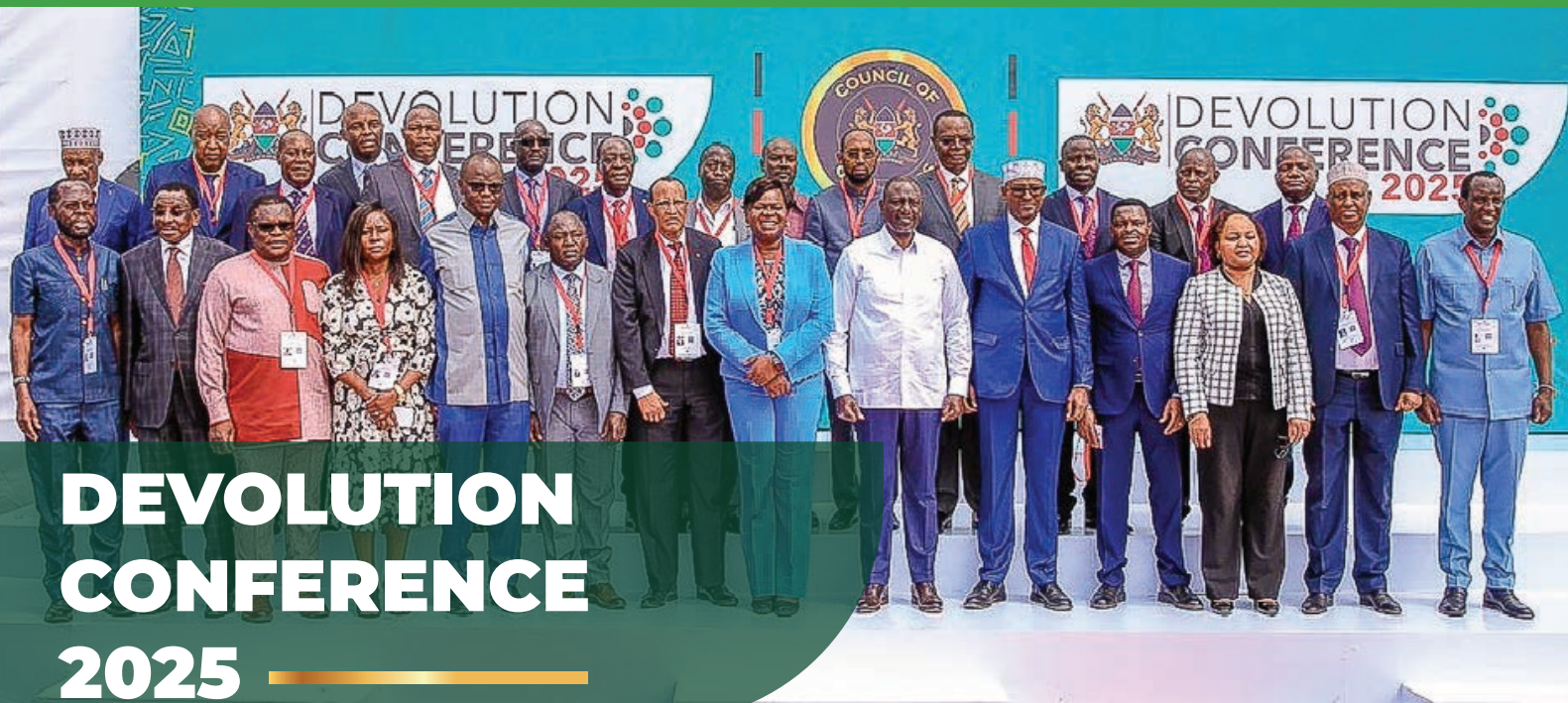




SPECIAL EDITION

AUGUST 2025



DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE 2025

DEVOLUTION CONFERENCE 2025 CHAMPIONS EQUITY, INCLUSION, AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

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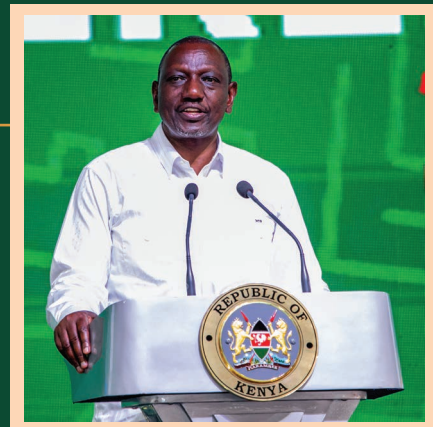
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“

I urge all leaders to invest in people-first policies and programmes and ensure every shilling is used prudently to deliver impact and bring government services closer to the people ”

President William Ruto



CoG Chairperson H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.

