



**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NYANDARUA
OFFICE OF H.E THE GOVERNOR**



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**SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY GOVERNOR (DR.) MOSES
KIARIE BADILISHA DURING THE STATE OF THE
COUNTY ADDRESS, DELIVERED ON WEDNESDAY, 4TH
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NYANDARUA, OL'KALOU**

**The Speaker of the County Assembly Hon. Stephen Waiganjo,
The Senator, Nyandarua County
The House Leadership,
Honorable Members of the County Assembly**

Today marks another historic moment when our two arms of government come together to share their shared journey and chart new paths for the transformation of our great county.

On this second State of the County Address, I take great pride in the record we have set together as leaders, and especially the urgency and commitment we have shown towards making this great county one where generations will be witnesses of the work we have done.

Today, in fulfilment of statutory obligation to this House, and buoyed by the collegial and collaborative partnership shared between our two arms of government, it is my honor to deliver this annual address to you and the great people of Nyandarua County.

Guided by the success of the last two years, the theme of this year's address is - **Making Nyandarua Better: Transforming Every Ward.**

This theme is founded on the real testimonies of our people, the thousands of men and women, young and old, farmers and doctors, parents and guardians supported to educate their children, and patients seeking services in our improved health facilities. It is the story of our people.

It is the story retold in each household – each testimony unique in its own ways, but with a common thread of transformation running through each one of them.

That, Honorable Members, is the shared story of our two years, and one we share here today.

Honorable Speaker,

One of the foundational principles of this administration is on dignified development. And it is founded in the believe that it's time to move development interventions from short-term targets to long-term and sustainable programmes.

Our citizens across the wards share the believe that the fruits of meaningful development may sometimes take time, and may not always be instant. This, especially coming from our people, is not just comforting, but equally a challenge to us as we conduct our budgets and formulate policies. This is an invitation for us to go for legacy and sustainable development that meaningfully transforms the lives of our people.

And I am proud that in many of the projects running in our wards, this test has not only been met, but in many instances even surpassed.

The bridges connecting our people, saving lives and revolutionizing transport and commerce in Nyandarua will certainly remain legacy projects witnessed long after each one of us here is gone. I commend this House for the budgetary support, and oversight provided, to overseeing these projects. The echoes of transformation ring across homes and villages in Kedowa, Njogui-ini, Kanduma, Thaba, Rumathi, Washington, Gachuha, Rayetta – some of these places where lives and property had been lost for generations, and in Chobe-Cianda, Kangui, Mutarakwa, and to the once cut-off Rironi-Ha-Kiragu residents who now have modern bridges.

And many more such flagship projects are being replicated across our county. Notably, in this roads' sector, over 3000kms of roads are now motorable - in all seasons, with over 250kms of new never-constructed roads before now done. This is the testament of the residents of Nazareth road in Shamata, those using the newly constructed Kambaa-Mwihoti and can now easily connect to Pesi, or the new Gikano bypass which only existed in the dreams of the local residents. The roads' transformation is unfolding in Kanjuiri ward, a ward hitherto facing serious transport challenges. In the last few weeks, for example, seven major roads have been rehabilitated, including but not limited to Base-Njigaga road, Base-Kagunda road, Nyaituga-Corner C-Kirathimo road, and a host of other feeder roads spread across the ward.

Honorable Members,

You will also agree with me that one area we have jointly worked together is in lighting our towns. And to make this sector better, with the support of this House, we acquired a dedicated vehicle to address street lighting repairs across the county. This is from the realization that externally sourcing for these repair services was draining unavailable resources, while at the same time creating a lag and unnecessary down time that negatively affects local economies.

However, experience of the last two years has taught us that it is no longer sustainable to continue running these lights from the national grid. The escalating operational costs and power bills far outweigh the intended benefits, and continue to pile pressure on available yet meager resources.

Consequently, my government will be working very closely with this House to ensure that new public lighting assets are fully powered from renewable energy sources, especially solar. Further, we shall implement this policy including in the construction of our offices and buildings to ensure that we make maximum use of renewable energy sources.

Adoption of renewable energy, mostly through solarization of projects will be extended to water programs in different wards.

This will ensure that the massive works undertaken in the water sector are solar-equipped to ensure sustainability and lessen community power burden. Towards this goal, my administration solar-equipped 13 boreholes in the county within the last financial year.

