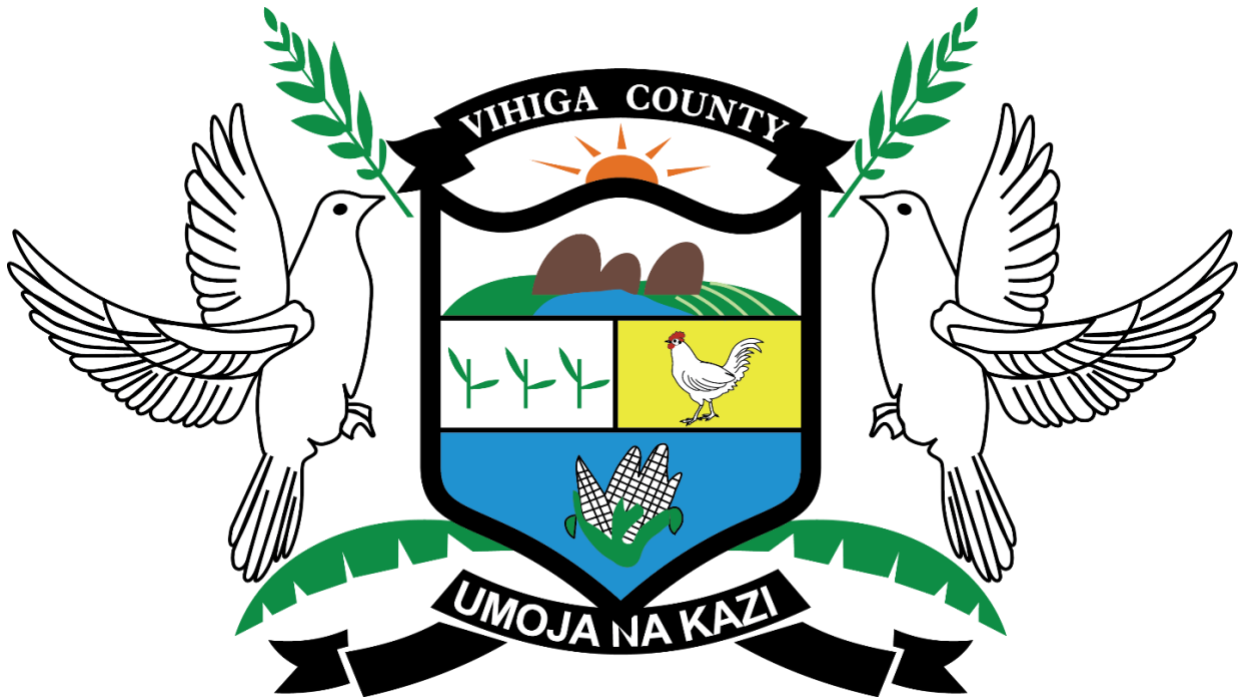


COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF VIHIGA



STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS

BY

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

31ST OCTOBER, 2019

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

THE ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS 2019

Honorable Speaker Hasna Mudeizi Mbone,

Honourable Members of the County Assembly,

County Elected and Non-elected Leaders,

County Executive Committee Members present,

Chief Officers and Other Officers of the County Public Service present,

Invited Guests and Members of the Public present,

Members of the Fourth Estate present,

All the residents of Vihiga County present and those listening to this Address through the Radio,

Ladies and Gentlemen.

Good Afternoon.

Madam Speaker,

It gives me great pleasure to be in this special assembly sitting this afternoon to deliver my **Second State of the County Address** 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 the development achievements in the County during the 2018/19 financial year and the proposed development projects and programs for the 2019/2020 financial year.

In my first **State of the County Address** which I delivered in this Honourable assembly on 18th October 2018, I outlined the challenges my administration was facing and how I was going to deal with the same. I also outlined the achievements my administration had made for the 2017/2018 financial year. I further gave an outline of the projects and

programmes that my administration was going to undertake for the 2018/19 financial year.

In this second State of the County Address, I will present a detailed overview of the development achievements and challenges of my administration for the 2018/19 financial year. I will also present the planned and budgeted for development projects for the 2019/20 financial year.

Madam speaker,

This State of the County Address is organized as follows: the first section is the introduction and this is followed by a brief overview of issues raised in the first State of the County Address and the actions taken; the second section presents details of the projects undertaken by each department during 2018/19 financial year as well as challenges encountered; the third section presents the planned and budgeted for projects for implementation during the 2019/2020 financial year; and the last section presents concluding remarks.

Madam Speaker,

During my first state of the county address, I identified a number of challenges that had to be addressed if by my administration was to move forward and successfully implement my development agenda. Among the challenges were; lack of effective and efficient government structure, corruption, bloated wage bill, unverifiable pending bills burden, declining own source revenue, unpredictable disbursement of shared revenue from treasury and high expectation from the people. Although some of these challenges still remain unresolved, I am happy to note that we have significantly addressed challenges regarding putting in place an effective governance system through issuance of **Executive Order Number One (2017)** and **Executive Order Number Two (2018)**, with the help of EACC we have undertaken corruption risk assessment in our governance systems and put in place remedial measures, we have increased collection of our own source revenue, we are addressing the issue of bloated wage bill and we are managing high expectation from the people through implementation of various projects and public participation.

During the first address, I also outlined the projects my administration would implement during the 2018/19 financial year. The projects included; the renovation and equipping of health facilities, construction and equipping of ECDE classrooms, purchase of fire engine, construction of hospital plaza, street lighting among others.

Madam Speaker,

I am happy to note that the financial year 2018/19 marked a turning point in the leadership and development agenda initiatives in our county. Unlike the 2017/18 financial year when we faced a lot of leadership and other challenges that slowed down our focus on

development for the people of Vihiga County; in the period under review we experienced a lot of harmony in the working relationship between the executive and the county assembly. The assembly executed its oversight, legislation and representation roles prudently, and this led to the implementation of various sectoral development projects and activities across the county. This led to significant improvement in our financial absorption rate for development projects from less than 30% in the 2017/18 financial year to 70% during the 2018/19 fiscal year. Further, our own of source revenue collection increased from KES 93 million during the 2016/17 financial year, to KES 143 million during the 2017/18 financial to KES 178 million in the 2018/19 financial year. For 2019/2020 financial year we have projected to collect KES 192 million but we have the potential to collect more particularly if we automate our revenue collection systems.

Among the most important development projects implemented during the reporting period are:

1. Renovation and equipment of our County Referral Hospital and sub-county hospitals,
2. Acquired 32 and 64 slice CT-scan,
3. Implementation of OttichiloCare Mother and Child program,
4. Established Mwitoko fish hatchery and training farm,
5. Installation of high mast and ordinary market lights across the county,
6. Procurement of fire engine, rapid response vehicle and hired and trained fire marshals
7. Construction and equipping of 108 ECDE classrooms,
8. Inauguration of the Governor's Scholarship Programme,
9. Procurement of tools and equipment for VTCs,
10. Launched the state-of-the-art Geospatial Technologies Services Laboratory,
11. Acquired 10 tonne exhauster, 10 tonne garbage compacting truck under the Kenya Urban Support Programme,
12. Successful implementation of civil works for the Belgium funded water project, covering Maseno, Kaimosi and Lunyerere Water Supplies.
13. Commenced rehabilitation of riparian lands and Maragoli hills using bamboo and indigenous tree seedlings,
14. Establishment of the Trade and Enterprise fund,
15. Construction of market stalls in various markets,
16. Commencement of the construction of the County Data Center
17. Formulation and enactment of various laws and policies

Despite of the above development achievements, we also faced a number of challenges that directly or indirectly affected our overall performance during the reporting period. Among the key challenges were:

1. Delayed release of development funds by the National Treasury
2. Unreliability in the functioning and operation of Integrated Finance Management Information System (IFMIS)

3. Pending bills
4. Bloated wage bill
5. Serious lack of technical capacity in all departments
6. Lack of capacity and capability by some of the contractors awarded projects
7. Lack of enabling laws and policies to implement projects as per the Public Finance and Management Act (PFMA)
8. Poor work ethics and attitude for work by County Government staff
9. Failure of the County Public Service Board to offer guidance in the hiring and management of human resource in the county public service.

