



**KEYNOTE ADDRESS BY THE GOVERNOR  
H.E. ANNE WAIGURU (O.G.W)  
ON THE OCCASION OF JAMHURI DAY CELEBRATIONS HELD AT KIRINYAGA  
UNIVERSITY, KIRINYAGA COUNTY**

**12<sup>th</sup> DECEMBER 2018**

---

**The Deputy Governor,  
The Senator of Kirinyaga County,  
The County Commissioner,  
The Speaker of the County Assembly,  
The Leader of the Majority in the County Assembly,  
The Member of County Assembly of the Ward hosting us today,  
Elected leaders present today,  
Distinguished guests present,  
Ladies and Gentlemen, ....**

**Hamjambo,  
God is Good, (all the time) and all the time, (God is Good)**

It gives me great pleasure to address you on the occasion of Kenya's 55<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration of independence. This is an important milestone in our growth as nation. Today, we remember the sacrifices made for the freedoms we enjoy as a sovereign nation, the fruitfulness that is found within the borders of this country, and our common identity and shared patriotism as citizens of Kenya.

This is also a very historic occasion for us as a County. 55 years ago, in 1963, Kirinyaga District was created out of the larger western part of Embu District and today we exist as one of the 47 counties under the devolved system of government. It is therefore fitting that we take time to pay tribute to significant events in our national life that have made us who we are today.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

**[Reflecting on Our History as Nation]**

As we reflect back on our journey as a nation, there have been many events that have tested us, but we have always overcome. The one thing that has been constant for us as Kenyans, is that God has surely been for us and never against us. We have experienced growth and progress in different areas as a testament to our resilience as a people and God's faithfulness over us.

In Kikuyu we say, "*Mûrimi tiwe mûrei*" In other words, he who tills the land is not necessarily he who eats the harvest. In deed today, we are enjoying the fruits of independence hard won by others who paid the ultimate price for it. Their sacrifice was not in vain. From a country that inherited a constitution crafted at the table of colonial powers, we have matured as an independent democracy to be architects of our own constitution that has given us devolution as a progressive form of governance.

**Ladies and Gentlemen,**

**[Justification for the Mountain Cities Vision 2032]**

The people of Kirinyaga decisively voted for development and made their expectations clear that they wanted a government that works for them. As a government, we embarked on delivering on the promises we made to the people of Kirinyaga as soon as we came into office. However, beyond keeping the promise of

short-term gains, we also took on the challenge of addressing Kirinyaga County's prosperity through a long-term vision for development that will ensure our children and our children's children will enjoy the harvest of our hard work.

In the same way our founding fathers sacrificed themselves for the sake of a brighter future for this nation, we too envisioned a brighter future for Kirinyaga and came up with a plan that will lay the foundation for a sustainable and prosperous county for future generations.

On April 18<sup>th</sup>, 2018, this Plan was born after the County Assembly of Kirinyaga ratified the Mountain Cities Sessional Paper 2032 that officially became known as the Mountain Cities Vision 2032. This is an important step in our history as a County as the Mountain Cities Vision document has guided and informed all our development activities as part of fulfilling the broader mission which is to ensure every resident of Kirinyaga is able to achieve their fullest potential in an environment of dignity and well-being.

Allow me to summarize the main goals envisioned by the Mountain Cities Vision and how we have worked to achieve them in the past one year. Under the Mountain Cities blueprint for development we set out to create more jobs, improve access to affordable and quality healthcare, increase income through better productivity and markets for farm goods, improve urban planning and infrastructure so that our land is put to better use and greater productivity, and enhance skills and knowledge capacity for our youth so that they are empowered to work.

**Fellow Kenyans,**

**Health: (Improve access to affordable and quality healthcare)**

In less than a year in office, we built a fully functional x-ray unit at Sagana Hospital, expanded Baricho and Kianyaga Hospitals by building a new male ward and mother and child unit respectively. Kerugoya Sub-County Hospital which had never been renovated since it was constructed before independence has been extensively renovated. Hospital facilities were upgraded to include a fully functional eye Unit, a renal unit where patients can now receive dialysis treatment without cost, CT Scan facility, and an Outpatient department that has also been upgraded to better serve patients in an environment of dignity. We have also improved service delivery

within Kerugoya Hospital by fully automating patient services through a digitized hospital management system. As one elderly lady recently described her visit to Kerugoya Hospital to me; she said, “*Nilishindwa kama hii ni hospitali ama ni benki*”

### **Ladies & Gentlemen,**

This is only the beginning. Our goal is to transform Kerugoya Sub-County Hospital into a Level 5 Referral hospital that includes a medical training college, modern diagnostic facilities with a 500-patient bed capacity that will be known as a leading institution in healthcare serving the entire region.

