

**H.E. HON. Dr Wilber K. Ottichilo.**

**Speech during Inauguration and swearing-in ceremony as  
Vihiga County Governor at Kidundu Stadium on 21<sup>st</sup>  
August, 2017 from 10.00AM**

**Justice Hellen Omondi,**

**Principal Magistrate Jacinta Orwa,**

**H.E. HON. Wycliffe Musalia Mudavadi**

**Vihiga County Senator-Elect George Khaniri,**

**Vihiga County Woman MP-Elect Beatrice Adagala**

**Honourable MPs-Elect**

**Honourable Leaders of Vihiga County**

**Hon Speaker Vihiga County Assembly**

**Clerk of Vihiga County Assembly**

**Honourable MCAs-Elect**

**County Commissioner**

**The people of Vihiga County, Our distinguished guests,  
Ladies and Gentlemen.**

Good morning.

I am very blessed, honoured and indeed humbled to be standing here today as Governor of Vihiga county addressing my people. I want to take this moment to say **thank you to you the great people of Vihiga County for electing me as your Second Governor after a very successful and peaceful National General elections.**

From this moment going forward, I wish to inform all citizens of Vihiga county that, my agenda as your new governor is to **Transform Our County Vihiga into a prosperous and Model county in Kenya, in the shortest time possible.**

I want to categorically state that the time for Vihiga County is now. The time for empty rhetoric has passed. It is time for action for the welfare of the people of Vihiga County.

I intend to achieve this transformation by effecting change in the following sectors that will drive the development agenda for my people of Vihiga County.

#### **A. GOVERNANCE**

My government will **promote unity of purpose and inclusivity of all communities residing within Vihiga County.** In the first 30 days of my government, I will convene a meeting of the respective representatives of all the communities resident in Vihiga County, to commence the process of cohesion and integration. The period for politics has passed, our people now need to heal and reconcile. Any rift that may have risen from the previous political encounters and from the previous regimes, we have to mend by people coming together and forging forward together. Our unique identities give us the diversity that build up a society but our primary identity is and will always remain proud sons and daughters of Vihiga County before anything else.

I wish to state from the on-set that **my government will transact all its business in a transparent and accountable manner and will put systems in place to ensure that this is adhered to.**

Ladies and gentlemen, I intend to **form a lean and effective Government that will focus on the peoples' development agenda**, through in-built self and external evaluation and monitoring mechanisms. All development processes to be implemented by **my government will strictly adhere to the constitution, the county government act and the Public Procurement and Disposal Act**. In this regard, **my government will strive to allocate more resources to development programs and reduce recurrent expenditures specifically the wage bill**.

To cultivate public trust and to ensure county resources are managed and employed well, my administration, working in tandem with the County Legislature will **enact relevant sectoral policies and laws that will enable my government to implement its development agenda**. **My government will not condone corruption and those found practising this vice will be promptly punished according to law and dismissed from the service**.

The core principal of devolution is public participation, making the people part and parcel of the development planning process. They say the wearer of the shoe knows where it pinches most. My government intends to **involve the people in development planning and decision making processes through public participation**. This can only be achieved through formulation of public participation policy and laws that will mainstream the same in all sectors of the county social, economic and political activities.

Further, rational planning requires to be informed by data and information. In this regard, my administration will establish County Spatial Data infrastructure (CSDI) that will be digitally

accessed by all directorates for their planning and Management needs.

**Immediately on assumption of office, I will constitute a committee for the preparation of 2017-2022 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) and I expect the plan to be ready for approval by the county assembly latest by end of October, 2017. This plan will elaborate on my development agenda for the county during my tenure of service as summarised in this speech.**

As a people forming one Vihiga county community, we need values for which we need to be guided by and from which our uniqueness can be exemplified from. Through participatory process, my government will **formulate and implement county values which will include but not limited to; good governance, the importance of Life, the environment, integrity and peace for all etc.**

## **B. DEVELOPMENT AGENDA**

### **1. Healthcare and sanitation**

My government intends to give more focus on preventive healthcare rather than curative healthcare. My government will invest more in public/community health work to ensure that my people of Vihiga County live in a clean environment and adopt healthy living.

