



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

ANALYTICAL REPORT

of the COVID-19 Virtual Conference
Held on August 31st 2020

**County Governments' Resilience in the
COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and
Building Sustainability for The Future**



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Held on August 31st 2020

Conference Theme:

**County Governments' Resilience in the
COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the past and
Building Sustainability for the Future**

Our Vision

Prosperous and democratic Counties delivering services to every Kenyan.

Our Mission

To be a global benchmark of excellence in devolution that is non-partisan: providing a supporting pillar for County Government as a platform for consultation, information sharing, capacity building, performance management and dispute resolution.

Our Values

Our core values are: professionalism, independence, equality and equity, cooperation and being visionary.

Our Motto

48 Governments, 1 Nation.

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ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AGRA	Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa
AMREF	African Medical and Research Foundation
CAADP	Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme
CDC	Centres for Disease Control and Prevention
CIDP	County Integrated Development Plan
CoG	Council of Governors
COVID-19	Coronavirus Disease
CS	Cabinet Secretary
EGH	Elder of the Order of the Golden Heart of Kenya
HIV	Human Immunodeficiency Virus
ICT	Information and Communication Technology
ICU	Intensive Care Unit
IFMIS	Integrated Financial Management Information System
IEA	International Energy Agency
JICA	Japan International Cooperation Agency
KEMSA	Kenya Medical Supplies Agency
Kg	Kilogramme
KHRC	Kenya Human Rights Commission
KNCHR	Kenya National Commission on Human Rights
NCCRP	National Coordination Committee on the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic
PPE	Personal Protective Equipment
SARS	Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome
SDG	Sustainable Development Goals
TB	Tuberculosis
UCLGA	United Cities and Local Governments of Africa
UNDP	United Nations Development Programme
UNEP	United Nations Environment Programme
WHO	World Health Organisation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Background

COVID-19 was first reported in China in December 2019, and as of August 2020, the World Health Organization had reported more than 19 million people infected by the disease, and over 700,000 deaths worldwide. Kenya recorded the first case of COVID-19 on March 13th 2020 and as at August 31st 2020, all 47 Counties had reported COVID-19 infections, with 34,201 confirmed positive cases, and 577 reported deaths. Millions of others have recovered from infection across the globe.

Apart from human loss, the pandemic has led to massive socio-economic losses that have forced institutions to re-engineer their plans and budgets and rethink service delivery across sectors. In Kenya, the National and County Governments have jointly coordinated their COVID-19 efforts through the National Coordination Committee on the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (NCCRCP).

Context

This report contains key discussions from the COVID-19 Virtual Conference held on August 31st 2020. The Conference was necessitated by the need to appraise the Sub-national Government's response to COVID-19. Key components of the one-day Conference include sharing of lessons, best practices and challenges; recommending actions to both levels of Government on how best to remain resilient amid the pandemic; and preparedness in the event of future pandemics.

More specifically, the report contains the collective reflections of the National Government and County Governments, development partners, experts in health and other sectors, and civil society organisations, among others, on the actions taken by the Government to prevent and control COVID-19. It also contains discussions on the impact of the disease on Kenya's socio-economic existence, as well as recommendations for strategic and sustainable interventions that can be adopted by both levels of Government for COVID-19 and unforeseen future pandemics.

All discussions and recommendations in this report fall under the Conference theme: County Governments' Resilience in the COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and Building Sustainability for the Future; and the overall Conference Objective: To reflect on the government's COVID-19 response efforts, challenges and recommend strategic policy measures that can be adopted by both levels of government in readiness for future pandemics.

Discussion Outcomes

This report has six chapters, which include an introduction and background of the Conference; a summary of the opening ceremony; three successive chapters of distinctively themed panel discussions, and the closing ceremony. Also contained in the report are the opening and closing remarks by the President of The Republic of Kenya, H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, Resolutions of the Conference as read by the Chairman of the Council of Governors, Hon. Wycliffe Oparanya, and speeches of various dignitaries, including the Deputy President of The Republic of Kenya, Dr. William Ruto.

The report starts on a positive note with President Uhuru's remarks about progress towards flattening of the COVID-19 curve in Kenya, and challenging the Conference participants to gauge what has been done well and escalate it, correct mistakes that may have occurred, and prepare strategies that will enable the country not only to recover from the effects of COVID-19, but also be well-prepared for any future pandemics. Related to this, the two levels of Government receive overwhelming praise for their cordial and collaborative efforts that have led to the containment of the disease.

Some praiseworthy achievements of the NCCRCP mentioned in the report include the 33 public and private COVID-19 testing laboratories established in 12 Counties, and the increased bed capacities at County level health facilities, with 7,411 isolation beds and 312 ICU beds, supported by well qualified, devoted and compassionate health workers. Also hailed in the report are the socio-economic measures taken to ease the lives of Kenyans, such as the weekly transfer of Kshs. 2000 to the most vulnerable members of society; tax reductions, and the upcoming voucher system for farmers. The innovativeness of Kenyans in the face of the disease crisis in developing healthcare materials and equipment also receives praise in the report.

However, the report also records a few failures noted, especially in the COVID-19 containment efforts. Police are mentioned as having used excessive force in their attempts to enforce Presidential directives on curfew, use of masks and quarantine, leading to tens of deaths and hundreds of injuries. The Government is also mentioned as having conducted quarantine measures in contravention to existing laws. Also recurring in the report is graft in Government Institutions, especially the alleged theft of COVID-19 funds and supplies by the Kenya Medical Supplies Agency. Delays by the National Government to disburse County Funds also recur in the report as a negative occurrence in the COVID-19 crisis period.

Some of the recommendations contained in the report include the need to scale up the collaborative working groups established during the COVID-19 crisis, such as the Food Security War Room, into other sectors and beyond the pandemic, for sustainable development. Also recommended is the establishment of more Centres for Disease Control and Prevention to strengthen the health system. Towards management of increasing mental health challenges is recommended the establishment of mental healthcare facilities in all Counties. Domestication of research and enhanced use of research recommendations and data is also recommended for transformative development.



I commend the Council of Governors for bringing us together. This forum affirms the unique place of county governments in the structure of our governance and towards the realisation of our national values, which include public participation.

The Chairman, Council of Governors, Cabinet Secretaries, County Governors, Principal Secretaries, the Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Ryoichi Horie, the Secretary General of UCLGA, Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, representatives of various Development Partners, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen: It is with great pleasure that I open this Virtual Conference. I am particularly pleased that today's assembly is a congregation of solution givers. Permit me to begin my statement, by conveying my heartfelt condolences to all the families, who have lost loved ones to this deadly disease.

This Conference brings together a multi-disciplinary community of problem-solvers; leaders and a group of professionals, and policy practitioners, who have applied their minds to the COVID-19 pandemic for the last six months. I commend the Council of Governors for bringing us together. This forum affirms the unique place of county governments in the structure of our governance and towards the realisation of our national values, which include public participation.

Today's engagements bring together an assembly of the country's foremost brain trust on COVID-19. Everyone present here has agonised in his/her area of professional practice, over how to manage and end this crisis. Most of you have experienced anxiety as you crunch numbers, rationalise models and contemplate over what should be best decisions for our country.

On my part, as President, I have been called upon to make weighty decisions that presented the most unique dilemma to me as the Head of State. More often than not, as I have indicated in my previous statements, the agonising dilemma was one between two rights. Never before, in the history of our nation has the Head of State been called upon to invoke the Public Health Act, and issue containment measures that would significantly affect the enjoyment of various liberties, rights, and freedoms of our people. Never before have families had to make choices as to who will lay a departed loved one to rest. Never have we failed to share in the joy of witnessing our children's union in marriage. Never have our individual and collective courage to believe there will be a better day, been tried like it has been over the last six months.

And so today we gather here to harvest the results of these collective experiences and chart a way forward for our nation's future. We are here to collect and build on the best practices you have recorded in the last six months. And if you are the custodians of best practice in the fight against COVID-19, you must remember that best practice is NEVER implemented retrospectively. It MUST be applied instantaneously. Timely and instantaneous implementation of what has worked is what will take us forward and most significantly secure the gains we continue to make.

But as we implement best practice after the counsel of this conference, our shared goal must also remain in sight. And this goal is simple: Victory over COVID-19 and nothing less. We must achieve it at ZERO OPTION. And to achieve it, we must begin by building positive resilience. We must move away from tactical response to this pandemic, to strategic response. Instead of symptomatic reactions to this crisis, we must move to structural reactions that are long-term and transformative. And this is what I call positive resilience – being able to anticipate the patterns of this pandemic, responding to it transformatively and ‘building-back’ better.

Allow me now to suggest a framework for ‘banking’ your experiences of the last six months in this conference. This framework has three elements to it. First, I want you to do a post-mortem analysis of how we have handled the COVID-19 crisis six months after it became manifest. Begin by looking at the forecasting of the spread of the virus. If our models had projected severe scenarios that did not happen, was it because we were forewarned or was it because of the swift interventions we put in place? How does our national response compare with others within the region, the continent and the world? Is there something we could have done better and are there lessons we should carry with us to the strategic phase of this war.

I am not asking you to ponder these questions because you failed us. To the contrary, you did remarkably well and that is why we have begun to flatten the curve. But to do better, we must remain brutally honest with our approaches, because intellectual honesty is critical to building resilience.

Secondly, after doing a post-mortem analysis, I invite you to do some in-mortem analysis. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in the middle of a crisis and we must analyse it as it unfolds and changes form. The good news, though, is that in the middle of this crisis, the curve is beginning to flatten. However, we must celebrate this happy moment with caution. More so because, a curve begins to flatten after it reaches its highest point. This point is also called the inflexion point. And it is the most dangerous point because the curve can either flatten and de-escalate, or take an upward surge. My appeal to you as experts and practitioners is therefore to deliberate on our in-mortem condition. Although the curve is beginning to flatten, could it surprise us by taking an upward surge at this inflexion point?

My third invitation is for you to do a pre-mortem analysis. This is about early warning. But more fundamentally, it is about long-term responses. If indeed we are to shift our response from tactical to strategic interventions, we must do a simulation of how this will work. A shift from symptomatic response under COVID-19 to structural response under Universal Health Coverage must be well thought out. How, for instance, will the environment respond to this shift and what are the enablers and disablers of this undertaking?

Pre-mortem analysis will help us chart the path to sustainable health provisioning for all. Using this model, the conference should, therefore, give us counsel on how to promote preventive medicine over symptomatic care. It should guide us on how to use the lessons learnt from COVID-19 experiences in order to anchor the full national rollout of the Universal Health Coverage, one of the pillars of my Administration’s Agenda for the Nation – The Big Four.

More importantly, this conference of experts and stakeholders should use pre-mortem analysis to guide us on how to build positive resilience out of the COVID-19 experience. We must use this experience and lessons learnt to ‘build-back better’ and to create a society capable of absorbing shock and emerging on top; but most crucially, a society that unites when called upon to do so in the face of such a monumental challenge.

As I conclude, I challenge all of us to reflect on how we can position our country to emerge as a stronger and more responsive State from the current pandemic. With that, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you productive deliberations and, more importantly, look forward to your counsel on steps we could adopt to fully conquer this invisible enemy.

It is now my pleasure to declare this Conference officially opened.

Thank You, God bless you and God bless Kenya.



H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH
President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces



Despite it all, we remain a resilient nation. In this doom, let us hope for a better tomorrow.

Your Excellency Honourable Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya, Excellency Governors and Deputy Governors, Cabinet Secretaries, High Commissioners and Ambassadors, members of the County Assemblies, representatives of the National and County Governments, Development Partners, members of the Private Sector, International Guests and Fellow Kenyans:

On behalf of the Council of Governors, I take this opportunity to extend my most sincere gratitude, first and foremost to the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta, and to each and every one of you for honouring our invite and choosing to participate in this virtual conference.

For the past six months, Kenya has been among many countries of the world managing the COVID-19 pandemic. This virtual gathering today provides us a platform to collectively reflect on government action in the prevention and control of COVID-19; discuss the impact the disease has had in our nation's socio-economic space; and recommend strategic and sustainable interventions that can be adopted by both levels of government for this and future pandemics.

Allow me to convey appreciation to His Excellency the President for his efforts to bring the National Government and the County Governments together, with a view to forging a coordinated national response to COVID-19. Thus far, we have held three Summit meetings, forums, which have allowed the two levels of government to galvanise collaborative measures in the fight against COVID-19.

More positive cases continue to be recorded every day. More deaths keep being reported. The nation continues to witness more despair and hopelessness owing to closure of businesses, low incomes and loss of livelihoods. Tourism, the bedrock of Kenya's economy, has taken a huge blow from domestic and international restrictions of movement. Value chains that guarantee production and sale of agricultural products are nearly paralysed. Despite it all, we remain a resilient nation. In this doom, let us hope for a better tomorrow. COVID-19 has forced us to look inward and create solutions. As much as the pandemic has shaken our systems, some good has come out of it. Kitui County is now producing masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPE). We have seen universities develop ventilators. Young people are producing locally made sanitizers and assembling ICU beds.

COVID-19 has exposed the gaps and weaknesses that exist in our socio-economic systems and structures. The onus is on us, the National and County Governments, development partners, private sector and civil society, to devise remedial measures that will ensure every Kenyan's right to healthcare, food, shelter and housing is guaranteed. Moving forward, we must act differently. This is the premise on which the Council of Governors commissioned the development of the County Post-COVID-19 Recovery and Re-engineering Strategy: a plan that will assist the subnational level to adopt measures that enable it to prepare, respond and recover from future pandemics.

The Council wishes to thank our partners who have made it possible to have this conference.

Specifically, heartfelt thank you to the United Nations Development Programme through the Japan Government, the World Bank and the County Pension Fund for supporting this conference. And to the Council Secretariat, thank you.

I wish you fruitful deliberations during this conference.

Asanteni Sana!



H.E. Hon. FCPA. Wycliffe Oparanya, EGH, CGJ
Chairman, Council of Governors

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT



To all Kenyan and international participants who set aside time to actively engage in the deliberations of the Conference, we say thank you.

It is a great privilege to express warm and sincere gratitude and thanks on behalf of the Council of Governors and to all who participated in the Conference, first and foremost to H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya for his stimulating and targeted remarks and gracious participation in the Conference. The leadership and unwavering support of H.E. the President for the last six months is deeply appreciated. We also thank H.E. Dr. William Ruto, the Deputy President, for gracing the first Kenyan virtual COVID-19 Conference.

To all Kenyan and international participants who set aside time to actively engage in the deliberations of the Conference, we say thank you. Your contributions enriched the resolutions from the Conference.

Special gratitude goes to moderators of the Conference, Mr. Eric Latiff, Ms. Adelle Onyango and Mr. Waihiga Mwaura who steered the discussions of the Conference. The Council recognises your exemplary moderation of all the sessions. On the same note, we highly appreciate all the panellists who spoke passionately on all the topics. They shared invaluable insights, which have shaped the conclusions reached in this conference report. Though this was a reflection and look back, the grasp of the issues by the panellists enabled us to

break new ground in knowledge in certain areas. We all learnt something new. Asanteni.

The success of the Conference depended on the effort and enthusiasm of many people. We particularly thank our development partners who graciously supported the conference, enabling many Kenyans to enrol and participate in the Conference. We convey our heartfelt gratitude specifically to the United Nations Development Programme (through the Japan Government), the World Bank, UK Aid, the Royal Danish Embassy and the County Pension Fund for their support. Thank you for your commitment to devolution.

We also thank the Interreligious Council for their contribution in the fight against COVID-19 in the last six months, and deeply thank and recognise our health workers who have been in the frontline in the fight against the pandemic, we say thank you for the hard work and sacrifice to keep us safe and healthy. We truly appreciate you.

We also thank the Homeboyz team who were behind all the studio aesthetics, and media houses who enabled all interested participants to follow and engage in the Conference not just in Kenya where it was covered live, but also globally through live-stream.

Lastly, on behalf of all the Governors, we extend warm appreciation to those who have worked behind the scenes to make this Conference happen. I congratulate and appreciate the CoG Conference Planning Team for ensuring the Conference was well planned and executed. Your efforts and hard work have not gone unnoticed.

We engaged in very useful and important issues during the Conference. Our task now is to work together towards the successful implementation of the resolutions.

Lastly as the Head of State emphasized it is our responsibility to stem the rising curve of the pandemic by following the protocols issued. Ni jukumu la kila mwananchi!.

Thank you!

