

**REMARKS BY THE CABINET SECRETARY MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND ASAL, HON. EUGENE WAMALWA, EGH, DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE FIFTH EAST AFRICAN LOCAL GOVERNMENT FORUM ON 30<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2018 AT WINDSOR HOTEL & GOLF CLUB, KIAMBU COUNTY**

**The Outgoing Chair of EAGLA**

**Hon. Ministers in charge of Local Government from Uganda, Tanzania, Rwanda and Burundi**

**The Secretary General, Common Wealth Local Government Forum**

**Governors Present**

**Principal Secretaries Present,**

**Distinguished Guests:**

1. It is my pleasure to welcome you to Kenya and to be part of the East African Local Government Forum. I understand EAGLF was established five years ago to provide a platform for stakeholders geared towards strengthening of local governments through good governance.
2. It is indeed important for us to share experiences and best practices in the management of Local/County Governments in the region. I want to appreciate those who thought of this noble idea and made it happen. The onus is now on us to ensure that the forum does not become another talking shop but be a forum that delivers tangible results to our people.
3. I believe that a robust and proactive consultative forum on local/county government issues will enable the region realize social economic impact in public resource management through harmonious intergovernmental relations, public participation, civic education and information sharing for an informed citizenry. Kenya has made major strides in some of these areas with the development of a National Capacity Building Framework, Public Participation Guidelines, Civic Education Curriculum and Manuals.
4. You are all aware that in August 2010, Kenya ushered in a new Constitution that explicitly provided for Devolution in the Country and that in April 2013, Kenyans exercised their democratic rights by voting in two levels of governments. With this, one National Government and 47 County Governments came into being and both political power and resources were devolved to the counties. This is therefore our second five-year term of Devolution and so far, over Kshs. 1.3 trillion have been disbursed to the counties, which have gone a long way in changing the economic landscape of the country.
5. The Constitution of Kenya, 2010, on the Fifth Schedule clearly provided for the legislation of various laws to support devolution and their time lines within a five-year period. This process was spearheaded by the Attorney General, The Kenya Law Reform Commission and various Ministries. In addition, it also provided for the review of existing legislation and administrative procedures to support devolution.
6. Through the implementation of devolution in the country, several gaps have been identified in the current devolution laws. We have therefore embarked on amending the existing devolution laws where necessary and enacting regulations to encompass intergovernmental institutions which have not been elaborately covered by the existing laws. Some of the Laws currently under review are the County Government Act, 2012 and Intergovernmental Relations Act, 2012. We are also developing Alternative Dispute Resolution Regulations (ADR) to guide the resolution of disputes between counties and national governments and among counties. In addition, regulations on regional blocks are also being developed.

7. The last five years of devolution have had their fair share of successes and challenges. All of us have pushed and shoved as we tried to create spaces for ourselves. However, we have settled down now and have resolved to consult and collaborate as the two levels of government rather than the bickering that characterized the first term of devolution. The focus now is on delivery of services to the citizens through the Big Four Agenda. My Ministry has mainstreamed and is working to strengthen various intergovernmental consultative forums in order to enhance harmonious working relations among stakeholders in devolved governance.
8. As Ministry, I want to assure the County Governments that we are committed to making devolution work in the country. For this to happen, there is need to build the capacity of County Governments so that they can deliver their promises to the people. The Ministry is thus working with various donors and development partners like the World Bank, European Union, United Nations Development Programme and USAID- AHADI to not only build these critical capacities but to also fund various development programmes in the counties. Let me emphasize that it is of paramount importance that there is good governance, accountability and transparency in how these funds are spent.
9. The State Department of Devolution is one of the two State Departments in the Ministry of Devolution and ASAL. It is in charge of the overall coordination of the implementation of Devolution in the Country. Executive Order no. 1 of 2016 gives the Mandate of the State Department as:
  - Devolution Policy
  - Intergovernmental Affairs
  - Capacity Building and Technical assistance to the Counties
  - Monitoring and Evaluation
10. On ICT, the Ministry of Devolution and ASAL through the Kenya Devolution Support Programme (KDSP), is developing a Management Information System (MIS) for the county governments. The Ultimate purpose of the system is to have a web enabled MIS with a multimedia resource centre that includes various forms of electronic data, complete with online access to training materials, manuals, journals, government and county reports on devolution. The system shall have highly interactive features and will integrate with other systems of governments to facilitate analysis, monitoring and reporting.
11. In addition, the Ministry of ICT is working on leveraging the use of ICT to enhance service delivery in the Counties. Some of the examples are: The Smart County project, which is a component of the larger Kenya Transparency Communication and Infrastructure Program) KTCIP). It aims at supporting adoption of ICT within the County Governments in a bid to enhance service delivery in a transparent and accountable process. The Sub components include:
  - Implementation of a unified communications system and Integrated County Revenue Management System for Nairobi County (ejiji PAY) where parking fees and other county revenues are collected via mobile phone applications
  - Assist the other 46 Counties to develop ICT roadmaps that are aligned to the National ICT Master plan and their local county integrated development plans
  - Assist counties to equip their county headquarters and sub counties with basic equipment including office software applications, email and training
12. National Optic Fibre Backbone (NOFBI): This project is aimed at ensuring connectivity in all the 47 counties to ease communication across counties and also to enhance government service delivery such as issuance of identity cards passports, and registration of birth and deaths. The optic backbone was completed and fibre installed in all the 47 counties

13. County Connectivity Project (CCP): The County Connectivity project aims at ensuring that county government offices are connected to the internet as well as promoting online services using telephone, email and teleconferencing.
14. As a region, we face several challenges especially in delivery of healthcare services and employment creation. These challenges can only be solved through enhancement of the capacity of local/county governments. In Kenya, we have zeroed in on the Big Four Agenda, which I believe will go a long way in addressing problems being experienced by the other countries in the region. These are: Provision of Affordable housing, manufacturing, affordable housing and food security. These are areas that EAGLF and the Common Wealth Local Government Forum can build capacity in in the next year as it is at the local/counties that these achievements will be realized
15. Another critical area that the two forums can build capacity in is the use of ICTs in enhancing service delivery in the region. The use of ICT will be critical in promoting the big four agenda in Kenya. Emerging technologies are also changing lives through provision of e-learning, e-medicine and e-agriculture among other areas. However, the region still lags behind in these area due to infrastructural challenges.
16. In conclusion, I want to emphasize that the spirit of Devolution in Kenya is not about two levels competing but complementing each other for efficient and effective service delivery to the citizenry. I believe the same spirit equally applies for EALGF and the countries in the East Africa region. Let's therefore use this forum to learn from each other for the benefit of our people.
17. Let me therefore take this opportunity to urge countries in the region to work towards complementary service delivery and also focus on sharing ideas and best practices in the region for the benefit of us all. May I now wish you fruitful deliberations and the best of time while in Kenya.

**Thank You**  
**EUGENE WAMALWA, EGH**  
**30<sup>TH</sup> MAY, 2018**