



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KITUI

THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY

THIRD ASSEMBLY – (FOURTH SESSION)

VOTES AND PROCEEDINGS

TUESDAY 8TH JULY, 2025 AT 2.30 P.M

1. The House convened at Thirty Minutes Past Two O'clock.
2. The proceedings were opened with a prayer.
3. **PRESIDING** – Honorable Deputy Speaker on the Chair.

And the time being Three O'clock, the Honorable Deputy Speaker interrupted the proceedings and temporary suspended the sitting for Fifteen Minutes.

4. **HOUSE RESUMES** - at Thirty Minutes past Three O'clock.
5. **PRESIDING** – Honorable Speaker on the Chair.
6. **COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR**

The Honorable Speaker made the following communication.

i. COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR ON VISITING DIGNITARIES
Honourable Members,

I would like to acknowledge the presence, in the Speaker's gallery this afternoon, of visiting dignitaries as follows,

1. H.E Augustine Wambua Kanani - Deputy Governor, Kitui County

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2. Hon. Senator Enoch Kiio Wambu, Senator, Kitui County
3. Hon. Dr. Irene Kasalu, MP, Kitui County
4. Hon. Dr. Makali Mulu, MP Kitui Central
5. Hon. Paul Musyimi Nzengu, MP Mwingi North
6. Hon. Nimrod Mbai Mbithuka, MP Kitui East
7. Hon. David Mboni Mwalika, MP Kitui Rural
8. Hon. Racheal Kaki Nyamai, MP Kitui South
9. Hon. Edith V. Nyenze, MP Kitui West
10. Hon. Gideon Mulyungi Mutemi, MP Mwingi Central
11. Hon. Charles Ngusya Nguna, MP Mwingi West
12. Hon. Jonathan Mueke - Principal Secretary, State Department for Livestock Development
13. Dr. Monica K. Juma - CBS, EGH, MBS- National Security Advisor, Executive Office of the President
14. County Executive Committee Members
15. Kitui County Public Service Board led by the chair Dr. Florence Makindi
16. Governor Advisors
17. Mr. Bonnie Musambi - Director Coordination, State House

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18. Mr. Benedict Muasya Mutiso- Commissioner, Commission on Revenue Allocation
19. Mr. Moses Banda - Financial Services Advisor, Presidential Economic Transformation Secretariat
20. Mr. Wilson Muange - Member, Kitui County Assembly Service Board
21. Ms. Ruth Nzambi Joseph - Member, Kitui County Assembly Service Board
22. Hon. George Mutua Ndotto - Speaker Emeritus, County Assembly of Kitui
23. Mr. Augustus Kyalo Muli, Party Leader National Liberal Party
24. County Chief Officers
25. Kitui Municipal Manager
26. Mwingi Municipal Manager

JUDICIARY/ KITUI HIGH COURT

27. Hon. Justice Lucy W. Gitari - The Presiding Judge
28. Hon. Justice Anthony Kaniaru - Judge, Environment and Lands Court
29. Hon. David Mburu - Senior Principal Magistrate

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30. Hon. Elizabeth Karani - Deputy Registrar

31. Hon. Calistus N. Sindani - Resident Magistrate

32. Hon. Ogutu J. Ochieng - Resident Magistrate

33. Hon. Mwidadi Salim - Senior Resident Magistrate Kadhi

34. Hon. Margaret Kyalo - Deputy Registrar, Environment and Lands
Court

35. Ms. Fransisca Malinda - Court Administrator

LSK KITUI

36. LSK Kitui Branch - c/o Grace Muatha

SECURITY AND OTHER INSITUATIONS

37. Mr. Paul Rotich - Eastern Region Regional Commissioner

38. Mr. Kipchumba Rutto - County Commissioner

39. Mr. Joseph W. Njiri - County Critical Infrastructure Protection
Unit Commander (C.I.P.U)

40. Ms. Martha Ngetich - County Kenya Police Service Commander

41. Ms. Cecilia Mugambi - County Criminal Investigations Officer
(C.C.I.O)

42. Ms. Joyce Mullei - County Intelligence Coordinator (CIC)

43. Mr. Charles Kavithi - County Forest Services Officer

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- 44. Mr. Joseph Loctari - Officer In Charge, Kitui G.K. Prisons
- 45. Florence Ndeti - Director-Caritas
- 46. Dr. Gichichi Macharia - County Elections Coordinator, IEBC
- 47. Ms. Catherine Opwora- County Director, National Environmental Management Authority (NEMA)
- 48. Mr. Benard Makuluu - Red Cross Coordinator, Kitui County
- 49. Dr. Albert Luvanda - The Regional Director, Kenya Forestry Research Institute
- 50. Mr. Peter Gitau Karanja - Officer Commanding Police Division (OCPD), Kitui Township

CLERGY

- 51. Rt. Bishop. Joseph Mwongela - Catholic Diocese of Kitui
- 52. Bishop Gideon Muneeni Nzoka - Anglican Church of Kenya
- 53. Rev. Titus K. Masya – Senior Pastor, African Inland Church-Kitui Township
- 54. Emeritus, Arch. Bishop Benjamin Nzimbi - Anglican Church of Kenya
- 55. Ustadh Jaffer - Deputy Imam, Jamia Mosque- Kitui
- 56. Bishop Joseph Nganda - Evangelical Alliance of Kenya

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57. Bishop Peter Mwangangi - Holy Ghost Celebrations Church

58. Dr. Raphael Nzuki Kituva - Archbishop, Good News Church of Africa

59. Bishop Stephen Syanda Matandi - Chairman Kitui City Fathers

60. Emeritus, Arch. Bishop David Mutisya - Anglican Church of Kenya

61. Pst. Alexander Musilu

62. Rev. Ngomo Mwanzia - AIC Nzalwani

63. Rev. John Wambua - IPHC Sokomoko

64. Pst. Kakai Muinde Mueke - EIFC Itoleka

OTHER INVITATIONS

65. Timothy Mbuvi - Chair County Government Workers Union

66. Chair of Business Community - Kitui County.

In our tradition of receiving and welcoming visitors to the County Assembly, I extend a warm welcome to them and, on behalf of the County Assembly of Kitui and my own behalf, wish them a fruitful visit.

Thank you

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**7. CONVOCAATION BY THE CHAIR AS RELATES TO THE STATE OF
THE COUNTY ADDRESS BY H.E, DR. JULIUS MAKAU MALOMBE;
GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY.**

**Your Excellency, Dr. Julius Makau Malombe; Governor, Kitui
County,**

**Your Excellency, Augustine Wambua Kanani; Deputy Governor,
Kitui County,**

Honourable Members of National Assembly present,

The County Commissioner,

Honourable Members of the County Assembly,

The Acting County Secretary,

**County Executive Committee Members and Governor's Advisors,
Chief Officers,**

**Members of Staff from both the Assembly and the Executive,
The Clergy,**

Distinguished Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good afternoon.

It gives me great pleasure to welcome you all to this sitting of the Fourth Session of the County Assembly. This day marks a significant occasion in our legislative calendar — the delivery of the State of the County Address by His Excellency the Governor.

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Today's sitting is informed by the Kitui County Assembly Standing Order No. 18 which stipulates that *"The Governor shall address a special sitting of the Assembly once every year and may address the Assembly at any other time within the convenience of the County Assembly."*

During the evening sitting of Thursday, 26th June 2025, I informed this House that my Office had received a communication from His Excellency the Governor conveying his intention to address the Assembly today.

Your Excellency,

This Assembly warmly welcomes your address, marking the third of its kind since the commencement of this Third Assembly, and given that it has been a year, four months and twenty-four days since your last address to this August House which you did on Wednesday, 14th February, 2024.

Your willingness to engage with us underscores the pivotal role this Assembly plays in your agenda of the '**Kitui Promise**', and that you are ready to continue working with us in order to realize the gains of devolution. We are indeed honoured to host you once again.

Honourable Members,

Section 30(2)(k) of the County Governments Act, 2012, mandates the Governor to deliver an **Annual State of the County Address**. In this regard, the address should include, but is not limited to, the following:

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- a) A report on measures taken in the realization of the national values as provided under Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010;
- b) An annual report on the implementation status of County policies and plans pursuant to Section 30(2)(j) of the County Governments Act, 2012;
- c) A report on the performance of the County Executive Committee and the County Public Service, pursuant to Section 47(3) of the Act;
- d) A report on citizen participation in the affairs of the County government, pursuant to Section 92(2); and
- e) Any other information the Governor may deem necessary.

Honourable Members,

As provided for under law and established parliamentary practices, the Address must be delivered in the Assembly to accord it the legitimacy required for consideration by the House. This mirrors the national practice where the President of the Republic of Kenya, under Article 132(1)(b) of the Constitution, addresses a joint sitting of Parliament annually, and may do so at any other time.

At the conclusion of the Governor's address, the sitting shall stand adjourned. As per Standing Order Nos. 20(4) and (5), the Address shall be laid on the Table of the House as soon as practicable, and debate thereon shall not exceed four sitting days.