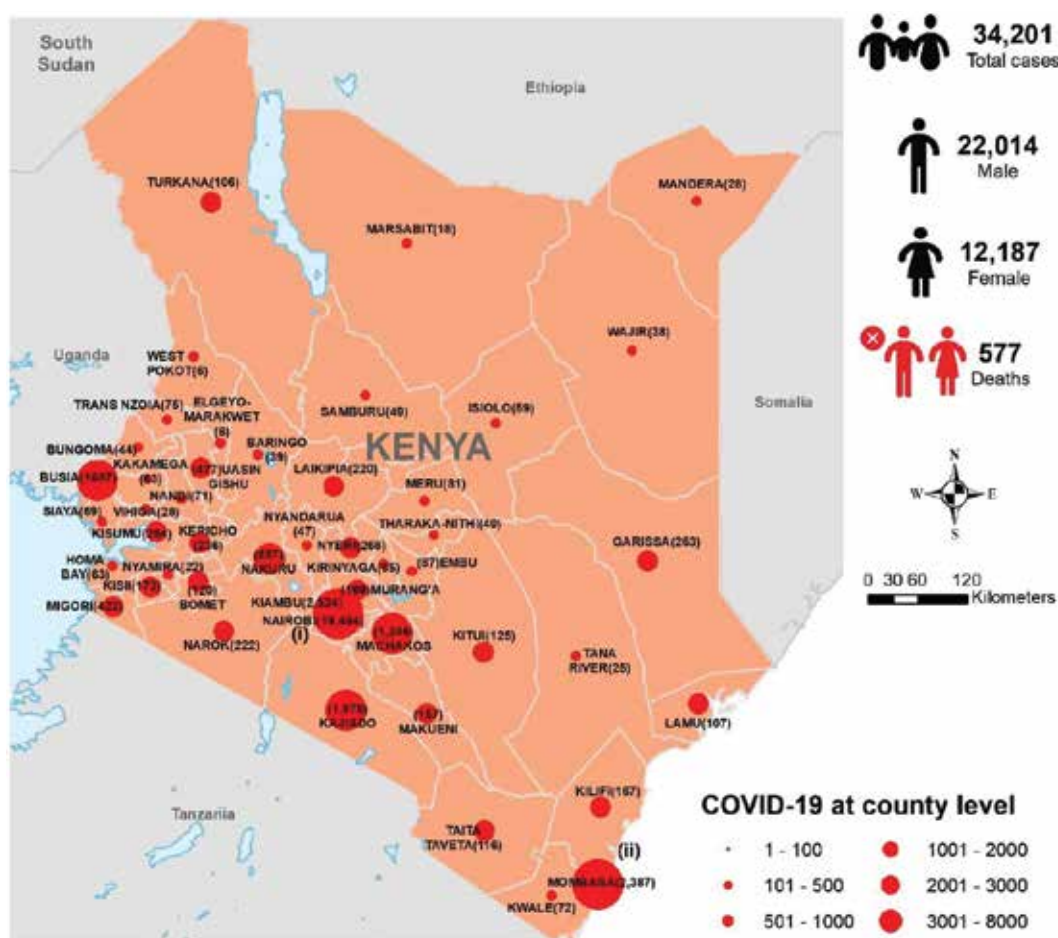


Jacqueline Mogeni, MBS
Chief Executive Officer, Council of Governors



H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH and Hon. FCPA. Wycliffe Oparanya, EGH, CGJ Chairman CoG during the opening ceremony of the COVID-19 Conference

Chapter 1: INTRODUCTION



COVID-19 Report cases by county as of 31st August 2020

Background

The impact of the COVID-19 pandemic cannot be overstated. Massive economic losses have been witnessed worldwide, occasioned by strict containment measures such as lockdowns and cessation of international travel instituted to curb the spread of the disease first reported in China in 2019.

Globally there were more than 19 million confirmed cases and over 700,000 deaths, according to the World Health Organisation as of August 2020. Kenya was not spared and recorded the first case of COVID-19 in the nation on March 13th 2020. As of August 31st 2020, Kenya had recorded 34,201 confirmed COVID-19 positive cases, and 577 reported deaths. All 47 Counties reported COVID-19 infections.

The National Government and the County Governments came together to coordinate efforts to curb the spread of the pandemic through the National Coordination Committee on the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (NCCRCP). This mechanism has enabled both levels of Government to cooperate in case identification, case management, containment measures, and formulation of strategies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on essential sectors and livelihoods.

Noteworthy is that the disruption brought about by the pandemic has forced state and non-state institutions to take unprecedented measures, re-engineering their plans and budgets and rethinking how best to deliver services across various sectors.

Justification

County Governments as centres of development have been at the frontline in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic for the six months. Consequently, the Council of Governors organised a Virtual Conference on August 31st 2020 aimed at appraising the Sub-national Government's response to date; sharing lessons, best practices, challenges; as well as recommending actions to both levels of Government on how best to remain resilient during the pandemic, and how to remain prepared in the event of future pandemics.

The Virtual Conference, which aimed at facilitating the exchange of ideas and learning was a first, and brought together various stakeholders including the National Government and County Governments and their representatives, development partners, constitutional commissions, civil society organisations, the media, religious institutions, professional bodies, international and local experts, academia, representatives of people with special needs, private sector practitioners and sub-national government associations from the region and the world.

Held in a one-day plenary format, all Conference participants were expected to register and participate virtually. The Conference endeavoured to tackle crosscutting issues such as gender, youth, women, persons with disability and marginalised groups.

Conference Theme and Objectives

The Conference theme was, County Governments' Resilience in the COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and Building Sustainability for the Future. The overall objective of the Conference was, To reflect on the government's COVID-19 response efforts, challenges and recommend strategic policy measures that can be adopted by both levels of government in readiness for future pandemics.

The specific objectives were:

- To reflect on Government efforts that have been put in place in the last six months in response to COVID-19 and the effectiveness and sustainability of these response mechanisms.
- To discuss the impacts of COVID-19 in various sectors and make recommendations on policy and legislative measures that can be adopted in preparation for future pandemics.
- To examine the role of research, data and intergovernmental relations in the COVID-19 period and how these can be leveraged to handle future pandemics.
- To share and document best practices and lessons that have emerged in response to COVID-19.
- To look at the best practices emerging from other subnational governments in Africa and the world in response to pandemics.

Expected Conference Outcomes

The proceedings and presentations made during the Conference published into a Conference Report containing resolutions that will inform Government action going forward. Specifically, the Conference proceedings are expected to:

- a). Give greater publicity to successful County Government policies, programmes, initiatives and gaps in tackling COVID-19;
- b). Support the call for increased allocation of resources to County Governments in the fight against COVID-19; and
- c). Sensitise all Kenyans on the need to take preventive measures in order to slow down the transmission of COVID-19.

Chapter 2: OPENING SESSION



Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, EGH moderating the opening session of the COVID-19 Conference

Moderator: Makueni County Governor, Prof. Kivutha Kibwana

The session began with the national anthem, followed by a Christian and Muslim prayer. Prof. Kivutha Kibwana read out the Conference theme: County Governments' Resilience in the COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and Building Sustainability for the Future, and invited participants to pay tribute to 576 Kenyans who had fallen to COVID-19, as a video projected pictures of the fallen. He then invited speakers to make their remarks.

2.1 H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defence Forces

President Kenyatta conveyed condolences to families that had lost loved ones to COVID-19. Commending the Council of Governors for organising the Conference, he expressed optimism that the Virtual Conference was a congregation of solution givers, consisting of multi-disciplinary problem-solvers, leaders and professionals, and policy practitioners who had applied their minds to the COVID-19 pandemic for six months.

He said the past six months had presented many difficult choices in the history of Kenya, where as the Head of State he had to invoke the Public Health Act and issue containment measures that significantly affected the enjoyment of various liberties, rights, and freedoms of the people. Besides that, families were forced to choose who would lay a departed loved one to rest; or failed to attend their children's union in marriage, as hope faded away.

The President stated that the Conference was a harvest of results of collective experiences, and to chart a way forward for Kenya's future, building on the best practices of the past six months. He reminded participants that best practice was never implemented retrospectively, but rather instantaneously. He added that the shared goal of: Victory over COVID-19 and nothing less, must remain in sight even as implementation moves away from tactical to strategic response; symptomatic to structural reactions that are long-term and transformative.

While hailing the outcome of the efforts put in place in fighting COVID-19, and stressing the need for intellectual honesty in building resilience, the President suggested to the Conference participants a three-element framework for banking experiences of the last six months, which included:

1. Conducting a post-mortem analysis of how the COVID-19 crisis had been handled during the six months, by looking at the forecasting of the spread of the virus, and pondering on the following questions: If our models had projected severe scenarios that did not happen, was it because we were forewarned or was it because of the swift interventions we put in place? How does our national response compare with others within the region, the continent and the world? Is there something we could have done better and are there lessons we should carry with us to the strategic phase of this war.
2. Conducting an in-mortem analysis, which involves analysing the crisis as it unfolds and changes form, e.g. the curve beginning to flatten. He however warned that such happy moments must be celebrated with caution since a curve begins to flatten after it reaches its highest point, which is the most dangerous point as the curve can either flatten and de-escalate, or take an upward surge.
3. Conducting a pre-mortem analysis, which is about early warning, and fundamentally long-term responses, which was necessary if indeed the country was to shift response from tactical to strategic interventions, and required a simulation of how it's shift would work. He added that a shift from symptomatic response under COVID-19 to structural response under Universal Health Coverage must be well thought out, for instance how the environment would respond to the shift plus gauging the enablers and disablers of the undertaking.

President Kenyatta stressed the importance of the pre-mortem analysis to the Conference in terms of charting the path to sustainable health provision, and further challenged participants to:

Provide counsel on how to promote preventive medicine over symptomatic care;

Guide on how to use lessons learnt from COVID-19 to anchor the national rollout of Universal Health Coverage, one of the pillars of the Big Four Agenda; and guide on how to build positive resilience out of the COVID-19 experience by creating a society capable of absorbing shock and emerging on top; and uniting when called upon to do so in the face of monumental challenges.

2.2 H.E. Hon. FCPA Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, Chairman, Council of Governors, and Governor Kakamega County

The Council of Governors Chairman thanked all participants for honouring invites and participating in the Virtual Conference to collectively reflect on government action in the prevention and control of COVID-19; discuss the impact of the disease on the country's socio-economic space; and recommend strategic and sustainable interventions that would be adopted by both levels of Government for this and future pandemics.

Appreciating President Uhuru's efforts to bring the National Government and County Governments together to forge a coordinated national response to COVID-19, Governor Oparanya said three Summit meetings had since been held. He added that despite the continued effects of COVID-19 – increased infections, deaths, closure of businesses, low incomes, near damaged Agriculture and a paralysed Tourism Industry, Kenya had remained resilient. He added that the nation had been forced to look inward and create solutions.

For instance Kitui County was now producing masks and Personal Protective Equipment, universities had developed ventilators and young people were producing locally-made sanitizers and assembling ICU beds.

Noting that COVID-19 had exposed gaps and weaknesses in the country's socio-economic systems and structures, Oparanya noted that it was up to the National Government and County Governments, development partners, private sector and civil society to devise remedial measures that would ensure that every Kenyan's right to healthcare, food, shelter and housing was guaranteed. He noted that this demanded acting differently, and consequently the Council of Governors had commissioned the development of the County Post-COVID-19 Recovery and Re-engineering Strategy: a plan that will assist the sub-national level to adopt measures that enable it to prepare, respond and recover from future pandemics.

The COG Chairman thanked everyone that had made the Conference possible, especially the Council Secretariat, and UNDP through the Government of Japan, the World Bank and the County Pension Fund, for their support.

2.3 Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, EGH, Cabinet Secretary Devolution and Arid and Semi Arid Lands

Hon. Wamalwa acknowledged that the Virtual Conference was important to evaluate the resilience of Kenya's devolved system, particularly concerning the application of intergovernmental relations in dealing with the pandemic. He observed that the response of the National and County Governments to COVID-19 was against the background of numerous challenges that the country had faced over the last twelve months, including a severe drought affecting about 1.2 million people in the 23 ASAL Counties, due to failed long rains in 2019. He also mentioned a locust invasion that destroyed thousands of hectares of crops and pasture, and heavy rains in March and April 2020, which led to massive flooding in parts of the country, the death of about 340 persons and displacement of more than 500,000 others. However, the unity of purpose and constant consultation between the two levels of Government as anticipated in Article 6 of the Constitution had enabled the country to address the challenges.

The strength of the National and County Government partnership was illustrated by the five extraordinary sessions of the Summit to address COVID-19, in addition to the numerous consultative forums in the Health, Agriculture and Infrastructure sectors. Wamalwa further observed that the Ministry of Devolution and ASAL played the key role of coordinating with other National Government ministries, departments and agencies to ensure that County Governments obtained the support required to provide services in emergencies, including facilitating negotiations leading to a redirection of funds to address the challenges.

Various programmes including the Kenya Devolution Support Programme, the Kenya Urban Support Programme, the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project, and the EU-IDEAS programme, etc., had all rededicated grants to address the needs of County Governments to deal with the effect of COVID-19. He also pointed out the cash transfer programme implemented by his Ministry as well as the distribution of food and non-food items to communities affected by floods, and those whose livelihoods had been adversely impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

The Cabinet Secretary reiterated the government's commitment to ensure that citizens continued to receive uninterrupted service alongside measures to combat the spread of COVID-19. He underscored efforts to strengthen ICT capabilities of all agencies in order to improve service delivery through digital platforms.

2.4 Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health

Hon. Mutahi Kagwe expressed gratitude to the Conference conveners and all stakeholders present. He thanked H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya, for his presence and support, especially to the Health sector and the nation, as an indication of his concern for Kenyans and their wellbeing.

In giving an update on the Country's COVID-19 status, Kagwe said it was a reflection on the response efforts

and challenges with a view of the Ministry of Health submitting strategic policy recommendations that could be adopted in future as a readiness measure for future pandemics. He recalled that the Corona Virus 2019 outbreak was first reported on December 31 2019 in Wuhan City, Hubei Province in China, and rapidly spread to affect many Countries across the globe. As of August 23 2020, there were 23,057,288 confirmed cases and 800,906 deaths reported globally. Kenya had reported 33,016 cases, 19,296 recoveries, and 564 deaths of COVID-19 across the 47 Counties, with Nairobi accounting for slightly over half of the cases. Sadly, among the reported cases, 920 were health workers, with 16 mortalities in 35 Counties.

On preparedness for the pandemic, and under the instructions of the President, the CS elaborated that the Government worked in close collaboration with County Governments and other stakeholders in the health sector to outline and implement the following measures:

The Ministry of Health established a COVID-19 taskforce in January 2020 to steward the preparedness activities. The plan was endorsed in February 2020 with the Government adopting a multi-ministerial approach under the Executive Order No. 2 of 2020, and constituting the National Emergency Response Committee that has since been cascaded to all Counties, the County Emergency Response Committee.

In line with the International Health Regulations 2005, the Ministry of Health activated the Public Health Emergency Operations Centres at County level, and developed teams of rapid respondents and contact tracers to be on standby, ready to investigate alerts on potential transmissions and provide daily situational reports which are conveyed daily to the public.

Ministry of Health achievements in containing the rapid spread of COVID-19

1. The decision to impose travel restrictions, closure of the Kenyan commercial air space, and mandatory screening of cargo vessels yielded the desired result of containing the spread of the virus.
2. The cession of movement within certain zones, the countrywide dusk to dawn curfew, wearing of masks, social distancing, and the Government engaging the Nyumba Kumi Committees was significantly impactful in the containment of the spread of the virus and in so doing many Kenyans were spared from being infected.
3. Although that Kenya lacked diagnostic capacity both at National and County level, when the first case was reported, the Ministry of Health in conjunction with various County Governments strategically developed this diagnostic capacity and currently can rapidly test, isolate and contact trace potentially infected individuals in 33 public and private COVID-19 testing laboratories in 12 Counties.
4. County level health facilities have increased their bed capacities in accordance with the President's directive, with 7,411 isolation beds and 312 ICU beds, supported by well qualified, devoted and compassionate community of health workers.

Challenges experienced during the COVID-19 pandemic

With the rapid spread of Corona Virus also emerged an inadequate supply and inaccessibility of COVID-19 commodities such as Personal Protective Equipment (PPE), testing reagents, and masks. This forced the country to seek other procurement options for the commodities, and unfortunately brought about graft and misappropriation of funds that were meant for the fight against COVID-19.

The Cabinet Secretary concluded by appreciating international partners, business and philanthropic individuals and communities, and Kenyans who made light the burden through donations – monetary, in-kind, and skilled services, to contain and fight COVID-19.

