

**CLOSING REMARKS OF H.E RIGATHI GACHAGUA, EGH,
DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA,
DURING THE CABINET SECRETARIES INDUCTION
MEETING AT THE NATIONAL DEFENCE COLLEGE (NDC)
INTERNATIONAL PEACE AND SUPPORT TRAINING CENTRE
(IPSTC) IN KAREN, NAIROBI, ON AUGUST 13, 2024 AT
5:00PM**

THEME: "A New Paradigm Beckons"

The Chief of Staff and Head of the Public Service, Felix Koskei;

Cabinet Secretaries;

Secretary to the Cabinet;

Senior Government Officials;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Good Evening;

1. I have known no greater honour than the privilege of serving our beloved Nation. No matter what you have achieved previously, when you first walk into the Cabinet Room, all else pales in comparison.

2. My first time walking into the room that has been the venue of all Cabinet Meetings since independence, was in my capacity as Deputy President. I must confess, I was a little unsure. I didn't know whether to sit to the right or left of the President. The room was intimidating.

The atmosphere was sombre. The lingering presence of all those great men and women who have also walked its hallowed halls was inspiring.

3. That feeling of being immensely privileged, never fades away. I still have a sense of awe every time the formal meeting starts.

Every day, I thank the Lord and the People of Kenya for this opportunity, and the strength not to take it for granted.

4. The privilege to serve in State Office requires great courage. The courage to take responsibility for the actions of others.

The courage to be the only one in the room that carries the vision, confident in your ability to make a significant impact despite naysayers and detractors.

The courage to persevere judgement and reproach. The courage to inspire in word and deed.

The words of Robert F. Kennedy ring true today, as they did in June of 1966 when he said them in Cape Town, South Africa:

“Moral courage [which is the capacity to overcome the fear of shame and humiliation in order to admit one’s mistakes, to confess a wrong, to reject evil, conformity, to denounce injustice, and to defy immoral or imprudent orders] is a rarer commodity than bravery in battle or great intelligence. Yet it is the one essential, vital quality of those who seek to change a world which yields most painfully to change.”

5. It, therefore, gives me great pleasure to join you once again, to officially close what has been a moral courage building session for Cabinet Secretaries.

Ladies and Gentlemen

6. This induction comes after the reconstitution of the Cabinet, following a moment of great reflection and introspection for this country.

7. It follows a season of dissatisfaction and anger against the Government and its intentions. Yet in the dark clouds that loomed overhead, we found silver linings that resulted in the addition of a rich tapestry of talent, knowledge and experience that is the second Cabinet under the Kenya Kwanza Administration.

This masterpiece is a reflection of who we were, who we are, and who we want to be.

8. I congratulate you once again for your appointment and re-appointment to the Cabinet and look forward to working together to meet and exceed the expectations of the Kenyan people.

9. I have the duty of chairing the Cabinet Committees. The Committees are critical platforms for deep interrogation of proposed policies, legislation and government action.

10. As guided by H.E. The President, we must dedicate ourselves fully to the conduct of Cabinet Committee business, and break down for full Cabinet consideration, papers that have benefited from sufficient debate, analysis and examination.

11. I look forward to your cooperation in this regard.

12. I am informed that you have engaged in candid discussions and some self-assessment and reflection.

From yesterday's meeting with H.E. The President, to the various presentations delivered yesterday and today, you have been taken through the expectations of your roles, the macro-economic context in which we find ourselves, and the corruption pitfalls that you must avoid to guard against what the EACC describes as a cause for sleepless nights.

13. I also note the guidance provided on the national security posture in which we must operate, the contours of safeguarding our national interests, the machinery of

State, the mechanics of Parliamentary engagement and the tenets of effective communication and branding. Of greatest importance is the need to work cohesively in a whole-of-Government approach.

Ladies and Gentlemen

14. Kenyans expressed themselves loudly and clearly. They want a Government that is Responsive, Accountable, and Transparent. They want leaders not rulers, servants not masters, and they expect humility and sacrifice.

15. The youth, in particular, are the Game-Changer. Our country, though 63 years old, has a median age of about 19.8 years. This youthfulness presents immense opportunities to harness their energy, passion, and creativity; but it also comes with heightened pressures and greater expectations.