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Honourable Members,

Allow me to express my appreciation to all who made time to attend this Sitting - the Representatives of the National Government, Political Leaders, County Executive Committee Members, Governor's Advisors, Chief Officers, Clergy, Civil Society Groups, and members of the general public.

I also take this opportunity to **thank** His Excellency the Governor for his unwavering support in enabling the Assembly to discharge its mandate, particularly through budgetary allocations to support:

1. The construction of the Kitui County Assembly modern office block;
2. The purchase of land and commencement of the construction of the Speaker's Residence, and
3. The acquisition of land and initial funding for the construction of Members' Ward Offices.

Your Excellency,

While we recognize your support, I take this opportunity to kindly urge your Office to continue promoting cordial relations between the Assembly and the Executive by facilitating **consultative forums** between the two arms of government.

I also wish to raise an issue of concern among Members of the County Assembly regarding site handovers. Members have expressed dissatisfaction over not being adequately notified or involved in these

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events. I kindly request your esteemed Office to ensure that Members are informed **in good time**, preferably at least a day in advance, to enable proper scheduling of their engagements and to enable their effective participation.

Honourable Members,

In accordance with Article 6(2) and Article 189(1) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 which provide for cooperation between the National and County Governments, I wish to humbly appeal for a continued and strengthened working relationship between the County Government of Kitui and the National Government, led by the Office of the County Commissioner at the County level. We deeply appreciate the support already extended by the National Government, including in areas of security, infrastructure and development programs. May this cooperation continue to flourish for the benefit of our people.

I also wish to appeal to the Judiciary to support and complement the County Government in the process of shaping sound and responsive policies and laws. The Judiciary remains an essential partner in interpreting laws and ensuring justice and fairness for all, and we look forward to a collaborative relationship that promotes the rule of law and equitable service delivery.

To the Clergy present, we recognize your ever-present role in nurturing moral values in our society. We humbly seek your continued spiritual

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guidance and prayers as leaders, so that we may act with wisdom, compassion and integrity in service to our people.

Fellow leaders and stakeholders,

I extend a warm invitation to all development partners, community-based organizations, private sector players and individual citizens to actively participate in public engagements and forums organized by the County Government. Public participation is not only a constitutional imperative under Article 10 and Article 174(c) but also a cornerstone of devolution. It ensures that decisions made truly reflect the will and aspirations of the people.

Your Excellency, Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen,

Let me also take this opportunity to highlight that in the recent past, the working relationship between the County Assembly and the Executive experienced certain challenges. However, I am pleased to report that those differences are now water under the bridge. Today, the two arms of government are working closely together in harmony, guided by mutual respect and a shared commitment to the service of the people of Kitui.

As of today, it is exactly two years, one month, and two days to the next General Election in Kenya, which is scheduled for Tuesday, 10th August 2027. With such limited time remaining, we must rise above partisanship and focus our energies on unity, cooperation and impactful leadership. There is neither room nor time for unnecessary

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conflicts or political distractions. Our priority must be the fulfilment of the promises we made to our people when they entrusted us with leadership.

Your Excellency,

We reiterate our unwavering commitment to collaboration and mutual respect. The Assembly will continue to constructively engage the Executive while remaining steadfast in its constitutional mandate of legislation, oversight and representation.

In the same spirit, we kindly appeal for your continued support in addressing the Assembly's outstanding infrastructure needs, particularly the completion of the Modern Office Block and the construction of Members' Ward Offices through adequate and sustained budgetary allocations in subsequent financial cycles.

Honourable Members, Ladies and Gentlemen

With these remarks, it is now my honour and privilege to invite His Excellency the Governor, Dr. Julius Makau Malombe, to deliver the State of the County Address.

Welcome, Your Excellency.

Clerk, next Order!

**8. STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY DR.
JULIUS M. MALOMBE, EGH, GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY, AT THE**

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**KITUI COUNTY ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS ON 8TH JULY, 2025 AT
2.30PM**

1. SALUTATIONS

Hon. Speaker of the County Assembly, Honourable

Members,

The People of the Great County of Kitui, Distinguished

Guests,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

2. INTRODUCTION

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

It is my honour and privilege to address this august House and the great people of Kitui County as I deliver the **Annual State of the County Address**, in line with **Section 30(2)(k) of the County Governments Act, 2012.**

Hon. Speaker,

I am delighted to report that as we mark approximately **two years and ten months** since I assumed office on **25th August 2022**, my administration has made **substantive and transformative strides** in advancing the development agenda of our county.

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My address will reflect on key milestones achieved in the implementation of the county's lifechanging projects, programmes, policies, and strategic initiatives in enhancing healthcare service delivery, access to clean water, road connectivity, basic and vocational education, food and nutrition security, urban development, trade and investments, and strengthening collaborations with the National Government and development partners - all anchored in the **County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023-2027** and **"The Kitui Promise"** - the 16- Sector Manifesto on whose basis the people of Kitui overwhelmingly gave mandate to my administration.

I will also outline our progress in critical governance areas, including budget performance, own-source revenue collection, settlement of pending bills, promotion of staff welfare, and county legal services.

Further, I will highlight the performance of the County Public Service, as well as the strides we have made in citizen participation, consultation, and engagement, as enshrined in Article 10 of the Constitution and Sections 47(3) and 92(2) of the County Governments Act.

Finally, Mr. Speaker, I will briefly state the challenges we have encountered along the way, the mitigation measures being undertaken, and offer insights into our future plans.

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3. IMPLEMENTATION OF THE COUNTY'S LIFE- CHANGING PROJECTS, PROGRAMMES, POLICIES AND STRATEGIC INITIATIVES

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

On the implementation of the county's life-changing projects, programmes, policies and strategic initiatives, I am pleased to report that, in just two years and ten months, my government has so far implemented a total of **1,921 infrastructural projects and programmes** in all the 40 Wards and 247 Villages of our county. Out of these, **989 projects** were implemented under the **Community Level Infrastructure Development Programme (CLIDP)** – a key initiative that we conceptualized during my first tenure as the pioneer Governor, for equitable development, poverty alleviation and improvement of the livelihoods of our people in all wards and villages of our county.

These development projects are spread across the 16 Priority Sectors: Agriculture; Water; Health; Education; Urban Development; Roads & Construction; Trade & Investments; Micro, Small & Medium Enterprises (MSMEs); Cooperative Societies; Tourism & Hospitality; Women, Youth & Persons with Disabilities; Transport & Boda Boda; Energy, Environment, Climate Change Adaptation, Forestry, Natural & Mineral Resources; Information & Communications; and Security.

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2.1 Agriculture

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

“Agriculture not only gives riches to a nation, but the only riches she can call her own.” These are the words of Samuel Johnson, an English writer, poet, playwright, and essayist, that underscore the unmatched value of agriculture to any nation’s prosperity. Indeed, agriculture is more than just farming; it feeds the population, creates jobs, and drives economic growth. In Kitui County, agriculture stands as the primary economic activity, employing approximately 56.37% of the workforce and contributing to about 87% of rural household incomes (Source: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security – CCAFS, 2021).

In cognizant of this, my government has identified food and nutrition security as a strategic pathway to ensure a healthy, productive population for sustainable development. We have prioritized the provision of **agricultural extension and advisory services** aimed at enhancing agricultural production, productivity, and profitability. The said extension services comprise individual and group farm visits, residential and non-residential trainings, farm field days, on-farm demonstrations, and farmer field schools by our agricultural extension officers. The prioritization of extension service is borne out of the realization that governments, both national and county, cannot do farming for individual farmers. It is only individual farmers or those

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organized as cooperatives or business ventures who can effectively do so - whilst the government supports them with education, knowledge and capacity building on modern agriculture, including climate-smart agriculture.

Through these efforts, a total of **527,208 farmers** have been trained on modern farming and livestock production technologies, climate-smart agricultural practices, agribusiness skills and value chain development to boost productivity and resilience.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

As you are aware, over the past two years, we successfully hosted the Kitui Agricultural Show and Trade Fair, which we revived after a five-year hiatus. The Show attracted **30,440 participants** in **2023** and **52,355** in **2024** and served as a vital platform for showcasing modern agricultural technologies, innovations, and market linkages for our farmers and agribusiness stakeholders.

Hon. Speaker, at this juncture, I wish to inform the public that this year's Agricultural Show and Trade Fair has been rescheduled from **July 2025** to **February 2026**. This adjustment has been necessitated by the ongoing construction of a stadium at the Ithookwe Showgrounds, in preparation for the upcoming **Mashujaa Day celebrations**, which will be hosted in Kitui on **Friday, 20th October 2025**. The national event will be presided over by His Excellency the President and Commander-in- Chief of the Defence Forces, Dr.

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William Samoei Arap Ruto.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Through our **sand dams and sump-wells programme**, the County is significantly improving access to reliable water sources for both domestic use and irrigation. This initiative is a cornerstone of our strategy to promote climate-resilient and sustainable agriculture by reducing dependency on rain-fed farming. This shift not only boosts food security but also creates new economic opportunities, particularly for women and youth involved in kitchen gardening and small-scale irrigation. The sand dams and sump-wells we have constructed will be revisited under the Water and Irrigation Sector.

