



**COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS**

**Concept note for the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference 2021**

**Theme: Theme: Multi – Level Governance For Climate Action**

**Sub-Theme: Sub-National Mobilization in Unlocking the Full Potential of Climate Action During And After Pandemics**

**Objective: Strengthening Sub-national governments to act on climate change and develop stronger mitigation capacities**

**Date: 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021**

**Venue: Makueni County**

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## 1.0 Introduction

The United Nations defines climate change as the increasing frequency and the intensity of extreme weather events such as heatwaves, droughts, floods and tropical cyclones, aggravating water management problems, reducing agricultural production and food security, increasing health risks, damaging critical infrastructure, and interrupting the provision of basic services such as water and sanitation, education, energy and transport.

Climate action refers to the stepped-up efforts towards reducing greenhouse gas emissions and strengthening resilience and adaptive capacity to climate-induced impacts, including climate-related hazards in all countries; integrating climate change measures into national policies, strategies and planning; and improving education, awareness-raising and human and institutional capacity for climate change mitigation, adaptation, impact reduction and early warning according to the United Nations.

The Climate action agenda is taking momentum and nations in September 2019 congregated in New York City for the Climate Action Summit (CAS), for the Member States to deliberate on how to mobilize new partnerships, resources and actions that were geared towards robust national governments commitments ahead of the 2019 UN Climate Change Conference (COP 25) and support new and existing sub-National climate ambition in line with the Paris Agreement. There is need for subnational Governments to have discussions on how they will undertake deliberate action to protect the citizens from the impact of climate change.

The impact and effects of climate change in the recent years has had effects to planning and delivery of services by governments to its people. Particular effects have been observed to people living with disabilities, vulnerable groups in the society, marginalized communities in developing Countries, women and children. The United Nations has particularly pronounced itself on this and has endorsed the rights and privileges of PWDs in climate action. As Countries take deliberate efforts in taking specific actions for the PWDs they also need to ensure that the vulnerable groups in their population are also considered and ensure this is done using gender lenses.

Lastly, with under ten years of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), SDG 13 aims to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts and actions must go hand in hand with efforts to integrate disaster risk measures, sustainable natural resource management and human security into Sub-national development strategies.

## 1.1 Background

As the Continent gears itself in taking action, Kenya has demonstrated leadership in climate action in the following ways;

1. Kenya has mapped 498 pro-poor urban areas across the Country.
2. Kenya has the biggest wind power plant in Africa, an output of 310MW of clean and reliable electricity the biggest station in Turkana County.
3. The Government of Kenya has imposed a total ban on use, manufacture and importation of plastic bags as a way of mitigating the effects they cause to the environment.
4. Development and enactment of the Climate Change Act (2016) which provides for the development and implementation of a five-year National Climate Change Action Plan (NCCAP).

At the sub-national level, efforts have been put in place with a view to address climate change impacts. These includes: -

- i. Mainstreaming of climate change in the second-generation County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs) and the Medium-Term Plan (MTP III) as required in the Climate Change Act, 2016;
- ii. 46 County Governments have designated CECMs responsible for climate change to coordinate climate change affairs in the Counties: and
- iii. At least five (5) Counties have developed climate change policies while three (3) Counties have developed climate action plans.
- iv. Seven (7) Counties have developed climate change fund regulations to support local financing of climate action.

Whereas, Counties are making strides towards addressing the issue of climate change, there are challenges that are being experienced at the Sub-national level which include:-

- i. Funding – The County equitable share is limited hence most Counties have not set aside a percentage of development budget towards climate change initiatives;
- ii. Capacity Building – Counties lack expertise/knowledge on climate change adaption and mitigation to support local resilience building; and

- iii. Poor coordination between National and County governments in design and development of climate action initiatives.