2.5 H.E. Ryoichi Horie, Japan Ambassador to Kenya

H.E. Hoirie expressed condolences to Kenyans who had lost loved ones to COVID-19, and appreciated particularly healthcare personnel and hospital support staff for their roles in the management of the disease. He pointed out that Japan had stood with Kenya in the battle against the pandemic in various ways, in continuation to efforts such as the establishment of KEMRI in 1979. KEMRI has been at the forefront in the management of COVID-19, and through JICA, Japan supplied it with PCR kits.

Amb. Ryoichi said that through the Japan International Cooperation Agency, his country had provided chlorine to water purification facilities around the country in support for the fight against COVID-19. Clean water is an essential commodity in limiting the spread of COVID-19. Japan had also disbursed Kshs. 340 million through UNDP and UNICEF to help strengthen Kenya's health sector and provide medical equipment to hospitals. Amb. Ryoichi also recently signed a Kshs. 8 billion worth of loan with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury, Ukur Yatani, through an Exchange of Notes agreement titled Health Sector Policy Loan for Attainment of the Universal Health Coverage (phase 2).

Japan's future support to Kenya includes the provision of medical equipment to more than 10 Counties; aid for improving power distribution systems in and around Nakuru and Mombasa; 10 ambulances through the Counterpart Fund to enhance the capacity of county-level healthcare systems. Japan also supports other projects in Kenya, key among them being the expansion of infrastructure such as Ngong Road Expansion Project Phase 2 that was completed in April 2020.

2.6 Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA)

Mr. Mbassi commended the collaboration between the National Government and County Governments in addressing COVID-19, saying it had helped the country to save lives. Noting that Kenya was among the five African countries that were handling decentralised governance well, Mbassi added that local units were key to the effective management of crisis owing to their closeness to populations on the ground. He described COVID-19 as an environmental disease that necessitated efforts towards promoting environmental health, and equipping local governments to handle pandemics which would still happen in future.

Pointing out that local governments in Africa would experience revenue loss of between 30 and 40% from COVID-19, Mbassi urged President Kenyatta to encourage the National Government and international communities to create support packages aimed at facilitating economic recovery within local governments. He mentioned the social impact of the pandemic, adding that it presented an opportunity to renegotiate how to rebuild trust between the people and public institutions. Mr. Mbassi took the opportunity to request the President to sign the African Charter on the Values and Principles of Decentralisation, Local Governance and Local Development, adopted in Malabo in Equatorial Guinea, in June 2014. He further announced that the 2021 Afri-cities Summit would be held in Kisumu, the second time that Kenya will be hosting UCLGA's signature event after the first one in 2006 in Nairobi.

2.7 Mr. Walid Badawi, Resident Representative, United Nations Development Programme

Mr. Badawi acknowledged the decline of the global human development due to the COVID-19 pandemic, noting that it was happening in the same year that marked the beginning of a decade of action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the context of development in Kenya and globally, affecting the most vulnerable, amplified by the long-standing structural deficiencies in health systems.

He stated that UNDP was supporting countries to respond to COVID-19 by mobilising resources and supporting development of national systems for strengthening transparency and accountability in the

response to the pandemic. In Kenya, UNDP is responding to the needs of its partners at national and sub-national levels on initiatives that aim to prepare, respond, and recover from COVID-19, as listed below;

- Resilience of the health system by providing to counties most in need frontline health workers in hospitals and medical facilities, supplying PPEs, and providing medical waste disposal equipment.
- UNDP initiated multi-sectorial crisis management that develops and communicates factual COVID-19 messages to Kenyan citizens, promoting innovative digital solutions, enhancing business continuity of government through digital solutions, and collaborating with civil society organisations to protect human rights, promote gender equality and access to justice.
- On socio-economic impact and human rights, UNDP is supporting the National Economic Recovery Strategy by conducting socio-economic research to inform counties on recovery strategies and how to integrate the information into CIDPs, and developing policy briefs on the impact of the pandemic, and elaborating the UN's socio-economic response aimed at saving lives.

He thanked the Government of Kenya, the bilateral and multilateral development partners, for their continued support and assistance in response to the COVID-19 pandemic.



Participants during the Opening Ceremony

Chapter 3: PANEL ONE DISCUSSIONS

3.1 COVID-19 PREPAREDNESS AND RESPONSE: REFLECTIONS OF THE PAST SIX (6) MONTHS

Objective: To reflect on Government action in response to COVID-19

Moderator: Ms. Adele Onyango

Panellists

1. Cushioning County Health Systems from Shock: Redesigning Public Healthcare and Emergency Response Systems
 - Governor Mohamed Kuti, EGH, Chair, CoG Health Committee
 - Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO, AMREF Health Africa
2. Accountability and Transparency: Inspiring Public Confidence in Management of Resources in a Pandemic
 - Hon. Ndegwa Wahome Chair, County Assemblies Forum
 - Ms. Wanjiru Gikonyo, National Coordinator, the Institute of Social Accountability (TISA)
 - Mr. Irungu Houghton, Executive Director, Amnesty International Kenya
3. Living with COVID-19: Managing Attitudes and Behaviour
 - Dr. Patrick Amoth, Ag. Director General for Health
4. Being Prepared: What Role did the Early Warning System play in this pandemic? Why were we caught flat-footed?
 - Dr. Rudi Eggers, WHO Country Representative
 - Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health
 - Governor Capt. Ali Roba, Governor, Mandera County

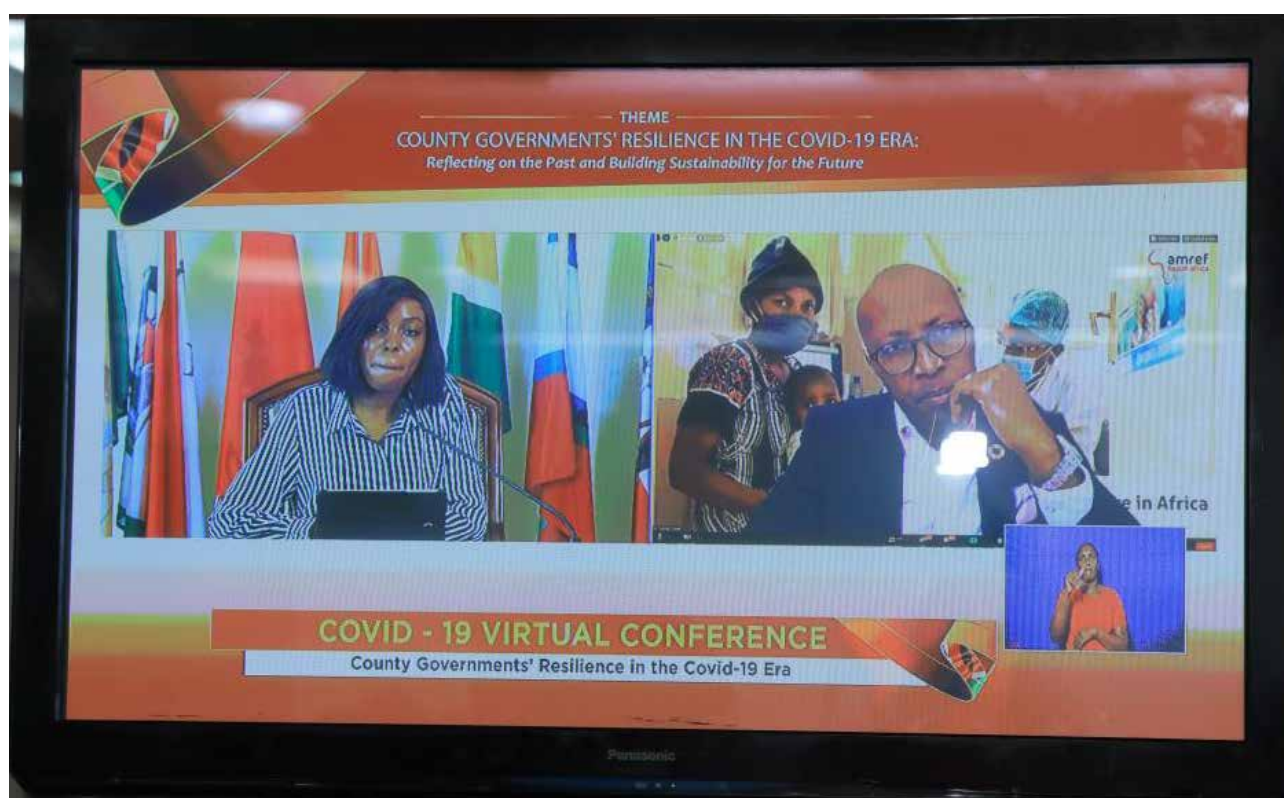
3.1.1 Cushioning County Health Systems from Shock: Redesigning public healthcare and emergency response systems



Ms. Adelle Onyango, Moderator, with Governor Mohamed Kuti, EGH, during deliberations in the first panel

Governor Mohamed Kuti, EGH, Chair, CoG Health Committee

Governor Kuti hailed the quick response by President Uhuru Kenyatta in forming the National Emergency Response Committee for COVID-19, which cascaded to the Counties through the County Emergency Response Committee, enhanced leadership and decision-making at County level and empowered counties to effectively manage cases, thus saving many Kenyans from infection. The Ministry of Health came up with protocols that were communicated to Counties. These included training of County medical staff on how to manage COVID-19 cases. The apparent lack of the necessary commodities for the containment of COVID-19 was also dealt with promptly. Locally available human and natural resources were used to develop, in line with the Kenya Bureau of Standards, commodities such as masks, sanitizers, hand washing soaps and machines, ICU beds and isolation centres. The use of mainstream media to disseminate information to the public about how COVID-19 is transmitted, its symptoms, and preventive measures, as well as restricted movement in areas where the infection was high, also helped to contain the spread of the virus.



Ms. Adelle Onyango, Moderator, with Dr. Githinji during deliberations in the first panel

Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO, AMREF Health Africa

Making remarks, Dr. Gitahi said the multi-sectorial and multi-dimensional rapid and positive response by National and County Governments, the media, and the community at large contributed to the successful containment of the virus. The COVID-19 curve can only be as flat as the healthcare system is strong, and the curve should always be at the capacity of the health system to avoid further economic interruptions in the country. The country's ability to conduct contact tracing, the public health measures undertaken, the effective communication about the virus, and encouraging home-based isolation were a plus in managing COVID-19.

Nevertheless, there are adverse effects of the pandemic on several sectors of the economy including tourism, agriculture, manufacturing and trade. The socio-economic impact of COVID-19 on the health and livelihoods of families and communities, in particular the most vulnerable groups, will regress the Sustainable Development Goals.

Additionally, inadequate community ownership to the response, centralisation of the response and supplies, financing approach to quarantine and isolation (those affected catered for their isolation costs), and lack of trust by the public for those managing the situation did not augur well for the country.

Recommendations

- The Government should invest in research institutions and Universities in the country to enhance development of vaccines for the life-threatening diseases.
- It is also imperative to ensure that fully equipped infectious disease centres exist at National and County level for better preparedness to manage pandemics and other medical emergencies.
- There is need to strengthen the underlying health system, as strengthening crisis response to a pandemic is not enough.
- The health sector needs to be fully devolved at County level, and delays and dependency on the National Government for commodities and funds avoided.
- There is need to increase funding to enhance the Universal Health Care roll-out in the remaining Counties, and accessibility of a functional National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) to all citizens.
- Community leadership through Nyumba Kumi should be encouraged to make prevention and responses to COVID-19 more effective and reliable since they are the first responders, and are aware of the real situation on the ground.

3.1.2 Accountability and Transparency: Inspiring public confidence in management of resources in a pandemic

Hon. Ndegwa Wahome, MBS Chairman, County Assemblies Forum

Hon. Wahome noted that the country had continued to make commendable effort towards containing the spread of COVID-19. On allegations of graft and misappropriation of COVID-19 funds, he admitted that the oversight bodies – the National Parliament and the Senate had disappointed the public by failing to ensure that the funds were used appropriately. Lack of an accountability mechanism, and proper communication flow at National and County levels during implementation of the COVID-19 prevention and response left grey areas that left citizens disgruntled.

Ms. Wanjiru Gikonyo, National Coordinator, The Institute of Social Accountability (TISA)

Ms. Wanjiru appealed for people-centred governance as the lacking pillar in the fight against corruption. Citing a 2018 assessment report of Kenya's procurement systems, she said that most of the solutions to Kenya's procurement problems did not require significant technical amendments to the law, but adherence to transparency and open contracting. The pandemic revealed that countries with strong local health and food management systems had fared best, hence the need for increased investment in community-based systems through adequate funding and appropriate decentralization.

Mr. Irungu Houghton, Executive Director, Amnesty International Kenya)

Mr. Houghton stated that a KNHCR opinion poll titled #Distressedyet had found that 30% of Kenyans felt that the Ministry of Health has handled information flow during COVID-19 well. Most citizens felt that Kenya had handled the crisis better than its East African counterparts and the rest of the world. He said 75% of Kenyans associated devolution with improved development, while 87% associated it with corruption. On curfew, 60% felt it was brutally managed by the police, 17% felt the forced mandatory quarantine was mismanaged, and 15% wanted more action taken to reduce gender-based violence. Instances contributing to a delayed flattening of the COVID-19 curve include:

- Failure to fully devolve the health function to County Governments creates delayed supply of COVID-19 commodities and funds to County health facilities.
- Failure to roll out Universal Health Coverage that hindered citizens' ability (especially the most vulnerable) to access medical attention.
- Failure to establish transparent and open government contracting leading to misappropriation of funds meant for the fight against COVID-19.

Recommendations

- There is need for the country to adopt measures that prevent corruption rather than dealing with it after it happens.
- The National and County Assemblies, and the Senate should perform their duty of representing the public and demand for public and transparent procurement processes, as it will enable the public to be well informed, conduct social accountability, and provide oversight of public expenditure.
- Ensure proper implementation of programmes, apart from COVID-19, through effective communication of the intended programmes from the National to the County level and the public, to allow oversight bodies and the public to use social accountability tools to monitor and audit the use of resources.
- The rule of law must be adhered to without fear, favour or discrimination, and strict action taken on all the parties involved in graft allegations.
- The National Government and County Governments to adopt an open contracting approach throughout the procurement process to build trust, value for money, higher quality of goods and services, as this will prevent fraud and corruption.
- Accountability and reporting to be mandated through clear designations, and decentralised decision-makers who are made public.
- Internal audit reports to be submitted to Parliament and the Auditor General for validation, and all payments made outside the IFMIS system recorded for verification. This will allow for proper accountability and tracking of all awarded contracts.
- The Ministry of Health and the County Governments to increase budget allocation for contracting healthcare workers, introduce risk allowances and procure enough PPEs for National and County Health facilities.
- Parliament to promptly establish a National Emergency Taskforce to investigate allegations of misappropriation of funds, develop an anti-corruption strategy on how such cases must be handled, and develop policies to guide internal and social audits.
- The Ministry of Health and County Governments to amend the home-based quarantine guidelines that require persons over 60 and children below two years to be quarantined in Government facilities without their consent, and the cost to be covered by the Government.

3.1.3 Being Prepared: What role did the early warning system play in this pandemic? Why were we caught flat-footed?

Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health

Hon. Kagwe disagreed with the session title that the country was caught flat-footed. He reiterated that the National Government worked in collaboration with the County Governments and other stakeholders in the health sector to outline and implement response measures that were immediately communicated to Counties to enhance their preparedness. Kenya was among the first countries in Africa to perform her own testing, a milestone that not many African countries can perform to date. Due to the early preventive and

response measures that were adopted, Kenyans should not beat themselves up, but commend themselves on what the country has achieved in containing COVID-19. Health facilities have increased their capacities on emergency response, which will benefit citizens beyond COVID-19.

Dr. Rudi Eggers, Country Representative, World Health Organization

Kenya was not caught flat-footed, but like many countries including the most developed, it struggled to be fully prepared to handle the unforeseen pandemic. The rapid response measures undertaken by the Government to contain the virus when the first case was confirmed in the country, like closing commercial airspace, imposing dusk to dawn curfew, curtailing inter-county movement where high infections were noted, must be applauded for their effectiveness. Open communication and daily updates about the unfolding pandemic by the Ministry of Health helped to better inform the Counties and the people about prevention and response to COVID-19. However, there was lack of proper coordination between the National Government and County Governments regarding preventive and response measures. There was also lack of sufficient funding to facilitate better containment measures of COVID-19, especially contact tracing, due to Counties' inability to collect and manage their own data. The data challenge is also hindering proper evaluation of COVID-19. Although there is a decline in confirmed cases in the country, it is still too early to celebrate, as more reliable data is required to make better decisions on eliminating COVID-19.