**I will endeavour to improve the existing healthcare facilities through renovation and provision of the necessary medical equipment and drugs for better delivery of services to the people. This will be done by engaging the**

**healthcare leaders and professionals for a more informed strategy towards elevating healthcare in Vihiga County.**

**I will also embark on developing Mbale Hospital to referral standard through upgrading of its infrastructure and equipment. My government will complete the 260 patient bed capacity building that was started but stalled.** Due to the ever increasing cases of cancer disease prevalence in our populace, my government will establish **cancer treatment centre at Mbale Referral hospital.**

To deliver specialized health services to the citizens in remote areas within Vihiga County, my government in conjunction with the county health department will be organizing regular medical camps where prominent medical experts will be invited to offer free services and treatment to the people.

My government recognises the role played by community health volunteers (CHVs) in the healthcare system. Therefore, my government will provide them with the necessary health kits and will explore avenues of rewarding them for their services.

## **2. Education**

Ladies and gentlemen,

In my government, education will be promoted as the foundation and backbone of development of Vihiga County. **My government will put more focus on ECDE and Technical and vocational training for our youth.**

Within the first 6 months, I will hold a stakeholders consultative forum to evaluate the challenges facing our ECDE and together agree on the best strategies and solutions to this critical sector.

My government intends to do the following to improve and build the capacity of our ECDE and Technical and Vocational Training institutes and Polytechnics:

- My administration will formulate policy on the implementation of ECDE and technical, vocational training skills development.
- My government will invest in developing, equipping and staffing of ECDE at every primary school as well as model ECDE centres in each sub-county from which the rest can adopt the best practises and systems from.
- **My government will recruit ECDE teachers and polytechnic teachers on permanent and pensionable terms**
- My government will invest in building the capacity of technical and vocational training colleges and youth polytechnics in all the 5 sub-counties, through completion of those under construction and renovation of the existing ones, equipping them with modern equipment and ensuring they have qualified managers and staff.
- **My government will provide incentives and bursaries to students who will opt to join Technical and vocational training colleges and youth polytechnics, for lifelong skills development.**
- To promote education, **my government will enact policy and law to allow the provision of at least 10 Million shillings for bursary for each ward every financial year and how to collaborate with HELB.**
- My government will seek partnership with the chamber of commerce and other countries like Israel, Germany, and South Korea in the promotion of technical education in the county.

- My government's ultimate goal will be to make Vihiga County a source of skilled manpower for export to other counties and countries.

**To enhance devolution at ward level, my government will make the necessary amendments to the current Ward development bill, have it approved by the county assembly and signed into law. This will enable the wards under the oversight of MCAs to have funds to undertake small needy projects that will have incremental impact to the people at the ward level.**

### **3. Water, Environment and Natural Resources**

#### **Water**

Ladies and gentlemen,

My administration will focus on the provision of clean and safe piped water to all communities and institutions. We currently have so many stalled water projects in the county. My administration will focus on the completion of stalled water projects e.g. Nang'oli water project, Lunyerere water project, Eburnangwe water project etc.

**My government will also fast track the implementation of the 1.5 Billion shillings Belgium funded water project for Vihiga County. My government will partner with donor agencies and the national government to implement water projects across the entire county.**

Lastly, efforts will also be made to promote roof-water harvesting in the county.

## **Environment**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Matters of the environment are of a very great concern to me. The environment in Vihiga County is highly degraded, particularly forests and riverine (riparian) areas. Programs will be initiated by my government towards the reforestation of the degraded hills and riverine areas.

Growing Bamboo in riverine areas; is but one project that will be initiated as part of the effort to conserve these areas.

**My government will put in place measures to conserve the existing natural forests like Kaimosi forest and rehabilitate degraded areas.**

Lastly, my government will **establish a long term education and awareness program on the importance of conservation of our environment and living in a clean environment.**

## **Natural Resources**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Our County is rich with granite stones, particularly in Hamisi and Bunyore areas. **In collaboration with the Ministry of Mining, efforts will be made to establish stone crushing and polishing factory to process the granite stones into different finished products for use in construction and interior decor.**

Because of possible environmental degradation, efforts will be made to rehabilitate areas where stones will be harvested from.