In partnership with the National Government and development partners, we have implemented a range of projects aimed at building resilience among our farmers. Under the **Emergency Locust Response Programme (ELRP)**, **486 groups** in Tharaka, Tseikuru, Mumoni, Kyuso, Ngomeni, Nguni, Waita, Kivou and Mwingi Central Wards were supported with **Kshs.79 million** for micro-projects in pulses, cereals, goats, and pasture. Moreover, a total of **4,381 farmers** in **four Farmer Producer Organizations (FPOs)** - **Mwekaka** in Waita, **Thagicu Arimi** in Tharaka, **Mikaki** in Ngomeni and **Goat2Farm** in Kyuso - received inclusion grants of **Kshs.500,000** each. These funds were for recruitment of more members and office establishment.

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The **Emergency Locust Response Programme** also saw the implementation of **eight water projects**. These include rehabilitation of **Ikaaie borehole** in Ngomeni and **Kalisasi Rock Catchment** in Mwingi Central, desilting of water pans in **Mutingwa** in Kyuso and **Thitha** in Kivou, and equipping and hybridization of boreholes in **Masukanioni** in Mumoni and **Masavi** in Nguni, benefiting **over 4,000 farmers**.

Under the **Small-Scale Irrigation and Value Addition Project (SIVAP)**, we established **nine small-scale irrigation schemes** in Kauwi, Nguutani, Kyome/Thaana and Mutonguni Wards, benefiting **4,456 farmers**. We also drilled and equipped **eight boreholes** with solar-powered pumping systems in Zombe/Mwitika, Kauwi, and Nguutani wards, benefiting **2,324 farmers**. Similarly, **Muangen****i Livestock Sale Yard** and **Meko Ma Kaongoa Market Shed** in Athi Ward were constructed to improve marketing infrastructure and open new economic opportunities for our farmers.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Through the **National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP)**, we profiled **229,396 farmers** and onboarded **280 youth agri-preneurs** (seven per Ward) to enhance agricultural outreach. Agri-preneurs are persons who undertake business ventures within the agriculture sector, aiming to provide innovative solutions, add value to products, and involve rural human resources.

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Under NAVCDP, the youth agripreneurs will link smallholder farmers with farm input suppliers, market off-takers, and financial institutions. In addition, we also issued **21 additional motorcycles** to extension officers, bringing the total to **99 motorcycles**, thus improving mobility and service delivery to our people.

To ensure access to affordable credit facilities for our farmers through the NAVCDP programme, **40 Ward-based SACCOs** have also been established.

Mr. Speaker,

Through our collaboration with the **Korea International Cooperation Agency (KOICA)**, **eight women's groups** from three Wards received **164 water tanks** of 10,000-litre capacity each, to support kitchen gardening besides improving household nutrition and incomes. These groups are: **Kimusyi Self Help Group, Kanda New Generation, Ngunga Farmers and Kawelu Farmers** in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Mwamba Isyuko** and **Wikwatyo Wa Makaiye** in Athi, and **Mwanzo Mpya, Mang'elu Ndyukila Mana** and **KUDP Mutanda** in Kauwi Ward. Under this collaboration, we also **Wikwatyo wa Makaiye Women Group** in Athi Ward with a poultry feed crusher and mixer for the enhancement of their poultry value chain.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Post-harvest loss is a significant challenge facing our farmers. Despite their hard work and dedication, many farmers experience

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substantial losses after harvesting their crops, affecting their income and food security. Leveraging on the establishment of the **Kitui County Aggregation and Industrial Park (K-CAIP)** will significantly reduce post-harvest losses. The Aggregation and Industrial Park will provide farmers with access to modern storage facilities, processing, and marketing infrastructure, enabling them to preserve their produce, add value, and access better markets.

Mr. Speaker,

A key constraint we continue to face is the shortage of agricultural extension officers. The current ratio stands at **one officer** for every **2,414 farmers**, against the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO)-recommended ratio of **1:400**. To bridge this gap, my administration will recruit

128 additional agricultural extension and animal health officers to replace those who have exited the service through retirement, resignation or natural attrition.

2.1 Water

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

“Thousands have lived without love, but not one without water,” so goes a common saying attributed to British-American poet **Wystan Hugh Auden**. Water is critical for sustainable development, including environmental integrity and the alleviation of poverty and hunger, and is indispensable for human health and well-being.

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Our county is endowed with major rivers – River Tana and Athi River – as well as five river basins comprising Nziitu, Enziu, Tyaa, Thua and Tiva. Therefore, **the real challenge in Kitui is not water scarcity, but rather limited accessibility.** In recognition of this fact, my administration has prioritised the construction of sump-wells and sand dams which are cost-effective, reliable and sustainable water solutions. Notably, a single sump-well has the capacity to yield approximately **200,000 litres** of water per day, which can serve an estimated **2,000 households daily.**

So far, we have constructed **19 sump-wells** serving over **5,000 households** across all eight sub-counties, including **Mwitasanyano-Kwa Vonza** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward, **Imuumba** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Kalambani** in Mutha, **Ndiang'u** in Matinyani, **Yambuu** in Mulango, **Kamenkia-Gankanga** in Tharaka, **Kaki-Kilali** in Mui, and **Tyaa-Wimbondo** in Kiomo/Kyethani. In addition, a total of **347 sand dams** have been constructed across many rivers within the county's 40 Wards.

Further, to enhance food production through irrigated agriculture, my government has established **32 solar-powered cluster irrigation projects.** These include: **Kithiini Ndiani** in Kanziko/Simisi, **Kitwa Mikeu** in Waita, **Mamuluni** in Kyome/Thaana, **Mbaa Nzei (Kaumu)** in Zombe/Mwitika, **Mumbuni Farmers** in Kithumula/Kwa Mutonga, **Muthoo Farmers** in Miambani, and **Katangini** in Kisasi, among others. We aim to

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progressively expand the acreage under irrigation from the **current 3,900 hectares to 7,200 hectares** by the end of the 2025/2026 Financial Year.

We have also **constructed and desilted 60 earth dams** across the county, among them **Kwakwai** in Endau/Malalani, **Moomoka Kwa Mulu** in Mui, **Kitoo** in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Mbuani** in Kyuso, **Kikunduu** in Kiomo/Kyethani, **Matiliku** in Kanyangi, **Kwa Mukuti** in Kyangwithya West, and **Kwa Munzyu** in Mutonguni.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

We have **drilled 55 and equipped 33 boreholes** in strategic locations across the county, benefitting an **estimated 8,550 households**. They include **Gatoroni** in Tharaka, **Myaani** in Athi, **Itoloni** in Migwani, **Ithookwe Showground** in Kyangwithya West, **Kanyangi Primary School** in Kanyangi, **Mutitu Girls** in Mutitu/Kaliku, **Nyanyaa/Katitika** in Waita, and **Kithumula** in Kithumula/Kwa Mutonga.

Additionally, we have **solarized 31 boreholes**, significantly improving water access for **over 3,000 households**. These include **Masukanioni** in Mumoni Ward, **Kyanda** in Kyome/Thaana, **Ingamba** in Nuu, **Itaani** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Katuku** in Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula, **Kamutyanzuku** in Mutha, **Kilinditini** in Kisasi, and **Kwa Kisini/Kathungu** in Mulango.

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In our efforts to reduce distance covered to access water points, my administration has installed and rehabilitated a total of **134 kilometers of water pipeline extensions** across the county. They include: **Nzeluni earthdam to Kilungu pipeline** in Migwani Ward, **Tyaa sump-well to Mboru Primary School** in Mwingi Central, **Konani Kwa Kalondu to KITWASCO Manyenyoni** in Township, **Kaunguni borehole to Mungatu Shopping Centre** in Athi, **Mang'ola to Kiema Kilonzo Primary School** in Chuluni, **Kwa Mwatu to Kwa Kamula** in Kanyangi, **Kwa Mutuku to Sangala Market** in Kauwi, **Matingani to Kwa Kitavi to Kwa Ngungu** in Kyuso.

We have also installed a total of **180 plastic water tanks**, each with a 10,000-litre capacity, in various public and learning institutions, market centres and community water points across the county, including **Enziu ECDE** in Kivou Ward, **Kamutekeo ECDE** in Kyome/Thaana, **Munathi Primary** in Ikanga/Kyatune, **Kyamboo Dispensary** in Migwani, and **Kathivo VTC** in Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In fulfilment of my campaign pledge to revive, complete and commission the stalled **Kangu Kangu Water Project** in Kitui South, we have, in collaboration with World Vision our partner, developed a new intake, installed modern pumping systems, and installed and rehabilitated key pipeline networks, including the **Kamutei-Mutomo**

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main gravity line, the Mutomo-Syunguni-Kandae-Syuma Nzeke-Makongoni return line, the Mutomo-Ikutha line, and the Mutomo-Mutha line.

We have also installed new valves, replaced faulty ones, and constructed water kiosks at strategic points across Kitui South Sub-County to improve last-mile distribution.

