

THE COUNCIL MONTHLY



Devolution Conference 2025 Steering Committee led by H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga addressing media following the inaugural meeting held at the CoG offices, Westlands

DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE 2025 PLANNING UNDERWAY – HERE WE GO



H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga speaking during the inaugural Devolution Conference 2025 Steering Committee meeting

A Multi-Agency Steering Committee is leading the planning, comprising representatives from the Council of Governors, the Executive Office of the Deputy President, the Senate, the County Assemblies Forum, Homa Bay County, KEPSA, youth organizations, and CSOs. This inclusive approach reflects the collaborative nature of devolution.

The 2025 theme, For the People; For Prosperity: Devolution as a Catalyst for Equity, Inclusion, and Social Justice, with the sub-theme Re-engineering County Governments to Accelerate Development and Close the Socio-Economic Divide, underscores the role of devolution in promoting equity and inclusion.

The Council of Governors has begun preparations for the Devolution Conference 2025, set to take place in Homa Bay County from August 12 to 15, 2025. The Steering Committee convened its inaugural meeting on February 4, 2024, to lay the groundwork for the event, which serves as a crucial platform for evaluating and strengthening devolution.

The conference will bring together government officials from both national and county levels, private sector leaders, academia, civil society organizations (CSOs), the media, and international partners. Their participation will foster knowledge-sharing and dialogue on advancing devolution policies that impact the citizens.

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH

The Steering Committee Chair, H.E. Dr. Kahiga Mutahi, who is also the Vice Chair of the Council of Governors, emphasized the importance of the conference saying the conversations from the conference shape the future of the Country. “The Devolution Conference is not just an occasion to reflect on our devolution journey; it is a platform for shaping its future. It allows state and non-state actors to exchange ideas and take actions that will drive Kenya’s development forward.” He said.

Governor Gladys Wanga of Homa Bay County welcomed all stakeholders, and took time to also market the County and what it has to offer, terming it as a County of endless potential.

“I look forward to welcoming all stakeholders—government leaders, international partners, businesses, academics, the media, civil society, and the public—to Homa Bay for Devolution Conference 2025. This is our chance to come together and strengthen devolution for the benefit of every Kenyan.” Said Governor Wanga.

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H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga”

Standing Relations, equity, social justice, and inclusion.

Senator Catherine Muma, Vice-Chair of the Senate Committee on Devolution and Intergovernmental described the conference as timely, given its focus on



Senator Catherine Muma (Left), Principal Secretary Teresia Mbaika(Right) during the inaugural Devolution Conference 2025 Steering Committee meeting



H.E. Gladys Wanga during the inaugural Devolution Conference 2025 Steering Committee meeting

Principal Secretary Teresia Mbaika from the State Department for Devolution reiterated the collaborative approach, stating: “The two levels of government will work together to ensure the conference’s success. Devolution is not a matter for one level of government—it requires joint effort.”

The conference will embrace digital innovation, featuring an online registration platform, a dedicated website, and a mobile application for seamless communication and logistics. Additionally, Homa Bay County is planning cultural and tourist activities to enrich the experience beyond formal discussions.

With the Steering Committee having approved the framework, the Devolution Conference 2025 is set to be a transformative event, reinforcing Kenya’s commitment to strengthening devolution for the benefit of all citizens.

CLARION CALL FOR STRENGTHENED INTERGOVERNMENTAL RELATIONS AT 26TH IBEC

National and County Governments have been urged to work collaboratively to deliver joint government projects and resolve any issues that may arise in execution of functions.

Delivering his address while chairing the 26th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council (IBEC) in Karen, Deputy President H.E Prof. Kithure Kindiki urged both levels of government to embrace constructive consultations to effectively deliver on the development agenda for the benefit of all Kenyans.

“We acknowledge and appreciate Counties for their valuable contributions towards ensuring the success of the ongoing Community Health Programmes and the push to register Kenyans for Taifa Care. Together, we can improve access to quality healthcare for all and realize UHC,” noted the Deputy President further commending County Governments for achieving notable growth in Own Source Revenue (OSR), with some surpassing the ksh. 1 billion mark in collections.



