REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 11th October, 2022

The House met at the Assembly Chambers at 2.30 p.m.

[The Speaker (Hon. Lantano Nabaala) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

COMMENCEMENT OF ASSEMBLY HOUSE BUSINESS

Speaker: Hon. Members, Your Excellency, I would like to acknowledge the presence of visitors in the Speaker's gallery and Public gallery this afternoon. I therefore wish to recognize the following guest who are seated in the Speaker's Gallery.

1. The County Commission
2. Deputy County Commissioner
3. County Secretary
4. Staff of County Assembly and Executive and all other guests.

In our usual tradition of receiving and welcoming visitors to the County Assembly, I extend a warm welcome to them all. Hon. Members, it is my pleasure and privilege to welcome you to this first regular sitting of the County Assembly after swearing-in and a successful training which was necessary in order to help you undertake your constitutional mandate.

The House Business Committee will deliberate and submit the House a calendar which will definitely set out the dates for regular sittings and recesses to aid in planning and scheduling of business of the County Assembly.

THIRD COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA HOUSE LEADERSHIP

Hon. Members, before we proceed with the core business of today's sittings as listed in the Order Paper, I take this opportunity to inform the House that vide letter dated 11th October, 2022, the Majority Party submitted the names of Members to serve in the Majority Party Membership pursuant to Standing Orders No. 19. The Members are as follows: -

1. Hon. John Gichuki Maina – County Assembly Majority Leader.
2. Hon. Irene Wachuka John – Deputy County Assembly Majority Leader.
3. Hon. Stephen Nderitu Kamau – County Assembly Majority Whip.
4. Hon. Nicholas Mwaniki Muturi – County Assembly Deputy Majority Whip

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Likewise, vide letter dated 6th October, 2022, the Minority Party submitted the names of Members to serve in the Minority Party Membership pursuant to Standing Orders No. 20(1). The Members are as follows: -

1. Hon. Sammy Parleto – County Assembly Minority Leader
2. Hon. Catherine Umija – County Assembly Minority Whip

Hon. Members, I take this opportunity to congratulate the Members for appointments to these high offices and assure them of the cooperation and support from the Office of the Speaker. I am confident that you will steer your respective parties and in turn the County Assembly in advancing a robust legislative oversight and representation agenda that will develop our county.

Hon. Members, in regards to the business before the House tomorrow, the County Assembly will consider the names of the Members to serve in the House Business Committee as specified under the Standing Order No. 151. The Committee is charged with responsibility of;

a. Preparing, and if necessary from time to time adjust the assembly calendar with approval of the assembly.

b. Monitoring and overseeing the implementation of the assembly business and programmes.

c. Implementation of the Standing Orders, respecting the scheduling or programming of the business of the assembly and the functioning of the committees of the assembly.

d. Determining the order in which the records of committees shall be debated in the Assembly.

e. Taking decision and issue directives and guidelines to prioritize or propose any business of the Assembly acting with the concurrence of the leader of the Majority Party or the leader of the Minority Party as the case may be.

f. Considering such matters as made from time to time arise in connection with the business of the Assembly and shall have and perform such powers and functions as are conferred on and ascribed to it by the Standing Orders or from time to time by the Assembly.

Consequently Hon. Members, I wish to notify you that in the business to be considered tomorrow, is the names of not less than two other Hon. Members to serve in the Committee on Selection in addition to the Members under Standing Order Number 152(1).

Hon. Members, Committee on Selection shall nominate Members to serve in the committee same for the membership of the House Business Committee and Committee on Appointment. This will enable the County Assembly to undertake the legislative and oversight role in the committees. Therefore Hon. Members, I urge the House Leadership to populate Members in the aforesaid committees. Thank you.

ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY THE GOVERNOR

Speaker: Hon. Members, Section 30 of the County Government Acts provides for the functions and responsibility of the County Governor which includes delivering the annual state of

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County Address, containing such matters as maybe specified in the County Legislation among others.

Further, Standing Order Number 21 provides for the Governor's Address on the opening of the new County Assembly. It states that Section 21;

(1) The Governor shall address the opening of each newly elected Assembly

(2) At the conclusion of the Governor's Address, the sitting shall stand suspended or adjourned as the Speaker may direct until such time or to such day as it may be specified by the Speaker.

