

MEDIA RELEASE

Joint County Investment Conference in Lamu to spotlight relevant climate solutions for the region

- Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera County Investment Conference slated for June 27th
- The forum to expound on agriculture, tourism, LAPSET corridor opportunities, and closing the funding gap for SMEs in the counties.

June 3, 2024.... Communities in Kenya's marginalized semi-arid lands face a growing threat from climate change with increased droughts, erratic rainfall patterns, and land degradation which pose significant challenges to livelihoods, food security, and overall well-being. To address these issues, the county governments of Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera have organized a joint County Investment Conference bringing together stakeholders to explore innovative solutions to enhance these counties' climate resilience.

The *Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera County Investment Conference* taking place on June 27th in Lamu County will be a platform for identifying the unique challenges faced by ASAL communities in the context of climate change, showcasing successful climate resilience initiatives, facilitating dialogue between government, NGOs, researchers, private sector, and local communities and brainstorming on practical solutions for building long-term resilience.

The event under the theme is *Unveiling Opportunities: Redefining Northern Kenya as an Investable Destination* is open to the public and will feature keynote addresses from leading experts in climate change adaptation, panel discussions on topics such as sustainable water management, drought-resistant agriculture, animal health and breeding anchored on the need to commercialize agriculture, and an exhibition showcasing innovative technologies in tackling some of the most pressing needs in the region.

The over 500 delegates will also explore financing mechanisms and investment opportunities to stimulate economic growth and development along the LAPSET Corridor including the potential impacts of attracting the private sector to invest in these counties.

H.E. Issa Timamy EGH, Governor, Lamu County noted while making the joint announcement:

"It is my great honor and privilege to welcome you to Lamu County for the Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera County Investment Conference. Our region is rich in potential and brimming with opportunities and this unique platform to discuss and explore transformative strategies will drive sustainable development. As a region, we are particularly vulnerable to the impacts of climate change. It is imperative that we develop and implement strategies to mitigate these and create a resilient environment that supports our agricultural and livestock sectors thus ensuring long-term economic stability and food security for our communities. Tourism, for instance, holds tremendous potential for Lamu County, and developing and promoting this sector can create new economic opportunities and jobs for our people".

H.E Maj. (Rtd) Dr. Dhadho Gaddae Godhana, Governor, Tana River County noted:

"This conference is more than just a gathering; it is a testament to our shared vision of a thriving, inclusive economy. We are dedicated to creating an ecosystem where businesses can flourish. In Tana River County, we are keen on promoting mining and manufacturing activities as a key to diversifying

our economy. Our county is endowed with abundant natural resources that, if properly harnessed, can significantly contribute to our economic development. By investing in responsible mining practices and establishing manufacturing industries, we can create jobs, increase our revenue base, and reduce our reliance on traditional economic activities. Our other key focus areas include modernizing farming and fishing activities as well as investments in tourism infrastructure and services which will enhance our county's appeal and ensure sustainable growth in these vital sectors”.

H.E. Nathif J Adam, EGH, Governor, Garissa County added:

“Together, through this conference, let us embark on this journey of growth and transformation, paving the way for a brighter, more prosperous future for the five counties. I encourage investors to explore the unique opportunities Garissa County has to offer such as those presented by the LAPSET Corridor. This strategic infrastructure project can greatly enhance connectivity, facilitate trade, and attract investments. When an enabling environment is created for businesses in the region to flourish. Our pastoral communities have long relied on livestock as a primary source of livelihood and as such, by introducing innovative practices, improving animal health services, and expanding market access, we can significantly increase livestock productivity and profitability”.

H.E. FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi, Governor, of Wajir County remarked:

“As we engage in meaningful discussions and forge new partnerships let us not forget that the backbone of our Kenyan economy is agriculture. Wajir County boasts of vast tracts of arable land and a favorable climate for various crops. Commercializing agriculture and embracing value-addition is critical for transforming our county's economy. We are calling on investors who can support us in modernizing our farming techniques, enhancing market access, and investing in value addition, to increase productivity and profitability in our agricultural sector. This will not only boost our economy but also improve the livelihoods of our farmers and create job opportunities for our youth and women. Their active participation in economic activities is vital for our progress and we are committed to providing them with the necessary resources, training, and support to thrive as entrepreneurs”.

H.E. Mohamed Adan Khalif, Governor, of Mandera County noted:

“By investing in Northern Kenya counties, you create a more equitable and prosperous society where everyone has the opportunity to succeed. One of our key focus areas in Mandera during this conference will be on opportunities to enhance livestock production which can help our pastoralist communities achieve economic resilience and stability, even in the face of climatic challenges. Trade and commerce are also a cornerstone of our economy, and enhancing our trade capabilities is essential for our progress. Investments geared towards improving our trade infrastructure, reducing barriers, and fostering partnerships, can help increase market access for our goods and services. Promoting trade will not only boost our local economy but also integrate our county into regional and global markets, opening up new avenues for growth and development”.

USAID Kuza is a key facilitator for the Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera County Investment Conference.

Venny Mayaka, the Deputy Chief of Party, USAID Kuza remarked:

“This forum is a crucial step towards building a more resilient future for Kenya's ASAL communities. By working together, we can ensure these regions are equipped to adapt and thrive. This Lamu, Tana

River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera County Investment Conference comes soon after USAID Kuza launched its new climate finance window last month, which earmarks \$6 million (Ksh 810 million) dedicated to providing capital to those who are driving climate change adaptation and mitigation in Northern Kenya”.

Aligned with USAID's Private Sector Engagement Policy, USAID Kuza employs market-based approaches to accelerate Northern Kenya's self-reliance through building resilience and reducing the need for humanitarian assistance. The program works in 10 arid and semi-arid counties of northern Kenya (Garissa, Isiolo, Lamu, Mandera, Marsabit, Samburu, Tana River, Turkana, Wajir, and West Pokot). USAID Kuza also manages the Impact for Northern Kenya Fund an impact investment wholesale financing vehicle that lends catalytic capital to financial institutions and small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs). The conference in Isiolo is part of a series of investment conferences supported by USAID Kuza across different Northern Kenya Counties this year.

With a population of over 2.9 million, Lamu, Tana River, Garissa, Wajir, and Mandera counties chiefly engage in pastoralism, livestock farming, fisheries, and tourism - activities heavily dependent on environmental conservation. Other areas of discussion during the Investment Conference will include how to incorporate a gender and youth perspective into agricultural development initiatives, and overcoming barriers for farmers and pastoralists to access markets and finance.

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