Insightful discussions on Equity, Inclusion and Social Justice took center stage at the Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August at Homa Bay National School, Homa Bay County. The week – long conference saw local and international delegates, private sector, civil society, academia, development partners, NGOs, duty bearers and stakeholders gather to engage and develop practical solutions that can be implemented to address the pertinent issues affecting citizens. The guiding theme: For the People; For Prosperity: Devolution as a catalyst for Equity, Inclusion and social justice and sub-theme : Re-engineering County Governments to Accelerate Development and Close the Socio-Economic Divide.

Unlike previous conferences, this year's conference provided a unique opportunity for different partners, state and non-state actors to host side events and drive rich citizen-centred conversations in line with the thematic days. Dubbed 'Good Governance Day', the first day of the conference focused on mainstreaming principles of good governance in sub-national governments particularly public participation; citizen engagement; social accountability; citizen oversight; civic education; transparency and; rule of law.

Delivering his address during the official opening ceremony, President William Ruto reaffirmed his administration's commitment to ensuring that Devolution is fully realized, stating that Kenya's growth must start from the grassroots.

"I urge all leaders to invest in people-first policies and programmes and ensure every shilling is used prudently to deliver impact and bring government services closer to the people," he appealed calling upon all public agencies to join forces in confronting corruption, a vice he said is stifling service delivery.

Two landmark pieces of legislation, he announced, have been signed into law at the state lodge in Homa Bay. The County Allocation of Revenue Bill 2025 which will see Counties receive ksh. 415 billion in the 25/26 FY and the County public finance law amendment bill of 2023 which provides for financial autonomy of the county assemblies.

Enumerating the commendable milestones achieved in advancing Devolution thus far, the President noted that all 14 devolved functions had been conclusively delineated, unbundled and formally gazetted while the ownership of immovable assets including land and buildings had been successfully transferred to Counties through a gazette notice dated 12th August 2025.

Making his remarks Council of Governors (CoG) Chair H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi underscored the notable improvements highlighted across various sectors since the implementation of Devolution and the need to jointly develop interventions that will catalyze the realization of equity, inclusion and social justice in county governance.

"It is time for action, not mere talk. To all the leaders here, we have been called to serve. Let us heed to this call with integrity, humility and selflessness and conduct our affairs in the fullness of good governance practices; in respect of human rights and social justice; and not leaving any Kenyan behind," added the CoG chair.

Host governor H.E Gladys Wanga on her part welcomed all delegates to Homa Bay County noting that the impact of Devolution is undeniable, with stories of progress and transformation written across our 47 counties.

"If devolution were a person, it would be a spirited teenager—vibrant, curious, and occasionally challenging. It is befitting that the Devolution Conference is held in Homa Bay, the home of Dr. Odhiambo Mbai, the architect of the Devolution Committee during the Constitutional Review Exercise," she added.



H.E. President William Ruto receiving the Devolution Training Institute induction manual from the CoG vice Chair H.E. DR. Mutahi Kahiga

The planning of the Devolution Conference 2025 was a joint initiative spearheaded by a Steering Committee chaired by the CoG Vice Chair H.E Mutahi Kahiga and a Multi-agency planning committee chaired by the CoG CEO Mary Mwit.

Delivering the progress report on implementation of the communique adopted at the previous Devolution Conference 2023 held in Uasin Gishu County, H.E Mutahi Kahiga noted that commendable progress had been made. This includes: coordination in Project and Program Implementation; automation and digitalization of services at both the county and



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CoG Vice Chair H.E. DR. Mutahi Kahiga speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.

national level; leveraging on automation to enhance Counties' OSR; transfer of County functions and attendant resources; registration of land and bridging the gender gap in land ownership; strengthening primary healthcare and community health services and; creating a conducive environment for youth to carry out business.

He further lauded the steering committee comprised of Governor Gladys Wanga; Senator Catherine Mumma and Senator Beatrice Ogolla; Principal Secretary, Devolution Mr. Michael Lenasalon; Hon. Chege Mwaura, Secretary-General of the County Assemblies Forum; Ms. Gloria Wawira CEO National Youth Council; and Mr. Tom Were of Act!, alongside the Multi-agency planning committee chaired by the CoG CEO Mary Mwititi and the CoG secretariat for their immense contributions towards ensuring the success of the Conference.

