



SPEECH BY H.E. HON. JAMES E.O. ONGWAE, CBS, EBS, OGW

GOVERNOR, KISII COUNTY

MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS

AT THE GUSII STADIUM

JUNE 1<sup>ST</sup>, 2015

**Fellow Kisii County residents,**

I am delighted to join you on this occasion when we celebrate 52 years since our beloved nation attained internal self-rule. I would like to extend warm greetings to all residents wherever they may be in this great County. I also send warm greetings to the Kisii Diaspora in all parts of the country and the world.

Madaraka Day is an anniversary of the day in the year 1963 when Kenya attained independence. On this occasion, we salute the gallant sons and daughters of our land who sacrificed immensely so that we can enjoy the freedom and liberty today.

In our own County, we salute those who sacrificed and even paid the ultimate price in the liberation struggle. Otenyo Nyamaterere, Moraa Ng'iti, Ogowora Bitega, Siruel Moturi, Ongeru Nyamateganda, Bethwel Nyagaka and Nyamacharara stand out as heroes of the liberation struggle whom we must honour.

Indeed, we have finalized the Heroes and Heroines Bill that will be presented before the County Assembly for necessary approval. The bill will be subjected to public participation to help us identify our heroes and determine how they

should be honoured. We plan to erect statues and monuments made from soapstone at designated areas in the County in honour of these heroes.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

During my Madaraka Day address last year, I shared with Kisii County residents my vision of a prosperous and peaceful county. I urged residents to work hard to rededicate their energies to the development of our beloved County.

I shared with residents the commitment of my Government to fix our infrastructure, ensure provision of quality healthcare, improve our urban centres, modernize our agriculture and invest in the economic empowerment of our people.

Looking back, I am glad to report that we have lived to our pledges. Today, we have made progress in building and rehabilitating road infrastructure throughout the County. Our healthcare sector has improved tremendously and now we have a Teaching and Referral Hospital in Kisii. Our towns are well lit with solar powered streetlights and high mast lights popularly known as ‘mulika mwizi’ promoting a 24-hour economy in Kisii Town and other areas.

Recently, we hoisted our County Flag in a historic ceremony at the Gusii Stadium. The unveiling of the County flag and other emblems signify identity and exercise of authority as provided for in the Constitution of Kenya, 2010. Our dream is revealed in these symbols and I urge all of us to embrace the vision they embody for the good of our beloved County.

A recent survey ranked our County sixth best among the 47 Counties in the country; thus confirming to us that we are firmly on track. The survey indicated that the county scored highly in the areas of health services, agriculture, roads and education. This performance is a result of concerted effort by every single employee of the county from the most senior to the lowest; and to each one of you, I extend my greatest appreciation.

Equally, these achievements could not have been realized without the support of members of the public who kept us on our toes. As we celebrate this achievement, we will not rest on our laurels because we are yet to reach our desired level of becoming a middle income economy. To achieve this goal, we must remain united, work hard, and focus our energies on the County's development.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

A month ago, Kenyans converged in Kisumu to celebrate the 2<sup>nd</sup> anniversary of devolution. During the conference, it became clear that despite the challenges experienced at the start, devolution was working and Kenyans are enjoying its fruits.

We have interacted with our people through public participation forums and the feedback we receive indicates that our people now understand the role of the County Government because they were able to identify the strides we have made in;

- Road infrastructure
- The County Bursary fund which they want increased
- Street lighting
- Spring protection
- Establishment of the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital among others.

In the past two years of our existence, we focused our energies on institutionalizing the Governance structures requisite for efficient and effective provision of services to our people. Now that the institutional structures are in place, we are concentrating on service delivery to realize our vision of a prosperous county for all. In the next few days, we shall launch the code of conduct for public officers and the county ethics and anti - corruption policy in a bid to develop a culture of zero tolerance to corruption. Further, all our officers will sign performance contracts to increase efficiency in service delivery.

## **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

In the **Roads, Public Works and Transport** department, we have prioritized road development to ease access and enhance mobility throughout the County. In the past one-year, we managed to build over 500km of roads up to compacted murram standard to ensure market access for farmers. This has been done in the Sub Counties.

In this financial year, we are doing another 550km of compacted gravel roads and village roads spread across all the 45 wards. We have also finalized mechanisms for making the road works labour intensive thus creating jobs for the youth and women.

We have also invested heavily in the purchase of road construction equipment including tippers, excavators; drum rollers, shovels and prime movers. Further, we received additional equipment such as tippers, excavators and other equipment from the National Government. These have greatly assisted in our ability to do the roads more cheaply and efficiently. We have finalized plans to put in place a mechanical transport fund that will be used to maintain the equipment and help do more roads.

