



SPEECH DURING THE 13TH DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP FORUM HELD ON 28 AUGUST 2025 AT THE OFFICIAL RESIDENCE, KAREN, NAIROBI

**The Co-Chairpersons of the DPF, Amb. Sebastian Groth and Dr.
Stephen Jackson**

Cabinet and Principal Secretaries Present,

Chairperson and CEO, Council of Governors,

Your Excellencies Ambassadors and High Commissioners,

Representatives of Private Sector and Civil Society Organizations,

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

1. It is my great pleasure to welcome you to the 13th Development Partnership Forum (DPF).
2. At the onset, I wish to convey warm greetings and best wishes from **His Excellency Dr. William Samoei Ruto**, who has expressed his optimism with this engagement, and anticipates this forum will yield positive outcomes that will further strengthen the vital relationship between the Government of Kenya and our Development Partners.
3. Kenya has been and continues to be a collaborative partner of the global network of nations and to effective partnerships of mutual interest. As we are all aware, development demands far outweigh available resources. The government is therefore implementing its commitments in partnership with yourselves not only in alignment

with our foreign policy, but also to support the fulfilment of our development objectives to the critical government priorities.

4. The jobs creation and income opportunity agenda has become a critical anchor of our programming going forward. The events of June 2024 and 2025 have necessitated a fresh reorientation towards prioritizing interventions geared towards responding to this dual concern from our young people. We, and you, our development partners, must invariably be flexible, nimble and alert enough to understand, respond and adapt to changes as and when they happen.
5. This agility requires our review of existing programmes for purposes of evaluating their currency and responsiveness to this and any other identified priority agenda. Our focus on opportunities, especially those that help our nascent industries and sectors including MSMEs is our new north. We must help draw drive job and value creation in all our programming. Where the same is not perfectly aligned, we must be willing and able to allow change.
6. We will also be supporting the diversification of our economy to create jobs and expand the tax base. To do this, we are examining measures to support private sector enterprises operating in key economic development areas, such as manufacturing and agriculture, and attract and retain domestic and foreign direct investment.
7. This forum therefore remains a critical platform not only to review progress on Official Development Assistance (ODA) but also to reflect on how ODA aligns with this priority. Most importantly, it is a unique opportunity to fortify the partnership that we all cherish.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

8. As we convene today, we must ask ourselves a fundamental question. **Are the ODA programmes and projects jointly funded by the government and you, the development partners demand driven or supply driven?**

9. Allow me to revisit an agenda from the last DPF, which agenda is a core item in today's deliberations. Concerns were raised regarding absorption rates of our jointly funded projects. The report to be presented presents a mixed bag of results, characterised by a progress that is fragile.
10. We do not take for granted that with the collaboration with Development Partners, the Government of Kenya has made impressive achievements in terms of socio-economic development and environment and natural resources management.
11. While we celebrate the milestones we have achieved together as partners, we must confront recurring challenges that continue to hinder optimal absorption of ODA. These challenges are attributable to both sides of our partnership, with development partners, and government interlocutors all contributing alike. The call will be for all of us to take decisive and actionable steps to overcome these setbacks.
12. Chief among these is the issue of counterpart funding. The absence of clear, predictable counterpart funding requirements embedded within financing agreements continues to pose a serious impediment to project implementation. We have also identified the challenge of uncoordinated off-budget support, whose lack of centralized visibility presents risks such as double allocation of resources to similar projects, ineffective planning and resource allocation, and possible corruption. Further, addressing aged, stalled, and delayed projects is essential to optimizing resources and mitigating risks, anchored by a strong monitoring and evaluation framework.
13. We expect to receive the report on measures to address these and other challenges and are working with the National Treasury to issue guidelines specifying counterpart funding caps, eligible expenditures,

and clearer provisions to ringfence counterpart contributions from budget cuts. Further, we are encouraging prioritization of in-kind contributions and visibility of all off-budget support to ease fiscal pressure. We are also intent on introducing clear criteria for identifying viable projects and introducing cut-off periods beyond which projects should be renegotiated or terminated.

14. This will invariably involve the review of the Joint Sector Working Group (JSWG) framework, to secure its vitality and anchorage of the DPF process.
15. We all remember that, nearly two decades ago, the **Paris Declaration on Aid Effectiveness (2005)** set out five principles namely, country ownership, alignment, harmonization, managing for results, and mutual accountability. These tenets remain as relevant today as they did back then.
16. Real partnership requires genuine accountability and reciprocity. We should hold each other accountable based on the tenets of alignment with home grown systems, agreed priorities and a relentless focus on delivering results. We must therefore ensure that future reporting is in accordance with the provisions of Host Country Agreements and principles on aid effectiveness to ensure transparency, accountability, and effective coordination of development assistance.
17. We call on your support in this regard.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

18. The Nairobi Declaration on Climate Change, adopted at the Africa Climate Summit, serves as Africa's common position on future climate negotiations. The declaration emphasizes the need for global collaboration to mobilize climate finance, and reforms to the global

financial system to better support African nations in their climate goals. We expect to receive a status update from the Ministry of Environment and Forestry, and a call to action in this regard.

19. Lastly, we appreciate that development partner support may be impacted by the general withdrawal of support to key programmes, particularly by traditional partners such as the United States. Major policy shifts are reshaping country priorities, impacting on the long-standing financing support we have traditionally received as a country. We expect to receive a report from the National Treasury on the mitigation actions in place, and the particular reforms being prioritized to secure seamless transitions.
20. Our DPF today should invariably lead us to adopt a whole-of-society approach in leveraging funds through coordinated structures to maximize impact, reduce duplication, improve governance, and strengthen linkages among interconnected projects.
21. As we gather here today, our goal is to deepen ongoing reforms, strengthen the use of country systems, improve absorption rates, and ensure that every shilling of ODA is fully aligned with Vision 2030, the Bottom-up Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA), and Medium Term Plan (MTP)-IV priorities, while honoring our commitments under the Paris, Accra, Busan, and Nairobi outcome frameworks. Let us transform ODA from a mere flow of resources into a powerful driver of Kenya's sustainable and inclusive transformation.
22. I call on all of us to recommit to these reforms within the broad context of the seventeen (17) Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), with a particular emphasis on SDG17 on durable partnerships in implementation.

23. I would like to thank all of you for joining us today and for working with us to achieve our national priorities aimed at improving the lives of our people. Our successes in national development are also your successes and we thank you for your friendship and support. It is my firm belief that the collective wisdom and cooperation within this Forum will generate actionable recommendations to strengthen development partnerships and accelerate Kenya's development agenda.
24. As Nelson Mandela said once, and I quote: "It always seems impossible, until it's done."
25. With these remarks, it is my great pleasure to officially declare the 13th Development Partnership Forum open and invite us to receive the first presentation of today's programme.

THANK YOU