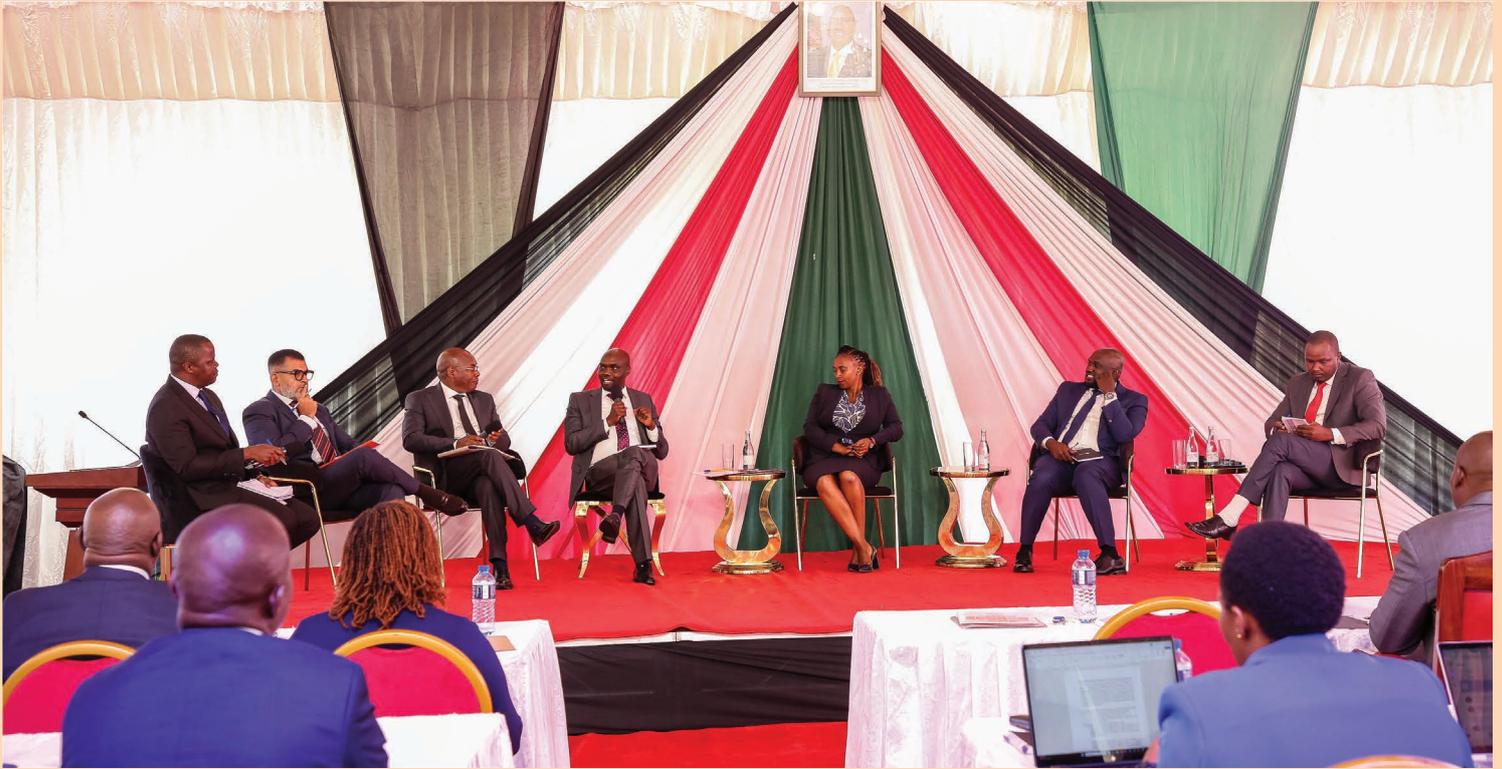


# THE COUNCIL MONTHLY



A panel discussion during the National & County Governments Health Summit held at the Deputy President's residence in Karen on 17th February 2025

## GOVERNMENT PROMISES TO ADDRESS ISSUES AFFECTING UHC AND SHA AT HEALTH SUMMIT



H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki speaking during the National & County Governments Health Summit

“The economic transformation of this country relies on a healthy population. While achieving UHC is a complex and costly endeavor, we will work in collaboration with County Governments and all stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation,” noted the Deputy President highlighting that since the launch of the Social Health Authority (SHA) under Taifa Care on 1st October 2024, approximately 19.5 million people had been registered, an improvement from the 9 million members registered under the defunct NHIF.

“We must find a way to ensure that as many people registered are making contributions in order to enjoy the full healthcare package beyond primary care,” he added.

