

STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS BY H.E THE GOVERNOR OF NYAMIRA COUNTY, JOHN OBIERO NYAGARAMA PRESENTED TO COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF NYAMIRA ON 8/04/2015

Hon. Speaker

County Assembly of Nyamira,

Hon. Members of the County Assembly,

County Officials,

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen;

Mr. Speaker:

Before delivering my speech, Honorable Members of the Assembly, I want to thank our God because His grace has been sufficient to us all despite social, economic and physical challenges. By faith, we shall overcome.

Mr. Speaker:

Allow me to request all present to be upstanding to observe a one-minute silence in remembrance of the victims of the Garissa University tragedy where the County and the Nation as a whole lost precious and promising young men and women in a senseless terrorist attack.

THE GATHERING OBSERVES ONE MUNITE OF SILENCE

Be seated. I would like to inform Honorable Members that the County Government has moved quickly and formed a Secretariat Committee chaired by County Chief Officer, Health Services assisted by Sub-County Administrator, Borabu Sub-county(based at Nairobi) to oversee the conduct of funeral arrangements. We have also given some donations to the afflicted families to assist in starting them off.

Mr. Speaker:

The purpose of our presence here today is to review and reflect on gains made in the second year of devolved Government particularly in our County of Nyamira.

In the past one year, our County recorded remarkable progress despite the many challenges we encountered such as inadequate resources, unjustified criticisms, and mounting expectations. Despite these mammoth challenges, I am pleased to

reassure the residents of Nyamira County that the State of the County is good and is getting better.

The remarkable successes we have achieved in the last two years is attributable to the possibilities unleashed through devolved government. As we take stock of the fruits of devolution such as lessons learnt, challenges encountered, and possible areas of improvement, it is of paramount importance to match expectations with reality in order to plan more appropriately.

From the onset, the object of devolution was to bring essential services closer to the people, and ensure public participation in the processes of good governance. So far, the National government has devolved critical functions such as health, agriculture, and pre-primary education.

However, at this moment as I address you, our County Government and the National Government are at cross roads on certain important functions such as construction and maintenance of roads, among others. The Chabera-Ikongge-Chebilat road, for instance, remains a constant problem in this County; regardless being within the armpit of the Cabinet Secretary in charge of roads and infrastructure in the National government.

It is time the National Government considered transferring some of these functions to County Governments for efficient management and operation.

If we were to take a critical look at the overall performance of the few functions already transferred to counties, it is abundantly clear that the sectors concerned have recorded major successes within the past two years. Indeed, if the National Government had transferred all functions, as envisaged in the Constitution, service delivery would have improved tremendously.

The Health sector is one area where Nyamira has performed extremely well. For instance, in the last two years My Government has purchased and distributed medicine and other supplies to all public and faith-based health facilities in the County. We promise to ensure that adequate medicine and other supplies are always available to all.

In the same period, the County Government initiated an integrated health management information system in Nyamira County Referral Hospital leading to the doubling of revenue collection. We are monitoring intervening factors in order to make it a model for other revenue collection units to emulate.

We also procured five ambulances and refurbished old ambulances into serviceable status in the last financial year, and we plan to acquire another one this financial

year. Furthermore, we are in the process of procuring an assortment of medical equipment before the end of this fiscal year.

In addition to this, an assortment of medical equipment have been purchased including three X-ray machines, maternal and child health equipment, laboratory equipment and other related medical supplies aimed at improving our healthcare system. The CT-scan installed recently is a major achievement for the people of this region. Currently this machine is serving clients from the entire western Kenya region.

In partnership with Kenya Commercial Bank, My Government is in the process of setting up a renal dialysis unit and launch services after completion of installation works. Better still, we have renovated 64 health facilities across the County some of which had stalled due to lack of funding.

Mr. Speaker:

A Doctor's Plaza with a 72-bed amenity wing to enable our medical personnel provide consultancy services is undergoing the procurement process.

Several specialized equipment are in the high seas on the way to Nyamira following high-level delegations that visited Finland, Germany, USA, and the Czech Republic in December 2014 and February 2015. Our overall aim is to upgrade the Nyamira Level Four Hospital to a fully-fledged referral facility, and make health services affordable to all.

