

**THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE
MINISTERIAL CONFERENCE ON GLOBAL OPEN DATA
FOR AGRICULTURE & NUTRITION CONFERENCE
(GODAN)
AND
THE AGRITEC-AFRICA EXHIBITION**

**SPEECH BY H.E UHURU KENYATTA, CGH, PRESIDENT
AND COMMANDER-IN-CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE
FORCES OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

JUNE 14, 2017 AT KICC AT 10.00 A.M

Distinguished delegates

Invited Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

1. I would like to welcome you all to Kenya for the Global Open Data for Agriculture and Nutrition (GODAN) Conference which will be held alongside the 4th Agritec Africa International Exhibition in Nairobi for the next three days.

2. The hosting of this event comes at a time when Kenya and the region is facing drought and food scarcity within a context of climate change, making it even more poignant

that we are talking about data for decision making and action for our collective resilience and futures.

3. **Ladies and Gentlemen**, agriculture is the backbone of most economies of the world and a main source of livelihoods in the developing world. It accounts for 63 % of rural household income in Africa, 62% in Asia and 56% in Latin America. Agriculture has tremendous potential for lifting economies out of poverty, create employment for youth across its value chains, catalyze improvements in nutrition and deliver better health outcomes.

4. Use of reliable agricultural data for planning, decision-making and informed actions is critical in transforming the agricultural sector. Despite remarkable advancements in the sector, investments in technology, climate smart agriculture, data production and access by farmers remain a challenge.

5. It is my understanding that the GODAN Conference and 4th AGRITEC AFRICA International Exhibition will seek to address these challenges, by convening policy makers, innovators, researchers, multi-lateral institutions, private sector and student organizations, to think creatively and innovate solutions around access to data for agriculture and nutrition, by all.

6. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** my Government joined the GODAN Community at the margins of the Finance for Development (FfD), in the run up to the adoption of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

7. You also will recall that Kenya played a leading role in the development of the Agenda 2030 that seeks to end extreme poverty and leave no one behind. Kenya, as a country that depends on Agriculture, therefore considers open data for agriculture, a critical component of our development agenda.

8. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** we firmly believe our entry into GODAN will enable us access important datasets being held by G7 countries that are critical for the informational aspects of our economy.

9. It is therefore gratifying and as evidenced by this meeting, that the GODAN community is growing rapidly, currently with more than 530 partners from national Governments, non-governmental, international and private sector organizations. It is my hope that Countries, especially from the Global South will Join Kenya in ensuring our nations benefit from this vibrant network.

10. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** the Ministry of Agriculture has been modernizing in-light of the demands of a growing population and challenges related to Climate. The ravages of human activity and nature demand smart solutions that are data driven to inform food production and resilience. The Ministry has a robust market information system to inform farmer prices and has been working on an Agricultural Information System that enables famers to access insurance information by location.

11. Such systems will benefit immensely from the GODAN network, data and analytics capability that may be brought to bear, for the benefit of farmers.

12. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** I cannot over emphasize that countries in the Global South require accurate, timely and reliable data that is openly available and accessible for their developmental decision making.

13. Our planning must be informed if we are to remain competitive in the agricultural industry, create new jobs for our young people and secure our food supplies for a growing population.

14. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** by hosting the Godan Conference in Nairobi, Kenya is taking lead as requested by

the GODAN Summit held in 2016, to increase access and use of such data by developing countries as a key resource in fulfilling their common visions of agricultural growth and transformation.

15. We hope that this Conference will propose policies that improve coordination of data for agriculture and nutrition across Governments, private sector, and academia in the global south; provide a platform for peer-learning, share of expertise and practices on proven success on use of quality data and standards on agriculture and nutrition.

16. Let me also encourage you to visit the Agritec Africa International Exhibition to experience the cutting edge innovations and practices from leading agricultural firms and nations. The future of the developing world and that of food production must be anchored on south-south cooperation. The exhibition is a practical example of the potential for innovation that lies within our countries.

17. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** as we embark on a historic two day conversation, let us remember that this is just the beginning of a long journey in shaping our collective future with some measure of predictability through data.

18. It is my hope that the conference will shore up support

for increased financial investments in support of data, generate opportunities for building capacity for farmers to use data, improve policy coordination within governments to make data more available and accessible and finally, provide a clear understanding on how governments can take up innovations by the youth within the public sector.

19. With these few remarks, I declare the GODAN and 4th Agritec Africa International Conference officially opened.

20. I would also like to urge you to spend some time during and after the conference, to enjoy our parks, cultural sites, scenaries and the warm hospitality of the Kenya people.

Thank you.

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