H.E Prof. Kithure Kindiki giving his remarks during 26th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council (IBEC)



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“As County Governments we are cognizant of the tight fiscal space the government is operating in. We remain committed to prioritizing the payment of pending bills, salaries and pensions to ensure fiscal prudence and smooth running of operations in devolved units,” noted the Council of Governors (CoG) Chair H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi highlighting the need to fast track mediation for the 24/25 County Governments Additional Allocations Bill, 2024 currently before Parliament.

The Deputy President committed to engage the Parliamentary leadership to address the stalemate arising from the stalled mediation between the National Assembly and Senate on the County Governments Additional Allocation Bill, adding that adequate financing of devolved units is paramount for effective service delivery.

Governors further cited the perennial delays in release of County allocations as one of the bottlenecks facing Counties.

The National Treasury on their part committed to disburse pending December disbursements to County Governments in the month of January 2025 and January and February allocations within the month of February 2025 and monthly thereafter.

Additionally the CoG, National Treasury and the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) will negotiate the matter of division of revenue to ensure continued support for County Governments while remaining conscious of the available resources.

“We will continue to work consultatively with the Council of Governors and the Controller of budget to foster collaboration and streamline engagements between the key institutions for enhanced efficiency and optimal delivery of their respective services,” added the Treasury CS John Mbadi.

The summit deliberated on key issues affecting both levels of government including the recent circular by the Controller of Budget (CoB) on functions of County Governments towards provision of education support. In this regard, it was resolved that, all Counties that have established distinct funds and regulations for educational support to continue to draw disbursements for FY 24/25.

Any County Government that has not established distinct funds is expected to expeditiously put such funds in place or alternatively pursue

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H.E Prof. Kithure Kindiki



H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi giving his remarks during 26th Ordinary Session of the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council (IBEC)

intergovernmental participatory agreements with the Ministry of Education.

“Subsequently, a formal engagement will be undertaken between the National Treasury, CoG, Ministry of Education, office of the CoB and IGRTC to formulate a sustainable engagement framework,” said the CoB Margaret Nyakang’o.

On the County Aggregated and Industrial Parks (CAIPs), it was resolved that implementation of CAIPs be fast tracked and the disbursement framework for National Government allocations be based on performance and status of implementation. The remaining Counties will be included in the County Governments Additional Allocation Act for FY 24/25 that is to be republished.

Further, the summit resolved that the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development convene a summit in consultation with the CoG Agriculture committee within 60 days, bringing together all stakeholders in the agriculture sector to develop comprehensive strategies on agricultural extension and production support.

On Unbundled and delineated functions, members agreed that the National Treasury reviews the budgets in line with the gazetted devolved functions to ensure that national government ministries, departments and agencies cease to hold funds for any devolved functions. Similarly, the implementation of resolutions of the previous 25th IBEC session will be expedited particularly in relation to court fines, mineral royalties, library functions and construction of county headquarters.

STRENGTHENING POLICY AND COLLABORATION FOR KENYA'S AGRICULTURAL TRANSFORMATION

The Council of Governors (CoG) convened a sensitization meeting for County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) in charge of agriculture at Lake Naivasha Resort on January 27-29, 2025. The gathering brought together key stakeholders, led by the COG Vice-Chairperson H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga, and H.E. Kenneth Lusaka, Chairperson of the CoG Agriculture and Livestock Committee, to address pressing issues in Kenya’s agricultural sector. The meeting focused on food security, policy coherence, and intergovernmental collaboration, aiming to transform agriculture into a driver of economic growth and poverty reduction.

In his remarks, Governor Mutahi Kahiga emphasized the critical role of agriculture in Kenya’s development. “Food security is a human right, not a privilege. As leaders, we must ensure that our policy frameworks are geared towards achieving this, as well as creating employment and wealth for our citizens.” He stated. He further highlighted the alarming reality of food insecurity in Kenya, citing that approximately 3.1 million Kenyans face food insecurity, with 1.5 million requiring emergency assistance.