This **Kshs.839.7 million** flagship project, being jointly funded and implemented in partnership with World Vision, will provide reliable access to potable water for **over 25,000 households**, that is **100,000 people**, in Kitui South and parts of Kitui Rural Sub-County once operationalized. Specifically, the project will serve six Wards

- Mutomo, Kaziku, Mutha, Ikutha, Athi, and Kanyangi.

Mr. Speaker,

We had earlier planned to launch the **Kangu Kangu Water Project** on **20th June 2025**, but due to the ongoing final testing, we have rescheduled the launch to **Friday, 22nd August 2025**.

Regrettably, the implementation of this critical project has been hindered by incidents of vandalism in certain sections, acts we believe are being perpetrated by individuals acting at the behest of political detractors and development saboteurs who seem bent on denying the people in the area the enjoyment of piped water access. I wish to strongly condemn these unlawful activities, which undermine our collective progress and deny our people the services they

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rightfully deserve. I therefore call upon members of the public, local administrators, and the security agencies to remain vigilant and promptly report any suspicious activities or individuals to the relevant authorities for swift lawful action.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

The long-term sustainability of our water and irrigation investments requires sound governance and professional management. In this regard, water supply schemes, including sump-wells, boreholes, and pipeline extensions, have been placed under the management of our two main water service providers - the Kitui Water and Sanitation Company (KITWASCO) and Kiambere-Mwingi Water and Sanitation Company (KIMWASCO) in Kitui and Mwingi sub-counties respectively, to ensure efficiency and sustainability.

2.2 Health

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

I now wish to turn to the Health and Sanitation Sector and start by quoting an American essayist and philosopher Ralph Waldo Emerson who said and I quote **“The first wealth is health.”** End of quote. We all agree with Ralph Emerson that the health of our people is their greatest wealth, hence, the need to ensure that our **Health Sector** is functioning properly.

In recognition of this, my government has prioritized health as a key sector in our development agenda, investing in **promotive,**

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preventive, curative, and rehabilitative healthcare to improve the well-being and productivity of our people.

To enhance access to healthcare services, we have increased the number of healthcare facilities from **306** in **2022** to **311** in **2025** through the construction, completion and operationalization of **Kiviu dispensary** in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Kilulu dispensary** in Kyuso, **Vinda dispensary** in Miambani, **Ngungi dispensary** in Zombe/Mwitika and **Kangondi dispensary** in Mutonguni.

We are also constructing and renovating **34 healthcare facilities** in villages that previously lacked functional infrastructure, such as **Kaluluini** in Kaliakatune in Mutha, **Gatoroni** in Tharaka, **Katuyu** in Nguutani, **Kyeng'e** in Kauwi, **Nyaanyaa** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza, **Mulang'a** in Mwingi Central, **Kalundu** in Township, **Ndili** in Ikutha, and **Kimela** in Ngomeni. This bold initiative moves us closer to achieving the vision of a dispensary in every village, ensuring equitable access to healthcare services and accelerating progress towards **Universal Health Coverage**.

Mr. Speaker,

To enhance access to cancer care services, we operationalized the **Phangisile Mtshali Cancer Centre** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital in **November 2023**. So far, **3,806 patients** have been attended to at the Centre with **188** currently receiving treatment.

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Moreover, **new outpatient blocks** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital, Mutomo, Zombe, and Kyuso Sub-County Hospitals have been operationalized, reducing congestion and enhancing timely consultations and treatment.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To improve maternal and child healthcare, we operationalized the **maternity theatre** at **Migwani Sub-County Hospital** and equipped another at **Kanyangi Sub-County Hospital**, increasing by **18** the number of operational maternity units from **81** in **2022** to **99** in **2025**. The new maternity units include: **Kisayani dispensary** in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Endau dispensary** in Endau/Malalani, **Ndiuni Health Centre** in Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula, **Tiva dispensary** in Kyangwithya West, **Usueni dispensary** in Tseikuru, **Nguni Health Centre** in Nguni and **Kalisasi Health Centre** in Mwingi Central.

In our continued efforts to reduce **infant mortality**, we constructed a **70-bed Newborn Unit** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital and a **Maternity Unit** at Nuu Sub-County Hospital in collaboration with the **Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB)**, reducing infant mortality from **47** to **13 per 1,000 live births**.

Our **Intensive Care Unit (ICU)** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital continues to provide critical care, having treated **196 patients** to date. The **Hemophilia Clinic** has also been instrumental in managing hemophilia, a rare genetic bleeding disorder, for **12 patients**.

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Additionally, plans are underway to operationalize Intensive Care (ICU) and High Dependency (HDU) units at the Mwingi Level IV Hospital.

To improve **rehabilitative care** for patients recovering from injury, surgery, or persons with disabilities, we have equipped the Kitui County Referral and Mwingi Level IV Hospitals with essential assistive devices.

To strengthen **diagnostic services**, my government has reinstated the previously non-functional **Computed Tomography (CT) Scan** services at the Kitui County Referral Hospital, and completed laboratories in **11 facilities** which include; Mutomo, Katulani, Kanyangi and Kyuso hospitals, and X-Ray units at Tseikuru and Kauwi Sub-County Hospitals.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In our efforts to enhance emergency response and healthcare delivery, my administration has rehabilitated **nine ambulances**, raising the operational fleet to **26**. We have also ensured the **consistent restocking of essential drugs and non-pharmaceutical supplies** across all county health facilities, strengthening uninterrupted service delivery.

Moreover, in response to the persistent threat posed by snakebites, particularly in high-risk areas, my administration has equipped **96**

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healthcare facilities across the county with life-saving anti-snake venom. These facilities include **Kitui County Referral Hospital, Katulani Sub-County Hospital** and **Mikuyuni Dispensary** in Kitui Central; **Malalani Health Centre**, and **Zombe** and **Mutitu Sub-County Hospitals** in Kitui East; **Katse Health Centre**, and **Tseikuru** and **Kamuwongo Sub-County Hospitals** in Mwingi North;

Thitani, Winzyeei and **Nzawa Health Centres** in Mwingi West; **Nyaani Dispensary**, and **Nguni** and **Ukasi Health Centres** in Mwingi Central; **Kivani Dispensary**, and **Ndiuni** and **Tulia Health Centres** in Kitui West; **Mutha Health Centre** and **Ikanga** and **Ikutha Sub-County Hospitals** in Kitui South; as well as **Mbitini, Kisasi** and **Kwa Vonza Health Centres** in Kitui Rural.

Other initiatives include the completion of **stalled mortuaries** at the **Kitui County Referral Hospital, Mwingi Level IV Hospital, Thitani Health Centre** in Kyome/Thaana Ward, and **Yatta Health Centre** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward.

Going forward, we will fast-track the implementation of the **Facilities Improvement Financing (FIF) Act, 2023** to enhance mobilization of local resources, thus ensuring sustainable funding of our healthcare facilities.

2.3 Education

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Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

As President Nelson Mandela, South Africa's first African President observed, "**Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.**"

In our continued effort to provide a conducive learning environment for our children, we have constructed **179 ECDE classrooms**, benefitting over **7,000 ECDE learners** across the county. We have also supplied a total of **2,040 coloured tables** as well as essential teaching and learning materials to ECDE Centres countywide, benefitting over **53,000 ECDE learners**.

Our ECDE learners continue to benefit from the motivated workforce of the **1,688 ECDE teachers** whose terms of engagement were converted into permanent and pensionable on **1st July 2023**.

Through the **Pro-Poor Fees Support Programme**, we have disbursed a total of **Kshs.244.8 million** to support **31,573 learners** from economically disadvantaged backgrounds in universities, colleges, secondary schools, vocational training centres, and special needs institutions.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Skills development is the foundation of empowerment. **When we equip our youth with practical, hands-on skills, we are not just training workers, we are building innovators, problem-solvers and**

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leaders for tomorrow. In our county Vocational Training Centres (VTCs), we endeavour to equip our youth with relevant, hands-on skills to shape a generation that creates jobs, solves societal problems, drives innovations, and is self-reliant.

To achieve this, we continue to improve infrastructure and learning conditions in our VTCs. **Three modern workshops** have been completed in **Mutomo VTC** in Mutomo/Kibwea Ward, **Ngwani VTC** in Ikanga/Kyatune and **Kyambiti VTC** in Mulango. We have also renovated **nine workshops** in various VTCs including Ngomeni, Katse in Mumoni, Ithiani in Kyangwithya West, Mwingi Baptist in Mwingi Central, Mutwaathi in Migwani, Mutonguni, Syou in Endau/Malalani, Kyatune and Mui.

As part of our efforts to mainstream Information and Communication Technology (ICT) in our vocational institutions, we constructed and equipped **three ICT classrooms** at Ikutha, Kauwi and Mwingi Baptist VTCs. Likewise, we supplied modern training tools and equipment, including **660 sewing machines**, to various VTCs across the County.

These efforts have borne fruits as evidenced by the increasing enrolment in vocational training institutions **which has more than tripled**, rising from **2,506 trainees in 2013** to **8,003 in 2025**, an increase of **219.4%**

2.4 Urban Development

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Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Urbanization is not just the growth of cities, it is the engine of economic transformation, social progress and innovation. We recognize that **“the future is urban”** as urban centers increasingly support more people and generate more employment. Urban areas also serve as hubs for innovation, investment, and economic transformation, hence vital in shaping a more inclusive and resilient future for all residents.