It is imperative for the subnational Governments to discuss and deliberate on this issues among others and their mobilization in unlocking the full potential of climate action. The willingness of County Governments in Kenya to take action has been building momentum and their commitment was demonstrated through their participation in the Climate Action Summit. Through the Council, Kenya's subnational Governments represented the Country in sessions on Local Leadership for Climate: Solutions to the Climate Emergency. They committed to partner and share experiences with other Countries on how to climate action at subnational levels. It will also promote conversations and commitments in ensuring that the country is on track in achieving the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) by 2030.

## **2.0 Purpose of 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference**

The Annual Devolution conference is an important event as it provides a platform through which all stakeholders in the devolution space evaluate the performance of both levels of governments on matters of policy, legislation, accountability, good governance, and service delivery among others. It also provides an opportunity for sharing challenges, opportunities and best practices from a local and international perspective.

Kenya is one of the member states of the United Nations has committed to take urgent action to develop ambitious solutions in five areas:

- i) Global transition to renewable energy;
- ii) Sustainable and resilient infrastructures and cities;
- iii) Sustainable agriculture and management of forests and oceans;
- iv) Resilience and adaptation to climate impacts; and
- v) Alignment of public and private finance with a net-zero economy.

Climate change poses a critical threat to future development, particularly in developing countries where food security, water scarcity ,urban poverty, high unemployment, increased industrialization activities and low access to quality healthcare is widespread and key assets such as infrastructure are underdeveloped for even current needs. Kenya is bearing the brunt of climate change impacts and the associated socio-economic losses. The imperative to tackle climate change becomes ever more urgent with each passing day as the situation is exacerbated by the high the high dependence on climate-sensitive natural resources. The use of fossil fuels for combustion for both domestic and commercial has detrimental effects to environment where some lead to acid rains. There is need therefore to have a discussion and

formulate workable strategies geared towards renewable sources of energy such as bio gas to deter some of this effects.

Given the challenges being experienced due to changes in climatic conditions occasioned by human activity and environmental degradation, the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference is geared towards looking at the role of sub-National governments in climate action. The sub-National levels of government have a critical role to play as far as climate action is concerned as they operate at the local level where the greatest impacts are felt by the communities. This, therefore, calls for a platform for sub-national levels of Government to discuss, share and develop a strategy together with the National Government and other relevant stakeholders on addressing climate change.

### **3.0 Justification for 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference**

The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference shall be held from 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in Makueni County. The last six conferences have focused on various issues with a key focus on the devolution journey, the space of National and County Governments in the implementation of the Big Four Agenda and reviewing its implementation. The 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference will focus on Climate Action, in particular, the impact and the role of sub-national Governments in Climate Action.

The focus on climate action has been necessitated by the adverse impact of climate change in socio-economic development in Kenya. This has resulted in poor living conditions in some areas, occurrence of floods, drought, unregulated release of industrial wastes and increased burden in health. National and County Governments have a responsibility in ensuring that the Country this issues are dealt with and that the population is food secure, there is use of natural resources sustainably, provision of affordable and quality healthcare, job opportunities are created and sustainable waste management employed both by government and private sector.

The conference will be critical in ensuring that sub-national Governments both local, regional and across the globe have a platform to discuss and deliberate on their role and how they can unlock opportunities to turn around the climate change effects in the communities. Given the increasing nature-related hazards like floods, landslides among others facing Kenyans, it is time we saw concerted actions to legislate, fund and enforce climate-smart strategies and reduce greenhouse gas emissions at sub-national and national levels.

#### **4.0 Main Objective**

The overall objective of the conference is Strengthening Sub-national governments to act on climate change and develop stronger mitigation capacities.

#### **4.1 Specific Objectives of the 7<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference**

The objectives of this conference will include among other things, too;

1. Enable County Governments to demonstrate bold climate leadership;
2. To deliberate on the impact of climate change mitigation measures;
3. To deliberate on how to strengthen Kenya's capacity to develop a GHG inventory;
4. Provide a platform for government and private sector to commit on climate action strategies to be undertaken for the next year; and
5. Mobilize two million trees to be planted in the host county before and during the conference.

