

# THE COUNCIL MONTHLY



Governors led by CoG Chair H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi speaking to the media during the high-level two-day symposium in Nakuru County

## COG CHARTS COMMON PATH ON AFFORDABLE HOUSING AND SHA REFORMS, ELECTS NEW VICE CHAIR AND WHIP



CoG Chair H.E FCPA. Ahmed Abdullahi speaking during the high-level two-day symposium in Nakuru County to strengthened governance, collaboration and effective national-county engagement.

During the Full Council meeting, Governors unanimously elected H.E. Muthomi Njuki, Governor of Tharaka Nithi County, as the new Vice Chairperson of the Council of Governors. His election created a vacancy in the position of Whip, which was subsequently filled by H.E. Benjamin Cheboi, Governor of Baringo County. The new leadership is expected to strengthen coordination within the Council and steer collective County positions in upcoming intergovernmental engagements.

Following the elections, the Governors transitioned into the two-day symposium aimed at clarifying the operational, legal, and fiscal implications of the Affordable Housing and SHA reforms on County Governments. The symposium provided a platform for deep reflection, peer learning, and harmonization of policy positions in line with the principles of consultation and cooperation enshrined in Devolution.

The Council of Governors (CoG) on 19th November 2025 convened an Ordinary Full Council meeting and a high-level two-day symposium in Nakuru County to develop a unified County Governments' position on two major national programmes—the Affordable Housing Programme (AHP) and the Social Health Insurance Scheme (SHIS). The meeting also marked an important leadership transition within the Council, demonstrating the continued commitment of the 47 Governors

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KEY EVENTS OF THE MONTH





CoG Vice-Chair H.E. Muthomi Njuki, speaking during the high-level two-day symposium in Nakuru County

On Affordable Housing, Governors adopted far-reaching resolutions to ensure transparency, legality and County involvement in the programme. They affirmed that all ongoing AHP projects must be fully regularized in compliance

with due process and applicable laws, and further underscored that the allocation of County land for future projects shall strictly adhere

to all legal and regulatory requirements with County Governments remaining the lessors upon allocation of such land to Affordable Housing Board on a lease basis.

**“Strong policy today is better service delivery tomorrow. By forging a unified County position on the Affordable Housing Programme and the Social Health Insurance agenda, we are making a deliberate investment in improved services and strengthened devolution.”**

**H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi, EGH**

Counties also resolved that all AHP projects must undergo full county development approvals, ensuring alignment with local planning frameworks and environmental safeguards. Additionally, it was agreed that interested County Governments shall buy the affordable housing units from the Affordable Housing Board at a subsidized rate (at cost) for County Housing Stock for both Social and Affordable programme.

Recognizing that housing cannot exist without adequate services, it was resolved that the Affordable Housing Board shall ensure provision of on-site infrastructure and last mile infrastructure for affordable housing programme. This includes schools, health facilities, access roads, markets, water and sanitation—elements essential to creating livable, inclusive settlements. Counties also welcomed the deployment of interns from the State Department for Housing to bolster capacity in planning, implementation and monitoring of the AHP.

On health, the Governors emphasized that reforms under the Social Health Insurance Scheme must safeguard service delivery at the primary level. They called on the Social Health Authority to allow Primary Healthcare (PHC) facilities to offer and be reimbursed for maternity services, noting the essential role of community-level care. They also urged the expansion of the ambulatory package to cover inter-facility referrals, many of which occur during emergencies. The Council underscored the importance of timely disbursement of funds to County facilities and recommended that proxy means testing be undertaken by County Governments to ensure accurate identification of vulnerable populations.

The symposium further highlighted the ongoing work of the Lands, Housing and Urban Development Committee, which continues to support counties through policy review, capacity building, research and intergovernmental coordination. The Committee is currently implementing key programs such as KUSP II, KISIP II and the Digital Land Governance Programme, all of which are critical in strengthening urban planning, slum upgrading, digital land management and the transition to resilient, well-governed urban areas.

On the sidelines of the symposium, the Governors also held a consultative session with MEDS and PATH to explore strategies for strengthening health supply chains and enhancing service delivery across counties.

Through these engagements, the 47 Governors reaffirmed their collective commitment to safeguarding Devolution, ensuring prudent implementation of national reforms and delivering value to citizens. The symposium's outcomes set the foundation for coordinated, people-centred development anchored in strong intergovernmental collaboration and county-driven leadership.



