



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

THE COUNCIL

MONTHLY

MAY 2021

GOVERNORS COMMIT TO PROTECT DEVOLUTION

The Council of Governors held a physical Council of Governors (CoG) Meeting on 27th May 2021 at Tamarind Hotel, Nairobi to deliberate on pertinent issues affecting County Governments in accordance with the Intergovernmental Relations Act 2012. This was the second physical meeting the Governors have held since January 2021. Several other meetings have however been held virtually. Some of the key issues discussed included: Safeguarding devolution; Disbursements of County Equitable Share of revenue; Pending Bills and the Conditional and non-conditional Grants legal framework for the Financial Year (FY) 2021/2022.

Speaking during the meeting, Council of Governors Chairman, H.E Martin Wambora expressed his gratitude to fellow governors for honoring the invite to physically attend the meeting at a time when the Country continues to fight the COVID-19 pandemic.

“I wish to thank you all for honoring the invite to attend this meeting. Since we held our executive elections in January 2021, this is the second time I am chairing a physical full Council meeting”. Expressed the chairman.

During the meeting it was noted with concern the increased action of impeachment of Governors. Recently, Wajir County has been on the headlines due to impeachment of Governor H.E Mohamed Mohamud. However, his position, as Governor, has since been reaffirmed by the Meru Court. It was eminent that oversight bodies had lowered the threshold for impeachment of Governors and this largely exposes the Counties to political upheavals. It was further reported that, the Court of Appeal and possibly the Supreme Court will provide clarity on the threshold of impeachment a Governor. “The said courts will also provide clarity on attendant process of assumption of office”, said Governor Wambora during the meeting.

The meeting culminated in resolutions followed by media press briefing by the COG Chairman H.E Hon Martin Wambora. The statement addressed the issue of impeachment of Governors with the most recent being in Wajir County. He stated that, “The Council of Governors notes the orders by the Honorable High Court in Meru that re-affirmed the position of the Wajir County Governor H.E Amb. Mohamed Mohamud... the Court of Appeal and the Supreme Court will provide clarity on the threshold of impeaching a Governor... and the attendant process of assumption of office”.

The Statement also addressed the issue of the delay in disbursement of the County Equitable Share for FY 2020/2021 which amounts to Ksh. 242,686,833,790.00 (inclusive of Ksh.26.9 Billion arrears for FY 19/20). “This delay has continued to derail our response measures to the COVID 19 pandemic, payment of pending bills and service delivery to Kenyans.

As a matter of urgency, we call upon the National Treasury, to immediately release the funds to Counties”, The Chairman stated.

In conclusion he reassured the public of the Council's commitment to safeguard devolution.



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CSW MASHINANI EMPOWERS WOMEN ON LEADERSHIP AND GOVERNANCE

The Commission on the Status of Women (CSW) is a transformative women leadership programme aimed at promoting gender equality and women empowerment. The forum, which brings together stakeholders in the gender sector, takes place in New York every year. However, due to COVID-19 restrictions, the Council of Governors in Partnership with County Assemblies Forum (CAF) localized the CSW meeting by convening a forum dubbed 'CSW Mashinani' between 18th and 19th May 2021 at Sunshine Hotel in Kericho County. The 65th session of CSW was held under the priority theme; 'Women's full and effective participation and decision making in public life, as well as elimination of violence, for achieving gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls'.

The CSW Mashinani programme forum sought to; enhance leadership capacities and skills of Women leaders at County level through training, provide a platform to evaluate and take stock of the achievements made through the transformative leadership curriculum as well as determine mechanisms of ensuring women's continued and sustained participation and influence in various governance positions. Speaking during the event, the chief guest H.E Prof. Paul Chepkwony, Governor Kericho County emphasized the need for women to take up leadership roles to ensure advancement of this county.

"When women are empowered, the whole society is empowered," he said. While Kenya has made tremendous progress in the number of women holding both elective and appointive leadership positions, the concept of gender parity in participation and decision-making in public life is still elusive. Lack of information on women empowerment initiatives compounded with ineffective policy development prevents women from making significant contributions to the development agenda. Further, there are glaring policy and legislative gaps that hamper women's effective participation in political spaces. Case in point, the two-thirds gender rule is not observed across all arms of government whereas sections of the Political Parties Act are yet to be implemented.

In her remarks, Kericho County Deputy Governor called for synergy on gender equality programmes aimed at empowering women at all levels of government, and articulated the need to sensitize women from the counties on the National Government initiatives on women empowerment e.g. the WEF and the Affirmative Action Fund.