Governor Capt. Ali Roba, Governor, County Government of Mandera

Governor Roba affirmed that indeed the Counties were caught flat-footed by the pandemic as County health facilities were struggling to handle common health issues, let alone a pandemic. He also confirmed an increase in domestic violence at the County level and attributed it to the dusk to dawn curfew imposed to contain COVID-19.

Recommendations

- There is need to fast track establishment of Centres for Disease Control and Prevention in Kenya, to work with other multinational organisations in strengthening Kenya's health systems.
- The country should focus on preventive rather than curative measures.
- Due to the global rise in domestic, sexual and gender-based violence due to the pandemic, the issue should be approached understandably as a mental disease, with a critical look at Kenya's mental health facility, currently only one. Consequently, Mathare Mental Health facility is to be revamped and equipped to acceptable standards, and other mental health facilities constructed in Counties.
- The National Government to urgently devolve the health sector to enable counties deal with their health issues, and renovate hospitals to become beneficial to the public.

Chapter 4: PANEL TWO DISCUSSIONS

4.1 Impact of COVID-19: Beyond Health



Mr. Eric Latiff, Moderator, during delivery in the second Panel

Objective: To discuss the impact of COVID-19 in various sectors and make recommendations on policy and legislative measures that can be adopted in preparation for future pandemics

Moderator: Mr. Eric Latiff

1. The Impact of the Pandemic on our Health Systems: A Recovered Health Worker's Perspective
 - Dr. Nyachira Muthiga, Medical Doctor
2. A Paradigm Shift in Food Security: Sustainability of Value Chains and Small Scale Farming During this Pandemic
 - Prof. Hamadi Boga, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture
 - Mr. John Macharia, Country Director, AGRA
3. Integrating Climate Action with Recovery Process
 - Eng. Festus Ng'eno, CEC Water, Nakuru County
 - Mr. David Ombisi, Acting Coordinator, UNEP Kenya Country Programme
4. The Place of Human Rights in a Pandemic vis-a-vis Public Order
 - Mr. George Kegoro, Executive Director, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC)
 - Mr. Charles Owino, Police Spokesperson
5. Education and COVID-19: Continuity and Resumption
 - Prof. George Magoha, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education
 - Mr. Nicholas Maiyo, Kenya National Parents Association
6. Realities of Economic Recovery and Re-engineering in a Pandemic: Sustaining the New Normal
 - Governor Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, EGH, Kisumu County
 - Amb. Ukur Yatani, Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Planning

4.1.1 Impact on Health Systems: A recovered health worker perspective



Dr. Nyachira Muthiga, Medical Doctor, Mbagathi District Hospital, and Advisor, University of Nairobi Science and Technology Park

Dr. Nyachira Muthiga, Medical Doctor

Dr. Muthiga shared her experience of getting infected and recovering from COVID-19. As one of the doctors the Ministry of Health and World Health Organisation trained when COVID-19 entered the country, she participated in setting up an isolation facility at Mbagathi Hospital, where she observed the following key issues:

1. Training must be a continuous process for all levels of care.
2. Recruitment should also be continuous to avoid staffing gaps that cause burnouts and expose healthcare workers to prolonged periods of exposure to the disease.
3. Poor infrastructure affects the morale and mental state of healthcare workers.
4. Stigma of COVID-19 made patients conceal their symptoms from health workers.

Recommendations

Collaboration should be enhanced between all health sector stakeholders including the Health Ministry, the Kenya Medical Association (KMA), etc. to bridge existing gaps and improve the quality of care patients receive. Psychological support for health workers should be enhanced, as doctors who recover from COVID-19 have to work in hospitals and be physically present with patients. Properly packaging communication for citizens and healthcare workers is important in addressing stigma and avoiding panic and hysteria. Therefore public hospitals should have communication departments to ensure proper messaging on all COVID-19 discussions.

4.1.2 Paradigm Shift in Food Security: Sustainability of value chains and small scale farming during COVID-19 pandemic

Prof. Hamadi Boga, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture

From the onset of COVID-19, the County Coordination and Food Security Committee, chaired by Agriculture Cabinet Secretary, Peter Munya was established to manage food security and access to food and water for

all Kenyans, especially those in informal urban settlements. This was to avoid a bigger crisis than COVID-19, where communities were likely to disregard outlined containment measures. The committee focused on the following three delivery areas:

1. Food production had to go on and therefore guidelines were developed to support farmers and counties, including declaring input suppliers of pesticides, fertilizers and other mechanical implements as essential services so they could reach farmers, and farmers and workers could access farms.
2. The National and County Governments ensured that water service providers provided the commodity for free, especially in informal settlements to assure its availability. A few hitches were observed.
3. Weekly cash transfers of Kshs. 2,000 were made to vulnerable households who could not afford food due to loss of income. The system managed by the provincial administration avoided physical food distribution to dignify families and allow them the choice of what to buy. This was a first for Africa and can be carried into the future in case of famine or drought.

Policies and actions that the government employed to ensure the country was better prepared to handle crises in future include:

1. The Food Security War Room comprising of Agriculture Ministry, Counties, private sector, development partners, and research institutions, which was set up to minimise disruptions to the food chain. It successfully managed COVID-19, floods and locust invasion.
2. Sections of the Agriculture Sector Transformation and Growth Policy deal with crisis management and are critical in the face of the prevailing climate change, where crisis is the way of life that has to be normalised especially in the agriculture sector.

Mr. John Macharia, Country Director, AGRA

Commended setting up of the Food Security War Room that effectively coordinated activities of National and County Governments, the private sector and development partners. The Counties kept the markets open ensuring that farmers supplied food and consumers procured the food. COVID-19 exposed the interrelatedness of Health, Education, Agriculture, and Infrastructure hence the need to focus on the development of resilient food systems that are cognisant of the nexus between water, nutrition, food security and the environment. While Counties have put down a lot of hard infrastructure, soft infrastructure such as technology is also required to help in achieving a food secure country. Macharia emphasised the importance of extension work and the use of digital tools, e.g. to pass on research findings especially on climate change to farmers. He lauded Governors James Nyoro of Kiambu and Martin Wambora of Embu Counties, for employing the village-based advisors approach, which applies private sector models to grow the number of personnel available for extension.

Lessons learnt and good practices

Use of data: A lot of data on food production, food balance sheet for the various value chains in the country, region and globally was collaboratively churned out. Therefore data collection, processing and sharing using digital tools at County and National levels, and linking it to the global systems guarantees the country of food security.

- The Food Security War Room was able to simultaneously respond to three crises, which have an impact on food production.
- Collaboration and partnership with counties, private sector and development partners is key to achieving food security.
- Kenya's maize production is about 1.5 to 2 MT per hectare, way below its production potential of 5 to

8 MT per hectare, with a fertilizer adoption rate of about 30 to 40 kgs compared to the requirement of Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme at 50 kgs per hectare.

- On mechanisation, the whole country has about 16,000 tractors compared to about 5,000 motor vehicles imported into the country every day. A paradigm shift calls for more tractors than cars.
- Climate change is a reality, with the country having gone through periods of flooding, drought, locust invasion and disease outbreaks – fall-army worm, maize lethal necrosis disease and others. It is important to domesticate efforts by Agriculture Ministry in this regard.

Recommendations

- As a paradigm shift, build more resilient food systems as opposed to value chain sustainability.
- Strengthen the effective crisis management systems put in place especially at County level to avoid reinventing the wheel in future.
- Transition the Food Security War Room into the Agriculture Transformation Office to ensure that future challenges are well coordinated and emerging issues are multi-dimensionally addressed.
- Kenya to continue collaborating with partners in the region because it shares its Food Balance Sheets with other countries in the region.
- Domesticate at the county level, efforts of the Food Security War Room and the analytics that went into getting the Food Balance Sheets to enhance collaboration.
- Strengthen the joint Agricultural Sector Coordination and Communication Mechanism and enhance inclusion and collaboration.
- Establish innovative ways of improving agriculture extension. In Kenya the ratio between extension officers and smallholder farmers is approximately 1:5000, against the desired Alliance for a Green Revolution in Africa ration of 1:500 farmers.
- Increase investments in digital tools that can help reach more farmers.
- Link policy and private sector efforts towards sustainability, with Inter-county collaboration to reduce the cost of doing business, lower the cost of food produce coming to urban areas, and stabilise prices. For instance, excise duty is destabilising operations of smallholder farmers in the sorghum value chain.

4.1.3 Integrating Climate Action with Recovery Process

Eng. Festus Ng'eno, CEC Water, Nakuru County

Eng. Ng'eno who is also the chairman of the CECs for Water and Environment Forum focused on recovery from the Water, Sanitation and Hygiene perspective. Provision of water and sanitation was the first line of defence to prevent the spread of COVID-19. Important lessons were learnt on engaging with communities at the local level and preparing for other patterns of emerging diseases. COVID-19 also provided a reason to assess societies, as sustainable recovery requires an understanding of social, political and economic factors that contribute to the vulnerability of the poor and marginalised communities, in order to effectively address them.

The poor are more affected by the impacts of climate change, whether flooding, drought or diseases, hence the importance to examine how they are affected by various actions and policies, including enacted climate change action plans. Adaptation to climate change should reflect in the country's programming, e.g. by supporting alternative sources of fuel especially for low income and vulnerable members of society. In the long term COVID-19 offers lessons and opportunities for environmental action, for instance, a new baseline of what can be digitally achieved through working remotely, education/schools being conducted online,

etc., which will possibly increase the people's confidence to tackle other pressing issues such as climate change. Kenya's response to the health crisis will shape how it deals with a climate crisis in future decades, as times of change can lead to acquisition of long lasting sustainable

habits, some of which are beneficial to the environment, the way reducing commuting due to work from home policies has reduced carbon emission.

Key lessons

- Climate action must become a big agenda in the COVID-19 recovery process, drawing scientific examples from the pandemic.

Mr. David Ombisi, Acting Coordinator, UNEP Kenya Country Programme

Being a zoonotic disease, COVID-19 requires that the human right to a safe environment be addressed. The destruction and degradation of the environment exposes humans to animals, therefore enabling the transfer of zoonotic diseases between human beings and animals. COVID-19 may have caught the world by surprise, but climate change has been predictable through existing data, information, and science that should enhance resilience, e.g. by launching a green economic recovery. Climate action needs stepping up efforts to reduce Green House Gas emissions; stepping up efforts to strengthen resilience; and stepping up efforts to adapt to the impacts of climate change. And just like effort has been put to 'flatten the curve' of COVID-19, it is important to 'flatten the curve' of Green House Gas Emission and the broader ecological footprints by integrating Climate Action into decisions at all levels of government, business, communities and households.

Recommendations

- Kenya being one of the countries with the best mechanisms and policies on Climate Change, including the Kenya Climate Change Act, 2016; National Climate Change Action Plan, 2018-2022; and the Kenya National Adaptation Plan, 2015-2030, among others, should implement them.
- In response to COVID-19, Kenya should ensure integration of climate action as part of its national determined contribution to the Paris Agreement reached five years ago.
- Promote additional acts such as use of clean renewable energy, like solar, wind, geothermal, and planting more trees to increase forest cover from the current 7% to at least 10%. The joint initiative between the Kenya Government and UNEP aims at planting 1.8 billion trees to achieve more than 10% forest cover in the country by 2022.

4.1.4 The Place of Human Rights in a Pandemic vis-à-vis Public Order

Mr. George Kegoro, Executive Director, Kenya Human Rights Commission

Giving a chronological outline of the measures that were taken to address the COVID-19 pandemic and how their enforcement resulted in human rights violations, Mr. Kegoro cited the presidential orders on dawn-to-dusk curfew, quarantine and wearing of face masks, announced at the onset of the pandemic, and how police had imposed them with violence. The March to June 2020 report of the Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR) recorded that police killed 10 people across the country, and injured 25 others, while at least 222 others were subjects of severe police brutality. The Independent Medical Legal Unit also recorded 19 deaths and 70 cases of torture and ill treatment as a result of police action during the period. The KNCHR report shows that perpetrators of brutality were 70% police and police formations, which includes chiefs. E.g. in Homabay a chief had removed the eye of a person who violated curfew. Cases of domestic violence, including aspects of sexual and gender based violence, accounted for the remaining

30%. Ordinary citizens and health workers experienced the violence most. E.g. a health worker in Busia was severely beaten and maimed while coming from work and was hospitalised for several days in Kisumu, underwent several complicated surgeries, and spent several days in the ICU. Similarly a health worker in Bomet was severely assaulted by police and KNCHR is still handling the case. However, there are also documented cases of police acting heroically by assisting the elderly, the sick, and pregnant women who needed access to emergency treatment.

Contrary to the Public Health Act, human rights violations occurred via quarantine / isolation procedures, e.g. in contravention of Section 27 which provides that a medical officer of health should certify the necessity for quarantine; and a magistrate should provide an order that gives legal force to the idea of isolation. Kenya's quarantine process was employed without any legal safeguards, in addition to controversies surrounding who bears the cost of quarantine. Kenyans have paid the cost of quarantine, contrary to the Public Health Act, which stipulates that the cost of quarantine is to be paid by the local authority of the county where such a person is found. The government should therefore refund the moneys.



Mr. Charles Owino, Police Spokesperson during the session

Mr. Charles Owino, Police Spokesperson

Mr. Owino noted that the police are officers of the law who merely enforce all laws and regulations of the land including health regulation laws. The COVID-19 period posed a challenge in the management of public order. For instance, the first day of the 7pm to 5am curfew was met with confusion and panic, especially in Mombasa where some panicked members of the public “became rowdy and started to destroy other people’s cars” forcing a few police officers who could not contain themselves to resort to violence and leaving a bad impression on the police. Separately in Mathare, police accidentally shot dead 13-year-old Yasin Moyo from the balcony of his home as they tried to disperse persons who were holding meetings at night in contravention to the curfew.

The police have also faced danger such as infection by COVID-19 (one died) due to inadequate Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs), gloves and other items necessary for protection.

Recommendations

- The greatest challenge is the conflict between the police and members of the public, and development of standard operating procedures for police officers in cases of emergencies is necessary beyond COVID-19, to help minimise the conflict.
- There is need to create public awareness on social responsibility so that members of the public understand their responsibility to support the police in enforcing laws and regulations e.g. during a pandemic.

4.1.5 Education and COVID-19: Continuity and Resumption

Prof. George Magoha, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education

Prof. Magoha said the Ministry of Education through the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) had adopted digital learning offered through TV, radio and YouTube, following the closure of all institutions of learning in mid-March 2020. Universities had also adopted virtual mediums in admission, orientation, teaching, examinations and graduation.

The suspension of face-to-face teaching was the biggest challenge, given the backlash from parents who were asking for schools to reopen earlier, while the Government's concern was the safety of children and teachers. Because the problem is medical, it is imperative to listen to physicians. The decision to reopen schools would be based on the behaviour pattern of the virus as it was behaving differently. The Education Ministry had indicated that face-to-face learning would resume in January 2021, but Prof. Magoha said Ministry of Health reports on the status of COVID-19 and the state of preparedness of learning institutions would inform the final decision.

So far the Ministry of Education has held three stakeholder meetings on re-opening of schools and all are in agreement that proper measures to prevent the spread of COVID-19 have to be put in place first. To be adequately prepared, learning institutions would need resources, including up to Kshs. 1 billion to buy masks, as between 50 and 60% of the learners may not be able to afford them. To this end, Magoha appealed for the support development partners including UNICEF and World Bank. Other requirements include water and sanitizers, as social distancing is near impossible to achieve especially in the overcrowded public schools.

Mr. Nicholas Maiyo, Kenya National Parents Association

The pandemic had led to the initiation of radical measures in the education system, central to them being the closure of all schools and colleges in March 2020, disrupting approximately 17 Million learners across the country. This has seen parents and caregivers desperately supervising or facilitating learning through radio, TV and digital platforms (zoom, google, YouTube, etc.). The National and County Governments, through the Ministries of Education and Public Health have attempted to address the situation by constituting an expert taskforce; initiating and executing formal consultations with stakeholders; managing and responding to hints and mixed signals channelled through social media; and instituting and executing Community Based Learning.

Mr. Maiyo cautioned that any decision to reopen learning institutions without sufficient considerations would be dangerous because of the consistent increase of new COVID-19 infections; and trends observed in some countries like China and South Korea, which reopened schools and experienced new waves of infection. Further, reopening schools is likely to suffer a false start due to inadequate infrastructure for achieving the set international standards and guidelines for reopening, and the inability of parents to afford the costs associated with learning, like fees, due to the interruption to their sources of income.