In recognition of this, we have undertaken deliberate and strategic interventions to modernize our urban centers through infrastructure investments, spatial planning, and service delivery, to improve quality of life and stimulate trade.

To enhance the business environment in our urban centers, we rolled out the **Dustless Towns Programme** — starting with the tarmacking of streets in **Kiusyani Market, Yatta/Kwa Vonza** Ward. In the current financial year, we are set to expand this initiative to other key trading centers, beginning with **Tseikuru Town**, as we work to create cleaner, more accessible, and investor-friendly urban spaces across Kitui County.

Additionally, we have enhanced pedestrian safety in our urban areas by constructing cabro-paved walkways in Mwingi and Kitui

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municipalities, and tarmacked the **500- metre** St. Ursula Tungutu-Ithookwe Showground Road, including walkways and drainage.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In pursuit of cleaner, healthier urban environments, we are constructing **13 ablution blocks** in various urban areas such as Katse, Nuu, Thokoa, Kwa Vonza, Zombe, Mutito, Ikanga, Mutha, and Kavisuni to improve public sanitation standards.

To strengthen solid waste management, we procured **a skip loader, a dump truck, and 21 fabricated skip bins** for use in Kitui and Mwingi municipalities, as well as in Mutomo and Kyuso towns. Further, we constructed a perimeter wall around the Mwingi Town dumpsite to secure and manage waste disposal activities.

To ensure orderly growth and sustainable development, we are preparing **land use development plans** for Kanyangi, Kabati, Zombe, and Migwani towns, alongside the preparation of **16 market layouts** to enhance land use efficiency and protect public land from encroachment.

Additionally, we have finalized the **Mwingi Municipality Integrated Development Plan (IDEP)** to guide structured planning, zoning, and prioritization of development initiatives.

As part of our long-term vision for coordinated and sustainable development across Kitui County, we have allocated funds in the

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FY2025/2026 budget to commence the formulation of a **County Spatial Plan** —a critical framework that will inform physical and socio-economic development countywide.

2.5 Roads and Construction

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Effective road transport systems are vital for rapid economic growth. They connect people to opportunities, goods to markets, and communities to essential services.

To improve our road network, we have graded over **4,000 kilometers** of roads across the 40 Wards, easing mobility for over **50,000 road users per day**.

We have also opened and widened **more than 500 kilometers** of roads across the county, thereby opening up remote areas and connecting them to the rest of the road network.

To date, we have **gravelled** a total of **27.8 kilometers** of roads among them **Tseikuru-Nzanzeni-Usueni Road (12.3km)** in Tseikuru, **Thaana Nzau - Kithyoko River Road (1.2km)** in Kyome/Thaana, **Kinakoni-Imali- Kiangini-Kivwauni Road (2km)** in Voo/Kyamatu, and **Kwa Mbuvi-Muangeni (2km)** in Athi.

Hon. Speaker,

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We have also constructed **41 drifts**, including **River Katse Drift** along the Katse–Musosya Road (150m) in Mumoni, **Kithyoko River Drift** along the Kithyoko–Thaana Nzau Road (140m) in Kyome/Thaana, **Ngunga River Drift** along the Kisaayani–Imwange–Kilui Road (70m) in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Thua River Drift** along Kinakoni–Emale–Kiangini–Kyuukuni Market (150m) in Voo/Kyamatu, **Kisiiyo River Drift** along the Inyuu–Kyamusivi Road (90m) in Chuluni Ward, **Mui River Drift** (40m) in Mui, and **Masyungwa Drift** along Kalambani–Kairungu in Kyuso.

In addition, we have constructed **11 slabs** along various roads throughout the county. Some of these slabs are along **Mutula Market–Kwa Wewa–Junction–Kilingile Road (120m)** in Miambani/Chuluni Wards, **Mbitini/Voo Road Junction to Kinakoni Market (270m)** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Kwa Lele–Maiyuni–Ithiiani Road (100m)** in Kyangwithya West/Township Wards, and **Kiteeti slab along Mwaani Wa Nguku–Kimwele Road (150m)** in Kauwi Ward.

In addition, the **600-meter** Kitui–Ithookwe Showgrounds exit road was upgraded to bitumen standards during the 2023/2024 financial year.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

As you are aware, during the 2024/2025 Financial Year, my administration had earmarked the construction and improvement of **45 roads** across the county under the **Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF)**, with a total allocation of **Kshs. 445 million**.

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Unfortunately, the implementation of this vital infrastructure program was delayed due to a protracted court case concerning the disbursement of the funds.

I am pleased to report that the matter has now been resolved in favour of county governments, and as a result, the National Government has released **Kshs. 152 million**, enabling us to initiate **Phase I** of the Road Maintenance Levy Fund program. **Fifteen** out of the proposed **45 roads** have been prioritized for implementation under this phase, as we await the disbursement of the remaining funds.

Some of the targeted roads include: Improvement of **Kanyagi/Kanyongonyo Junction – Ndovoini – Nzambia Road** in Kanyangi Ward, upgrading of **Kalimbui**

Junction-Kakauni-South Eastern Heritage Centre Road in Tseikuru Ward to bitumen standards, construction of **Muthungue-Masikalini-Imumba Police Station Road** in Voo/Kyamatu, construction of **Muthue-Mwangala-Kanziku Road** in Kanziku/Simisi, including a box culvert at **Kwa Vai**, and construction of **Waluku-Vinda-Makaani-Ndivuni Road** in Miambani Ward.

In collaboration with the **Kenya Roads Board**, the following **three projects** have also been implemented: **Tseikuru-Nzanzeni-Usueni Road** and **River Nzanzeni Drift (135m)** in Tseikuru as well as **Thitani Market-Kavaini Loop Road** in Kyome/Thaana.

2.6 Transport and Boda Boda

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Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Today, we recognize and appreciate the crucial role that our **Boda Boda operators** play in driving local economies, supporting livelihoods, and bridging mobility gaps across our communities.

In Kitui County, we have an **estimated 22,000 boda boda operators**, with the highest concentrations operating within Kitui Municipality, Mwingi Municipality, Kwa Vonza, and Mutomo towns.

To support their operations and improve their working conditions, we have constructed **42 modern sheds** across the county, including **Kyulungwa** in Waita, **Kivwauni** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Kwa Kilui** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza, **Syongila** in Township, **Mukuyu** in Tharaka, **Nzauni** in Nguutani, **Mutha Lower Town** and **Soweto** in Matinyani. These facilities provide safe, dignified, and weather-protected spaces for riders to operate from.

We have also trained **1,140 boda boda riders** countywide on road safety, professionalism and best practices in the transport sector.

My government has developed a draft **Boda Boda Policy** aimed at establishing a well-regulated, efficient, and sustainable Boda Boda industry that promotes mobility, safety, and economic empowerment in Kitui County. The draft policy is currently awaiting approval at the Cabinet level, after which it will be presented to the County

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Assembly for further approval consideration.

2.7 Trade and Investments

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Trade and investment are the mainstay of economic development, job creation and social progress. In this regard, my Government has collaborated with the National Government in establishing the **Kitui County Aggregation and Industrial Park (K-CAIP)** at Kanyonyoo along the Thika-Mwingi-Garissa Highway. The park is designed to enhance productivity of the agriculture sector, increase farmers' income, create jobs, and attract investments.

Hon. Speaker,

To promote local investment in the county, we organized the **Kitui County Investors' Sensitization Forum in March 2025**. The forum sensitized over 3,000 participants on the county's investment opportunities in the six Economic and Investment Zones (EIZs) of **the Kyuso-Muumoni-Tseikuru, the Mui Basin, the Mutomo-Ikutha-Kanziko, the Kyangi-Kwa Vonza- Kanyonyoo, the Kitui Town and Environs, and the Mwingi Town and Environs**. We have mapped the resource endowment and investment opportunities in each of the six EIZs to attract both local and foreign investors, creating employment opportunities and ultimately boosting the county's overall economic development.

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2.8 Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Mr.

Speaker and Honourable Members,

To support the growth of **Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)** and provide dignified trading environments, my government has improved market infrastructure by constructing **45 market sheds, 15 market toilet facilities** and installed **129 market solar lights** in various trading centres across the eight sub- counties, among them **Kamaembe Market** in Chuluni, **Endau Yiuku Market** in Endau/Malalani, **Nzamba Market** in Ikutha, **Ngiluni Market** in Kisasi, **Kyethani Market** in Kiomo Kyethani, **Syumikuku Market** in Kivou, **Waluku Market** in Kyangwithya East, **Twimyua Market** in Kyuso and **Kwa Mulungu** in Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula.

2.9 Cooperative Societies

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In our continued efforts to strengthen cooperatives as a driver of socioeconomic empowerment, my administration has trained **261 cooperative societies**, with over **12,300 members**, on best practices in governance and management. We have further enhanced transparency and accountability through the auditing of **127 cooperatives**.