#### **4.2 Expected Outcomes/Outputs**

To share best practice across the country, regionally and globally on climate action strategies being undertaken by subnational governments and how they can unlock the full potential of climate action.

A final communique will be developed and signed by the key stakeholders for implementation in the next year.

#### **5.0 Proposed Conference format**

The conference shall adopt the **dialogue approach** through panel discussions followed by plenary engagements. This will be achieved through the use of both general plenary sessions and side events to discuss various climate action agendas while mainstreaming issues of the Big 4.

The concurrent sessions shall be held separately and shall have a moderator to pose questions to the panelists. Thereafter, plenary shall be opened up for participants to give their views on the subject matter being discussed.

Professional facilitators/moderators shall be engaged by the participants in dialogue towards identifying solutions and making prepositions for the way forward.

The conference shall also have an open exchange of experiences through exhibitions which shall be open opportunities for direct interaction.

The panel modality shall include:

1. A video/ Snapshots with Headlines on the impact of climate change in the specific sector or sub-theme.
2. Paper presentation/ sharing of best practice on climate action strategy being employed or should be employed by stakeholders.
3. A moderated plenary.
4. Wrap up by the moderator will give a summary highlighting the challenges being experienced and progress made so far.

The following activities will be undertaken as curtain-raisers before the main conference:

- a) Growing two million indigenous and fruits trees in institutions of learning, health facilities and other public spaces in the South Eastern Regional Economic Bloc and Kajiado County; and
- b) Football tournament and tug of war. The football match will be two tier tournament being:
  - Morning session a tournament for the youths from the South Eastern Kenya Regional Bloc (SEKEB), and
  - Afternoon tournament will be for Council of Governors, County Assemblies Forum, Ministry of Devolution & ASAL and Senate.

## **6.0 Proposed Sub-Themes**

The Sub-themes for the sector side events will be developed jointly by sector stakeholders and sector programs developed. The main plenary where critical issues to be discussed and commitments made in the conference will have four sub-themes. The sub-themes will include:

- Climate Action and Urban development
- Climate Action and Food Security
- Climate Action and Natural Resource Management
- Climate Action Health and Sanitation
- Climate Action and Tourism
- Climate Action and Blue Economy
- Impact of pandemics and disasters to Trade and Manufacturing
- Strengthening climate action through promotion of gender equality and empowerment of all women and girls



- Managing fossil fuels
- Indigenous knowledge in climate action (food, forest, Herbal medicine etc)
- Youth leading the way to environmental conservation
- The future of Pastoralism in the wake of Climate Change

## **7.0 Resource Mobilization Strategy**

The Council will engage possible partners from National Government, Development partners and Non-State Actors.

## **8.0 List of Participants**

To have robust engagements, the Council of Governors seeks to invite representatives of County Governments, National Government institutions, Civil Society Organizations, media, religious institutions, sub-national Governments from Africa and other regions, development partners, academia, private sector practitioners and other Governments that have a devolved system of government similar to Kenya. This approach will facilitate the exchange of experiences and potential learning from each other and provide a platform to come up with practical solutions that can be employed to achieve the key objectives.

Representatives of development partners and the private sector will be encouraged as a follow up to the conference to identify ways to partner on implementation of the agreed actions, in the form of specific knowledge exchange among participants, capacity building or technical cooperation.

## **9.0 Duration and Schedule of Conference**

The Conference shall be held on 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021 in Makueni County.

The conference schedule is as follows:

- I. Arrival and collection of registration badges Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021;
- II. Devolution Tournament on Tuesday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2021;
- III. Tree planting presidential Morning of Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021;
- IV. Official Opening of the Conference Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021;
- V. Conference Days Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> - Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021;
- VI. Official Closing Ceremony and signing of Commitments Friday 26<sup>th</sup> November 2021;  
and
- VII. Departure Saturday 27<sup>th</sup> November 2021.