

**Governor Samuel Ragwa speech during the opening of the County Assembly on  
3<sup>rd</sup> February 2015 at Kathwana County Headquarters.**

H.E Deputy Governor,

Hon. Speaker,

Deputy Speaker,

Leader of Majority,

Leader of Minority,

Hon. Members of our County Assembly,

Ladies and gentlemen,

It is with great pleasure that I join you today in reopening of our county assembly after the recess which marked the end of year 2014.

A year in which we remained united as we transited to the second year of devolution amidst various challenges that we walked through hand in hand.

Challenges that if it were not for you, our honorable members' support would have not been overcome easily not to mention peacefully.

I am entirely grateful to the County Assembly, led by Honorable Speaker John Mbaabu and his Deputy Paul GK Mwabu for your support to me as the Governor for Tharaka Nithi County and the executive.

As we are all aware the County government consists of the County Assembly and the County Executive which are meant to work together in promoting democratic and accountable exercise of power, foster national unity, promote social economic development just to name a few as affirmed in the constitution.

We have witnessed some counties fail to achieve this harmony and a lot of time and resources meant to ensure a smooth transit into devolution wasted.

Honourable Members, I take this opportunity to pass my appreciation and gratitude assuring you that Tharaka Nithi County government will forever strive to enhance a strong relationship with an objective to improve the livelihoods of our people.

With respect to the principle of separation of powers, you have exercised the oversight role over the executive keeping everyone responsible and up to their tasks.

As we begin 2015 I can confidently say we have been busy this financial year and we are indeed walking the talk by implementation of projects that we promised as a government.

Honourable members, ladies and gentlemen,

Let me mention a few of what has been done in the last two years cutting across all the departments highlighting our achievements and challenges in preparation for future plans.

### **Ministry of Education, Youth, Gender, Culture and Social Services.**

We are grateful for your support with the introduction of the county Bursary Funds which was presented and passed in the county assembly.

Your commitment to the education sector was clearly experienced when you overwhelmingly embraced the motion and passed it to make it a bill.

A bill that will see needy pupils and students access bursary worth 30M every financial year.

We have also introduced a Shs 30 Million revolving Fund Bill for Women, Youth and People living with Disabilities which is ready for presentation on the floor of our county Assembly.

This fund will go a long way in uplifting lives of Women, Youth & People living with disabilities and to the entire County as envisaged in our constitution and we still count on your support as esteemed members of the County Assembly.

As we concluded year 2014 we distributed cheques worth Shs 50 Million for development of Infrastructure in learning institutions.

Our Members of the County Assembly joined us as we distributed the cheques and are witnesses to how well the community embraced the assistance despite the entire education sector having not yet been devolved.

This money has been piped to ninety four primary and secondary schools, eight polytechnics, an ICT Centre and a Community Library.

We have not been able to employ the Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) Teachers due to the tussle with the KNUT AND TSC on devolution of the department.

We are however supplementing the community's effort that has been paying them and set aside a monthly kitty of Shs10, 000 for every public primary school with ECDE classes to facilitate their day to day activities.

The county is going to automatically absorb 40 Polytechnic instructors that had been employed by the national government on contract under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) that has since expired from last year.

### **Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operative development.**

We have already awarded tenders for rehabilitation of 17 markets with contractors expected to have moved their plants and equipment to the site by this month.

The markets are rehabilitated; we shall embark on street lightning (solar) and also construction of sheds for key local markets

As established during the Tharaka Nithi Investors Forum in Mombasa August last year we have identified Middle East as a key market for cereals and especially Green Grams and Pigeon Peas and plans are underway to sell our next harvest to an organization that has already been identified.

Cheques worth Ksh. 9.8 Million have already been issued to 118 Traders in Tharaka Nithi County through the Joint loan Board.

A total of Shs 20M more is expected to be issued in this month after the various interested traders have completed and Submitted loans application forms for consideration for loans.

### **Tourism, Water, Environment and Natural resources.**

We are currently seeking partners in renovation of Mt Kenya Kinondoni lodge and have been in consultation with the Chogoria Ward Member of County Assembly Hon Purity Wanja on best ways to market the facility.

We can all as well agree that if well furnished, branded and marketed, this tourist lodge will fetch our county extra revenue which will assist in curbing the financial constraints we often face.

In addition, construction of Chiakariga cultural center as the main county tourism market starts this month. All architectural drawings, designs are ready and we are in the process of getting a contractor. Topographical survey is currently being undertaken.