To catalyse growth within the sector, we have facilitated the registration of **94 new cooperative societies**, including **Kanziku**

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Faith Leaders Sacco in Kanziku/Simisi, **Aithi Farmers** in Kivou, **Kikavi Sacco** in Kisasi, **Thagicu Farmers** in Tharaka, **Kakwa Sacco** in Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula, **Vookya Farmers Sacco** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Pamoja Miambani Sacco** in Miambani, and **Utu Wema Cooperative** in Migwani.

Additionally, we successfully revived **26 previously dormant cooperatives** across the county. These include **Kanguka Farmers** in Nguutani, **Mikaango** in Ngomeni, **Endui Farmers** in Waita, **Matimu Sacco** in Mutha, **Malaenda Livestock Cooperative** in Endau/Malalani, **Kiusyani Rural Sacco** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza, and **Kitui Township Livestock Cooperative**.

2.10 Tourism and Hospitality

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To tap into the great potential of Kitui's rich cultural heritage, scenic landscapes, and unique ecological attractions, my administration has stepped up efforts to revitalise the **Tourism and Hospitality Sector** as a strategic driver of economic growth.

In collaboration with the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), we have developed the Kitui Tourism Circuit that connects our local attractions with the national tourism network, enhancing their visibility and accessibility. The official launch of the Circuit is scheduled for **Friday, 17th October 2025**.

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Further, we are in advanced discussions with the Board of Utalii College to establish the **South Eastern Utalii College** at Tiva, Kitui County. This institution will be instrumental in building local capacity and providing world- class training for the region's tourism and hospitality professionals.

In strengthening conservation and eco-tourism, my administration has deployed **37 game rangers** to key sites including the Mutomo Reptile Park, South Kitui Game Reserve, Mwingi Game Reserve, and Kalundu Eco-Park.

As part of our efforts to operationalize the **Mutomo Reptile Park**, we have completed key infrastructure, including a snake house, snake cages, a crocodile pen, as well as a snake pit and habitats. The Park is set to serve as a centre for tourism, scientific research, breeding, and venom harvesting.

In addition, we drilled the **Kaningo borehole** in Tseikuru Ward, solarised the **Kalalani borehole** in Mutha Ward, and renovated the **Masyungwa entrance gate, Kalundu Eco-Park** and **Kalalani Rangers Camp**. We also graded 15 kilometres of road from Masyungwa Gate to the Kora National Park and Mwingi Game Reserve cutline.

Despite the significant progress we have made in promoting tourism in our county, we continue to encounter challenges, including the encroachment of protected areas, particularly the South Kitui Game

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Reserve. Human-wildlife conflict has also continued to adversely affect communities living near conservation zones. In response, we are working in collaboration with relevant national agencies to enhance the protection of these ecological areas and implement sustainable, community-driven solutions to mitigate the impact of such conflicts.

2.11 Women, Youth, and Persons with Disabilities Mr.

Speaker and Honourable Members,

In our county, we believe in the motto: **"Leave no one behind!"** A just and thriving society is built when youth are empowered, women are uplifted, and persons with disabilities are fully included — not as a favor, but as a right.

In our continued commitment to inclusive development, my administration has prioritized the empowerment of women, youth, and persons with disabilities as a strategic investment in the long-term prosperity of Kitui County.

To promote youth engagement and nurture sporting talent, we have upgraded **21 public playgrounds**, benefiting over **20,000 sportsmen and women**. They include **Kituti** in Athi, **Vutu** and **Kanziko** in Kanziku/Simisi, **Ithumula** in Chuluni, **Ndulikye** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Kaumu** in Zombe/Mwitika, **Kathungu** in Mulango,

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Kalawa in Kyangwithya East, **Kathivo** in Kithumula/Kwa Mutonga, **Katuka** in Mumoni, **Ciampiu** in Tharaka, **Yumbe** in Waita, **Nzouni** in Nguni, **Mathuki** in Mui, **Mukameni** in Kisasi **Maangani** in Mbitini, **Yenzuva** in Kyome/Thaana, and

Kyethani in Kiomo/Kyethani.

In addition, we have initiated the development of **Kivou** and **Kyoani stadia**, with fencing, gating, and preparatory works currently in progress. Upon completion, these stadia will provide modern training facilities for our youth to nurture their sporting talent.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In November 2024, we hosted the **Kitui County Youth Engagement Forum** at the Ithopkwe Showgrounds, bringing together **1,302 young men and women** from all 247 villages. The forum served as a platform for dialogue, knowledge exchange, and inspiration. We showcased outstanding young entrepreneurs from diverse sectors, whose compelling success stories not only ignited ambition and expanded perspectives, but also demonstrated that with the right mindset and a positive attitude, even the seemingly impossible can be achieved. In line with our commitment to inclusive economic empowerment, my administration has strengthened compliance with the **Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO)** framework by reserving **30 percent** of all county procurement opportunities for

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youth, women, and PWDs. Notably, in the 2024/2025 financial year, CLIDP contracts worth **Kshs.404,890,512.79**, which is **55.7%** of the total allocation of **Kshs.727.5 million** were awarded to enterprises under this special category. The women emerged as the leading beneficiaries, receiving **Kshs.207,797,514.30 (28.6%)**, followed by youth with **Kshs.167,816,518.50 (23.1%)**, and persons with disabilities with **Kshs.29,277,480.49 (4%)**.

To enhance their participation and competitiveness, we have trained and sensitized **2,000 youth, 1,000 women, and 600 PWDs** across the county on AGPO requirements and procedures.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To guide youth development, we have formulated the **Kitui County Youth Empowerment and Development Policy 2025**. The Policy will be submitted to the county Assembly by the end of this week. This is a bold and timely step in our collective journey towards the realization of the aspirations of our young people. **The policy is not merely a framework of intentions, but it is a strategic instrument that seeks to mainstream youth issues across all sectors and ensure coordinated, well-sourced and impactful interventions.**

To the youth of Kitui, **you are not a problem to be solved, you are the solution.** I urge you to take ownership of this policy, embrace the opportunities it presents and lead with courage and purpose. Ralph Waldo Emerson, a renowned 19th Century American

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philosopher and poet, once said, **“Do not go where the path may lead, go instead where there is no path and leave a trail.”** His words call on our youth to lead with courage, carve new paths, and become the trailblazers of Kitui’s future.

To strengthen the county’s response to **Gender-Based Violence (GBV)**, we have acquired **1.5 acres** of land in Ikutha for the establishment of a **GBV Rescue Centre**. The administration block for the GBV Centre, a four-door pit latrine, and a chain-link fence have already been completed.

In our continued efforts to support persons with disabilities, my government has distributed **1,000 assorted assistive devices** across all 40 wards. We also partnered with the Walkabout Foundation to issue **600 wheelchairs** to PWDs, and provided eight PWD groups, one per sub-county, with a **100-seater tent** and **100 chairs** each. These groups include Twaweza **Thua Disability Group** in Zombe/Mwitika,, **Kitui United Disabled People** in Matinyani, **Wakonie Kitise Disabled Self-Help Group** in Mui, **Ndaluni Disability Self-Help Group** in Kyome/Thaana, **Kiliko Self-Help Group** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza, **Kamane Kituti PWD Group** in Ikutha, and **Wikililye Wikwatyo Group** in Mulango.

2.12 Environment

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

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“The generation that destroys the environment is not the generation that pays the price.” This quote is from our very own Nobel Laureate, Prof. Wangari Maathai. It is our collective responsibility to protect and conserve our environment so as to meet our current needs and those of generations to come.

In appreciation of this, the county has undertaken a series of ecosystem restoration initiatives focused on key environmental assets, including the county's water towers, wetlands, rock catchments, and riverine ecosystems. These efforts comprise the planting of over **60,000 tree seedlings** and dispersal of **2,500 kilograms of seedballs** in areas such as Mumoni, Mutha, Endau, Mutito and Nuu hill forests as well as Kyui Ranges in Mui Ward.

Under the **Financing Locally-Led Climate Action (FLLoCA)** Program, we have constructed **24 mega sand dams** which have boosted soil water retention, provided water for both domestic and livestock use, and supported small-scale irrigation. Some of these sand dams are **Kiteeti** in Kauwi, **Kaitha Kwa Karungu** in Kivou, **Ciacaba Kwa Mutugi** in Tharaka, **Nzeeu Seekea** in Nzambani, **Mumbuni Kwa Kisenga** in Nguutani and **Kyalalaka** in Ikanga/Kyatune.

Additionally, the construction of **three mega sump-wells**

— **Katse-Nguuku** in Mumoni, **Kaningo-Karumu** in Tseikuru and

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Tiva Ivovoa in Kyangwithya West — is underway. Once completed, by the close of this calendar year, these water projects will enhance access to and reliability of water supply for our communities.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

As part of our continued efforts to conserve our river basins and promote the sustainable harvesting of sand, we enacted the **Kitui County River Basins Sand Utilization and Conservation Act, 2024**. To operationalize this legislation, the Kitui County River Basins Sand Utilization and Conservation Committee has been duly established and is now functional.

The Committee has already developed comprehensive guidelines, checklists and templates to support a structured licensing and permit issuance process. In line with its mandate, it has also identified designated sand conservation and harvesting sites for gazettelement.

