

EXECUTIVE OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT



GOVERNMENT SPOKESMAN

Press Briefing

January 12th 2016

Last week on Thursday, 5th January 2016, Governor Hassan Joho, during the commissioning of the Buxton footbridge here in Mombasa, accused the National Government of taking credit for projects it did not initiate. The comments were widely broadcast and I would like to address them briefly. Essentially, Governor Joho belongs to a primitive school of thought which holds that the life of a Government is five years—equivalent to one electoral cycle. In Joho's warped thinking, every successive administration should abandon plans and commitments made by previous

administrations and start its own new ideas. This thinking would not be so alarming if, as evidenced by social media, it did not—when viewed against the spirit of our constitution with due regard, particularly, to devolution—represent the most retrogressive thinking. The Joho thinking is embarrassingly ignorant of what gives legitimacy to the political direction and control exercised by elected leaders. He displays a dangerous arrogance that can be only attributed to limited political literacy, and to political conmanship.

Joho envisages a government where critical projects conceived, initiated and planned by previous government would be abandoned so that government can start their own projects to impress the electorate. Needless to say this would result in wanton wastage of public resources. Every mwananchi has a responsibility to dismiss this thinking with due contempt.

The Government wishes to inform Kenyans that the decision by Jubilee administration to mobilize resources and drive the projects started by previous administrations is deliberate. It is based upon a vision to convert the

Kenyan dream into the Kenya we can live in in this generation.

Previously, it was accepted that Kenya has some of the best development brains anywhere in the world. Several countries (where we are spending public resources traveling for benchmarking today) came into Kenya in the 1980s, picked our development plans, domesticated them and created countries where citizens are wealthier, the investment climate is better and citizens are enjoying modern lifestyles. The bulk of our population is still living below poverty line, thanks to the Joho school of thought. The same thinking has ensured that Kenyan experts can work for international organizations and foreign governments with great results while back home they never have an opportunity to make any contribution.

The Government wishes Kenyans to know that politicians are elected for only five years to exercise political authority and allocate resources for the benefit of citizens not merely to start new projects. That is why projects conceived in the 1960s like SGR are becoming a reality now. That is why National Water Resources Master Plan—drawn in the 90s to manage our persistent drought—is now

well under way. And that is why rural electrification is on the country's last mile.

Good governance projects are supported and completed not on the basis of who started them but on the basis of how they can positively improve the quality of citizen life. The Jubilee Government did not therefore start a new vision but chose to implement the vision 2030. Otherwise some critical projects would not have been completed, on the basis of the fact that they were started by the last Government. A situation where every administrations is constantly starting new projects can be politically stimulating but the effect is dangerously retrogressive and a wanton waste of public resources.

On Thursday last week, the President commissioned projects worth Ksh 3.2 billion here in Mombasa. All these projects were completed over the course of this administration under His Excellency President Kenyatta. This Government had an option not to support them to completion but this is an option it did not take it, because Jubilee is committed to good governance and citizen focused.

This Government knows that there is no such thing as a Jubilee project—there are Government projects which either move Kenya forward and benefit all Kenyans, or do not.

Development projects belong to Kenya and to Kenyans. As a nation, we have a national development blueprint in vision 2030. This is the blue print that will put shillings into the pockets Kenyans—not warped political rhetoric.

Finally, let me end on a positive note by noting yesterday's unveiling of six freight locomotives which will run on the Standard Gauge Railway. Cabinet Secretary James Macharia oversaw the unveiling. This was no doubt a significant milestone in the plans to launch the SGR, which is nearing completion. It was an encouraging sign that Kenyans will later this year be able to ride the train from Mombasa to Nairobi in just over four hours. As a nation, we can be proud to see this project the biggest infrastructure project in Kenya's history, and one of our most audacious ventures being finalized.

With those comments, let me open the floor to your questions.

Government Spokesperson

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