Vihiga County is also rich with sand in river valleys. My government will set up and enact sustainable environmental policies which will be enacted into law through the county



legislature that will ensure that sand and marrum is sustainably harvested and used without leaving behind environmental hazards like huge and dangerous quarries.

Goldis found in various river valleys particularly areas bordering Kaimosi forest. **In collaboration with the Ministry of Mining, gold mining will be organized and regularized, artisanal miners will be organized in groups in order to acquire mining equipment and favourable markets for their gold. Safety measures will also be introduced and enforced in the industry.**

Brick making is also widely practised in the county. Sustainable brick making technologies will be introduced and rehabilitation done in areas where soil is sourced.

#### **4. Agriculture**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Subsistence agriculture is the main economic activity of the people of Vihiga County. **My government will endeavour to introduce horticulture and agribusiness in order to create employment for the youth in those sectors.**

Dairy farming, poultry farming, bee-keeping, aquaculture (fish farming) and vegetable farming will be introduced and value addition promoted through agro-processing.

**To offer support to the farmers, Agricultural extension services will be enhanced, contact farmers and demonstration farms established.**

Lastly, needy farmers will be provided with subsidized agricultural inputs early enough before the commencement of the planting

season. The cereals board stores in Chavakali will be rehabilitated, renovated and used for storing agricultural inputs and strategic grain reserves.

### **Cooperative movement**

Cooperative movement over the years in the country has been the engine of development in the agricultural sector and general ease access to funds for development of the people of Kenya. However, most of the cooperative movements have collapsed due to poor management as is the case in Vihiga County.

**My government will endeavour to revive this vital industry which has a promise to create more jobs and wealth in the agricultural and business sectors and provide ease access to loans for various entrepreneurship activities.**

In this regard, my government will establish a fully-fledged cooperative directorate that will make an inventory of all existing Saccos and their activities and provide training where necessary and also conduct monitoring and evaluation on regular basis.

To access to county empowerment funds, beneficiaries will be expected to be members of Saccos registered by the directorate.

## **5. Trade and Commerce**

Ladies and gentlemen,

**My government in collaboration with the chamber of commerce will undertake an inventory of trade and commerce businesses within Vihiga County. This information will be used for revenue collection and establishment of new business opportunities.**

My government will further **establish an empowerment fund to provide ease of access to soft loans by the business community especially the youth and women.**

To attract investors to do business in Vihiga County, my government will offer trade Incentives like tax free regimes to encourage the business community to set up and conduct their commerce within our county.

## **6. Industry**

Ladies and gentlemen,

Aside from Mudete tea factory in Vihiga County, there are no other factories in the county. To encourage industrial development in the county, **my government will endeavour to promote agro-processing industries like Wine and Jam processing from pawpaw and bananas, Lotion from avocados, vegetable drying and packaging and honey production among others.**

**My government will also promote cottage industries like basketry, pottery, skins and hides processing in the County.**

Neglected facilities like the Mukhalakhala slaughterhouse in Luanda Sub-county will be completed, equipped and opened.

The issues facing Mudete tea factory will be addressed in collaboration with farmers and a way forward agreed and implemented.

My government will also offer incentives to private investors for establishment of light industries like bakeries and flour mills in our main towns.

## **7. Youth, Culture, Tourism and Social Services**

### **Youth**

Vihiga County has a population of about 604,000 of which 60% are youth. Most of these youth are unemployed and lack lifelong skills. Those who have certificates and degrees continue to desperately look for white collar jobs which are not forthcoming.

My government plans to change this state of affairs of our youth seeking employment. Instead **my government plans to empower them to create jobs for themselves and their colleagues. In this regard, my administration will focus on technical and vocational training so that the graduates from our youth polytechnics and technical institutes can be self-employed through the help of my government.**

My government will establish empowerment funds to provide soft loans for those youth who upon completion of technical training will wish to establish companies. The companies will be given top priority under the 30% public tender affirmative action by my government to county contracts.

My administration will also create incentives for the youth to get involved in entrepreneurship activities – particularly agribusiness, ICT, transport etc.

