

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF BUNGOMA

COUNTY ASSEMBLY DEBATES

(SPECIAL SITTING)

DAILY HANSARD

TUESDAY 18TH OCTOBER, 2022

Afternoon Sitting

(Tuesday 18th October, 2022 County Assembly met at two thirty in the afternoon in the County Assembly Chambers)

ARRIVAL OF HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

[His Excellency the Governor (Hon. Kenneth Lusaka) escorted by the Speaker of the County Assembly (Hon. Emmanuel Situma) entered the Chamber at two thirty two accompanied by the Mace of the County Assembly]

[His Excellency the Governor (Hon. Kenneth Lusaka)) took the Chair of Governor]

(The Mace was placed on the Table)

(The National Anthem was played)

(East African Community Anthem was played)

(Bungoma County Anthem was played)

PRAYERS

OFFICIAL OPENING OF THIRD COUNTY ASSEMBLY BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR KENNETH LUSAKA

Mr. Speaker: Your Excellency, Honorable Kenneth Makelo Lusaka EGH, The Governor of Bungoma County Government, Honorable Members of the County Assembly, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen. Provisions of Standing Order No.25 (1) requires the Governor to address the opening of each newly elected County Assembly in this respect pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order No. 32 of the County Assembly Standing Orders, by gazette **notice number 12588** which was published by the Kenya gazette on 14th October, 2022. I gave a notice of this special sitting to the members of the County Assembly. Consequently Honorable Members, this special sitting is properly conveyed. Your Excellency, it is a practice of Parliament in this case the County Assembly to recognize the invited guests seated at the speaker's gallery. I therefore wish to recognize the following guests:

1. Her Excellency Jennifer Mbatiany - Deputy Governor, Bungoma County Government

Kindly stand up, Madam you resume your seat

1. Joseph Wambati, County Secretary
2. Dr. Janet Manyasi, Chief of Staff
3. Cyrile Wayong'o, County Attorney
4. Mr. George Kombo, Chief Officer - Lands and Acting in Education and Vocational Training.

5. Mr. Stephen Makhanu, Chief Officer - Water and acting in Public Administration
6. Mr. Chrisantus Barasa, Community advisor
7. Mr. Andrew Wamukoya, Political advisor
8. Bramwel Simiyu, Advisor

Kindly be seated.

Also in the public gallery are the members of the public and other invited guests. Honorable Members in our normal custom, we can appreciate all our visitors accordingly.

(Applause)

Honorable Members, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen let me remind all of us the provisions of Standing Order No. 28 (2) and I shall quote it "*when delivering an address to the county assembly, the Governor shall be heard in silence and the address shall not be followed by any comment or question*". Your Excellency, it is now my singular honor and privilege to invite His Excellency, the Governor to address this special sitting of the County Assembly. Your Excellency please proceed.

Hon. Kenneth Lusaka (Governor): Honorable Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma, Honorable Members of the County Assembly, the Clerk to the County Assembly, the Clergy, Ladies and Gentlemen; allow me to first congratulate you, Honorable Speaker and distinguished Members of this County Assembly for being elected to serve in this Third Session of this August House.

Your presence here is a testimony of the immense trust and responsibility that the people of Bungoma have bestowed upon us.

But as a great man once said, "*With Great Power come Responsibility.*"

Devolution has given us a unique opportunity to offer our people services and provide Solutions that will address the many problems and challenges that they face every day. This range from matters of Food Security, Access to Good Quality Education and Reliable and Affordable Healthcare, The Need for Good Infrastructure, Access to Clean Water and Sanitation, to name just but a few. Our work is certainly cut out.

Honorable Members, the Constitution gives you the unique task and responsibility of providing oversight to my Executive to ensure that we discharge our mandate faithfully. Let me take this early opportunity to assure you that my administration remains committed to serving the great people of Bungoma, efficiently and diligently. I have no doubt that you will similarly discharge your mandate faithfully and responsibly.

As we embark on this third cycle of devolution, we have the privilege of drawing from the experiences of the past ten years. This gives us an opportunity to learn from our history.

But as George Washington once said, *“We should not look back unless it is to derive useful lessons from past errors, and for the purpose of profiting by dearly bought experience”*

I urge this Honorable House to work together with my administration to draw on the positive lessons of the past in order to enhance synergies, cooperation and collaboration between the Executive and the Legislature.

