

ADDRESS BY H.E DANIEL WAITHAKA, AG. CHAIRMAN COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE AND LANDS DURING THE NATIONAL VALIDATION WORKSHOP ON THE AGRICULTURE POLICY HELD ON 24TH FEBRUARY 2015 AT HILTON HOTEL, NAIROBI

**Cabinet Secretary Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, Hon Felix Koskei
Principal Secretaries in the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
County Executives in charge of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries
Heads of Parastatals
Development Partners
Farmer Organizations
Distinguished participants
Invited Guests
Ladies and Gentlemen**

Good Morning!

I would like to begin by thanking all of you for attending this validation workshop today and for inviting the Council of Governors as a critical stakeholder in the development of this Agricultural Policy.

It is an honor to be addressing you this day on behalf of all the members of Council of Governors and more specifically on behalf of H.E Nderitu Gachagua, the Chairman of the Council of Governors Committee on Agriculture and Lands.

Ladies and Gentlemen

For many years in this country, there have been several sub sector specific policies in agriculture, but there has never existed a policy governing agriculture in its entirety in the country.

Given the importance of agriculture in our country, its citizens and the economy, there is need for this policy governing agriculture. Previously policy guidance in agriculture has been from the Economic Pillar of Vision 2030 on agriculture, the Agriculture Sector Development Strategy and the Medium Term Plan II and the Report of the Presidential Taskforce on Parastatal Reforms which proposed the amalgamation of the various agricultural parastatals into AFFA.

There is therefore the need for this policy to be the link between these strategies, the devolved system of governance under the Constitution of Kenya (2010), and the agricultural activities of the 47 county governments for harmonious synergetic efforts in the sector.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The Agricultural function is well outlined in the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution distributing the powers and functions between the National and County Governments. This Schedule clearly outlines the nature and functions of the two levels of Government in agriculture.

I am glad that this has been brought out in the draft policy and I hope that this can also be emphasized in the implementation process of the policy.

Ladies and gentlemen

The Council of Governors has reviewed this policy and through its Secretariat, it has consolidated comments from the various counties which have been forwarded to the Ministry

The following were the salient issues raised by the Council:

1. There is a need to clearly define the role of each level of government in the performance of the agricultural function. Under the Constitution, the National Government is in charge of policy formulation, capacity building and providing technical assistance to the county governments. This is an essential role of the National Government and critical steps need to be taken to improve the skills, abilities and expertise of agriculturalists in the counties in line with the Ministry's Vision 2030 goal of achieving an average Gross Domestic Product growth rate of 10% per year. Extensive training and public awareness on sustainable development principles should be used for capacity-building, targeting farmers, managers of rural institutions, NGOs, private sector operators, communication systems, and the media and the public at large.
2. The policy should also emphasize the relationship between the national and county government based on consultation and cooperation as per Article 6 of the Constitution. Achievement of the policy's objectives can only be attained through co-operation, coordination, consultation and mutual respect between National and County Governments. This is to be demonstrated with a real intention of active engagement with counties by the National Government more so on implementation of the policy by the Counties.
3. There is a need to focus on achieving the development, promotion, facilitation and marketing of high quality, value added agricultural products in the domestic, regional and international markets at competitive prices. This is through the provision for economically viable, socially equitable and environmentally sustainable use of land, agriculture, livestock and fisheries resources through sustainable use of modern technology. The policy should also seek to improve infrastructure to promote agricultural marketing, ensure safety and quality standards compliance and intensify

product branding and traceability to assure consumers and access regional and international markets.

4. The policy should provide a guide for the development of county policies in agriculture. Counties are in the process of development of legislation in agriculture and it would only be prudent if they based this on a county policy. This policy should therefore be the link to provide a platform for the development of these agricultural policies at the county level.

Ladies and Gentlemen

In conclusion, I would like to emphasize the commitment of the Council of Governors towards helping the Ministry of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries finalize the development of this policy and participate actively in its implementation at the county level.

Thank you very much once again for your invitation and I wish you fruitful deliberations.