Achievements and best practices

- Continued cooperation between the National Government and County Governments with all key stakeholders in the education sector. This has been critical in advancing discussions on education beyond the COVID-19 period.

Lessons learnt

- Reducing physical contact in learning institutions by having fewer learners will have a great impact in reducing COVID-19 cases and fatalities associated with reopening of learning institutions.
- Schools should only reopen when the daily percentage (positivity rate) of confirmed positive COVID-19 cases have reduced consistently for at least 14 days (which is evidence that the country has passed the peak).
- Social/Physical distancing is the most critical factor in ensuring safety and health of learners for reopening of learning institutions.
- Hand washing with soap and/or use of sanitizers, wearing of masks and monitoring body temperature will be the minimum requirements for the health and safety of learners.
- To mitigate the effects of COVID-19 and any other disruptions, the Ministry of Education will need to enhance the resilience of the education system by promoting blended and remote learning (e-learning, online and distance learning).
- Decisions regarding reopening of learning institutions may change as informed by reports from the Ministry of Health, prevailing circumstances and increased knowledge of COVID-19. 4.5.5.

Recommendations

- The Ministry of Education to convene a stakeholders' meeting in September 2020 to establish the status of COVID-19 in the country and review the state of preparedness in light of Conference recommendations as a condition for re-opening learning institutions.
- Schools should not be reopened until Kenya is free from COVID-19 or sufficient containment measures are executed.
- The government should provide adequate masks (5 per child per week) and sanitizers to each learner.
- The government should ensure that all learners and workers are screened at the points of entrance.
- Schools to ensure all suppliers and staff have a public health document confirming that they are free from COVID-19.
- Schools to ensure that all tuition facilities and offices are fumigated daily.
- Enforce restriction of movement in and out of school compounds.
- Schools to restrict entry of unauthorised persons.
- Schools to ensure provision of adequate water at all times to facilitate hand washing and clean-up exercises.
- School management to provide medical facilities and properly trained medical personnel.
- School management to offer training services to staff on implementation of social distancing and school hygiene practices.
- The Ministry of Health to inspect each school every month to ensure conformity to health and safety guidelines.
- Mr. Maiyo also urged the government to give special consideration to the disparities characterised by unequal access to current forms of education delivery, where learners from poor backgrounds do not have sufficient learning resources; lack of policies regulating online learning; absence of

sufficient assistive devices for online learning for learners with special needs; involvement of learners in crime and defiant behaviour during this time they are not in school; teenage pregnancy; and clear guidelines on government employed teachers and staff in public schools earning salaries while their counterparts in private schools lack a salary.

4.1.6 Realities of Economic Recovery and Re-Engineering in a Pandemic: Sustaining the new normal



Governor, Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, EGH, Governor, County Government of Kisumu during deliberation in Panel two

Governor Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, EGH, Kisumu County

Prof. Nyong'o began by painting a negative picture saying that no sector was doing well, but the potential to recover varied from one sector to the other. Some sectors have very high potential to recover, some have a middle or medium recovery potential, while others will take a long time to get back to business or will simply be submerged. Intervention measures must take the sectorial differences into account, as below:

Agriculture and food production sector

In enforcing the COVID-19 containment measures of lock-down, curfews, which led to interruptions in movement of goods and services, one major consequence was the loss in household incomes, which affected the ability to purchase food. Subsistence became the major means of survival for households in the rural areas, while in the urban areas food aid became the main means of survival at the household level because household economics depend essentially on daily wages.

Finance sector

Counties have been the major culprits of stress given the tremendous pressure that the National Government has had in managing financial flows due to external indebtedness, inefficiency in managing the flow of funds to Counties, and a reduction in domestic revenue collection during COVID-19. Not only has the impasse in settling the Division of Revenue Bill adversely affected Counties, but also locally collected revenue was even more adversely affected by non-collection of rates, etc. during COVID-19.

Water, health sanitation and education sectors

The protocols enforced by the National Government and County Governments to prevent and slow down the spread of COVID-19, such as washing hands, wearing masks, keeping social distance and regularly measuring body temperature will end when the pandemic subsides, except for washing hands which has already had a tremendous positive impact on public health. The reduction of diarrheal diseases as well as mother to child visits to health facilities is attributable to improved hygiene through washings hands. Further, pupils staying at home drastically reduced the spread of cases of flu, etc.

Hon. Amb. Ukuru Kanacho Yatani, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Planning

Amb. Yatani's discussion focused on the impact of COVID-19 on the economy and the recovery plans to mitigate the challenges following the pandemic. He mentioned that the pandemic had disrupted the business environment for trade following containment measures including curfew, closure of airspace and borders, as well as cessation of movement in several countries, leading to loss of livelihood for millions of people, Kenyans included.

Tourism, Agriculture and Manufacturing sectors were the most affected, with import and export trade falling dramatically following the containment measures that the government put in place. In addition, Kenya's economy experienced two other shocks in the form of the invasion of locusts, and floods that led to the loss of livelihood and massive destruction of infrastructure, thus disrupting facilitation of movement of goods and services. As a result, the growth of the economy is now projected at a very minimal figure of 2.6%, down from 5.4% before the onset of COVID-19. Encouragingly, the country has started to record some recovery in the agricultural sector following the partial opening of key export destinations mainly in Europe and the Far East, which gives hope that the economic growth will rise to 5.3% in 2021.

While taking cognisance of the magnitude of the multiple challenges resulting from COVID-19, the government swiftly intervened and implemented the following range of measures to mitigate the adverse effects:

- Collaboration between the National and County Governments, the private sector and all other stakeholders in fighting the pandemic and helping to cushion the state of the economy.
- Reduction of income tax from 30% to 25%, as well as VAT from 16% to 14%, thus the Government foregoing up to Kshs. 172 billion in lost revenue, but helping to guard against job losses.
- A review of Central Bank's regulatory policies resulting in reduced rate from 8.2% to 7%, and a reduction of revenue ratio from 5.2% to 4.2%, all of which was meant to avail money to commercial banks for onward lending to SMEs to maintain liquidity in the market.
- Restructuring of loans of almost Kshs. 800 billion for private sector and individuals who were experiencing challenges in repayment thus giving them a break. The Government also liaised with the Central Bank and came up with a provision for the Credit Reference Bureau to suspend listing.
- Establishing a cash transfer programme amounting to Kshs. 10 billion to support vulnerable populations, mainly the unemployed urban in informal settlements who lost their jobs due to COVID-19.

COVID-19 recovery plan

In this financial year, the Government has introduced a Kshs. 57 billion stimulus package targeting infrastructure, improved education, enhanced business liquidity, improved healthcare, and agriculture and food security, to pay as many Kenyans as possible, hence the machine-free construction approach. Similarly, it targets local labour and materials while generating short-term employment (kazi mtaani) in road construction and de-clogging of drainages, etc. To enhance hygiene, the Government has in the last two months drilled over 100 boreholes and set up 20 new hospitals in informal settlements in Nairobi. The Government has also set aside money for more facilities and infrastructure in the education sector in readiness for opening of schools. In agriculture, which remains the backbone of the country's economy, the Government has introduced e-vouchers for farmers to subsidise farm inputs.

Lessons learnt and recommendations

- To defeat COVID-19, prevention solves 80% of the problem hence investment should focus more on public health over curative health, as good primary, preventive and public health system drastically reduces the cost of curative health system.
- Reinforce preventive health system in Counties, as it is where the rubber touches the ground. These include better-engaged Community Health Workers, emergency and ambulatory services in functional referral systems, electronic health records, etc., hence the need to digitise the health system from the grassroots.
- Urgently and quickly invest in urban renewal by eradicating slums just as China did after the death of Mao. If it took China, a vast country, 40 years, it can take Kenya 20 years.
- Kenya needs properly resourced strategic food reserves that can effectively respond to a crisis of food shortage at the household level in the event of such a pandemic. Such facilities should be linked to food processing/manufacturing industries in the private sector, which can be momentarily “nationalised” to manufacture high nutrition value foods for domestic consumption.
- While the subsistence economy has been regarded as “backward” by conventional liberal economics, supported by proper infrastructure and scientific knowledge, it has proved to be more sustainable when markets break down as they did during the COVID-19 crisis.
- The cooperation between the National and County Governments during the COVID-19 crisis (largely a health service delivery crisis) ought to be replicated in all sectors of our economy, particularly the financial sector.
- The two levels of Government must be seen as necessary partners in driving Kenya's economy with availability of resources to ensure that all National and County functions are effectively performed by both Governments.
- Availability of water in all households and public/private institutions ought to outlive the COVID-19 experience. Were the initiative to be implemented with the enthusiasm and commitment that the Indian Government implemented the “green revolution” in the 1960s and 1970s, it would succeed.
- Urgently get rid of pit latrines, especially in flood-prone areas, as they easily become the source of water pollution, and spreading water-borne diseases during floods, and are a threat to hygiene, good sanitation and health in general.

Chapter 5: PANEL THREE DISCUSSIONS

5.1 COVID-19 Innovation, Research and Cooperation



Mr. Waihiga Mwaura, Moderating deliberations in the third panel

Objective: To examine the role of research, data and inter-governmental relations in COVID-19 response

Moderator: Mr. Waihiga Mwaura

1. Preparing for the Future: Leveraging on Science and Research in Combating Pandemics
 - Prof. Omu Anzala, University of Nairobi
 - Dr. James Kariuki, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)
2. From Data to Action
 - Dr. Khama Rogo, Health Expert
 - Mr. MacDonald George Obudho, Director Population and Social Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics
3. Harnessing Innovation in a Pandemic: Sustaining Opportunities
 - Hon. Betty Maina, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development
 - Mr. Ben Roberts, Vice-Chair ICT Sector Board, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA)
4. Managing Intergovernmental Relations in a Pandemic
 - Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, Laikipia County
 - Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and ASAL
 - Prof. Karuti Kanyinga, Director, Institute for Development Studies

5.1.1 Preparing for the future: Leveraging on Science and Research in combating pandemics

Prof. Omu Anzala, Virologist and Immunologist, University of Nairobi

Outbreaks have occurred and recurred since the 18th century, and are therefore not new. Kenyan scientists have expected an outbreak like COVID-19 to occur for the past 10 years. But the country has challenges in coordination and data management, as useful data is scattered and hard to get.

Dr. James Kariuki, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI)

The Ministry of Health responded well to the COVID-19 pandemic by using available data for triangulation, which informed its decisions. Because Kenya is risk averse, it takes three years to utilise new research recommendations, while other countries like Rwanda only take 30 days.

Recommendations

- Create a coalition responsible for health starting with COVID-19 and extending to the future on virology and virology studies, human interface, climate change, vector adaptation, among others.
- Kenya also needs a consortium for COVID-19 to look for funds and do local studies for a vaccine to ensure safety and efficacy.
- Strengthen the abilities of State and County Governments' health departments to undertake rapid research and come up with SMART recommendations.
- Synthesize and use the existing knowledge in policy, practice and programming.
- Adaptability of findings: harvest and repackage the SMART recommendations and other knowledge generated by researchers for better decision making.

5.1.2 From Data to Action

Dr. Khama Rogo, Health Expert

Data is the new currency for managing health and development, yet Kenya is slow at translating recommendations into policy or action because of:

1. Lack of confidence in local researchers, as opposed to foreign researchers;
2. Lack of confidence in local research funding, as most are donor funded;
3. Deficit on focus and relevance, as most researches done in Kenya are commissioned by donors who moderate everything;
4. Deficit in ownership. Most research done in Kenya benefits other countries;
5. Deficit in coordination;
6. Deficit in dissemination; and
7. Deficit in the will to implement change. Transformation requires change, not maintenance of status quo.

Mr. MacDonald George Obudho, Director Population and Social Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics has supported the National Coordination Committee on Response to Corona Virus through surveys on the impact of COVID-19 on work related economic activities, transport, education activities, rent, food security, knowledge on COVID-19, coping mechanisms, cash transfers and

remittances, and domestic violence. The data is used to inform intervention measures, assess emerging issues and developing trends, and to make informed decisions.

Recommendations

- Conduct research that is relevant to communities and policy, as a lot of data that is collected currently is not used.
- Coordinate research between counties, and this includes KEMRI.

5.1.3 Harnessing Innovation in a Pandemic: Sustaining opportunities

Hon. Betty Maina, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industrialisation, Trade and Enterprise Development

The response that Kenya has had to COVID-19 was not anticipated. A lot of health related items that were previously not needed are now produced locally and distributed widely. These include ventilators (which are yet to be certified), beds, digital thermometers, PPEs, facemasks, hands free hand washing facilities, etc. These innovations will be sustained beyond COVID-19 through:

1. Market access: Government will buy locally produced goods to create market for the products;
2. Education: Research capacity has to be enhanced through harnessed and stimulated innovation; and
3. The financial system has to be aligned to support innovation and research for commercial production.

Mr. Ben Roberts, Vice-Chairman ICT Sector Board, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA)

Innovation is a demonstration of the resilience of Kenyans. A KEPSA survey revealed that 63% of businesses had adopted e-commerce and online mobile technology to enable business continuity. The local value chain is also improving with a lot of innovations in the jua kali sector and local universities. The digital economy has also improved, especially in e-commerce, education and healthcare. COVID-19 has accelerated e-commerce in the world by five years and Kenya needs to catch up too, by investing in technology that supports these developments.

5.1.4 Managing Intergovernmental Relations in a Pandemic

Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, Laikipia County

The speed at which resources allocated to county governments move to the counties has been the main challenge in inter-governmental relations, as it has hampered health operations during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and ASAL

Inter-governmental relations are at an all time best. The two levels of Government are operating as allies, partners and enablers and complementing each other. Many summits have been held during the COVID-19 pandemic, consultations have increased, and committees created beyond those provided for under the Inter-governmental Relations Act. Besides, more structures have been created to fight the pandemic, including National coordination, National security, economic recovery, and food security. Communication has improved due to improved relations, and funds are released better, including all the COVID-19 funds.

Prof. Karuti Kanyinga, Director, Institute for Development Studies

Some of the issues that strain inter-governmental relations include:

1. The National government usurping county governments' powers and responsibilities e.g. as it handled health at the start of the pandemic.
2. Resource flow to the counties has not been as generous compared to what some parastatals receive. Such issues need to be discussed openly and with commitment, as transformation of counties adds to the GDP of Kenya.
3. Some bureaucrats in government prefer to have non-devolved government, which makes some Governors uneasy. These bureaucrats perceive devolution as loss of power as opposed to enhanced development.
4. Some Governors are also centralised in county headquarters, thus ignoring other county spaces such as sub-counties, villages, etc.
5. The national assembly and county assemblies are somewhat left out of the devolution space, and they now need to be included as part of inter-governmental relations.

Recommendations

- There is need to hasten the speed at which resources move to the County Governments.
- The funding stalemate at the Senate ought to be worked on as fast as possible so counties can get the funds to run effectively.
- The country should support scaling up of all local innovations.
- Kenya should improve healthcare financing beyond current capacity post COVID-19.
- There is need to strengthen the structures and coordination between the National and County Governments by amending the Inter-governmental Relations Act.

Recurring Issue

Governor Mandago of Uasin Gishu County reiterated the need for pending County Government funds to be released soonest possible to facilitate payment of pending bills and salaries, and enable suppliers to continue to render services, and boost economic recovery and effective fight of COVID-19. Amb. Ukur Yatani stated in response that all counties were aware of the source of the problem – the Senate, which had compromised all possible chances to release the funds. He added however that the national assembly might be the window for releasing at least 50% of the funds as the stalemate gets resolved.