In the area of **health services**, we are committed to improving the preventive and curative services. In preventive healthcare services, we have put in place measures to ensure our people are free of preventable illnesses like diarrhea, cholera and amoebiasis. We are also encouraging our people to embrace good dietary habits and already, all County Public Health Officers have been trained on Community Led Total Sanitation (CLTS) where all families are encouraged to have latrines or toilets.

In the curative healthcare, we have invested in improvement of our facilities starting with the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital (KTRH). As I have told you before, we have in place a state of the art 16-slice Computerized

Tomography (CT) Scan machine and a digital x-ray machine, a well equipped laboratory, theatres, four dialysis machines, a High Dependency Unit (HDU), an emergency ambulatory service, an Intensive Care Unit (ICU) as well as outpatient and inpatient services. These facilities have had a tremendous impact in our health sector and a week ago, when the Senate Committee on health visited the facility, they commended our efforts in transforming this sector. Over the past five months, we have performed over 900 CT scans while the renal unit has handled over 1200 kidney dialysis sessions for patients.

In efforts to decongest Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital, we have invested over KShs.150 million to improve outlying health facilities like Nduru, Kenyena, Nyamache and Marani hospitals. We have also finalized discussions with a donor to set up a **cancer treatment centre** worth over KShs.2 billion at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital through a Public Private Partnership arrangement. Further, we are rehabilitating health centres in the wards at a cost of KShs.135 million with each getting KShs.3 million.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

To ensure improved provision of quality healthcare to our people, we recruited over 400 health workers among them doctors, clinical officers, medical lab technologists, radiologists and nurses. I have also set up a team led by the County Secretary and the County Public Service Board to look at human resource related issues affecting our health workers among them promotions and training as a way of retaining skills and experience in the health sector.

Last year, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Dr. B.L Kapur (BLK) and Apollo Group of hospitals in India and I am glad to report that

today, they have sent specialist doctors who are offering cancer and orthopaedic screening for patients at the Kisii Teaching and Referral Hospital.

Through collaborations, we plan to improve services to all residents of our County. Some of the ongoing collaborations are with: -

- (1) Care Kenya – enhancing our services to HIV and Aids patients and working to lower our County HIV prevalence rate that still stands at 8 per cent.
- (2) International Medical Clinic (IMC) – is working with MARPs (Most at Risk Populations) in Kisii town. These are people who are at risk of acquiring or transmitting HIV because of their behavior that includes having multiple sexual partners. The targeted groups are sex workers and intravenous drug users.
- (3) The World Bank – which is assisting us to come up with an Environmental and Sanitation Bill that will go a long way to improve our health living standards.
- (4) Private Sector Innovation Programme for Health – who have signed a memorandum of cooperation with us to provide expert advice on improving the delivery of quality services.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

As I have indicated before, my Government is concerned over the low uptake of medical insurance among our people. In fact, studies show that only 80,000 out of the 1.3 million people in Kisii County have access to medical insurance.

To redress this, we have set aside KShs.40 million to establish a social protection programme where we shall pay annual subscription to the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) for over 40,000 needy people. We target to rope in about 800 people per ward into the programme in an effort to

increase the number of people with access to healthcare. The **Kisii County NHIF Support Bill, 2014** is in the County Assembly for debate and approval to enable us identify beneficiaries and spell out modalities on disbursement.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Even as we invest heavily in preventive and curative healthcare, water borne disease prevalence remains high in Kisii County. Consequently, in the past two financial years, we have invested in spring protection. However, a long-term solution is to have reticulated water to every homestead in Kisii County.

This financial year, we have allocated more funds towards water reticulation schemes and drilling of boreholes. We have also entered into a **Public, Private Partnership with Scope International** to drill 45 boreholes across the County with each ward getting one borehole, and already 13 boreholes have been sunk. In this financial year, revival of stalled water schemes at Mosora, Nyaguku, Riotero and Nyatieko is ongoing. Water projects like Birongo, Gesusu and Sengera that have unique problems are also being looked at. Further, we are protecting over 10 water springs in each of the 45 wards. As we move in the future, emphasis will be on water reticulation to ensure every household has access to potable water.

With the assistance of the German Bank (KFW), we plan to rehabilitate and expand the water supply system for Kisii Town at a cost of KShs.1.2 billion. There have been delays in the start of this project but all outstanding issues have now been resolved and we are now in the tendering stage. The first phase starts in October this year and will involve the rehabilitation of Kegati and Nyakomisaro intakes as well as relaying the pipeline to replace the existing one that was installed in 1934. We expect that by 2017 when the project is completed, the water problems in Kisii Town will be a thing of the past. In environmental conservation, we recently launched a tree planting campaign where we target to plant 80,000 trees by the end of the rainy season.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**Agriculture** remains the backbone of our County's economy. As I indicated earlier, our long-term plan is to take advantage of our good climate to promote food security through sustainable agricultural growth. Indeed, our vision as a County Government is to promote food security through sustainable agricultural growth. In this regard, we have adopted new technologies like greenhouse and tissue culture banana farming to increase yields and produce inputs for agro processing. Working with Amiran Group from Israel, we have established a training centre on greenhouse farming best practices. This will be launched in July this year together with a private sector funded programme to enable farmers acquire greenhouse kits.