My administration notes that we still have some gaps in our subsidiary Legislation to enable the County government to operate optimally. Whereas this may seem as a drawback, it will offer us an opportunity to adequately provide for and effectively mainstream good governance practice across our legislative framework.

May I appeal to all of us to diligently discharge our duties and perform our functions to the best of our ability in line with the Oaths we took to respect, uphold, preserve, protect and defend the Constitution.

I further request you Honorable Members to ensure that the legislation that you will pass will be maintained, not so much due to abundance of physical resources or productive capacity, but because of your commitment to uphold the dreams of the hundreds of thousands of people who collectively gave you the mandate to lead Bungoma; people who will live to cherish the principles which underline our system; who appreciate sound governance structure and who believe in you as much as they believe in the constitution that put you into office.

The Devolution agenda aims to promote democratic, accountable and transparent exercise of power; to foster national unity in diversity; to give self-governance to the people; to promote social and economic development; to enhance the right of communities to manage their own affairs; and to enhance checks and balances. This paradigm shift is what we must exploit to achieve and deliver the promises that we made to our people even as we sought their mandate.

Honorable Members, allow me at this juncture set forth in summary my Executive Legislative Agenda.

As we all know, without appropriate legislative support, implementation of our key programs may be delayed and potential gains for our community reversed. We must therefore harmonize our priorities and ensure our actions are mutually supportive of each other, and that these are directed at the realization of our development goals.

I invite you to work with my Administration to position Bungoma County towards a positive growth trajectory; to transform it into a modern County with a robust and vibrant economy.

Honorable Members,

To this end, my Administration has set out a ten-point plan under which we will ensure effective and efficient service delivery to our people.

AGRICULTURE

As you know Agriculture is the backbone of our County's Economy. My Administration will therefore institute measures that will support the rapid growth and development of Agricultural Production. Our aim is to help our People embrace Agriculture as a Business and not just a means of consumption.

My Administration will encourage our people to adopt an Agribusiness mindset by equipping them with the requisite knowledge and skills to practice modern farming techniques as well as promote greater value addition. We must ensure that our farmers get better returns by selling processed products.

As we continue with our journey with devolution we should keep in mind that there is a high expectation from the community to quickly revive the economy and restore public confidence.

It is on this basis that my Administration has initiated the process of procuring fertilizer and seeds to ensure that our farmers' plant in good time, as you will see in the Supplementary Budget.

(Applause)

We will increase and expand the supply of agricultural farm inputs to farmers to stimulate production.

My Administration is also committed to introducing new innovations such as the Agricultural Subsidy Insurance Program that is designed to safeguard farmers from post-harvest losses occasioned by climate and weather-based risks.

We will repair and purchase new tractors and related equipment to offer our farmers affordable farm preparation services. Additionally, we will strengthen the capacity of our Extension Workers by equipping them with new Motor Cycles to enable them reach more farmers.

I wish to reiterate our commitment to strengthen our agricultural value chains to make them not only efficient but also profitable. We will mainly focus on the Dairy, Poultry, Coffee, Cereals and Horticultural sectors.

All these efforts are geared towards the goal of transforming our farming and agriculture in the County into an efficient, profitable, sustainable and market-oriented enterprise.

INFRASTRUCTURE

A reliable and good quality Infrastructure system is fundamental to stimulating sustainable growth and development, without which Agriculture and Business Enterprise cannot prosper. It goes without saying that as a County, a lot more needs to be done to improve our road network. Out of the existing network of over 800 Kilometers of roads, only 142 Kilometers is tarmacked. Put into the perspective that our surface area of 3,032 Kms, this situation is certainly not tenable.

My administration will endeavor to rehabilitate the current road networks which are in a bad state and pose grave danger to all road users. We will focus on construction of new roads with particular emphasis on the rural areas.

(Applause)

That said, we also remain committed to the completion the Misikhu - Brigadier road, the Dual carriageway and all the other projects started by my Predecessor.

HEALTH

Without good health everything else does not matter. The safety and well-being of our people is paramount. Access to affordable, efficient and good quality healthcare services is therefore vital.

Indeed, my Administration recognizes the need to urgently improve and upscale our healthcare facilities, while at the same time continue to motivate our gallant healthcare workers at all levels.

Accordingly, we will endeavor to improve Primary Healthcare services by upgrading and expanding our Level 1 & 2 facilities which mainly consist of local clinics and dispensaries. These facilities serve 80% of our population.