The theme of this year's conference reminds us that Devolution is not about systems or structures; it is about people. It demands that we make counties leaner, smarter, responsive, and people-centred.

Speaker of the Senate Rt. Hon. Amason J. Kingi emphasized the need to ensure accountability at all levels of government adding that Devolution was not envisaged to be a destination, but a continuous journey that requires vigilance, courage, and commitment.

"We must decisively act to strengthen intergovernmental relations, advocate for the timely and predictable disbursement of funds, enhance oversight and accountability, promote economic Devolution, deepen public participation to ensure the people shape Devolution and that it works for all Kenyans," he added.

The first day of the conference marked the official unveiling of the Council of Governors unveiled Devolution Training Institute - a learning center where County Governments, the National Government, private sector, academia and all devolution stakeholders, can access knowledge and generate solutions on all matters devolution.

It also provided an opportunity for County Governments and all Devolution stakeholders to showcase innovations in governance and service delivery across various sectors.



Homa Bay Governor H.E. Gladys Wanga speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.



THE QUEST FOR SOCIAL JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS THROUGH DEVOLUTION



Rt Hon. Raila Amollo Odinga flanked by Governors during the Devolution conference 2025 in Homa Bay



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Former Prime Minister Rt. Hon Raila Odinga speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.

Day Two of the Devolution Conference in Homa Bay unfolded under the theme: Human rights and social justice, reminding delegates that devolution is not simply about transferring functions but about restoring dignity and equity to the people. From the plenary sessions to the side events, the conversations reiterated one core truth - that Devolution will only be meaningful when citizens at the grassroots feel the difference in their daily lives through equal access to health care, education, clean water, decent livelihoods and inclusive opportunities.

The side events of the day gave life to this theme. Different institutions including civil society organizations, private sector, youth representatives, women leaders, persons with disabilities, government agencies and development partners engaged in candid dialogue on how devolved units can better safeguard rights and address the inequalities that have long excluded communities from development. Issues such as gender equity in leadership, youth employment, climate justice and accessibility for people with disabilities were tabled as priorities. These voices emphasized that Counties must be deliberate in mainstreaming inclusivity, designing budgets that reflect the needs of all citizens and ensuring that no community is left behind.

Delivering the closing address, Rt. Hon Raila Odinga echoed these sentiments reminding all delegates present that “social justice is not achieved by handouts but by creating opportunities where every citizen, youth, women, persons with disabilities and marginalized groups, can participate in building prosperity.”

He further argued that Counties must graduate from dependency and instead become engines of wealth creation through industrial parks, renewable energy ventures and smart agriculture. “We must move away from the idea that development is about distributing handouts and embrace a model where every County generates opportunities for its people.” He emphasized that true equity can only be realized when essential services such as schools, hospitals and roads are accessible to every citizen as a right, not a privilege.

Prime CS Musalia Mudavadi on his part highlighted the realities facing Counties cautioning that the gaps in service delivery continue to undermine citizens’ rights, with stalled or abandoned projects worth billions of shillings denying Kenyans access to basic services. “When a health facility is stalled, it is not just a project that has failed, it is a mother’s right to health care that has been denied. When water projects collapse, it is people’s right to clean water that is violated,” he emphasized.

He urged County Governments to strengthen accountability mechanisms, adopt reliable data systems to track inequalities and confront corruption without compromise, warning that mismanagement and inefficiency are not just technical failures but direct violations of people’s social and economic rights.

“Social justice demands that every Kenyan has equitable access to quality, affordable, and dignified care across all counties,” added the Health CS Aden Duale while reaffirming the government’s commitment to advancing Kenya’s Universal Health Coverage (UHC) reforms.

By the close of Day Two, it was evident that the discussions in

Homa Bay were not abstract debates on governance but heartfelt appeals to place human rights at the core of devolution. The

“Social justice is achieved by creating opportunities where every citizen can participate in building prosperity.”

**Rt. Hon Raila Odinga
Former Prime Minister**

testimonies from the side events, coupled with the strong messages from national leaders, painted a united picture that devolution is most powerful when it delivers fairness, dignity and opportunity at the grassroots. In doing so, it fulfills not just constitutional promises but the everyday hopes of Kenyans for a just and inclusive society.



Prime CS Musalia Mudavadi speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.



