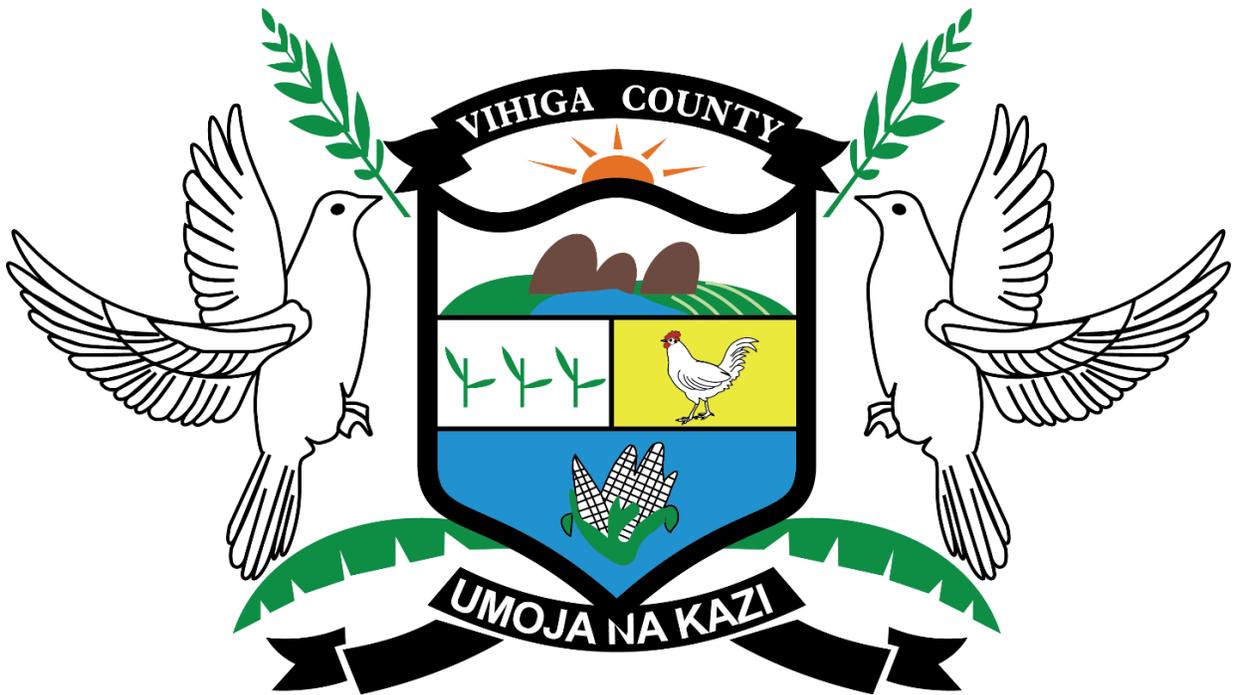


COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF VIHIGA



STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

BY

H.E. DR WILBER K. OTTICHILO
GOVERNOR VIHIGA COUNTY

2018

VISION

Vihiga to Become a Prosperous and Model County in Kenya

MISSION

To transform Vihiga into a Prosperous County by Formulation and Implementation of Good Governance and Development Systems

OUR MOTTO

All Inclusive Development Without Corruption and Tribalism,
supported
by County Values and Hard work

CORE VALUES

- Integrity and Honesty
 - Equity
- Accountability and Transparency
 - Inclusivity
 - Teamwork
- Courtesy/ Respect
 - Quality service
- Creativity and Innovation

H.E. DR. WILBER OTTICHILO'S STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS TO THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF VIHIGA DELIVERED ON 18TH OCTOBER, 2018

Speaker of the County Assembly,

Honourable Members of the County Assembly,

County Executive Members,

The County Commissioner and National Government Officials,

The Principal Magistrate and Members of the Judiciary Present,

Members of the County Public Service Board

Our Development Partners,

Invited Guests,

Fellow Residents of Vihiga County,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members of Vihiga County Assembly,

It gives me great pleasure to address this special Assembly sitting in line with my statutory obligation; as provided for in the County Government Act 2012 Section 30(k). This Annual State of the County Address outlines socio-economic development matters in the County.

I took an oath during my inauguration, on 21st August, 2017, to diligently serve the people of Vihiga County with dedication and integrity. This commitment is still fresh in my mind as I endeavour to execute the mandate given to me by the people of Vihiga County and as elaborated in my Manifesto, the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018-2022, my Swearing-in address and my opening speech to this second County Assembly of Vihiga. This address covers the period from assumption of office to date.

During my first address to this house on 19th September, 2017, I identified our main governance and development challenges that were hampering our vision for development of our County. In this regard, I highlighted priority areas that my administration would focus on in order to transform our County into a prosperous and model County in Kenya.

This address therefore covers; activities and programs that have been initiated and completed; or on-going as well as the challenges that have been experienced during the reporting period and the way forward.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

My address today to this Honourable County assembly will focus on the following:

- Challenges faced by my administration on assumption of office to date;
- Formation and operationalization of my Government;
- The main highlights of the 2018-2022 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) My blue print for development;
- Projects implemented/started during the 2017-2018 Financial Year period;
- The main highlights of the 2018-2019 Budget and Annual Development Plan;
- Policies and bills formulated and their status;
- The way forward.

CHALLENGES AND INTERVENTIONS

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Upon assumption of office, my leadership was faced with a lot of governance challenges that limited me to directly embark on the implementation of my vision and development programs for the people of Vihiga County. The following were the main challenges encountered among others:

1. None or very little transitional support and advice from previous leadership and senior government officials;
2. Inherited a Government structure that was not efficient and effective particularly the lack of capacity and capability of the staff in governance and development matters;
3. Verifiable and unverifiable Pending bills burden;
4. Unmanageable wage bill;
5. Endemic Corruption;
6. Bloated County staff;
7. Unpredictable availability of financial resources to fund management activities and development programs; and
8. High expectations from the people.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members

For my administration to function, it was necessary as a first step to formulate a Government structure that would deliver my vision and manifesto for the people of Vihiga County. In this regard, I formulated and submitted to this assembly my

First **Executive Order Number One** in September, 2017; which defined the sectoral structure of my Government as follows:

1. Administration and Coordination of County Affairs
2. Finance and Economic Planning
3. Transport and Infrastructure
4. Health Services
5. Physical Planning, Lands and Housing
6. Trade, Industry, Tourism and Entrepreneurship
7. Agriculture, Livestock, Fisheries and Cooperatives
8. Environment, Water, Energy and Natural Resources
9. Education, Science and Technical Vocational Training
10. Youth, Gender, Sports, Culture and Social Services

The above governance structure has 10 departments headed by County Executive Members (CECMs), and 15 Chief Officers. The recruitment and approval of all CECMs was done in September, 2017 and the recruitment of nine Chief Officers was undertaken in March 2018, three Chief Officers were recruited in August 2018 and three Chief Officers are yet to be recruited. These are Officers responsible for: ICT, Cooperatives and Technical Vocational Education Training (TVET).