CoG Vice-Chairperson H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga Speaking during sensitization meeting for County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) in charge of agriculture



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Chair CoG Agriculture Committee H.E. Rt. Hon. Kenneth Lusaka Speaking during sensitization meeting for County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) in charge of Agriculture

Dr. Kahiga attributed this crisis to a combination of poverty, climate change, and uneven resource distribution. He called for urgent action to modernize farming techniques, enhance productivity, and strengthen agricultural value chains.

Dr. Kahiga also stressed the importance of aligning Kenya's agricultural policies with global frameworks such as the United Nations Development Goals (SDGs) and the Paris Agreement. He outlined key priorities for policy development, including innovation, addressing youth unemployment, and ensuring environmental sustainability. Quoting World Bank data, he noted, "For every 1% increase in agricultural productivity, poverty is reduced by 0.6% in developing countries." This statistic underscored the transformative potential of the agricultural sector in lifting millions out of poverty.

Governor Kenneth Lusaka echoed these sentiments, emphasizing the need for coordinated action between National and County Governments. He described agriculture as the backbone of Kenya's economy, contributing significantly to the national GDP and employing over 70% of the rural population. However, he acknowledged the sector's challenges, including low productivity, high production costs, climate change, and inadequate financing. "These challenges are not insurmountable, but they require an integrated, coordinated, and collaborative approach to policy formulation and implementation," he said.

Governor Lusaka highlighted the role of the Joint Agricultural Sector Consultation and Coordination Mechanism (JASCOM) in addressing these challenges. He described JASCOM as a platform

for dialogue and collaboration between National and County Governments, aimed at harmonizing policies and optimizing resources. "It is through platforms like JASCOM that we can leverage collective effort to drive agricultural transformation," he stated. He also emphasized the importance of adhering to communication protocols, urging CECMs to ensure that all correspondence with the national government flows through the Council of Governors to safeguard devolution and protect county interests.

The meeting concluded with several resolutions aimed at enhancing policy coherence and intergovernmental collaboration. Key resolutions included strengthening intergovernmental collaboration through regular consultation, engaging the new Cabinet Secretary Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, for Agriculture to discuss mutual interests, and institutionalizing County Agricultural Sector Steering Committees (CASSCOMs) across all 47 counties. Additionally, the CoG committed to establishing a standardized framework for donor and partner engagements in devolved sectors and ensuring that county governments are actively involved in developing national policies.

The Naivasha meeting marked a significant step towards addressing Kenya's agricultural challenges. By fostering collaboration, enhancing policy coherence, and prioritizing devolution, the CoG and county leaders aim to create a sustainable, resilient, and equitable food system that lifts millions out of poverty and ensures food security for all Kenyans. As Dr. Kahiga rightly said, "Food security is not just a goal; it is a path to prosperity, stability, and a better future for all Kenyans." The resolutions and commitments made during the meeting provide a roadmap for achieving this vision, ensuring that agriculture remains at the heart of Kenya's development agenda.

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H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga

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Country Director AGRA Kenya John Mcharia Speaking during sensitization meeting for County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) in charge of Agriculture

COG HOLDS ANNUAL CSR AND MEDICAL CAMP AT KINANGO SCHOOL FOR THE DEAF

In a bid to positively impact and give back to the community, the Council of Governors (CoG) secretariat led by the CEO Mary Mwiti undertook its annual CSR activity in Kinango School for the Deaf on Friday, 7th February 2025.

Making her remarks during the event CoG CEO Mary Mwiti noted that access to education is not just a basic right for all children in Kenya but a tool that empowers every child to achieve their dreams and realize their full potential.

"During the G7 activation held in Kwale last year, we identified some of the needs of the children in Kinango and interventions that may be required to

address these needs. That is why we decided to come to Kinango for our CSR. We are here to serve," noted the CEO.

"The lack of items or materials that enable one to access education is a reality in our societies and I know some of us may have grown up in similar situations. We can all make our contributions, be it big or small to addressing such inequalities," she added.

The CSR activity featured talks on various topical issues affecting different groups of children including health, fun activities and give aways.





