

**SPEECH OF H.E. RIGATHI GACHAGUA, EGH, DEPUTY
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA, DURING THE
NORTH AND NORTH EASTERN DEVELOPMENT
INITIATIVE (NEDI) HIGH-LEVEL CONSULTATIVE FORUM
AT THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE IN KAREN, NAIROBI
COUNTY, ON MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 9, 2024 AT 8:00AM**

Cabinet Secretaries;

Principal Secretaries;

Governors;

Senators;

Members of the National Assembly;

The World Bank Country Director Qimiao Fan and team;

Ladies and Gentlemen;

- 1. I extend a warm welcome to you all this morning, and thank you for joining us in this important Consultative Forum of the North and North Eastern Development Initiative (NEDI).**
- 2. Under this collaborative initiative involving the Government of Kenya, the World Bank and other development partners, we are working to better the lives and livelihoods of the people in these under-developed regions.**

3. The innovation of having a specific focus on the development interventions targeting NEDI region has proved to be strategic. Regional focus has allowed us to take advantage of localised knowledge and expertise. We have gained a better understanding of the cultural, political, and economic factors that impact this region.

We have gained a better understanding of the risks associated, and indeed, the unique factors that impact it, and tailored interventions accordingly.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen,

- 4. We are pumping in resources to the 10 Counties of West Pokot, Turkana, Samburu, Isiolo, Marsabit, Tana River, Lamu, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera, to ignite, stimulate and sustain socio-economic projects of building resilience, in the face of adversity fueled mostly by Climate Change.**

5. Let me thank the World Bank for their unwavering support and commitment to this mission. With an investment of 2.3 Billion USD since the launch of this initiative in 2018, the focus has remained on funding crucial and high-impact projects in Transport, Agriculture, Water, Health, Education, Energy Sectors, Social Protection and the welfare of refugees and host communities.

6. The conception and implementation of these projects aligns with the focus of the Ruto Administration, which was elected on the promise of improving the lives of the people at the bottom of the socio-economic pyramid.

7. I am, therefore, pleased to chair this Consultative Forum, as we collectively evaluate the progress and review performance of development programmes being implemented under this Initiative.

- 8. It is part of the monitoring process of ensuring that we are on course to meeting the ultimate goal of enabling the target communities contribute to development of our Nation.**
- 9. As the senior ranks of Government, we are here to review and the status of our investment, enrich the discussions on emerging concerns, and receive inclusive insights in our pursuit to ensure that we Leave No One Behind, in the Kenya We Want and Desire.**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

- 10. This conversation is very important as we consolidate development plans of the National Government, Counties and the allocations under other elected leaders.**

- 11. We are not only avoiding replication, but also strengthening our approaches for catalysed implementation of the projects. The North and North Eastern Frontier Counties have been left behind for far too long.**

- 12. We focus on them mostly during drought and deluge disasters. Over the last two years, my Office has been coordinating emergency responses to drought and El-Nino rains causing immense suffering and large-scale humanitarian crises.**
- 13. It is not sustainable to mobilise resources for relief food, clean and safe water supplies, cash handouts, among other interventions, season after season. Such interventions are ad hoc and short-lived.**

- 14. We also, as a Nation, dent our pride that over 60 years of independence, that socio-economic independence in this region is still a mirage.**
- 15. With Climate Change, the cycle of asking for help is likely to persist unless we make and implement solid, systematic and resolute decisions through strong partnerships.**
- 16. We have a duty and responsibility to dignify our people even when disaster strikes through lasting solutions.**

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

17. This is why the Ruto Administration has given priority to Devolution, besides seeking and strengthening strategic partnership with national and international actors, in building better communities as underpinned by the Bottom-Up Economic Transformation Agenda, Kenya's Vision 2030, Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and Agenda 2063 of the African Union.

- 18. What are some of the key interventions under the NEDI architecture?**
- a. In supply of more safe water for domestic and commercial use, we are activating the crop and livestock subsectors in these vast virgin lands.**
 - b. In quality primary and secondary education, we are empowering the community into self-reliance- not only for today, but posterity.**

- c. In harnessing solar power, we are igniting the economic potential of the region, by sparking and spurring the Jua Kali Sector and expanding employment opportunities.**
- d. Through increased road networks, we are opening up the region to trade between and among the Counties.**

- 19. These, and other Climate Action-based initiatives, will lead us to the desired change.**
- 20. NEDI programmes are rising to the occasion and we have an opportunity to work with the World Bank and other partners in long-term transformative initiatives of propelling the NEDI Counties into the next socio-economic power-cells of our country.**

- 21. However, ladies and gentlemen, we must not only be realistic, but also reflect on this gracious support.**
- 22. The Scripture in Galatians Chapter 6 tells us to “Bear one another’s burdens, and thereby fulfill the law of Christ...But each one must examine his own work... For each one will bear his own load”**
- 23. The support from the World bank and our other development partners will not be available forever.**

Donor funding is shrinking due to, among other reasons, geopolitics and shifts in global priorities.

24. I take this opportunity to ask our grassroots leaders to also align and complement their development projects into what is, or has already been supported. It is our collective responsibility to better the lives of our people.

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen;

25. Today, we will receive real-time updates on the status of projects, from National Project Coordinators, alongside input from the World Bank NEDI team on the implementation and coordination of projects.

26. I wish to invite input from Governors, Senators, and Members of the National Assembly here regarding implementation of these projects in your Counties and Constituencies.

27. We intend to use this meeting to also agree on those projects that are ready for commissioning, groundbreaking or inspection.

By organizing public events around them, we shall assist to fast-track unlocking of any bottlenecks, and secure timelines for their completion.

28. On this note, I intend to have these high-level consultations convene bi-annually or even more frequently when urgent matters arise.

Focusing on continuous accountability will create a more transparent and accountable outcome, benefitting from the shared learning, and experiences that can only be derived through such oversight.

- 29. I will Chair this session alongside the Chair of the Frontier Counties Development Council, Governor Mohamud Ali of Marsabit County.**

- 30. Consequently, we shall receive an overview of the NEDI Coordination Framework and an update on the status of NEDI projects, supported by the Project Implementation Units through their respective Principal Secretaries.**

31. Principal Secretaries from various ministries, with the support of the World Bank team, will address questions from the Governors, Senators, Members of the National Assembly.

I look forward to fruitful deliberations and a successful outcome.

ASANTENI SANA