Council of Governors (CoG) Chair H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi further highlighted the need to address the pressing challenges affecting health service delivery noting that Counties were owed about ksh 7.5 billion in unpaid claims by SHA. The chair faulted the inefficient e-claims machines adding that there had been delays in implementing capitations for Level 2 and 3 facilities.

Both levels of government have reaffirmed their commitment to work together to ensure the realization of Universal Health Coverage (UHC) so that every Kenyan can access quality, affordable healthcare.

Speaking during the National & County Governments Health Summit held in Karen on 17th February 2025, Deputy President H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki called for strengthened intergovernmental collaboration in order to address critical issues affecting the health sector including: human resources for health; health financing; health commodities; digitalization of health facilities, registration for Taifa Care and the National Equipment Service Program.

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH

“The recent stop-work order by the United States Government (USG) has exposed our overreliance on external donor funding for key health programs including HIV, Malaria, TB, Family Planning, and immunization programs. To address this, we must take decisive action to integrate donor-supported systems into our health system and ensure sustainability,” said the Wajir Governor emphasizing the need for intergovernmental coordination and cooperation to fast track the journey towards UHC.

The Deputy President highlighted immediate interventions to be undertaken by all stakeholders in order to facilitate UHC. He directed that by 28th February 2025, the following should be undertaken:

- Ministry of Health and the Digital health agency team to provide customized dashboards for all County Governments to track County facility claim processes;
- Means testing tool be reviewed to ensure accurate, objective and data-based premiums that can't be distorted;
- SHA to expedite the payment of all pending PHC capitation for all registered and facilities;
- SHA to ensure that all dependants have successfully on boarded to all the principals to avoid pocket payments by paid up members and;
- the Ministry of Health to pay the pending CHP stipends due from December, 2024.

“While achieving UHC is a complex and costly endeavor, we will work in collaboration with County Governments and all stakeholders to ensure its successful implementation”

**H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki**

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CoG Chair H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi speaking during the National & County Governments Health Summit

Health Cabinet Secretary Dr Deborah Barasa on her part also noted that there will be a review of benefits and tariffs under SHA in the coming months which will be catered for through a supplementary budget that has been proposed to parliament.

This review will see the emergency, chronic and critical illness fund as well as the Primary Healthcare fund receive ksh. 3 billion each while maternity-related services enshrined in Linda Mama that will also cater to those with teenage pregnancies will receive another ksh. 1.8 billion.

“The benefit package for ICU has been increased to ksh. 28,000 per day from the previous daily rebate of ksh. 4,480, while the oncology package has been increased from ksh. 400,000 to ksh. 550,000 per household per year. SHA tariff for overseas treatment is currently ksh. 500,000 all inclusive,” noted the CS adding that the government was working towards exploring alternative methods to secure funding for key health programmes affected by reduced donor funding and addressing concerns raised by healthcare workers.

The summit was convened to assess the status of healthcare in the country, address teething problems, and strategize on scaling up the rollout of UHC while mitigating initial challenges. All stakeholders need to combine their unique synergies and deliver as one in order to attain UHC.



Health Cabinet Secretary Dr Deborah Barasa Speaking during the National & County Governments Health Summit

## CONSOLIDATING COMMITTEE GAINS FOR TRANSFORMATIVE GOVERNANCE

The Council of Governors (CoG) convened its Executive and Liaison, Management & Business Committee retreat on 12th to 13th February 2025, bringing together all Chairpersons of CoG Committees under the theme Fostering Collaborative Leadership and Synergy for Transformative Governance and Devolution. The meeting aimed to strengthen intergovernmental relations, set strategic priorities, and reaffirm the commitment of the CoG and county leadership to the principles of devolution.

During the retreat, sector committee chairs were apprised on crucial policy and legal matters affecting devolution, while discussions focused on sustainable strategies to improve County Government resourcing. Among the resolutions adopted were the need to enhance collaboration with the National Assembly and Senate to advocate for county interests in legislative matters, ensuring the transfer of funds for unbundled functions, and engaging with the Senate to secure a fair revenue-sharing formula. The governors also resolved to lobby for the reinstatement of Ksh. 400.1 billion as the equitable share for counties and to strengthen sector forums with



CoG Chief Whip H.E. Stephen Sang speaking during the Executive and Liaison, Management & Business Committee retreat



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quarterly committee meetings to track progress. Additionally, they emphasized the importance of signing Intergovernmental Participation Agreements (IPAs) before the National Government undertakes county functions.

Speaking during the retreat, CoG Chairperson H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi, emphasized the need for county leaders to remain united in the fight to protect devolution. He highlighted the persistent challenges devolution faces, stating that leaders must be proactive in defending it. He called for active participation in policy discussions and legislative processes that affect counties and stressed the need to ensure commitments made at intergovernmental forums work in their favor. "Devolution continues to experience clawbacks and serious attacks. It seems we are alone in this fight, but as leaders, we bear the greatest responsibility to promote and defend it." He said.

