



Draft

Remarks by H.E. William Ruto, EGH, EBS, Deputy President During the launch of the Common Programme Framework for Ending Drought Emergencies in Kenya - KICC, Nairobi

Cabinet Secretaries,

Governors here present,

Heads of Mission,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me first thank you all for joining us in the launch of the Common Programme Framework for Ending Drought Emergencies in Kenya, also known as EDE. Your presence shows the importance you attach to finding lasting solutions that will move Kenya to the next level where drought will no longer lead to disasters.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Each drought brings with it untold human suffering, with the numbers of affected people ranging between 1.5 and 3.5 million during each drought cycle. Empirical evidence shows that Kenya has been losing billions of shillings of development funds to drought. For example, according to the Post Disaster Needs Assessment of the 2008-2011 drought period, we lost a total of USD 12.1 billion (Kshs. 1.2 trillion at current exchange rate) that could have pushed the country to higher levels of development. Besides the loss of livelihoods by communities in the arid and semi-arid regions of Kenya, many of whom are already living in chronic poverty, the loss of human life was also recorded.

These unwarranted and unnecessary losses from drought happen despite the fact that it is a slow-onset hazard which, if well managed, should not turn into a disaster.

While Kenya has made good progress in strengthening its drought early warning and response system, with the support of our development partners, and while we have now established a permanent mechanism in government, namely the National Drought Management Authority, to provide leadership in drought management, our biggest challenge is to eliminate the conditions which perpetuate poverty and leave people vulnerable to the effects of drought. It is this campaign to reduce vulnerability which lies at the heart of the EDE.

We are all aware that many states around the world have higher levels of aridity and lower levels of rainfall but have still ensured that there is minimum impact of drought on their economies and the lives of their citizens. There is no reason why we cannot join these countries and end drought emergencies in Kenya.

Moreover, this ambition is supported by our Constitution. The Constitution obliges the State to equalize opportunities, protect the vulnerable, and progressively realize a portfolio of rights, including the right to be free from hunger.

Similarly, the need to provide long-term solutions to drought was recognised by all IGAD member states in a Summit held here in Nairobi in September 2011, at which Heads of State and Government committed themselves to ending drought emergencies in the region.

In line with this regional commitment, Kenya's Cabinet in 2012 adopted a Strategy to End Drought Emergencies by the year 2022. This was then entrenched in the 2nd Medium Term Plan

(2013-17) for the Vision 2030 as one of the key foundations for national transformation.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The EDE cuts across many sectors and is implemented by both the National and County Governments. In addition, there are many development partners, including NGOs, who are involved in funding, implementing and advising EDE-related programmes and projects. I would like to briefly highlight some of the progress that has already been made.

The Government is committed to opening up northern Kenya for rapid development. You are aware that implementation of the Lamu Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport Corridor (LAPSSET) has started and is progressing well. Besides this, there are a number of roads that are under construction in the region. These include Isiolo-Marsabit-Moyale; and the Kitale-Lodwar-Lokitang roads.

We also have massive investments in harnessing untapped wind energy in Turkana and Marsabit and are using the same to ensure that every school and trading centre in the region has access to electricity.

We are also investing heavily in irrigation, to address the issue of food security. Good progress is being made in the Galana-Kulalu scheme, where we have recorded the first harvest.

There are also plans to construct multi-purpose dams to provide water for livelihoods projects in the ASAL counties.

Ladies and gentlemen,

While much has been done in the past, and while new initiatives are coming on stream, sufficient impact on the underlying problem of vulnerability is yet to be recorded. Clearly this will take time, but one reason our past finance was less effective is

that many projects, were designed and implemented in isolation from others, and for a limited period of time. If the EDE's 10-year goal is to be achieved, we need a strong and effective coordination and financing framework that ensures alignment by all agencies and reinforces our joint intent.

In this respect, I am glad to note that the Ministry of Devolution and Planning, in collaboration with sector Ministries, County Governments and development partners, initiated the development of the Common Programme Framework for EDE as a way of achieving this synergy. In doing so, the Government's intention is to ensure that the efforts of individual agencies, whether in Government or outside it, complement each other and are directed towards a common goal and a common set of agreed results.

This Framework has now been finalized and is officially being launched here today.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Achieving the goal of Ending Drought Emergencies will require that we all work in a collaborative manner in line with the coordination mechanisms proposed in the frameworks we are launching today. I would therefore urge all parties to join hands and support each other by playing their full part in those structures. Let today's event be a true launch pad from which we re-energise our efforts and re-commit ourselves to ending the suffering currently caused by drought emergencies in our country.

With these remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare the Common Programme Framework for Ending Drought Emergencies in Kenya officially launched.

H.E. William Ruto, EGH, EBS, Deputy President

4th November 2015