### **Culture**

People of Vihiga County,

My government will promote the rich culture of our county. **We shall organize cultural festivals at sub-county levels in the course of every year and at the end of the year, from 24<sup>th</sup>-27<sup>th</sup> day of December, we shall have Vihiga Cultural Festival, which will form part of tourism promotion in Vihiga County.**

A county cultural promotion committee will be appointed after every three years to organize the festivals and will have the mandate to invite cultural groups from other parts of the country to participate in the celebrations.

### **Tourism**

Vihiga County has a lot of potential to gain from domestic and international tourism, particularly cultural and eco-tourism. **My government will promote tourism in the county through invitation and attraction of investors to build hotels and eco-lodges in the county. We shall particularly promote cultural tourism through Vihiga annual cultural festivals and conferencing.**

During my tenure of leadership, my administration will explore the feasibility of establishing a large amphitheatre for use for various activities e.g. meetings, weddings, music festivals, performance arts etc.

We shall rehabilitate sites of tourism interest in the county including the Maragoli hills and Mungoma Caves.

### **Cultural Museum**

In the course of my tenure as your Governor, I intend to build a cultural museum in Vihiga County that will avail to people of Vihiga County, the nation and the world the rich historical culture of the people of Vihiga County. The unique circumcision rites of the Tiriki community, the rain-making prowess of the Abasiekwe in Bunyore, the Maragoli culture and the Terik customs will be the major highlights of this endeavour.

### **Social Services**

My government will develop the following social amenities during my tenure as governor of Vihiga County:

- 1. One stadium, in the county, of national standard for use by our teams, e.g. Vihiga United FC and other national teams.**
- 2. One local stadium at sub-county level like this stadium Kidundu and Hamisi stadium will be completed.**
- 3. I will build a Talent Development Centre to promote music, athletics, sports and performance arts talents within the county.**
- 4. My government will budget and sponsor soccer and athletics from ward level to county level on annual basis.**

Ladies and gentlemen, my government will not overlook the elderly in our society. My government will **establish a program for cash transfer to the elderly of over 65 years and also get hospital insurance for each one of them.**

### **People with Disability**

My government will mainstream the needs of people with disability in all sectors of the county economy. It will further establish facilities in our learning and social institutions to create an enabling environment for their effective participation.

Further, **my administration will accord them affirmative action when it comes to employment and access to opportunities.**

## **8. Energy**

Ladies and gentlemen,

My government in conjunction with Kenya Power Company will work together to ensure every remote corner of this county is connected to the national electric grid.

**We will also work with Kenya Generation Company (Kengen) to revive and develop Kaimosi mini hydro power generation plant.**

**My government will also make a deliberate effort to promote the use of the solar energy in the entire county for general lighting in an effort to eliminate the use of kerosene.**

In conjunction with local and international NGOs, my government will work to promote the use of energy saving stoves. Together, I am looking forward to making Vihiga County clean green energy reliant.

## **9. ICT**

My government will develop and establish ICT as a platform for the county development agenda. We shall introduce faster internet connectivity through upgrading of our facilities to fibre optic connection. **All the county business transactions and activities will be ICT based and supported.**

## **10. Land Bank**

My government will survey and issue titles to the public lands in the county. It will further acquire land in strategic areas. **The**

**lands will be available for use for construction of public institutions and for allocation to investors under a negotiated agreement.**

### **11. Revenue collection**

Ladies and gentlemen,

My government will place a high premium on the collection of local revenue which is necessary for funding of development initiatives in the county. **To improve the collection of revenue, my government will outsource this activity to entities like KRA or Chamber of commerce through negotiated agreements.**

### **12. Grants**

The resources for the development of the county will remain limiting. Therefore, my administration through public-private partnerships and donor agencies will identify projects that would be funded externally. This will be achieved through project proposal writing. Also, my administration will work in collaboration with the national government in accessing of such grants.

### **13. Transport, Communication and Infrastructure**

#### **Roads**

Good roads are necessary for the development of any community.

Vihiga County has fairly good motorable roads during the dry season but are impassable during the rainy season. **My**



**government will take an inventory of all important roads in the county and their status and come up with a master plan on their rehabilitation and maintenance on a long term basis.**

Important economic roads that cut across the county will be identified for tarmacking. For example; **Luanda-Magada-Mbaleroad** and **Majengo-Hamisi-Shamakhokho road**.