My Government is committed to delivering on our promise to the people of Nyamira on infrastructural development, although some of the roads fall under the National Government. All the same, My Government has already realized a number of successes in this sector such as opening up of several access roads and upgrading 240 kilometers of roads. The ultimate objective of our County Government is to improve over 500 km of roads before the end of the five-year term.

Another milestone in this regard is our recent purchase of heavy road works equipment, which we launched on March 18, 2015. Procurement of additional equipment is set for purchase this financial year. Additionally, our County received some road construction equipment from the National Government stores shared out among all counties.

My Government has renovated County Assembly offices and plans are underway to erect executive wing offices. We also intend to set up a mechanical fund

management unit and a yard for sustainable management of our county equipment. The objective of all these efforts is to make every part of the county accessible.

LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,

The State of the County of Nyamira is good and getting better.

My Government wants to maintain a green environment through a variety of measures. In the water sector, we initiated protection and construction of 46 small and medium sized water supply projects throughout the county.

Secondly, both Nyamira and Keroka townships water supplies are undergoing major rehabilitation works to boost water supply to their consumers. We are also in the process of making our county clean and friendlier to live in through environmental beautification programs, including installation of 100 streetlights in our towns and trading centers in the past year. We have also initiated a project towards achievement of a bamboo tree economy by putting up 20 nurseries with the intention of planting 100,000 seedlings as a replacement of the water guzzling blue gum tree.

My Government is keen in establishing an industrial economy with trade and cooperatives as the prime movers towards achievement of this dream. In this connection, we have already accomplished a great deal such as revival and re-engineering of cooperative movements by registering new societies, training of Cooperative Management Committees, and initiation of innovations like 'bob ni swag'.

My Government has also issued Ksh 2 million loans to 90 traders through the Joint Loans Fund facility, conducted a benchmarking venture at both Kisumu and Nairobi for our Jua Kali traders, and set aside Ksh 6m for erection of Boda Boda sheds in each Sub-county. We are constructing several market structures across the county starting with 8 new modern markets in Magombo, Girango, Keroka, Nyabite, Mosobeti, Mokomoni, Ikonge, and Magwagwa).

We plan to improve water supply and toilet systems in all 8-market centers. We will also build 7 new modern markets across the county with Girango market being the first in these projects. We hope to create a 24-hour economy, and an enabling environment for business enterprises in our major towns of Keroka, Nyamira, Ekerenyo, and Nyansiongo.

With regard to the Education sector, the County of Nyamira deserves a university of its own. This is because university education is a critical component of human development. University education provides high-level skills necessary for the

labour-market especially in the training of teachers, doctors and other specialized groups.

Nyamira needs trained individuals with the capacity and analytical skills that drive local economies, which support and run effective government and businesses as well as enable them to make important decisions, which affect the entire nation. I have listened carefully to my people of Nyamira and I hear them call for establishment of a fully-fledged university of our own.

Indeed, given the sterling performance of our children in the recently released KCSE examination results, both within and outside the County, this is a genuine request deserving maximum attention and action. My Government has therefore embarked on a feasibility study aimed at mobilizing resources for establishment of a university at the County of Nyamira.

Although the education sector still falls mainly under the National Government, we have our eyes trained on setting up first class ECDE centers across the County. So far, we have constructed 20 ECDE centers and 26 polytechnic workshops with at least one in each ward, and the County Government has employed 406 ECDE teachers and established a fully-fledged ECDE directorate.

We successfully inducted all ECDE teachers, and provided relevant training materials in close partnership with Kenya Literature Bureau and Kenya School of Government. We have also laid a plan to take over active management of all polytechnics in the County as well as establishing a management model for all polytechnics.

My Government has also undertaken several educational supportive projects to public education institutions by providing 10000litre water tanks to schools, building materials, textbooks and other educational incentives across the county. I wish to take this opportunity to appeal to the National Government to devolve and provide resources for educational infrastructural projects as they retain curriculum, examination policy and standardization mandates.

Many integrated infrastructural projects are ongoing, and since the County Website is operational, I wish to advise all County citizens to visit the website regularly for updates on county policies, programs, projects, and events.

Mr. Speaker:

My Government is keen on the planning, management, provision of infrastructure and land use and development of the master plan of all our leading towns and urban centers throughout the county. We have opened up the necessary backstreets in

Nyamira, created an alternate transit route for entry and exit for orderly town management by the end of June 2015.

