

The Swearing in Speech of His Excellency, the New Governor Mohamed Adan Khalif, 25<sup>th</sup> August 2022

Asalaam Aleykum Warmatulah Wabarakatu...

Rer Mandera Hamjambo! Good morning ladies and gentlemen;

His Excellency Captain Ali Ibrahim Roba, Governor Emeritus of Mandera County who is also the Senator elect;

UDM Deputy Party Leader Hon. Rtd. Major Bashir Abdullahi;

UDM Chairman Senator Dr. Abdullahi Abdi;

The Honourable Justice Mr. Justus Bwonwonga and Hon. Peter Wasike from The Judiciary, who are presiding over this swearing-in ceremony;

The County Commissioner My friend Mr. Onesmus Kyatha & the County Security commanders;

His Excellency Dr. Ali Mahamud Maalim - The Deputy Governor;

Members of Parliament present;

Former Members of Parliament present;

Members of the County Assembly present;

Former Members of the County Assembly present;

The representative of Director General - Kenya Roads Board;

The representative of Director General - Kenya Urban Roads Authority,

Hon. Eng. Nicolas Gumbo all the way from Siaya County;

Ambassadors present,

Elders from various communities;

Religious leaders;

County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers and County Government staff present;

The Business community;

My family and friends present.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Allow me to extend my gratitude to Almighty Allah (SWT) and organizations that made this occasion possible including the Committee on Assumption of Office for a job well done.

I thank my family members especially my wives and children for their sacrifice, commitment and understanding throughout the grueling campaign period and for their constant source of encouragement and support. Thank you, the people of Mandera County, for peacefully exercising your democratic right. I would like to recognize the campaign teams and the communication team who tirelessly kept our audiences informed. Thank you for your faith and confidence in choosing my leadership to steer our County toward social and economic prosperity for all.

Fellow Kenyans, the great people of Mandera, today we celebrate the story of Mandera's renewal, from a previously marginalized part of Kenya to a firm pillar and testimony of how devolution has transformed our lives.

I stand here today humbled by the task I have been called upon to perform. I am grateful for the trust you have bestowed on me through your vote to be the second governor of this great county in the journey of building Mandera. We are ready to realize the dream of making Mandera County better.

I am taking over the reins of power from my brother and comrade His Excellency Captain Ali Ibrahim Roba and I take this opportunity to thank him immensely for having laid a solid foundation for Mandera County Government. I will tread on the footsteps of this illustrious man who by Allah's will and grace has been elected the Senator of Mandera County. He served as governor with unwavering reliance, patriotism and restored Mandera on the map of Kenya for the right reasons. He stood for the cause of Mandera people and helped to institutionalize devolution in the frontier counties.

Today, Mandera proudly stands tall in the family of 47 counties. Let us appreciate Governor Emeritus Ali Ibrahim Roba, the Party Leader of United Democratic Movement. You have not only left a rich legacy and a firm foundation, the people of Northern Kenya today have a party where they have a sense of belonging and ownership. Long live Roba Long Live UDM In sha Allah!

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our county must be the envy of Kenyans. Our leadership in partnership with the National Government, development partners and civil society must be the engine of renewal and progress. I promise Kenyans this is a new season of growth and prosperity for Mandera.

To make Mandera prosper, we must be bold. We must do what no generation has had to do before. We must invest more in our own people, in their jobs, and in their future, and at the same time cut widespread poverty bedeviling our people. And we must do so in a country in which we must compete for every opportunity. It will not be easy. It will require sacrifice, but it can be done. We must provide for our county the way a parent provides for children.

To my former colleagues who are charged with sovereign functions of legislation at Mandera County Assembly, I look forward to encouragement, guidance and support which will enable us to steer with safety the vessel that is carrying the hopes of Mandera stakeholder's resident here and those in Diaspora as well. Together we can make Mandera shine brighter and remain the pride and beacon of devolution.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have emerged from a competitive election where we had difference of opinions. But difference of opinions is not necessarily difference in principle. Let me take this opportunity to thank IEBC for a job well done and our communities for a peaceful electioneering process. We all meant well for Mandera and I want to congratulate my worthy competitors who made concession speeches after the people's verdict and I encourage them to support my administration to make Mandera shine more and be a benchmark of where devolution works and benefits the masses.

I also take this opportunity to thank my able Deputy Governor, Dr. Ali Mahamud Maalim with whom we start this new chapter of leadership. We must now roll up our sleeves and get down working starting now. The honeymoon of victory is over. Kazi lazima iendelee!