Apart from the challenges that are beyond our control, like delays in the release of development funds and unreliability of IFMIS, my administration has put in place mechanism to address the rest of the challenges to enable us perform much better in the 2019/20 financial year than we did in the previous year. To achieve this, we shall need the support and cooperation of this assembly particularly in the enactment of relevant laws.

Madam Speaker,

I will now present to this Assembly the detailed information on projects that were planned and implemented during the financial year 2018/19. During the year under review, KES 1,938,078,816 was allocated to development, representing 35% of the budget. The allocation per department and respective achievements was as follows:

1. TRANSPORT AND INFRASTRUCTURE

Madam Speaker,

In the department of Transport and Infrastructure, the County Government planned for a total of 164 projects with a budget of KES 671 million. During the financial year under review, 126 projects worth 514 million were completed and this represents 77 % absorption rate. This is the highest absorption rate in the history of the department. However, it should be noted that 38 projects valued at KES 118 million are still ongoing and are expected to be completed before the end of this year. Details of all the projects can be found in the 2018/19 County Annual Report.

Most of the opening or rehabilitation of the roads (91 KMs) were ward-based; meaning the roads development was equitably distributed in the 25 wards. The ward-based roads were funded by county revenue funds. We received KES 118 million from Kenya Roads Board (KRB) for rehabilitation and maintenance of Class D and E roads in the County. The selected roads which were equitably distributed in the County covered 205.7 KM and were successfully completed. The details of the KRB roads that were rehabilitated and maintained are found in the 2018/19 County Annual Report.

Apart from the rehabilitation and maintenance of roads, the following was also achieved during the reporting period:

1. Purchase of the Fire Engine and Rapid Response Vehicle that strengthens our fire emergency response systems in the county.
2. Recruitment of County Architect and Quantity Surveyor which has improved service delivery in the Building Section.
3. Recruitment and training of Staff in the Fire Department that now manages the Disaster Management Unit.
4. Commissioning of the first High Mast and normal lighting in most of our markets in the county. This has greatly enhanced business and security in those markets.
5. Completion of the County Mechanical Workshop at Manyatta which is now ready for commissioning.
6. Under the County Revenue Fund projects, construction of the following was undertaken:
 - **BRIDGES:** - Minyika Bridge in North Maragoli ward is 100% complete but has structural problems; Opuya Maganga Bridge in Luanda Township ward is 90% complete pending backfilling; and Okondo Bridge in Luanda South ward is 75%
 - **BOX CULVERTS:** - Murichile in West Bunyore ward is 100% done; Emmunwa in Emabungo ward is 100% complete; Mulwanda in Mwibona ward is 100% complete; and Jepsani in Jepkoyai is 90% done.
 - **RIVER CROSSINGS:** - Lwangele in Lugaga/Wamuluma ward is 100% complete; Vihindi Losoma in West Sabatia ward is 100% complete; Mudindi in Jepkyoyai ward is 90% done; and Mwibiba in Muhudu ward is 80% done.
 - **FOOT BRIDGES:** - **Ebulako** foot bridge in Emabungo ward is 100% complete.

Installation of high mast flood lights with the County Revenue Fund is ongoing (30%); this is in partnership with Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (formerly Rural Electrification Authority (REA), under their matching funds program at:

- Mago Market in Wodanga Ward
- Tripple T in Luanda ward
- Ekwanda Market in Luanda South ward
- Wangoya Market Vihiga Sub-county
- Emanyinya in Central Bunyore ward
- Ebuyangu market in West Bunyore ward
- Shamakhokho market in Shamakhokho ward
- Hamisi stadium in Banja ward
- Gambogi market in Jepkoyai ward

Advertisement for tender for 4 more high mast flood lights is underway for the following markets:

1. Ebusakami Junction – Luanda Sub-county
2. Gavalagi Market – Vihiga Sub-county

3. Emuhaya Centre – Luanda Sub-county
4. Cheptulu Market – Hamisi Sub-county

Madam Speaker,

The following bills and policies are under development:

1. Mechanical Transport Fund Bill
2. Road Maintenance Policy
3. Integrated Transport Policy
4. Fire and Safety Policy

Madam Speaker,

Despite of the above achievements, the department is still grappling with various challenges including:

1. Inadequate budget provisions e.g. no funds for bridges, tarmac roads, high mast street lighting, and purchase of construction equipment. This is a challenge that cuts across the departments and that is why it is necessary to increase our revenue collection and alternative sources of funding.
2. Inadequate technical staff leading to challenges in supervision of projects; and
3. Inadequate supervisory vehicles.
4. Poor continuous maintenance of roads

To address some of these challenges, the government has planned to undertake the following:

1. Allocate more financial resources in future budgets
2. Recruit sub-county road inspectors and ensure that the roads are maintained continuously using local labour
3. Recruitment of more quantity surveyors to fast track preparation of bills of quantities and supervision of implementation of projects.
4. Purchas of vehicle for monitoring and supervisory purposes.

2. EDUCATION SCIENCE, TECHNICAL & VOCATIONAL TRAINING

Madam Speaker,

The department of Education planned for a total of 183 projects with a budget of KES 282 million. During the financial year under review, 138 projects valued at a total of KES 210 million were completed and paid. This is 75 % absorption rate. The remaining 45 projects valued at 67 million are ongoing and are expected to be completed before the end of the second quarter of this financial year 2019/2020.

Madam Speaker,

In the department of education, my administration has accomplished the following projects and programs: -

1. Equipping of 408 ECDE Centers in public primary schools across the County with; branded Chairs, tables and book shelves.
2. Successful completion of 115 new ECDE classrooms spread out within the 25 wards of Vihiga County. Each ward received at least 2 new ECDE classrooms.
3. Delivery of ECDE Teaching and learning Aids including, Assorted Teaching Aids -Vowel Sounds, Consonant Sounds, Numbers Charts, Plasticine, Dustless pieces of Chalk, Branded books, Branded pencils, Erasers and everything else that is required in an ECDE center.
4. Trained ECDE Teachers
5. Improved remuneration of ECDE teachers

In the area of **Technical Vocational Education Training**, the department made great strides as follows: -

1. The increase of student enrolment from 2900 in 2017/18 financial year to 4572 in 2018/19 financial year.
2. The renovation of 30 TVET Centers in the County.
3. Construction of a new administration Block at Shiru VTC,
4. Construction of temporary structures at Mwambeba VTC and Munugi VTC.
5. 5 VTCs, 1 per Sub County were selected as model VTCs offering specialized training.
 - a. **Vihiga Sub-county:** Keveye VTC has specialized in Electrical & Electronics, Hair Dressing & Beauty Therapy, Motor Vehicle Mechanics
 - b. **Sabatia Sub-county:** Solongo VTC has specialized in Motor Vehicle Mechanics, Electrical & Electronics, Fashion Design & Garment Making
 - c. **Luanda Sub-county:** Maseno VTC has specialized in Motor Vehicle Mechanics, Fashion Design & Garment Making, Hair Dressing & Beauty Therapy
 - d. **Emuhaya Sub-county:** Emmukunzi VTC has specialized in Building & Construction, Motor Vehicle Mechanics, Electrical & Electronics
 - e. **Hamisi Sub-county:** Kaimosi VTC has specialized in Agribusiness, Hair Dressing & Beauty Therapy, Motor Vehicle Mechanics
6. To enhance the capacity and capability of the above model and other VTCs in the county, various tools and equipment were procured and distributed to these institutions. The tools and equipment distributed included but not limited to the following:
 - a. Motor Vehicle engines and tools for vehicle mechanics
 - b. Three-phase and single-phase motors, circuit boards and other electrical tools for Electrical and Electronic engineering
 - c. Tools and equipment for Hair Dressing and Beauty Therapy

- d. Tools and equipment for Building and Construction
 - e. Tools and equipment for Agribusiness
 - f. Laptop computers and projectors for ICT training
7. Constituted Boards of Management for all VTCs
 8. Trained all instructors and managers in Nakuru under the sponsorship of the Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB).

