

The role of Tea Industry in the achievement of the Kenya Vision 2030

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INTRODUCTION

Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen. It gives me great pleasure to share with you my keynote speech on “the role of Tea Industry in the achievement of Vision 2030” in the third Karatina University International Conference on Tea Science and Development whose theme is “A sustainable Tea Industry for social, economic and technological development.” My speech is based on three main areas: i) Value addition, ii) Job creation and employment opportunities, and iii) Research and development.

VALUE ADDITION

A commercialized agriculture with high value added remains a key priority for the Government of Kenya. Therefore, the Government in cooperation with the county governments concerned will support higher productivity to increase value addition and employment within the tea sector. To meet the goals of job creation, value-addition in agriculture, and export diversification, the Government in partnership with private investors will support increased manufacturing and exports with high value added. To meet the demand for skilled jobs in these and other sectors, priority will be accorded to programmes targeting training and apprenticeships to meet the demand for human resource skills required by the transformation of the economy.

Under agri-business development programme, improvement will be done geared towards improving access to markets by all agricultural value chain players as well as improving and modernizing market facilities. It will further transform agricultural marketing functions through value chain development and strengthening producer and marketing systems. Under this programme, agricultural product development will be done through value addition programmes. The programme will ensure creation of local, regional and international marketing opportunities for agricultural commodities, and in particular the tea sector.

JOB CREATION AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES

The Government prioritizes job creation and increased youth employment, agricultural productivity and food security. *The Second Medium Term Plan* outlines the policies, programmes and projects which the Jubilee Coalition Government intends to implement during the five-year period starting 2013 to 2017 to deliver accelerated and inclusive economic growth, higher living standards, better education and health care, increased job creation especially for youth, commercialized agriculture providing higher rural incomes and affordable food, improved manufacturing sector and more diversified exports. The tea sector has been identified as one sector that will create jobs and employment opportunities and, thus, provision of livelihood. All this is necessary in order to address the acute challenges of poverty, joblessness, inequality and to facilitate faster realization of the Vision.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT

Our economy is still reliant primarily on agriculture and services and the growing consumer demand for manufactured goods has been met mainly by imports. To address this, the Government will facilitate growth of the manufacturing sector and make agriculture competitive

and diversify the economy for employment creation. Moreover, the Government will also support local entrepreneurs to increase their share in local and external markets through better supply chain and making local enterprises more price-competitive to serve a growing local, regional and continental market. To realize this, the Government will facilitate and coordinate research in business development and entrepreneurship under a new entity called “Biashara Kenya” to provide funding and leverage investment from local banks. This will develop capacity and productivity of local manufacturing geared to competitively priced quality exports to Africa and the global market. To realize this, the Government will invest in research and development, extension services, producer institutions, expansion of irrigation, seed improvements in crop, livestock and fisheries development through the National Agricultural Sector Extension Programme. This programme aims at improving access to agricultural extension by farmers and further strengthening agricultural research and development.

In conclusion, Ladies and Gentlemen, I would like to emphasize three things: productivity and competitiveness, impact of climate change, and leadership and integrity.

PRODUCTIVITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

As a country, we must be productive and competitive as spelt out in the Vision 2030 “to be a globally competitive nation”. In the tea sector, this will entail being efficient in the application of farm inputs, mechanize picking of tea, transport tea more efficiently and add value to the finished product. Kenya must be a nation of adding value and not a nation of mere traders. In addition, we must expect high yield per acre, address the disparities in productivity between smallholder farmers and large tea estates – fragmentation of land into small parcels is leading to lower productivity and does not favour agribusiness.

IMPACT OF CLIMATE CHANGE

With rapid climatic change, harvest inevitably becomes unpredictable since global warming gradually makes the conditions unsuitable for tea. We must as a nation design and implement climate policies that mitigate the negative impact of climate change. There is need to embrace a development agenda that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.

LEADERSHIP AND INTEGRITY

No nation, individual and indeed business can prosper and grow without servant leadership and integrity. Firstly, we must have a clear vision and effectively make decisions – the captain must steer the ship. Secondly, we must hold ourselves and others accountable – we tend to hold others accountable, but we must hold ourselves accountable first by adhering to the same rules and guidelines we set for others and taking responsibility when we succeed and fail. Thirdly, we must delegate because learning to delegate instead of micromanaging is about trust. Fourthly, we must put other people first and show meaningful expressions of appreciation for them. Fifthly, we must love and be passionate about what we do – we must “live and breathe what we do and strive to do the best possible,” yet we should have lives outside our work and understand the need to balance work and family, and work and play.

With these remarks, I would like to sincerely thank Karatina University for inviting me and hosting this event, which will enable us to exchange views and also give us an opportunity to learn from each.

Thank you very much and God bless you all.