Chapter 6: CLOSING CEREMONY AND PRESENTATION OF RESOLUTIONS

6.1. Resolutions of The Covid-19 Virtual Conference held on August 31st 2020

The COVID-19 Virtual Conference was convened by the Council of Governors on Monday August 31 2020 with an overall objective of reflecting on the Government's COVID-19 response efforts, challenges and recommending strategic policy measures that can be adopted by both levels of Government in readiness for future pandemics. In line with the Conference theme 'County Governments' Resilience in the COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and Building Sustainability for the Future', the Conference made the following resolutions, THAT:

1. Both levels of government to institutionalise the strong intergovernmental relations exhibited during the COVID-19 period by applying structural and transformative response towards future pandemics and all sectors of our national life.
ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Devolution and Development Partners.
2. The National Government and the County Governments shall jointly develop a country post COVID-19 socio-economic re-engineering and recovery strategy.
ACTION: Council of Governors, National Treasury, and UNDP.
3. Both levels of Government shall improve community healthcare response by:
 - i. operationalising a health fund at County level with oversight through the health facility committees; and
 - ii. ensuring community ownership in pandemic response.ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Health, Development Partners, And Civil Society.
4. Strengthen preparedness and response to pandemics through:
 - i. Establishment of Regional Infectious Disease Centres and Research Institutions by the County Regional Blocs and the establishment of the Kenya Centre for Disease Control (CDC) in order to strengthen national and local early warning systems; and
 - ii. Investment by both levels of government in preventive care.ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Health.
5. Both levels of government to strengthen healthcare systems and fully roll out Universal Health Coverage.
ACTION: National Government, Parliament, and County Governments.
6. Strengthen accountability and actively fight corruption by:
 - i. Both levels of government embracing open government and publicise tenders and awarded contracts on County and National Government websites; and
 - ii. Ensuring agencies tasked to fight corruption coordinate their work in order to minimise duplication (Senate, National Assembly vis-à-vis anti-corruption agencies).ACTION: Parliament, County Assemblies, Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission, Office of the Auditor-General, Directorate of Criminal Investigation (DCI).
7. Both levels of government to work with health workers' associations in order to improve psychosocial support for frontline staff, survivors and families of those who contract COVID-19.
ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Health.
8. Both levels of government to build resilient food systems by investing more in technology with respect to food production.

ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Agriculture, and Development Partners.

9. Both levels of government to mainstream climate change within annual budgets to promote community resilience during pandemics.

ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Agriculture, Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation.

10. The Public Health Act to be reviewed with a view to aligning it with the current constitutional dispensation.

ACTION: Ministry of Health, Council of Governors, and Office of the Attorney General, Parliament.

11. National Youth Service, in anticipation of opening of schools, to produce masks for all school going children and all teachers.

ACTION: Ministry of Public Service, Ministry of Education and County Governments.

12. State Agencies at the national level and County Departments to strengthen their capacity to undertake rapid research synthesis mechanisms and deliberately seek to harvest local knowledge for decision-making.

ACTION: National Government, County Governments.

13. The Kenya National Bureau of Statistics and County Departments in charge of Statistics to generate quality and usable data for evidence based planning and budgeting.

ACTION: County Governments (Statistics' Offices), National Government (KNBS).

14. Both levels of Government to stimulate local manufacturing of COVID-19 commodities in order to meet the local demand, promote industrialization and create job opportunities.

ACTION: County Governments, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development, Private Sector.

15. The National Government and the County Governments to keep the momentum of coordinating and collaborating in the post COVID-19 recovery period.

ACTION: National and County Coordinating Summit, Intergovernmental Sector Forums.

6.2 Vote of Thanks

Governor Mwangi wa Iria, Vice-Chairman Council of Governors, and Governor Muranga County



On behalf of the Council of Governors and all participants, Governor, Mwangi Wa Iria thanked President Uhuru Kenyatta for his stimulating and targeted remarks, and gracious participation in the Virtual Conference. He also thanked the Deputy President, Dr. William Ruto, for gracing the first Kenyan COVID-19 Conference.

He also thanked all Kenyan and international participants for setting aside time to actively engage in deliberations of the Conference, adding that their contributions had enriched the resolutions from the Conference. He sent special gratitude to the Conference facilitators Ms. Adelle Onyango, Mr. Eric Latiff and Mr. Waihiga Mwaura for their exemplary moderation and steering discussions in all the sessions. He made special mention of all the panellists who spoke passionately on their topics, sharing invaluable insights, which shaped the conclusions reached in the Conference. While there was a reflection and look back, the grasp of the issues by the Panellists enabled breaking of new ground in knowledge in certain areas, hence a learning process for all.

The CoG Vice-Chairman said that the success of the Conference depended on the effort and enthusiasm of many people, and specially thanked development partners who had graciously supported the Conference, thus enabling the participation of many Kenyans. Thanking them for their commitment to devolution, Wa Iria singled out the United Nations Development Programme (through the Japan Government), the World Bank, UK Aid, the Royal Danish Embassy and the County Pension Fund for their support.

He also thanked the interreligious council for their contribution in the fight against COVID-19 in the last six months, and made a special recognition of health workers who through hard work and sacrifice to keep Kenyans safe and healthy, had been in the frontline in the fight against the pandemic. He thanked the Homeboyz team for all studio aesthetics, and media houses for enabling local and international publics to follow and engage in the Conference through live-streams.

On behalf of all the Governors, Wa Iria extended a warm appreciation to those who had worked behind the scenes to make the Conference happen, and in particular, the CoG Planning Team who planned and executed the Conference. Having engaged in useful and important issues at the Conference, he reminded participants that a more important task was now to work together towards the successful implementation of the resolutions. He urged all to remain united in the fight against this pandemic.

6.3 H.E Dr. William Samoei Ruto, EGH, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya



The Deputy President expressed gratitude to all participants at the Conference, and specifically thanked the President for the immediate response measures he took to manage and contain COVID-19. He further observed that the strict measures and tough decisions made were necessary to contain the spread of the virus. Imposing the strict measures at an early stage resulted in the current flattening of the curve.

Ruto said Counties had proven that they were not only centres for decision-making, but also centres of solution. He commended County Assemblies and speakers for stepping up and providing leadership during this pandemic. Weighing in on President Uhuru's statement on moving from tactical to strategic thinking, Ruto said the pandemic had exposed the urgent need to roll out Universal Health Coverage as the pillar for the country's health solution. While the country had managed to handle the pandemic, long-term solutions were critical and needed prompt action.

The Deputy President applauded Counties' quick decision to manufacture PPEs, ICU beds and other health items as an indication that Kenya was able to manufacture its own equipment given the required resources. The Government should capitalise on this milestone to develop the Country's manufacturing sector.

6.4. H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defense Forces, remarks during closing of the conference



H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta during the closing ceremony of the COVID-19 Conference

The President expressed gratitude that the COVID-19 Virtual Conference was important and successful, and asked both levels of government to leverage on technology to make the Annual Devolution Conference to happen. He said the Conference has enabled leaders to meet and deliberate on how Kenya has managed the past six months, congratulated good deeds, and interrogated short falls, and strategized on the country's preparedness not to be caught off guard again.

Observing that the outcome of Conference had been well summarised, President Kenyatta reiterated the deepening of partnerships of the two Governments, adding that both serve one people, and are indeed one Government with two levels. He thanked Governor Oparanya for the cooperation the two levels of Government have had from the day the pandemic was announced, adding that the close collaboration had seen impact, which can be deepened and extended to healthcare sector, agriculture and other devolved areas to ensure better service to the people.

On preventative healthcare, he expressed the need to reengineer and focus on preventative healthcare and taking action before things get to a critical stage. This should be the focus and base of universal healthcare going forward, he said. President Kenyatta said that measures taken during the COVID-19 period had seen a decline in water-borne diseases and problems like Cholera and Bilharzia, all related to cleanliness. These positive measures should now become the new normal, new Kenya and the way we move forward. They should be incorporated and built upon, by strengthen the capacities of Community Health Workers and other health workers at grassroots level, to ensure prevention before cure.

On the need to focus on mental healthcare, Uhuru observed that mental health was becoming an increasing problem especially among young people, hence the need to refocus efforts and double work towards mental health. He directed the Ministry of Health to start working on an active plan on mental health to be presented during the upcoming National Conference.

On transparency regarding procurement, the President stated that it was not just about the health sector (KEMSA), but the entire government procurement. He stressed the need to work together at National level, County level, the Judiciary, the National Assembly and Parliament, as there was law and systems were needed. He directed the Ministry of Health to, within 30 days, come up with a transparent method and mechanism on how KEMSA tenders and procurements are to be done online to enhance transparency in the process and ensure the confidence of our people in the management of resources of the Kenyan taxpayer and development partners. This transparent tendering and procurement will flow through all

Government departments and Arms of the Government. “Kenyan people have a right to know how their funds are being utilised,” he said.

Responding to earlier assertions by Governor Ali Roba on Preparedness for COVID-19, Uhuru said preparedness was a responsibility at all levels, including County Governments, as Health is a devolved function. Counties have to be prepared not just for COVID-19, but for any eventuality such as peculiar issues like foot and mouth disease, animal to human diseases, Polio (at border counties), Malaria, etc. Preparedness has to be a partnership between the two Governments as it is not a National Government function, but a joint function. “The Government is one, with three arms and two levels of Government that have to work together to prepare for any disaster, pandemic, terror, livestock health. It is everyone’s responsibility,” he said.

Going forward, the President said that a National Conference would review and build upon efforts that had been undertaken over the past six months, the present, and plan and prepare for Kenya’s post COVID-19 action in collaboration with County Governments.



The President, Governors and invited guests during the Official Opening session of the COVID-19 Conference



Governor Opranya and Kivutha exchanging pleasantries before the opening ceremony of the COVID-19 Conference



Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o and Prof. Kivutha Kibwana exchanging pleasantries at the office of the Chairman of CoG before start of the Conference



Hon. Wycliffe Oparanya, Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o and Prof. Kivuthat Kibwana



Governors following the deliberations during the COVID-19 Virtual conference



Conference rapporteurs and COG staff member following the deliberations closely to capture notes and resolutions



Home Boyz team with CoG staff in the control room during The COVID-19 Conference

CONCEPT NOTE

Background

The COVID-19 disease (COVID-19) was first reported in China in December 2019. Globally, there are over 19 million confirmed cases and over 700,000 deaths have been reported (World Health Organization, August 2020). The pandemic has led to massive economic losses worldwide occasioned by strict containment measures such as lockdowns and cessation of international travel.

Kenya recorded the first case of COVID-19 on 13th March 2020 and as at 10th August 2020, Kenya had confirmed 26,436 cases. The National Government and the County Governments are coordinating their COVID-19 efforts through the National Coordination Committee on the Response to the Coronavirus Pandemic (NCCRCP). This mechanism has enabled both levels of government to cooperate in case identification, case management, containment measures, and formulation of strategies to mitigate the effects of the pandemic on essential sectors and people's livelihoods.

The disruption brought about by the virus has forced institutions, both state and non-state, to re-engineer their plans and budgets and rethink about how services are delivered across various sectors.

Justification

County Governments have been at the frontline in the fight against the COVID-19 pandemic. With COVID-19 having been in Kenya for the past 5 months, the Council of Governors intends to bring together stakeholders to appraise of the sub-national government response to date, share lessons, best practices,

challenges, as well as recommend actions to both levels of government on how best to remain resilient in the midst of the pandemic and how to remain prepared in anticipation of future pandemics.

Key Conference Objectives

The overall objective of the conference is to: "To reflect on the government's COVID-19 response efforts, challenges and recommend strategic policy measures that can be adopted by both levels of government in readiness for future pandemics."

Specific objectives include:

1. To reflect on government efforts that have been put in place in the last five (5) months in response to COVID-19 and the effectiveness and sustainability of these response mechanisms.
2. To discuss the impacts of COVID-19 in various sectors and make recommendations on policy and legislative measures that can be adopted in preparation for future pandemics.
3. To examine the role of research, data and intergovernmental relations in the COVID-19 period and how these can be leveraged to handle future pandemics.
4. To share and document best practices and lessons that have emerged in response to COVID-19.
5. To look at the best practices emerging from other subnational governments in Africa and the world in response to pandemics.

Conference Format

The conference shall adopt a plenary approach.

Conference Programme

The conference shall have a one day virtual Programme. All participants shall be required to register and participate virtually. The President of the Republic of Kenya will be invited to open the conference. Additionally, the conference shall endeavor to tackle cross-cutting issues such as gender, youth, women, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups.

Duration of the conference

The conference will take place for one (1) day.

Participants

Attendees for the conference will be: representatives from National Government, County Governments and their officials, independent offices, constitutional commissions, civil society organizations, media, religious institutions, professional bodies, international and local experts, development partners, academia, representatives of people with special needs, private sector practitioners and sub-national government associations from the region and the world. This approach will facilitate the exchange of ideas and learning.

Deliverables/Outputs

The proceedings and presentations made during this conference will be synthesized and published into a report – Conference Report. A final communique will also be generated at the end of the conference.

Expected Impact

The conference's proceedings are expected to:

- a) Give greater publicity to successful County Government policies, programs, initiatives and gaps in the response to COVID-19;
- b) Support the call for increased allocation of resources to County Governments in the fight against COVID-19; and
- c) Sensitize all Kenyans on the need to take preventive measures in order to slow down the transmission of COVID-19.

PROGRAMME

Conference Facilitators: Mr. Eric Latiff, Ms. Adelle Onyango and Mr. Waihiga Mwaura

Monday 31st August, 2020		
Time	Session	Facilitator
9:00 am- 10:00 am	<p>Opening</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Anthem Prayer Tribute to the Fallen COVID-19 Kenyans Remarks by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH Remarks by the Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and ASAL <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, EGH Remarks by the Ambassador of Japan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Ryoichi Horie Remarks by the Secretary-General, United Cities and Local Governments of Africa (UCLGA) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi Remarks by UNDP Resident Representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Mr. Walid Badawi Remarks by Chairperson, Council of Governors and recognition of the invited guest - Governor Hon. FCPA Wycliffe Ambetsa <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Oparanya, EGH, CGJ Official Opening <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defense Forces. 	Governor Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, EGH
Panel 1: COVID- 19 Preparedness and Response: Reflections of the Past Six (6) Months Objective: To reflect on government action in response to COVID-19		
Time	Panelists	
10:00 am –11:30 am	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cushioning County Health Systems from Shock: Redesigning Public Healthcare and Emergency Response Systems Governor Mohamed Kuti, EGH, Chair, CoG Health Committee Dr. Githinji Gitahi, Group CEO, AMREF Health Africa Accountability and Transparency: Inspiring Public Confidence in Management of Resources in a Pandemic Hon. Ndegwa Wahome Chair, County Assemblies Forum Ms. Wanjiru Gikonyo, National Coordinator, The Institute of Social Accountability (TISA) 	

	<p>Mr. Irungu Houghton, Executive Director, Amnesty International Kenya</p> <p>3. Living with COVID-19: Managing Attitudes and Behavior Dr. Patrick Amoth, Ag. Director General for Health</p> <p>4. Being Prepared: What Role did the Early Warning System play in this pandemic? Why were we caught flat-footed? Dr. Rudi Eggers, WHO Country Representative Hon. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Health Governor Capt. Ali Roba, Governor, Mandera County (Emerging Best Practices)</p> <p>Moderator Ms. Adelle Onyango</p>
<p>Panel 2: Impact of COVID-19- Beyond Health Objective: To discuss the impact of COVID-19 in various sectors and make recommendations on policy and legislative measures that can be adopted in preparation for future pandemics.</p>	
Time	Panelists
11:30 am-1:00 pm	<p>1. The Impact of the Pandemic on our Health Systems: A Recovered Health Worker's Perspective Dr. Nyachira Muthiga, Medical Doctor</p> <p>2. A Paradigm Shift in Food Security: Sustainability of Value Chains and Small Scale Farming During this Pandemic Prof. Hamadi Boga, Principal Secretary, Ministry of Agriculture Mr. John Macharia, Country Director, AGRA</p> <p>3. Integrating Climate Action with Recovery Process Eng. Festus Ng'eno, CEC Water, Nakuru County Mr. David Ombisi, Acting Coordinator, UNEP Kenya Country Programme.</p> <p>4. The Place of Human Rights in a Pandemic vis-a-vis Public Order Mr. George Kegoro, Executive Director, Kenya Human Rights Commission (KHRC) Mr. Charles Owino, Police Spokesperson</p> <p>5. Education and COVID-19: Continuity and Resumption Prof. George Magoha, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Education Mr. Nicholas Maiyo, Kenya National Parents Association</p> <p>6. Realities of Economic Recovery and Re-engineering in a Pandemic: Sustaining the New Normal Governor Prof. Anyang' Nyong'o, EGH, Kisumu County Amb. Ukur Yatani, Cabinet Secretary, National Treasury and Planning (Emerging Best Practices)</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Eric Latiff</p>