Madam Speaker,

The following Bills and Policies were prepared and their progress status are as follows:

1. ECDE Bill – submitted to this County Assembly
2. Scholarship Policy – passed by cabinet and shared with this Assembly
3. Capitation Policy and Bill for TVET – are ready for Public Participation

It is worth noting that the County Government oversaw the disbursement of the 2nd conditional grant of KES 41 million to all the VTCs in Vihiga County. However, it should be noted with concern that this money was not utilized prudently by a number of VTCs as confirmed by the Education Committee of this County Assembly. Further the department managed to conduct a suitability test to all TVET instructors and managers thereby improving their productivity and also indicating their weaknesses.

Madam Speaker,

This department has not been without challenges.

1. One of the key challenges has been, the lack of Quality and Assurance Standards Officers to monitor and ensure that quality is achieved in both ECDE and TVET Centers. Challenges in staff skill and capacity is another major challenge and we are working hard to have additional staff with the requisite skills and build the capacity of the current staff, particularly TVET instructors and managers.
2. Recruitment of qualified ECDE teachers and TVET instructors on long term basis.
3. Increasing but low enrolment in our TVET centers. There is an urgent need to create awareness on the importance of TVET training in our County – particularly in the creation of jobs for our youth. I call upon all the leaders to aggressively create awareness on the importance of TVET training for our youth and particularly to note that the training program is heavily sponsored by both county and national governments.

3. HEALTH SERVICES

Madam Speaker,

The department of Health Services deals with matters pertinent to the quality of life of the people of Vihiga County. It is one of the most critical services devolved and one that has attracted a lot of attention and criticism.

In this department, the government identified a total of 57 projects with a budget of KES 341 million. During the financial year under review, 49 projects worth KES 252 million were completed and paid; which is 80.2% absorption rate. The remaining 8 projects valued at KES 22.9 million are ongoing and are expected to be completed before the end of the second quarter of this financial year.

The following was achieved by the department during the reporting period:

1. Completed and opened health facilities including:
 - a. Mulundu Dispensary,
 - b. Cheptulu Health Centre,
 - c. Maternity wing at the Kaptech Dispensary in Muhudu ward among others.
 - d. Ebwiranyi Community Health Centre
 - e. Inavi Dispensary
 - f. Eliangoma Dispensary
2. Partly completed the following facilities awaiting equipping and staffing before official opening. However, some are already offering services on experimental basis.
 - a. Kidinye Dispensary
 - b. Ebukhaya Dispensary
 - c. Essaba Dispensary
 - d. Esirulo Dispensary
 - e. Givigoi dispensary
3. Renovated the following health facilities:
 - a. Vihiga County Referral Hospital
 - Renovated VCRH ground floor
 - Renovated VCRH amenity ward and is operational
 - Renovated VCRH Male ward
 - Installed new water tanks and solar water heating system
 - Installed water heating appliances and fixed the plumbing system at VCRH
 - Commenced construction of County Blood Transfusion Centre (50% progress)
 - Equipped the male ward with modern facilities
 - Installed modern medical diagnostic facilities at VCRH – 32 and 64 slice CT-Scans
 - The cardiac unit was established and is operational
 - The renal unit was established and is operational
 - The dental unit was established and is operational
 - The hospital plaza is under construction
 - The funeral home is under construction
 - b. All Sub-county Hospitals - Hamisi, Sabatia, Emuhaya and Emusire.
 - c. Lynaginga Health Centre has been identified to be upgraded to a Sub-county Hospital
 - d. Jebrok Dispensary was renovated

- e. Enzaro Health Centre maternity wing extended, works 80% complete
 - f. Egago Dispensary renovations 70% complete
 - g. Esirulo Dispensary renovation 98% complete
 - h. Completed renovation of Maternity ward at Ipali Health Center
 - i. **Emusire Sub-county hospital**
 - Carried out general renovation of the entire facility
 - Completed construction of the Mortuary
 - j. **Sabatia Sub-county hospital**
 - Completed renovations of the Maternity ward
 - Completed renovations the mini casualty section
 - k. **Emuhaya sub-county hospital**
 - Completed Renovation of the male ward
 - Completed the 3-phase electrical works and installed a new standby generator set
 - The operation/surgical theatre is ready for commissioning
 - Commenced construction of a kitchen – 90% complete
 - The dental unit was established and is operational.
4. Opened Oncology/Cancer Unit at Hamisi Sub-county hospital
 5. Opened a cardiac unit at VCRH
 6. Opened dental units at All sub-county hospitals and VCRH
 7. Ultra-sound services are now available across all sub-county hospitals; further strengthening Ottichilocare – reproductive health.
 8. In the area of legislation, the department has forwarded to this Honourable Assembly various Bills for enactment into law. These include:
 - a. Vihiga County Facility improvement Fund Bill
 - b. Vihiga County Health Care services Bill
 - c. Vihiga County Reproductive Maternal New Born Child and Adolescent Health Bill.
 9. The department has prepared, finalized and will be unveiling the following strategic plans before the end of the year:
 - a. The Vihiga County Referral strategy, policy and regulations
 - b. The Vihiga County Health Monitoring and Evaluation Plan (10 year)
 - c. The Vihiga County Health Sector Strategic plan (10 year)

Our Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) remain to be a crucial aspect of our health system. My administration will continue to support our CHVs for their role in promoting primary healthcare. To motivate them, my administration is currently paying them a stipend of KES 2,000 per month. However, the payment faces a lot of challenges including late payment and payment to illegal recipients.

Madam Speaker,

The implementation of the maternal healthcare program dubbed OttichiloCare has continued well although I am aware that there have been challenges in disbursing the

stipends due to the expectant mothers in the program. The OttichiloCare Program aims to encourage pregnant women/mothers to attend all the 4 Ante Natal Clinic (ANC) visits and to be under the observation and advice of health workers during pregnancy up to delivery.

Although the program has so far performed well, it faces a number of challenges that have been identified and must be addressed as soon as possible. I take this opportunity to appeal to the nominated Women Members of this County Assembly to take an active role in the support and promotion of this important program. My administration is willing to support their participation in the program.

The OttichiloCare implementation policy was launched last year and the Bill is now ready for presentation to the County Assembly. I wish to extend my gratitude to our development partners in this area; notably UNICEF and PATH International, who funded the preparation of these legal documents.