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**H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi**

CoG Vice Chairperson and Chair of the Liaison, Management & Business Committee, H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga, reiterated the call for unity and strong leadership. He echoed the call for unity and strong leadership. He stated that the gains of devolution must be protected through unwavering commitment and collective decision-making. He urged committee chairs to lead by example, remain proactive, and ensure they were present where critical decisions were made. "We must lead by example. Our commitment to committee work should be reflected in our proactive engagement and strategic decision-making. We must be present at the tables where decisions are made; otherwise, we will be on the menu." Said Governor Kahiga.



H.E. Joshua Irungu (Left) and H.E. Fernandes Barasa (Right) during the Executive and Liaison, Management & Business Committee retreat

The retreat concluded with a renewed commitment to strengthening CoG’s influence, improving intergovernmental collaboration, and ensuring the full implementation of devolution. The resolutions set the stage for a more robust approach to governance, with county leadership pledging to work together in overcoming challenges and delivering better services. As H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi aptly put it, the success of devolution lies in collective effort, requiring vigilance, unity, and proactive engagement in advancing the interests of counties

The implementation of devolution continues to be a key priority for county leadership. The resolutions set the stage for a more robust approach to governance, with county leadership pledging to work together in overcoming challenges and delivering better services.

**DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE 2025: DEVELOPMENT PARTNERS TO STRENGTHEN GOVERNANCE THROUGH EXPERTISE AND SUPPORT**

The Council of Governors (CoG) held a high-level engagement with development partners on February 26th, focusing on strengthening collaboration for the upcoming Devolution Conference 2025. The discussions centered on leveraging expertise, financial support, and consultancy services to enhance the effectiveness of devolution. With the conference scheduled for August 12th–15th in Homa Bay County, development partners were urged to play a strategic role in shaping the conference’s success and long-term governance reforms.

The theme for the 2025 Conference, "For the People; For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice," aligns with the broader goal of ensuring inclusive governance and sustainable development. H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga, Chair of the Devolution Conference Steering Committee, expressed deep appreciation for the contributions of development partners in supporting county governments. "Over the past 12 years, we have seen tremendous progress in counties, thanks to the technical and financial support from development partners. Your role in co-creating solutions with us is invaluable in strengthening devolution," he stated.

The meeting underscored the need for technical expertise and consultancy support to enhance governance at the county level. Counties require strategic input in areas such as policy development, public finance management, infrastructure planning, climate resilience, and social service delivery. With counties at varying levels of development, capacity-building initiatives were identified as a priority, ensuring that county officials receive the necessary training to implement best practices in service delivery. The Steering Committee also emphasized the importance of data-driven decision-making, calling on development partners to support research, data collection, and policy analysis to promote evidence-based governance.

Beyond expertise, financial and in-kind contributions will be essential in ensuring the success of the Devolution Conference 2025.



CoG Vice-Chairperson H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga Speaking during the stakeholder engagement meeting

Development partners were encouraged to support the event through direct funding, sponsorships, and logistical contributions. Additionally, non-monetary support such as digital infrastructure, research tools, and knowledge-sharing platforms was identified as equally impactful. By strengthening technological and research capabilities, counties can enhance service delivery and accountability.

A key focus of the engagement was on sustaining long-term partnerships beyond the conference. The Council of Governors urged development partners to align their interventions with county development priorities and national strategies. By fostering structured collaborations, counties can continue benefiting from policy advisory services, innovative governance solutions, and financial opportunities beyond the conference. The Steering Committee emphasized that resolutions made at the event should translate into practical and impactful governance improvements.



*Devolution Conference steering committee members during the Development partners stakeholders meeting*

With only a few months to the Devolution Conference 2025, the engage

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**H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga**

ment. As the Governors remains ensure that devolution transform

ment with development partners reaffirmed the critical role of multi-sectoral collaboration in advancing devolution. By harnessing expertise, financial support, and strategic guidance, counties will be better positioned to close socio-economic gaps, improve service delivery, and drive sustainable development. As the conference approaches, the Council of Governors remains committed to working with its partners to ensure that devolution continues to empower communities and transform governance across Kenya.

## COG AND MEDIA JOIN FORCES AHEAD OF 2025 DEVOLUTION SUMMIT

The Steering Committee of the Devolution Conference 2025, on February 26th, engaged media stakeholders in a critical meeting to discuss collaboration opportunities before, during, and after the highly anticipated conference set for August 12th–15th in Homa Bay County. The discussions emphasized the media’s crucial role in fostering transparency, accountability, and public engagement in the devolution agenda. With this year’s theme, "For the People; For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice," the 2025 Conference seeks to evaluate devolution’s progress, address challenges, and set a transformative course for the future. The media is expected to be a powerful force in shaping public narratives, amplifying key discussions, and ensuring that devolution remains at the center of national conversations.