1:00 pm - 1:15 pm Experiential Session	(video) Leave No One Behind: Experiences of Vulnerable Groups- Women (GBV and RMNCH), Refugees, Children, Youth, PWDs and Prisoners; Innovations; Buy Kenya Build Kenya; Intergovernmental Relations; Public- Private Partnerships
Panel 3: COVID-19- Innovation, Research and Cooperation Objective: To examine the role of research, data and intergovernmental relations in COVID-19 response	
Time	Panelists
1:15 pm - 2:45 pm	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Preparing for the Future: Leveraging on Science and Research in Combating Pandemics Prof. Omu Anzala, University of Nairobi Dr. James Kariuki, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) 2. From Data to Action Dr. Khama Rogo, Health Expert Mr. MacDonald George Obudho, Director Population and Social Statistics, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics 3. Harnessing Innovation in a Pandemic: Sustaining Opportunities Hon. Betty Maina, CBS, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Industrialization, Trade and Enterprise Development Mr. Ben Roberts, Vice-Chair ICT Sector Board, Kenya Private Sector Alliance (KEPSA) 4. Managing Intergovernmental Relations in a Pandemic Governor Ndiritu Muriithi, Laikipia County Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, EGH, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Devolution and ASAL Prof. Karuti Kanyinga, Director, Institute for Development Studies <p>(Emerging Best Practices)</p> <p>Moderator: Mr. Waihiga Mwaura</p>
Closing	
2:45 pm- 3:15 pm	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vote of thanks by the Vice - Chair, CoG - Governor Mwangi Wa Iria, Vice- Chair • Reading of the Conference Resolutions and invitation of the Deputy President - Governor Hon. FCPA Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, EGH, CGJ • Remarks by the Deputy President and invitation of the President - H.E. Dr. William Samoei Ruto, EGH, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya <p>Closing of the Conference by H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defense Forces.</p>

Remarks by H.E. Uhuru Kenyatta, CGH, President of the Republic of Kenya and Commander in Chief of the Kenya Defense Forces

Chair, Council of Governors,
Cabinet Secretaries,
County Governors,
Principal Secretaries,
Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Ryoichi Horie,
Secretary General UCLGA, Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi,
Representatives of the various development partners present,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is with great pleasure that I open this Virtual Conference. I am particularly pleased that today's assembly is a congregation of solution givers.
2. Permit me to begin my statement, by conveying my heartfelt condolences to all families, who have lost loved ones to this deadly disease.
3. This Conference brings together a multi- disciplinary community of problem-solvers; leaders and a group of professionals, and policy practitioners, who have applied their minds to the COVID-19 pandemic for the last six months.
4. I commend the Council of Governors for bringing us together. This forum affirms the unique place of county governments in the structure of our governance and towards the realization of our national values, which includes public participation.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

5. Today's engagements bring together an assembly of the country's foremost Brain Trust on COVID-19. Everyone present here has agonized in their area of professional practice, over how to manage and end this crisis.
6. Most of you have experienced anxiety as you crunch numbers, rationalize models and contemplate over what should be best decisions for our country.
7. On my part, as President, I have been called upon to make weighty decisions that presented the most unique dilemma to me as the Head of State. More often than not, as I have indicated in my previous statements, the agonizing dilemma was one between two rights.
8. Never before, in the history of our nation has the Head of State been called upon to invoke the Public Health Act, and issue containment measures that would significantly affect the enjoyment of various liberties, rights, and freedoms of our people.
9. Never before have families had to make choices as to who will lay a departed loved one to rest. Never have we failed to share in the joy of witnessing our children's union in Marriage. Never has our individual and collective courage to believe there will be a better day, been tried like it has been over the last six months.
10. And so today, we gather here to harvest the results of these collective experiences and chart a way forward for our nation's future. We are here to collect and build on the best practices you have recorded in the last six months.

11. And if you are the custodians of best practice in the fight against COVID-19, you must remember that best practice is NEVER implemented retrospectively. It MUST be applied instantaneously.
12. Timely and instantaneous implementation of what has worked, is what will take us forward and most significantly secure the gains we continue to make.
13. But as we implement best practice after the counsel of this conference, our shared goal must also remain in sight. And this goal is simple: Victory over COVID-19 and nothing less. We must achieve it at ZERO OPTION.
14. And to achieve it, we must begin by building positive resilience. We must move away from tactical response to this pandemic, to strategic response. Instead of symptomatic reactions to this crisis, we must move to structural reactions that are long-term and transformative.
15. And this is what I call positive resilience – being able to anticipate the patterns of this pandemic, responding to it transformatively and 'building-back' better.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

16. Allow me now to suggest a framework for 'banking' your experiences of the last six months in this conference. This framework has three elements to it.
17. First, I want you to do a post-mortem analysis of how we have handled the COVID-19 crisis six months after it became manifest. Begin by looking at the forecasting of the spread of the virus.
18. If our models had projected severe scenarios that did not happen, was it because we were forewarned or was it because of the swift interventions we put in place?
19. How does our national response compare with others within the region, the continent and the world? Is there something we could have done better and are there lessons we should carry with us to the strategic phase of this war.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

20. And I am not asking you to ponder these questions because you failed us. To the contrary, you did remarkably well and that is why we have begun to flatten the curve. But to do better, we must remain brutally honest with our approaches, because intellectual honesty is critical to building resilience.
21. Secondly, after doing a post-mortem analysis, I invite you to do some in-mortem analysis. Ladies and Gentlemen, we are in the middle of a crisis and we must analyze it as it unfolds and changes form. The good news, though, is that in the middle of this crisis, the curve is beginning to flatten.
22. However, we must celebrate this happy moment with caution. More so because, a curve begins to flatten after it reaches its highest point. This point is also called the inflexion point.
23. And it is the most dangerous point because, the curve can either flatten and de-escalate, or take an upward surge.
24. My appeal to you as experts and practitioners is, therefore, to deliberate on our in-mortem condition. Although the curve is beginning to flatten, could it surprise us by taking an upward surge at this inflexion point?

25. My third invitation is for you to do a pre- mortem analysis. This is about early warning. But more fundamentally, it is about long-term responses. If, indeed, we are to shift our response from tactical to strategic interventions, we must do a simulation of how this will work.
26. A shift from symptomatic response under COVID-19 to structural response under Universal Health Coverage, must be well thought out.
27. How, for instance, will the environment respond to this shift and what are the enablers and disablers of this undertaking?
28. Pre-mortem analysis will help us chart the path to sustainable health provisioning for all. Using this model, the conference should, therefore, give us counsel on how to promote preventive medicine over symptomatic care.
29. It should guide us on how to use the lessons learnt from COVID-19 experiences in order to anchor the full national rollout of the Universal Health Coverage, one of the pillars of my Administration's Agenda for the Nation – The Big Four.
30. But more importantly, this conference of experts and stakeholders should use pre-mortem analysis to guide us on how to build positive resilience out of the COVID experience.
31. We must use this experience and lessons learnt to 'build-back better' and to create a society capable of absorbing shock and emerging on top; but most crucially, a society which unites when called upon to do so in the face of such a monumental challenge.
32. As I conclude, I challenge all of us to reflect on how we can position our country to emerge as a stronger and more responsive State, from the current pandemic.
33. With that, Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish you productive deliberations and, more importantly, look forward to your counsel on steps we could adopt to fully conquer this invisible enemy.

It is now my pleasure to declare this Conference officially opened.

Thank You, God Bless You and God Bless Kenya

Remarks by H.E. Hon. FCPA Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya, Chairman, Council of Governors and Governor Kakamega County

Your Excellency Honorable Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya,
His Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto, Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya,
Excellency Governors and Deputy Governors,
Cabinet Secretaries,
High Commissioners and Ambassadors,
Members of the County Assemblies,
Representatives of the National and County Governments, Development Partners,
Private sector, International Guests, Fellow Kenyans,

Good Morning.

1. On behalf of the Council of Governors, I take this opportunity to extend my most sincere gratitude first and foremost to the President of the Republic of Kenya, His Excellency Uhuru Kenyatta and to each and every one of you for honouring our invite and choosing to participate in this virtual conference.
2. For the past six (6) months, Kenya has been among many countries of the world that is managing the COVID-19 pandemic. This virtual gathering today will provide us with a platform for us to collectively reflect on government action in the prevention and control of COVID-19; discuss the impact the disease has had in our nation's socio-economic space; and recommend strategic and sustainable interventions that can be adopted by both levels of government for this and future pandemics.

Ladies and gentlemen,

3. Allow me to convey appreciation to His Excellency the President for his efforts to bring the National Government and the County Governments together with a view to forging a coordinated national response to COVID-19. Thus far, we have held three (3) Summit meetings, forums which have allowed the two levels of government to galvanize collaborative measures in the fight against COVID-19.

Fellow Kenyans,

4. More positive cases continue to be recorded every day. More deaths keep being reported. The nation continues to witness more despair and hopelessness owed to closure of businesses, low incomes and loss of livelihoods. Tourism, a bedrock of Kenya's economy, has taken a huge blow from both domestic and international restrictions of movement. Value chains that guarantee production and sale of agricultural products have been near paralyzed.
5. Despite it all, we remain a resilient nation. In this doom, let us be hopeful for a better tomorrow. COVID-19 has forced us to look inward and create the solutions ourselves. As much as the pandemic has shaken our systems, some good has come out of it. Kitui County is now producing masks and Personal Protective Equipment (PPEs). We have seen universities develop ventilators. Young people are producing locally made sanitizers and assembling ICU beds.

Fellow Kenyans,

6. COVID-19 has exposed the gaps and weaknesses that exist in our socio-economic systems and structures. The onus is on us, the National and County Governments, development partners, private sector and civil society, to devise remedial measures that will ensure every Kenyan's right to healthcare, food, shelter and housing is guaranteed.

7. Moving forward, we must act differently. This is the premise on which the Council of Governors commissioned the development of the County Post- COVID Recovery and Re-engineering Strategy: a plan that will assist the subnational level to adopt measures that enable it to prepare, respond and recover from future pandemics.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. The Council wishes to thank our partners who have made it possible to have this conference. Specifically, a heartfelt thank you to the United Nations Development Programme through the Japan Government, the World Bank and the County Pension Fund for supporting this conference. And to the Council Secretariat, thank you.

Distinguished guests,

9. I wish you fruitful deliberations during this conference. I now welcome His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, Hon. Uhuru Kenyatta to officially open the conference.

Asanteni Sana!

Remarks by Hon. Eugene Wamalwa, Cabinet Secretary for Devolution and ASAL

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta,
Chair, Council of Governors, Hon. Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya County Governors,
Cabinet Secretaries,
Principal Secretaries,
Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Ryoichi Horie,
Secretary General UCLGA, Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Representatives of the various development partners present, Distinguished guests,

1. It is indeed a pleasure to participate in this virtual conference themed: County Governments' Resilience in the COVID-19 Era: Reflecting on the Past and Building Sustainability for the Future. This is an important event that provides us an opportunity to evaluate the resilience of Kenya's devolved system particularly with respect to the application of intergovernmental relations in dealing with the pandemic.
2. This conference may have as its focus the COVID-19 pandemic and our response to it at both levels of government. However, it is important to note that it is against the background of numerous challenges that the country has faced over the last twelve months.
3. Kenya is a resilient country with a robust economy, but never has this resilience been tested more severely than it has been over the last twelve months. During this period, the country has faced a severe drought following failure of the long rains in 2019 that affected about 1.2 million people in the twenty three ASAL counties; the drought was followed closely with a locust invasion which cause the destruction of thousands of hectares of crops and pasture. Before we could bring the locust invasion under control, the first COVID-19 infections were reported in the country leading to the need for measured to curb its spread. As of yesterday, 34,057 persons had tested positive, and we have unfortunately lost 574 persons to COVID-19. As is this was not enough, in March and April heavy rains across the country led to massive flooding in parts of the country leading to the death of about 340 persons and the displacement of more than 500,000 persons.
4. The effects of global warming continue to have a damaging effect in the country with unprecedented rise in the levels of all our lakes. This has lead to the destruction of property, loss of livelihoods and displacement of person.
5. As a country, we have faced and surmounted all these challenges as one strong and united country. Our people, institutions, and resources have been stretched to the limit, yet, we have held strong and alleviated the adverse effects of each of these challenges in our communities.
6. To address these challenges, there has been a unity of purpose and constant consultation between the two levels of government as anticipated in article 6 of our Constitution. County Governments have stood in partnership with the national government, to address each of these challenges. The strength of this partnership is illustrated by the fact that there have been five extraordinary sessions of the Summit to address COVID-19. There have been numerous consultative forums in the health, agriculture and infrastructure sectors. The Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee has also remained steadfast in ensuring implementation of the decisions of the Summit.
7. The Ministry of Devolution and ASAL has played the key role of coordinating with other national government ministries, departments and agencies to ensure that county governments obtain the support required to provide services in the emergency situations. In particular, the Ministry has facilitated the negotiations leading to the redirecting of funds particularly conditional and unconditional grants towards the services to address these challenges.

8. In this regard, funds under various programmes including the Kenya Devolution Support Program, the Kenya Urban Support Program, the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project; the EU-IDEAS program, to name a few, have all rededicated the grants and activities to ensure we address the needs of the county governments to deal with and ensure recovery from the effects of the COVID-19. The ministry has also implemented a cash transfer program as well as distributed food and non-food items to communities affected by floods, and those whose livelihoods have been adversely impacted by COVID-19 pandemic.
9. The implementation of the eight point Economic Stimulus Package as given during the 7th Presidential Address on the COVID-19 Pandemic, remain firmly on course and as a ministry we embarked on flood control measures to mitigate against further loss of life and livelihood in flood prone areas and the greening Kenya campaign has been rolled out in many parts of the county and part of the wider programme to reduce surface runoff and flooding.
10. Even with measures in place to combat the spread of COVID-19, the Government has ensured that services to citizens have continued uninterrupted. There is concerted effort to strength the ICT capabilities of all agencies in order to improve service delivery through digital platforms where possible. Farm input subsidies are now offered through a digital voucher system redeemable through the convenience of a hand held telephone device and relief and other social security support is also done through digital cash transfers. In short ladies and gentlemen, the government is embracing the 'new normal' of ensuring the safety of every Kenyan while also providing services to them at their convenience.
11. Going forward, the Ministry will continue to work with county governments to assess and address their capacity needs in order to facilitate continued service delivery particularly health and economic recovery as we rebuild livelihoods even as we flatten the COVID-19 infection curve. These are just a few examples of how government has re-engineered its service delivery for efficiency and the convenience of beneficiaries. In this way, we build greater resilience in county governments and in communities.

Thank you.

Remarks by Sen. Mutahi Kagwe, EGH, Cabinet Secretary for Health

Your Excellency, the President of the Republic of Kenya, President Uhuru Kenyatta, Chair, Council of Governors, Hon. Wycliffe Ambetsa Oparanya County Governors, Cabinet Secretaries, Principal Secretaries, Ambassador of Japan, H.E. Ryoichi Horie, Secretary General UCLGA, Mr. Jean Pierre Elong Mbassi, Representatives of the various development partners present, Distinguished guests,

It is my humble pleasure to have this opportunity to update you on the country's COVID-19 status and reflect on our response efforts and challenges with a view of the Ministry submitting strategic policy recommendations that can be adopted in the future as readiness measures

for future pandemics. I am glad, Your Excellency, that you have taken the time to join us for this occasion; it is yet another indication of your concern for Kenyans and their health status. Thank you for your support of the healthcare sector and in particular, the valuable work of this ministry and its devoted army of healthcare workers. My gratitude also goes to the Council of Governors for organizing this important event and convening us today. Its value can not be underscored.

Your Excellency,

The Coronavirus 2019 (COVID-19) outbreak, that was first reported on 31st December 2019, in Wuhan City, Hubei Province, China has rapidly spread to affect many countries and territories across the globe. As of 23rd August 2020, globally 23,057,288 confirmed cases and 800, 906 deaths had been reported. To date, Kenya has reported 33,016 confirmed cases, including 19,296 recoveries, and 564 deaths of COVID-19 across all the 47 counties, with Nairobi accounting for slightly over half of the cases recorded. Among the reported cases, 920 are healthcare workers, with 16 mortalities in 35 counties.

Your Excellency,

In preparedness for the pandemic - - and under your instruction - - the Government worked in close collaboration with County Governments and other stakeholders in the Health Sector to outline and implement a number of measures.

First, as the Ministry mandated to coordinate the response, the Ministry of Health established a COVID-19 National Taskforce as early as January 2020. Its goals were to provide stewardship of the preparedness activities in readiness for the pandemic even though at that time, there had not been a case reported on the continent of Africa. The plan was endorsed in early February 2020 and to catalyze its success, on 28th February 2020, the Government adopted a multi- ministerial approach through which Your Excellency - - in accordance with the Executive Order No. 2 of 2020 - - constituted the National Emergency Response Committee. In the periods since, this has been cascaded to the sub – national level across all counties.