I also wish to thank all other development partners who have supported the health department initiatives, particularly DANIDA, AMREF, Nutrition International, Ipas, Marie stopes, AMPATH, Institute of Cancer, Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine, KEMRI, KEMSA and Ministry of Health – Afya House.

Madam Speaker,

The following are some of the main challenges faced by the department:

1. Serious shortage of staff
2. Inadequate equipment
3. Inadequate funding for purchase of drugs

4. AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, FISHERIES AND COOPERATIVES

Madam Speaker,

Agriculture is a critical devolved function whose aim is to strengthen agricultural productivity towards food security. Vihiga is a predominantly a subsistence agricultural economy; and my vision for the county is to transform to agribusiness as the main economic stay.

Under the department of Agriculture, my administration planned a total of 54 projects with a budget of KES 380 million. During the financial year 2018/2019, 44 projects worth KES 219 million were completed and paid for. This is 58 % absorption rate. The remaining 10 projects valued at 22 million are still ongoing.

The agriculture department accomplished the following projects and programs during the reporting period;

1. Distribution of planting fertilizer, top-dressing fertilizer and 2 Kg packet of certified maize seed to thirty-Four Thousand (34,000) Farmers identified from all the 25 wards of Vihiga County.
2. Distribution of Twenty Thousand (20,000) Coffee seedlings to Coffee farmers within the County, Twenty Thousand (20,000) Avocado seedlings and Thirty Thousand (30,000) Tea seedlings to farmers in Vihiga County.
3. Distribution of three heifers (dairy cow) per ward totaling to seventy-Five (75) animals across the County.
4. Distribution of a total of 80 dairy goats to Farmers within Vihiga County.
5. Completion of the Mwitoko Fish Farm to operational level. Fingerling production has commenced and this is expected to increase fish production in Vihiga County.
6. Partially completed Mukhalakhala slaughterhouse to 90% and is due for opening before the end of the year 2019.
7. Serem slaughterhouse is 40% complete. The department expects to complete it by the end of 2019.
8. Vaccinated 37,428 Cattle against Lumpy Skin Disease; 29,257 Cattle, 441 sheep, 2,972 goats against Black Quarter Anthrax; and 183 dogs against Rabies.
9. Procured a backup generator for Vihiga Dairy Cooperatives, to improve milk delivery and storage.
10. Procured a Coffee pulper machine for JEBROK Farmers Coffee Society at a cost of KES 1.9 million.

Under the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIGP) Conditional Grant, the department has accomplished the following:

1. Developed 52 proposals from Eight wards and 15 have been funded to the tune of KES 15 million. The remaining are due for fund disbursement which cumulatively amount to KES 525 million for 2019/20 financial year.
2. Four stakeholder platforms have been formed along the Four Value Chains (Dairy Cow, Local Chicken, Banana and Africa Leafy vegetable). The platforms (Production, Processing, Innovation and Marketing) are in the process of making investment plans for each value chains which will be funded by the Project.
3. The Multi Community Irrigation Project in Luanda Sub-county (Wemilabi ward) worth KES 80 million has been approved by the National Project Committee and is ready for implementation.

Under the Agriculture Sector Development Support Program (ASDP), the department has achieved the following:

1. Developed the Prioritized Value Chain Action plan;
2. Developed the prioritized Value chains resource maps;
3. Developed the inventory of the prioritized value chain organizers and actors
4. Developed the March, April, May season advisories to advise stakeholders on how to plan for the season; and

5. Trained Sector staff on development of policy briefs, Strategies, plans and regulations.

The ASDP II is funded by the County Government of Vihiga, National Government and the Swedish International Development Cooperation Agency (SIDA) to a tune of KES 21,224,262. The expected program's impact will be:

1. Increase productivity of priority value chains - Dairy, Local Chicken and Banana
2. Strengthen entrepreneurial skills of priority value chains; geared towards commercialization of these value chains.
3. Improve access to market
4. Strengthen structures for consultation, cooperation and coordination in the Agriculture sector

Madam Speaker,

Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO), Alliance for Green Revolution in Africa (AGRA), United Nations Environmental Programme (UNEP) and the County Government of Vihiga are implementing a sustainable Land and Forest Management project in Muhudu ward, Hamisi Sub-county. The project is currently being implemented in Vihiga, Nandi, and Kakamega counties. The project aims to conserve forest resources and promote sustainable and climate smart land management practices.

Indigenous Vegetable and Dairy farming are now a priority value chain under the National Agricultural and Rural Inclusive Growth Project (NARIGP). The department of agriculture has selected Dairy production as the anchor programme through which commercialization of agriculture (agribusiness) will be realized. The department has gone as far issuing out 75 dairy cattle to groups across the county towards promotion of Dairy production.

Madam Speaker,

I take this opportunity to thank this Honourable County Assembly for passing the following Bills which I assented to gazetted:

1. The Vihiga County Tea Cess Act 2019,
2. the Vihiga County Farm Inputs Fund Act 2019,
3. the Vihiga County Cooperative Development and Enterprise Act 2019,
4. the Vihiga County Tea Development Act 2019.

The following legal frameworks are under development and once ready, will be presented to this honourable assembly:

1. The Vihiga County Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) Development Bill
2. The Vihiga County Savings and Credit Cooperatives (SACCO) Development Policy

These legislations provide the legal framework necessary for the carrying out of various activities and programs in the agriculture sectors.

The main challenges facing the department are:

1. Inadequate staff particularly extension staff
2. Lack of funding for main transformative agriculture projects and programs. The on-going programs and projects are donor funded.
3. Lack of transport and equipment

To address these challenges, we propose to increase budgetary allocation to the department during the 2020/2021 fiscal year particularly for recruitment of extension staff.

5. GENDER, CULTURE, YOUTH, SPORTS AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Madam Speaker,

This department is concerned with the preservation of our cultural identity, cognizance of societal gender issues, youth affairs and development and social welfare of Vihiga County society.

In the fiscal year 2018/2019, the department of Gender planned for a total of 17 projects with a budget of KES 55 million. During the financial year under review, 3 projects valued at KES 19 million were completed and paid which is 37 % absorption rate. This, I must observe is a big letdown to the people of Vihiga County.

The gender, youth, culture, sports and social services department accomplished the following in the year under review:

1. Successfully organized the Vihiga County Youth Conference that focused on entrepreneurship and innovation.
2. Sponsorship of Vihiga United and Vihiga Queens football teams. Vihiga Queens has maintained exemplary performance in the national women premier league; they were crowned National Women Premier League champions for the third time in a row. Vihiga United has struggled and was unfortunately relegated from the National Premier league.
3. Construction and expansion of Hamisi stadium is underway although it has faced a number of accountability and management issues that are yet to be resolved.
4. The expansion of Mumboha stadium was done but not to the expected standard
5. The department organized and held countywide soccer tournaments in December 2018 with finals playing in January 2019. These tournaments were not well coordinated and therefore not successful.
6. Vihiga county cultural festivals were also successfully carried across the county with:
 - The Maragoli cultural festivals taking place on 26th of December 2018 at the Mbale municipal grounds. However, it must be noted that this festival was turned into a political rally and did not achieve its goal.

- Bunyore cultural festivals were hosted at Ebusakami grounds on 27th December 2018. But it was poorly organized.
- Tiriki cultural festivals were held at Hamisi stadium on 29th December 2018 but it was not well attended as expected.
- Terik cultural festivals closed the cultural week on 30th December 2018 at Kapchemgum primary school. The Terik festival was well organized, in my view, it was overall the best in exhibiting our cultural heritage.

Overall, there is a serious and urgent need to evaluate the role and importance of these cultural festivals. If they have to continue, they must be restricted and managed professionally.

