SPEECH BY H.E WILLIAM RUTO, EGH, DEPUTY PRESIDENT OF THE REPUBLIC OF KENYA

DURING BRIEFING MEETING WITH UN COUNTRY TEAM

ON 13TH NOVEMBER, 2018

Distinguished Guests,

When in November 2016 Secretary General Ban Ki Moon hosted the World Humanitarian Summit  in Istanbul, Turkey, where I represented President Kenyatta, the core quest was to build global consensus on human security for people caught in humanitarian crises, including war, public health epidemics or climate induced displacement.

This Summit typified what the UN is all about. A global force for good, and a veritable instrument for multilateralism needed to negotiate credible outcomes to solve complex global challenges in a world driven by disparate state interests.

At the country level, the UN Development Assistance Framework (UNDAF) represents this spirit of collaboration and collective action. I am therefore pleased that this UNDAF 2018-2022 for Kenya is a product of more than a hundred different organizations working together under the leadership of two Government Ministries, National Treasury and Devolution, as well as the UN Country Team.

Rather than obsess over their different mandates, these institutions were led by a singular focus on the mission at hand; that of giving a blueprint for creating the Kenya that secures a better future for our children.

Embodied within this UNDAF are a set of clear and time bound interventions underpinned by SDGs and aligned to Kenya’s development plans as articulated in Vision 2030 and more immediately by, the Big 4 Agenda.

I have listened to the eminent presentations and looked closely at all the 14 outcomes of this new generation UNDA. In them, I see the building blocks needed for a stable, inclusive and prosperous polity.

This UNDAF has identified those sectors in which we can invest strategically for the youth.  We are determined that in our time, we must lay the foundations on which hard work will be rewarded with employment that is good enough to enable them to raise a family comfortably.

That is what reaping the demographic dividend is about. How we will keep that promise alive is the defining issue of our collaboration with the UN.

From this Administration’s first term and now, we have enhanced youth specific affirmative action, for instance through reserving government procurement quotas for the youth by way of the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) framework.

We are implementing the most ambitious programme on human capital development focused on technical and vocational training that has seen an increase in the number of TIVET institutions from less than 700 in 2013 to 971 in 2018.

For the first time since independence, the number of students enrolling into TIVET institutions now exceeds those joining universities. This is a tectonic shift in priorities driven by this government’s commitment to aligning training with market needs and to the demands of the 4th Industrial Revolution.

As such, we are also developing ICT incubation hubs at county level, with plans for extending these to constituency levels, to empower youth with the training and work experience appropriate for market-ready ICT services and products.

Already we are seeing the fruits of such investments especially in high multiplier effect sectors such as agriculture. Increasingly, tech savvy youth are developing products that are transforming the way we practice agriculture. The paradigm is slowly shifting from practising agriculture as away of life to seeing it as a business that can provide gainful employment. The adoption of better crops varieties, improved management practices and mechanisation will give the sector the allure that will attract the youth.

Further UNDAF’s commitment to devolution as a mechanism for fostering shared prosperity and stability in Kenya cannot be understated. The cry of marginalisation no longer serves as a centrifugal disruptor of our stability, thanks largely to devolution.

Rather than tinker with devolution as constitutionally entrenched, we must instead invest in effective implementation and institutionalization thereof and improve accountability, transparency and openness within devolved units.

Our pursuit of inclusive development will be undermined unless there is deliberate effort to ensure environmental sustainability. I note that UNDAF’s Social Pillar is focused on disaster risk reduction. Given that Nairobi is the headquarters of the UN in the Global South, I encourage this UN country team in Kenya to invest more in sustainability and resiliency.

The dangers represented by the failure to decarbonize by 2030 and its implications on health and agricultural production means that we all must do more to conserve the environment. Our forests, as the natural carbon sinks must be preserved, unsustainable logging practices curtailed, and new forests regeneration encouraged. I urge the UN, especially UNEP to work more concertedly with our Environment Ministry and its agencies to formulate and implement innovative ideas in our forestry sector.

It is because we believe in the place of the UN in our development path that the Government is keen to see all UN agencies work with us with one voice.  Kenya is a strong supporter of the Delivering as One principle.  For this reason, Kenya endorses and welcomes Secretary General Gutterres’ ongoing reforms of the United Nations. These reforms will see the organization become more agile, nimble and effective to respond better to development needs at country level. We urge the UN Country team to wholeheartedly embrace these reforms.

In conclusion, I am proposing that to keep our eye on the goal, the UNDAF National Steering Committee should give special consideration to mechanisms for reporting on impact. My office would be happy to be part of such a quarterly reporting forum.

I believe there is no reason why we should not deliver this UNDAF to Kenyans.  The Building Bridges initiative has granted to us a moment of great opportunity, where old political rivalries are crumbling. The collaboration with the UN through the UNDAF is a blueprint for this road to a more stable future.

You can count on the President and me, to fully support your important work to deliver the Big 4 and the UNDAF for the benefit of every Kenyan.

Thank you. God bless you.