CoG whip H.E. Benjamin Cheboi during the high-level two-day symposium in Nakuru County

## ENDING MATERNAL AND NEWBORN DEATHS FOR EVERY MOTHER, EVERY NEWBORN, EVERYWHERE

With Kenya losing an estimated 5,680 mothers and 33,600 newborns every year to preventable complications, strengthening maternal and child health systems has become an urgent National priority. In a decisive step toward addressing this crisis, the Council of Governors (CoG), led by the Vice-Chair H.E. Muthomi Njuki alongside Governors H.E. Stephen Sang, H.E. Kenneth Lusaka, H.E. Mohamed Adan Khalif convened a high-level engagement to review County progress, identify persistent gaps and agree on actionable strategies to reduce preventable deaths. CECMS and Chief Officers in charge of health at the County level, frontline healthcare workers and development partners were also in attendance, emphasizing a united approach to safeguarding maternal and newborn health.

During the session, the Inter-County Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) initiative was officially launched, marking a defining moment in Counties' collective resolve to end preventable maternal and newborn deaths.

Speaking during the launch, H.E. Muthomi Njuki highlighted that leadership is about service and that all Governors share an equal responsibility to protect the lives of mothers and newborns across all 47 Counties. With a catalytic investment of 531 million over three years, the Inter-County MPDSR initiative is set to strengthen coordination, accountability and real-time data use through a live National dashboard. Counties will be empowered to cost and implement life-saving interventions, from postpartum hemorrhage bundles to essential newborn care, ensuring that



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CoG Vice Chair H.E. Muthomi Njuki speaking during the official launch of the Inter-County Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) initiative

childbirth is a blessing, not a source of preventable tragedy. “Every mother deserves dignity, safety and care and I am calling on all stakeholders to uphold this commitment.” He emphasized.

Governor H.E. Stephen Sang reinforced this message, saying, “Our goal is clear and profound, no woman or newborn should die from preventable causes. We must work together across all Counties to ensure that every mother receives the care, protection and support they deserve.” Governor H.E. Kenneth Lusaka and Governor H.E. Mohamed Adan Khalif also reiterated that coordinated County action, continuous monitoring, real-time data use and strengthened health systems are essential to saving lives.

“With a catalytic investment of 531 million over three years, the Inter-County MPDSR initiative is set to strengthen coordination, accountability and real-time data use through a live National dashboard.”

H.E. Muthomi Njuki, EGH

and child deserve.”

CoG CEO Mary Mwiti on her part addressed the delegates, calling for stronger systems and collective action. “We must build sustainable structures and strengthen inter-County collaboration if we are to reduce maternal and newborn deaths. The MPDSR dashboard and the investment case are crucial tools and the voices of frontline health workers must guide our interventions. Every stakeholder, from policy to implementation, has a role in ensuring a resilient and accountable health system,” she reiterated.

Building on this, Dr. Mary Maina brought in the clinical perspective, drawing from recent maternal and perinatal audit findings. She emphasized the need for timely care and consistent follow-up, noting, “When we detect risks early, act promptly and ensure structured follow-up, we prevent avoidable deaths. Clinical excellence, supported by committed leadership and coordinated County efforts, can truly transform maternal and newborn health outcomes in Kenya.”



H.E. Mohamed Adan Khalif speaking during the official launch of the Inter-County Maternal and Perinatal Death Surveillance and Response (MPDSR) initiative

The launch of the Inter-County MPDSR initiative, coupled with these collective commitments, signals a transformative moment for maternal and newborn health in Kenya, ensuring that no mother loses her life while giving one, and every newborn has the healthy start they deserve.

## REINFORCING PUBLIC SERVICE FOR IMPROVED GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY

County Secretaries from all Counties gathered for a consultative engagement convened in Nakuru County on Monday, 24th November 2025 to address key sector issues including coordination, performance management and service delivery.

Delivering the official opening remarks on behalf of the Chair, CoG Whip H.E Benjamin Cheboi reiterated that “the Office of the County Secretary is, at its core, the central command of County administration, the place where governance, coordination and institutional identity converge.” The statement underscored the mounting pressures facing Counties, diminishing public trust, blurred role boundaries among senior officers, weak internal controls and a public service increasingly affected by politics. It was a call for County Secretaries to reestablish order, reinforce administrative discipline and safeguard the integrity of County systems.

Building on this, H.E. Anne Waiguru, highlighted the weight of expectations carried by the office. She noted that “the public service looks to the County Secretary for direction, stability and alignment with the Governor’s vision,” urging leaders to cultivate systems that operate with efficiency, purpose and ethical grounding. Her remarks highlighted a shared understanding

that Counties can only achieve coherence when the administrative center is strong, respected and clearly defined.