The department has faced several challenges that have hindered effective service delivery. Some of these challenges are:

1. Lack of competent and qualified staff
2. Inadequate funding
3. Lack of appropriate policies and laws

To date, the department has managed to work on the following legal frameworks:

1. Youth policy and bill
2. Sports policy and bill – submitted to this honourable assembly
3. Cultural festivals policy and bill – still under development

I have appointed my Deputy Governor as the acting County Executive Committee Member for the department. This is to ensure that the department delivers on the youth agenda, social and gender programmes and development of sporting activities in Vihiga County.

Madam Speaker,

I take this opportunity to call on the youth of this County to be proactive and work with my administration in creating job opportunities in agribusiness and entrepreneurship. They should refrain from complaining and expecting favours to getting serious in determining their destiny through entrepreneurship and innovation. They should apply for loans from the Trade and Enterprise Fund and other funds like NARIGP.

Finally, they should organize themselves into a formidable group to champion the youth agenda as opposed to many opposing groups.

6. PHYSICAL PLANNING, LANDS AND HOUSING

Madam Speaker,

During the 2018/19 financial year, the department planned for a total of 26 projects with a budget of KES 327 million. During the period, 12 projects worth KES 120 million were

completed and paid which is 37% absorption rate. The remaining 14 projects valued at KES 176 million are ongoing.

The following were the achievements of the department during the reporting period;

1. Successful completion and launch of Geospatial Technologies Services Laboratory. This lab is one of its own in the country and is important in the provision and analysis of data and information necessary for rational planning and decision making;
2. The department carried out Land clinics in 15 wards to sensitize Vihiga residents on land issues, principles of physical planning and land titling. In collaboration with the national government, uncollected title deeds have been transferred to sub-counties for ease of collection without any payment.
3. The construction of Governor's and Deputy Governor's residences commenced early this year and are expected to be ready early next year. Once complete and occupied, the county will save more than two million shillings annually in terms of house allowances currently paid out to the two executives.
4. Provision of land and title for purposes of setting up Kenya School of Government in Boyani, Central Maragoli.
5. Survey and excision of 35 acres for EPZ in Kaimosi (the title deed is currently being processed at the Ministry of Lands);
6. Preparation of Kaimosi - Jeptulu Physical Development Plan (Draft Plan). As pointed out earlier in this address, this was necessitated by the rapid urbanization of the area due to the availability of various institutions including Kaimosi Friends University College.
7. Preparation of Valuation Roll for Vihiga Municipality, Luanda Town and selected market centers.
8. Purchase of approximately 5 acres of land for land banking purposes in South Maragoli, Tambua and Iduku in Lugaga Wamuluma.

Madam Speaker,

Vihiga County qualified to access municipal development grant under the World Bank and National Government's Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP); whose objective is to establish and strengthen **urban** institutions/municipalities to deliver improved infrastructure and services in participating counties in **Kenya**.

In the 2018/19 financial year, we received KES 250 million for the development of Vihiga Municipality (Majengo, Mbale, Chavakali, Mudete)

Under the World Bank's Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP), the following has been achieved;

1. Preparation of the Municipal charter which was approved by this Assembly and has been gazetted.
2. Establishment of PCT (Programme Coordination Team)

3. Competitive selection of board members, vetting by assembly and inauguration of Municipal Board

The Municipal Board has identified crucial projects and advertised the same through e-procurement. Projects completed under this program include provision of high mast lights within Vihiga municipality and provision of dustbins across major centers within the municipality.

The Ongoing projects include:

1. Beautification of part of Mbale town – there is need to improve the quality of works
2. Provision of fire hydrants,
3. Construction of waste water treatment and bio digester plant in Mbale Town
4. Supply and delivery of one 10 tonne garbage compacting truck

Completed and delivered projects include:

1. 10 tonne exhauster
2. 10 tonne skip lauder complete with litter bin
3. Installed Garbage bins across the municipality
4. Installed and commissioned 20-meter monopole high mast lighting in the municipality
 - 3 high mast flood lights at Mbale town
 - 3 high mast flood lights at Chavakali town
 - 2 high mast flood lights at Majengo township
 - 1 high mast flood light at Mudete town
 - 1 high mast flood light at Kidundu
 - Conducted Environmental and social impact study and
 - Preliminary and detailed engineering design of Vihiga municipality access roads, footpaths and flood water drains at Majengo, Mbale, Chavakali and Mudete Urban centers

Madam Speaker,

The main challenges the department is facing are;

1. Stringent World Bank conditions regarding project implementation
2. Late disbursement of World Bank's Urban Development Grant (UDG) and Urban Institutional Grant (UIG) funds
3. Lack of experienced and qualified staff

To address the above challenges, we plan to recruit more qualified staff with the technical capacity to handle the technical work of the department.

Madam Speaker,

In line with the President's Big Four agenda of the National Government, Vihiga County entered into an MoU with the State Department for Housing and Urban Development for development of 2,000 affordable housing units in Vihiga.

To that effect, the County government through the department has collaborated with the National Housing Cooperation (NHC) to bring this project to fruition. So far, both the State Department for Housing and HFC have been shown the available sites in Vihiga County where the projects can be implemented. We are also seeking joint venture partnership with the private sector for the project.

Madam Speaker,

The department has embarked on the formulation of the following bills and policies:

1. Vihiga County Physical Planning Bill - draft stage
2. The Vihiga County Street naming Policy - Draft stage
3. Vihiga County Land Use Policy - Draft stage
4. Vihiga County Spatial Data Infrastructure Policy - Draft stage
5. Vihiga County Housing Policy - Draft stage
6. Vihiga County Address system Bill - Draft Stage

7. ENVIRONMENT, WATER, ENERGY AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Madam Speaker,

Under the department of Environment, the County Government of Vihiga planned a total of 50 projects with a budget of KES 172 million. During the financial year under review, 38 projects worth KES 61 million were completed and paid for. This represents 36% absorption rate. The remaining 12 projects valued at KES 86 million are still ongoing.

The department undertook well over 40 development projects with majority falling under ward projects and others directly by the department as flagship projects. Notable achievements are as follows:

1. Vihiga Cluster water project (Belgium water project)
 - a. Maseno Water Project is 90% complete. The water treatment plant is complete with over 90% civil works done. Elevated steel water Tanks at Ebusakami, Emmunwa and Kima Mission Hospital are ready. Laying of distribution pipes is ongoing.
 - b. Kaimosi water project is 95% complete. Most of the civil works are complete. The Shamakhokho elevated steel water tank is complete.
 - c. Lunyerere/Mbale water project is 60% complete due to the late commencement of works brought about by the delayed acquisition of land. Distribution pipeline is yet to be installed.

Installation of the solar farms at these facilities has been delayed due to the delayed tax exemption on imported solar equipment and facilities. Once delivery of these equipment is done, the entire Belgium water project will be on course for commissioning in June 2020.

