



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

STATEMENT BY

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AFRICAN COMMUNITY, ASALS AND REGIONAL DEVELOPMENT**

DURING

THE 9TH IDDRSI GENERAL ASSEMBLY MEETING HELD IN ENTEBBE, UGANDA

ON 24TH NOVEMBER 2023

Salutations

1. Let me convey my sincere gratitude to the Government and the people of the Republic of Uganda for the warm reception and excellent facilities put at our disposal since we arrived in this beautiful lake side city of Entebbe.

Ladies and Gentlemen

2. This meeting is coming at a time when we are facing enhanced rainfall in many parts of the IGAD region including Kenya and is coming hot on the heels of the worst drought in over forty years. Indeed a God's blessing on one hand but on the other hand, a potential disaster. This is a clear manifestation of the effects of climate change that as a region we must be ready to address. Allow me to put this into perspective.
3. A few months ago, we had serious water and pasture shortage in Kenya leading to loss of at least 2.6 million livestock and more than 1,000 wildlife. Currently, we are losing lives and livelihoods to floods. What a contrast when the enhanced rainfall is expected to be a perfect solution to the effects of drought!

4. As a region, this is a wakeup call and a clear display that our goal of building resilience to calamities such as drought and now floods is far from being achieved.
5. As we celebrate ten years of IDDRSI, we need to re-evaluate strategies and plans we have been implementing over this period to establish whether they are taking us to the right direction and whether there are things we need to do differently to accelerate achievement of goal of community resilience to drought.
6. In Kenya, we have completed review of performance of our resilience building strategy over the past ten years and noted that there are some good lessons we can take forward and there are other weaknesses that we must address if the goal of ending drought emergencies is to be achieved. Based on this evaluation, we have commenced development of a ten-year strategy for drought resilience and ending drought emergencies.
7. The initial deliberations of the new strategy point to the need to do things differently including use of technology, building on past experiences and strengthening collaborations for efficiency. Among other factors, the new plan will focus on high impact investments that catalyze the change we desire.
8. In the spirit of this new strategic direction, and recognizing that water is the major challenge facing drought risk management, the Government is planning to invest in one large dam per county over the medium term to harvest water for domestic use, livestock production and irrigation.

Distinguished Participants

Ladies and Gentlemen

9. As a country, we remain committed to implementing of Communiqué of the General Assembly and recommendations of the Steering Committee Meetings. Allow me to highlight status of implementation of three recommendations of the 15th IDDRSI Platform Steering Committee meeting held in Khartoum, Sudan:

- a. In response to the recommendation to invest in post-harvest management capacity, and recognizing that Kenya has been losing an average of 30% of cereals in form of post-harvest losses, the Government has purchased 100 grain dryers at a total cost of Kshs. 2 billion to be used by farmers across the country to mitigate against the losses.
- b. In response to the recommendation to strengthened early warning for early action, the reliability of the Kenya drought early warning system has been enhanced by refining the early warning triggers across 23 ASAL counties, incorporating remote sensing data and the digitizing the system.
- c. In line with the call made for member states to safeguard lives and livelihoods from effects of drought, the Kenya Government, with support of development partners and the private sector spent over 82 billion Kenya Shillings in response interventions during the 2021-23 drought to mitigate effects of the calamity on affected households

Ladies and Gentlemen

10. During the previous drought, almost five million Kenyans were food insecure and required humanitarian assistance. To this end, deliberate measures have been taken to improve on food and nutrition security and contribute to Kenya's Ending Drought Emergencies goal. One such measure is the fertilizer subsidy programme whose implementation has been rolled out with remarkable success. Preliminary reports show that

during the 2023 long rain season, maize production increased by 12 million bags due to access to subsidized fertilizer coupled with favorable rains.

11. BUT – dealing with drought risks require addressing the root causes of the problem, not just dealing with the symptoms.

12. The Kenya Government has therefore commenced implementation of a programme aimed at dealing with issues of climate change that has been blamed for increased frequency and severity of drought. Among these is the tree planting programme for which the Government targets to plant and nurture 15 billion trees in ten years.

**In conclusion,
Ladies and Gentlemen**

13. I have noted with appreciation that we have regularly been holding the IDDRSI General Assembly meetings of Ministers, with this being the 9th meeting in ten years. However, over the past ten years, we have held only two Drought Resilience Summits of Heads of State and Government; the first being in Nairobi, Kenya, in 2011 and the second in Kampala, Uganda in 2014.

14. As we celebrate the 10th anniversary of IDDRSI, we need to reflect on whether this may have affected achievement of the targets of drought resilience and as a matter of urgency, plan to hold the third Summit.

I thank you

24th November 2023