On behalf of my administration, I wish to take this opportunity to thank the leadership of this County Assembly and Honourable Members for the support they gave me in fast tracking the vetting and approval of the County Executive Committee Members and Chief Officers. This enabled my Government to become operational and embark on the implementation of my manifesto and CIDP. I am confident that this County assembly will vet and approve the remaining three Chief Officers as soon as their names are submitted.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Due to the previously stated challenge of a bloated staff in the County Government of Vihiga, it became necessary to establish the true staff complement and competence, through undertaking of a comprehensive staff audit. In this regard, my administration invited the Directorate of Personnel Management (DPM) from the Office of the President in September 2017 to conduct a staff and payroll audit. The final DPM report was submitted to my administration for implementation in May 2018. Among the key observations made in the report are the following:

- There was overemployment of staff mainly on contract and casual basis without following the laid down procedures.
- Many employees were wrongfully placed in different cadres that they were least suited and unqualified for.

- There were great disparities in salaries and allowances given to various Officers and this was not based on qualification and experience.
- The payroll had staff who could not be verified with some occurring more than once.
- Some employees received several arrears and allowances which were not justifiable and accounted for.
- The report highlighted the ballooning wage bill which increased from KES 204.6 million in 2013 to KES 1.03 billion in 2017.

I wish to report that, my administration on receipt of the DPM report embarked on its immediate implementation. In this regard, contracts of all casual and contract staff which expired at the end of June 2018 were terminated and the compensation for the remainder of the contract period paid. We have also embarked on the verification of employment documents; and terms and conditions of those who are on permanent and pensionable terms. Further, we are in the process of implementing the New Government Structure that the DPM report proposed and very soon I will be submitting to this Assembly **Executive Order Number Two** on Government Structure and Function.

When this report is fully implemented, it is expected that the wage bill will significantly reduce and the capacity and capability of the Government will be greatly enhanced. On behalf of my administration, I wish to thank DPM for their effort in the preparation of this important report which is currently being used in the restructuring and management of the Vihiga County public service.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Apart from late remittance of funds from Treasury, we also faced numerous challenges in appropriation of the funds we were able to receive. The challenges were mainly centered on the operation of the IFMIS system and unreliable internet connectivity at the County offices. Our personnel in the IFMIS unit and departments lacked capacity to properly utilize the IFMIS system. Also, the central IFMIS system in Nairobi proved to be a hindrance to procurement and payment of services because most of the time the system was down or inaccessible.

To address this challenge, my administration in collaboration with the IFMIS department in Treasury organized IFMIS training for our staff. We have also improved on our internet connectivity. Therefore, currently we have built capacity and capability in the management of IFMIS and we expect that during this financial year (2018-2019) we should face minimum challenges in the running and management of IFMIS system at County level. To expedite the use of IFMIS, we have decentralized the e-procurement and approval activities to the departmental level.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members

The operations of the County Government of Vihiga became almost impossible due to the undefined structure and clear disregard of the regulations provided by the County Government Act 2012 and the Public Finance Management Act 2012. This allowed room for Endemic Corruption. Uncertainty in the remission of devolved funds by Treasury delayed timely procurement and delivery of development projects across the County; coupled with the high expectations of the people of Vihiga County were among the key challenges encountered during the reporting period.

CORRUPTION

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Corruption is a serious vice that has greatly hampered development in our Country and County. My fight against this vice has never wavered. Within the County Government, to fight corruption and ensure transparency, accountability and prudent management of public resources; we have decentralized procurement and approval of financial transaction from Treasury as it used to be to departments. Each department has now trained staff and procurement Officers how to use IFMIS effectively and efficiently. Therefore, Chief officer is accountable for the department and ensures transparent and accountable use of public resources and payments. Also, to control corruption, all procurement and payments in the County are done online; and to fast track corruption reporting we have provided a toll-free telephone number.

PENDING BILLS

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The first phase of devolution in Kenya was between 2013 and 2017 and the second phase started after the August 8th 2017 general elections. The first devolution experience presented several successes, lessons and challenges. One of the biggest challenges that the first this experience left behind is pending bills. Many County Governments which took over after August 2017 have been confronted with financial claims running into hundreds of millions and even billions.

The County Assembly of Vihiga in June 2017 commissioned a special audit by the office of the Auditor General of the pending bills. Departments were asked to submit all the pending bills in their respective departments and the list presented showed that the pending bills ran into the sum of **KES 2,481,399,292.40**. In its preliminary report the Auditor General observed that the figures from the

departments were prima facie faulty as the departments quoted the contract sums as opposed to the actual value of the work done and payable amounts pending.

This figure was thus revised to **KES 1,602,515,507.84**; purely based on the certificates of works in the files. It does not necessarily represent the pending bills as per the works done. A scrutiny of the alleged pending bills by the Auditor General left the alleged pending bills of **KES. 826,259,130.04** for consideration by the County Executive.

The office of the Auditor General prepared its preliminary report and asked departments to respond to several issues raised regarding the pending bills amounting to KES 826,259,130.04. The Auditor General further made recommendations and conditions for payment on each of the alleged pending bills.

To hasten the process of verification of the Pending Bills, we constituted a Committee under the chairmanship of the Deputy Governor. The Committee looked at the preliminary recommendations of the Auditor General based on the available documents. The preliminary report of the committee is ready. Upon receipt of the final Auditors report, the committee shall prepare its final report to pave way for payment.

I therefore kindly request the affected contractors to remain patient until when we receive the Final Auditor's Report. We expect to receive the report anytime during November 2018.

However, despite of these challenges, my administration has achieved a lot as will be evidenced in the rest of my speech.

DEVELOPMENT PLANNING, BUDGETING AND FUNDING

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Clause 135 of the Public Finance Management Act 2012 and Article 223 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010, allows for a County Government to prepare a supplementary budget in support of additional expenditure for authority for spending money that has not been appropriated, the money appropriated is insufficient, or a need has arisen for expenditure for a purpose for which no amount has been appropriated by that Act.

