

THE COUNCIL MONTHLY



Governors during an extra ordinary meeting held on Friday March 21, 2025 at the CoG offices

COG ISSUES 14 DAY NOTICE TO SHUTDOWN SERVICES OVER KSHS. 38 BILLION FUND DIVERSION



CoG vice-chairperson H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga speaking to the media during the extra ordinary meeting

The Council of Governors (CoG) has strongly condemned the National Government, accusing it of diverting Kshs. 38.4 billion earmarked for County projects and warning of a potential shutdown of services within 14 days if the funds are not restored. The declaration made during an extra ordinary meeting on Friday March 21, 2025 at the CoG offices raises concerns over the future of County-level service delivery amidst recent attempts to claw back on devolution across various sectors.

Governors, led by CoG vice chair H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga faulted the passage of the County Governments Additional Allocation Bill 2025, which unlawfully redirects Kshs. 24 billion in conditional grants from international development partners. These grants

were intended to fund vital projects in healthcare, agriculture, fisheries, water access, road construction, slum upgrading, and infrastructure development. An additional Kshs. 13 billion allocated for joint national-county initiatives, such as industrial parks, was also slashed.

The Council termed the move as part of a broader pattern to weaken devolution, citing a Kshs. 114 billion increase in National expenditure under the Supplementary Appropriation Act 2025 as evidence of the Treasury's "deliberate and unjustified" prioritization of centralized spending.

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH

"The Council of Governors demands the immediate restoration of all the diverted funds to County Governments to ensure uninterrupted service delivery, failure to which County Governments will shut down its services in the next 14 days," said CoG Vice Chair Mutahi Kahiga.

The National Treasury reportedly justified the cuts by claiming County Governments lacked the capacity to absorb the additional funds in the current financial year. However, Governors dismissed this argument as "fallacious," noting that counties had already committed the funds to ongoing projects.

"It is becoming increasingly apparent that these systematic budgetary cuts are designed to cripple County Governments, hinder effective service delivery, and ultimately discredit and kill the devolved system of governance," added Trans Nzoia Governor George Ntembeya highlighting that the cuts would also strain relations with contractors.

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H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga

Kirinyaga Governor Waiguru urged the National Government to release the funds even as she expressed concerns at the continuous clawing back of not just the devolved functions,



Trans Nzoia Governor H.E. George Ntembeya speaking to the media during the extraordinary meeting



Kirinyaga Governor H.E. Anne Waiguru speaking to the media during the extraordinary meeting

but also the resources that have been planned over the years by development partners.

"Devolution is not a privilege—it is a constitutional right," added H.E. Anne Waiguru reaffirming the CoG's commitment to pursuing all legal avenues to protect County allocations.

"These diverted funds and the Kshs. 78.03 billion in delayed equitable share disbursements threaten to paralyze healthcare, infrastructure, and other essential services, disproportionately affecting vulnerable populations," added CoG health committee chair H.E. Muthomi Njuki.

The Council lauded the Senate for its historical defense of devolution and urged legislators to resist the "unconstitutional" budgetary cuts. Kenyans can attest to the benefits of the devolved system of governance. It is therefore our patriotic duty as a country to protect our Constitution and its supremacy.

GOVERNORS: STRENGTHEN KENYA'S SELF RELIANCE IN HEALTHCARE TO SUSTAIN GAINS

County Governments have underscored the need to strengthen self-reliance in Kenya's healthcare system and explore alternative funding mechanisms following the recent USG executive stop work order which jeopardized essential health service delivery and access to life saving treatment for millions of Kenyans.

Speaking during a high level consultative meeting on the impact of the stop work order held on 12th March 2025 in Nairobi, CoG Vice Chair H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga noted that while donor support had played an instrumental role in supporting key health programmes particularly TB, malaria, HIV and family planning, it was the collective role of both tiers of government and stakeholders to safeguard and sustain the gains made.

"We must come together as a country, identify the solutions locally, re-strategize where need be and chart the way forward. The time to act is now," added the Nyeri Governor H.E. Kahiga while singling out key interventions required to strengthen Kenya's HIV response. This includes: development of a framework to integrate care and treatment at the regional level; increased human resources for health; increased domestic resource mobilization and innovative health financing.



CoG vice-chairperson H.E. Dr. Mutahi Kahiga speaking during the high level consultative meeting



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The forum themed “Accelerating actions for a whole government approach for the management and control of HIV in readiness for 2030 and beyond,” brought together key actors including Ministry of Health, County Governments, members of the National Assembly (Health and budget committees), National Syndemic Diseases Control Council and National AIDS and STI Control Programme.

Health CS Deborah Barasa on her part noted that significant improvements had been achieved in health infrastructure, supply chain management, and capacity for disease surveillance and response. Further, the Ministry had developed the Health Sector Transition Roadmap and an operational plan for enhancing the country’s readiness to sustain a resilient HIV Response Beyond 2030.

