

STATEMENT BY THE CABINET SECRETARY FOR DEVOLUTION HON EUGENE WAMALWA ON THE UPDATE STATUS ON THE PLANNING PROCESS OF AFRICITIES KISUMU 2021:

Ladies and Gentlemen of the media,

Welcome to this press briefing convened by and on behalf of the Executive Committee of the Africities Kisumu 2021.

First let me begin by congratulating our brother H.E Martin Wambora and his Deputy H.E James Ongwae on their recent election to the leadership of the Council of Governors. As the line ministry for devolution, we look forward with excitement to continue with our rich engagement with the council through their leadership.

Let me also take this opportunity to welcome the Chairman to the Executive committee for Africities in his capacity as the Chair of COG taking over from our brother Oparanya. As you might be aware, Africities Summit planning process has a number of very robust and distinct institutional structures both locally and with UCLG Africa and this committee is one that brings us and the leadership of UCLG-A together, where we discuss and update both sides on various planning aspects.

We also have various committees here at home constituted by H.E the President to steer the process and ensure that we deliver a successful event for the country, Kisumu and the Lake Region Economic Bloc. There is a committee of Cabinet Secretaries of identified line ministries for this process which I chair and the chair COG and Kisumu Governor are members, there is committee of line principle secretaries chaired co-chaired by the Head of the Public Service and the Kisumu Governor here and a Multi-Agency technical Committee

composed of technical officers from both levels of government and other stakeholders. So this is a well-structured and inclusive process with the single aim of branding this great country at the global stage.

We have convened this briefing let the people of Kenya know where we are with the planning process of this Pan African event.

As you might already be aware, these conferences provide the government with an opportunity to showcase to the world what we have to offer at the global arena both in terms of available opportunities and who we are as a people. And we are known for being very hospitable people. This 9th edition of Africities Summit is no less.

And so, the government has been on overdrive to ensure that Kisumu is primed and ready to receive the world on behalf of Kenya.

A number of activities have from various government ministries have been ongoing. The government has mobilized resources to ensure that roads to and around the conference venue are improved. Through the ministry of Infrastructure, we are going to improve to bitumen standards a number of roads leading to the ASK Show ground such as

- Airport – Uzima University – Mamboleo Road which is a 4 km road
- Mamboleo – ASK – Migosi Estate Road,
- Kondele – Mamboleo Highway
- Mamboleo – Miwani road

These are to provide smooth accessibility to the conference venue

Another area of concern that the government is addressing is the airport. Kisumu International Airport was originally upgraded to process 250,000

passengers annually. Demand has grown for its usage to the extent that it is now processing 500,000 passengers. We have determined that with the expected number of delegates to the conference, this will pose a challenge. So the government is committing resources to upgrade the airport by building another terminal that will increase the capacity of the airport to about 1 million passengers annually. This is a commitment of about **1.2 billion shillings**.

A serious factor to note is the availability of convention facilities in Kenya. The government is committed to open up Kisumu by virtue of its geo-positioning and the entire Lake Region Bloc as a focal point for investments and what better opportunity to use than this conference. To this extent, the Government has committed to build a 6000 seater ultra-modern convention Centre in Kisumu. Kisumu has proved over the last three years that it is indeed the business tourism destination for the future.

This has manifested in the development of the tourism industry of the region where about 18 hotels of 3 star and above with almost 2000 bed capacity have come up in the last 5 years.

Overally, our Multi Agency Committee have done a very good job mapping the the planning process in such a way that all we are left with is to measure the implementation process.

The Executive Committee of the Africities convened virtually on 17th February 2021 to consider and review the planning process and made the following resolutions;

- a) That due to some outstanding preparatory plans and cognizant of the fact that some countries are under various levels of restrictions, the date of the Summit be moved from **16th – 20th November 2021 to 26th - 30th April 2022 in Kisumu City.**

- b) That the Summit theme shall be “***The Role of Intermediary Cities of Africa in the Implementation of Agenda 2030 of the United Nations and African Union Agenda 2063***”. The two agenda focus on the urgent need to develop resilient and sustainable urbanization in Africa that are cognizant of livable urban space where over 50% of the African population will be found by 2050. Intermediary cities like Kisumu are likely to be the fastest growth points for this urbanization. Hence the need to focus on INTERMEDIARY cities at the Summit.
- c) That as part of the planning process to the new date, we shall hold the official launch of the Africities website and the Early Bird Registration in Kisumu in the first week of April of 2021.

Ladies and Gentlemen, Welcome to the 9th Edition of Africities Kisumu April 2022.