In an effort to appropriate money for implementation of my manifesto, my administration in September/October 2017 prepared 2017-2018 supplementary budget that was submitted to this Assembly and approved in February 2018 for implementation. However, despite of the approval of the budget the Treasury through the controller of budget did not remit the money for development until 29th June, 2018. Therefore, most of the development projects that we had proposed

in the budget were not implemented and those that started were not completed. To implement and complete these projects, it is imperative that we have to prepare the 2018-2019 supplementary budget to budget afresh for the development money that was not spent during the 2017-2018 financial year and not factored in the 2018-2019 budget. I am happy to report that we have already embarked on the preparation of the 2018-2019 supplementary budget and should be ready for submission to this Assembly in early November 2018.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Article 108 of the County Government Act 2012 provides for the development of a five-year County Integrated Development Plan with clear goals and objectives; on the implementation plan with clear outcomes; provision for monitoring and evaluation; and clear reporting mechanisms.

The County Integrated Development Plan identifies the institutional framework, which shall include County Government Structure for the implementation of the CIDP and addressing the County's internal transformation needs.

The CIDP is the development bible for the County Government guiding: any investment initiatives in the County; any development initiatives in the County, including infrastructure, physical, social, economic and institutional development; all known projects, plans and programs to be implemented within the County; and the key performance indicators set by the County.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Due to the financial constraint earlier reported in this address, it was quite a challenge to begin the preparation of the CIDP. With limited financial resources, the County Government of Vihiga could not engage key consultants to aid in the preparation of a professionally guided and well-informed document.

With this reality, I sort the assistance and support of willing development partners to prepare the 2018-2022 CIDP. Agile Harmonized Assistance for Devolved Institutions (AHADI) – USAID and GIZ came on board and fully facilitated the preparation and development of our CIDP. All public participation forums for the preparation of the document, engagement of a consultant to align the document to the required standards and proof reading of the CIDP main version were funded by USAID-AHADI and GIZ. The printing of the CIDP is currently being undertaken by Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) and we expect delivery of printed copies before the end of this month.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The 2018-2022 CIDP main highlights are as follows;

- Construction of Low Volume Seal Roads in the County, Particularly in Urban areas;
- Construction and equipping of a County mechanical unit – **on-going**;
- Construction and equipping resource and data centres at County and sub-County headquarters;
- Construction of official residences for the Governor, Deputy Governor and Speaker of the County Assembly – **land procured**;
- Construction of Vihiga County headquarters, sub-County and ward offices;
- Establish and strengthen disaster management unit, by purchasing 10,000 litre fire engine and Rapid Response Vehicle – **on-going**;
- Establish and implement project monitoring and evaluation dashboard;
- Establishment of Agriculture Training Centre (ATC) in the County – **land identified**;
- Promotion of Smart Agriculture and Conservation Farming;
- Revitalization of the cooperative movement and establishment of cooperative advisory office – **on-going**;
- Establish granite products processing and value addition factory in the County – **on-going**;
- Promote financing of smallholder and small-medium, enterprises;
- Promote County branding and destination marketing;
- Establishment of an ECDE centre of excellence in every sub-County;
- Establish model Vocational Training Centre in each sub-County;
- Construction of Vihiga County Hospital Medical Plaza – **on-going**;
- Implementation of **OttichiloCare** Mother and Child Health Programme – **on-going**;
- Upgrading of five existing hospitals and health facilities – **on-going**;
- Construction of County medical supplies storage;
- Completion of hydro-power generation plant at Kaimosi dam;
- The Belgium Government – Vihiga Cluster Water Project implementation in Maseno and Lunyerere Water Supplies – **on-going**;
- Establish Kenya School of Government Campus in the County – **On-going**;
- Establish automated revenue collection system – **On-going**;
- Establish and operationalize Vihiga Municipal Board – **On-going**;
- Establishment of GIS centre – **on-going**;
- Installation and implementation of Land Information Management System (LIMS) and Land Registry – **on-going**;
- Upgrading of sports grounds and construction of one stadium in the County;
- Establishment of EPZ industrial park in Kaimosi;
- Establish County Youth Service

- Establish County Fish hatchery at Mwitoko – **On-going**; and
- Establish County Talent Centre budgeted for in the 2018-2019 financial year.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

It is gratifying to note that the implementation of some of these key projects in our CIDP has already commenced. We are optimistic that, God willing, we shall fully implement all the projects by the year 2022. It should be noted that, during the course of implementation of this plan, we shall review and update it accordingly to the changing development priorities of our County.

The County Government of Vihiga received a total sum of KES 4,409,200,000 from the National Treasury during the reporting period, to finance the management and development projects in the 2017-2018 budget. We also received support from development partners to support various activities within the County. We received KES 17,325,260 funding from DANIDA for our health facilities; KES 38,854,627 for the Kenya Devolution Support Program (KDSP) for capacity building in County Governments; KES 50,886,386 from the National Agricultural Rural Inclusiveness Growth Project (NARIGP) to support agricultural programs within the County; and KES 50,886,386 Subsidized Vocational Training Centres Support Grant (SVTCSG) for TVETs.

We also received support from other development partners like UNICEF, FAO, AMREF, PATH International, USAID-AHADI, GIZ, Nutrition International and the Belgium Government -for the Vihiga Cluster water project, among others.

I wish to take this opportunity to thank all our development partners who have supported projects in our county that has significantly enhanced the socio-economic welfare of our people. We look forward for their continued support.

PROJECTS IMPLEMENTED/ STARTED DURING THE 2017-2018 PERIOD

HEALTH

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In the 2017-2018 financial year, the department of Health services implemented the following projects and programs in the Health sector:

The Vihiga County Medical Plaza was begun and stalled over 15 years ago. My administration has revived the KES 260 million project and as I give this address to this Honourable assembly, the Medical Plaza's construction is on the 4th floor. In the 2018-19 budget, KES 65 million has been allocated for the project which is expected to be completed by end of 2019 financial year.

My administration has availed medical supplies, non-pharmaceuticals and equipment to all health facilities across the County. Since my assumption of office, we have received 2 medical consignment deliveries from Kenya Medical Supplies Authority (KEMSA). The first consignment was worth KES 30 million and the second KES 52 million with a third one on the way. The 2018-19 budget has allocated KES 161 million for medical supplies and non-pharmaceuticals. Consistency in provision of medical services has been maintained since I signed a Memorandum of Understanding with KEMSA for supply of drugs to Vihiga County in September 2017. We have also stocked our health facilities with lab reagents and equipment for testing and diagnosis of diseases.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

We commenced the time overdue facelift, refurbishing and upgrading of 4 sub-County hospitals namely; Emuhaya, Emusire, Sabatia and Hamisi sub-County hospitals, at a cost of KES 20 million. The renovations and facelifts are currently on-going and are expected to be complete in December 2018.

Vihiga County Referral Hospital facelift is on-going at a cost of KES 10 million and is expected to be complete in December 2018.

We have also resumed the completion of the Funeral home at the County Referral hospital. There's a budget allocation of KES 3 million in the 2018-2019 budget enough to complete the facility.