At the same time, we pursue the upgrading of our Referral Hospital to become a Fully-fledged and well-resourced Level Five facility.

We also commit to ensure that our Health workers are properly resourced and well remunerated. We will in due course confirm all the health professionals who have been serving on a Casual basis and hire additional staff to fill existing gaps that have existed for a long time.

(Applause)

My Administration also recognizes the important role that our Community Health Volunteers play in our community. We will ensure that the CHVs are put on a reasonable and sustainable monthly stipend to further motivate them.

(Applause)

Many residents of this County have suffered because of travelling long distances to seek for medical services from within and from other Counties. This is a significant drain on their scarce resources and we must change this situation.

We must also ease the pressure on the referral hospital by ensuring that the satellite units are properly resourced, well equipped and fully operationalized.

WATER AND SANITATION

Honorable Members, access to clean water and sanitation is basic human right. My Administration will work closely with Members of this House to identify strategic and appropriate locations to sink additional boreholes and establish water kiosks in as many wards as possible, in order to expand access to safe and clean water for our people.

(Applause)

We shall endeavor to place the County Water Drilling Rig, at your disposal, working together to develop a coordinated program. Never again should access to this critical water drilling resource be politicized.

EDUCATION

Honorable Members, Education is the key to unlocking opportunities for our children. My Administration is committed to ensuring that our children access good quality education.

As you are aware in my first tenure, I initiated the employment of ECD teachers on a permanent and pensionable basis. We are committed to fast tracking and hiring even more Teachers.

As I await the report on the Scholarship Fund, we wish to affirm our resolve to cascade all the available education subsidy programs down to the Ward level.

(Applause)

Additionally, we will endeavor to strengthen our colleges and TIVETS to ensure that our youth are equipped with the necessary skill sets that are aligned to the job market.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT AND BUDGETING

Honorable Members,

In the next few days, my Administration will be forwarding to you the memorandum to review the policy documents that capture my promises and aspirations as contained in my manifesto;

- a) The Annual Development Plan
- b) The County Fiscal Strategy Paper
- c) Debt Management Strategy Paper

Also critical planning documents under preparation include:

1. The First Supplementary Budget 2022/23, and
2. The Country Integrated Development Plan (CIDP 2023 - 2027)
3. The County Sectoral Plan (2022 - 2032).
4. County Spatial Plan(2022-2032)
5. Municipalities Plans

I need to bring to your attention that we have had a very high level of pending bills as you will see from the Pending Bills report. I will therefore encourage you to be particularly vigilant in the budgeting review process so that we can bring down the level of outstanding bills and commitments.

We are also aware that you promised our people a number of items contained in your respective ward development manifestos. This is why we have retained the ward allocation for the year 2022/2023 as well as enough ward provision to clear the outstanding bills and commitment. I will endeavor to re-in fence this fund in the budget. This will help to operationalize the procurement limits set at the ward level.

(Applause)

As we join hands to enhance devolution, please remember that our planning should take into account and be aligned to that of the National Government. We particularly need to bear in mind H.E. the President's promise to ensure that the Hustler Fund trickles down to help transform our local communities.

I therefore call upon you to encourage our people to form CBOs and Sacco's to take advantage of this scheme as well as our own endowments funds. We particularly encourage our Youth, Women and Persons Living with Disability (PLWDs) to take the lead in this respect.

In the same vein, we also need to take note of the Presidents promise to establish 10,000 low cost housing units. My Administration is in the process of identifying suitable land to benefit from this initiative.

STRENGTHENING DEVOLUTION

As alluded to in my Executive Order Number One, my Administration will instigate measures to strengthen the capacity of the government workforce and further devolve service points across the county in order to improve accessibility and enhance efficiency and integrity of service delivery.

To this end, I intend to establish government service centers at the ward level to ensure that our services are demand driven and responsive to the citizens real needs. This will ensure a more structured and grassroots driven engagement and feedback mechanism.

We are currently finalizing and will roll out an intensive ward sensitization strategy to ensure that our people are properly appraised and positioned to take full advantage of the new development.

We promise to practice consultative leadership that allows for the inclusion of all shades of opinion and cultivate a culture of tolerance for diversity. We will be particularly keen to incorporate your views and input from your individual ward manifestos, as presented to the Electorate. By doing so, we shall be able to focus county resources on essential services and employ enterprise solutions. We must aim to increase citizen participation and stem any frustrations that may compromise service delivery to the Mwananchi.