Standing Order Number 24 (2) states that; *when delivering an address to the Assembly, the Governor shall be heard in silence and the address shall not be followed by any comment or question.*

With these few remarks I hereby invite H.E the Governor to address the opening of the third County Assembly.

SPEECH BY HIS EXCELLENCY H.E. HON. JOSHUA IRUNGU, THE GOVERNOR, LAIKIPIA COUNTY DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF THE THIRD COUNTY ASSEMBLY, TUESDAY, 11TH OCTOBER 2022, 2.30 PM.

Governor (Joshua Irungu): Mr. Speaker, I come here today cognizant of the fact that the hope of our County rests in greater part, with us the honourable men and women in this legislative House. We have the greatest power in our land; the power to shape the destiny of our county, the power to translate the dreams and hopes of our people into reality. A reality of food on the table of each household, healthcare and education on the door step of every community in a vibrant economy and with a place in it for everyone.

Yes, we, in this House, are the hope of our people. So, we meet on this occasion to mark the official opening of the 1st sitting of the 3rd County Assembly of Laikipia on the presumption that there is so much to be done, so much to be accomplished, and yet so little time to waste.

Mr. Speaker, during this address, I will share with our people through this Honourable House, the ambitious transformational agenda that my administration intends to undertake in making our great county, Laikipia, a model within the region and across the country.

Mr. Speaker, before I proceed with my address, let me ask the House to join me in sending sincere message of goodwill on behalf of the people of Laikipia to H.E. Dr. William Samoei arap Ruto and his able Deputy H.E. Rigathi Gachagua upon their election and subsequent swearing in as the 5th President and Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya.

Their election marks a new phase in Kenyan history whereby sons of peasants have ascended to the apex of the country's leadership. We are quite optimistic as a county that this administration is a breath of fresh air to the frosty relationship that has existed between the county and the National Government.

Mr. Speaker, may I also take this chance to congratulate all Honourable Members here present upon being elected as Members of the 3rd Laikipia County Assembly. You went to the electorates, spelt out to them your agenda, they believed in you and through the ballot they mandate you to be their representatives.

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I wish to reiterate that the people in your wards have placed their trust in you, so please represent them ably and never at any one time betray that trust. I also wish to congratulate other elected and nominated leaders who are now bestowed with a singular obligation of offering leadership to the people of Laikipia. For all those present here and in the Speaker's gallery, thank you for giving the occasion the decorum it deserves.

My maiden call to the Honourable Members in this Assembly is to deliberate and debate the business of the House with deep commitment in line with our democratic principles and accord invaluable legislative contributions for the sake of our people.

Mr. Speaker, the Clerk of the County Assembly and his staff similarly deserve commendation for the invaluable service they have continued to render to this House. I urge them to firmly stand with the Honourable Members as they get acquainted to the new environment.

So today, Mr. Speaker, I wish to emphasize on my sentiments during my inauguration that it is time for us to start afresh; a time to listen to one another, a time to hear one another, a time to always consult amongst ourselves and most important of all, a time when mutual respect must thrive in our midst. The bottom line will be our abiding belief that Laikipia can be a better place for all of us if we work towards achieving common goals.

Mr. Speaker, let me now go into the details of my address which will be an outline of my vision for a better Laikipia; a vision of a county that is united, prosperous and the pride of all. We aspire to build a strong and dynamic county that provides opportunities for improving the well-being of all our people and embodies values of socio-economic justice.

Mr. Speaker, in pursuing this vision, we are mindful that our society is not homogenous. There are those of our people that are struggling to make ends meet, others too are disadvantaged by reasons of gender or disability. Still, there are those who feel excluded by virtue of living on the margins of the society with limited access to education, health and other social amenities.

I am glad that we are part of a government that was elected largely on the Bottom-Up philosophy; a government that is committed in uplifting those at the base of the economic pyramid. It is for this reason that my administration will endeavour at not leaving anyone behind.

It is for this reason that my administration will endeavour at not leaving anyone behind. As government, our commitment is to make Laikipia a land of opportunity for all, a county on the move towards achieving prosperity for all and determined to secure the future of its people.