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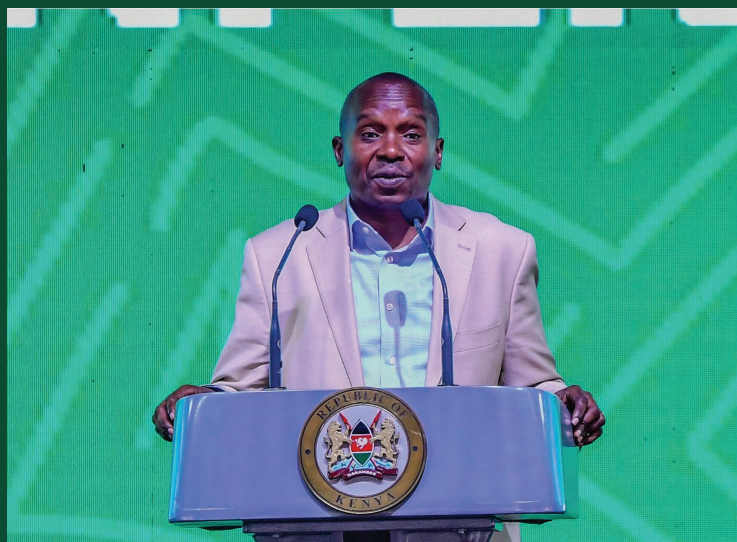


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BEYOND THE CONFERENCE: TURNING RESOLUTIONS INTO REALITY



Deputy President H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.

The 9th Devolution Conference officially came to end on Friday, 15th August marking the conclusion of robust 3-day engagements on matters devolved governance and the beginning of an even greater task – implementation of the resolutions agreed upon during the conference by all relevant actors.

Delivering the keynote speech, Deputy President H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki highlighted that all stakeholders have a role to play in implementation of the commitments made. “Devolution is more than a constitutional requirement, it is a moral duty to make sure prosperity reaches every corner of our nation”.

He urged both National and County Government leaders, alongside the private sector, civil society and development partners, to translate the conference resolutions into tangible action, with progress to be monitored every six months over the next two years.

CoG Chief Whip and Nandi Governor Stephen Sang expressed gratitude to delegates, development partners and the host County for their contributions to the success of the conference. “The spirit of partnership and unity we have witnessed here in Homa Bay is the true driver of people-centered devolution. These resolutions will only matter if we walk together to translate them into action in our Counties,” he said, noting that collaboration among leaders was a clear demonstration of Kenya’s collective commitment to equity and inclusion.

The three-day forum brought together policymakers, leaders from across the country, development partners and grassroots representatives to reflect on Kenya’s devolution journey and chart a path for stronger fiscal discipline, inclusivity and resilience. The Final day of the conference centered on one of the most pressing questions for Kenya’s devolved system of governance - how to finance equity and inclusion in a way that leaves no County behind and ensures effective equitable service delivery.

“Funds should follow functions and where the funds are held by the National Government agencies, they should be released to Counties,” reiterated Homa Bay Governor Gladys Wanga.

During the closing ceremony, the Council of Governors (CoG) in collaboration with Food4Education launched the model pre-primary school feeding policy for County Governments. The policy seeks to institutionalize school meals within County planning and financing frameworks, recognizing that hunger remains a major barrier to learning for many children, especially from vulnerable backgrounds. By ensuring that every child has access to nutritious meals in school, the policy is expected to improve attendance, enhance concentration and promote better learning outcomes.

There were key resolutions arrived at during the conference across various sectors. On Early Childhood Development (ECD) services, both levels of Government, working with education, health and agriculture stakeholders, committed to scaling up

“Devolution is more than a constitutional requirement, it is a moral duty to make sure prosperity reaches every corner of our nation”

H.E. Prof. Kithure Kindiki
Deputy President



CoG whip H.E. Stephen Sang speaking during Devolution Conference 2025 held from 12th – 15th August in Homa Bay.



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Deputy President H.E Prof. Kithure Kindiki (Centre right)' CoG Chair H.E. FCPA. Ahmed Abdullahi during the launch of model pre-primary school feeding policy for County Governments

financing for ECD as the foundation for long-term growth. The private sector was also challenged to scale up partnerships with Counties as Kenya accelerates investments in value chains and Business Process Outsourcing (BPO). These efforts are expected to spur industrialization, create jobs and expand exports, positioning the country more firmly in regional and global markets.