Your Excellency,

In a bid to provide daily situational reports that inform planning, the Public Health Emergency Operations Centre was fully activated pursuant to which each county set up teams of rapid responders and contact tracers to be on standby, ready to investigate alerts on potential transmissions. Updates on these figures are relayed to the public on a daily basis by the Ministry of Health in line with the International Health Regulations of 2005.

Overview of Achievements

Your Excellency,

As I am sure that Governor Oparanya will speak to the achievements of our counties on behalf of the Council of Governors, I will not focus on this matter other than to highlight a few successes that the Ministry of Health, as our experts have attested, the decision to impose travel restrictions such as the closure of Kenya's commercial airspace and the mandatory screening of cargo vessels and crew at all points of entry, yielded its desired results. Further to it, the cessation of movement within certain zones, the countrywide dusk-to-dawn curfew, masking and social distancing directives, and the Government's engagement of the Nyumba Kumi committees were significantly impactful. Experts have estimated that by undertaking these measures, we spared many Kenyans infection by COVID-19 and fatalities from it. I am very grateful for these interventions which, in addition to saving lives, have slowed the speed and spread of the pandemic therein easing the strain on our healthcare system. I have every confidence that notwithstanding the country's gradual reopening, the measures that are still in force will continue to achieve the same.

With regard to our COVID-19 capacity - - and while we recognize our shortcomings - - I think that it is equally important for us to appreciate how far we have come in such a short period of time. At the onset of COVID-19 - - and despite planning - - the country was ill prepared for the pandemic. As an illustration of this, at the time we confirmed our first case, we lacked diagnostic capacity at both a county and national level, and were air freighting our samples for testing in South Africa. To address this, as COVID-19 took root, the Ministry - - in conjunction with various counties, strategically developed this diagnostic capacity and which has to date resulted in our ability to rapidly test, isolate and trace potential infections in a total of 33 public and private COVID - 19 testing laboratories across 12 counties. This has not only improved our overall response systems but, post COVID-19, also expanded our national capacity to test for diseases such as HIV/AIDS, tuberculosis and malaria which will boost our provision of Universal Health Care (UHC).

Your Excellency,

With your permission, I would like to take a moment to express my appreciation of the response our Governors accorded to your directive on the building of our capacity to isolate and quarantine our sick. With few exceptions, virtually all the counties have implemented this directive and they have installed a 300-bed minimum capacity that you instructed. Today, we can proudly say that nationwide we have 7,411 isolation beds and 312 ICU beds across the 47 counties which, when occupied, are supported by a well-qualified, devoted, compassionate community of healthcare workers whom I regard us indebted to. Independently, the Ministry has trained thousands of our healthcare workers on COVID-19 management and we have distributed to them 42,283 complete PPEs as a means of ensuring their safety. We are continuously training community health volunteers on detection, reporting and contact tracing at household level and we believe, Your Excellency, that the benefits of all of this are far reaching. Beyond the obvious contributions to Universal Health Coverage, we anticipate that post the pandemic, this capacity will spur medical tourism in the counties with the most advanced systems, and it should therefore be our collective goal to advance this objective so that we are not only capable of attending to our sick sufficiently, but also catering to the East African Community and beyond.

It has been achieved elsewhere including in countries like Thailand and can be successfully replicated in Kenya if we overcome our challenges.

Challenges

Your Excellency,

Now that I mention challenges, it would remiss of me not to take a second or two to highlight some of the

challenges that we have had during this period. Indeed, it's only by acknowledging them, that we can apply ourselves to overcoming them. And because we are discussing matters as a "family," we should be candid about this. After all, as the saying goes, "obstacles do not block the path, they are the path." As we all know, one of the first obstacles we had was the lack of COVID-19 supplies and the inaccessibility to them. With the coronavirus spreading rapidly, we found ourselves like all other nations, competing with one another in what would become a sellers market. Beyond pricing, securing commodities such as PPEs and testing reagents proved a feat. And therefore like everyone else, we looked inward, and unblocked the path. We reached out to partners who responded positively by providing us assistance and we ignited our local manufacturing sector which has since then been producing PPEs, masks and, therein, the much needed jobs that our youth have been yearning.

COVID-19 guided us into discovering industrial capacities we did not consider before; it has similarly prompted our reassessment of manufacturing and particularly that of pharmaceuticals. Here, I thank you, Your Excellency, for your commitment to exploring the means of easing the production of local Pharma by, among the many other initiatives, the reduction of taxation. Our potential in this sector is unparalleled to our continental sister nations, and, for example, it should give us tremendous pride that out of the over 500 pharmaceutical companies in sub-Saharan Africa, Kenya is home to one of the only two that has received WHO Pre-Qualification status. As an enabler, Government should not be an obstacle to such companies, it should be their path. And therefore thank you, Your Excellency, for directing your attention to this important prong in the Big4 Agenda. We stand guided on this...just as we learned from my ministry's initial approach to quarantine or the Ministry of Interior's response to curfew violations.

Your Excellency, our collective experience has illuminated the light on a vice that we have always known is amongst us and one which we all know you have committed yourself to fighting. I refer here to the issue graft; an issue that Kenya has for long grappled with, its people suffered under but for some reason, seldom resisted. I cite this as a problem because, in this fight against COVID-19 and our nation's utilization of healthcare funds, the penchant for officers desiring profit from these public resources has come to surface. It has come through the inflation of commodity prices and among other manifestations, in the provision of substandard goods such as pharmaceuticals and PPEs.

To this point, Your Excellency, aware of the need to deliver best value for the taxpayers' money, the Ministry of Health sought a waiver for the County Governments to acquire PPEs from the market without necessarily relying on KEMSA. This was not just intended to ensure cost efficiency but also to eliminate the middlemen who were shortchanging Kenyans. In collaboration with stakeholders who include medical practitioners, the Ministry vetted and selected local manufacturers as suppliers. Notwithstanding this, some counties have opted to pursue other supply chains - - cheaper and less secure to the Healthcare worker - - for their own gain. I need not underscore the importance of our frontliners. They place their lives on the line daily for us - - and our need to protect them. It is here, Your Excellency, I must thank you again for your recent call upon law enforcement and investigative agencies to expedite the investigations on the allegations of misappropriation and corruption at KEMSA as it relates to the coronavirus. Beyond its ethical implications, such graft is literally immoral as it meets death on each one of us.

What is perhaps the most unfortunate of all the obstacles we have had, is political interference. Your Excellency, as you are well aware, I have served this country in various capacities including roles that were political. In that duration, I subscribed myself to a national aspiration - - the Vision 2030 - - which bonded all Kenyans to a goal of developing our nation's collective prosperity. Under your leadership, this Vision has been further chiseled into four key prongs, one of which is the provision of Universal Health Coverage. The aspiration has not only been to provide such services in quality, but to also insulate them from the day-to-day political sways and nuances. After all, Your Excellency, no matter what one's religious or political persuasion, we remain bonded by our need to care for our loved ones physically, mentally - - and medically. This responsibility is not merely a governmental undertaking but one to which we all ascribe as a country that is God-fearing.

Your Excellency, I bring this up because it's essential to point out that in the past few weeks - - and as all present here can attest - - this nation has been held hostage by an agenda that has aggressively invested time, energy and resources into sabotaging the healthcare system and its efforts to cleanse itself by eliminating the barriers such as corruption that have injured our people.

Rather than enabling me and my team to focus on protecting our people in their time of vulnerability, this agenda selfishly aspires to draw me into a counterproductive war of disinformation whose sole objective - - far from healing Kenyans - - is creating harm.

And therefore, Your Excellency, if ever there was justification for insulating our national aspirations from politics, this is it. With a focus on elevating our national crises management and our domestic capacity to mitigate pandemics, I pray that this distinguished conference takes time to reflect, soul search and separate these two issues even as its members struggle between balancing their personal and public aspirations.

Conclusion

On behalf of the National Emergency Response Committee, I would like to express my heartfelt appreciation to the international donor, business and philanthropic communities who, along with countless Kenyans, have lightened our burden through monetary, in-kind or donations of skilled services, and say thank you... and God bless you.

Remarks by H.E. Roiyichi Horie, Japan Ambassador to Kenya

His Excellency, Uhuru KENYATTA, President of the Republic of Kenya
Hon. Wycliffe OPARANYA, Chairperson of Council of Governors,
Hon. Governors,
Hon. Mutahi KAGWE, Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of Health,
Hon. Eugene WAMALWA, Cabinet Secretary for Ministry of
Devolution and ASAL,
Mr. Walid BADAWI, UNDP Resident Representative,

It is my great honour to say a few words at this important and timely conference on COVID-19 with the various stakeholders.

Before I begin, I would like to take this opportunity to express my sincere and heartfelt condolences to all the people who have lost their family members, relatives or close friends to this deadly virus. I would also like to express my gratitude to all the essential workers in this country especially the frontline healthcare personnel including the doctors, nurses, paramedics and support staff at the various medical facilities around the country.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

Today, I would like to address how Japan has stood by the people of Kenya in this prolonged war against the virus. As some of you well know, Japan's ODA to Kenya started in 1963 and since then we have shared a long history of cordial relations and cooperation. That includes our support in the establishment of KEMRI in 1979, the institution which is in the forefront in the fight against this virus. I visited the institution last week and reinforced the recognition of the importance of its work in the fight against this pandemic.

Our recent support to Kenya to combat the virus includes the provision of chlorine to water purification facilities around the country by Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) to help mitigate the impact of COVID-19 through continued supply of safe water to Kenyans. In addition, 340 million Kenya Shillings was disbursed through UNDP and UNICEF to strengthen the health sector and provide the much needed medical equipment to hospitals. Indeed, this conference is also receiving support from the Government of Japan through UNDP.

Last week on Thursday, I signed the Exchange of Notes, titled "Health Sector Policy Loan for Attainment of the Universal Health Coverage (phase 2)" with Hon. Yatani at the National Treasury, amounting to 8 billion Kenya Shillings. On the same day, I handed over PCR testing kits with capacity of 50,000 tests to KEMRI through JICA, both of which will surely contribute to enhance the health architecture of Kenya.

Our support does not stop here. We are planning another assistance in the very near future. I agreed with Hon. Yatani to sign on Friday this week another Exchange of Notes to disburse Japanese grant aid for the provision of medical equipment to over 10 counties in Kenya, and aid for the improvement of Power Distribution System in and around Nakuru City and around Mombasa city. In addition, Japan will provide 10 ambulances to Kenya through the Counterpart Fund to enhance the capacity of county-level healthcare systems.

The wide range of assistance reflects Japan's response and commitment to President Kenyatta's call for joint operation with County governments to fight against COVID-19.

Your Excellency, President KENYATTA

I would like to take this opportunity to present good news for you. The Ngong Road Expansion Project Phase

2 which was implemented by Japanese grant aid was completed at the end of April this year. To promote Strong, Sustainable, Balanced and Inclusive growth and to enhance resilience of Kenyan society, as well as to contribute to the global efforts for SDGs, this project is one of the quintessential cases, promoting Quality Infrastructure by Japan.

Your Excellency, President KENYATTA

One of the key hallmarks of Japan's infrastructure projects is its distinguished quality. I think you have already realized the quality differences between Ngong Road from Upperhill to the end of Junction Mall and the road from Junction Mall leading to Karen. (I would not dare name any specific country). I hope to see Your Excellency soon, on the occasion of the Opening Ceremony at Ngong Road.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

I would like to assure all Kenyans, that this assistance is part of our seamless contribution to Kenya. True friendship and partnership are realized and proved in the time of trouble.

While taking precautionary measures against COVID-19, Kenya has chosen the path to move the country forward. I appreciate the Kenyan people's courage and tireless efforts in this endeavor.

I would like to commend the Government of Kenya in taking timely measures to contain the virus and as a result was able to keep the infection rate low in the country.

Finally I would like to thank all those who have contributed and were involved in carrying out this meaningful conference.

(We, Japanese are together with the people of Kenya.)
SISI WAJAPANI TUKO PAMOJA NA WANANCHI WA KENYA.

ASANTENI SANA.

Speech by Mr. Walid Badawi- Resident Representative, UNDP

It is a pleasure to join you today, on behalf of UNDP, in this important and timely virtual conference as we reflect on the impact and the response to the COVID-19 pandemic in Kenya.

Let me also express my sincere condolences to all those that have lost family and loved ones in the fight against COVID-19.

For the first time, since 1990, global human development is on track to decline this year due to COVID-19. This is happening in the same year that marked the beginning of a Decade of Action towards the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs). As evidenced across the world, and here in Kenya, COVID-19 has fundamentally changed the context of development – and what we face today is, as you have repeatedly called it, Your Excellency, indeed “a war”.

COVID-19 has amplified the long-standing structural deficiencies in health systems impacting on the most vulnerable.

Drawing on UNDP’s global experience with other outbreaks such as Ebola, HIV, SARS, TB and malaria, we are helping countries to respond to COVID-19. Working with Governments at the highest level, we are helping to mobilize resources and support the development of national systems for strengthening transparency and accountability in the response to this pandemic. For example, recently in Nigeria, UNDP supported the COVID-19 Presidential Committee to set up a Resource Tracking Dashboard to ensure greater transparency in the use of public financing for the COVID-19 response.

In Kenya, working within the wider UN family, under the leadership of the UN Resident Coordinator, UNDP is accompanying the Government and the people of Kenya in efforts towards eradicating poverty, reducing inequalities and building resilience to crises and shocks. On COVID 19, we are responding to the demands of our partners at both national and sub-national levels, including Ministries, the Council of Governors, county governments, the County Assemblies Forum, civil society organizations and engaging the private sector on initiatives that aim to prepare, respond and recover from COVID-19. This assistance is by no means exhaustive but has included the following:

1. Resilience of health systems

- Providing frontline health workers in hospitals and medical facilities to counties most in need through our Joint UN Devolution Programme
- Supplying PPEs across various institutions
- Providing medical waste disposal equipment to 13 health facilities

2. Inclusive and multi-sectoral crisis management

- Developing and communicating factual COVID-19 messages to Kenyan citizens
- Promoting innovative digital solutions working with youth in the areas of health, food security and dignified work
- Enhancing business continuity of government through digital solutions
- Collaborating with civil society organizations to protect human rights, promote gender equality and access to justice Working with the peace architecture in the country to mitigate potential conflict that could derail progress towards the SDGs

3. Socio-economic impact and human rights

- Supporting the national economic recovery strategy linked to Vision 2030, the Big Four Agenda, and the SDGs
- Conducting socio-economic research to inform county level recovery strategies and integration into the CIDPs including financing instruments for implementation
- Developing policy briefs on the impacts of the pandemic and elaborating the UN's socio-economic response aimed at saving lives, protecting people, and rebuilding better

We have an opportunity to 'Build-Forward-Better and Greener', to restore balance between people and planet, designing and de-risking nature-based solutions as part of a new social contract for the world. Kenya can emerge stronger from this crisis with more robust, transparent, and accountable institutions in all sectors. UNDP stands ready to continue supporting your government and the people of Kenya. We have the collective expertise and the experience to look beyond recovery and towards 2030 together.

Let us be reminded that the young people of this country are its greatest asset as leaders, as change agents, and as innovators, we must make sure that we prioritize solutions that put youth at the center of everything we do, with them and for them, as we recover from this crisis. We commit to leveraging and working under the GenU platform that your Excellency launched earlier this month and for which you have been nominated as a global youth champion.

As I conclude, let me summarize 4 key messages:

- While I wish to congratulate the Government of Kenya for putting in place robust COVID-19 management strategies that have been critical in containing the spread of the virus and minimizing losses – both economic and human, we cannot be complacent, we must keep our foot on the pedal.
- As the world seeks to "build forward better", we must ensure that the SDGs and "leaving no one behind", particularly our youth and women, remain our compass in devising our recovery strategies.
- Let us be reminded that this is a moment for all humanity to rise above "business as usual" and deliver the most efficient response possible with the highest standards of integrity.
- Together we will win this war, but only if we seize the opportunity to unite against a common enemy armed with the right strategy as we learn from the lessons of others.

In closing, I wish to acknowledge and thank the government of Kenya, our bilateral and multilateral development partners that continue to stand with the Government and people of Kenya in responding to the COVID-19 pandemic and have entrusted UNDP to serve as an implementing partner for many of their programmes. Specifically, I thank the Government of Japan through the Ambassador, His Excellency Ryoichi Horie, for enabling UNDP to support this important Conference as well as other COVID-19 response and recovery measures being implemented through UNDP as part of our global partnership.

I wish this conference every success.

Asanteni

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From
the People of Japan



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