

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



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COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF VIHIGA

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**H.E. HON. DR. WILBER K. OTTICHILO'S SPEECH TO THE
PEOPLE OF VIHIGA COUNTY DURING THE NATIONAL
JAMHURI DAY CELEBRATIONS ON 12TH DECEMBER, 2017.**

**The speaker of Vihiga County Assembly, Hon. Hasna Mbone
Mudeizi,**

The Deputy Governor, Dr. Patrick Saisi

The Vihiga County Commissioner, Mr. Alex Ole Nkoyo

Honourable leaders of Vihiga County in attendance,

Vihiga County Stakeholders and Guests,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Today we celebrate the 54th Jamhuri day since Kenya attained independence and became a republic on 12th December, 1963.

Since that period to date, the country has made significant strides in socio-economic development of its people and at the same time it continues to be faced with a number of challenges, specifically in governance and national cohesion and integration issues. On behalf of the people of Vihiga County, I take this opportunity to thank all previous and present leaders and Kenyans who have played pivotal role in the

development of our country since independence to date. Particularly, I wish to loud those who participated in the struggle for independence and those who later struggled relentlessly to usher in important governance reforms particularly, the enactment of the 2010 Constitution which gave birth to devolved system of governance in Kenya.

As we celebrate today, we should be cognisant of the challenges facing our country and find amicable and sustainable solutions to them in order for the country to remain unified and focused on future development agenda. In particular, we urgently require reforms in our electoral systems and independent commissions; amendment of the constitution to address issues related to the form of government and devolution challenges.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Vihiga County joins the rest of the country to mark this important Day by acknowledging the great strides and accomplishments our country has made in socio-economic development of its people since independence. In particular, we loud the enactment of the 2010 Constitution which gave birth to devolution form of governance system in Kenya. The implementation of devolution form of governance in Kenya since 2013 has experienced both success and challenges but its future is promising. What is needed is for the County Governments to strengthen public participation in development and decision making processes and to improve in the governance systems particularly; leadership, transparency and accountability.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Since the commencement of implementation of county governance system in 2013, Vihiga County has experienced numerous leadership and governance challenges that have to be urgently addressed if the County has to move forward and focus on development issues. Among the challenges are; inappropriate governance system, financial management, procurement and integrity issues and capacity building of staff. To address these issues, the current Government has already put in place appropriate leadership and governance structure. What remains now is the implementation of the development activities spelled out in the governor's manifesto. Already the 2017/18 supplementary budget has been finalized and submitted to the County Assembly for approval. Once the budget is approved, the implementation of development programs will start. Despite of these challenges, the current

Government has made a lot of successes in the last 100 days it has been in office.

Ladies and gentlemen,

During my campaign, I promised to ensure that my people have access to quality healthcare and medical services. To that effect, I have budgeted for the completion of the stalled health projects in the 2017/18 supplementary budget. This is to ensure we complete these vital facilities and operationalize them so that they can begin serving you the people as soon as possible. We have also stocked our health facilities with the needed medical supplies to address the various ailments facing our people. I urge the people of Vihiga County to seek medical treatment and services from these facilities and ensure these drugs serve them.

My Government is committed to ensuring you get clean and reliable water in your homes, areas of business, schools, medical facilities and other social facilities. We are soon launching the Belgium funded water project that will increase the capacity of Maseno, Mbale and Kaimosi water supplies, the project will impact over 300,000 residents of this county. We have also partnered with LivingWater International who will rehabilitate and sink boreholes within Vihiga County.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We commenced the preparation of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), originating development proposals from you the people through public participation at the ward level. We brought back the first draft CIDP back to you the people to verify the projects proposals suitability, validity and viability in your respective wards during the sub-county CIDP Validation workshops that were conducted in all the five sub-counties. A few days ago, we had the second and final CIDP validation forum at the county level that brought together the sectoral leaders who interrogated the document and gave their vital and well informed input to the project proposals in the CIDP. As your governor, it is my job to bring on board key development partners to support development initiatives in this county. To that effect, I managed to bring GIZ, a German corporation supporting development in Africa, to come on board. They fully funded the Sub-county CIDP validation workshops in all the five sub-counties of Vihiga County. I also brought USAID-AHADI on board and they fully funded the County CIDP Validation workshop. AHADI have also agreed to get a consultant for the county government of Vihiga who will edit the CIDP document in the standard

format that the document should be in before we present it to the County Assembly for approval. They won't stop there; they have also agreed to facilitate printing of the final CIDP Document.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to thank all the development partners who have come in to help the County Government develop its CIDP. Specifically, I want to thank GIZ, USAID-AHADI and all the people that contributed to the development of the CIDP from the public participation workshops to the CIDP validation forums, giving proposals and views to enable the development of a well-informed document that will be used to steer the development of the county in the next five years.

Ladies and gentlemen,

We have finalised the preparation of the 2017/18 supplementary budget and submitted it to the County Assembly for approval. The supplementary budget has been aligned to my manifesto to ensure that I commence on the implementation of the development agenda I promised the people of Vihiga County during my campaign. In the last three months, since being elected the Governor, we have faced a lot of governance and lack of financial resources challenges. As such we have not been able to commence on the implementation of development projects in my manifesto. I am happy to note that recently the senate approved the 2017/18 County Revenue Allocation bill which was signed into law by H.E. the President last week. This will enable the National Treasury to remit development funds to the counties and consequently, the counties will embark on the implementation of their 2017/18 development programs. In this regard, we have planned to implement the following projects in the next three months starting from January 2018:

1. Disburse education bursaries to the Wards through established education committees.
2. Finalize Ward Development Fund Bill and disburse first tranche of development funds to the Wards.
3. Rehabilitate major roads that have been destroyed by the current heavy rains.
4. Embark on the completion of stalled projects particularly: bridges, health centers, ECDE classrooms.
5. Embark on installation of high mast lighting in our major County Markets.

6. Develop and launch an integrated business licensing, rating and revenue collection system that will reduce harassment of traders and business people, stealing and diverting of revenue for personal benefit and corruption.
7. Establish a County Empowerment Fund for access of soft loans by young entrepreneurs, local business people and SACCOs.
8. Launch the Belgium water funded project and embark on the completion of stalled water projects.
9. Embark on the rehabilitation of health facilities and completion of stalled health projects including the construction of the 260 bed capacity hospital plaza at the County Referral Hospital.
10. Embark on the rehabilitation of our Vocational Training Centres and equipping them as well as completion of stalled ECDE classrooms and equip them.

Ladies and gentlemen,

I wish to congratulate our youthful Vihiga United FC and Vihiga Queens FC, the 2017 National Super League Champions and 2017 Kenya Women's Premier League Champions respectively for doing this county proud. As both teams participate in Kenya's top tier leagues, they carry our dreams, hopes and the pride of the people of Vihiga County. The County Government is coming up with a sports policy that will guide the development of sport and sporting talents in the county as well as define the different ways the County Government will come in to support the same.

Ladies and gentleman,

I wish to appeal to the people of Vihiga County to accord me and my Government the support and patience I require to deliver the services I have promised. Further, I appeal to the people to remain peaceful and cohesive and to focus on the development agenda of this county.

Last and not least, I take this opportunity to wish you a happy and merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

God bless you, God bless Vihiga County and God bless our country Kenya.

Thank you.