“We have put in place measures to ensure sufficient medical supplies, including a buffer stock for at least six months. I urge all Kenyans to remain calm and united as the country navigates these changes. Kenya’s HIV response remains strong, resilient, and people-centred,” noted the CS calling upon Members of Parliament to prioritize and advocate for increased budgetary allocations to the health sector, particularly for HIV and key health programs for long-term sustainability.

Nandi Governor and CoG Whip H.E Stephen Sang reiterated County Governments’ commitment towards realization of the Universal Health Coverage agenda calling for the speedy resolution of the issues facing SHA to ensure continued delivery of quality health services to all Kenyans.

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Health CS Deborah Barasa



Health CS Deborah Barasa speaking during the high level consultative meeting

Making brief remarks, Senior economic advisor to the president Moses Kuria highlighted the need to reassess the design of key health programs while urging County Governments to strengthen the Facility Improvement Fund and leverage on public-private partnerships. County Governments have enacted and operationalized FIF, a framework that has been crucial in improving health service delivery and providing reliable and predictable funding for health facilities.

The meeting resolved among others that: the Ministry of Health and County Governments shall establish a coordination framework for partners with clear definition of roles in capacity building, technical assistance and knowledge transfer; an engagement be held between both levels of Government, senate and national assembly and the National Treasury to address the resource gaps in the 25/26 FY; amendment of policies, legislation and governance structures for SHA to integrate HIV, malaria and TB care and treatment services in SHIF benefits package to ensure service accessibility.

STAKEHOLDER COLLABORATION KEY IN STRENGTHENING URBAN DEVELOPMENT

The Council of Governors (CoG) Lands, Housing, and Urban Development committee convened a consultative meeting with key stakeholders from 17th – 21st March 2025 to address challenges plaguing the sector and emerging issues.

Making his remarks, County Executive Committee Members (CECMs) caucus Chair Mr. Raymond Kinyua highlighted the need for strengthened collaboration and alignment across all levels of government and related entities to ensure efficient and streamlined service delivery that better meets the needs of urban communities.

“We need to have regular, structured dialogue and collaboration among urban development actors, including government bodies, private sector players, community groups, and other relevant stakeholders to ensure all actors remain actively engaged, aligned in their efforts, and working effectively together to promote sustainable urban growth,” noted the caucus chair.

The forum brought together CECMs, Chief Officers in charge of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development, County Directors of Housing, Survey, Valuation & Physical Planning, City/Municipal Board Chairpersons, City/Municipal Managers, and Chairpersons of the County Rural & Urban Affordable Housing Committees.

Stakeholders present urged the State Department for Urban Development to prioritize implementation of resolutions from the First Kenya Urban Forum, with particular focus on the establishment of the National Urban Fund. This initiative is as a cornerstone for sustainable urban development and is expected to provide critical financial support for infrastructure, housing, and urban services across the country. By establishing the National Urban Fund, targeted investments can be made to address the diverse



CECM in Charge of Lands, housing and Urban development Caucus Chairperson - Mr. Raymond Kinyua speaking during the consultative meeting with key stakeholders

challenges facing by urban areas, thus promoting long-term, inclusive, and resilient growth for Kenya’s urban centers.

National Director of Urban Development and the National Coordinator of the Second Kenya Urban Support Program Plan. Lilian Kieni further commended County Governments and Cities/Municipalities for their pivotal role in strengthening urban institutional capacity and improving service delivery.

The session highlighted legislation that is crucial in addressing the challenges in the Lands, housing and urban development sector at the County level and ensuring effective urban planning and governance namely: the Affordable Housing Act 2024, National Rating Act 2024 and Sectional Properties Act 2020.



National director Urban development/ National Coordinator Second Kenya Urban support program- plan. Lilian Kieni speaking during the consultative meeting with key stakeholders

County Governments were encouraged to domesticate the National Rating Act and ensure the regular updating of the Valuation Rolls in order to boost own-source revenue and financial sustainability. Additionally, devolved units were urged to prioritize comprehensive planning and surveying before allocating or leasing public land. This strategic approach will ensure that land use is optimized and aligns with each county's long-term development objectives. On affordable housing, it was noted that there is a need to develop County Affordable Housing Plans to

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CECMs caucus Chair Raymond Kinyua”

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Counties align their strategies to both the local and national needs, identify the necessary resources, and set clear timelines for implementation. This will empower counties to better manage housing projects, promote sustainable urban development, and provide affordable housing solutions for vulnerable and low-income populations amidst the growing demand for affordable housing across Kenya.



National Land Commission Commissioner- Reginald Okumu speaking during the consultative meeting with key stakeholders

The session was a crucial step toward advancing urban development in Kenya, focusing on the importance of proactive engagement and collaboration among stakeholders. Overall, these efforts aim to strengthen urban institutions, improve policy implementation and create a more resilient, inclusive, and sustainable urban development framework for Kenya.

COG SECRETARIAT CHARTS PATH TO IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND SERVICE DELIVERY IN MID-TERM STRATEGIC REVIEW

The Council of Governors (CoG) secretariat convened its semi-annual and mid-term review of the Strategic Plan (2022–2027) from 24th - 27th March 2025 in Meru County. The review sought to evaluate progress and refine implementation strategies to enhance the Council's overall effectiveness and strengthen key systems for improved governance and service delivery at the County level.

