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11/15/2024

**STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS BY HIS
EXCELLENCY DR. JULIUS MALOMBE EGH,
GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY,
ON WEDNESDAY 14TH FEBRUARY, 2024 AT
2.30PM,
AT THE KITUI COUNTY ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS**

**The Speaker of the County Assembly,
Honourable Members of the County Assembly,
The Great People of Kitui,
Distinguished Guests,
Ladies and Gentlemen,**

II clerk
Approval
~~_____~~
11/03/2024.

III PCA
Run sufficient copies
to the Hon. Members
~~_____~~
11/7/2024

Good Afternoon! Hamjambo!

I am this afternoon grateful for the opportunity to deliver the State of the County Address to the Great People of Kitui from the Kitui County Assembly Chambers.

My address will focus on three areas: **Firstly**, a recap on the state of the County when we took over after our election in August 2022. **Secondly**, I will outline the key achievements of my government since I assumed office in August 2022 to date. This development achieved underscores the priorities that we undertook to deliver in our election Manifesto – *The Kitui Promise* and the **Kitui County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023-2027**. **Finally**, I will briefly state what we plan to accomplish going forward and conclude with a rallying call for us all to keep our eyes on the ball.

Honourable Speaker and Honourable Members,

When I addressed this august House on 11th October 2022 during the Opening of the 3rd Kitui County Assembly, I observed that the Great People of Kitui were looking upon us to offer solutions to the myriad of

challenges that they faced. Our people held great expectations that we, their leaders, would rejuvenate their hopes and aspirations by spurring development and progress. I expressed confidence that the two arms of the County Government of Kitui – the Assembly and the Executive – would cultivate a mutual working relationship that would result in concerted efforts to unlock the potential of our Great County.

I am glad to note that we are on the right track in our cooperation and consultations geared towards achieving our ***Vision: to be a prosperous county with vibrant rural and urban economies whose people enjoy a high quality of life***, as well as our ***Mission***, which is: ***to provide effective county services and an enabling environment for inclusive and sustainable socio-economic development and improved livelihoods for all.***

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Mr. Speaker, in this regard, I am reminded of the words of Warren G. Bennis, an American scholar, who once said: **“Leadership is the capacity to translate vision into reality.”**

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

We inherited a County whose people had apparently lost hope on the contribution of the County Government to their socio-economic needs. The people complained of inequitable development, food insecurity, lack of access to clean and safe water, a failing healthcare system where drugs and other commodities were unavailable, access to industrial oxygen to inpatients was not assured and indifference to educational issues affecting our children.

Other complaints involved **rural roads** that were hardly graded or maintained, main urban areas with no street and security lighting, market spaces that were rarely cleaned, a county where youth, sports and ICT were

neglected, environmental degradation occasioned by unsustainable sand harvesting and deforestation, and lack of policy frameworks for the conservation and utilization of the county's natural and mineral resources.

Further, the people raised concerns about a moribund county economy where money was not circulating, suppliers and contractors were not being paid on time, and lack of collaborative national and county government interventions to address insecurity particularly in Wards bordering neighbouring counties.

The Boda Boda transport sector was neglected and was characterized by lack of operators' database, a cooperative empowerment framework, lack of training on road safety, licences and protective gear.

Moreover, many local contractors lacked exposure in the use of IFMIS, e-tendering as well as project and financial management and lost competitive tenders to non-locals.

The annual Kitui Agricultural Show and Trade Fair had collapsed for five years since 2017, denying the residents the opportunity to learn about the best agricultural practices and business linkages. The county also lacked clear plans for promoting tourism and hospitality resulting in unexplored tourism opportunities.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

We inherited **eight insolvent County investment entities** namely; the Kitui County Textile Centers (KICOTEC) in Syongila, Mutomo and Mwingi, Kitui Stone Crusher at Kwa Kilui in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward, the Kitui County Youth Development Centers in Manyenyoni and Kanyonyoo, Kitui Leather Industry in Manyenyoni within Township Ward, Kitui Pharma Industries in Kitui County Referral Hospital, Kitui Food Industries in ATC, Kitui County Empowerment Fund and Kitui livestock carrier trucks. For example, the Report of the Auditor General on KICOTEC for the year ending June 2022, indicated an operating loss of **Kshs.90,902,130**. The Auditor General concluded and I quote: **"In the**

circumstances, going concern of the Center is in doubt.”

In addition, low morale and lack of motivation were prevalent among the County staff due to delayed payment of salaries and work-related allowances, lack of promotions and job stagnation, ECDE teachers who served on casual and temporary terms of service, insufficient staff training and capacity building, inadequate office space, working tools and equipment. There were no performance management frameworks and set performance targets resulting in a scenario where assessment of achievements could not be evaluated objectively.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

During my Inauguration Speech on August 25, 2022, I committed to undertake initiatives that we would adopt to salvage the situation. These include but not limited to: revamping the healthcare system, enhancing accountable revenue generation, responsible planning, budgeting and

expenditure, equitable development across the county, rationalization of staff with a view to reducing the unsustainably huge wage bill, inculcating efficiency through institutionalizing performance contracting, the culture of integrity and zero-tolerance to corruption in service delivery, prompt payment to contracted services and works, strategic partnerships with the National Government and development partners, as well as conducting structured and meaningful public participation, to get and infuse our people's perspectives in our development projects and programs.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Today, I can affirm that, for the 16-month period we have been in office, we have made remarkable progress in achieving the life-transforming initiatives as outlined in the 16-Sector development priorities, **"The Kitui Promise"**.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Allow me now to present an overview of the **Key Achievements** that have been realised for the period we have been in office.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

When I assumed office in August 2022, I appointed four committees to carry out various tasks and advise the County Government accordingly. These committees were: the Kitui County Pending Bills Committee, 2022; the Kitui County Human Resource Audit and Rationalization Committee, 2022; the Kitui County Government Motor Vehicles, Plant and Determination, Assessment and Evaluation Committee, 2022 and the Kitui County Sand Harvesting and Management Taskforce, 2023.

The Kitui County Pending Bills Review Committee, 2022 was established to advise and guide the County Government on the settlement of genuine pending bills while the Kitui County Human Resource Audit and

Rationalization Committee, 2022 was to carry out an audit of the current human resource status and advise on the optimal staffing levels for permanent, contractual and casual staff.

The Kitui County Government Motor Vehicles, Plant and Determination, Assessment and Evaluation Committee, 2022, on the other hand, was to establish the County Government's current number and location of motor vehicles, plant and equipment in the county ministries and departments and to advise on their mechanical conditions, their serviceability and those the County Government should dispose in line with the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act, 2015.

