



COUNCIL OF GOVERNORS

TALKING NOTES DURING VIRTUAL GLOBAL OBSERVANCE OF WORLD CITIES DAY 2020

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DEVELOPMENT, PLANNING, LANDS, HOUSING, INFRASTRUCTURE AND
ENERGY COMMITTEE**

*H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta,
UN Secretary General,
Director General of UNON,
All Excellency Governors,
Cabinet Secretaries,
National Government Representatives,
International Delegates,
All protocols observed,
Distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen.*

Good Morning!

1. It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to the first virtual World Cities Day, 2020 which is being hosted for the first time in Africa. As the host, I wish to extend my most sincere gratitude to each and every one of you for honoring our invite and choosing to participate in this

virtual conference especially at this time when the world is fighting the COVID-19 pandemic.

Ladies and gentlemen,

2. By way of Introduction, allow me to highlight a few facts about Nakuru County. We are a cosmopolitan city with a population of 2.162 million people according to the current 2019 population census. The youth make up majority of this population. We are centrally located along the Northern corridor that links Kenya with neighbouring countries such as Uganda, Rwanda and Burundi and 150 kilometers from the capital city Nairobi. We are also the fourth largest city after Nairobi, Mombasa and Kisumu. We are a melting pot of all cultures in Kenya and are a true reflection of World Cities Day theme: valuing our communities and cities.

3. Nakuru City has embarked on a mission to improve the urban community life by initiating a number of flagship projects among them being beautification of the city and creation of open public spaces. To this end we have rehabilitated one of the gardens at the centre of our city which is being used for recreational purpose. The completion of this project will broaden meeting and bonding areas.

4. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a profound impact on our cities as well as all aspects of our daily lives. This pandemic has taught us that as a cities, we need to forge partnerships and collaboration within the country and with the rest of the world and understand the risks with a focus of rebuilding resilience in the new reality of a post COVID-19 world. Cities have the potential to make their economies recover and

thrive by leveraging on enormous opportunities that can grant the current generation economic and social renewal.

5. The onset of the COVID-19 pandemic and the resultant lockdown across major cities in the world, has increased the need for urban planners to reflect on challenges of communities living in urban areas and the need to enhance a sense of community living. Having to live in the house with children schooling at home and no opportunity for outdoor engagements has placed urban dwellers on the edge.
6. For third world countries, the situation was compounded by the existence of large populations that live in informal settlements with inadequate provision for water, electricity and sanitation. Inability to access economic opportunities and low saving culture put the communities on the red with many cases reported of depression, suicide and associated criminal activities.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

7. As we celebrate the world cities day, it is most befitting that we also focus on life in the informal settlements and community life. For this reason, Nakuru City has initiated a deliberate plan to upgrade life for persons living in the lower economic bracket.
8. Working with development partners like the World Bank, we are building resilience in the vulnerable city dwellers through a programme, the Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Project (KISIP). Some of the areas under review include investment in social amenities and enhancement of living conditions in the slums.
9. Additionally, my administration is working to improve non-motorized transport within Nakuru City and encourage healthy living by creating

walk friendly road infrastructure. This will improve safety of walking and improve other basic mobility within the city as well as increase the health benefits for residents.

10. To achieve this, we have embarked on decongestion of the town by implementing designs that will help us become a more people friendly city. These include redesigning and relocation of public transport from the city centre.
11. A city should also have good sporting facilities. Good sporting infrastructure encourages the growth of a social culture around games. As we all know, sports brings people together and builds communal wellbeing. To this end, we are in the process of upgrading the Afraha Stadium, which is a 20 minutes' walk from the City centre.
12. An airport is critical to any city, therefore, in collaboration with the National Government, we have started the rehabilitation of the Lanet Airstrip that will be completed within 18 months. The airport will be a game changer as Nakuru is not only a tourist destination but is also surrounded by rich agricultural farms. A large percentage of flowers exported to the European countries are grown in our county and an airport would ease transportation of the produce.
13. We have also embarked on the process of Tree planting to help achieve the National afforestation agenda of planting at least 2 billion trees by 2022. Furthermore, we intend to roll out a massive tree planting programme in schools, forests and open spaces with a focus of achieving SDG Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities through providing universal access to green and public spaces.

14. Waste management remains one of the critical development challenges globally, nationally and at the county level. Solid Waste is inevitable due to ordinary human activities such as industrial production, consumption at household level, construction and commercial processes among others. To this end, Nakuru County has established a guiding framework for Waste management which provides effective, efficient and sustainable services while utilizing waste as an economic resource.
15. This includes a project where human waste is processed to fuel referred to as briquettes. This project also helps in environment conservation because it is an alternative to charcoal. A tonne of briquettes is equivalent to saving around 88 trees.

Ladies and gentlemen,

16. Indeed, Urbanization has helped millions of people escape poverty through higher levels of productivity and employment opportunities, improved quality of life via better education, large-scale public investments and access to improved infrastructure. As engines of growth, cities have a key role to play in the economic recovery of countries, cities can be used as instruments to revive the economy by driving growth, providing jobs, supporting investment in critical infrastructure and granting greater financial autonomy.
17. We believe that cities are centres of creativity and innovation as well as places with valuable cultural heritage. Innovation and cultural heritage should be the foundation of how urban centres operate, Supported by people centered technology. We as Cities are committed to understanding innovation beyond technology, placing communities at the centre of the agenda, and securing a technological revolution

that services the communities to guarantee equal access by all people for sustainable growth, shared prosperity and inclusive development

18. It is important to appreciate that Cities and Urban areas offer significant opportunities for formal and informal employment to millions of youth. Involvement of youth in shaping the urban development trajectory enables them to take responsibility and ownership to support the realization of integrated, inclusive and sustainable cities. This approach helps the youth to achieve a positive correlation between urbanization and development, effectively placing communities at the center of urbanization.
19. As I conclude, allow me to mention tourism in Nakuru County. Tourism is one of Kenya's most important industries and has strong linkages with transport, food production, retail and entertainment .We have five lakes in Nakuru County. These are Lake Nakuru and Lake Elementaita commonly known as "Home to the pink flamingoes" The Lake Nakuru National Park is a bird sanctuary. Bird lovers from all over the world congregate in this park for bird watching and related activities. If today's world Cities day was held physically, I am sure you would all have taken a visit to the park to savour this beautiful nature.
20. With these few remarks, it is my hope that this conference will promote the international community's interest in global urbanization, push forward cooperation among countries and address challenges of urbanization globally. I therefore wish you all fruitful discussions aimed towards promoting success of urbanization with a focus on the value of our communities.

THANK YOU!