Further, to ensure reliable access and availability of water at the hospital, we have embarked on sinking a borehole and rehabilitation of water works. To take care of water shortages at the County Referral hospital, we have put up an elevated 100,000 litres and ground 70,000 litres steel water tanks.

The County Referral hospital unveiled its strategic plan and the County Laboratory strategic plans this year to guide the service delivery and development in the Vihiga County health sector. These plans are being used to solicit funding from development partners.

To strengthen primary healthcare, the department of public health has recruited and trained 961 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs), our first line of defence against preventable ailments. Plans are underway to recruit another 500 CHVs. We have put them on a stipend of KES 2000 and we are in the process of procuring medical kits, branded t-shirts, jackets and umbrellas among other items for them. This will enhance their image and role they play in Public Healthcare.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

To boost Vihiga County Medical emergency services; we have acquired 1 new Ambulance at a cost of KES 11 million, refurbished and equipped 2 existing ambulances to meet the industry's required standards at a cost of KES 5 million.

This therefore guarantees proper medical services to patient enroute to medical facilities for comprehensive medical services.

To facilitate smooth running and supervision of health and medical services programs, the department also acquired a new department vehicle at a cost of KES 11 million.

During the 2017/18 financial year, Omwiranyi community health centre in Mwibona Ward, Luanda sub-County was completed through partnership with Circle International, development partners from Italy. We have planned to open the health centre in November 2018. We have planned to also open **Inavi dispensary** in Mungoma ward before the end of this year. Further, through funding from the World Bank, we shall be launching the construction of Mwoki dispensary in South Maragoli early next month.

The Canadian Government through Nutritional International reaffirmed their support for the **Anzilisha program** in Luanda sub-County and welcomed the idea of expanding the program to Emuhaya sub-County and eventually the entire County. The program was started in 21 counties whose main objective is to improve the health and nutrition of the mother and child. Vihiga County is the beneficiary of this program focusing on the first 1000 days of child survival, health and development.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Maternal healthcare dubbed **OttichiloCare** has attracted several able partners; eager to make this vision a reality for expectant and new mothers of Vihiga County. The **OttichiloCare Program** aims to encourage pregnant women/mothers to attend all the 4 Ante Natal Clinic (ANC) visits to aid the health workers attend to complications that may arise during pregnancy. The program also seeks to encourage mothers to have their deliveries at health facilities to mitigate pregnancy and child birth complications promptly. UNICEF has been at the forefront in the development of this program which is set to be launched next month. The implementation policy for the project has been finalized and will be launched tomorrow at the County headquarters. I wish to extend our gratitude and appreciation to all development partners including UNICEF and PATH International who funded and coordinated the preparation of the policy.

We have set-up a fully operational **Dental clinic** at the Vihiga County Referral hospital, fitted with 3 modern dental chairs at a cost of KES 5 Million.

The County Referral hospital also has **New Born Unit**, new and functional **Vihiga County Cardiac Unit** with a functional ECHO Probe worth KES 1 million and cardiac specialist from Cuba.

In partnership with the National Ministry of Health, a **Cancer Screening Unit** at the County Referral Hospital is in development.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

We are in the process of acquiring a CT scan at a cost of KES 41,495,093 for the County Referral hospital. We are also expecting an additional CT scan from the Ministry of health of the National Government by the end of this year.

We have also received 8 Fridges from UNICEF to support our Cold Chain System within the County medical services sector.

We have also recently gazzetted Health Facility Management Committees for all our dispensaries and Health Centres as well as our County Referral Hospital. We are in the process of identifying members to be gazzetted for Sub-County Hospital Health Management Committees. This action is expected to improve the performance of the facilities and continuation of funding from DANIDA.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members

It is clear from the fore-going that my administration has accomplished a lot in improving our healthcare systems for our people in the last one year and more is yet to come. I wish to thank all our development partners who have and continue to support our healthcare programs. Further, I also wish to thank our journalist, Mr. Joseph Jamenya, for his walk from Vihiga to Nairobi in an effort to create awareness on the increasing prevalence of Non-communicable diseases, particularly Heart Diseases.

AGRICULTURE

Madam Speaker, Honourable Speaker,

During the 2017/18 financial year, the agricultural department purchased and distributed 75 dairy cows to 75 groups at a cost of KES 6,375,000; 7,875 local improved 1-month old chicken to 108 groups at a cost of KES 2,756,250.

To support the farmers, improve in food production, the department issued Subsidized planting and top-dressing Fertilizer as well as planting seed to 27,000 farmers as follows:

- 27,000 10KGs bags of planting fertilizer to each farmer.
- Each farmer also received 2KGs of planting maize seed.

The planting fertilizer and planting maize seed consignment was worth KES 19 million.

- 10KGs 27,000 bags of Top-dressing fertilizer costed KES 17 million

The supply of those farm inputs greatly impacted the production of maize in the County by 15-20% per unit area.

In support of aquaculture and apiculture; the department issued 7 Honey centrifuges costing KES 1,920,000, 1 million fingerlings costing KES 1,837,500 and fish feeds costing KES 4,230,000 to farmers within the County. This has significantly improved bee-keeping and fish farming in the County.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In order to secure Vihiga County as food secure County, we need to change from subsistence farming to agribusiness. To support this transition, Meru Greens-EPZ Limited has come on board to revive farming and production of French beans in Vihiga County. They are also constructing Cold room in Chavakali for storing the beans before collection for processing and export. The growing of French beans will commence in March 2019.

The department also distributed 30,000 Coffee seedlings to farmers in Jebrok, Mugango and Lwandoni areas in Hamisi sub-County to support revival of coffee farming in the County.

Mwitoko fish farm and hatchery is currently under construction at a cost of KES 11,788,958 to support farmers engaging in aquaculture within the County. This project has been identified by UN-FAO for financial and technical support.

Construction of Serem Slaughterhouse at a cost of KES 9 million is 80% complete. The construction of Mukhalakhala slaughterhouse in Luanda Sub-County at a cost KES 2,002,256 is almost complete. These facilities will become operational once completed.

The department of agriculture has successfully controlled the fall army worm and Anthrax outbreak in the County through creation of awareness, spraying and vaccination respectively.

Further, during the reporting period, the department has registered 78 new Cooperatives with 47 being active. These cooperatives are being supported through technical advice, mainly on management matters.

Last and not least, the department also carried out a total of 1,169 farmer visits targeting 3,000 farm families, conducted 420 demonstrations, organized 8 field days and successfully held 89 stakeholder forums.

EDUCATION

TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING (TVET)

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

My administration has put a lot of emphasis in strengthening and promotion of Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) in Vihiga County.

To that effect, several development initiatives and programs have been started to set a better foundation for the realization of these goals.