Finally, the Kitui County Sand Harvesting and Management Taskforce, 2023 was to review and evaluate the current sand harvesting and management practices, including public participation, transportation, revenue collection and environmental matters and to develop

drafts for both the Kitui County Sand Harvesting Management Policy and Bill.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

With the world facing adverse effects of climate change, food and nutrition security remains a key challenge to many of our people. Cognizant of the fact that Kitui is an arid and semi-arid county, we have initiated mitigation strategies and initiatives in the **Agriculture Sector** to address food and nutrition security. Agriculture generates **87 per cent** of our rural household incomes. *(Source: Climate Change, Agriculture and Food Security (CCAFS, 2021)*

In our efforts to support agriculture, the County Government has facilitated **84,137** smallholder farmers across the 40 Wards with **168.3 Metric Tonnes** of assorted **Certified Drought Tolerant Crops (DTCs)** with an estimated yield of **14,400 Metric Tonnes**; and have supported **524** livestock farmers in all the 40 Wards

with **3.23 Metric tonnes** of assorted certified pasture seeds to improve livestock feeds and vaccinated **186,298** animals benefitting **16,774** farmers across the **40** Wards. Additionally, we have supported **2,261** horticultural farmers across the county with **0.35 Metric Tonnes** of assorted certified seeds with an estimated yield of **912 Metric Tonnes** for increased production.

In furthering our commitment to disseminate appropriate agricultural technologies to our farmers, we have successfully reached **214,055** farmers with various messages on the information and tools they need to improve food production.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In collaboration with the National Government, we carried out a comprehensive farmer profiling in the County and generated a database of **229,076** farmers in all the 40 Wards for provision of enhanced extension services and various forms of support.

Further, the County Government developed irrigation infrastructure for **nine** micro-irrigation schemes in collaboration with the Small Irrigation Value Addition Project (SIVAP) in four Wards (Kauwi, Nguutani, Kyome/Thaana and Mutonguni) benefitting **460 farmers** to increase food production. Three **Sustainable Land Management (SLM)** sites were also developed in Itulu in Kisasi, Katwenye in Kyuso and Syokaai in Nuu Wards through construction of **101.5Km** of terraces as well as **42** farm ponds and supply of **2,690** agroforestry seedlings, benefitting **1,350 farmers**.

We have supported **320** farmers in **five** apiculture and honey producer organizations in five Wards - Tharaka, Mwingi Central, Kiomo/Kyethani, Mutitu/Kaliku and Athi - with **1,200** modern beehives.

The County Government has also repaired **10** heavy earth moving machinery and **18** farm tractors to provide subsidized ploughing services to **646** farmers across the County. A total of **1,148.3 acres** were ploughed during the last rain season. We also collaborated with the National Government to provide value addition equipment including **four** feed mixers, **14** threshers and **three** green gram cleaning and destoning machines to **1,611 farmers** in **17** Wards - Kyangwithya West, Mutonguni, Nguutani, Waita, Mutomo/Kibwea, Mutha, Ikutha, Endau/Malalani, Chuluni, Yatta/Kwa Vonza, Kwa Mutonga/Kithumula, Kyome/Thaana, Kiomo/Kyethani, Mumoni, Kyuso, Zombe/Mwitika and Mui.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To provide a platform for exhibition and networking that spurs development in agriculture, trade and allied sectors, the County Government revived the **Kitui Agricultural Show and Trade Fair** in July 2023 **after**

a five-year hiatus. The Fair attracted over **70** exhibitors and over **30,000** show-goers.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Water remains a scarce resource in Kitui County. Our ultimate goal is to ensure accessibility to adequate, safe and clean water to all Kitui residents within a distance of two kilometers or 45 minutes turn-around.

Under the **Water Sector**, the County Government has undertaken completion of the flagship **Kangu Kangu Water Project** in Kitui South and parts of Kitui Rural. This has entailed rehabilitating the pipeline (Kamutei - Mutomo main gravity line, Mutomo – Syunguni – Kandae – Syuma Nzeke - Makongoni return line, Mutomo - Ikutha line and Mutomo – Mutha line), installation of valves and construction of water kiosks to serve over **120,000 people**; construction of Mwitasyano - Kwa Kilui – Matulani - Kwa Kilya sump well water supply in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward that is serving an estimated **12,000 people**.

In addition, we have extended a total of **97kms** of water pipelines across the County, including Kithayoni water pipeline in Tseikuru Ward, Thua-Nduluni-Waani-Kisiuni water pipeline in Voo/Kyamatu Ward, Thua-Zombe water pipeline in Zombe/Mwitika Ward, Kwa Watia borehole pipeline in Kanziku/Simisi Ward, Kisasi water pipeline in Kisasi Ward and Kisayani-Manyenyoni water pipeline in Township Ward to serve over **30,000 people**.

The County Government has rehabilitated **43 boreholes**. These include Ikuusya in Waita Ward, Musavani in Tseikuru Ward, Thitani in Kyome/Thaana Ward, Ilooi in Kyangwithya West Ward, Kabati in Kauwi Ward, Kavoo in Kanyangi Ward, Vutu in Kanziku/Simisi Ward, Kairungu in Kiomo/Kyethani Ward, Kalambani in Mutha Ward, Lundi in Mui Ward, Ngomano in Zombe/Mwitika Ward, Kanzinwa in Mumoni Ward, Wangwui in Mui Ward, Miambani in Miambani Ward, Kolyani B in Kiomo/Kyethani Ward, Kyamboo in Migwani Ward, Muvitha in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward, Kasang'u in

Voo/Kyamatu Ward and Kilonzo in Nzambani Ward, all in all increasing water accessibility to an estimated **20,000 people**. We have also drilled **two** boreholes in Waita Secondary School and Ithookwe Showground and solarized Kwa Sendi borehole in Kisasi Ward serving an estimated **2,000 people**.

In our continued effort to increase access to water for domestic use, livestock and irrigated agriculture, the County Government has embarked on implementation of a program that targets construction of **2,400 sand dams** across the County. Last financial year, we constructed an additional **120** sand dams across the 40 Wards and **10 on-farm ponds** in Chuluni, Voo/Kyamatu, Athi, Yatta/Kwa Vonza, Kivou, Mwingi Central and Kithumula/Kwa Mutonga Wards. Additionally, **eight earth dams** have been desilted at Kwa Kameta in Kyangwithya West Ward, Kakea in Kivou Ward and Kwa Mbiti in Kyuso Ward, among others, serving over **10,000 people**.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

A healthy population is a productive population. According to the United Nations' Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs), Health is Goal No. 3. Similarly, the County Government of Kitui has prioritized health as one of the key pillars in our development agenda, focusing on promotive, preventive, curative and rehabilitative healthcare services to the people of Kitui.