For women to take up and occupy leadership and decision making positions, they need to focus on creating resourceful and strategic partnerships that will work for them. Prof. Senator Kamar- Senate Deputy Speaker urged women leaders to deliberately create coalitions and networks across the gender sector to ensure their success in politics. "As women, we have to come together. We have to focus on creating resourceful and strategic partnerships among ourselves and our male Counterparts that will work for us and benefit us, she Said.

The CSW Mashinani Forum arrived at a number of resolutions. First, it was recommended that women leaders pursue elective positions as opposed to nominative positions and engage in lobbying activities for amendment of timelines contained in various elections legal frameworks. To address the issue of lack of awareness concerning women empowerment programmes, capacity building interventions should be implemented to ensure that women leaders are informed about the existing National Government programmes on women empowerment.

Gender mainstreaming has been embraced internationally as a strategy towards realizing gender equality. Women leaders in partnership with their male counterparts need to ensure gender is mainstreamed in the outputs generated including Bills, Policies, Plans and Budgets.

Women are the primary drivers of growth and economic development in the society. They also play a crucial role in the achievement of the SDGs and realization of Kenya's big four agenda. When women participate in leadership, Counties and communities tend to reposition empowerment, resource distribution and redistribution, creation and sharing of opportunities and as well as re-define power sharing and utilization. There is need for collective reflection on what more can be done to ensure that all women, including those facing multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, can participate in decision-making.

Among other dignitaries in attendance were H.E Lily Ng'ok, Deputy Governor for Kericho County, the Senate Deputy Speaker, Prof. Sen. Margaret Kamar, the State Department of Gender Affairs, KNBS, the CoG Secretariat, County Assemblies Women Caucus, Registrar of political parties and County women leaders drawn from all the 47 counties among other key players in the Gender sector.

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PANDA MITI, BORESHA MAISHA: LAUNCH OF THE 2 MILLION TREE GROWING INITIATIVE MAKUENI COUNTY CHAPTER

The Steering Committee for the 7th Annual Devolution Conference launched the 2 Million tree growing initiative on Wednesday, 12th May, 2021 at the Wote Center for People Living with Disabilities in Makueni County.

The Makueni Tree –growing exercise, led by the host Governor, H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, was the third phase after similar ones were held last month in Kajiado and Machakos Counties. In his statement, H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, lauded efforts by the Private Sector in helping mitigate Climate Action through various initiatives in the country and their strong partnership with both the County and National Governments.

“On behalf of the National and County Governments, I would like to thank the Private Sector for their unwavering support especially towards Climate Action and Environmental conservation. As Makueni County, we welcome this joint effort, particularly the Council of Governors who have been at the forefront in ensuring that this day is made possible for the betterment of our people,” said H.E Prof. Kivutha Kibwana.

As Kenya gears to achieve the 10% forest cover mark by 2022, Makueni County has managed to reach a staggering 13% forest cover having engaged in rigorous tree growing exercises from just planting of 5000 tree seedlings in 2019 to 40,000 tree seedlings in 2020 across the County.

Speaking during the event, Vihiga Governor, H.E Dr. Wilber Otichillo, urged fellow Governors to lobby, through the CoG, for the speedy implementation of the Climate Change Fund and the operationalization of the National Climate Change Council. “What is remaining as a Country is to implement all remaining legal frameworks that pertain to Climate Change, beginning with the Climate Change Act which clearly states that there should be a Climate Change Fund financed by the Treasury and available to Counties and the establishment of the National Climate Change Council to be chaired by the President. So far the two are yet to be implemented since the enactment of the Climate Change Act in 2016,” said H.E Dr. Wilber Otichillo.

On his part, Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of

Devolution, Arid and Semi-Arid Lands, called upon National and County Governments, all stakeholders including members of the public to visit Makueni for the 7th Annual Devolution Conference and witness what the County Government has achieved in terms of Climate Action.

“This is not a local problem but a global one, therefore we encourage everyone, starting from the top leaderships of both County and National Governments, all stakeholders including members of the community to come to Makueni and attend the conference in August. Makueni County has done a lot so far in terms of Climate Action therefore we are waiting to see what the other Counties have done as well during the Conference,” said Hon. Eugene Wamalwa.

The event was also attended by Makueni Deputy Governor H.E Adelina Mwaui, CAS Ministry of Devolution, Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Mr. Gideon Mung'aro and PS Ministry of Devolution, Arid and Semi-Arid Lands Mr. Julius Korir and PS Environment Mr. Mohammed Elmi, who also planted trees together with members of the public at the Disability center. A total of 2250 Trees were planted during the one-day event.