Further, we intend to extend the same model in other water works where we have laid over 107 kilometers of pipes, conducted pump testing in 19 projects, including in Kioneki, Miti-Itano, Kagaa, Nyandundo, Oljoroorok secondary among many others. We have also sunk and cased 18 boreholes among them Churiri, Kamukunji and Kihoto, and completed 15.53 kilometers of piping for Kirima water intake benefitting 667 households.

And to achieve the set target of water circulation in the county, one water treatment plant in Rurii, aggregating water from several sources has been completed. In addition to provision of domestic water, two irrigation projects under the same department – Kibindo and Mihuti - are intended to wean-off our farmers from rain-fed agriculture.

Honorable Members,

Agriculture remains our greatest driver of change and transformation. In June this year, we launched the flagship subsidized A.I programme that seeks to disrupt the traditional ways of dairy sector management and animal husbandry in the county. While Nyandarua remains among the top three major milk producers in the country, our production per cow remains below the top market average. To address this gap, my government – and with the support of this House, and Honorable Members, conceptualized and implemented the A.I/ Dairy Improvement programme to improve on the breeds as well as holistic animal husbandry through health and feeding management, including provision of super nappier to our farmers. Already, four months later, this program has seen over 6000 cows successfully served.

We have also supported thousands of households with pyrethrum seedlings, cow peas in places like Geta, and will expand these projects to even more wards. It is this development model, Honorable Members, that informs the new Apple Growing project.

Allow me, for the people of Nyandarua, to delve a little deeper into this project. Nyandarua is the number one leading producer of potatoes in the country – and potatoes remain the only viable cash crop at the moment – putting our farmers at a disadvantage and susceptible to losses and other financial vulnerabilities. Introduction of apples creates a variety of options while at the same time introducing a **premier cash crop** for the farmers in Nyandarua. It is not debatable that returns from potatoes continue to decline by the season.

In addition to the above justifications, Nyandarua, like many other regions in Central Kenya, is experiencing rising population density which is exerting even more pressure on land ownership and sizes; the cultivation of traditional crops like maize and potatoes – which ordinarily require large parcels of land, is thus getting commercially untenable hence the need for alternative, yet high-return crop, and which equally require less land size. And that is the foundation of the ‘Ten by Ten’ concept in apple farming; everybody, including small plot owners, is eligible. I call upon you to continue supporting this project.

Honorable Members,

And it is not just in crops and animal sectors that we are supporting agriculture. Only yesterday, in Gathanji ward, we rolled out the NAVCDP project where we issued a cheque of Ksh. 700,000 to Alpha Genesis Sacco as part of capacity building our local economic drivers – the cooperative societies. This will take place in each of the 25 wards.

These interventions are dove-tailed into other such related projects in water and climate change sectors, including under the FLLoCA. This is intended to create a synergetic value-driven sector that addresses both immediate and long-term needs of our people. Once again, I thank the Honorable Members for their steadfastness in supporting these interventions through budgetary and policy actions.

Honorable Speaker,

One of the greatest legislative and policy legacies of the 2022-2027 administration – both Executive and Assembly, is the enactment and operationalization of the Alcohol Control Act passed by this House. For the first time since devolution, we managed to create a legal framework that addresses alcohol issues across all value chains and focusses on the root drivers and enablers of killer brews. The act was able to craft a multi-agency architecture that no longer allows for blame games between the county and national government, or even between agencies. The division of responsibilities was clear and well defined.

It is my assurance that the County Government of Nyandarua will strictly enforce this law without fear or favor; protecting legitimate businesses while at the same time doubling down the crackdown on all unscrupulous traders operating, or wishing to operate in the county.

While this intervention may, in the very short-term, negatively affect our own source revenue targets, the medium and long-term implication on the health and productivity of our people, and which will in turn spur economic growth, is reason enough to push through and fully enforce this law.

Own Source Revenue, which as events and experience of last few months has demonstrated, is the only guaranteed lifeline for county governments and, indeed, devolution.

Towards this end, even as we crackdown on certain sectors of the economy, my administration has come up with realistic goals that are aimed at shoring up our resources, while ensuring that our taxation regime is alive to the economic realities of our times.