Addressing the meeting, H.E. Dr. Mwalimu Mutahi Kahiga, EGH, Chair of the Devolution Conference Steering Committee, commended the media’s consistent support over the years. He emphasized that journalists, editors, and broadcasters serve as the bridge between county governments and the citizens by ensuring that people are well-informed about policies, projects, and service delivery efforts. “The media is not just a messenger; it is a key player in the devolution journey. Your role in shaping conversations, holding leaders accountable, and amplifying citizen voices is indispensable,” he stated. He urged media houses to focus on human-interest stories that showcase the tangible impact of devolution on communities, highlighting areas such as health, infrastructure, agriculture, and social justice.



*CEO CoG Mary Mwiti speaking during the high level meeting with media stakeholders on the Devolution Conference 2025*

The Steering Committee identified three main areas for media collaboration: pre-conference engagements, conference coverage, and post-conference reporting. Leading up to the conference, media campaigns will play a pivotal role in raising awareness about devolution’s achievements and challenges, while also covering county-level engagements with stakeholders.



*H.E. Gladys Wanga speaking during the high level meeting with media stakeholders on the Devolution Conference 2025*

During the conference, live reporting, in-depth panel discussions, and real-time updates will be critical in capturing the event’s essence and shaping national discourse. Post-conference, journalists and media organizations are expected to track the implementation of key resolutions, ensuring that discussions translate into real change for citizens.

As the Council of Governors embarks on the journey to host the 9th Devolution Conference, collaboration with the media will be instrumental in influencing policy direction and fostering public participation. By leveraging their platforms, media houses will ensure that devolution remains a driver of inclusive development. The Steering Committee reaffirmed its commitment to working closely with media partners, recognizing them as essential watchdogs, storytellers, and catalysts for progress. With strengthened media partnerships, the 2025 Devolution Conference is set to be more impactful, engaging, and citizen-centered.



*Media stakeholders during the high level meeting on the Devolution Conference 2025*





CoG appearing before the Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations

The Council of Governors (CoG) led by the CEO Mary Mwitia appeared before the Senate Standing Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental Relations on 27th February 2024, to present the Council's position on key policies, programmes and targets underlying the proposed expenditure ceilings in the 2025 Budget Policy Statement (BPS). Key proposals highlighted in the 2025 BPS are: inclusion of an overarching policy pronouncement on identification and transfer of attendant resources to the recently gazetted functions of the National and County Governments; Senate to initiate review of the conditional and unconditional allocations to delink the additional allocations from the National government's share of revenue from loans and grants from development partners to ensure efficient and effective transfer and utilization of funds.

## ENHANCING COMMUNITY ACCESS TO SAFE WATER: THARAKA NITHI COUNTY'S INNOVATIVE WATER SUPPLY SOLUTIONS



H.E Muthomi Njuki drinking water from one of the water supply point

As at January 2024, over 100,000 liters of treated water had been dispensed, reaching more than 1,250 households. To date, over two million liters have been distributed, bringing clean water closer to families and ending the long, exhausting treks in search of safe drinking water. Additionally, smart water kiosks have been piloted at 3 key sites: Nkondi Water Supply (Nkondi Ward), Njukini Giekuri Water Supply (Nkondi Ward) and Barrier Murigi Kaareni Water Supply (Igambang'ombe Ward).

Beyond household supply, the project has benefited local businesses, schools, and health centers, ensuring steady water supply for essential services. The digital monitoring system has also enhanced efficiency by tracking water usage patterns and identifying areas for improvement.

Best practices highlighted in this initiative include: there is need to engage the community throughout the implementation process to foster ownership, ensuring long-term sustainability and better project adoption; a clear strategy for transitioning operations and maintenance to local entities is essential for continued service delivery after partners exit; water supply systems are critical infrastructure which require strong community sensitization and security measures to prevent vandalism.

Access to safe water is crucial for community well-being. In view of this, County Governments have developed policies to enhance water access, particularly in arid and semi-arid regions where water scarcity is a major challenge.

Tharaka Nithi County Government in particular, under the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023 – 2027, has prioritized cost effective strategies to ensure sustainable water access. Further, the County Government has sought partnerships with various stakeholders including eWATER Services, and established a legal framework in collaboration with the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB) to facilitate public private partnerships.

With support from the Ministry of Water and Irrigation, key water supply schemes designed to improve water distribution, efficiency and reduce non-revenue water losses, including the Chuka and Chogoria Bulk Water Supplies, have been handed over to the Nithi Water and Sanitation Company (NIWASCO) for maintenance and service provision.



One of the County Government Funded borehole in Tharaka Nithi County

# KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH



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