In serving the people of Mandera, we recognize a simple but powerful truth: We need each other, and we must care for one another. We must appreciate our brothers from down Kenya who we now call the seventh community of Mandera. We must appreciate the civil servants from National Government working here led by the County Commissioner my brother Mr. Onesmus Kyatha. We must appreciate the gallant soldiers from KDF who work to keep our county safe as they guard the national borders with Ethiopia and Somalia. We must appreciate and cooperate with the National Police Service officers working hard to ensure law and order is maintained in order to overcome our security threats.

Ladies and gentlemen,

To all elected leaders and civil servants working in Mandera County, the time for politics is over. I extend an olive branch to those who were competitors to join me in the building a united peaceful and progressive Mandera. We must ensure our people get quality efficient services going forward. Let us with courage and confidence face the challenges facing our county with principles, policies and programmes that will lift our people out of poverty. An estimated 300,000 residents of Mandera live below poverty line according to the latest figures of Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS).

Ladies and gentlemen,

From the outset, I want to make a commitment that my government will be representative of the faces of the people of Mandera and Kenya. No family, clan, gender or section of people will be discriminated against. I am a strong believer in justice and this will run through my administration.

To the staff of the county government, we must discharge our duties with professionalism, integrity while adhering to core values and code of ethics of public service. We are servants of the citizens. I expect all staff to be in their work stations without fail. Heads of Departments and supervisors must ensure no staff has abdicated their duties. The era of earning from county government while doing personal business or politicking is over. It is no longer business as usual.

Ladies and gentlemen, let me now highlight our agenda for the people of Mandera:

1. We will build on the peace and security currently being enjoyed in our county and this calls for closer working relations among communities and networking with security partners from the National government. Let us all preach peace, love and unity.

2. Unemployment among our youth is becoming a big challenge. We intend to create an environment that will open up Mandera job market with at least 10,000 jobs available for our youth in the next five years. My Administration will be an equal opportunities employer for all residents without favoring families or clans. We target to create 2000 jobs for the youth each year jointly with stakeholders and the private sector.

3. We have a robust healthcare infrastructure in place and we target creating healthcare cover for 20,000 vulnerable households through the National Hospital Insurance Scheme. We will make sure Mandera County Referral Hospital operates fully as a proper level 5 facility and we will lobby partners to establish a research and development wing to help us manage emerging health challenges. My administration will fast track, equip and operationalize all health projects that are complete including the blood bank at MCRH and we will complete projects that are pending as we decentralize services to our people. We will improve on the gains in health by ensuring we have adequate human resource including specialists required by our county. The Kenya Medical Training College in Mandera will be prioritized in terms of equipping the workshops and Laboratory with state of the art technology so that our boys and girls do not have to travel far for training.

For the existing health personnel we will invest in their capacity building to better skills going forward. For the county government staff we will roll out a comprehensive medical cover for all staff cadres.

4. As part of our social protection scheme, we plan to support 20,000 vulnerable citizens through cash transfer programmes. This will target poor families by cushioning them against inflation and high costs of living. To this end, I appeal for external support from development partners and well-wishers to enable the county government cover more vulnerable people.

5. To our mothers, sisters and daughters, I want to assure you that we will implement the two-thirds gender rule effectively as part of affirmative action. We also have robust plans that will establish Mandera County Women Economic Development Fund to support our resilient business women and entrepreneurs.

6. As you may be aware of the adverse effects of climate change which has resulted in long dry spells, drought and severe shortage of water, we plan to plant additional one million trees as mitigation and in this regard we invite partners to join us on this noble cause.

7. On Education, we will equip all ECDE centres and introduce feeding programmes for our young ones. We will decentralize bursary allocation in a fair, just and transparent manner. We will invest in technical training and vocational colleges to offer our youth skills set for the job market. We will complement school fees scheme in Mandera County for those students who are not covered by various institutions under sponsorship or scholarship programmes.

8. In the water sector and in line with Sustainable development goal number six, we will expand provision of clean water to all towns and villages. We will improve water services through our two companies; Mandera Water and Sewerage Company (MANDWASCO) and Elwak Water and Sewerage Company (ELWASCO) to deliver their mandate effectively.

9. On road infrastructure, we will partner with National Government and support the completion of Gateway Africa Highway which connects Mandera to Isiolo as we engage Kenya Roads Board, Kenya Urban Roads Authority, and Kenya National Highways Authority and invest in the county road network to ease travel for our people and reduce costs of transportation of goods and services. At this moment I wish to thank Kenya Urban Roads Authority for constructing over 22 kilometers of road network in Mandera County. We are extremely grateful and we request you double the effort.

Ladies and gentlemen

Finally, my government will be frugal in the use of resources entrusted to us. We will go for value for money, a disciplined and responsible public service that is accountable. There will be zero tolerance to corruption. As we take office I know expectations are high and we need your prayers and goodwill to deliver the promise.

May Allah bless you all, God Bless Mandera.

Thank you.