As discussions deepened, H.E. Rt Hon Kenneth Lusaka shifted the focus to the culture shaping County public service. He emphasized that “we cannot deliver excellence without restoring the traditional ethos of public service, one that is citizen-focused, principled and professional.” He outlined practical steps such as county-wide inductions, service charters, depoliticized workspaces, integrity scorecards and structured motivation initiatives. His message reinforced the idea that transforming Counties begins with transforming the people and practices within them.

H.E. Lucy Mulili, Deputy Governor of Makueni County, complemented this by drawing lessons from National Government structures. She highlighted that “coordinated communication, strong HR instruments, cabinet sub-committees and effective record-keeping are not just processes, they are foundations of a functional Government.” She encouraged County Secretaries to strengthen their advisory role, interrogate executive orders more deliberately and embrace governance models that enhance clarity and cohesion.



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H.E. Rt Hon Kenneth Lusaka speaking during the County Secretaries consultative engagement

Adding a leadership perspective, CoG CEO Mary Mwiti guided the participants through her “Wheels of Life, Pillars of Effective Leadership” presentation. She

“we cannot deliver excellence without restoring the traditional ethos of public service, one that is citizen-focused, principled and professional.”

H.E. Rt Hon Kenneth Lusaka

explained that “value, authenticity, receptivity and balance are the pillars that influence whether a leader truly rises in service.” Her reflections reminded County Secretaries that the essence of their role is not only administrative, it is deeply relational and rooted in servant leadership. She encouraged them to model honesty, consistency, collaboration, openness and citizen-centered decision-making.

The conversations concluded with insights from governance expert Mr. James Ntobo, who underscored that “the County Secretary is not just an administrator, this office is a brand and how you carry it defines how the entire County functions.” He unpacked role conflicts between County Secretaries, CECs, Boards and County Attorneys and urged leaders to strengthen their networks, build better coordination frameworks and maintain executive presence in all official engagements.

Together, the discussions painted a clear picture that the future of County governance rests heavily on the clarity, discipline and leadership of County Secretaries and as Counties continue to grow, reform and redefine themselves, the office remains the anchor, the place where vision is translated into coordinated action and where public service ethos must truly come alive.

During this forum, the County Secretaries caucus unveiled its new leadership, tasked with steering the caucus for the next one year. Mr. Billow Issack Hassan made a comeback as Chairperson and will be deputized by Ms. Amy Ruria as Vice Chairperson. Prof. Bernard Muok will serve as Whip while Mr. Frank Kanja takes up the role of Secretary. Mr. Joseph Ogutu now assumes the position of Treasurer, while Mr. Philip Meli takes charge of Welfare, strengthening the team’s administrative and support functions.



H.E. Anne Waiguru speaking during the County Secretaries consultative engagement

## COUNTIES RECORD TRANSFORMATIVE GAINS IN PRIMARY HEALTHCARE

Devolution continues to strengthen Kenya’s primary healthcare (PHC) systems with County Governments registering notable progress through strategic partnerships, targeted investments, and community engagements. In line with its mandate to share and document best practices emanating from County Governments on devolved sectors, the Council of Governors (CoG), recently visited Tana River, Kitui, Tharaka-Nithi and Kilifi Counties to document the achievements and innovations in primary health care.

The mission highlighted how devolved health governance, coupled with community-driven approaches, is accelerating improvements in maternal, newborn and child health (MNCH) outcomes, with a focus on the DANIDA-funded Primary Healthcare support program. Key indicators like Antenatal Care services (ANC), immunization coverage, skilled deliveries, and family planning uptake are on a strong upward trend.

Field engagements at Pumwani Dispensary and the Lafuma community in Bondeni Village showcased a model example of strong community-facility collaboration. This includes: mother-to-mother support groups; extensive capacity building for CHPs, CHCs, and reorientation of Traditional Birth Attendants (TBAs), strengthening referral systems and behaviour change communication. TBAs now serve as birth companions and mobilizers, reinforcing community trust in formal health services.



A facility nurse in Tharaka-Nithi County packing medical supplies in shelves build from Danida Funding





Community members and beneficiaries of during a field visit in Kilifi County

Notably, at Garsen Health Centre, hospital deliveries have increased from 17 per month in 2017 to over 100 currently, demonstrating improved access to health services, while provision of simple mama packs continues to incentivize facility-based deliveries.

