



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
THE NATIONAL TREASURY AND PLANNING

**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY, HON, UHURU KENYATTA, C.G.H.,
PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA AND COMMANDER IN
CHIEF OF THE DEFENCE FORCES DURING THE LAUNCH OF THE
COST OF HUNGER IN AFRICA (COHA) KENYA STUDY REPORT AT
KENYATTA INTERNATIONAL CONVENTION CENTRE (KICC),
NAIROBI, 21ST NOVEMBER 2019**

- **Cabinet Secretaries;**
- **Principal Secretaries;**
- **Chairman, Council of Governors;**
- **Chief Executive Officers;**
- **Senior Government Officials;**
- **Development Partners;**
- **COHA –Kenya National Implementation Team;**
- **Distinguished Guests;**
- **Ladies and Gentlemen.**

1. On behalf of my Government and the people of Kenya, I am profoundly delighted and honored to join you this morning for the official launch of the Cost of Hunger in Africa (COHA) Kenya Study Report. I note with gratitude that the study focused on the three sectors of education, health and labour productivity, which sectors resonate well with our “Big Four” Agenda.

The study touched on two pillars in our Big Four” Agenda, that is, Food and Nutrition and Universal Healthcare, a clear indication on the relevance of the study to our key priority policy objectives.

2. May I reiterate that the COHA Study fits well within the framework of our Long term Development aspirations as spelt out in our constitution. The Government is committed to ensuring that the following Constitutional obligations are met:-
 - i. Every person has the right to be free from hunger and to have adequate food of acceptable quality (Article 43); and
 - ii. Every child has the right to basic nutrition (Article 53).
3. **Ladies and gentlemen:** Hunger continues to be one of the major challenges facing the world today. Globally, one out of nine people suffers from hunger. Evidence shows that people who suffer from hunger are the majority in the malnutrition spectrum.
4. You will agree with me that malnutrition is a global phenomenon with severe consequences on economic growth and development. By and large, Africa bears the greatest percentage of all forms of malnutrition globally. Children under the age of five (5), who suffer from stunting, wasting and micronutrient deficiency are the most visible victims of malnutrition. .
5. The challenges associated with malnutrition have led to the need for focus and emphasis on nutrition as part of the development effort worldwide. Goal number two (2) of the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) emphasizes

the need to end hunger, achieve food security and improved nutrition as well as promote sustainable agriculture. My government is committed to delivering on the Food and Nutrition Security Pillar of the “Big Four” Agenda.

6. Ladies and gentlemen, knowing that Children are the greatest asset of our Nation, My Government is committed to ending child undernutrition. Child undernutrition and in particular stunting in children has a negative impact on productivity at a much later stage in life. Indeed, it cannot be overemphasized that a healthy productive age population is a productive Nation that we aspire to build through our “Big Four” agenda policy framework.
7. Today, as we launch the Study on COHA, I wish to state that Kenya has over the years played a critical role in reducing stunting in children from a high of 33% in 1994 to 26% in 2014. As A Government, we are committed to reducing the stunting rates to 14.5% by 2030.
8. **Ladies and gentlemen**, Despite the progress made in child-undernutrition, the COHA Kenya Study results indicate that our Nation is losing revenue worth is **KSh. 373.9 Billion, which represents a loss of 6.9 percent of our GDP as at 2014**. The loss to our GDP is an opportunity lost forever as the amount is equivalent to the revenue allocated to Forty-Seven (47) County Governments in Kenya in 2019/20 Financial Year.
9. I am aware that the task ahead of us, no doubt, is enormous. But, there is no receding in our quest to fight child undernutrition. Across the length and breadth of this Great Nation, my Government in collaboration with

development partners continues to do extraordinary things that show that the flame of our National Spirit burns brighter than ever before.

10.Ladies and Gentlemen, I wish to express my sincere gratitude to our development partners, who have walked the journey of ensuring that our children have a brighter tomorrow. These include, but not limited to:-

- i. The World Food Programme (WFP);
- ii. United Nations Children’s Fund (UNICEF);
- iii. United States Agency for International Development Nutrition and Health Programme (USAID-NHP Plus); and
- iv. Nutrition International (NI).

11.ladies and gentlemen, I wish to emphasize the need for all of us to work together and:-

- i. put in place a comprehensive mechanism to address challenges of child-
undernutrition;
- ii. Scale up and diversify financing for good nutrition for a healthy and
productive nation; and
- iii. Embrace and strengthen existing public private partnership in the
implementation of the policy recommendations from the study.

12.As you may be aware, the Government has successfully rolled-out the pilot phase of the Universal Health Care programme in the Counties of Isiolo, Machakos, Nyeri and Kisumu. I call upon our development partners to join

hands with the Government and leverage on the “Big Four” priority plan on achieving our aspiration of 100 percent provision of Universal Healthcare.

13. Ladies and Gentlemen, you may wish to note that, to date, the programme has witnessed enhanced access to essential health services, with an average increase of 39% reported in the pilot Counties. We are on course for the full rollout of the universal health coverage in the year 2019/2020 in the remaining 43 counties.

14. **Ladies and Gentlemen,** Building a better Kenya is the desire of every Kenyan. But we must be alive to the reality that this noble goal cannot be achieved if the two levels of Government are operating in disharmony.

15. In light of the foregoing, I call upon the County Governments to formulate and develop specific policies based on the recommendations stipulated in the Study Report and implement them seamlessly with the goal of achieving our healthcare and nutrition objectives and saving the loss of our GDP. Development of County Specific nutrition strategies, is no longer a choice but mandatory.

16. In conclusion, I wish to thank the National Implementation Team (NIT), a multi-stakeholder team bringing together Government (through the National Treasury, Ministries of Health, Education, Labor and Social Protection, Agriculture, Livestock, and Fisheries as well KIPPRA, KNBS, and KEMRI not forgetting the Council of Governors and our worthy Development Partners.

17. With these few remarks, **Ladies and gentlemen**, I wish to declare that the COHA Kenya Study Report is officially launched.

Thank you

THURSDAY 21ST NOVEMBER 2019