Further, the committee recommended the suspension of operations in **seven sites** that are either depleted or environmentally degraded, in order to allow for natural regeneration. These sites are **Kyaaoni (near Tiva Market)**, **Kasiviluni/ Ivovwe** and **Kyaaoni A (near KEFRI woodland)** in Tiva River, **Mikuyuni/SEKU** in Mwitasyano River, **Nguutani** in Luli River, **Kwa Nduuthi** in Kivou River and **Mwania River** near Nguni Market.

The Committee is in the process of vetting and approving for licensing

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and registration of all persons/institutions/ vessels/premises engaged in the sand value chain. Working closely with River Basin-Based Cooperative Societies, it is finalizing the identification of sustainable harvesting sites and aggregation yards, while also developing robust grievance redress mechanisms to safeguard the interests of all stakeholders within Kitui County's sand value chain.

2.13 Energy, Environment, Climate Change Adaptation, Forestry, Natural and Mineral Resources

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Access to **energy and connectivity** are crucial **enablers for socio-economic development**, impacting various aspects of life from basic needs to economic growth.

My government has installed and repaired a total of **1,454 poles of solar security/streetlights** across the county. Out of these, **319** have been installed in Kitui Municipality, **244** in Mwingi Municipality, while the rest are spread across various towns and markets, including **Kyuso, Migwani, Tseikuru, Kabati, Kwa Vonza, Mutomo, Zombe, Mutha, Ukasi** in Nguni, **Kisasi, Ekani** in Kanziku/Simisi, **Kangweni** and **Kamulewa** in Chuluni, **Ciampiu** in Tharaka, **Ithiiani** in Kyangwithya West, **Myuuni** in Nuu, **Kyenini, Kamali, Kisayani** in Mutomo/Kibwea, **Makaani and Kivuuni**.

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Additionally, to reduce water pumping costs and enhance efficiency, we have hybridized **10 boreholes**, serving over **3,400 residents** and **10,000 head of livestock**. The boreholes are **Kyume** in Mui, **Katse** in Mumoni, **Ngungi** in Zombe, **Kakeani** in Mutonguni, **Ikanga** in Ikanga/Kyatune, **Matinyani Primary** in Matinyani, **Miambani Catholic** in Miambani, **Itangani** in Mutito, **Mutomo Ndovoini** in Mutomo/Kibwea and **Kangilwa** in Mui.

Moreover, we have collaborated with the State Department for Mining to establish an artisanal mining committee to manage permits. So far, **Kakinga** and **Kathathi** artisanal cooperatives have been licensed while **Kitui artisanal**, **Kitui South**, **Mwingi**, **Timboni**, **Mithikwani** and **Kaliku Muungano** have been recommended for licensing.

2.14 Information and Communications

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To expand access to digital opportunities, we installed internet connectivity at Mutomo, Ithiani and Mwingi Baptist Vocational Training Centres, directly benefiting **approximately 3,000 learners**. Additionally, Mulango and Kathivo ICT Centres were equipped with wireless internet, serving over 1,000 youth.

2.15 Security

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

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The security and well-being of the people of Kitui County are paramount. By ensuring the safety and stability of our county and people, the county lays a foundation for investment, industrialization, trade, and a prosperous future.

As part of our commitment to help enhance security and restore law and order in volatile areas along our Eastern border, my administration has collaborated with the National Government to establish **eight police stations** in the most affected Wards.

We have completed the **Mandongoi Police Station** in Ngomeni Ward, while construction of four additional stations - **Imuumba** in Voo/Kyamatu, **Twambui** in Endau/Malalani, **Kwa Kamari** in Tseikuru, and **Kwa Ngongoo** in Nuu - is ongoing.

Further, plans are at an advanced stage to construct new police stations at **Katumba** in Nguni Ward and **Kituvwi** in Kanziko/Simisi Ward.

These security installations are not just about protecting lives, they are a strategic investment in our county's future. A secure environment is the foundation of investor confidence, and without it, no serious investor will commit their capital. By strengthening security, we send a clear message: **our county is open for investment and business, is stable, and ready for sustainable growth.**

While we have made commendable progress in ensuring the safety of

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our people, our efforts have encountered significant challenges. The ongoing border dispute with Tana River County has delayed the construction of **Katumba Police Station** in Nguni Ward. In addition, the recently completed **Konakaliti Police Station** in Mutha Ward was vandalized, slowing down our collective mission of safeguarding the lives and property of our people in these insecurity-prone areas.

Hon. Speaker,

To address these setbacks, my administration has proactively engaged national agencies, including the **Ministry of Interior** and the **National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC)**, to fix the beacons along the well-established boundaries as per the 1992 Districts and Provinces Act and the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 – to help restore calm and pursue lasting, peaceful solutions to the inter-county boundary impasse.

Let it be known: **we remain steadfast and unyielding in our resolve to secure Kitui.** Our people deserve to live in peace and dignity — and we owe them a future anchored in safety, stability, and hope.

3. COUNTY LEGAL SERVICES

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

The Office of the County Attorney, established under Section 4(1) of the Office of the County Attorney Act No. 14 of 2020, serves as the principal legal advisor to the Executive of the County Government of

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Kitui. The office plays a critical role in providing legal counsel to the County Executive, representing the county in legal proceedings, drafting and reviewing legal documents, and ensuring that our laws and policies align with the constitutional and statutory framework necessary for sound governance.

Upon assuming office, I inherited a county burdened by numerous court cases and inadequate legal representation, an unfortunate situation that had exposed the county to mounting litigation costs and significant financial risk. A report by the Kitui County Pending Bills Review Committee, 2022, revealed that **court decrees** and **arbitral awards** against the county government amounted to **Kshs.533,631,481.37**.

Through targeted policy reforms and strategic operational improvements, the Office of the County Attorney has since significantly strengthened legal representation. Today, Kitui County is being robustly defended in court, and the interests of our people are better protected. We are also embracing **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR)** mechanisms to proactively address potential legal disputes and minimize litigation.

Notably, the Office of the County Attorney has been instrumental in negotiating the settlement of outstanding court decrees and arbitral awards through the Pending Bills Review Advisory Team (PBRAT). As a result, **14** out of **17 court decrees** have been successfully settled, most with decree holders agreeing to waive interest, saving the

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County an impressive **Kshs.289,865,657.01.**

In addition, the office has successfully defended court claims against the county totaling approximately **Kshs.450 million.**

To sustain these gains and enhance the office's capacity, we are in the process of recruiting additional legal professionals. In this regard, we officially advertised the position of **County Attorney** alongside that of **County Secretary** and **Board Secretary**, Kitui County Public Service Board, on 30th June 2025. I take this opportunity to encourage all qualified and passionate professionals to apply and contribute to the continued strengthening of our legal framework and governance systems.

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4. BUDGET PERFORMANCE AND REVENUE

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Kitui County is among the Top 10 counties that have demonstrated consistent improvements in transparency between successive surveys according to the **County Budget Transparency Survey (CBTS) 2024 report**. On average, Kitui County ranks in position 6 among the counties that have shown consistent improvement on CBTS transparency.

In 2024, the **International Budget Partnership**, a nonprofit organization promoting more responsible, effective and equitable management of public funds, ranked Kitui County **Position 1 nationally** for publishing the most comprehensive Finance Act. The County scored **100 out of 100 points** on the required information.

One of the most notable indicators of our progress as a county has been the consistent growth in Own Source Revenue (OSR) collection. When we assumed office in August 2022, the annual revenue stood at **Kshs.361,271,341** in **FY2021/2022**. This OSR figure increased to **Kshs.473,138,519** in **FY2022/2023**, **Kshs.517,049,815** in **FY2023/2024**, and most remarkably, **Kshs.895,416,036** in **FY2024/2025**. This represents an impressive **147.8% growth** in just three years.

This significant growth reflects improved efficiency due to deliberate reforms, tightened systems, and automation of most of our revenue streams, as well as the trust and cooperation we have received from the people of Kitui.

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Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

On budget absorption, the approved budget for the 2024/2025 financial year was **Kshs.14,305,355,310**, comprising **Kshs.4,751,753,572 (33.2%)** for development expenditure, and **Kshs.9,553,601,738 (66.8%)** for recurrent expenditure.

By the end of the financial year, 30th June 2025, the total expenditure amounted to **Kshs. 12,302,605,566.60**, reflecting a gross absorption of **86%**.

However, this progress has not been without challenges. Persistent delays in the disbursement of funds from the Exchequer have adversely affected the timely implementation of development projects and the prompt settlement of payments to contractors and suppliers.

This challenge is not unique to Kitui County, but it is an issue affecting all 47 counties. In response, the County Governments, through the Council of Governors and other constitutional bodies, are actively engaging the National Government in ongoing consultations aimed at streamlining and expediting the flow of funds to the counties.

In the interim, we continue to strengthen partnerships with development partners, non-governmental organizations, and the private sector to mobilize alternative resources. Additionally, we have adopted a phased implementation approach to projects and programmes to ensure continuity in service delivery despite fiscal constraints.