2. All ward development projects (mainly water springs) were implemented to completion as planned and most contractors paid except a few that had documentation issues.
3. The department of Environment continued to support Vihiga Water and Sanitation Company by paying their monthly electricity bills in all their five water facilities. We aim to have all county entities to be self-reliant for sustainable operations and uninterrupted service delivery.
4. South West Bunyore (Nang'oli) water project was revived during the reporting period as a flagship project. The construction of the project is on-going and when complete will serve over 50,000 people.
5. A notable feat by the department of Environment was the commencement of reforestation of Maragoli hills. I led the department to plant over five thousand (5,000) indigenous tree seedlings. We have identified volunteers who are environmental conservation enthusiasts to spearhead nurturing of the planted trees and see to it that the tree cover is restored on Maragoli hills.
6. Environment day celebration was held on 5th June 2019 at Gilwadzi in South Maragoli and about 2,500 bamboo tree seedlings were planted on Maragoli hills on that day, 2,000 bamboo tree seedlings were planted in Emukhuya Maseno and 1,355 seedlings issued to 20 Vocational training centers.
7. 5 students and instructors from Vocational Training centers have been trained and certified on bamboo tree planting and technology in partnership with International Network for Bamboo and Rattan (INBAR).
8. Garbage collection in our market centers towns has considerably improved despite of many challenges including lack of dumpsites, rampant littering and inadequate transport.
9. The department has acquired land for waste management in Luanda South. Once the land transaction is complete, the 6.9 acres piece of land will host a waste management and sorting center. The facility will have an organic fertilizer line and recycling line for plastic and glass products.

Madam Speaker,

1. For the first time in the history of this County, I appointed and gazetted the Vihiga County Environment Committee in line with applicable laws. The members of the Committee have been trained and ready to work. Their main agenda is to consider all matters relating to sustainable water management; mining; climate change; environment management and conservation; forestry; natural resources; pollution and waste management.
2. Chief officer for environment was recruited during the reporting period.

Madam Speaker,

Landscapes Conservation and Livelihoods Improvement (LaCoLi) is a Project funded by the European Union. Vihiga County will receive a grant of KES 80 million to reclaim, rehabilitate and restore degraded landscapes in Maragoli Hills. The project proposal has been approved by the European Union and implementation of the same will commence once the work plans are ready and approved.

Madam Speaker,

Most miners in Vihiga County are operating illegally. It has been established that neither the National Ministry of Mining and Petroleum nor the County Government have granted permits or authority for mining activity in the county.

To that effect, the state department of Mining and Petroleum has issued a moratorium on all mining activities in Vihiga County due to the adverse environmental degradation brought about by the activity.

The county government supports mining as an economic activity and revenue stream, however all mining activities must be within the set laws and regulations. We have engaged NEMA for an Environment Impact Assessment in areas with Mining activity and we urgently urge the Ministry to establish and gazette Artesian Gold Mining Association that will be responsible for coordination of gold mining activities in the County.

Madam Speaker,

The county Government acquired land for the establishment of Granite processing and value addition factory at Emwatsi, West Bunyore ward, Emuhaya Sub-county. The land was availed to the state department of Mining and Petroleum. The ministry was expected to commence on the construction of the factory after conducting feasibility study.

However, to date nothing has been done despite of several investors showing interest to invest in the same. My administration is aggressively following this matter with the state Ministry.

Madam Speaker,

The following Policies and bills were prepared by the department:

1. Vihiga County Climate Change Policy 2019 - approved
2. Vihiga County Forest Management Policy 2019 - approved
3. Vihiga County Solid Waste Management Policy 2019 - Going for public participation
4. Vihiga County Agroforestry Management Policy 2019 - Going for public participation
5. Vihiga County environment Policy 2019 - Going for public participation

Vihiga County Climate Change Fund Act 2019 is already in place. Thanks to the expedient approval of the same by this honourable assembly. The Vihiga County Climate Change Fund Regulations are ready and approved.

With the enactment of the law and regulations, the county is now eligible for grants from the National Climate Change Fund at the Treasury and from other development partners

Madam Speaker,

The department of Environment has experienced the following challenges;

1. Lack of experienced and qualified staff
2. Inadequate funding
3. Attitude of our people on environment and water
4. Gold mining challenges

8. TRADE, INDUSTRY, TOURISM AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Madam Speaker,

Under the department of Trade, my administration planned a total of 37 projects with a budget of KES 56 million. During the financial year under review, 13 projects worth KES 15 million were completed and paid, which is 29 % absorption rate. The remaining 24 projects valued at KES 39 million are ongoing.

Madam Speaker,

During the reporting period, the department achieved the following:

1. Creation of the legal framework to regulate the functions of the department. The following Acts have been enacted under the department;
 - a. Vihiga Trade and Market Act 2019
 - b. Trade and Enterprises Fund Act 2019 - which has seen the government disburse enterprise loans worth KES 35 million to various businesses and individuals in the County; and
 - c. Vihiga Weights and Measures Act 2019.

The following bills and policies have also been developed and are due for submission to this Honourable County assembly: -

1. The Bodaboda policy;
2. Vihiga Outdoor advertisement bill;
3. Vihiga County Investment policy;
4. Vihiga County Entrepreneurship Policy; and
5. Vihiga County Tourism and marketing Policy.

Madam Speaker,

To improve the management and business environment of our markets, the following has been achieved;

1. Conducted elections in Esibuye, Mbale and Majengo markets;
2. Enhanced market cleanliness by outsourcing garbage collection and recruitment of cleaners;
3. Recruited and rebranded revenue collectors and market cleaners hence making a major contribution in meeting the revenue collection target.
4. Installed a number of solar lights;
5. Fenced markets such as Lunyerere, Angoya, Standkisa and Emanyinya;
6. Constructed latrines in Muhudu, Luanda, Boyani, Chavakali and renovation of Mudete stock market latrines.
7. The construction of the famous Luanda Omena Market in Luanda is finally nearing completion.

Madam Speaker,

The bodaboda form an important sector of our economy. My administration recognizes this fact; and that is why a lot of effort and attention has been given to the industry to bring order, improve working environment and increase revenue collection from the riders.

The department funded the training of 1,200 bodaboda riders, issued them 1,595 Driving Licenses and 900 helmets. The County has also constructed to completion 25 Bodaboda sheds across the County.

Also 9 modern market stalls were constructed in the following markets:

1. Banja market
2. Emabungo market
3. Mwichio market
4. Depo market in Luanda South
5. Ekwanda Market
6. Shiru Market
7. Cheptulu Market
8. Gisambai Market
9. Kilingili Market, and
10. Ipali Market

Madam Speaker,

The department has also planned to complete and operationalize markets that were built under the Economic stimulus program. The following are planned for completion:

1. Wemilabi economic stimulus market
2. Majengo economic stimulus market
3. Chavakali economic stimulus market

Gambogi Market is under construction by the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) funded by the World Bank. The construction of sheds at the market is ongoing although at a very slow pace.

9. ADMINISTRATION AND COODINATION OF COUNTY AFFAIRS

Madam Speaker,

The department of Public Service is generally a service department. Under this department, a total of 5 development projects with a budget of KES 133 million were planned. During the financial year under review, 4 projects worth KES 28 million were completed and paid which is 21 % absorption rate. One project valued at KES 75 million, which entails the construction of a data center, is ongoing. The department is overseeing the implementation of the DPM Report and all the human resource policies.

Key Achievements under the department include;

1. Development of reporting template for Ward activities/projects
2. Implementation of performance contracting in the County Government of Vihiga.
3. Successfully conducted/coordinated the 5th County dialogue forum
4. Organized Madaraka Day and Mashujaa Day celebrations.

Madam Speaker,

Human resource and staff establishment gaps continue to be a major concern in the County Public Service. My administration is not relenting in creating order and making the public service lean and responsive to the needs of the people of Vihiga who have given us this mandate. The following are some of the major challenges the county government of Vihiga experienced during the reporting period:

1. Wage bill

We still have challenges due to the uncoordinated employment of staff from casual to contract without a clearly defined and managed process. The County Public Service Board (CPSB) has been recruiting and employing contrary to Public Service procedures. The board has been recruiting and appointing contrary to the County Government Act section 59. This establishes the Board as an agent of the County Government and the employer. They were no controls, a deficiency that led to the irregular employment of staff in the department of health service recently. I sincerely hope that the new board, that will soon be assuming office, will urgently resolve the myriad problems caused by the previous board.