In becoming the Health and Wellness capital of our Country, I recognize that there is need to make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all levels of society. This is also one of the key goals of the National Development Agenda known as the Big 4 which targets Universal Healthcare for all Kenyans by 2022. Towards these ends, my government launched a household census to register over 120,000 households under the NHIF program so that citizens can sustainably benefit from continued provision of quality health services. To date, over 70,000 households have been mapped and with a near target completion of the exercise by early 2019

### **Education: (Enhance Skills and Knowledge Capacity for youth so that they are empowered to work)**

In a bid to improve the quality of learning for our students, my government has invested in the construction of new classrooms and the rehabilitation of existing infrastructure in our polytechnics. ECD Kiriko Primary classrooms are complete and already in use. We have constructed two new classrooms in ECD Kiumbu Primary school which have also been furnished with equipment and learning materials to ensure that our Early Learners are highly motivated to engage with education and a love for learning. We have completed dormitory blocks at Nyangati and Kaitheri and have on-going construction of dormitory, workshop and ablution facilities at Mucii Wa Urata, Kimweas, Kiambwe and Ndiriti Polytechnics. Our goal is to ensure that we empower more youth to take up jobs and support our vision to be the leading agro-processing and manufacturing hub in the country by helping them acquire skills needed to support our economic growth.

At this point, I would like to congratulate our 2018 KCPE Candidates on the excellent performance in the just concluded primary school examinations. Kirinyaga County was the top performing County in Mt. Kenya region, a feat that we should all take great pride in and strive to maintain.

**Ladies & Gentlemen,**

**(Increase Income and Productivity for farm outputs)**

### **Agriculture**

Agriculture is the mainstay of our economy as a county. Kirinyaga is famously known as the “Food Basket of the Capital of Kenya” We have the capacity to be the Food Basket of the continent and indeed the world if we improve our yields, embrace innovation in our farming methods and invest in direct markets for our agricultural produce. Our efforts over the past one year have been primarily focused on helping our farmers secure their produce and gain access to markets. In a bid to boost rice production, we took measures such as addressing the quelea birds menace in Mwea to help reduce rice harvest losses. We also improved our irrigation methods and as we speak, our rice farmers are enjoying a bumper harvest this season.

Beyond preventative measures, we have sought to boost production by issuing 30,000 coffee seedlings to farmers at Inoi Co-operative Society and setting up additional coffee nurseries at Kamweti Agricultural Training College so that farmers can readily access coffee seedlings. We have sought to enhance farmers’ capacity for greater agricultural output in dairy and tea by installing 3 milk cooling facilities and refurbishing the Kiamarewa Tea Buying Center which is almost complete. In addition to this, we have also conducted extension services to farmers on Good Agricultural Practices (GAP) standards so as to improve their produce competitiveness for other markets.

Coffee remains the major focus of our efforts as it holds one of the highest economic earning potential to transform our economy as a county and as a nation. In September this year, Kirinyaga County was honored to host the first International Coffee Day Celebration. We were also the first county to host the Cabinet Secretary for Trade, and Co-operative Development Hon. Peter Munya as part of the Taskforce on Coffee Revitalization mandated by the President to find lasting solutions to the challenges

of the coffee sector. Our farmers in Kirinyaga County had an opportunity to personally present their views to the task force. The importance of these events should not be lost on us. This focus on Kirinyaga County shows that we have earned the attention of the nation and the world as can be proved by the international awards our coffee farmers' co-operatives have won. For this reason, we have committed much time and effort into promoting our high value crops such as coffee in international markets with a view to establishing direct market access for our farmers.