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5. PENDING BILLS

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Accumulating **pending bills** can have several negative consequences, including hampering the operations of businesses that rely on timely government payments, eroding public trust, and potentially leading to legal disputes.

In October 2022, I constituted the **Kitui County Pending Bills Review Committee (PBRC) 2022** to receive and verify all pending bills owed by the County Government.

The Committee received claims amounting to **Kshs.2,560,718,639**. Of these, pending bills worth **Kshs.1,431,226,010** comprising of **Kshs 897,594,528** for works, goods and services; and **Kshs 533,631,481** court decrees & arbitral awards were verified and cleared for payment, while the remaining claims totalling **Kshs.1,129,492,629** were flagged for further verification, valuation, and validation.

To address the unresolved bills flagged for verification, valuation and validation worth **Kshs.1,129,492,629**, I formed an internal team, the **Pending Bills Review and Advisory Team (PBRAT)**, to verify, value and validate the above claims, including site visits to determine if the actual work was done. To date, the team has reviewed a total of **Kshs. 468,200,079**, and cleared claims worthy **Kshs.333,553,837** for payment, and declared bills worthy **Kshs.134,646,242** ineligible claims.

Hon. Speaker,

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In summary, both the PBRC and PBRAT have cleared a total of **Kshs 1,764,779,847** for payment, out which **Kshs 1,459,243,457** (or 83%) has been settled while **Kshs 305,536,390** (or 17%) is still outstanding. The PBRAT will continue reviewing and verifying the remaining bills to determine the eligibility or ineligibility of the claims for settlement.

6. PERFORMANCE OF THE COUNTY PUBLIC SERVICE

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

The institutionalization of Performance Contracting within the Kitui County Public Service has significantly strengthened the culture of accountability, transparency and efficiency in public service delivery. It remains a central tool in our commitment to prudent resource utilization and the consistent achievement of measurable, impactful results.

With support from the **National Ministry of Public Service and Performance Management**, my administration has undertaken external performance evaluations of all county ministries. The top three performing ministries during the performance evaluation for the FY2023/2024 were; Water & Irrigation, Roads, Public Works & Transport, and Trade, Industry, MSMEs, Innovation & Cooperatives with composite scores of 2.5120, 2.5752 and 2.7857, respectively.

Notably, all the 12 ministries met their performance targets, posting an average composite score of 2.8034, which is a 'very good' rating; hence, no ministry performance was rated as either good, fair or poor.

In order to enhance output and accountability of the limited resources

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and ensure efficient and effective service delivery to the people of Kitui, my government has incorporated **Productivity Mainstreaming** as one of the indicators in the Performance Contracts for the FY2024/2025.

7. CITIZEN PARTICIPATION, CONSULTATION AND ENGAGEMENT

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Alain de Benoist, a French political philosopher and journalist, once said (and I quote): "**The highest measure of democracy is neither the 'extent of freedom' nor the 'extent of equality', but rather the highest measure of participation.**"

Citizen participation is a key tenet of governance as provided for under Article 10 (2) as read together with Article 201 (a) of the Constitution of Kenya, and Sections 47(3) & 92(2) of the County Governments Act. This principle requires **openness, accountability** and **participation** of the people in public decisions and matters affecting them. To this end, my administration has consistently and actively engaged the people of Kitui in all facets of development from planning and budgeting to the implementation of projects and programmes, as well as the formulation of key public policy decisions. Some of the major public participation forums we have organized during the year include, but are not limited to; the **CLIDP, sand dams project** identification and validation forums, the **Pro-Poor Fees Support** beneficiaries identification and cheque issuance process, Annual Budget Estimates, the Kitui Finance Act 2024, Kitui County Fiscal Strategy Paper, and the Kitui County River Basins Sand

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Utilization and Conservation Act 2024, among others.

8. STAFF MATTERS/WELFARE

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

The most valuable resource in an organization is its human resources, who are key to effective governance and efficient service delivery. In recognition of this, my administration has made significant strides in enhancing the welfare, motivation, and working conditions of our county staff who remain the engine driving our development agenda. Upon assuming office in August 2022, I found a demoralized workforce, weighed down by delayed salaries and unpaid allowances, stagnant career progression, limited training opportunities, a dysfunctional Health Insurance Scheme and inadequate workspaces, tools and equipment.

I am proud to report that we have since reversed this trajectory. Despite persistent delays in Exchequer releases, we have consistently paid staff salaries on time and ensured the prompt remittance of pension contributions to all relevant bodies, including **NSSF**, **LAPFUND**, and **County Pension Fund (CPF)**. We have also made commendable progress in clearing historical pension arrears, most of which were inherited from defunct local authorities.

Notably, in recognition of our outstanding performance, we were honored last year as the **Overall Winner** in pension fund remittances by the County Pension Fund (CPF). This year, we have also emerged as the winner for CPF's Award of excellence for consistency in pension remittances.

My government is committed to ensuring that County Government

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Staff allowances are promptly paid to all officers on approved work assignments that are aligned with the ministries and departments' annual work plans and budgets.

In this regard, during the 2025/2026 Financial Year, ministerial and departmental budgetary allocations will be streamlined and implemented in accordance with the Controller of Budgets' advisories on the management, processing and payment of staff allowances.

Ministries and departments shall henceforth be required to requisition staff allowances in time as per their annual work plans and budgets for timely processing and payments before embarking on approved work assignments.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In our commitment to meritocracy and fair labour practices, we have promoted **1,372 deserving employees** to higher grades, and **re-designated 101** in line with their career progression paths. For example, in the **Ministry of Health and Sanitation**, a total of **1,076 officers** have been promoted, and **61** redesignated. In **Agriculture and Livestock**, a total of **84 officers** have been promoted, and **three** redesignated, while in the **Office of the Governor**, a total of **69** have been promoted, and **four** redesignated.

Further, to address staffing gaps, we are aligning human resource needs with the approved staff establishment. Priority has been placed on the recruitment and replacement of personnel in critical sectors, particularly health. In this regard, a budgetary allocation has been included in the FY2025/2026 to support targeted recruitment in these essential service areas.

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Hon. Speaker,

We have also ensured that our staff enjoy access to quality and dependable healthcare services through the procurement of a comprehensive medical cover. This move has significantly improved employee well-being, reduced absenteeism due to illness, and boosted overall productivity within our workforce.

To entrench transparency, legal compliance, and fairness in the engagement of short-term personnel, the County Public Service Board is currently developing a comprehensive policy framework to guide the recruitment and management of staff on casual terms, internships, and industrial attachments.

In support of continuous professional development, we have actively facilitated both short-term and long-term staff training, aligned with our institutional priorities. Course approvals have also been granted for self-sponsored studies. To institutionalize this effort, the County Public Service Board has developed a robust **Training and Development Policy**, which ensures that all capacity-building programmes are aligned with the strategic goals of the County Government.

To promote a conducive work environment, we continue to invest in the provision of adequate office space, essential working tools, and equipment.

9. CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

As I conclude, allow me to sincerely thank this Honourable Assembly for the cooperation you have demonstrated as we work to deliver

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quality, timely, and impactful services to the people of Kitui.

The profound duty and privilege of transforming the lives of our people falls squarely upon us as leaders within both the County Executive and the County Assembly. It is a responsibility we must discharge with humility, integrity, and determination.

As a team, we must continue to uphold unity of purpose, staying firmly on course and refusing to be distracted by shifting political dynamics. The people of Kitui are not interested in petty politics. They are not looking for discord. They are looking for results. They are yearning for better healthcare services, fairly well-maintained roads, improved water access, a functional local economy where money is in circulation, an environment that promotes investments and the creation of jobs, opportunities and wealth.

Let us give our people their rightful return for the immense trust they placed in us when they elected us in August 2022 and when we were sworn into office. Let us not betray the hope they pinned on our leadership. John C. Maxwell, an American author, said, **"Teamwork makes the dream work."** Our vision is to make Kitui a model county of inclusive development, a beacon of service delivery, and a home of opportunity for all.

To the great people of Kitui, I thank you, deeply and wholeheartedly, for your resilience and enduring belief in our ability to deliver. Your trust continues to fuel our passion, sharpen our focus, and reinforce our resolve to continue serving you with excellence.

God Bless the Great People of Kitui County! God Bless

Kenya!

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Thank you. Asante Sana!

H.E. Dr. Julius M. Malombe, EGH,

GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY.

9. ADJOURNMENT – And the time being Twenty-Five Minutes past Nine O'clock, the Temporary Speaker adjourned the House.

10. ASSEMBLY ROSE- At Twenty-Five Minutes past Nine O'clock.

MEMORANDUM

The Honorable Speaker will take the chair on

Wednesday, 9th July, 2025 at 9.00 A.M

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THURSDAY, MAY 20, 1963

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Thank you, Robert Davis

W. D. Adams M. H. Jones, Esq.

GOVERNMENT OF THE DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

2. ACCOUNTS - This is a statement of the accounts of the

of the District of Columbia, and is a statement of the

10. ACCOUNTS - This is a statement of the accounts of the

MEMORANDUM

The following is a statement of the accounts of the

of the District of Columbia, and is a statement of the