2. Transparency and accountability

Madam speaker,

Corruption is a national disaster and has significantly contributed to the underdevelopment of our country and counties. My campaign slogan was

Maendeleo bila ufisadi, therefore since my assumption of office as a governor, I have continued to strive to fight corruption which was rampant in the county. Since corruption has become a way of life in Kenya, I must admit that we are far away from its eradication although there is increasing decline in the vice in the county. To fast track the fight against corruption in the county, my administration invited EACC in November 2018 to undertake corruption risk assessment with an aim of identifying areas of governance systems that are more prone to corruption and prescribing remedial measures. The EACC submitted the report to the executive in August 2019 and we have prepared and submitted to EACC the implementation framework of the governance systems that were identified as being weak and highly prone to corruption practices in our county. We have committed to EACC to submit monthly progress reports on remedial measures we have put in place to address the same. Equally, EACC has committed to periodically audit our governance systems to ensure that we are following their recommendations. I therefore appeal to the assembly, Vihiga County leadership and the people of Vihiga County in general to join me in the fight against corruption by giving us information on any corruption practices in my administration and to refrain from promoting corruption by influencing our officers for provision of any services including employment. Further, they should heed to our warning particularly through press releases where we have warned people to refrain from giving bribes particularly in the cases during recruitment for employment and award of tenders.

3. Administration Coordination

We want the Ward to be the center of government activities. Socio-economic development and environmental activities of the county government will be run and coordinated from the lowest unit of governance in the county. As such, ward administrators will be empowered to ensure delivery of services.

- 4. Public participation** is the pillar of devolution and my administration has established a fully-fledged directorate to coordinate the same. We have planned to take planning to the lowest unit of administration. However, the people of Vihiga county need to quickly understand that the spirit of public participation is to ensure development planning originates willingly from the people. As such, the notion that public participation forums are platforms for making money is misguided and unhealthy. As a people, we need to change our mindset and put Vihiga first over our self-interest.

5. Human Resource Management Information System (HRMIS)

We have a big challenge in the management of human resource, job responsibilities appraisals, appointments and deployment. To address these issues, we have planned to procure Human Resource Management Information System during 2019/2020 financial year.

Madam Speaker,

Performance management is legally prescribed through various sections of the County Government Act 2012 and the Public Finance Management Act 2012. In order to remain accountable and ensure the County meets and delivers on the set targets, we have instituted a performance-based management system in the County Government of Vihiga.

I have signed performance contracts with all the County Executive Committee Members who have in turn signed with their respective Chief Officers. As of 15th October 2019, Chief Officers had signed performance contracts with their directors.

Madam Speaker,

The Kenya Devolution Support Program (KDSP) is a four-year program of USD 200M for the entire country financed by the World Bank to support capacity building and technical assistance at the county level - building governance systems for devolution.

Due to poor management and use of these funds, Vihiga County since inception of the program has always been rated below average. However, since 2018/19 financial year, we have been able to use the program to build capacity in human resource management systems, finance systems, asset inventory management system and procurement management systems. We were evaluated on performance in August 2019. We are looking forward for positive evaluation since, for the first time since the start of devolution we got a qualified audit opinion for the 2017/18 financial year.

A positive evaluation would qualify us to receive a grant of over KES 100 million for our projects.

10.FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Madam speaker,

During the reporting period, the department of finance and economic planning successfully prepared the required financial documents as per the set fiscal deadlines.

For the first time since the inception of devolution, we have a County Budget and Economic Forum (CBEF) in place. We have proactive people as members, who continue to play a major role in the budget process and prioritization of projects to be implemented.

We also have the County Audit Committee in place. The committee is yet to become fully operational. I will be realigning the reporting structure of the committee and the Internal Audit Unit to be directly reporting to my office; for proper operations and execution of the audit functions.

In order to surpass our set revenue collection target, full automation in revenue collection is the way to go. For effective actualization of this, we need a data center. This financial year, we commenced construction of our data center at the County Headquarters. Once the construction is completed, we shall equip the center with servers and other ICT hardware and software that will enable us automate revenue collection.

Preparation of County quarterly reports and County annual reports are statutory requirement as per the Public Finance Management Act. However, departments have not been doing very well in availing these statutory documents to this honourable Assembly.

I wish to assure this Assembly that I will ensure that these reports are submitted on timely basis.

Madam Speaker,

Vihiga County Government does not have an Assets management register. We must know how many assets we have if we have to establish the value of the county. So many assets have not be registered. We are putting in place an asset management register unit. We are also acquiring Asset management software to manage in this function. Valuation of county assets is also called for as part of asset management.

Madam Speaker,

The question of pending bills remains an important issue in my administration. In my address last year, I highlighted the historical background of pending bills and the steps that we had taken to address the same. As you are aware the President directed the Auditor General to carry out an audit of all pending bills in the 47 counties. The Auditor General conducted the audit and prepared a report which guided the first phase of payment of pending bills. However, to assist the process, creditors availed supporting documents as proof of delivery of goods and services to ensure that only credible bills are paid.

The paying of pending bills has to be staggered so that it does not consume the entire fiscal budget. As of today, my administration was able to pay KES 57 million of the historical pending bills; the rest of payments will be staggered over the next financial years, subject to availability of funds.

KEY PROJECTS EARMARKED FOR THE 2019-2020 FINANCIAL YEAR

Madam Speaker,

The 2019/20 fiscal year budget is ready for implementation. Development projects to be implemented this financial year have been highlighted in this financial year's Annual Development Plan (ADP); prepared from development vision as is highlighted in our 2018-2022 County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP).

Vihiga County is projected to receive KES 4,402,000,000 this financial year as equitable share of revenue raised nationally; with KES 192,086,250 as the projected own source revenue to be collected this financial year. Our total budget estimate for 2019/20 financial year is KES 5,556,670,244.

It is worth noting that, 2018/19 financial year we grew our own source revenue by 24% collecting a total of KES 178.18 million against a target of KES 153 million.

Madam Speaker,

This financial year, my administration is putting a lot of effort to complete development of our markets and increase access to clean piped water to households in Vihiga County. This is the year to operationalize Maseno, Lunyerere and Kaimosi water projects. Main water supply conduits are being installed as we speak to major water storage and supply lines. There is an urgent need to provide funding for water piping at ward level.

Promotion of smart agriculture, agribusiness and development of agricultural value chains is a sector of focus under our agriculture programmes this financial year. As mentioned earlier in this address, through National Agricultural Rural Inclusive Growth Programme (NARIGP) and the Agriculture Sector Support Development Program (ASDP), the department of agriculture is focusing on promotion and commercialization of the four priority agricultural value chains namely: - Dairy farming, Local Chicken, Tissue Banana and Local vegetables.

Revival of cooperative movements in Vihiga County will minimize our economy's over reliance on subsistence agriculture.

We have come a long way in turning around the state of medical services in our health facilities across the county. This financial year, we are keen on finishing all pending health projects and ensuring an all year-round availability of medical supplies for better care and services to our people.

The priorities for the 2019/2020 fiscal year are:

1. Water – operationalization of the Belgium water/Vihiga Cluster water project (Maseno, Lunyerere and Kaimosi water projects). Funding for piping to homesteads will be factored under ward-based projects.

All other water schemes in the entire county are planned to be operationalized this financial year, subject of availability of adequate funds.