16. The great task of our season in leadership is to initiate an industrial, agricultural, and digital age revolution, that will create millions more jobs and self-employment opportunities for all Kenyans, but particularly the youth.

We are expected to do so with transparency, accountability and integrity. The temptation will be to think that this can be achieved quickly and easily; but the reality is that this is a momentous task.

17. Our key task as H.E. The President's soldiers, is to translate his political intent into policy programmes. The President's political intent is crystal-clear in the Kenya Kwanza Plan, that outlines the Bottom-Up-Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA).

Through it, we are addressing the economic turbulence in the country, protecting the health of those without wealth, providing a decent roof over many more heads, and leading the Nation to economic rebirth.

18. The Kenya Kwanza Plan is firmly anchored on three Pillars, which we must uphold at all times.

- i. First and foremost, we must maintain fidelity to the Constitution and rule of law.**

- ii. Secondly, we must remain responsive to the needs and aspirations of the citizens we serve. Their trust and confidence in the government depends on our ability to deliver.**
- iii. Lastly, we must demonstrate unwavering loyalty to His Excellency the President, as we carry out our duties and responsibilities.**

19. On the first point, all the power we wield is delegated to us by the people of Kenya. We are oath and honour-bound, to only exercise that Power in strict conformity with the Constitution, and to use that Power for the enduring benefit of the People.

20. On the second point, we must be open and accessible leaders who listen, learn, and lead not just by words, but by example. Don't lock yourself up in your office – move around and find out what is really going on.

Have an open-door policy that encourages full and frank input from those who serve under you. Encourage diverse opinions, welcome different ideas. Great leaders forge great teams, and your ability to deliver will be defined by how well you craft a vibrant and cohesive team.

21. Interact with ordinary Kenyans from all walks of life. The feedback you can receive from the watchman, farmer, or Uber driver can be a million times better than reports and briefings of officials – because it is honest, unfiltered, and based on lived experience and not just observation.

22. On the third point, loyalty to the Head of State and Government is NOT NEGOTIABLE. You are now soldiers in an army that has only one General.

23. You are now also bound by collective responsibility, and no matter your personal views on a matter, once it is directed by the President or resolved in Cabinet, your duty is to jealousy, fiercely, and firmly defend it.

You no longer have personal views or observations. Your words are policy pronouncements.

Ensure that they carry the same weight, consideration and gravitas as your Cabinet memoranda, or official communication.

24. But loyalty also means Faithful, Honest and Truthful Counsel to the President. Offer Honest Counsel and Advice, even to the plans and activities that appear already set in stone. But when the President reflects on your counsel and offers guidance on a different route, take it up as such without turning back.

Ladies and Gentlemen

25. A change of mindset has been emphasised in this meeting. We have been reminded that notwithstanding how we have come here, or the expectations we may have of political or personal reward, we are now called to a different order.

We must bring Dignity and Professionalism to the task at hand, honesty and honour to all endeavours. We must be servant leaders, projecting humility, sensitivity and empathy for the people who we serve.

26. When I think about the distinguished assembly of Cabinet Secretaries gathered here today, I am confident in who we are today, and secure in the belief that we will be even better tomorrow.

To each of you, it is my sincere hope that you will always lead with your heart, driven by the moral courage to do what is right.

27. I have the utmost respect and gratitude for all, you dedicated men and women, who have demonstrated a commitment to serve others, over self.

We are just ordinary people who dare to trust God on the road between who we are, and the bold impact we can leave on this earth.

28. Like those who came before us, it is now our solemn duty and responsibility to continue to answer this call. We have a wonderful story to tell, and we must jointly tell it.

Robert Frost said: "Two roads diverged in a wood, and I took the one less travelled by, and that has made all the difference".

I hope your commitment to this great Republic will be worthy, along the path less travelled.

29. I thank the Chief of Staff and Head of the Public Service for coordinating this induction, and for the facilitation of the National Defence University Kenya, in securing its excellent execution.

The discipline, integrity and ethos of the disciplined forces is something I admire, and desire to see duplicated across the entire public service – at National and County level.

30. We will continue to schedule forums like this on a regular basis, ensuring that we have opportunities for collaboration and knowledge sharing. Let us join hands in unity in support of H.E the President's Agenda for this Nation and her citizens.

31. At this point Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to declare this induction session for Cabinet Secretaries, officially closed.

God Bless Kenya