To facilitate provision and distribution of farm inputs to our farmers, we are working towards establishment of cereal depots in the Sub Counties. Already, tenders have been issued for the construction of depots at Nyamache and Nyamarambe Towns for a start.

Over the years, we have experienced declining crop yields due to reduced soil fertility occasioned by continuous cropping and wrong application of fertiliser. Consequently, soil acidity has gone up making it unfavourable for production of crops like beans and peas.

To help farmers determine soil fertility levels, we have made available soil sampling and testing kits (four in each Sub County). Farmers who need this service should make their requests at ward offices and our staff will provide this service for free thus help them know the appropriate corrective measures.

We have embarked on **value addition** to a number of crops among them tea, coffee, sugarcane, avocado, bananas, pyrethrum and passion fruits. Focus is on farmer groups who are encouraged to venture into value addition, branding and packaging of products for better returns. To boost these efforts, we are building a bigger facility at the Agricultural Training Centre to handle avocado processing and a similar facility will be constructed in the next financial year to handle banana and tomato processing. Plans to brand Kisii



Coffee are at an advanced stage and soon, our own roast coffee will be distributed through supermarkets.

I am also happy to report that the implementation of the coffee taskforce report has begun to bear fruit as all farmers have now been paid for the crop delivered last year. In the tea sector, we have signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA) on the actualisation of Sombogo Tea Factory in Kitutu Chache North. On the realization of the sugar factory in south Mugirango, all the statutory approvals are at advanced stages and once complete, we shall hand over the site to the investor for construction of the sugar factory. We are also concluding the acquisition of machinery and equipment to enable farmers transport cane to others factories while the cane factory is built.

We have also made progress in our efforts to modernise Agricultural Extension Services like planting time, disease control and management, animal husbandry among others and soon, our farmers will be able to access this service through a toll free call centre where farmers can make calls and access urgent extension services.

Extension officers at the Ward level have been equipped with 15 motorbikes to ensure they complement this service by providing support to farmers quickly.

To help actualise the citizen's right to food security, we have drafted the Kisii County Food Security Bill, 2015 to be presented before the County Assembly. Once enacted, the food security law will empower the County Government to institute corrective interventions to ensure food security.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

To increase yields in the livestock sub sector, we must invest in breed improvement. In this regard, we have finalized plans to set up an Artificial Insemination (AI) centre for the County opposite Kisii School and once

complete, it will improve the quality of dairy cows available to our farmers. Regarding access to quality farm inputs, we have put in place measures to streamline the input supply and distribution system and rid the sector of counterfeit products. In the last planting season, our farmers received 26,000 bags of fertiliser through the National Cereals and Produce Board and we shall continue to engage the National Government for a higher allocation.

In the area of **trade and industry**, we are determined to transform Kisii County into a middle-income economy so as to create jobs for our young people, ensure food security, and provide quality education and healthcare, among other services. Through the Joint Loans Board scheme, over 1,200 Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) have benefitted from affordable loans to expand their businesses.

In the area of **market improvement**, each ward has been allocated funds for the renovation of an existing market or construction of a new market. As for **Daraja Mbili Market**, we are modernizing the facility at a cost of KShs.600 million in partnership with the National Government. Architectural designs and bills of quantities have already been done.

In the interim, we have built a parking lot across the river to ease congestion and moved traders from the roadside to enhance safety of traders and their customers.

In tourism, we have also mapped out all tourist sites and products including soapstone. We intend to protect this stone and in this regard, a bill has been tabled in the County Assembly for necessary debate and approval.

We plan to hold first Kisii County Investor's Conference in August this year. The theme of this conference is "Tapping the trade and investment opportunities in Kisii County". Already, we have developed an investment policy that has been presented to the County Assembly for debate and approval. The policy will guide us on how to attract investment in our County and we target to leverage on our agricultural base to develop a robust

economy hinged on value addition through agro-processing, branding and marketing.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

In the area of **Education, Labour, and Manpower Development**, we have made significant strides in improving academic standards. Although education is not a fully devolved function, we have instituted deliberate measures to see that the County gets involved in matters of education. In the last financial year, we built 9 workshops in youth polytechnics – one in each Sub County. In the current financial year, we are building one workshop in each ward. We have also provided basic tools and equipment to the existing youth polytechnics.

