

**SPEECH OF H.E. RIGATHI GACHAGUA, EGH, DEPUTY  
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA DURING THE  
OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE 2024 AGRICULTURAL  
SOCIETY OF KENYA, CENTRAL KENYA NATIONAL SHOW  
AT KABIRU-INI, NYERI COUNTY, ON FRIDAY,  
SEPTEMBER 13, 2024**

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**Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture, Dr Andrew Karanja;**  
**Nyeri Governor, Mutahi Kahiga;**  
**Nyeri Senator, Wahome Wamatinga;**  
**Woman Representative Rahab Mukami;**  
**Members of Parliament;**  
**Members of County Assembly;**  
**ASK National Chairperson, Ms. Annabel Kiriinya;**  
**Central Kenya National Show Chairperson Patrick**  
**Karinga;**  
**The ASK CEO, Batram Muthoka;**  
**Distinguished Farmers and Exhibitors;**

- 1. It is with profound pleasure that I join you on this important occasion of the Central Kenya ASK National Show, hosted by Nyeri County.**
- 2. We gather here because of the farmer who is the foundation and the pillar of our Nation. Out of the sheer hard work of the farmer, Kenyans have food on the table daily. Out of the sweat of the farmer, the Agriculture Sector injects 22% in direct and 27% through linkages, into our GDP.**

**Out of the resolute and absolute dedication of the farmer, we are on the world map as one of the largest exporters of quality and most sought-after Tea, Coffee, Avocado, Macadamia, Mangoes, Green Beans, among others. This is raking in millions of dollars in foreign exchange annually.**

- 3. That is why the Ruto Administration is paying close attention to the farmer, who is at the base of the production chain in our focus of promoting resilience and sustainability of our economy, which is mainly built on a vibrant Agriculture Sector.**

**Ladies and Gentlemen;**

- 4. One of the biggest threats to a thriving small-scale farmer, is Climate Change.**
- 5. I wish to thank the Ministry of Agriculture and the Agricultural Society of Kenya for the spot-on theme of this year, "*Promoting Climate Smart Agriculture and Trade Initiatives for Sustainable Economic Growth*".**

**During my visit to various stands here, farmers and exhibitors are showcasing top-notch innovations, aligned to promotion of Climate Smart Agriculture.**

- 6. The Government annually facilitates shows to among other issues, build the capacity of farmers and raise awareness on new technologies for integration, for high yields.**

- 7. It is in fulfillment of the Kenya Kwanza Plan of transforming our country into a net exporter of finished products under the Manufacturing strand, founded on a solid and vibrant Agriculture Sector.**
- 8. Processing will save us more than 500 Billion Shillings in annual importation of foods and raise our foreign exchange profile for a stronger and better economy, with more money in the pocket of the farmer.**



- 9. Indeed, there is more in value addition. In collaboration with Counties, we are also constructing common user facilities at the County Aggregation Industrial Parks.**
- 10. It is for this and other reasons that I call on our small-scale farmer to progressively integrate Climate Smart Farming technology.**

**11. It is exciting that the Jua Kali artisans and other innovators are driving transformative and affordable solutions to the small-scale farmer.**

**With the Jua Kali Sector employing over 16 million people, we must harness their skills and expertise to spur sustainable production , moreso, at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid, where most of our small-scale farmers are.**

**12. To encourage the artisans to do more, we launched the Recognition of Prior Learning Policy in March 2023 to validate their skills and knowledge and expertise, through TVETs.**

**My Office, in collaboration with line Ministries, has created a framework of linking artisans to job and business funding opportunities, including Agri-business and Agri-tech.**

**The innovations here are possible candidates for industrial application starting with cottage**

**industries , to catalyse local manufacturing in the agriculture value chains.**

- 13. On this note, I throw a challenge to learning institutions to also focus on affordable solution-based innovations of beating Climate Change as envisioned under the National Value Chain Development Project on resilience.**

**Distinguished Farmers, Exhibitors, Ladies and Gentlemen;**

- 14. At the same time, we are working to rejuvenate the Agriculture Sector, through radical reforms in the various value chains including Coffee, Tea, Dairy, Avocado, Macadamia, among others.**

- 15. The Government is aware of the challenges in the Macadamia Subsector. As we plan for full-scale lasting reforms- informed by robust farmer engagements, we are ready to discuss with processors and exporters on minimum returns equivalent to their sweat.**
- 16. In the Avocado Subsector, we have implemented crucial interventions, which have synchronised and streamlined processing and inspection for export.**

**This has eliminating undue delays, ensuring quality produce for export.**

- 17. We are also organising Avocado farmers into cooperatives for better economies of scale, as we expand our market into the Unites States of America, Japan, India, Malaysia, among others.**

## **Distinguished Farmers, Exhibitors;**

- 18. In the Tea Subsector, we have also made progress with reforms since the Kericho Tea Conference last year. Last week in Mombasa, I engaged the new KTDA Directors and we agreed that the Tea Farmer is a priority.**
- 19. As such, cutting down production and operational costs, eliminating lossmaking subsidiaries and strengthening value addition for more money to trickle down to the farmer must be done. .**



**20. I also visited warehouses in Changamwe and Jomvu for a clear understanding of the required interventions to unlock selling of the remaining tea from the financial year.**

**We look forward to better returns per kilo in the monthly and bonus payments.**

**21. We are also reforming the Dairy Subsector as we move to implement the minimum pay per litre at 50 Shillings, alongside prompt payment.**

**My Office is organising an engagement Forum, which will help deliver farmer-focused reforms.**

**Distinguished Farmers, Exhibitors;**

**22. I take this moment to inform our coffee farmers that we have mobilised action to ensure compliance with the European Union Deforestation Regulations before the December 30, 2024 deadline.**

**This will enable us retain the profitable European Union market, which accounts for over 55% of our coffee.**

**23. In supporting our small-scale farmer, we have also availed 3 Billion Shillings for the Coffee Cherry Revolving Fund and a further 2 Billion Shillings for the Coffee Debt Waivers.**

**24. It is, however, unacceptable that despite the rigorous reforms of transforming the coffee value chain, governance of cooperatives remains the weakest link in freeing and empowering our farmers.**

**25. In this regard, I have asked the Ministry of Co-operatives and Ministry of Agriculture to fast track the administrative and legal actions to enhance Corporate governance, transparency and accountability in co-operative societies. This includes direct payment to coffee farmers from the Direct Settlement System (DSS). For full disclosure, co-operative societies must publish and make known their costs and deductions to their members.**

**26. Distinguished Farmers and Exhibitors, it is now my pleasure to declare the 2024 A.S.K. Central Kenya National Show officially open.**

**ASANTENI SANA**