PRESS STATEMENT AFTER THE CONSULTATIVE MEETING ON HARNESING OPPORTUNITIES IN THE INTRA REGIONAL ECONOMIC BLOCS (REBs), 1ST – 3RD OCTOBER, 2018, NAIVASHA

Following the consultative meeting between County Governments, National Government, private sector and development partners with respect to Regional Economic Blocs, the resolutions agreed upon are as below:

I. Policy Legal and Institutional Framework

1. The National Government and County Governments, will jointly through a technical committee, develop a policy and legal framework to provide for the establishment, composition, management, operational and governance of REBs.

2. Stakeholders will review relevant legal regimes specifically but not limited to: the Inter-Governmental Relations Act to provide elaborate provisions for engagements amongst county governments for purposes of economic development; Public Finance Management Act to regularize funding from the exchequer and development partners; and the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act to provide for procurement in these entities. We have agreed that there is also need for legislation (mirroring the Treaty Making and Ratification Act) that can enable Counties execute and deposit the necessary legal instruments through their respective County assemblies in establishment of the various REBs.

3. The National Government and County Governments will review and restructure the existing Regional Development Authorities (RDAs) to align these to the devolved system of governance so that there is no duplication between the work of Counties, REBs and these RDAs.
4. REBs will endeavor to mainstream gender, youth, minorities, marginalized groups and persons living with disabilities in planning and implementation of programmes and shall adopt effective public participation approaches that genuinely engage citizens in determining development priorities for the REBs.

II. Regional Economic Blocs: Opportunities

5. National and County Governments shall harmonize regulatory frameworks to improve the ease of doing business in the country.

6. In order to avoid further duplication, REBs will align their blueprints with County Integrated Development Plans (CIDPs).

7. REBs will maximize on their specific competitive advantage so as to attract investors. REBs will also engage in extractive resources mapping for the purpose of setting up industries to exploit natural resources.

8. REBs will focus on value addition in areas such as agro processing, leather, textile and blue economy for both domestic and international markets.

9. REBs will strengthen and provide linkages to Small, Micro and Medium Enterprises to access both domestic and international markets and that REBs will be included in bilateral and multilateral trade negotiations.

10. REBs will tap into regional and international markets (EAC, COMESA, AGOA, EU) and also the diaspora community for resource mobilization and access to larger markets.

11. REBs will take advantage of shared resources like Finances; Skills; Equipment & Infrastructure; and Backward linkages with the Special Economic Zones, Export Processing Zones.

12. REBs will encourage synergy in Research, innovations and knowledge banking. This will culminate in partnerships with institutions of higher learning.
13. REBs will encourage Trade in services: Tourism, Financial services, Transport & communication.

14. REBs will position themselves in such a way that development partners can easily approach them as a bloc for partnership in various sectors.

The Council of Governors and the Ministry of Devolution and ASAL would like to thank our development partners (USAID, UNWomen and DFID), the County Executive Committee Members, County Attorneys, representatives of the various regional blocs, the National Government ministries, departments and agencies and private sector for supporting this meeting.

From today, we will now move to translate these joint resolutions into actions so that when we meet again, we will be reporting on progress.

Signed

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H.E. Prof. Kivutha Kibwana
Governor, Makueni County and Chair, Legal Affairs and Human Rights Committee

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Amb. Hussein Dado
Chief Administrative Secretary
Ministry of Devolution and ASALs