In the **Health Sector**, we have reinstated, trained and commissioned **2,470 Community Health Promoters (CHPs)** to provide promotive and preventive healthcare services to our people. We have established and commissioned the **Phangisile Mtshali Cancer Centre** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital (KCRH), bringing services closer to the people of Kitui who previously sought these services outside the county.

To reduce maternal and child mortality cases, we have completed and renovated stalled maternity units in various health facilities such as Kyuso Sub-County

Hospital, Ikanga, Nguni and Malalani Health Centres. We also established **three New Born Units (NBUs)** at Ikanga, Ikutha and Tseikuru Sub-County hospitals increasing the number to **seven**. This has reduced infant mortality rates from **47** to **21** per **1,000 live births**. We operationalized Mutomo Sub-County Hospital's **Maternal and Child Health (MCH) Unit** to serve **12,549** people, and constructed **two** wards (female and male) in Yatta Health Centre in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward to enhance curative healthcare services.

In order to offer affordable and reliable diagnostic services to our people, we reinstated the **Computed Tomography (CT) Scan** services at the Kitui County Referral Hospital.

To improve the supply of oxygen in our facilities, in partnership with USAID, we installed and commissioned an **Oxygen Plant** including **300** gas cylinders at the Mwingi Level IV Hospital serving **58,493** people within

Mwingi and adjoining areas. We have installed oxygen piping in essential sections at the Kitui County Referral Hospital to serve **67,242** people.

At the Kitui County Referral Hospital, we have operationalized **two Intensive Care Unit (ICU) beds** and a **High Dependency Unit (HDU) bed** for critical care services, and fully operationalized the new outpatient block to decongest the old block, thus increasing efficiency in service delivery at the County Referral Hospital.

To ensure uninterrupted provision of healthcare services in our hospitals, regular restocking of pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals has been enhanced through timely procurement and supply of medical commodities.

The County Government has also repaired and operationalized **eight (8) ambulances** and **two (2) utility vehicles** to effectively respond to emergency cases and save lives.

The Orthopaedic Department at the Kitui County Referral Hospital made and availed to patients **236 orthopaedic assistive devices** which include shoes raising, crutches, knee ankle foot orthosis and walking frames.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

On **Education** - we remain faithful to our clarion call ***Kisomo Nokyo!*** An educated society is an empowered society. At the advent of Devolution, pre-primary education and vocational training were devolved.

Pursuant to this mandate, the County Government of Kitui has designed projects and programs tailored towards promoting Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) and vocational skills development targeting mainly our youth.

In this regard, the County Government has employed and converted into **Permanent and Pensionable (P&P)** terms **1,688** ECDE teachers, boosting their morale, improving their livelihoods and spurring, re-energizing

rural economies through their expenditure of their enhanced incomes within their localities. At this juncture, I take this opportunity to thank you Honourable Members for approving the budget that enabled us to undertake this noble initiative with effect from February 2023.

To provide a conducive learning environment, we have constructed **85 ECDE** classrooms across the County. Just to mention a few, in **Mwingi North Sub-County** we constructed ECDE classrooms in Katumbi, Manguu, Katama, Nguviu and Twathi primary schools. In **Mwingi Central Sub-County**, we constructed in Kaai, Kyandoa, Ivuusya, Kiviuni and Thitha ECDE classrooms. In **Mwingi West Sub-County**, we constructed Kairungu, Kyome, Mathiani, Ilalambyu and Kavuni primary schools. We also constructed ECDE classrooms in Kwa Kaungu, AIC Kololo, Kiseveni, Manzi Itumo and Kyondoni primary schools in **Kitui West Sub-County**. In **Kitui South Sub-County**, my government constructed ECDE classrooms in Muamba, Yaathi, St. Peter's, Muambani and Matikoni primary schools. In **Kitui Central Sub-**

County, we constructed ECDE classrooms in ACK Tungu, Maviani, Mulutu, Mboo and Kavutini primary schools. We have also constructed ECDE classrooms in Kitaama, Kyenze, Mbananga, Masoka and Ulungu primary schools In **Kitui Rural Sub-County**. Further, we constructed ECDE classrooms in Kiongwe and Kalalani primary schools in **Kitui East Sub-County**.

The County Government also provided **teaching and learning materials** to the various ECDE centers.

We further established a new **Vocational Training Centre (VTC) at Mwakini/Katothya** in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward and completed the stalled **Information Communication Technology (ICT) Workshop** at **Mutonguni VTC** as well as the twin workshop and toilet blocks at **Syou VTC** in Endau/Malalani Ward.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

I now turn to our **Urban Development** interventions. Mr. Speaker, urban areas have always been centers of development and growth, often leading a nation into

progress. Urbanization in Kitui County is on an upward trajectory as people continue to migrate to our fast-growing urban centers in search of business and employment opportunities, resulting to growth in urban population. This in turn leads to changes in land use, economic activity and culture.

Effective urban planning, therefore, ensures that these opportunities are created and catered for in our towns and creates a brighter future, healthier and conducive environment for the communities who live in them.

To ensure sustainable urban development in our towns, the County Government has upgraded to bitumen standards the **500-Metre** St. Ursula Tungutu Girls' High School – Ithookwe Showground Road and constructed cabro-paved walkways and storm water drainage channels. In addition, we have constructed cabro-paved walkways and drainage channels from Catholic Church Cathedral to Magunas Supermarket, and Kalundu Trading

Center from Kalundu Market entrance to Riverside Hotel within Kitui Municipality.

To enhance road connectivity within our urban centers, we graded the **2.2KM-long** Agricultural Mechanization Services (AMS) – South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) – Manyenyoni – Majengo Road in Kitui Municipality and Beth-El Academy – Kathonzweni Secondary School Road in Mwingi Municipality.

In our efforts to enhance waste management in Kitui and Mwingi Municipalities, we procured a **skip loader**, a **dump truck**, **six fabricated skip bins** and constructed a perimeter wall around the Mwingi Town dumpsite.

The County Government has also drilled and equipped **Mwingi Slaughterhouse borehole** serving the abattoir and the surrounding community.

Further, to enhance security and spur a 24-hour economy in our County, we installed, repaired and maintained street lights in Kitui and Mwingi Municipalities and upcoming urban areas across the County (Mutomo, Kanyangi, Kabati, Nuu, Tulia, Ikutha, Kyuso and Kakongo).

In addition, for appropriate urban planning, we prepared and verified **eight market layouts** for Kanziko, Mutito/Kaliku, Mutonguni, Kisasi, Waita, Nzambani, Kyangithya West and Kyome/Thaana. Moreover, the County Government facilitated land adjudication in preparation for titling of **Mwakini Settlement Scheme** in Yatta/Kwa-Vonza Ward targeting more than **2,000** people.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Let me now share our **Road** network interventions. Mr. Speaker, roads are prime communication links between all economic sectors. Indeed, roads account for over **80**

per cent of Kenya's total passenger and freight transportation.