To boost transition rates in our learning institutions, we launched the Kisii County Fund and in the last financial year, we disbursed KShs.45 million in bursaries with each of the 45 wards getting an allocation of KShs.1 million each for bright and needy students.

This financial year, we have tripled the allocation to the fund translating into KShs.135 million. A total of 41,639 students in Day Secondary Schools, National Schools, Boarding Schools, Universities and other tertiary institutions benefitted from the allocation. A total of 23,420 students in day secondary schools received KShs.57, 376,200 while 11,864 students in Boarding and National schools received KShs.45, 144,300. I call upon school management boards to be transparent and file returns in advance for accountability.

You are also aware that Kisii was the first County to hold a major education stakeholders' conference to look at issues affecting our education sector. The conference came up with a raft of recommendations that we are keen to implement. Towards this end, we have put in place a taskforce to oversee the implementation process.

**Ladies and Gentlemen:**

**In the area of Culture, South, Sports and Social Services**, we have initiated a number of projects including the construction of youth empowerment centres at Kenyena and Keumbu, which are ongoing. In order to boost literacy among our people, my Government is building **community libraries** and already, construction work at Kenyena and Ogembo towns is almost complete.

As part of our programme to upgrade sports facilities in the County, we are currently rehabilitating the Gusii Stadium and phase I of this project is nearly complete. Construction of a perimeter fence, three new pavilions, new toilets, offices and changing rooms is ongoing.

We have completed data collection and needs analysis for **Persons with Disability**. A total of 5,015, representing about 80 per cent of Persons with Disability were involved in the exercise and an assessment of possible beneficiaries of assistive devices is complete. In the next financial year, we have set aside KShs.20 million to cater for vulnerable groups among them Persons with Disability, widows and orphans. We have also set up a youth and women fund of KShs.10million and a disability fund of another KShs.10million.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

Turning to **Lands, Physical Planning and Urban Development**, we have a number of projects that relate to opening backstreets in urban centres, street lighting, solid waste management in urban areas and preparation of physical development plans.

During the last financial year, we initiated the Integrated Street Lighting Program with phase I covering Kisii Town and Sub County headquarters. We installed eight (8) high mast streetlights popularly known as *mulika mwizi* at designated areas to boost security. Through a PPP arrangement, we have

installed over 250 solar powered streetlights and this has significantly boosted the 24-hour economy in line with our dreams. In the Sub Counties, installation of *mulika mwizi* streetlights is complete at Suneka, Keumbu, Marani, Masimba, Nyamarambe, Keroka, Nyamache and on going at Ogembo. We are in the process of installing solar streetlights in 50 urban centres throughout the County in a bid to boost trade activities.

Regarding access roads in urban areas, we have opened up back street roads in Kisii and Ogembo Towns that has significantly boosted access especially for our disaster management department. Currently, we are opening up back street roads in Suneka Town and this programme will be escalated to all urban centres to improve access.

Regarding **solid waste management**, we have completed the acquisition of a waste disposal site for Ogembo Town and finalized the process of buying land for a waste disposal site for Kisii Town. Further, we have purchased two exhausters, which are available for hire to help manage solid waste disposal. We have also bought two refuse compactors and collection bins to enhance waste management in the County. The process of contracting youth groups to offer integrated cleaning services at Ogembo, Keumbu and Suneka has been completed. These services will be extended to cover all sub county headquarters in the next financial year.

#### **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

On **physical planning**, the preparation of the Integrated Strategic Urban Development Plan for Nyamache Town is complete while that of Ogembo Town is 30 per cent complete. The plans will be available in digital format once completed. Our plan is to prepare physical development plans for all Sub County headquarters in the next financial year. **On Construction of Town Halls in Sub Counties**, we have completed Nyamarambe and Suneka Town halls while work is on-going at Tabaka, Mosochi and Kenyenyia.

On other public facilities, 10 washrooms have been put up at the Sub County headquarters during phase I of the project. Phase II of this project which involves completion of septic tanks and connections is due to be completed in the next financial year.

As I conclude, **Ladies and Gentlemen:**

It is important to note that all these planned developments that I have highlighted require substantial financial resources, the reason why we should invest in revenue collection and management. Indeed, Article 207 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 provides that the capacity of counties to carry out their functions is dependent on their ability to collect revenue. We shall continue seeking ways to improve revenue collection from our local sources to supplement what we get from the National Government.

Finally, let's remember that each one of us has a responsibility to make meaningful and constructive contributions towards the growth and betterment of this County. I wish all Kisii County residents peace and prosperity and above all a Happy Madaraka Day. God bless you all and long live Kisii County.

I thank you!