We have printed 65,000 branded TVET *The Innovator series* books from Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB). The books contain approved TVET syllabus, by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD). These books will significantly improve learning and skills development in our TVET institutions.

We organized and successfully hosted the first ever TVET graduation in this County. Some members of this house graced the event to witness the graduation of 522 TVET graduates.

The County Government paid for their exam materials and funded the graduation.

We have registered 26 Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) with the National Ministry of Education and Technical training.

We received KES 50 million from the Ministry of Education for the renovation, procurement of equipment and capitation in the 26 registered VTCs. Renovations are on-going for VTC facilities; and some of the equipment ordered have been bought and delivered.

Construction of workshops in selected TVET centres like Ebusiralalo is currently going on funded by Kenya Italy Development Program (KIDP) through the National Ministry of Education at a cost KES 9 million.

The department also successfully organized and held sports activities for TVET institutions in Vihiga County

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

A total of KES 121,250,000 in Education bursary was distributed across the County, with each ward receiving KES 4,850,000 million shillings in 2017/2018 FY. KES 21,250,000 education bursaries went to students in Technical and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in the County. This translates to KES. 850,000 to each of the 25 Wards of Vihiga County. Due to the improved facilities in our polytechnics and award of dedicated bursaries to students; the enrolment has increased by about 40%. This is really encouraging and should be promoted.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

We have trained TVET instructors and managers in their first ever capacity building workshop organized by Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB) in Nakuru. The workshop familiarized them with the new approved curriculum.

The County Government has availed land for the establishment of Kenya School of Government Campus at Emanda in Central Maragoli. The title deed has already been issued to Kenya School of Government and construction is expected to commence soon.

We have commenced on the preparation of the TVET master plan.

EARLY CHILDHOOD DEVELOPMENT AND EDUCATION (ECDE)

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

During this reporting period, my administration put a lot of emphasis in strengthening Early Childhood Education in Vihiga County.

The Department of Education has paid more than two years pending salaries for ECDE teachers and TVET instructors.

All ECDE teachers have been trained in the Competence-based curriculum courtesy of Kenya Literature Bureau.

We commenced Construction of 75 ECDE classrooms, which are currently ongoing at a cost of KES 85 million; with each ward getting 3 classes in select primary schools. However, due to non-remittance of funds from Treasury, the construction of these classrooms that have stalled at different stages. As soon as we receive funds, the classrooms will be completed.

We have printed 45,000 branded ECDE, *Skillgrow series*, books for ECDE (competence-based curriculum) syllabus, approved by the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD), from Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB).

These books will significantly improve both ECDE learning.

Printing of both TVET and ECDE books costed KES 31 million.

We have improved ECDE teachers' remuneration. Teachers with certificates have had their salaries doubled from KES 5000 to KES 10,000. Diploma holders have moved from KES 10,000 to KES 12,000. Degree holders have moved from KES 12,000 to KES 15,000.

Fifty water tanks were procured, delivered and installed in fifty ECDE schools across the County at a cost of KES 1.8 million to provide clean water to our ECDE pupils.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

During the reporting period, the department also supported ECDE pupil's participation in the National Music Festivals that were held in Nyeri County where they received presidential commendation and National trophy.

TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In the 2017/18 Financial Year, Vihiga County received KES 169 million from Kenya Roads Board (KRB). A total of 55 projects were awarded with the works 90% complete. 5 roads have been awarded this financial year and works are commencing next week. KRB is disbursing KES 117 million for the 2018/19 financial year in this month of October. The department is currently working on work plans to be finalized in the next two weeks and awarding to be done in December 2018.

The County Government of Vihiga has an allocation of KES 20 million for grading some of the County roads using County resources. The grading has commenced in the entire County. The grading of our roads is completed by use of rollers to press and compact marram – to make the roads smooth.

Epangá bridge in Luanda Township ward, Luanda sub-County is almost complete and will soon be ready to start serving the people of Luanda.

Through my administration engagement with the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KERRA), the following roads have been repaired to improve their status as key economic roads within the County;

- Majengo – Gisambai – Mudete,
- Majengo - Luanda
- Standkisa – Emusutswi - Khumusalaba

Luanda–Esirulo; Mwichio–Esibuye–Magada; and Bukuga–Magada roads are currently under construction to bitumen standard by KERRA.

We have installed Lightning Arresters and protectors in all County Government Buildings in the County.

We have planned 37 markets to get high mast flood lights through partnership with Rural Electrification Authority (REA) this Financial Year. The County is Concluding payment of KES 30 million to REA who are matching the same with KES 25 million. Therefore, a total of KES 55 million will be used in Phase 1 of this important Project.

Gambogi, Majengo, Mbale and Chavakali town service roads are funded by World Bank under COVEC, who have already constructed Mbale and Chavakali, with Gambogi and Majengo construction to begin next month. On request by my administration, COVEC is set to also install street lighting in the same urban areas.

I am happy to report that, we have procured a Rapid Intervention/Response Vehicle (1000 litres of water and 300 litres form) at a cost KES 15 million. The vehicle has already been delivered and will officially be unveiled next week.

We have also ordered the procurement of a Fire Engine (MAN model, 10,000 litres water and 2,500 litres form) at a cost of KES 57 million from Austria. An inspection team will depart for Austria at the end of this month for inspection of the engine before delivery.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

We have allocated KES 310 million for ward-based projects in the 2018-2019 budget. Preparation of the second quarter of the financial year work plans is on-going, advertisements for the works will be issued by end of this month.

We have also budgeted KES 5 million for the Construction of a fire station in this 2018-2019 financial year.

The County Mechanical Unit is 90% complete; and we have already acquired equipment for the facility at a cost of KES 14 million.

There is a budgetary allocation of KES 27 million in the 2018-2019 budget for completion of stalled bridges and box culverts. Identification these projects is on-going.

We have also managed to release County vehicles that were held in various garages in Kisumu for more than two years. This will facilitate movement of County Officers with ease as they execute, manage and monitor County programs.

Last and not least, the department of Transport and Infrastructure has improved service delivery to other department in terms of preparation of drawings/plans, generation of bills of Quantities (BQs), inspection and issuance of certificates of work done.

WATER AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The KES 1.7 billion Belgium funded cluster water project covering Maseno, Lunyerere and Kaimosi water treatment and supply plants is on course. Works already on-going in Maseno and Kaimosi expected to be completed by September 2019. Lunyerere water supply works will commence soon after the purchase of land required for the construction of a solar plant. When the project is complete it will supply water to 220,000 to 270,000 people.

