



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING

KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE CABINET SECRETARY/THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING, MR. HENRY K. ROTICH, EGH, DURING THE KICK-OFF LAUNCH OF KENYA'S COST OF HUNGER IN AFRICA STUDY TO BE HELD AT KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE, NAIROBI ON 14TH FEBRUARY, 2019.

**Fellow Cabinet Secretaries,
Chairman, Council of Governors;
Development Partners;
Senior Government Officials;
Distinguished Guests;**

Ladies and Gentlemen;

I am honored to be here with you today during the kick-off launch of the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) – Kenya Study. Thank you for finding time off your busy schedules to attend this important event. In March 2012, during the 5th Joint African Union meeting and Economic Commission for Africa conference of Ministers of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in Addis Ababa, Ethiopia, the declaration on COHA (Resolution 898) underscored the importance of carrying out studies to estimate the economic and social impacts of child undernutrition in Africa.

Ladies and Gentlemen

As you are aware, good nutrition is essential for healthy development, survival, dignity and economic productivity. The Constitution of Kenya Articles 43 and 53 guarantees every person the right to be free from hunger and to have adequate food of acceptable quality, and every child the right to basic nutrition respectively.

Health, Food and Nutrition Security are key priority areas under the Government's "Big Four" Agenda which are embedded in the Third Medium Term of the Kenya Vision 2030. To enable a win-win cooperation, as a Government, we have taken deliberate steps to develop policies, strategies and programmes geared towards eradicating undernutrition.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Under the Government's budgetary allocations, we continue to extend cash transfers through the Hunger Safety Net (Inua Jamii) Programme for Older Persons, Orphans and Vulnerable Children (OVCs) as well as People with Disabilities (PWDs).

During the 2017/18 budget, we allocated KShs 7.95 Billion for OVCs, KShs 1.2 Billion for cash transfers to PWDs. In order to address child undernutrition and other issues affecting children, we have allocated KShs 1.2 Billion for Child Welfare Society of Kenya; a State Corporation for the care, protection, welfare and adoption of children vide Legal Notice **No. 58 of 23/05/2014**.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Currently, we are in the process of rolling out Universal Health Coverage (UHC) in four pilot counties of Kisumu, Machakos, Nyeri and Isiolo with the goal of guaranteeing quality and affordable Health Care. Plans are underway to expand the free maternity (Linda Mama Programme) to both mission and private hospitals in Kenya. We envisage that this intervention shall leverage on the government aspirations to deal with child undernutrition and in particular low birth weight by ensuring that expectant mothers receive adequate and sufficient pre and postnatal care.

Towards this end, the Government has devoted KShs 13.5 Billion to support free maternity healthcare as well as leasing of medical equipment during the 2018/19 financial year. The Government expenditure on health and related issues is significant. For instance, during the financial years 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17, the Government spent KShs 37.3 Billion, KShs 41.1 Billion, and KShs 57.4 Billion respectively.

Ladies and gentlemen

In a bid to strengthen Food and Nutrition Security, the Government plans to grow enough food to feed our people at affordable prices through enhancing large scale production by placing an additional 700,000 acres of land through a Public Private Partnership that will support various irrigation schemes.

In addition, the Government is planning to support small scale farmers by up scaling crop and livestock insurance and promoting use of appropriate farming techniques, in addition to availing affordable credit facilities.

To enhance food and nutrition security and modernize agriculture, we have devoted Ksh 1.4 billion for the strategic food reserves, Ksh 1.9 billion for the Kenya Cereal Enhancement Programme, Ksh 0.5 billion for mechanization of agriculture, and Ksh 0.9 billion for crop diversification during 2018/19 financial year. All these interventions are geared towards improving food and nutrition security.

However, despite the bold initiatives that the Government of Kenya has put in place, more interventions are needed to ensure child undernutrition in Kenya is comprehensively addressed.

Ladies and Gentlemen

We note that international best practice demonstrates that evidence-based policy making and budget allocation and implementation is the foundation of economic prosperity. Indeed, carrying out a cost of hunger analysis for Kenya is imperative and timely.

We therefore expect that the findings of the study on estimating the economic and social impact of child undernutrition shall enable the Government makes decisions which are anchored on research particularly with regards to dealing with the challenges of child undernutrition.

Faced with the need to eradicate child undernutrition, the Government shall implement the study findings leveraging on the Public Private Partnership (PPP) framework and with support from development partners given our limited fiscal space.

We are grateful for the financial and technical assistance offered by the African Union Commission (AUC) through the World Food Programme (WFP), Economic Commission for Latin America and the Caribbean (ECLAC), the Canadian High Commission, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund (UNICEF), and Nutrition International among others.

Ladies and Gentlemen

I look forward to insightful study findings that will guide targeted Government investments to address this matter. I wish to thank the National Implementation Team and development partners for making this day a success. With those few remarks, it is now my pleasure to declare that the COHA Kenya study is now officially launched.

Thank you all