An efficient transport system reduces logistics and trade costs, promotes competitiveness and integration and generates socio-economic growth and spatial development.

To improve our road network, my government has graded a total of **1,311kms** of roads including Katse-Musosya Road in Mumoni Ward, Thaana Nzau – Kithyoko River Road in Kyome/Thaana Ward, Kombu Primary - Kilonzi Mwanzia - Kinaa Makau - Kauwi River through John Mutemwa Road in Kwa Mutonga Ward, Mutula-Kwa Wewa-Junction to Kilingile Road in Miambani Ward, Miambani-Kiongwe-Kanguu-Inyuu Road in Chuluni Ward, Mbitini/Voo Road Junction - Kinakoni Market Road in Voo/Kyamatu Ward, among others.

We have also opened/widened a total of **192.6kms** of roads including Karangeni-Kanyengya-Nthangani Road in

Tharaka Ward, Membau–Mbakoni-Yolomuni Road in Athi Ward, Kanyongonyo–Kangukangu Road in Kanyangi Ward and Kwa Kyenza-Kithome Nziana through Ngethwa River-Kunikila Primary School in Matinyani Ward, among others, and gravelled **6.8 kms** of roads across Kitui including Inyuu–Kyaango Junction Road traversing Zombe/Mwitika, Voo/Kyamatu and Chuluni Wards, besides maintaining **3.8kms** of paved roads.

We have constructed a total of **775 metres** of drifts including the Katse Drift along Katse-Musosya Road in Mumoni Ward, Ngunga Drift along Kisayani–Kilui Road in Mutomo/Kibwea Ward, Kithyoko River Drift along Thaana Nzau to Kithyoko River Road in Kyome/Thaana Ward, Kisiiyo Drift along Inyuu–Katumbu Road in Chuluni Ward, Thua Drift along Kiangini–Kivwauni Road in Voo/Kyamatu Ward, and Thua River Drift along River Thua-Kavuvuu-Mutula Road in Miambani Ward.

In addition, we have built a total of **3,151 metres** of concrete slabs along Mutula-Kilingile Road in Miambani

Ward, Kamaembe-Mukungo-Itiko Road in Mutito/Kaliku and Chuluni Wards, and at Museve Shrine along Kitui-Museve-Miambani Road, among others.

To improve road drainage, we have also constructed a total of **1,938 metres** of culverts across the County.

Mr. Speaker, to enhance the skills and capacity of our contractors in public procurement processes and give them a competitive edge in tendering and contract management, the County Government of Kitui collaborated with the National Construction Authority (NCA) to train and capacity-build **4,000 contractors** from all the 40 Wards.

The County Government also repaired and operationalized road machinery including **four graders, three tippers, a backhoe loader, a bulldozer, a shovel and eight vehicles** to enhance inhouse road grading and opening.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Employing over **20,000** youth in Kitui, the **Boda Boda Sector** is one of the fastest growing sectors in the County.

The County Government has rolled out programs aimed at streamlining and strengthening the sector through formation of proper regulations and capacity-building frameworks in order to harness its huge potential for the benefit of the residents.

We have mapped Boda Boda operators and sensitized them on road safety and the need to form at least one Savings and Credit Cooperative Society (SACCO) in each of the 40 Wards.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Trade and Investment are powerful engines that drive economic growth and reduce poverty. To spur Kitui's economic growth and operationalize the **County's Six Economic and Investment Zones (EIZs)**, we have undertaken various initiatives geared towards

guaranteeing traders and investors an enabling business environment. Some of these initiatives include the reinstatement of the **Kitui Agricultural Show and Trade Fair** and initiation of the review of the **Kitui Vision for Economic and Social Transformation 1 (KIVEST I)** and the development of **KIVEST II**.

The County Government has also **linked** and **exposed** various MSMEs to international and local markets through forums and events like the **3rd Kenya International Investment Conference 2023** held in Nairobi and the **Biennial Devolution Conference 2023** in Uasin Gishu County. During the Devolution Conference, Kitui Stand that showcased products by **six exhibitors** from the County was ranked the **2nd Best Overall County**. The ranking was based on innovation, the 2023 Devolution Conference theme interpretation and quality of products and services displayed.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs)

create jobs in rural and urban areas of the county, enabling many people to access economic opportunities they would otherwise not have.

To facilitate economic growth in Kitui, the County Government has continued to support MSMEs through construction of **seven** market sheds at Katothya in Yatta/Kwa Vonza Ward, Wii in Mulango Ward, Kamaembe in Chuluni Ward, Thaana Nzau in Kyome/Thaana Ward, Itiva Nzou in Kyuso Ward, Kalamba Muyo in Mumoni Ward and Maliku in Kisasi Ward.

To boost trade and promote a 24-hour economy in our County, we have installed solar security lights in various market centers across the County such as Ndiini in Mutomo/Kibwea Ward, Kitoani in Kanyangi Ward, Maliku in Kisasi Ward, Syongila in Township Ward, Kyandoa in Waita Ward and Lundi in Mui Ward.

Mr. Speaker, in order to empower and expose the youth in business innovations, we implemented the ***Plug Mtaani-Vijana2Invest Program*** in collaboration with the National Government, where **200 youths** participated and **135** were shortlisted to compete.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Cooperative Societies serve common interests of people for mutual benefit. They promote members' interests and their socio-economic welfare.

To support formation and strengthening of cooperative societies in various sectors, we facilitated registration of **61** new cooperative societies across the County. They include **Thagicu Farmers, Utu Wema, Aithi Farmers, Mathima Livestock Marketing, Misokani Farmers, Kicopo Poultry Producer and Marketing as well as Zomwita Farmers** Cooperative Societies. We also trained **9,762 Cooperators** on governance of

Cooperative Societies, and conducted an audit on **66** Cooperative Societies for compliance.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Kitui is a potential top tourist and hospitality destination in Kenya. Our County hosts an assortment of tourist attractions, among them the Tsavo East National Park, South Kitui Game Reserve, the mystical Nzambani Rock, the scenic Ikoo Valley, Muumoni hills, Kora National Park and Mutomo Reptile Park.

To tap into the **Tourism Sector's** huge economic potential, we sensitized and trained **200** Kitui youth in November, 2023 on tourism opportunities including tourism circuits, hospitality and tour guiding. This was done in collaboration with the **Kenya Tourism Board (KTB)** and the **Kenya Utalii College**. We also solarized Kalalani Game Rangers Camp borehole in the South Kitui Game Reserve.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Women are the backbone of families and communities. The youth, on the other hand, are the future of our nation. People with disabilities are abled differently.