Mr. Speaker, allow me now to inform you that my vision is envisaged in the pre-election manifesto which was accorded a 70% approval by the people of Laikipia and which is built on 6 main pillars which include:

- Health care
- Water and sanitation
- Food security and wealth creation
- Renewable energy, roads infrastructure and urban development
- Trade, industrialization, Enterprise and urban development

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- Youth & Employment

Mr. Speaker, in our PLAN, which received an overwhelming support of the Laikipians, we have sought to restore and improve health services in partnership with the National Government. Our aim is to achieve 100% Universal Health Coverage (UHC) by 2027 (way before the global deadline of 2030) and focus on strong Human Resources for Health Program that will ensures that we have an empowered and well-motivated workforce needed for health services.

Mr. Speaker, our health sector suffered a great deal over the last five years due to poor decision making and reversed priorities. For instance, our top cream medical consultants were sacked more than two years ago by the then administration due to a labour dispute that would have been resolved without causing too much pain to our people.

The people of Laikipia overwhelmingly voted me in on the premise that I would reinstate the medical services to where they were and even improve on them. It is for this reason that upon my election, my first obligation was to hold candid dialogue with the Kenya Medical Union officials in a bid to reach a point of convergence for the long postponed industrial row.

Mr. Speaker, we made a bold move to reinstate all the doctors who were unfairly and illegally dismissed at a cost of Kshs.380 million in unpaid salary arrears. I am glad to bring to your knowledge that services at the Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital, that was most affected, have already resumed. The orthopaedic surgeries output has already doubled within few days of resumption. More of the services in Paediatrics, Pathology, Radiology, those that require a Physician, and many others will resume as the respective specialist doctors resume duties in the months of September and October 2022.

Plans to establish an Oncology Clinic at Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital are at a final stage. Currently, there is a team that is finalizing the remaining steps in regulatory compliance to ensure that we get licensed by the National Cancer Institute of Kenya to provide Chemotherapy Services.

We are on advanced stages of establishing Comprehensive Non-Communicable Diseases services that cover hypertension and diabetes. This is aimed at ensuring that the vulnerable Laikipians access all their medicines without having to make out of pocket payments at our various hospitals.

Mr. Speaker, with an aim of achieving 100% Universal Health coverage, my PLAN and that of the national Kenya Kwanza PLAN agree that all Kenyans must have a social health insurance cover. We are committed to roll out UHC program which will start by covering those who have already demonstrated financial inability at our various health facilities.

Existing Medical Social Workers reports on those who have benefited from waivers and exemptions will be a necessary guide for a start. Special consideration will also be given to our senior citizens suffering from non-communicable diseases so as to caution them from huge financial costs while at the same time ensuring that our hospital revenues remain secured.

Mr. Speaker, as a reciprocal sign of appreciation in good faith, the doctors forfeited an equivalent of 12-month salary arrears which to nearly Kshs.120 million thus easing the burden on the exchequer. This agreement will definitely double the existing health revenues through more

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work output as a dividend the new and cordial partnership between the political leadership and the health workers, something that was in existence.

Mr. Speaker, in order to improve the funding and performance of the health facilities and preventive health services, I am hereby calling for the support of this House in expediting necessary amendment to the Laikipia Health Services Act of 2014.

This will ensure that revenues from the health facilities will be for the exclusive use at the respective facility through the establishment of Laikipia County Health Services Facility Improvement Fund. This has worked well in a county like Kiambu and would urge the Health Committee to consider doing a benchmark.

In the meantime, Mr. Speaker, to ensure that there are efficient operations in our health facilities, I have directed that the Facility Improvement Fund (FIF) be availed at all times to enable facilities manage their day-to-day expenses as well as situations where emergency supplies have to be acquired.

For the information of this House, Mr. Speaker, just before my inauguration, I happened to do a random visit to our major health facilities (Nanyuki Teaching and Referral Hospital, Nyahururu County Referral Hospital, Rumuruti Sub-County Hospital) among others.

Mr. Speaker, my observation was that there is dire need to set aside a substantial budget for the improvement of health infrastructures which have suffered months of neglect. We have put in place an elaborate plan to ensure that there will be a noticeable change in the wards (to begin with) within the next 100 days.

