

**SPEECH BY MS ANNE WAIGURU, OGW, CABINET SECRETARY, MINISTRY OF DEVOLUTION AND PLANNING DURING UWEZO FUND CHEQUE ISSUANCE AND SENSITIZATION CEREMONY TO BENEFICIARY GROUPS OF YOUTH, WOMEN AND PERSON WITH DISABILITIES ON FRIDAY, 8<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2015 IN MWINGI CENTRAL, KITUI COUNTY.**

**Hon. Julius Malombe, Governor, Kitui County,**

**Hon David Musila, Senator, Kitui County,**

**Hon. Joe Musyimi Mutambu, MP, Mwingi Central Constituency,**

**Other Hon. Members of Parliament with us here today,**

**Colleagues, Distinguished Guests**

**Ladies and Gentlemen.**

I am greatly honoured to officiate today's Uwezo Fund, Youth Enterprise Development Fund, and Women Enterprise Fund Cheque issuance and sensitization ceremony here in Mwingi Central Constituency.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

The youth and women comprise over 60% of our Country's population but despite their significant numbers, they have continued to face enormous and varied challenges in their pursuit for social economic empowerment. Women and the youth are constrained by lack of business capital, business experience and discrimination. This has greatly reduced their chances of accessing credit for starting or growing their businesses.

The socio-economic empowerment of marginalized groups is one of the key agenda that the Jubilee Government is seeking to address with affirmative initiatives such as Uwezo Fund, the Youth Enterprise Development Fund and the Women Enterprise Fund. It is the intention of the Government, that through these funds and other programmes, marginalized populations can access necessary capital to implement their business ideas, generate income for themselves and improve their livelihoods.

**UWEZO FUND**

Uwezo Fund was set up specifically for youth, women, and PWD groups at the constituency level. To date, the fund has disbursed **5.35** Billion shillings to all the 290 constituencies and so far **32,405** groups of **19,690** women, **11,802** youth and **735** PWDs have accessed **Kshs. 3.3 Billion** of these funds.

Kitui County was allocated Kshs 158,924,668 of Uwezo Funds during the financial year 2014/2015 and in most Constituencies in the County, beneficiaries are already repaying their loans. I commend them and urge other areas to emulate the same.

I am pleased to note that Kitui Rural constituency, which has had prolonged outstanding issues has finally complied with regulations and received its Kshs. 18,008,894 allocation.

Today, Uwezo will issue cheques totaling KSH. 6,285,000 million to 92 groups from Mwingi Central Constituency.

I am however concerned that out of the 92 groups that will receive Uwezo cheques today, 79 of them are Women groups getting a total of 5.3 million, while only 13 are Youth groups getting KSH. 985,000. Let me say that this trend/pattern has also been noted in many other constituencies around the country.

I challenge the youth to work a little harder and position themselves to benefit from subsequent cycles of disbursement. I further challenge the Uwezo Fund Board and the Constituency Committees to identify interested youth groups and walk with them until they achieve the standards necessary for eligibility. We also look forward to seeing more groups of Persons living with disability benefit from the Uwezo kitty.

## **WEF**

Women fund has disbursed cumulatively KSH. **6.089 Billion** to **51,352** self-help women groups since inception, benefitting **1,046,012** individual women across the country. Women Fund has trained nearly 55,000 women on business management skills and this has born great dividends as the fund now boasts of an average loan repayment rate of 91% across the country. The fund also promotes a savings culture among women and has registered over 50 women SACCOs to date.

In Kitui County, the fund has, to date, disbursed Kshs 112.5Million to 24,000 women in 1,608 self-help groups.

Today, 328 women from Mwingi central Constituency organized in 27 self-help groups will receive a total of Kshs 3.5Million in loan support.

## **YOUTH FUND**

The Youth Enterprise Development Fund has disbursed Kshs. **11.1 billion** to **263,000** youth enterprises across the country. In Kitui County, 1350 youth groups with about 13,500 individual youth have benefitted from the Constituency Youth Enterprise Scheme (C-YES LOANS). A further 400 individual group members have benefitted from Easy Youth Enterprise Scheme (E-YES) LOANS.

Kitui County has also benefitted from 2 poultry Incubators valued at Kshs. 417,060 which are operating with notable success. 4 Green houses worth approximately Kshs. 1.5 million have also been installed for youth in the county keen on

agribusiness. All the green houses and the incubators are doing fairly well in contributing to food security.

Additionally, 10 Youth Owned Enterprises have benefited from individual business expansion loans amounting to Kshs. 2.6 million and a further 12 Youth Owned enterprises and Youth Contractors from Kitui County have received LPO/LSO financing to the tune of Kshs. 4,800,000. Our returns also indicate that financial intermediaries have given young people in Kitui County Kshs. 78.5 million worth of loans.

The fund has recently created a special business support facility for youth in the entertainment industry. The fund now gives loans of upto Ksh.25 Million to fund pre-production, production and post-production costs of film making.

Today, the fund will issue cheques worth Kshs. 7, 550,000 to 139 youth groups from Mwingi Central, Mwingi North and Mwingi West Constituencies.

### **30%**

Government has ring-fenced access to capital with the creation of ready market for products and services generated by target beneficiaries by earmarking over Kshs. 200 Billion worth of Government Procurement opportunities for youth, women and PWDs. This year alone, **4,250** youth, women and PWD owned companies have been awarded over Kshs. **9.2 Billion** worth of Government tenders.

Both YEDF and WEF are currently financing beneficiaries of Government tenders with Youth Fund financing young entrepreneurs who win tenders up-to Kshs. 25 million and Women Fund giving up-to Kshs. 2 Million to business women.

We are continuously investing in Capacity Building Programmes to ensure that the uptake of 30% increases and benefits the intended groups.

### **Ladies and Gentlemen,**

I take this opportunity to recognize the good work being done by all the funds and their support teams. I encourage you to continue ensuring effective, efficient, timely and prudent management of these funds for posterity.

I wish to conclude by reaffirming Government's commitment towards ensuring that marginalized populations access opportunities that will enable them to realize their fullest potential and accelerate their individual as well as the overall country's economic growth.

I appeal to all beneficiaries of all Government Loans to repay what you borrow promptly to enable more Kenyans to benefit and also ensure the sustainability of these programmes.

### **Thank You**