum for me and the Ruto Administration, as we start a decade of socio-economic transformation of the country under the Kenya Kwanza Plan.**

**Our Plan is not an accident. It is a carefully thought-out framework. It is a vehicle carrying the aspirations of the Counties in spurring the economy at the grassroots.**

**That is why collaboration and partnership despite the distinct nature of the mandates of the National and County Governments, are key.**

**We are here to court, cultivate and oil our mutual working relations for seamless service delivery.**

**The conversation of this conference, therefore, has established that Devolution is not a competition, but working in a complementary manner.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**The advent of Devolution has led to the rise of health facilities from about 8,000 to over 13,700 as of 2022.**

**While it is in the interest of the counties to adequately provide technical and equipment support, leveraging partnership with the National Government ensures quality health service.**

**As we collectively work to implement the Universal Health Coverage, the National Government has also given priority to preventive healthcare to ultimately reduce pressure on the county facilities.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**Similarly, when more than 4.5 million people in over 30 counties faced famine recently, we lost no life; it was out of collaboration. As we expect a bumper harvest, counties were key in the last mile delivery of over 3 million bags of subsidised fertiliser to our farmers in at least 40 devolved units.**

**Such partnership has been crucial in our war on illicit brews and drug abuse, besides public reforms in the Coffee, Tea, Dairy, and other key subsectors.**

**As the President said on Wednesday in this conference, I would like to ask counties to work with us in the registration of farmers and in delivery of Phase II of the subsidised fertiliser distribution to the farmer.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**From these examples, comparing notes between the National and County Governments is important in strategic planning and execution of short-term, mid-term and long-term measures.**



**Long-term measures involve pragmatic approaches to addressing perennial issues and rebuilding back better in resilience programmes under the shared or common functions.**

**Last month, President Ruto asked me to represent him at the UN Food Systems Summit in Rome, Italy.**

**A lesson to pick from the Summit was the importance of pooling resources and investing in establishment of structured self-sustaining food systems.**

**In the face of Climate Change, which knows no National and County functions, combined actions and investments in Climate Smart Agriculture will enhance the national food security and protect better, the environment.**

**With the inclusion of food trees into the equation of planting 15 billion trees by 2032, we move closer to addressing the negative impact of Climate Change.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**While this Conference has also listened to the voices of children, it is also a moment to decide on establishing a long-term framework on the school meal programme.**

**With counties having hired over 50,900 early childhood teachers, sustaining growth in enrollment and retention is key.**

**The current school meal programme has reduced dropping out by 56.5% while milk alone has increased enrollment by 50.72%.**

**Under the self-sustaining food system, the school meal programme is a potential economic opportunity in intercounty trade. Already, counties like our host, Uasin Gishu, are providing milk to children. This is a source of market for the dairy farmer.**

**Our Administration has also doubled funds for the school meal programme to KSh5 billion to cater for about 4 million learners- while benefiting our farmers.**

**As more counties embrace the meals initiative, there is need for a formal framework, to expand and sustain the programme, which touches our farmers directly. This is the real bottom-up development plan; it will allow counties exchange their products.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**Intra and intercounty trade is an essential component now that more than 90% of our counties keep missing Own Source of Revenue collection targets. It is time to re-strategise and implement better plans of cooking a bigger cake for sharing.**

**This is the ultimate answer to easing the revenue demands from the National Government and reducing dependence.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**While we are empowering the Counties to be economic powerhouses, we take note of the vulnerable groups of people amongst us.**



**They include orphans, the elderly, people living with disabilities, among others. They are at risk of being left behind.**

**The National Government is rolling out another registration in September; we seek to partner with the Counties in dignifying these special groups as conceived under the Inua Jamii Programme.**

**We invite you to work with us in the registration process.**

**On the other hand, the National Government is working hard to securing our Nation.**

**In building stronger security systems, we must work together in ending terrorism, banditry and other threats.**

**In CONCLUSION, I wish to Congratulate the Winners of the Devolution Warriors Awards, especially the Governors. You have shown the magic in Devolution. It is the real Bottom-Up that we need to dignify our people.**

**Governors, Distinguished Guests;**

**It is now my duty to declare the 8<sup>th</sup> Devolution Conference and the 1<sup>st</sup> Biennial Conference, officially closed.**

**ASANTENI SANA**

