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For Immediate Release

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Laikipia Farmers' Association alarmed by Raila Odinga's alleged statements on future of ranches

Nanyuki, (Laikipia Farmers' Association) - The LFA respectfully informs leader of the opposition and presidential candidate, Mr. Raila Odinga, that its members contributed 10 billion shillings towards Laikipia County's economy between 2014 and 2016.

Our members' enterprises are Laikipia's largest employers, taxpayers, investors, and private sponsors of social projects such as education and health.

The Times of London in a report published on 12th June alleged that Mr. Odinga said, "These ranches are too big and the people don't even live there; they live in Europe and only come once in a while... There's a need for rationalisation to ensure that there's more productive use of that land".

Laikipia is semi-arid land – where productivity is certainly a challenge. The LFA, which represents ranches and conservancies, has risen to that challenge. A recent economic survey revealed that in 2016 LFA members were employing 4,446 people on salaries of 1.14 billion shillings per annum. Taxes of 560 million were paid to the KRA and the County – proving our productivity through enterprise.

The LFA is also about productivity for people. In 2016 alone, LFA members contributed 218 million shillings towards social projects. A large portion of this sum went towards education – building schools, paying teachers and education staff, plus sponsoring students at secondary school and universities. LFA members are proud to help educate young people, providing them with skills and a good start in life.

LFA members assist in the health sector. One shining example is the OI Lentille Trust, linked to the OI Lentille conservation and community enterprise, which in 2016 completed the Kimanjo Sub-County Hospital – representing a contribution of 121 million shillings over three years.

Grazing plans for our pastoralist neighbours have been a priority for LFA for many years. We help communities with pasture for many thousands of cattle during times of droughts. We help find markets for their livestock.

LFA contributions also come in the form of trade and commerce, with our companies buying everything one can imagine from cabbages to farm machinery. Last year our purchases totalled 1.85 billion shillings, most of them from suppliers in Laikipia.

Productive use of land is at the heart of what LFA enterprises are all about.

Not only do we run productive ranching operations, but also tourism businesses. And these sustain an environmental heritage of global value, for the good of Kenya's people.

Laikipia preserves the largest population of elephants north of the Equator, is home to 49% of Kenya's black rhinos and is the second most important wildlife area in Kenya (after the

Maasai Mara). These enhance Kenya's international reputation. We could not protect these natural wonders of the world without running productive enterprises.

The LFA assures Mr. Odinga that its members are not "in Europe" – they are living and working very hard right here on the ground in Laikipia, because that is the only way to mind a successful business. All the ranches are owned by Kenyan citizens, whatever their racial origins, or by Kenyan companies or Kenyan trusts. These are people who have constitutional rights to protection of their property and their lives.

For Laikipia's success to continue, local people need peace and the rule of law. Laikipia has suffered months of invasions by pastoralists from other counties. The incursions have caused the deaths of many local people and inflicted economic losses now running into the billions.

The LFA calls on all politicians to support the urgent need for stability. For their part, LFA members stand ready to offer their significant private sector expertise to work on solutions to the crisis facing pastoralism in the northern rangelands.

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For more details, including interviews with the LFA chair or specific members, please email elodiesampere@yahoo.com. For more information and news from the LFA, follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

The Laikipia Farmers' Association is authorised to talk on behalf of all of its members and can quickly find information for reporters directly from the parties concerned. We encourage journalists to approach us with any requests for information they may have, rather than trying to contact our members individually.