

DG's OPENING SPEECH FOR KCGS SENSITIZATION DAY AND LAUNCH OF CWP USALAMA BAHARINI KWALE COUNTY ON 05 AUGUST 2024

Your excellency the governor/representative!

County commissioner!

County directors!

Members of the BMU and all protocols observed!

Good morning!

It is both an honor and a privilege to stand before you today as we mark a significant milestone in maritime safety and community empowerment. Today, we are here for pivotal initiatives that represent our unwavering commitment to the safety and well-being of our coastal community.

Our coastal waters are not just a source of livelihood; they are the lifeblood of our communities. The men and women who brave the ocean each day are not just fishermen—they are custodians of a way of life that has sustained generations. It is our duty as KCGS to ensure that they are equipped with the knowledge, skills, and tools to navigate these waters safely.

First, let me talk about the Safety Trainers for Fishers (STF) program.

The STF initiative is a groundbreaking effort to provide hands-on, practical training for our fishers. KCGS, in tandem with Expertise France, initiated STF to equip Kenyan fishers from various Beach

Management Units (BMUs) with vital knowledge on life-saving techniques and safe work practices. Through this initiative, participants have not only gained new safety skills but also received essential safety equipment, including SOLAS-approved life jackets and waterproof phone bags, enhancing their ability to call for help during emergencies. This program was further aimed on bridging the gap between traditional fishing practices and modern safety protocols. Our fishers have so far received training in a variety of crucial areas including emergency response and first aid to navigational skills and weather prediction.

Central to KCGS's community engagement strategy is the Community Watch Program (CWP), an initiative developed in collaboration with Go Blue. This program encourages fishers to actively participate in monitoring and reporting any suspicious activities or potential threats in their vicinity. KCGS as a frontrunner in maritime safety and security governance in East Africa pioneers this innovative program, aimed at strengthening the relationship between coastal communities and maritime law enforcement actors.

At the heart of this program is a smartphone application called '**USALAMA BAHARINI**' establishing a direct communication channel between coastal communities. In an age where technology has the power to transform lives, the **USALAMA BAHARINI APP** will be game-changer for our coastal communities. The app being user-friendly is designed to facilitate communication between KCGS and the community, allowing for faster response times and more efficient coordination during emergencies. It will serve as a vital tool for ensuring that KCGS (XOC) is informed and prepared for any situation encountered at sea and on land. By harnessing the power of technology, we are making it easier for our fishers to stay safe

and connected. It is therefore with great pleasure that I stand here before you as we are officially launch the ***Usalama baharini APP***, and as we do that, we are not just introducing a new program—we are making a profound statement about our values and priorities.

‘We are saying that the safety of our fishers is paramount. We are affirming our belief that every individual deserves the right to work in an environment that is as safe as it is productive.’

Your excellency, we would like to extend our deepest gratitude to your beloved county and to all those who have worked tirelessly to bring these initiatives to fruition. Your dedication and hard work have made this day possible, and your commitment to the safety and well-being of our communities is truly commendable. Thank you for welcoming us!

We further extend our heartfelt gratitude to our esteemed partners, EU GO BLUE and Expertise France, for their unwavering support and invaluable contributions to the Kenya Coast Guard Service. Through their support on these Community Watch Programs and Safety Training for Fishers, they have significantly enhanced the safety and well-being of our coastal communities. Their dedication to training fishers in basic life-saving techniques and safe working conditions together with material support has not only equipped them with essential skills but also fostered a culture of safety and vigilance at sea.

Finally, let us all embrace these new tool and resources with enthusiasm and a shared sense of purpose. Together, we can build a safer, more resilient maritime community where every fisher can go about their work with confidence and security.

Thank you, and let us continue to work together to ensure the safety and prosperity of our coastal communities.

Thank you.

ASANTENI SANA