My government promised that we will enable majority of our households to access clean water by 2017. We have been distributing pipes to enhance water distribution for the last one year

Notably, we have completed survey and designs for four major rivers that we hope are going to transform the livelihoods of our people which will provide water for an irrigation project we are launching this year.

By the end of this financial year, several community water projects are going to benefit from 60 million which the county government has sourced and in collaboration with two major donor countries.

On environment and natural resource, we launched tree planting on 12<sup>th</sup> Nov 2014 where we started our drive to plant 6 million seedlings. The theme is “plant your age to restore our forest cover”.

## **Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries department.**

Our objectives are to increase productivity, improve processing capacity and enhance efficiency in our marketing systems while at the same time ensuring sustainability of our land resources.

Our agriculture department in partnership with K-Sales, a three-year project Food for Progress initiative funded by the United States, department of Agriculture (USDA) to produce 10,000 livestock.

In addition to this, the county is on the final stages of finalizing procedure to jointly implementing a dairy project with technical support from Afimilk Company from Israel at cost of kshs 350 Million which begins later this month.

Last month, the Fisheries department was able to distribute over 1000 fingerings of trout fish in the county to fastrack fish growing.

The Livestock department also distributed 60,000 vaccines in the lower areas of the county, ie Tharaka North, South and Igamba Ng'ombe sub counties to curb diseases in these area where animals is one of the major economic activities.

## **Public works, Roads, transport and Legal affairs**

A total of 846 Kilometres has already been upgraded in the last financial year and another 53 Kilometres gravelled.

This has been supported by Twenty drifts that have been constructed as well as the a bridge connecting two major wards in the county.

In general, a total cost of 322 Million has been used on roads during the last financial year.

Last week we launched the county road improvements projects targeting 200 Kilometers at a cost of 308Million.

This will be followed by Ward roads which you have identified and whose commencement is in middle February 2015.

Of great importance to note honorable members, is that construction of the county headquarters is expected to commence in March after the end of the tendering process which was advertised last week.

### **Health**

We have also proposed introduction of the county National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF ) with registration of the needy cases who may need assistance, ongoing.

We will present it to the floor of the assembly and seek your approval for this worthy cause.

This involves sponsorship of 1000 households per ward which means 15,000 households throughout the county will definitely be enrolled in the scheme thus assistance trickling to an estimated over 20,000 people.

In the beginning of this financial year we launched health projects in our County where we have 54 health projects ongoing with some almost complete in all the four sub counties all at a cost of Shs 120 Million. This includes construction of health centers and various hospital facilities like wards, maternity wards, kitchens and staff quarters.

We are glad that as leaders in the communities you were able to follow up and oversight even the construction to ensure what was being done was a good job and a priority to our people.

### **Urban development, Labour and Disaster Management**

The county government bought food worth 6M with 1071 bags (90 Kg) of maize and 909 bags (50 kg ) of beans that has been distributed from the ward level to curb areas that were facing famine last few months.

We are aiming towards working together in eradicating hunger in our county to ensure our people do not lack food and have means of earning their living.

We have also set aside 35 Million shillings for commencement of two Major One air markets in the county to facilitate better environment for traders and to maintain an organized set up.

### **Physical planning, lands, energy and ICT**

Local physical development plan for Kathwana Town which is hosts our county headquarters is complete and all buildings have received approval from the physical planner.

We also have title deeds to several areas at the lower regions which we shall issue later this year.

We are happy to note that several electrification projects have been commissioned where transformers have been put up connecting to various homes, church, markets and schools through REA.

Three more transformers have been installed at Kathwana Market area and surrounding to open the town to more power connections for better investments.

Honourable members, we have noted we need a lot of sensitization for public participation in both governance and identification of development projects.

I ask for your support in mobilization of the people from the ward levels so that our people can be aware of what is happening as we embark on development.

Through your powers to make laws for the better performance of our government we rely on you for laws that will see us manage and exploit the county's resources.

It is also a challenge to the Executive to come up with plans and policies that can be presented to the floor of our assembly for approval.

I believe with the same unity we have had since we were tasked by the people of Tharaka Nithi, we are destined to drive our county to levels that other counties will envy.

We begun with humble beginnings and with the same zeal we currently hold, we shall be stand out through better livelihood for our people.

With that I declare the County Assembly 2015 reopened and wish everyone a victorious 2015.

God Bless You,

God Bless Tharaka Nithi County.

H.E Governor Samuel Ragwa.