Making the official opening remarks, CoG CEO Mary Mwititi underscored the need to educate stakeholders and members of the public on Devolution and amplify success stories and best practices from the Counties across Kenya and beyond.

“Today, everyone can see, touch and feel the gains of Devolution. We have a duty to champion for Devolution in our respective spaces and support County Governments to effectively execute their mandate and deliver services to their communities. Doing business the same way will not yield different results. We have to rethink, craft innovative strategies, adapt and act decisively,” added the CEO.

Meru County's newly inaugurated governor, H.E. Hon. Isaac Mutuma, who also graced the review meeting welcomed participants to Meru County further outlining his administration's priorities for strengthening governance and improving service delivery.

Governor Mutuma singled out among others: resource mobilization through partnerships with various actors including development agencies to support critical county projects; capacity building for new CECMs; documentation of best practices to guide evidence-based policy and decision making; and establishment of a performance management system to enhance government operations.



CoG CEO Mary Mwititi speaking during Semi-Annual and Mid-Term Review of its Strategic Plan (2022–2027) in Meru County

“As I take on this new assignment, I commit to work together with all stakeholders to ensure effective, quality service delivery to the people of Meru County. I also commend the CoG secretariat for their steadfast dedication in defending Devolution in Kenya and look forward to working closely with you in promoting accountable and effective county governance,” said the Meru Governor while highlighting the county's rich cultural and tourism assets.





Meru County Governor H.E. Isaac Mutuma speaking during Semi-Annual and Mid-Term Review of its Strategic Plan (2022–2027) in Meru County. The 3-day forum highlighted key areas including the need for systematic tracking of county performance to identify areas of improvement to boost service delivery and enhanced stakeholder collaboration and consultation as a key pillar in advancing the Devolution agenda. Further, it provided a platform for in-depth evaluation of the Strategic Plan implementation

matrix and proposed strategic recommendations aimed at enhancing efficiency and achieving the Council’s objectives.

The Council of Governors reaffirms its unwavering commitment to fostering good governance and advancing devolution for the benefit of all Kenyans.



Meru County Governor H.E. Isaac Mutuma (centre) and CoG secretariat during Semi-Annual and Mid-Term Review of its Strategic Plan (2022–2027) in Meru County

UGATUZI CORNER



PS State Department for Wildlife Silvia Museiya (seated 2nd left), Chair chief officers Tourism caucus (Centre) and other stakeholders during the consultative meeting

The Council of Governors Tourism Committee joined the State Department for Wildlife among other tourism industry experts and stakeholders for a consultative meeting on strategic interventions aimed at strengthening sectoral governance. Kenya's tourism and wildlife sectors have long faced significant challenges stemming from a disconnect between the National Government, its agencies, and County Governments, exacerbated by insufficient data on tourism performance. Stakeholders emphasized the need for structured engagement and collaboration to enhance coordination and efficiency. Counties were further urged to familiarize themselves with the unbundled functions to improve implementation and advocate for greater prioritization of the sector. Makueni and Kitui Counties were lauded for successfully developing tourism products, launching websites, and appointing brand ambassadors — initiatives that have boosted visitor numbers and serve as models for replication.

THE SUCCESSFUL TRANSITION OF GROUP RANCHES TO COMMUNITY LAND IN LAIKIPIA COUNTY



Ingwesi I-Mayanat Community Land in Laikipia County

In Kenya, there are 24 Counties that host community land, including 315 former group ranches. By July 2023, only 46 of these group ranches had successfully transitioned as required by law, accounting for just 15% of the total land mass considered community land (Ministry of Lands, Public Works, Housing and Urban Development). Laikipia County, which is among the aforementioned Counties, has successfully achieved 100% transition from the Group Ranches to Community Land in 2 Wards.

This transition has not been without challenges, especially given the historical injustices, land disputes and the ineffective implementation of the relevant legal frameworks including the Community Land Act, 2016

which provides for the management and administration of community land as well as the role of County Governments in relation to unregistered community land.

To address this, the County Government adopted a collaborative approach with key stakeholders at all levels including both levels of Government, the National Land Commission, Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), and Impact Africa among other actors. Additionally, Each village in the ward elected a representative to form the Community Land Management Committee, ensuring that the community members are included and actively involved in the governance and management of their shared land resources.

The County Government played a central role, providing overall coordination and acting as the main facilitator in community sensitization efforts, including extensive outreach and awareness campaigns, aimed at fostering community buy-in and support. Similarly, the Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, provided essential support in surveying, mapping, and dispute resolution while the National Land Commission (NLC) played an oversight role, ensuring that the process adheres to national land laws and policies.

As a result of this initiative, there has been reduced disputes over land use; collective decision-making; enhanced community engagements; greater land security, and environmental sustainability. This has promoted fairness, equity and transparency in the distribution of land-related benefits and improved overall land management and governance.

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH



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