Further, the Intergovernmental Relations Technical Committee (IGRTC), National Treasury and the Commission on Revenue Allocation, in collaboration with Counties, must finalize the identification and transfer of attendant resources tied to devolved functions within three months. This would close lingering gaps that have slowed down service delivery since the transfer of functions was gazetted in December 2024.

Delegates further emphasized the importance of strengthening County-level capacity in public finance management. While Devolution has expanded opportunities for citizen participation, Counties must be equipped with stronger institutional and technical skills to translate resources into real development outcomes. Development partners and civil society organizations were urged to support capacity-building efforts that reinforce people-centered prosperity across Counties.

On matters of revenue generation, County Governments committed to enhancing their own-source revenue collection through automation of systems, a move expected to reduce leakages, broaden revenue bases and ensure local development needs are sustainably financed. In addition, both levels of Government were tasked with designing budgets that are not only inclusive but also responsive, guaranteeing equity, social rights and justice in line with the country's development agenda.

The resolutions further directed increased financing of initiatives such as immunization and the use of drone technology, aimed at improving efficiency, equity and access to lifesaving services for vulnerable populations, while boosting resilience to climate-related shocks.

Delegates also welcomed a resolution requiring the Senate to establish more efficient mechanisms for processing conditional and unconditional grants, ensuring Counties can access funds in a timely manner without unnecessary bureaucratic delays. This, they said, would go a long way in resolving frustrations that have hampered County operations in recent years.



Deputy President H.E Prof. Kithure Kindiki (right) receiving a gift from CoG Chair H.E. FCPA. Ahmed Abdullahi during Devolution Conference 2025 close out meeting

COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS BRINGS HOPE TO HOMA BAY CHILDREN'S HOME ACADEMY

The Council of Governors (CoG) Secretariat, led by CEO Ms. Mary Mwiti, brought hope and support to vulnerable children at the Homa Bay Children's Home Academy during a Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) outreach as part of the 9th Devolution Conference pre-events. The team donated foodstuffs, clothing and hygiene items, while also spending time engaging with the children through songs, conversations and listening to their personal journeys.

Speaking during the visit, Ms. Mwiti emphasized that devolution must remain people-centered: "These children remind us why equity and inclusion must remain at the heart of devolution. It is not enough to speak about policies, we must show love in action. Every child deserves dignity, care and the opportunity to thrive."

Beneficiaries also of the Academy shared moving testimonies, with one young adult recalling how the Home raised them from infancy, supported their education to college level, and later offered them employment: a cycle of compassion that has nurtured both lives and livelihoods.



CoG CEO Mary Mwiti, EBS speaking during the CSR outreach at the Homa Bay Children's Home Academy



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The Homa Bay Children’s Home Academy itself has a long history of resilience. Founded in 1968 under the Full Gospel Churches of Kenya, it was officially opened in 1984 by President Daniel arap Moi. Initially supported by donors, mainly from Finland, the Home established a Community-Based Program to help children reintegrate into society. When donor funding ended in 2017, the Academy was set up to sustain operations by combining quality education for orphans with fee-paying students from the community. Since then, it has supported over 40 orphans through primary, secondary and university education.

Over the years, the Council has made CSR an integral part of its annual conference, ensuring that every host County feels a lasting impact that goes beyond policy deliberations. From donating essentials and visiting homes to supporting schools and community projects, these gestures have created a legacy of compassion and solidarity wherever the conference is held. They serve as a bridge between high-level policy dialogues and the lived realities of ordinary citizens, making devolution tangible in ways that touch hearts as well as livelihoods.

The visit to Homa Bay Children’s Home Academy went beyond charity, it was a powerful affirmation that social justice begins with small, intentional acts of kindness. To crown the day, the COG delegation joined the children in planting trees, symbolizing growth, resilience and hope for the future. The gesture underscored the broader message of the visit: devolution is strongest when it goes beyond budgets and policies to touch lives directly, bringing dignity and inclusion to the most vulnerable.



Homa Bay Children’s Home Academy representative, speaking during the CSR.

“It is not enough to speak about policies, we must show love in action. Every child deserves dignity, care and the opportunity to thrive”

Ms. Mary Mwiti
CEO Council of Governors



The CoG secretariat donating foodstuffs, clothing and hygiene items to support the day-to-day needs of the children at the Homa Bay Children’s Home Academy



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PRECONFERENCE ACTIVITIES



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KEY EVENTS



WE THANK ALL OUR PARTNERS FOR THE SUPPORT THEY ACCORDED DURING THE CONFERENCE



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