Many water projects were started by the previous Government but they all stalled at different levels of construction. During the reporting period, the Government embarked on the completion of the following projects:

- 1 Nangóli water project - Luanda South ward – on-going

- 2 Esirulo – Emalindi water project – Central Bunyore ward – on-going
- 3 Ebunangwe water supply – N.E. Bunyore ward – on-going
- 4 Chango water supply – Central Maragoli ward - stalled
- 5 Mbihi water supply – Lugaga/wamuluma ward - stalled
- 6 Gaga water supply – Gisambai ward - stalled
- 7 Chepsaga water project – Banja ward – on-going
- 8 Chekombero water project – Busali ward completed and due for commissioning
- 9 Mangóngó water project – South Maragoli ward funded by the World bank was completed and commissioned.
- 10 Ebunangwe water project – on-going

Also, several boreholes were sunk and capped by the previous Government and have never been completed. During the reporting period the boreholes have been tested for their water yield and those that have adequate water have been earmarked for completion during the 2018/19 and 2019/2020 financial years.

Plans for the establishment of a Granite processing plant at Emuhaya through the National Ministry of Mining and Petroleum are in advanced stage. The land has been acquired and feasibility study completed. The technical committee for implementation of the project has been formed.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

My administration has made considerable efforts towards Environmental conservation, garbage collection and waste management. To date, the department of environment has been able to achieve the following:

Fabrication and installation of 5m garbage collection bins installed in Luanda, Kima, Shamakhokho, Mudete and Mbale markets.

The department has successfully formed the County Environment Committee that will have oversight authority in matters environment management.

The department in conjunction with the Kenya Water Towers are in the process of rehabilitating the Maragoli hills, and the Restoration/Rehabilitation of County hill tops.

The department donated and planted 8,000 tree seedlings at the Kibiri forest for the rehabilitation it's plantation zone.

Four thousand indigenous trees were planted during the World Environment Day for the rehabilitation of the Ebusiekwe Hills and Nganyi shrine in Emuhaya Sub-County.

The department also facilitated the training of TVET instructors on bamboo production and utilization.

PHYSICAL PLANNING, HOUSING, LANDS AND URBAN PLANNING

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Vihiga County qualified for the World Bank funded Kenya Urban Support program (KUSP). The program intends to develop former Vihiga Municipality (Majengo, Mbale, Chavakali and Mudete) into a fully developed urban area. Therefore, Vihiga County is set to receive the first tranche of KES 250 million during this 2018-2019 financial year from the program. Municipal board Members have already been recruited, approved by this assembly and gazzetted. The board will be launched next month and will be responsible for urban planning and development of Mbale town and its environs.

Vihiga County has signed Affordable housing agreement with the National Ministry of Housing under the president's Big 4 agenda. Five-acre piece of Land for the construction of 500 units has already been identified at Matsigulu.

We have also leased thirty acres of land from Friends Church Kaimosi for the establishment of EPZ park. Physical planning of the facility is underway and construction will commence in early 2019. When construction is completed, the Park will become an Industrial hub for agribusiness processing and value addition, manufacture of apparel (textile) and other light industries. This is expected to create jobs for our youth.

The department of Lands successfully held Land clinics on land processes across all the 5 sub-counties of Vihiga County. The clinics intended to appraise the people on the current land services offered by the department, processes and cost.

Expression of Interest (EOI) for the preparation of Land valuation roll was advertised. When fully developed, it will greatly improve collection of land rates fees.

Kenya School of Government Campus land in Boyani Central Maragoli has been issued and titled in partnership with the National Lands Commission.

Titling of the Granite processing factory in West Bunyore is underway. Survey is in progress in collaboration with the National Lands Commission

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The designs for the establishment of the GIS lab are ready. Food and Agricultural Organization of the United Nations (FAO) is on board as a partner and is providing Scanner and Plotter for the lab. ESRI and AIRBUS are also on board and have committed to equip the lab with high end computers and high-resolution satellite imagery.

Land for the construction of the Governor and deputy Governor's residence site has already been purchased. The architectural drawing/plans area ready and tendering for construction is underway.

ADMINISTRATION AND COORDINATION OF COUNTY AFFAIRS

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members

During the reporting period, the department of Administration and Coordination of County Affairs has managed to make the following strides in enhancing and management of Vihiga County Public Service;

- Conducted DPM staff audit and is in the process of implementing recommendation highlighted by the report.
- Undertaken Staff rationalization
- Formulated the new Government structure
- Implemented the Kenya Devolution Support Program meant to strengthen capacity of core National and County institutions to improve delivery of devolved services at the County level.
- Liquor licensing
- Prepared Inventory of County assets report
- Successfully established the County communication mechanism by launching the County newsletter and toll-free number (0800 720 378) to be used for Emergencies, Security cases and report cases of graft.
- Launched the Vihiga County Court user's forum
- Organised the County Cohesion and Integration meeting that resulted in the constitution of the Vihiga County Cohesion and Integration Council.

While we acknowledge that the Kenya Devolution Support Programme (KDSP) has built capacity and capability of the senior staff of the County Government, very little has been done as regards capacity building of the Public in Public Participation and good governance principles and practices.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Public participation and good governance being the core to the implementation of devolved County Government system, we have embarked on the preparation of Public Participation policy which is expected to be presented to cabinet next month. Also, in our governance structure, we have created a fully-fledged Unit to address the issues of Public Participation in the development, Planning and Implementation processes. We have decided to adopt the Makueni County model of Public Participation.

As regards Vihiga FM Radio, we have initiated the process of making it a County Parastatal as soon as the **County Owned Entities Bill** is enacted into Law. We also plan to start Vihiga TV Station during my tenure of leadership.

TRADE, TOURISM, INDUSTRY AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The department of Trade, Industry, Tourism and Entrepreneurship organized the 1st Vihiga County Investment Conference 2018, held at Sosa Cottages in Gisambai on 28th and 29th of June, 2018. The conference themed: **Unlocking the economic and entrepreneurial potential of Vihiga County**; brought together more than 1,500 delegates with over 50 local exhibitors, interacting and sharing the unexplored investment opportunities currently available in Vihiga County. The conference cost KES 5 million.

The world bank funded Gambogi market construction is underway in partnership with the County Government.

Luanda Omena market completion is on-going, and is expected to be completed end of next month.

The leasing of 35 acres of land in Kaimosi for construction of EPZ has been finalized and the survey and physical planning of the same is underway.

The department of trade successfully conducted a business inventory of all licensed businesses in Vihiga County. This data is now being used to enhance revenue collection.

The department also conducted Bodaboda sensitization on revenue collection. The Bodaboda industry beginning 1st of July commenced payment of KES 200 every month. I wish to thank Bodaboda leadership and their leadership for their cooperation in this matter.

FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The following finance and economic documents have been successfully prepared by the Finance and Economic Planning Department;

- CIDP
- 2017-2018 Supplementary budget
- Vihiga County Debt Management Strategy Paper 2018

- Vihiga County Fiscal Strategy Paper 2018
- Vihiga County Budget Review Outlook Paper 2018
- The 2018-2019 Budget

During the 2017-2018 financial year, the County Government of Vihiga collected KES 143,530,753 against the set target of KES 220,000,000. During the 2016-2017 financial year, the County Government collected KES 112 million against a target of KES 220 million. Therefore, during the one year I have been in office, we have increased our revenue collection by KES 30.5 million, which is 28% improvement. This financial year 2018-2019, we have set KES 157,000,000 as the revenue target and we are confident to achieve this target.

Also, during the reporting period, the department constituted and gazzetted members of the following:

- The County Budget and Economic Forum
- The County Audit Committee

SPORTS, GENDER, CULTURE AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The County Government of Vihiga has continued to be the proud Sponsor to Vihiga united FC and Vihiga Queens FC. Going forward, my administration is working to establish the independence of these teams. We are also actively seeking corporate sponsorship for these teams to allow their smooth and uninterrupted execution of their sporting calendar. I take this opportunity to congratulate our Vihiga United FC for qualifying to remain in the Kenya Premier League.

From 26th – 29th December, 2017, we successfully held Vihiga County cultural festivals for Maragoli, Bunyore, Tiriki and Terik communities of Vihiga County. This year we are planning and looking forward to celebrating our culture during 26th – 29th December 2018. Plans are underway to hold the Vihiga County Cultural Festival at the end of March 2019.

Under the social protection program, 3,600 Vulnerable households were targeted across all the 25 wards of Vihiga County. To start off, all the 931 CHVs were the first ones to be enlisted to the program. Every household and CHV registered in phase 1 of this program had the County Government of Vihiga pay full year contribution to NHIF amounting to KES 6,000.

The County Government of Vihiga participated in the Kenya Inter-County Sports and Cultural Association (KICOSCA) games 2018 held in Kisii County in August

2018. The Vihiga County team may not have come back with the top Victory but the participants came back rejuvenated and motivated.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The department of youth and Culture experienced challenges during the reporting period. The department had organized for sporting activities across all the 25 wards of Vihiga County in August 2018 that did not take place due to misunderstanding in the logistical arrangement of the same.

I am happy to report that the KES 18.7 million that had been allocated for the sports activities is secure in our bank account and will be used to organize sports activities as earlier intended. Plans are underway to start the activities next month and complete in December 2018.

KEY PROJECT EARMARKED FOR IMPLEMENTATION DURING 2018-2019 FINANCIAL YEAR

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The 2018-2019 Budget was adjusted from KES 4.7 billion to KES 4.3 billion after signing the Vihiga County Appropriation Bill 2018. We expect further reduction of KES 200 million with the Presidential assenting to the new Finance Bill 2018. To finance development projects highlighted in the 2018-2019 Annual Development Plan (ADP) and the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), the County Government will rely on the remissions of devolved funds from the National Treasury. It is worth noting that, to date four months into the financial year, we have only received KES 200 million remission from Treasury which was used to pay salaries.

Our projection for own revenue collection for the 2018-2019 financial year is KES 157 million. Through the Council of Governors, we have written project proposals to development partners without whom we cannot implement the projects highlighted in our CIDP. In the 2018-2019 budget, there is an allocation of KES 20 million per ward, for proposed ward projects as in captured in the CIDP. Procurement plans for these projects have already been prepared. With IFMIS shortcomings no longer a problem, we will soon begin tendering, awarding and implementation of development program across the County. For your general information, the following are some of the major projects budgeted for in the 2018-2019 budget:

- KES 46.5 million for the National Agricultural Rural Inclusiveness Growth Project (NARIGP)
- KES 65 million for the County Referral Hospital Plaza

- KES 10 million for the completion of Givigoi Health Centre in Hamisi Sub-County
- KES 7,499,400 for the construction and equipping of theatre at the Sabatia Sub-County Hospital
- KES 10 million for the purchase of ECDE Educational Aids and related equipment
- KES 15 million for construction of Hamisi Stadium
- KES 10 million for completion of Mumboha and Solongo Stadium
- KES 10 million for construction of Kidundu Stadium
- KES 19 million for the construction of a Talent Centre
- KES 21,300,000 for the construction of BodaBoda shades across the County
- KES 74 million for the purchase of Fire fighting vehicles and equipment – the Rapid Response Vehicle has already been paid for and delivered; KES 20 million already paid as down payment for the Fire Engine.
- KES 27 million for the completion and construction of stalled and new Bridges across the County
- KES 30 million for street lighting
- KES 25 million for the engineering and design planning; and Valuation Roll in the department of Lands and Urban Planning
- KES 14 million for Land Banking
- KES 20 for the construction of the Governor and Deputy Governor’s residence

BILLS AND POLICIES APPROVED BY CABINET

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

I am disappointed to note that during this reporting period we have not been able to submit bills for your debate and approval. This has been a failure on our part and I take the blame. However, I wish to assure this assembly that during the 2018-2019 financial year, we are prepared to submit about 20 bills for debate and approval.

To date the executive has managed to draft the following Bills and Policies which have been approved by the Cabinet; some of these bills have already been forwarded to this County Assembly and the rest will be forwarded after completion of public participation.

These bills are;

- 1 The Health Facility Improvement Fund 2018
- 2 Markets Management Bill, 2018
- 3 Vihiga Outdoor advertising Bill, 2018

- 4 Trade Markets Management Bill, 2018
- 5 Vihiga County Weights and Measures Bill, 2018
- 6 Vihiga County Betting, Lotteries and Gaming Bill, 2018
- 7 Vihiga County Trade and Enterprise Fund Bill, 2018
- 8 Vihiga County ECDE Bill, 2018
- 9 County Health Care Services Fund Bill, 2018
- 10 Vihiga County Disaster Management Bill, 2018
- 11 Vihiga County Alcoholic Drinks and Control regulations 2018
- 12 Lake Region Economic Bill, 2018
- 13 County Owned Entities Bill, 2018 (differed)
- 14 Vihiga County Planning Bill 2018

Policies approved:

1. Vihiga County Climate Change Policy 2018
2. Vihiga County Government Housing Policy 2018
3. Vihiga County Transport Policy 2018
4. Vihiga County Communication Policy 2018

BILLS AND POLICIES AWAITING APPROVAL BY CABINET

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The following bills and policies are due for Cabinet approval:

1. Vihiga County Planning Bill, 2018
2. County Physical Planning Bill, 2018
3. Vihiga County Trade Policy
4. Vihiga County Tourism Policy
5. Vihiga County Investment Policy
6. Vihiga County Addressing and Signage Policy 2018

CROSS CUTTING ISSUES

SECURITY

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

My administration has established and has maintained a cordial working engagement with the National Government through County Commissioner. Together with the Vihiga County Commissioner, we have initiated the process of constituting the County Policing Authority to address security matters across the County. In the meantime, we collaborate in all matters concerning security in the County.