Accordingly, and as a result of comprehensive public participation and citizens' engagement, and with the support of this August House, we managed to revise our Finance Act to reflect the rates as charged in 2023. This revision was premised on the believe that we needed to enhance our collection efficiency, cut down on wastage, expand revenue streams, and seal loopholes through massive digitization and total elimination of cash transactions.

Further to these hardware and software issues, we are also training and recruiting additional workforce, while at the same innovating newer ways and strategies – including learning from successful partners, of harnessing revenue collection. I look forward to the support of this House in realizing these goals while maintaining prudent financial management and budgeting that is within realistic realms and targets.

Honorable Members,

The Change Manifesto – the very foundation of this government and our guiding principle document, sought to rework our healthcare sector through very targeted interventions.

In September 2022, for example, the county had only 75 health facilities, and most of them facing myriad of challenges including inadequate staffing, no drugs and heavily dilapidated infrastructure.

Today, courtesy of your support and that of the people of Nyandarua, we boast of 86 functional facilities; my administration has employed over 100 more healthcare professionals and employing more; new modern facilities like Chamuka in Oljoroorok, improvement of Ngano health center, Passenga dispensary, Munyeki dispensary, Kiganjo, a modern maternity in Ndaragwa, upgrading of Bamboo, Njabini, Manunga, and the speedy completion of the J.M Kariuki Memorial Hospital is getting actualized.

And with the actualization of the Facility Improvement Fund, 2023, – already domesticated through a county-enacted law, autonomy and efficient management of our facilities is now guaranteed. Only last week, together with development partner USAID, we witnessed the distribution of HIV and cancer-testing supplies and ICT equipment to 34 health facilities across the county. I want to thank all our stakeholders, healthcare workers, including the Community Health Promoters, for the milestones achieved and assure them of my unwavering commitment to actualizing every health goal we have set for ourselves.

Honorable Speaker, and Members of the County Assembly,

The support of our development partners cannot go unmentioned or unappreciated. When we talk of transformation, we speak of the small traders benefitting under the Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Programme.

This programme is also taking place in both Huruma and Njabini, with similar projects, albeit under different funding like KUSP II ongoing in other areas like Ol'Kalou, Engineer and other towns.

The department of lands is also working closely with other players and stakeholders towards ensuring that the Nyandarua land registry is transferred to Ol'Kalou, while at the same time pushing for the speedy conclusion of titling of all colonial villages.

I look forward to the support of this House, and its members, in ensuring that these inter-governmental objectives are met and fast-tracked to enable our people benefit from the fruits of devolution.

Honorable Members,

For too long we have faced the question of how to deal with our bulging youth population. The economy's ability to absorb our youth is no longer matching the number of our young people leaving institutions of learning. And the continued promise of a better tomorrow is no longer tenable to a restless generation staring at destitution, with societal and personal expectations, and goals missed.

The events of June this year, during the GenZs protests in the whole country were the clearest indicator that the patience of this generation is running thin, and fast.

Yet, even as we try absorb them and create these alternative avenues of employment, we must accelerate our interventions to match their expectations. And I am glad that many of the youth-targeted projects in this administration go far beyond tokenism and immediate needs. In the last one year alone, over 35 youth groups benefitted with empowerment equipment, including value addition assets like pasteurizers, tent-making tools, fuel station pumps, motorbikes, among other income generating ventures.

I also wish to thank one of our partners, Apostle John Kimani William, for his partnership with the county in putting up a modern ICT hub at the Arboretum that will provide a digital space, and platform, for our youth to work and innovate. Worth appreciation, too, is DanChurch Aid who supported about eleven (11) young men and women with training, and a financial grant of between Ksh. 35,000-50,000 for starting small businesses from the skilling done.

With your support, I will be bringing legal and policy proposals on creating sustainable programmes that target the youth. These proposals will further be supported through very targeted budgetary support. In addition, as a county, we must now reflect on the enabling sectors, and facilities that can provide platforms for our youth to excel in areas of performing arts and sports.

These interventions should include the establishment of a modern sporting facility in the county, and in the wards, as well as modernization of the Arboretum as a multi-disciplinary park for everything outdoor.

Honorable Members,

Still on youth, even though as a country, and indeed many other developing nations, we struggle with unemployment, we still got a responsibility to continuously equip and skill these young people with requisite knowledge for emerging opportunities. That is why, in every ward of this great county, we all joined hands in executing one of the most comprehensive citizens'-driven public participation on bursary for the financial year 2024-2025, valued at over Ksh. 194 million.