2. Agriculture
 - Operationalization of NARIGP program which is worth KES 535 million.
 - Revival of Cooperative movements and promotion of aquaculture.
3. KUSP
 - completion of beautification of Mbale, Majengo, Chavakali and Mudete towns.
 - Installation of street lights and high mast flood lights.
 - Provision of drainage and sewerage facilities and construction of roads to bitumen standards.
 - Completion of urban planning and spatial plans for the Vihiga Municipality, Luanda and Kaimosi Cheptulu complex.
4. Development of Market Infrastructure
 - Improvement of market drainage systems,
 - Construction of market stalls in various markets,
 - Installation of high mast and ordinary lighting in various markets.
 - Operationalization of Gambogi market, Luanda omena market and Chavakali fresh produce market,
5. Road maintenance
 - Kenya Roads Board funds and County own revenue will focus on road maintenance in the entire county.
 - We have planned to deploy road inspectors in every sub-county.
 - Road maintenance will be labour-based; creating employment opportunities for the locals around the roads under maintenance.
6. Construction, renovation and equipping of VTCs that were not factored in the 2018/19 plans and budget.

Youth Programmes

Madam Speaker,

During the reporting period (2018/19 FY), it had been planned and budgeted to construct a talent center. However, this project was not implemented due to various challenges. The same project has been budgeted for 2019/2020 financial year (KES 10M), and I am very hopeful this time round the project will be realized. During the 2018/19 financial year we had also planned to establish a Youth Desk in the department of Gender, Youth, Culture, Sports and Social Services, to coordinate youth affairs in the county, but this was also not realized due to disagreements among youth groups. We have planned to realize this during this financial year. During this financial year, we have planned and budgeted KES 10 million for the construction of Youth Talent Center; we shall also collaborate with various development partners to convene a youth investment conference that will showcase what the youth in Vihiga are doing in terms of job creation through investment.

In this regard, we encourage the youth to apply loans from the Trade and Enterprise Fund and NARIGP to finance their business enterprises and startups.

Women Programmes

Madam Speaker,

During the reporting period, various women groups across the county were empowered to engage in agribusiness when they received dairy cattle, local chicken, dairy goats and indigenous vegetable seedlings from the department of Agriculture. Various groups were supported to attend Conferences where they exhibited and marketed their products. For example, they attended the Lake Region Economic Bloc Investment Conference in Bomet and the Annual Devolution Conference in Kirinyaga. During this financial year, preference will be given to individual Mama Mboga traders and women groups to access to loans from the Trade and Enterprise Fund. The OttichiloCare maternal care programme was started to minimize the high mother mortality rates during pregnancy and child birth. Since the commencement 15,000 women have benefited from the programme, and the mortality rate has declined from 553 per 100,000 in 2017 to 121 per 100,000 in 2019.

Under this programme, we have recruited Community Health Workers in the entire county to provide continuous education and advice to the pregnant women to attend Antenatal clinics as required. Last and not least, during 2019/2020 financial year, we have planned to directly involve the nominated women MCAs in monitoring the success of this program and creating more awareness for the same.

People Living with Disability

Madam Speaker,

During the reporting period, there were no projects or programs that were initiated targeting specifically people living with disability. This was because there was no specific budget and there no legal framework. However, during the reporting period the department of social services funded the attendance of selected people living with disability in Vihiga County to attend a national disability conference that was held in Kisumu. I wish to take this opportunity to most sincerely congratulate the members of the County Assembly living with disability, Hon Mandela and Hon. Mayodi, for spearheading the formulation and enactment of the Vihiga County Disability Act 2019, which I happily assented to immediately it was approved by the assembly. Vihiga became the third county in the country to enact law on disability. With the act in place, I have instructed the department of social services to create vote heads for disability programs in their budget as spelled out in the act. I am happy to report that in the 2019/2020 financial year, the department has budgeted KES 5 million for Gender, Disability and mainstreaming.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Madam Speaker,

Based on our performance for 2018/19 financial year, it is apparent that if the current enabling environment is maintained and the above challenges are resolved; we have a high potential of fully implementing my manifesto through the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) 2018-2022 which was endorsed by the people of Vihiga County through a public participation process.

I therefore call upon this Assembly, the Vihiga County leadership and the people of the county in general to focus and support the implementation of development projects and programmes for this financial year and other years to come before 2022.

In this regard, I passionately appeal to the leadership and the people of Vihiga County to put aside the politics of clanism and early campaigns; and support my administration to achieve its development agenda. My administration welcomes constructive criticism and engagement on all leadership, development and financial management issues in the county. As per Article 35 of the constitution of Kenya, we are obligated as a public entity to provide information to any individual who requests the same through the prescribed procedures; on any issues regarding implementation of projects, financial management, corruption issues among others.

We have many communication platforms and channels for disseminating and engagement between the people and the County Government. These channels include: County website (www.vihiga.go.ke), social media, mainstream media channels and suggestion boxes. Specifically, information regarding county financial information (annual budgets and reports), projects tender information, project progress and implementation reports, is readily available on our county website. It is therefore saddening and demoralizing when social media users, who mainly are the elite of our society, make outrageous and unsubstantiated allegations and propaganda on social media about the affairs of the county contrary what is actually happening on the ground. Even when we issue press statements on particular matters of public interest, they still go ahead and rubbish the information and continue propagating their own narrative on the issue. I therefore appeal to the public to verify information shared from non-official sources before sharing the same on social media platforms.

Madam speaker,

Peace and security are the necessary pillars for human development. As per our constitution, security is not devolved, it is a function of the National Government. However, it is the responsibility of each one of us to ensure that security is upheld for the benefit of everybody. Equally, my administration cannot ignore security issues because they directly affect the operation and success of the county government and peace in the county. To enhance security and peace in the county, my administration is working very

closely with the Office of the County Commissioner and county arms of security to ensure that security in the county is maintained. However, we have been experiencing increasing incidences of theft, rape, gender-based violence and murder. I therefore call upon all the leaders and the people of Vihiga County to unite with the County and National governments in fighting these vices. In particular, am calling upon religious leaders to use their position and opportunities to preach and promote peace and harmony among their congregations and communities. I also call upon the Vihiga Elders to come out strongly to condemn those propagating clanism and marginalization, and instead promote cohesion and integration of communities living in Vihiga County. I wish to thank the elders coordinated by Hon. Fred Omido, who have been on the forefront in spearheading peace and harmony among the leaders of Vihiga County Government.

Madam Speaker,

I cannot end this address without thanking and recognizing all those people and institutions that have been very instrumental in supporting my administration to achieve what I have reported in this address today. In particular, I wish to thank the following:

1. The staff of the County Government of Vihiga
2. This County Assembly of Vihiga
3. The office of the County Commissioner
4. The Council of Governors
5. The National Government
6. The Development Partners – particularly; The World Bank, UNICEF, DANIDA, Nutrition International, AHADI-USAID, GIZ, Ipas, FAO-UN, Esri, Kenya Literature Bureau (KLB), PATH International

Madam Speaker,

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 transform our County to a socio-economically empowered society. Secondly, I wish to thank the people of Vihiga County and their leaders who have faith in me and who have tirelessly continued to support me even in times when my leadership is under severe attack and criticism. Further, I wish to thank the religious leaders in the County, who have faith in me and continue to pray for me to have courage and wisdom to lead and transform the lives of the people of Vihiga County.

Finally, I am committed to my vision to transform Vihiga into model and prosperous County in Kenya. With your support, this vision is achievable.

God Bless you all, God bless Vihiga County

Thank You!