The Department of Lands is preparing a county spatial plan 2014-2023, for completion by June 2015. We will soon complete the Nyamira development plan and the plans for 5 other major towns in the county. We have also purchased and enhanced the appropriate building technology by buying one extra hydro-form machine with 7 public institutions, namely Irianyi primary, Nyakemincha, Bosose, and Kitaru primary schools, St. Stephen Gietai, Mwongori, Bigege polytechnics benefited from construction of at least one classroom in the last financial year. Four more institutions are to benefit from this programme this year.

Our county relies on agriculture as the main source of income, consequently, My Government has ambitious plans and targets in this sector. For instance, the Artificial Insemination Program I launched in the last financial year continued into this year with the synchronization and insemination of 10,984 animals in 20 wards. 857 calves were born with 9846 animals reportedly in calve. This project has increased the amount of milk in the County from an average of 4 litres per animal per farmer to an average of 7 litres per animal per farmer. My Government's target is having 1 dairy animal per household producing an average of 10 litres per day.

We distributed over 2,100 local poultry birds to groups across the entire County in the last financial year while 20 poultry houses were constructed, and 400 farmers received training in poultry farming.

We further distributed 200 Kenya top bar hives to farmer groups in 20 wards and 20 more groups got one hive kit per ward where each hive kit comprises of 10 langstroth hives, centrifuge, hive equipment, smoker and hive suits.

We were able to support 45 groups with 611 Kg of fodder and pasture seeds. The seeds were established and later harvested and turned into hay. 548 bales of hay were harvested across the County, which reduced the drought risk. Farmers adopted dry matter feeding and the supply of milk remained constant during the drought.

My Government also employed 73 extension officers in the Department of Agriculture to offer extension services and Artificial Insemination Services to farmers. Now, each ward has minimum of 3 extension officers. In addition, the County has trained 10 more Artificial Inseminators to ensure that each ward has a qualified inseminator.

Within one year, we procured 40 motor cycles for extension officers and artificial inseminators, which enabled them to respond promptly whenever necessary. We

have also acquired 20 artificial insemination cylinders, one for each ward inseminator.

50 farmer groups have been supported with 5,000 banana plantlets in the entire county each group receiving 100 tissue culture banana plantlets. On the other hand, 200 groups received local vegetable variety seedlings. These groups have so far harvested and sold some 4,500 kilograms of Rinagu, 4,400 kilos of *Chinsaga*, and 6,600 kilograms of *Emboga*.

These harvests have increased farmers' incomes from an average of Ksh. 100 per farmer per week to an average of Ksh 600 per farmer per week. This is in line with the County Strategic Plan of increasing the incomes of the farming community with a view to reducing poverty among our people by the year 2017.

The Department of Agriculture has also supplied 150,000 fingerlings to 100 fishponds and 4 dams across County.

The department is strengthening farmers' organizations by providing education and training on issues of governance, appropriate marketing strategies and operationalization of regulatory frameworks. I am pleased to note that these activities aim at creating an agriculture-smart environment supportive of an agribusiness-oriented cottage industry.

One of the objectives of the Department of Youth, Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services is to encourage the youth to form groups and get proper registration. This is to facilitate broader consultations and involvement of the youth and special interest groups in County activities.

Mr. Speaker:

During the groundbreaking ceremony for the construction of Manga Stadium, I will launch officially the Nyamira County Governor's Cup in the various sporting disciplines. Competitions will start from ward level through to sub-county and at County level, complete with award schemes and talent identifications.

Secondly, we plan to hold the long awaited Youth Forum in both Nyamira and Nairobi in May 2015, and we will advertise the County Professionals meeting in June this year.

Concerning women and people living with disabilities, My Government is already implementing the 30% and above requirement on all appointments, and its application on procurement of goods and services. I wish to appeal to the target groups concerned to take full advantage of this opportunity.

Mr Speaker:

I am pleased to inform Honorable Members of my decision to create a County Department of Public Administration and Coordination of Decentralized Units. The mission of the department is to provide a platform of leveraging of core competencies in performance management, capacity building, and stakeholder management, civic education, and transforming the public service to fit its purpose.