Also, my government will ensure that the road networks in our important towns and markets are tarmacked. Further, we shall formulate road maintenance strategy.

### **Lighting of town and market areas**

To enhance 24-hour business activities in our towns and markets, my government will, in the shortest period possible from now, formulate a program for lighting all our towns and markets in the County.

### **Transport**

My government will formulate transport policy that will be used to enact transport law that is crucial for the management of transport activities in the county.

**My government will work with the stakeholders in the transport industry to formulate transport laws and regulations that will be enforced both by the county government and the industry.** Further, my administration will endeavour in consultation with the stakeholders to build Bodaboda and Matatu stages and bus parks in all our main markets and towns.

## **Communication**

Most of Vihiga is covered by GSM network. However, there are certain few areas in valleys and hilly parts of the county e.g. Musunguti and Buhani where there is no network. My administration will liaise with the various network providers to provide this service to those areas.

**My administration will establish a new website within 3 months of being in office. The website will provide updated information of the on-going and proposed development activities in the county. It will also provide a platform for wanainchi to raise their concerns and proposals on various developmental social and political issues.**

In support of this communication platform, my government will also unveil its official social media platforms for regular updates and engagement with the public. My administration will also have a dedicated SMS platform that will be issuing regular development updates directly to the people and also a feedback mechanism.

## **14. County Building**

**Currently, there is no official county house for the Governor. My administration will urgently put in place plans to construct the said house so that it can act as symbol of County Unity, Leadership and Pride.**

Further, my administration will endeavour to budget and construct offices at sub-county and ward levels as part of the devolution of county government. This will stop the need for people to travel from wards to the county headquarters to seek services that they could easily access at the ward level.

## **15. County disaster Management Plan**

Disasters are inevitable. They occur when least expected. My government will therefore formulate and implement county disaster management plan. Among the disasters to be considered; is fire and landslides. **My government will endeavour to procure fire fighting vehicles and equipment which will operated on a 24/7 basis.**

### **What I intend to do immediately after my assumption of office today:**

- 1. Form a government structure that is lean and efficient and ensure that the ministries within the structure are accountable in terms of budgeting process and expenditure.**
- 2. I will convene a Vihiga leaders and key stakeholders meeting whose agenda will be to promote cohesion and integration of the communities residing in the county and come up with a unified strategy on how to fast track our development agenda.**
- 3. Urgently institute the following audit activities:**
  - Personnel/Manpower**
  - County Financial Accounts**
  - County debt**
  - On-going and stalled projects**
  - Policies and laws by the previous regime**
- 4. Restructure:**
  - The Finance and procurement Department**
  - Health Department**
  - Transport and Infrastructure department**
  - Economic Planning**

- 5. Initiate the process of preparation of Supplementary Budget for 2017-18 fiscal year with a focus on urgent county social economic needs.**
- 6. Review the Ward Development Bill, have it approved in the assembly and signed for implementation.**
- 7. Immediately commence on the preparation of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) through public participation.**
- 8. Enact and implement county anti-corruption strategy and invite Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) to investigate the alleged corruption practices in the county.**

**Ladies and gentlemen,**

**To sum up my inauguration speech,**

I strongly believe my proposed development agenda, aimed at transforming Vihiga into a prosperous county is achievable. What I require is the support of everybody, particularly the elected leaders at the county level. On my part, I will endeavour to involve all elected leaders in my above summarised development agenda for the county during my tenure of service as your governor. To achieve this, teamwork by all leaders is a must.

We have just concluded our National General Elections. We have promised our people to undertake various development activities that will improve their welfare. Therefore, I call upon all elected leaders and the people of Vihiga to now focus on development and not politics. Further, I call upon the people of Vihiga County to focus on doing something productive rather than idling around and complaining and expecting something great to happen, you must make it happen.

Once again, I say thank you, to you the people of Vihiga County for electing me as your governor. I will work for you, I will deliver for you and the future generation. The new dawn for Vihiga County begins now.

God bless you all. God Bless this great County of Vihiga.

Thank you.

**H.E. Hon. Dr. Wilber K. Ottichilo.**

**GOVERNOR, VIHIGA COUNTY**

**21<sup>st</sup> August, 2017.**