My administration is also working with the police and civil societies in the County to address issues of rape and Gender-based violence in the County as well as murder cases.

NACADA has been very engaging with my administration for a collaborative approach towards fighting alcohol, drug abuse and substance abuse in the County.

We have planned to undertake a study on the status of alcohol and drug abuse in the County with the aim of coming up with a comprehensive strategy to address the same.

LAKE REGION ECONOMIC BLOC (LREB)

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Vihiga County is among the 14 County Members of the Lake Region Economic Bloc (LREB).

The economic block was constituted to: bring counties together to leverage on economies of scale in the Lake Region, including shared resources such as Lake Victoria, in order to improve the livelihoods of the residents of Member counties; facilitate access to wider markets Nationally and regionally; enhance food security through a coordinated agricultural strategy; and establish a regional bank to fund big projects that will impact the lives people of Member counties.

Vihiga County will benefit from this collective strength due to its small size compared to other counties. The Block avails opportunities and market for our Vihiga being a rich service County. There is also ready market for our agricultural products and produce. Vihiga County is a committed Member of the LREB. To that end, we have allocated KES 30 million in the 2018-2019 budget as the initial contribution of our KES 200 million share capital contribution to the LREB.

I have attended all summits organized by the bloc and recently we met in Kisumu with all County assemblies of Member counties for exposure on the LREB bill 2018. I therefore, appeal to this assembly to pass the bill as agreed in Kisumu within the set period of 6 weeks. I wish to also note that, Vihiga County will be showcasing investment opportunities available during the LREB investment conference that will be held in Bomet, from 21st – 24th of October, 2018.

THE WAY FORWARD

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

The County Assembly has a crucial role of overseeing the Executive in the implementation of development projects. This is not always a smooth ride for all

the parties involved. However, the shortcomings within the Executive can be addressed within the institution of the Assembly through consultations.

The Executive has the critical role of implementing policies and budget as passed by the Assembly. In execution of the mandate, the Executive must at all times ensure that public gets value for money and projects are delivered on time. This will be done through adherence to the rule of law. The constitution of Kenya, the County Government Acts 2012, the Public Finance Management Act 2012 among other applicable laws provide guidelines within which the County Government is to conduct its activities for the benefit of the people of Vihiga County.

During my first-year tenure in office, the relation between the Executive and the County Assembly has not been a bed of roses. We experienced disharmony between the two arms of Government, calling each other out instead of seeking out amicable solutions to the issues in dispute. I am grateful that both the Executive and County assembly have realized that this adversarial and negative engagement on governance and development issues of the County will not lead to the achievement of our desired development goals for the County; instead it will lead to underdevelopment, lack of cohesion and integration and consequently increase in poverty and hopelessness of our people. I am confident that our recent truce through handshake will be sustained and lead to the fast tracking of development in our County. I wish to take this opportunity to thank all those people, particularly the Vihiga County Council of Elders led by Hon. Fred Omido, who spent their valuable time encouraging us to work as a team for the betterment of the people of Vihiga County.

As the Executive, we are moving forward with haste to deliver development and progress. But as we do so, we understand that this journey can never be walked alone without the support and participation of the County Assembly. This new-found working engagement has to be nurtured and fostered; storms will hit it, divisive rhetoric will attempt to dismantle it, I pray our footing is set on a stronger foundation built on the dreams and expectations of the people of Vihiga County.

With one year gone, we have embarked on the achievement of our development agenda and the National Big 4 agenda for the next four years. To realize our development dream, we hope that the National government will improve timeliness of their disbursement of our devolved revenue allocation from the Treasury and also our development partners will continue to support us in various development initiatives.

As the Governor of this great County, I am not oblivious to the fact that fulfilment of my manifesto is in my best interest. If anything, my motivation at the very least is to transform this County into a prosperous County that will avail opportunities and grow the future generation of Vihiga County.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

In the last 3-4 months, social media has been awash with negative comments and propaganda on the performance of my administration. There have been allegations of corrupt practices in my administration. I wish to state that, everyone is entitled to their opinion but I humbly advice that, before going ahead to post allegations, observations or concerns, seek the truth on issues from the concerned bodies or departments through the recognized channels before rushing to share or post information whose sources and authenticity cannot be defended. All citizens have the right to seek information that is in the public interest and to petition to the County Government to perform what the petitioners deem necessary and lawful. This is a channel that I am asking the youth of Vihiga County to make use of.

Continued posting and sharing of allegations of corruption is adversely discouraging development partners from supporting development projects in our County and this is likely to impact negatively to our stated development agenda. I therefore take this opportunity to **sternly** warn the staff in my Government who have formed the habit of leaking Government documents to people and on social media to **IMMEDIATELY STOP**. Those who will continue with this vice, will summarily be dismissed when found culpable.

Because of the available frameworks and procedures available within Constitution and the County Governments Act, 2012, I wish to urge the public to explore these avenues through written petitions for intervention in matters concerning the management and expenditure of public resources in the County instead of prosecuting them in funerals, fundraising functions, social and print media.

Madam Speaker, Honourable Members,

Once again, I wish to applaud the united efforts of both the County Assembly of Vihiga and the Executive towards the development of Vihiga County. We owe the electorate our development promises that we made to them during our campaigns and therefore it is our sole responsibility and commitment to ensure that this promise is delivered.

I urge all the elected leaders and the people of Vihiga County to come on board and support my government. Let us embrace the spirit of the handshake as demonstrated by His Excellency the President and Rt. Hon Raila Amolo Odinga; that has brought about peace and tranquillity in the country and their emphasis on building bridges to foster unity among our people and have all-inclusive political and development agenda for our Country. Let us desist from early campaigning in readiness for 2022. Early campaigns will disrupt the development agenda for our County.

Madam Speaker and Honourable Members of this Honourable Assembly,

Last and not least, I wish first to thank the Almighty God for the good health, strength, determination, courage and wisdom he has given me to steer this County to greater heights despite of many challenges that have faced and I am likely to

continue facing. Secondly, I wish to thank the people of Vihiga County and their leaders who have faith in me and have tirelessly continued to support me even in times when my leadership is under severe attack and criticism. I especially wish to thank my political supporters who have remained steadfast and loyal to me for the last one-year despite of many challenges they have faced for supporting me.

Finally, the dream to transform Vihiga County into a prosperous and model County in Kenya is still very much alive. I therefore urge you all to be part of this great dream. I am determined and committed with your support to deliver the same.

Thank You.

God Bless you, God Bless Vihiga County