Additionally, my Administration intends to strengthen the Municipal Boards by enhancing their capacities to deliver services that complement those of the County Government. I recently directed that all functions that need to be performed by the Municipalities to be refined and transferred by December this year.

(Applause)

This will help us unlock and benefit from additional resources needed from development partners such as the World Bank. On this account, I invite you to encourage Members of the Public to engage closely with these Boards.

GOOD GOVERNANCE

We must always ensure that our people get Value for Money in all our undertakings as an Administration. In furtherance to this, I initiated a number of measures in my Executive Order No. 1 as part of our commitment to ensuring that our Administration adheres to best governance practices.

These include establishing three Task Forces to review the following:

- d) Pending Bills
- e) Education Scholarship Program
- f) Staff and Human Resources

As is the practice during such an important activity, we took the Administrative decision to ask some of the Officers manning some of the affected dockets to step aside. I am happy to report that the Task Forces have made tremendous progress and I will be sharing the reports and findings with this August House in due course.

As you are also aware, I have recently nominated a team of eminent Ladies and Gentlemen to serve as County Executive Committee Members, who will help me in the delivery of services to our people. I have presented this list to you as is the practice, for the statutory vetting.

Additionally, we are in the process of establishing a County Economic Council whose mandate will be to advise my Administration on Strategic policies aimed at promoting Economic growth, social equity and employment creation, thereby helping to reduce poverty and inequality.

SPORTS, ARTS, CULTURE & ENTERTAINMENT

The youth are our greatest human capital. Harnessing their creative talent will go a long way in expanding opportunities for them to earn a decent livelihood.

It is noteworthy that some of our Educational Institutions such as Lugulu Girls, Bukembe, Kamusinga, Kibabii and even Marakaru have been the cradle of great sports men and women who have left an indelible mark in the sporting scene locally and internationally.

My Administration is committed to putting in place appropriate policies and structures that will help identify, nurture, promote and protect local talent. I am happy to report that we are prioritizing the completion of Masinde Muliro Stadium and the Chemonge High Altitude Athletics Training Centre, among other facilities.

Also, some of our Cultural practices such as our Circumcision Ceremony have attracted global interest. My Administration will put in place measures to promote Bungoma as a Cultural hub and destination.

CLIMATE CHANGE

It is now clear that the effects of climate change are now with us. It is no longer just a foreign concept but a local reality that is affecting our everyday lives.

This is evidenced by erratic and unpredictable rains and longer dry spells, leading to declining agricultural productivity which experts warn is likely to get worse. Combating the effects of Climate-Change requires an aggressive and proactive strategy. It is on this basis that my Administration intends to put in place measures such as the aforementioned agricultural subsidy insurance scheme that will help protect our farmers from weather-based post-harvest risks.

Honorable Members, you will note that you have before you the Bungoma County Climate Change Fund Bill (2022). This Bill is aimed at creating legislation that will enable my Administration to appropriate the necessary funds that will go towards implementing programs that will help mitigate against the effects of Climate Change.

We urge you to fast track the passage of this bill to help us unlock and access additional resources, such as the World Bank funded program that can avail up to Kshs 50 Million per ward per year, over the next three years.

(Applause)

In conclusion Honorable Members, I have set before you my legislative agenda in line with my executive vision for the people of Bungoma County. These are the same commitments that form the social contract that I have with the people of this great County. I strongly believe that the same applies to you as well.

Together we can fulfill our People's Hopes and Aspirations. And thus make Bungoma great.
God Bless You.
God Bless Bungoma.
God Bless Kenya.

(Applause)

Mr. Speaker: Honorable Members, this speech will form part of our agenda on our Order Paper in the cause of next week for four consecutive sittings. Thank you, your Excellency. Before I formally adjourn the Assembly sitting, may I take this opportunity to invite all Honorable members, our visitors in the public gallery and our clergy men for a cup of tea at County Assembly Garden behind my office. As we are moving out, I request all Honorable Members to remain standing in your places as the procession of the Governor and the religious leaders leave the plenary.

We adjourn the House accordingly and resume our sittings on Tuesday 25th October, 2022 in our 2:30 p.m. sitting.

(House adjourns)