To foster an inclusive society whose **Women, Youth and Persons with Disabilities** are socially, economically and politically empowered, the County Government **has trained and sensitized 160 women groups, 400 youth, and 40 PWDs** groups on Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) across the eight Sub-Counties.

To enhance sports and nurture talents, the County Government of Kitui has renovated and upgraded the Kitui Stadium to increase the capacity to host **5,000 people** and upgraded **six playgrounds** (Vutu Secondary School in Kanziku/Simisi Ward, Mukameni Primary School in Kisasi Ward, Ithumula Primary School in Chuluni Ward, Kathungi Primary School in Mulango Ward, Yumbe Primary School in Waita Ward and Katuka

Primary School in Mumoni Ward) to benefit over **15,000** youth.

In addition, we have issued assorted sports equipment and kits to benefit an estimated **5,000 youth** across the 40 Wards; facilitated participation of a basketball team in the **Kenya Youth Inter-County Sports Association (KYISA) Games**. A total of **22 players** participated in the KYISA Games, out of which **three** were scouted for training at the **Kenya Academy of Sports**.

We also trained **285 coaches** and **referees** to increase efficiency in coaching and officiating of sporting activities, and facilitated **200 athletes/sportsmen** to register with the **Anti-Doping Agency** to enable national and international participation in sports.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Conservation of the **Environment** and sustainable utilization of natural resources are vital in building the resilience of our communities against the negative effects of Climate Change. To enhance environmental

conservation, the County Government has facilitated growing of **26,350 trees** across the County through the "**Nyumba Moja Miti Ishirini**" and the **Urban Greening Initiative of "Duka Moja Miti Tatu"**. We have also rehabilitated riparian land through growing of **1,000 bamboo seedlings** along Kalundu River in Township Ward.

To conserve our river basins and to streamline sustainable harvesting of sand in our rivers, we developed the **Kitui County River Basins Sand Utilization and Conservation Policy and Bill** which are before this Honourable House for consideration. Once enacted, the legislation will set out guidelines for sustainable sand utilization, emphasizing on the protection and conservation of our river basins.

In regard to **Mining**, we have conducted a geological assessment and mapping of mineral resources in Tharaka and Tseikuru Wards in Mwingi North. The assessment has unveiled substantial **copper deposits** within Tharaka Ward.

We have further established and gazetted the **Kitui County Artisanal Mining Committee** in collaboration with the State Department of Mining. The Committee is tasked with issuing artisanal mining permits for the artisanal miners operating in the County.

Similarly, on matters **Climate Change**, we have developed the **Kitui County Climate Change Action Plan 2023-2027** and established the **Climate Change Unit**, the **County Climate Change Technical Team** and **Ward Climate Change Planning Teams** in all 40 Wards.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In efforts to promote the adoption of green and renewable **Energy**, improve security and provide traders with a conducive business environment, the County Government has installed **87** solar security lights, and repaired **79** faulty solar security lights in trading and market centers across the 40 Wards. We have also

supplied and commissioned **11.88Kilowatt solar system** for water pumping at Kwa Muinde Borehole in Matinyani serving **250 households**, and installed electricity at Thitani Dispensary in Kyome/Thaana Ward, serving the facility and the neighbouring community.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members

Information Communication Technology (ICT) is a catalyst for increasing productivity, reaching global customers, and improving access to technology around the world. It has empowered marginalized communities, giving them a voice to influence the decisions that affect their enterprises and their livelihoods.

To improve access to County e-government services, we have redesigned the Kitui County website to integrate the ***myCountyApp*** service. The application was developed in collaboration with Safaricom PLC.

Moreover, to increase mobile telephony connectivity from **83 per cent** to **95 per cent**, my government

collaborated with Mobile Network Operators (MNOs) including **Safaricom PLC** and **American Tower Corporation (ATC Kenya)** to install new Base Transmission Stations (BTSs) and optimize the existing ones.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Security is key for human existence. Safety and security in local communities are crucial for development as they contribute to stability, social cohesion and the overall well-being of residents.

In order to offer a long-lasting solution to the insecurity challenges along our North and Eastern borders, we have collaborated with the National Government in order to establish **eight (8) police stations** to enhance security patrols in Kanziku/Simisi, Mutha, Voo/Kyamatu, Endau/Malalani, Nuu, Nguni, Ngomeni and Tseikuru Wards. This collaboration is in line with Article 189 (1) (b) of the Constitution of Kenya (CoK) 2010 that allows the

two levels of government to assist, support, consult and as appropriate, implement the legislation of the other level of government. Currently, two police stations i.e. Mandongoi in Ngomeni and Kona Kaliti in Mutha are complete, while Twambui in Endau/Malalani and Imuumba in Voo/Kyamatu are ongoing.

We have also installed street lights in various towns, market centers and other public facilities to enhance security.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To ensure equitable development in all the 40 Wards, we have been implementing the **Community Level Infrastructure Development Program (CLIDP)**. So far, the County Government of Kitui has undertaken **333 CLIDP projects** cutting across various sectors such as education, roads, water, health and security. To increase the rate of access, transition and retention of learners from financially disadvantaged backgrounds and improve the performance of the education sector, my government

has supported **23,733 learners** with bursaries totaling to **Kshs.172.8 Million** through the **Pro-Poor Fee Support** component of the **Pro-Poor Support Program**. It is important for this Honourable House and the Great People of Kitui to note that my government increased the program's budgetary allocation from **Kshs.40 Million** to **Kshs.120 Million**.

We are also undertaking Pro-Poor infrastructural projects worth **Kshs.60 Million**. These include construction of a two-floor administration block at Matinyani Secondary School, a dining hall at Tiva VTC, a four-door pit latrine at Mui VTC and completion of eight stalled classrooms at Ithiani VTC.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

On **Payment of Pending Bills** and guided by the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) Regulations, 2015 (Counties) Section 41 (2) which requires that debt service payments be a first charge on the County Revenue Fund, the County Government has paid **Kshs.901,046,920** of the total **Kshs. 1,431,226,007** bills approved by the

Pending Bills Review Committee. My government commits to clear the eligible unpaid bills totalling **Kshs. 530,179,087** in the subsequent financial years.

On **Own Source Revenue**, the County Government recorded an above-target revenue performance after exceeding the fiscal year target of **Kshs.420 million** to collect **Kshs. 464.35 million** during the 2022/2023 Financial year. This is the first time the County has surpassed its target since the onset of Devolution. The stellar performance is as a result of aggressive revenue collection and enhancement of related strategies including enforcement of the use of the automated County Revenue Collection System, staff training and retooling, performance-based contracting and resource allocation for optimal employee performance.

Kitui was ranked by the **Office of the Controller of Budget (OCoB)** as the **Best Overall County** nationally in achieving the highest performance in raising her own revenue at **84 per cent** during the FY2022/2023.