In the coming weeks, as our learners go back to school, we can guarantee them necessary financial support to keep them in school. In the two years, we have managed to disburse bursary support of over Ksh. 420 million supporting over 100,000 students, with another 35,000 expected to benefit from the current disbursement.

Yet, as I have often repeated, when the interventions we are implementing have borne fruits and their gains start to be felt in full, the need for bursaries and such other social cushions will decline, and such resources will be deployed towards long-term projects. This is the ultimate goal for sustainable development.

Still in the education sector, the once deferred dream of a Nyandarua University is now nearing reality. Already, infrastructure works at the Oljoroorok ATC – the interim venue for the constituent college, is almost complete with the University of Nairobi expected to begin admitting students under several programmes in the near future. This is a dream come true for our people, and the economic multiplier effect of this university will be profound. I, together with the leadership and Honorable Members of this house, visited this facility and remain satisfied with the strides made so far.

Honorable Speaker and Members of this House,

The state of the county is not just a moment to celebrate the great milestones as herein enumerated. But also one to reflect on the challenges while at the same time seeking solutions. It is also a moment to take stock of the journey traveled and re-evaluate the progress made.

In the last one year, especially, the functioning of devolved units and delivery of services, including essential services, faced serious threats from both internal and external sources. Additionally, the recent budgetary cuts from the Division of Revenue allocation means that our county will have to reduce our budget by over Ksh. 400 million.

Internally, at the beginning of the year our ability to collect revenue from our own sources and strategies to seal loopholes was greatly challenged and heavily politicized. Nonetheless, we thank our people whom we have already arrived at a consensus on the way forward. A similar attempt to politicize our internal mechanisms was attempted in the last week with a section of traders – especially in the liquor sector, seeking to obstruct revenue collection mechanisms.

To all our traders and business community, I want to assure them, in this administration they have a listening government. But, even as we continue to engage them, we shall not allow for any further delays whose only aim is to defeat public interest initiatives. Accordingly, and within the laws established, we shall enforce all laws and regulations passed to make the county function.

And that will be done without any fear or favor, but, again, in strict adherence to the law; the government has an obligation to deliver services - the traders, too, have a duty to pay their fair share of levies and licenses. And that will happen.

Externally, county governments continue to face serious financial hemorrhage from the national government through exchequer releases, and when that happens, even more bottlenecks from state agencies that should be facilitating devolution. I want to inform the House that this issue is being addressed at the summit level by all relevant agencies including at the Council of Governors.

In addition, projects earmarked for joint implementation with the national government face inordinate delays and stalling. Such projects like the County Aggregation and Industrial Park, the County Government headquarters, the Kinyahwe Museum, the Mama Mukami Hospital in Njabini, the Ol'Kalou stadium, several markets across the county, the promised roads' rehabilitation support programme to be embedded with our machinery units, the support for completion of the J.M Kariuki Memorial Hospital's Mashujaa complex, the promised mega dams, the fertilizer programme, among many others, have remained unfunded and facing delays in either commencement or completion.

We shall continue to engage the national government on these projects, while on our part, as county government, we shall continue to fund them – to the best of our capacity, to ensure our people realize the intended benefits. I remain optimistic that a solution to this state of affairs will be found through honest and constructive engagement with the national government.

Honorable Members,

This is just but a glimpse of the true state of our county. But the real effect of this transformation is found in the wards you all come from. And this is the experience we all share from our individual and joint visits and interactions with our people as we open one project after the other.

In the coming year, we will endeavor to build an even better Nyandarua for all. And as your Governor, I value your partnership as the representatives of the people.

The dream and aspiration of a greater and prosperous Nyandarua cannot be realized when any of our two arms of government is working at cross purposes. And that is why, despite many challenges, we have achieved what many thought was impossible.

Once again, accept my appreciation for the role each one of you has played in making this county what it is today. As we close the year, and you head for your much deserved recesses, I look forward to a your coming back with renewed energy to handle a heavy calendar where we shall be presenting tens of bills, regulations and policies for your consideration.

I thank and wish you, and the people of Nyandarua County, happy holidays full of blessings and fulfilment of their desires.

Thank you, God bless Kenya and may God bless the great people of Nyandarua county.