## **Trade**

Closer home, we have successfully expanded market access for our small-scale farmers. In one year, we have ear-marked 5 local markets for development. Two markets are already complete and fully functional at Kiamutugu and Wanguru. Works in three more markets, at Kagio, Kutus and Makutano are almost complete and ready to be launched soon. I would like to assure the people of Kirinyaga that we are closely monitoring and supervising these projects to ensure that contractors deliver to the letter on the proposed projects and where contractors fail to meet their obligations, we will hold them to account.

## **(Improve Urban Planning & Infrastructure)**

### **Public Works**

Immediately we came into office, the County Government prioritized the construction of roads by acquiring equipment that would fast track public works. We are among the best resourced Counties in the country in terms of heavy equipment with 10 brand new trucks, 5 Graders, 2 excavators, 2 Rollers, a crane, a back hoe, a prime earth mover, wheel loader and water bowser. This equipment has been put to good use and today we have completed the grading of close to 400km of road out of a target of 900km. We have also graveled and murramed over 110km out of a target of 217km. Current works are ongoing for public transport terminals at Kagio, Kutus and Kianyaga which will be launched soon.

### **Land (Industrial Park)**

In a bid to make our land more productive for the benefit of all Kirinyaga's people, we re-possessed over 250 acres that had been illegally acquired at Thigirici in Sagana

and demarcated this public land as the site of the Thigirici Industrial park that will house our light manufacturing and agro-processing industries.

Already, we have identified investors who are willing and ready to partner with us in this. The County Government has signed agreements with the Industrial and Commercial Development Corporation (ICDC). We have also set up the Kirinyaga Investment Development Authority (KIDA), an institution that will spearhead investment promotion in Kirinyaga County.

Our ultimate vision is that each sub-county in Kirinyaga will host a well-planned city that offers unique investment opportunities. Ndia Sub-County will be our industrial city as it houses our industrial park in Sagana. Gichugu sub-county will be our resort city that offers tourism due to its proximity to the “Gateway of Mount. Kenya” together with potential for other resort attractions offered by Thiba dam once its complete. Mwea will be our Green City where we will offer renewable energy solutions for our economy and Kirinyaga Central which is our designated health and wellness capital, hence our focus on upgrading Kerugoya Hospital.

**Fellow Kenyans,**

**(Create more jobs by empowering women and youth through the Wezesha Program)**

**Gender, Environment, Youth and Sports**

The Wezesha program is a self-empowerment initiative that ensures that women and youth are mainstreamed into the County’s development agenda. Under the Wezesha program we have not only identified women and youth groups but also began to match them to economic empowerment initiatives that they can undertake with support from government. Some of the projects include the creation of macadamia and avocado tree seedling nurseries for which site handover has already been completed, the Kiaga Animal Feeds project for youth which is awaiting approvals from the Kenya Bureau of Standards and the Wezesha Mama linen project where women are empowered to make linen items, such as bed-sheets, curtains and patient garments for use in our county hospitals.

### **Addressing the issues inherited from previous regime:**

I am aware that there has been concern from various quarters about stalled projects from the past regime. Let me be clear that we as a government intend to fulfill all our development obligations to the people of Kirinyaga regardless of which regime initiated the project. However, as responsible stewards of the limited resources committed towards development, there is need to first audit projects to determine what has been spent and what is required, pending project completion. This does not mean that investing in development must be put on hold pending completion of the audit. On the contrary, government must continue to work for the good of all people regardless of which regime is in power.

One of the important steps we have taken to limit waste of time and resources in project implementation is by investing in a project monitoring system that will not only help us monitor project budgets, but also monitor and report on project implementation according to set standards. This will ensure that our limited resources for development are put to the best possible use in the shortest time possible.

**Ladies and Gentlemen, as I conclude,**

### **Devolution Conference in 2019**

Kirinyaga County has been accorded the great honor of hosting the 6<sup>th</sup> Annual Devolution Conference in March 2019. This is a great opportunity for us to show the nation the very best of what our county has to offer. Our government is committed to ensuring the local economy fully benefits from hosting this major national event. I therefore call on all people, stakeholders and the various arms of government to engage each other and consult widely with each other so that we host the most memorable conference ever seen in this nation. I therefore call upon the good-will of all people in Kirinyaga to work together in ensuring this County lives up to the great honor and dignity that it is truly worthy of.

**Thank you very much**

**God bless you and God bless Kirinyaga County**