In fulfilment of Section 108 (1) of the County Governments Act, 2012, we prepared and launched the **Kitui County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2023-2017**, a five-year development blueprint capturing the aspirations and priorities of Kitui citizens which the County Government of Kitui will strive to progressively implement by 2027.

On **Budget Absorption**, the approved County budget for the **FY2022/2023** was **Kshs.12,306,052,565** comprising 70 per cent recurrent (**Kshs.8,662,902,604**) and 30 per cent development (**Kshs.3,643,149,961**).

Total expenditure for the year ending 30th June 2023 amounted to **Kshs.10,349,868,747**; representing gross absorption of **84.1** per cent, up from **82.95** in **FY2021/22** due to disbursement of all monthly equitable share for the County.

Concerning **Procurement**, we have put in place mechanisms to adhere to **Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO)** requirements by ensuring **30 per cent** of all County procurements are reserved for youths, women and People with Disabilities (PWDs).

Mr. Speaker, on **Personal Emoluments**, the County Government has put in place measures for timely processing of staff salaries and remittance of all statutory obligations and commitments.

We have also established the **County Budget & Economic Forum (CBEF)** as provided for in Section 137 of the Public Finance Management (PFM) Act 2012 for County budget consultation process.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

What gets measured gets done. To improve performance and service delivery in the County Ministries and Departments, my government re-institutionalized

Performance Contracting in the last Quarter of FY2022/2023.

STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIPS AND COLLABORATIONS

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

To enable our people to reap maximum benefits as far as development is concerned, we resolved to work closely with the National Government and other Development Partners so as to deliver transformative and sustainable development.

The County Government of Kitui in collaboration with the **Water Sector Trust Fund (WSTF)** is implementing two large water projects. These are **Ilimukuyu Dam Water Supply Scheme** in Endau, Endau/Malalani Ward in Kitui East Sub-County and **Kyuso Rock Catchment Water**

Supply Scheme in Kyuso Town, Mwingi North Sub-County.

The Ilimukuyu Dam Water Supply Scheme is designed to provide water for **17,971 people** and **54,237 heads of livestock**. Further, the project will support small-scale household level irrigated agriculture, thus promoting food security, while the Kyuso Rock Catchment Water Supply Scheme will supply water to **16,120 persons** in Kyuso and its environs. This will be a transformational model of providing high quality water harnessed from rainfall through the rock catchment.

Mr. Speaker, our water companies – the **Kitui Water and Sanitation Company (KITWASCO)** and the **Kiambere-Mwingi Water and Sanitation Company (KIMWASCO)** - are supported by the County Government of Kitui to pay the high electricity bills incurred through pumping water from Masinga and Kiambere Dams. This is mainly because their water tariffs

are subsidised. The companies are, however, in the process of reviewing their tariffs which were last reviewed in 2011. Further, the companies are faced with other challenges including an old depreciated pumping system and pipeline network. However, this is being addressed through partnerships with the National Government for **Kiambere Phase II** for KIMWASCO and the **Masinga Dam Water Intake Development Project** for KITWASCO.

We lobbied the National Government to revive the stalled **Umaa Dam** in Kyangwithya East Ward. The National Government has already contracted **China Jiangxi International Cooperation** to undertake the completion of the project at a cost of **Kshs.2 Billion**. Once complete, the dam will have a capacity to provide **3,975 Cubic Meters** of water per day.

Further, we have also negotiated for the establishment of a **construction site for the contractor** in Tharaka

Ward for the proposed **Kshs.425 Billion High Grand Falls Multipurpose Dam** located along the Kitui-Tharaka Nithi border along River Tana. This will in turn spur the local economy through creation of job opportunities and utilization of local construction materials.

Thwake Dam, whose benefits will be shared by the three Counties of Kitui, Machakos and Makueni, is another major product of the cooperation between the **South Eastern Kenya Economic Bloc (SEKEB)** and the National Government. Phase one of this project is at 89 per cent completion.

We also implemented the **Syomisyi-Mesilya-Enzou-Kisayani Water Project** in Ikanga/Kyatune Ward in partnership with the **Catholic Medical Mission Board (CMMB)** benefitting an estimated **3,000** people.

In partnership with the **Welt-Hunger Hilfe (WHH)**, a German NGO, we implemented the **Yongela Borehole Water Supply Project** in Ikanga/Kyatune Ward benefitting an estimated **2,000** people and the **Mbusyani Water Supply Project** in Athi Ward that is serving an estimated **2,500** people.

In the **Health Sector**, the County Government collaborated with the **United States International Development Agency (USAID)** to install the **Kshs.27.7 Million Oxygen Generating Plant** at **Mwingi Level Four Hospital** in May 2023.

In addition, we have initiated the establishment of the **Kshs.500 Million Kitui County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs)** in collaboration with the National Government through a 50/50 Matching Fund. The CAIPs facility, to be established at Kanyonyoo along the Thika-Mwingi-Garissa Highway, will serve as a hub for collection, sorting, grading, cleaning, processing and

packaging of agricultural products with a strong emphasis on value addition.

Moreover, the County Government, in collaboration with development partners, has prioritized **five** key value chains namely, **green grams, mango, sorghum, tomatoes,** and **local poultry** to promote agribusiness.

Other initiatives include facilitation of formation of 40 Savings and Credit Cooperative Organizations (SACCOs), one per ward, to empower our farmers financially and foster a culture of saving and investment, development of **seven** small-scale infrastructure investments for primary aggregation and value addition, establishment of **80** demonstration farms and learning sites across the county and establishment of **eight** farmer-led irrigation projects with a total area of **800 acres** with a view to promote irrigated agriculture. These collaborative interventions will benefit an estimated **40,000** farmers in the 40 Wards.

My government has partnered with the **Walk About Foundation** for the distribution of wheelchairs to person with mobility disability. The organization has donated **113** wheelchairs which have improved mobility of our people.

CHALLENGES AND MITIGATION MEASURES

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Despite our achievements, we have encountered a number of challenges in the implementation of our Manifesto and Annual Development Plans (ADPs).

First and foremost, we have experienced **frequent delays in disbursement of funds** from the Exchequer. This has affected timely implementation of projects and programmes. It has, on occasions, also affected prompt payments to our contractors and suppliers. However, this challenge is not unique to Kitui County but cuts across the 47 counties. To address this issue, the County Governments, through the Council of Governors and other Constitutional institutions, are actively engaged in

consultations with the National Government to streamline the disbursement of funds to counties.