In Kilifi County, Kiwandani Dispensary showcases how PHC resources can transform service delivery. The facility has invested in strengthening community engagements and enhancing Facility upgrades, including partitioned maternity rooms and an improved waiting bay, to enhance client comfort and privacy. After years of low uptake due to cultural barriers, Kiwandani is now leading the county in long-term and reversible contraception (LARC).

Additionally, Tsangatsini Dispensary has become a critical delivery point for maternal health services, conducting an average of 50 deliveries per month. The facility has increased demand for services through regular integrated outreaches and health education and utilized data effectively to undertake line-listing of ANC and PNC defaulters, improving follow-up and targeted outreach.

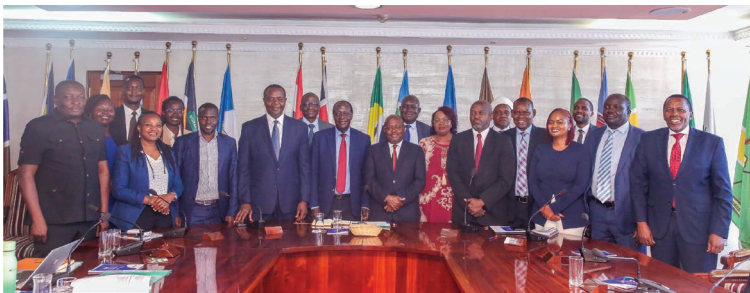
While commendable milestones have been achieved, challenges persist. These include: unpredictable financing and delays in SHA reimbursements which negatively impacts planning and continuity of service delivery; long distances to facilities, commodity stock-outs, and insufficient infrastructure among others.

In Tharaka Nithi County, particularly Gaceraka Dispensary and Gaceuni Dispensary, the facilities have improved the storage facilities for essential commodities and ensured that planning and budgeting is undertaken through a participatory process involving the health facility management committee and community representatives.

Similarly in Kitui County, facility - community linkages have been strengthened through the DANIDA PHC support program, with a remarkable increase in the number of referrals from the Community at Nzalei and Kasevi Dispensaries in Mwingi West Sub-County. Community dialogue days and integrated outreaches involving all relevant stakeholders have been instrumental in enhancing access to crucial health services and realizing these achievements.

There is need to adopt community-responsive strategies and advocate for increased investment in primary health care to sustain the gains realized thus far and ensure that no mother, child or family is left behind in Kenya's journey toward universal health coverage.

## UGATUZI CORNER



Council of Governors (COG) NRM Committee led by the chair H.E. Wilber Ottichilo and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) during a consultative meeting at CoG offices

The Council of Governors (COG) and the National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) held a consultative meeting on 6th November 2025 to discuss issues affecting the sector. These include the: Environmental Impact Assessment Fees for County Government Projects; the Environmental Management And Coordination (Sand Harvesting) Regulations, 2024; management of active and abandoned quarries; carbon markets; awareness creation on waste management; operationalization of the National Climate Change Council and the National Climate Change Fund.

It was agreed that both NEMA and CoG will reconvene in a month's time to review the progress of implementation of the resolutions.

## LAMU FARMERS UNLOCK NEW WEALTH THROUGH FIRST LOCAL EDIBLE OIL PLANT

Over 90% of Kenya's edible oil is currently imported, leaving local farmers at a disadvantage when it comes to value-addition. But in Lamu County, that narrative is shifting dramatically. Through a pioneering partnership between the County Government of Lamu and the Nuts & Oil Crops Directorate, farmers now have access to a cutting-edge edible oil processing plant at the Mpeketoni Agricultural Training Centre.

This facility has boosted daily production from just 500 kg, what farmers used to manage manually, to an impressive five tonnes. The plant can press, purify, package and brand oils made from sunflower, sesame (simsim) and peanuts, enabling Lamu producers to move from raw crop sales to value-added, locally processed oil.

As a result, farmers are now earning significantly more from their harvests. At the household level, residents benefit from affordable, locally produced cooking oil, reducing dependence on imports. The project is also driving job creation across the value chain, strengthening food security and strengthening agribusiness in the County.



Lamu's first edible oil processing machine, boosting local agriculture

Governor Issa Timamy celebrated the initiative as a major milestone for economic empowerment in Lamu, calling it a powerful example of how innovation and collaboration can transform agriculture and improvelivelihoods. Through this project, Lamu is not just boosting production, it's laying the foundation for long-term resilience, local value capture and sustainable development in the edible oil sector.







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