I have directed the new department to re-engineer achievements of the 2014/2015 performance contracting deliverables, through the rapid results initiative, effective April 1, 2015 for 90 days. I wish to request all stakeholders to collaborate with us in scaling up service delivery to the public.

COUNTY DEVELOPMENT PROJECTS IMPLEMENTATION TASK FORCE

Despite adequate budget provisions on the projects, the implementation of the projects and programs have faced several challenges such as delayed completions up to one year, alleged poor workmanship, lack of follow ups, request for unplanned variations and lack of social audit to ascertain the economic impact of the Development projects.

These implementation challenges of Development projects give the motivation for the formation of County Development Projects Task Force (CDPITF), whose members include Engineers, accountants, and various experts with distinguished career. On 11/03/2015 I constituted Task Force on projects implementation. The terms of references are:

1. Ascertain the number of projects and programs undertaken by the County Departments, entities and or institutions.
2. Assess and advise the extent of the projects implementation, quality works done and the status of the projects under implementation.
3. Examine the social and economic impact of the projects/programs vs resources allocated and economic justification of the costs.
4. Advise on strategies to be employed on projects/programs implementation to realize maximum social and economic impact in the society.
5. Formulate project monitoring and management strategies i.e. Bill of Quantities formulations, design supervisions, payments and handing over.
6. Formulate resources mobilization strategies
7. The Task force will be independent in discharging its mandate and advise H.E Governor on projects implementation status as per the terms of references.

Finally the findings will be inform the County Government on effectiveness in its projects/programs implementation, resources, utilization and the extent economic and social impact of the programs in the county.

I wish to reiterate my commitment to effective and efficient service delivery to the people of Nyamira. I would like take this opportunity to remind all staff in the County Government of the maxim **‘when you serve, you reign’**.

Before concluding my remarks, allow me to make a few crosscutting remarks and observations of the various positive developments and successes our County registered in the past year.

- ❖ A few months ago, the World Bank ranked the County Government of Nyamira among the top ten best performing counties in development expenditure.
- ❖ After a competitive beauty pageant process that started at county level across the nation, Ms Evelyn Arasa from Nyamira County, beat all competitors to the second overall Miss Tourism Kenya crown.
- ❖ The September 2014 edition of the Daily Post ranked Nyamira among the top five best performing counties.
- ❖ Apart from recording excellent results in the 2014 KCSE examination, our county had zero examination cheating cases.
- ❖ In the 2013-2014 year, Nyamira was the most improved county in revenue collection.
- ❖ We were also among the few counties to comply with the requirement that counties publish the County Fiscal Strategy Paper according a daily paper of March 2015.
- ❖ Our County is proudly the home of Rev. Joseph Obanyi, the first Omogusii Catholic Bishop to lead a Diocese in Kakamega.
- ❖ We also boast of an enhanced IT connectivity and infrastructural improvement
- ❖ Kenya School of Government and the World Bank also recognized us as an excellent county in ECDE infrastructural development.
- ❖ Our County is also leading in working collaboratively with the National Government. This is a key ingredient in service delivery.

We accomplished all these programs and projects, under a pastry budget received from the National Treasury to run our County. Budgetary constraint remains a major hindrance in our quest for rapid economic growth. Failure by the National Government to devolve critical functions such as education, roads, and others fully continues to undermine the speed with which counties can transform Kenya as a whole.

I would like to urge media practitioners to lower their appetite for negative news. Our media outlets should embrace constructive criticism and not propaganda.

Baseless and alarmist statements, some that quote me incorrectly, will not be of any help to our people.

Lastly but most importantly, I would like to give my special thanks to the Honorable Members of this Assembly for enacting the various critical Acts into law to guide us all in our various endeavor aimed at moving our County forward. Without the support of our Assembly in both oversight and legislative roles, we would not have achieved so much.

Mr. Speaker:

Finally, I feel proud and confident to report to the County Assembly that due to the various efforts of the County Assembly, the Executive, County staff, and collaboration from all stakeholders, as I have outlined in my remarks this morning, **THE STATE OF THE COUNTY IS GOOD AND IS GETTING BETTER.**

May the Almighty God be with us all and guide us all through us we struggle to achieve our day-to-day callings.

THANK YOU