As you are aware, we inherited **pending bills** totalling **Kshs.2,560,718,638.82**. Out of these **Kshs.1,431,226,009.65** was cleared for payment by the Pending Bills Review Committee. The balance of **Kshs.1,129,492,629.17** was not cleared for payment subject to verification, valuation and validation. Given that the Regulation 42 (1)(a) of the Public Finance Management, 2015 (Counties) requires that debt service payment shall be a first charge of the County budget, we have prioritized payment of pending bills in our budgets. This has eaten into our budget for new projects and programs for the last two Financial Years. Going forward, we intend to clear all pending bills in the subsequent Financial Years so that we can dedicate our financial resources to our development priorities. Additionally, to avoid future upsurge of pending bills, we have committed to set realistic own source revenue targets.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

When we assumed office, we found a **bloated wage bill**. Our current budget for the FY2023/2024 of **Kshs.13.988 Billion** comprises personnel emoluments totalling **Kshs.5.417 Billion** which is **39 per cent** of the total budget. This contravenes the fiscal responsibility principle as outlined in Section 107 (2) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012 requires that County expenditure on wages benefits shall not exceed 35 per cent of a County's budget. To address this challenge, we have resolved to freeze recruitment of new staff save for essential and technical officers. We will also endeavour to put in place strategies of raising our own source revenue in order to comply with the law.

FUTURE PLANS/WAY FORWARD

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Going forward, my government will continue to focus on the implementation of key projects and programs aimed at transforming the livelihoods of our people.

In the **Agriculture Sector**, we plan to intensify training and support to our farmers in adopting modern farming technologies through recruitment of more agricultural extension officers and animal health assistants. In addition, we will improve and modernize the Kitui Agricultural Training Centre (ATC), transforming it into a hub of learning and innovation by improving the demonstration farms, conference and accommodation facilities. We will also construct a borehole at the facility to enhance access to water.

Additionally, we will continue to offer subsidized tractor ploughing services and repair the remaining faulty **22** farm tractors ensuring that all the **40** farm tractors are operational to serve over **10,000** farmers annually.

In our efforts to enhance access to clean and safe water for our people, my government will construct **eight sump-wells**, one in each Sub-County, to serve an average of **40,000** people, solarize **20 boreholes** across the County through use of solar-powered as opposed to

diesel-powered water pumping systems to increase efficiency and cut down on operation costs, drill more boreholes in suitable sites with high water yield across Kitui, construct at least **20 (Twenty) 100-cubic meter** small dams in various Wards.

In **Health**, my government will focus on initiation of construction of the **Nzamba Kitonga Memorial Hospital** in Mutitu/Kaliku Ward, continue construction of the **South Eastern Kenya Renal Centre** at the Kitui County Referral Hospital, upgrade the Kanziko, Tiva, Endau, Kyuso, Katse, Sosoma, Mbitini, Tharaka and Miambani Health Centres to Level 3B and install **Integrated Health Information System** in the remaining 12 Level 4 hospitals across the County.

Mr. Speaker, other projects in the Health Sector will include construction of a general theatre and a kitchen at Kyuso Sub-County Hospital, completion and operationalization of a kitchen at Migwani Sub-County

Hospital, completion of the stalled female ward at the Mwingi Level IV Hospital and completion of Mutomo Health Center's Outpatient Department (OPD) Block.

Mr. Speaker, concerning our dispensaries, we plan to construct and operationalize Katumbi, Ngwate, Gatoroni, Kilimu, Kimela, Nguutani, Katuyu, Mukauni, Kangondi, Nzunguni-Kasang'o, Kathithu, Thitha, Kamanyi, Tuvaani, Kwa Song'e, Musovo, Thua, Kimangao and Masavi dispensaries.

We will also complete and equip the Kitui County Referral and Mwingi Level IV Hospitals mortuaries and purchase **two** coolers for Kyuso Sub-County Hospital mortuary.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

My government will equip and operationalize 13 completed maternity units in Kyuso Sub-County Hospital, Malalani, Yanzuu, Miambani, Nguni and Kauma health

centres as well as Tiva, Endau, Mui, Mivukoni, Itongolani, Kiseuni and Katilini dispensaries.

In addition, we will purchase medical equipment for Rehabilitation Departments at the Kitui County Referral Hospital, the Mwingi Level IV Hospital, Ikutha, Migwani, Kanyangi, Mutitu, Kyuso and Kauwi Sub-County Hospitals for occupational therapy and physiotherapy.

To boost the **Education Sector**, my government will continue to increase funds allocated to the **Pro-Poor Fee Support Program**, including enhancement of the Infrastructure component of the program, improve learning environment through construction of more modern ECDE classrooms and provision of teaching and learning materials.

In regard to vocational training and skills development, we will continue to improve our existing Vocational Training Centers (VTCs) and capacity-build VTC

instructors in line with the new Competency Based Education and Training (CBET) and Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (CDACC) guidelines, among other initiatives.

In our efforts to improve **urban infrastructure**, we will upgrade to bitumen standards our urban roads within Kyusyuni and Migwani towns through the Dustless Program, install and maintain integrated solar energy streetlights and high-mast flood lights in the various upcoming urban areas, construct storm water drainage channels in Zombe, Migwani, Mutomo and Kwa Vonza urban areas, construct cabro-paved pedestrian walkways in Migwani, Kwa Vonza, Mutomo and Kabati towns.

In the **Roads Sector**, my government will, under the **Inhouse Grading Programme**, grade a total of **1,600km** of the County roads, that is, **40km** in every Ward and open **280km** of roads across the County under the **Dozing Programme**. We will also tarmac the

1.4km ATC-SEKU Kitui Campus to Bypass Road and install street lights for the same. Further, my government will continue to periodically rehabilitate and maintain all our roads as well as construct drifts, concrete slabs, culverts, repair potholes, surface resealing and gravelling, among other works.

In the **Boda Boda Sector**, my government will develop the Kitui County Boda Boda Policy to address the key challenges, promote sustainable practices, and contribute to the overall development of the Boda Boda industry. In addition, we will train **2,000** Boda Boda riders, **50** from each Ward, and facilitate issuance of Smart Driving Licenses and **2,000** pieces of Safety Riding Gears by the end of this financial year. Boda Boda operators will also be sensitized on road safety and proper use of personal protective equipment (PPES) e.g., helmets and reflector jackets.

Further, to ensure that Boda Boda Riders work in a conducive environment free from adverse environmental conditions like direct sunlight, rain and wind, my government will construct **40** Boda Boda Sheds, one in each Ward.

To boost **Trade and Investments** in our County, my government, in collaboration with the National Government, will complete and brand the **Kitui County Aggregation and Industrial Park (KCAIP)** which will be popularized during the planned October 2024 **Investors Conference**.

In our efforts to strengthen the **Cooperatives Societies Sector**, my government will facilitate registration of **20** new cooperatives, capacity-building of **85** cooperative societies, revival of **20** dormant cooperatives and carry out audits on **60** cooperative societies.

