

THE COUNCIL

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS AND JUDICIARY CONSULTATIVE MEETING

As a way of fostering good relationship between the Council of Governors (CoG) and the Judiciary, a consultative meeting between the two institutions was held on Monday, 19th July 2021, at the Sarova Stanley Hotel in Nairobi. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss key issues that affect the two institutions and agree on how best to engage and enhance service delivery.

The delegation from the Council of Governors led by the Chair H.E Martin Wambora and accompanied by H.E James Ongwae, H.E Francis Kimemia, and H.E Kiraitu Murungi, reaffirmed the good working relationship both institutions have and continue to enjoy resulting in critical achievements.

"On behalf of the Governors, I wish to appreciate and thank the Judiciary for the good working relationship we have had, resulting in key achievements. They include favorable judgments on devolution and waiver of court filing fees for matters filed by counties, not to mention the efforts made to ensure that access to justice is real through increased construction of Courts. We know that counties such as Nyandarua, Samburu, Lamu, Wajir, Mandera, Nandi, and Elgeyo Marakwet lack High Court Stations, and we are committed to providing land towards the construction of such stations", said H.E Wambora.

H.E Kiraitu Murungi urged the Judiciary to consider leasing buildings to accommodate the courts as construction of court stations is expensive. In her address to the Governors, Chief Justice, and President of the Supreme Court, Hon Martha Koome echoed the need to foster access to justice in all parts of the country as part of reforms the Judiciary has been undertaking and whose aim is to improve service delivery. She encouraged the remaining seven counties to have High Court stations, which she viewed was long overdue. She stated that access to justice cannot be real when members of the public are forced to travel long distances to access courts in some parts of the country.

The Chief Justice speaking on reforms stated that the reforms consist of the introduction of active case management, mediation programs, improved courtroom information technology, public awareness campaigns, and continuous judicial education. She informed members present that that she intends to further empower the doorways of justice with support from stakeholders.

CJ Koome also encouraged counties to invest in Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) and child protection centers for children in need of care and protection.

"Article 174 of the Constitution enlivens the Objects of Devolution which is powered by a culture of consultation and collaboration as instructed by Article 6 becomes a powerful tool for social change and progression," she told the CoG members.

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COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

MONTHLY

JULY 2021

The meeting was the first between the two institutions since the appointment of Hon. Martha Koome, as the first female Chief Justice in Kenya; a remarkable milestone towards gender equality and women empowerment; and participation of women in key decision making processes in appointive and elective positions.



MAKUENI COUNTY VISIT BY THE MULTI-AGENCY DEVOLUTION COMMITTEE AHEAD OF 7TH AND THE FINAL ANNUAL DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE.

Everyone planning to attend the 7th Devolution Conference must be fully vaccinated against COVID-19 ahead of the conference. This was the resounding call by Kisii Governor H.E James Ongwae on Friday 16th July 2021, as he led a multi-agency delegation from the Council of Governors, the Senate, and the National Government during a Steering Committee meeting. The team was in Makueni County to assess the preparedness of the County to host the 7th and the final Annual Devolution Conference that is set to kick-off from August 23rd-26th at Makueni Boys' High School.

The delegation, which included Homabay Senator Moses Kajwang, who chairs the Senate Devolution Committee; Devolution and ASALS CAS Abdul Bahari Ali; Health CAS Rashid Aman, and Dr. Willis Akhwale, the Chairman of the COVID-19 taskforce at the Ministry of Health, paid a courtesy call on the County Governor H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana then proceeded to inspect Makueni Boys Secondary school grounds where the main conference will take place, UNOA Primary School grounds, and some hotels in Wote town and Makindu township.

In his address to the media in Wote, H.E Ongwae gave an assurance that proper arrangements have been put in place to ensure that everyone in attendance has been vaccinated before the conference.

"The Ministry of Health is making arrangements to ensure that all the delegates participating in the conference are vaccinated from their counties of origin. Makueni County should be provided with additional vaccines to ensure that all taxi drivers, Boda Boda operators, food handlers, and all the service providers who will interact with the delegates and exhibitors are vaccinated against COVID-19 ahead of the conference", he said.

According to Makueni Governor H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, "Makueni is well prepared to host the conference." The Governor stated that plans are in top gear to ensure that the 4-day conference is a success. H.E Kibwana noted that, the County is working very closely with the Ministry of Health to ensure that all protocols are observed to keep COVID-19 on check.

"We are ready for the conference. We want all our hotels in town and elsewhere to provide accommodation, but we believe some tented accommodation is needed so that there is no deficit of accommodation for all the visitors," H.E Kibwana said.

In addition, H.E Kibwana underscored the need for the Steering Committee to provide side event forums during the conference for grassroots and civil society organizations to showcase their work in the fight against climate change.

Speaking on behalf of the Ministry of Health, Health CAS, Dr. Rashid Aman gave the Ministry's assurance that adequate vaccines will be available to each delegate attending the conference.

The 7th Annual Devolution Conference, which will focus on climate action, in particular the impact and the role of sub-national governments, had earlier been scheduled for 3rd to the 7th of May but was postponed due to the COVID situation in the country. It will be the last annual devolution as subsequent conferences will be held once after every two years.



STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS CRITICAL FOR THE REALIZATION OF UNIVERSAL HEALTH COVERAGE

The Council of Governors (CoG) Health Committee held a three-day retreat themed 'Revitalizing the County Health Systems to deliver on Universal Health Coverage: Solidifying Strategic Partnerships and Coordination through the CoG Health Committee' from 29th June - 1st July 2021 to discuss critical issues in the health sector. The meeting brought together, among others, Excellency Governors in the CoG Health Committee, County Executive Committee Members of Health, development partners and the Chief Administrative Secretary for the Ministry of Health, Dr. Rashid Aman.

Speaking during the event, the Chair of the CoG Health Committee - H.E. Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, acknowledged that County Governments' healthcare systems had undergone an enormous transformation since the advent of devolution hence improving health outcomes for the citizens. However, County health systems continue to grapple with persistent challenges in 4 key areas - health financing and governance, human resources for health, health products supply chain and infrastructure and quality health service delivery. Given these challenges, all actors in the health sector need to change tact to ensure equitable and continuous investment in County health systems for quality healthcare that is accountable, affordable, accessible, and reliable.

"In collaboration with both private and public sector stakeholders at the National and County levels, we hope to achieve health equity, quality and County resource optimization for self-reliance, ultimately ensuring that County Governments have in place strong health systems that produce improved, sustainable health outcomes, even withstanding pandemics," said Acting Mission Director, USAID - Keith E. Simmons.

Health, being the most prominent devolved function of County Governments, requires a vast pool of resources. While the Kenyan Constitution (2010) clearly assigns functions to the National Government and the County Governments, there exists policies and laws that seek to recentralize the health function. The Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA) Act and the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) Act are still in use eight (8) years after the inception of devolution. While recognizing the importance of functional integrity as enshrined in the Constitution, it is urgent that KEMSA and NHIF are aligned to the current devolved system to enable harmonious and seamless implementation of UHC.



Another area in healthcare delivery in Kenya that requires reform is financing. If the recent delays witnessed in the disbursement of the County Equitable Share for the F.Y. 2020/2021 are anything to go by, timely release of budgetary allocations to Counties is vital for effective health service delivery. However, County Governments should also adopt innovative models for financing healthcare needs of their populations. This will boost County Governments' self-reliance and sustainability in provision of health services. With the emergence of County Regional Economic Blocs (CREBs), Counties can consider jointly investing in health infrastructure through the CREBs.

The COVID-19 pandemic has tested Kenya's health systems and proven that more needs to be done in healthcare investment. Indeed, this will require collaboration and coordination amongst both levels of government, development partners, private sector, faith-based organizations and all other stakeholders in the healthcare value chain. The Chief Administrative Secretary for the Ministry of Health, Dr. Rashid Aman, reiterated MOH's commitment to supporting County Governments to execute their health function in realizing the UHC. He also commended development partners for their continued support to the health sector.

"Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) offer great value to Counties' healthcare systems. Counties can leverage on the numerous opportunities available through partnerships to improve the existing healthcare infrastructure and maximize on the expertise offered by the private sector," he stated.

The meeting generated a number of resolutions that will be implemented through the CoG Health Committee.



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS STRATEGIC PLAN 2022-2027 INCEPTION MEETING

The Council of Governors executive led by COG Chairman H.E Martin Wambora and Whip H.E Alex Tolgos together with a team of Experts drawn from the Agriculture and Health Committees held a two-day inception meeting to brainstorm on the development of the Council of Governors Strategic Plan 2022-2027. The meeting that was supported by Accelerated Value Chain Development (AVCD) through International Livestock Research Institute (ILRI) was held on 29th-30th July 2021. The key objective was to develop the institution's long-term strategic goals for carrying out its mission and sustaining its prominent and vital role it plays in the Devolution Space.

In her welcoming remarks acting CEO Ms. Mary Mwititi, thanked the Governors for taking time out of their busy schedules to give their recommendations towards providing an opportunity for COG to take stock of the progress made thus far and get the perspectives, leadership and guidance of Governors regarding the strategic direction of the Council in the next five years.

"We are happy that Excellency Governors have managed to find time to convene with us for this important occasion. This demonstrates their commitment and zeal to steer the institution in achieving its mandate and responsibilities", said Ms. Mwititi.

In his address, CoG Chair H.E Martin Wambora assured the team that the Council is dedicated to this important process and is keen in ensuring that the Strategic document shapes the future of Council and propels the institution to greater heights.

"On behalf of all Excellency Governors, we commit to actively support this Strategic Plan 2022-2027 development process and provide the required leadership and guidance. Together, we shall build a vibrant and responsive blueprint to guide COG in the next five years," said Governor Wambora.

The Council of Governors has been implementing its mandate guided by the current Strategic Plan 2017-2022. This has greatly enhanced the role and visibility of COG and made the Council gain more significance as a common voice for the devolved governments. The five pillars of the current Strategic Plan are: Good Governance, Adequate Resourcing for the devolved functions, Build a strong COG, Knowledge-driven performance and Strengthen intergovernmental relations and devolution.



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Council of Governors- Kenya

KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH



VENUE: Makueni Boys High School, Makueni County

DATE: 23rd - 26th August, 2021

THEME: Multi – level governance for climate action.
Sub-National mobilization in unlocking the full potential of climate action during and after the Pandemic.

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