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KWA VONZA TOWN GETS FACELIFT THROUGH SYMBIOCITY KENYA PROJECT

Envision a breathtaking well-designed urban city with upgraded market centers, modern day public spaces and facilities that are both people and environmental friendly as well as profitable to the surrounding community. This is exactly what the SymbioCity Kenya project, implemented as a joint partnership between the Council of Governors and the Swedish Association of Local Authorities and Regions (SALAR), hopes to achieve. Through a holistic approach to sustainable urban development and integrating all dimensions including sociocultural and gender perspectives, the programme aims to transform urban challenges into opportunities. SymbioCity Kenya has so far implemented Pilot projects in small towns in seven counties; Kisumu, Meru, Kakamega, Trans Nzoia, Homa Bay, Kitui and Nakuru, selected through a competitive process in 2016.

The Council of Governors visited Kwa Vonza town in Kitui County to assess the Kwa Vonza market Symbiocity Change project on 12th May 2021. This project is expected to empower residents economically and give Kwa Vonza town an incredible face lift. Initially, the piece of land on which the new Kwa Vonza market currently sits was just a non-structured space where traders would camp to make their daily sales. Arising from the need to redesign the existing market stalls according to traders' needs, a detailed physical landscape design was formulated and construction work began. To this end, clearing and fencing the site, removal of waste debris, stumps and top soil stripping on the intended site area, levelling and grading works of the site to formation has already been done. This will help manage rainwater runoff and storm water from the nearby hills. In addition, a drainage system has been put in place all round the market to avert any chances of flooding.

Traders have also been allocated specific spaces as well as temporary structures within the market to shelter them from harsh weather conditions. Speaking during the assessment visit by the COG, James Kamami Muoka, the chairman of the Kwa Vonza urged each trader to maintain cleanliness in their own space since environmental conservation is a personal responsibility. "Let each trader be responsible for maintaining cleanliness in their own space," he said. Besides traders, the new Kwa Vonza market will also incorporate a students' center. Other aspects such as security in the market have also been addressed with solar lights being installed at strategic places.

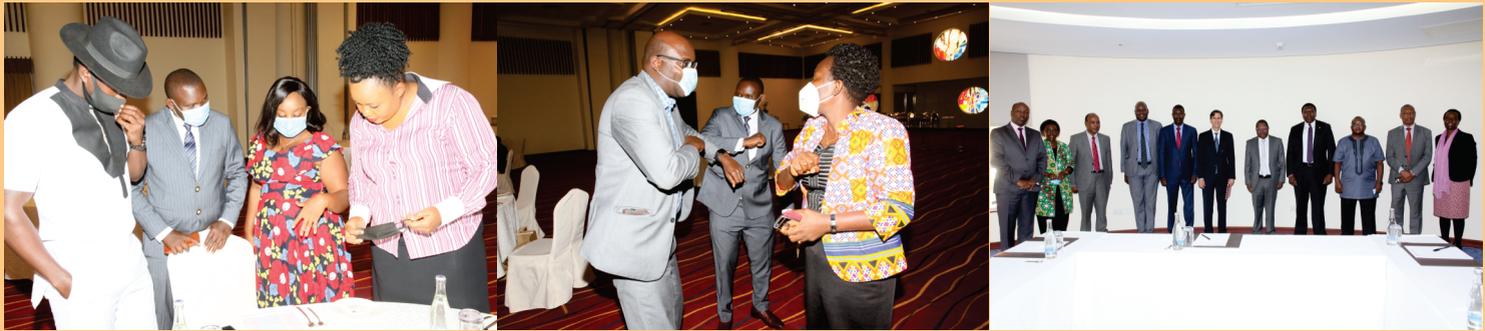
Successful implementation of the Kwa Vonza market project requires the concerted efforts of both town and County administrators among other stakeholders. Building the capacity of urban development stakeholders in these towns and ultimately counties will enable the formulation of a holistic vision for towns based on a sound understanding for assets and challenges. A multisectoral approach is key in the realization of sustainable urban development. All actors in the urban development unit need to work in harmony to ensure that they guide the urban cities conversation in the right direction. Rather than working in silos, different sectors should join forces with meaningful participation of civil society, academia, business and other stakeholders throughout the process.

While the SymbioCity Kenya project is still underway, remarkable milestones have been made in transforming our urban cities. Application of the SymbioCity approach in urban planning, management and development in the selected urban areas in seven counties has provided useful experience and innovative solutions to other counties and stakeholders. Secondly, decision makers and staff in the seven pilot counties have acquired skills that have proven to be instrumental in matters urban development planning.

At the heart of urban development is people and their lives. Through identification of synergies between urban systems, living standards have substantially improved and the local 'mwanachi' can now enjoy a safe, comfortable and quality life. The SymbioCity Approach is a model that achieves milestones through quick wins. This can be replicated in other counties and towns. The approach can also inspire other Counties to adopt urban policies, plans and processes that will offer responsive solutions for developing cities.



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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