Mr. Speaker, my government has acquired a **7-acre** land for construction of stadia in Kivou and Waita Wards in Mwingi Central and Kyoani in Kitui South. We will also roll out the Kazi Kwa Vijana Program to boost youth employment and wealth creation across the County.

In **Tourism and Hospitality**, my government will strive to promote the County tourism circuit that connects the beach tourism at the Coastal Region to the wildlife tourism at the South Kitui Game Reserve which lies within the Tsavo Conservation Area, taking advantage of the tarmacked Kibwezi –Mutomo – Kitui - Migwani Road that connects to Mwingi - Tseikuru Road, and eventually to the Mt. Kenya Tourism Circuit via Mwingi National Reserve which borders Meru National Park.

We will also seek to rehabilitate both South Kitui and Mwingi game Reserves as well as enhance Wildlife Conservation through establishing conservancies, in conjunction with the Kenya Wildlife Services.

We will also complete and operationalize Mutomo Reptile Park in collaboration with the National Museums of Kenya and the Kenya Wildlife Service. The Reptile Park features a display of various species of snakes and other reptiles. The site will also serve as a center for research, breeding and snake venom harvesting.

In addition, we will organize three tourism hospitality stakeholders' forums to sensitize and train them on investment and quality services. We will also embark on marketing of key touristic attraction sites including Ikoo Valley, Museve shrine, Nzambani Rock, Yanzuu rock retreat centre and Important Bird Areas (IBAs) of Mumoni and Mutitu hills.

On **Environment**, we plan to grow trees in hills, markets and riverine areas, establish ward tree growing nurseries,

rehabilitate Nuu and Mutitu catchment ecosystems, capacity build ward climate change planning teams and reengineer operations at the Kitui town dumpsite.

On **Energy**, we will undertake rural electrification of institutions by utilizing existing high voltage infrastructure for maximization of electricity connectivity to **20 institutions** and **1000 households**. This will be done through installation of transformers and low voltage lines in partnership with the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC) and Kenya Power. We will continue to install and maintain solar security lights in upcoming markets in all the 40 Wards.

On **Minerals**, we will construct and equip of one central mineral value addition and gemology laboratory to enhance marketability of County minerals and gemstones.

On **Security**, we will construct **four** Police Stations comprising administration block, OCS quarters, Deputy OCS quarters, junior staff quarters, chain link fencing and gate, pit latrine and solar lighting in Kanziku/Simisi, Nuu, Nguni and Tseikuru Wards.

Moreover, my government will gradually increase funding of the **Community Level Infrastructure Development Program (CLIDP)** to ensure equitable distribution of priority projects across the 247 County villages. This year, for instance, we increased the CLIDP budgetary allocation from **Kshs.412 Million** to **Kshs.690 Million**.

To boost the morale and performance of our county staff, we will endeavour to institute measures aimed at capacity-building and training, budgeting and timely promotion of deserving officers. We have already promoted **363** County staff and we intend to promote County specialists, medical doctors, pharmacists and

dentists by 1st April 2024. We are also in the process of addressing any backlog of staff stagnation across all other County Ministries/Departments. Further, we intend to construct **2 two-floor office blocks** to provide more office space for our staff in the next financial year.

Mr. Speaker, on the **County investment entities**, we have constituted an internal team to re-assess the viability of these entities and advise accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, owing to the unsustainability of such ventures, the County Executive Committee/Cabinet has resolved that, going forward, the County Government of Kitui will not engage in commercial business. Our role, as captured in our Mission, is to provide an enabling environment for investors but not to compete with the citizens in the provision of goods and services.

We are focused and committed to ensure that, by the end of the calendar year of our term, every citizen of this

county will have experienced tangible development in all sectors may it be in health, roads, water, education, agriculture, trade, cooperatives, energy, urbanization, among others, which will change their livelihoods.

CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

In conclusion, let me thank you for the steadfast unity and cooperation you have exhibited as we endeavour to deliver quality and timely services to our people. The responsibility of delivering development to the people of Kitui is squarely on the shoulders of both the County Executive and the County Assembly. The former US President Henry Ford said and I quote: **“Keeping together is progress. Working together is success.”**

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Another renown leader, the former Prime Minister of the United Kingdom Winston Churchill observed and I quote: **“When there is no enemy within, the enemies**

outside cannot hurt you.” We must remain united and focused in our journey to deliver on our pledges to the Great People of Kitui. We should not allow detractors to derail our efforts to meet the development needs of our people.

I need not belabour the point on the importance of pulling in one direction as the County Government of Kitui. If there was a time the County Executive and the County Assembly ever needed cooperation and unity of purpose, then that moment is now. Even as Members of Kitui County Assembly continue to play their key roles of legislation, representation and oversight, we should always bear in mind that those we represent are yearning for prosperity and development before anything else. These can only be achieved within an environment of **consultation, cooperation, unity and cohesion.** Therefore, in whatever we do, we should all strive to ensure that our people get their best bargain for the immense trust they bestowed upon us to lead them. **We must and should not let them down.**

MY MESSAGE TO THE GREAT PEOPLE OF KITUI

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Lee Kuan Yew, the first Prime Minister of Singapore, credited with leading his country from Third to First World status, once said: **"A nation is great not by its size alone. It is the will, the cohesion, the stamina, the discipline of its people and the quality of their leaders which ensure it an honourable place in history."** These words of wisdom equally apply to our County.

My Great People of Kitui, I sincerely thank you for your continued support, goodwill and patience as we strive to deliver what we promised in our Campaign Manifesto. Your steadfast trust in our commitment and ability to serve you has been a great motivation for us to work even harder to deliver quality services that improve the livelihoods and standards of living of you all.

To quote American actress and songwriter Sabrina Bryan:
“You can do anything as long as you have the passion, the drive, the focus and the support.” We have the passion. We have the drive. And we have the focus. But to deliver development, we need the undivided support of you all.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

Elections were held in August 2022 and the people of Kitui exercised their democratic right by electing leaders of their choice. This is time for service delivery and therefore, there is no room for premature politicking.

In his final speech, the former Singaporean Prime Minister Lee Kuan Yew told his countrymen to be wary of the kind of people they elect and emphasized on the need to entrust leadership to the best they have, and warned them against charlatans with the gift of gab.

Mr. Speaker and Honourable Members,

We – the County Executive and the County Assembly – as well as all the residents and well-wishers of this Great County, are one people sharing a common destiny. We must not squander this chance to make Kitui one of the most vibrant counties in Kenya. Let me end by paraphrasing Ghanaian author Lailah Gifty Akita, who said: **“There is power in unity. We must be united in heart and mind.”**

And I add: **“ONE KITUI, ONE PEOPLE!”**

Thank you.

God Bless Kenya!

God Bless Kitui!

**Dr. Julius M. Malombe, EGH,
GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY**