Kwale Governor H.E Fatuma Achani alongside CoG CEO Mary Mwiti during the Council's annual CSR at Kinango School for the Deaf, Kwale County

As part of the CSR, the Council in collaboration with partners, also held a free medical camp aimed at enhancing access to healthcare services for the residents of Kwale County, particularly vulnerable groups such as children, women and the elderly. Key services offered included: general health check-ups, blood pressure and sugar tests, screening, eye services, physiotherapy and occupational therapy, HPV vaccinations, free distribution of basic medicines and free registration for SHA among others.

Kwale Governor Fatuma Achani, who also graced the event alongside her Deputy Josephat Kombo and other senior County Government officials, expressed her gratitude to the CoG secretariat for the initiative to undertake the CSR activity and medical camp in Kinango School for the deaf, adding that it would positively impact the children and enhance access to healthcare for residents in the region.

The Head teacher, Kinango School for the Deaf, on his part thanked the CoG for such a noble initiative, noting that it would go a long way in improving the lives of the children.

"I would like to sincerely thank the CoG and Kwale County Government for the immense support they have given to this school this far. What we have done here today will greatly improve the learning conditions for our children," noted the head teacher adding that the children had great potential and the school had produced some of the best professional sign language interpreters.

Giving the vote of thanks at the end of the event, CoG CEO Mary Mwiti thanked all those who had contributed and supported the successful execution of the CSR activity and medical camp including: the CoG secretariat; Kwale County Government; School administration; Partners including Amref, Equity Afya, CBM, NCPWD, CHAI, APDK, Lwala Community, Kitu millers and Kevian juices among others.



CoG secretariat led by the CEO Mary Mwiti during the Council's annual CSR at Kinango School for the Deaf, Kwale County

UGATUZI CORNER



CoG CEO Mary Mwiti delivering her remarks during the joint Breakfast meeting for development partners, academia, philanthropists and communities living with or affected by HIV/AIDS

The CEO CoG Mary Mwiti joined development partners, academia, philanthropists and communities living with or affected by HIV/AIDS at a Breakfast Meeting for the National AIDS & STI Control Programme (NAS COP). The meeting sought to introduce the new leadership at NAS COP, provide a status update on Kenya commodity pipeline for HIV/AIDS and deliberate on sustainability and the journey to self-reliance amidst donor transition.

In her remarks, the CEO congratulated Dr. Andrew Mulwa as the newly appointed head of the National AIDS & STI Control Programme (NAS COP), noting that he had previously worked with the Council and his experience was testament to his capabilities.

Further, she reiterated the need to leverage on opportunities for innovation and impactful decision-making, and adopt a holistic approach to ensure NAS COP remains effective and resilient in the face of shifting dynamics.

ENHANCING TUBERCULOSIS MANAGEMENT THROUGH CROSS-BORDER COLLABORATION, GOVERNANCE AND PATIENT-CENTERED APPROACHES IN TRANS NZOIA



The successful treatment of tuberculosis (TB) globally has been hindered by several challenges, with one of the most significant being patients' failure to complete the full course of prescribed medication. This undermines the effectiveness of treatment and contributes to the emergence of drug-resistant TB strains, complicating global efforts to control the disease.

Closer home, Trans Nzoia County's border with Uganda renders it vulnerable to cross-border disease transmission, such as tuberculosis (TB). Further, the County faces significant challenges in management of TB including inadequate human resource for health (HRH), insufficient isolation facilities for TB patients and absence of comprehensive policies and structured protocols among others.

Despite these challenges, Transzoia County has devised a strategy to address and manage TB. The implementation of governance-driven strategies and cross-border collaboration in has demonstrated significant progress in the fight against tuberculosis (TB), particularly in managing drug-resistant strains. Through the establishment of a technical working group, improved coordination and oversight have strengthened the County's ability to address TB challenges more effectively. Additionally, cross-border engagement with Uganda has been crucial in addressing regional disparities in treatment protocols, advancing efforts to control TB transmission across borders. These efforts mark a critical step towards TB elimination, highlighting the importance of sustained collaboration, resource allocation and patient-centered approaches.

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH



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