Mr. Speaker, we are also working out on our budget since we are committed to restructure and improve the ambulance and emergency services across the county. Our people must access quality health care without much struggle. For this reason, I will be presenting before this House the Laikipia Ambulance and Rescue Services bill for the necessary legislation.

Mr. Speaker, in order to fully restore our health services, there is need to have in place strong human resources for the health programmes. We are obliged to create a new culture that values our health workers. We have learnt a great lesson that services like health which requires technical competence and utmost professionalism should never be subject to interferences from the executive and political class. In this regard, plans are underway to transition the competent health workers who are currently engaged on contract to permanent and pensionable status.

Mr. Speaker, of essence is that we will continually evaluate the health needs of our people and provide the requisite health workers needed. In the meantime, we will promptly replace health workers who exit the service to ensure the continuity of services. My assurance to them and all public servants is that I will offer an amicable working environment; free from any intimidation and in return optimal performance and personal career growth will not be optional but mandatory.

Mr. Speaker, perennial water shortages have been the norm in the county. I am committed to ensure that every citizen has access to affordable, safe clean drinking water. The aspect of affordability will be achieved through among others lowering the cost of pumping from the source to the end users. With this in mind, we will incorporate the component of green energy especially solar energy, which we are well endowed with but largely under-utilized.

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In this regard, I am urging this Honourable House to approve all the budgetary allocations that will be allocated for water provision and renewable energy. For instance, I intend to scale up the noble and life changing project I initiated during my first term by providing at least 50,000 water tanks to Household across the county. This will promote rainwater harvesting, storage and treatment.

The ultimate goal will be to ensure that no Laikipian walks for more than 3 kilometres in search of water for both domestic usage and livestock. Mr. Speaker, there will also be extension and improvement of water infrastructure to more Households in all major municipalities and existing rural water schemes. We will enhance the capacity and efficiency of our main water companies in Nyahururu and Nanyuki towns even as we plan to roll out to other parts of the county. In this regard, I am glad to announce that plans are at an advanced stage to establish a model rural water scheme, the Doldol Water and Sewerage Company (Dowasco) that will be in charge of the management of water resources in Laikipia North.

Mr. Speaker, the County Governments intend to restructure and enhance the economic stimulus fund for the wellbeing of the people of Laikipia. Having this in mind, the bursary fund for instance will be increased from Kshs. 50 million to Kshs. 100 million in the next fiscal year and further increment will be effected in subsequent years. The economic stimulus fund will be enhanced from the current Kshs. 50 million to Kshs.150 million over the course of 5 years. This will create over Kshs.2 billion worth of credit available to the people of Laikipia over the next one year. We will partner with banks, development agencies and other like-minded financial institutions as we endeavour to reach out as many Laikipians in the economic stimulus programmes.

Turning to trade, industrialization, enterprise and urban development, we will operationalize the County Enterprise Revolving Fund. This will enable our people access affordable start-up capital and working capital for businesses that are excluded from formal financial systems because of high cost of credit and strict credit requirements. We shall create a friendly business environment so that we promote entrepreneurship; expand private capital investments, urbanization and industrialization in the county. We shall pay special attention to the informal sectors. This will be in line with the Bottom-Up economic model that was the tagline of the Kenya Kwanza coalition.

Mr. Speaker, in Agriculture and livestock production, we have the vision to transform this important sector into a sustainable, innovative and commercially oriented one, contributing to food and nutritional security with increased incomes for the Laikipia people. It is beyond my conviction that increased agricultural productivity will always remain our fastest route to get our people above the poverty line. Our interventions shall therefore seek to sustainably increase agricultural productivity, income growth, food and nutrition security while creating agriculture and livestock related jobs through value addition and agro- industries.

However, Mr. Speaker, the previous budgets have been constraining to this department in complete disregard of the role this sector plays in the national and county economy. Allocating only 4% of the overall budget for a sector that directly employs 70% of our people is almost bordering infringement of human rights. I call upon this House to critically re-look at the budget setting right our priorities for the sake of our people.

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Mr. Speaker, a huge portion of our county has been experiencing prolonged dry spells over the last two years. This is a clear indication that the global warming phenomenon is a reality that we now have to live with. This year alone for instance, we have experienced one of the worst crop failures over the recent years especially in our traditional bread baskets of Laikipia East and West.

In this regard, Mr. Speaker, I will be seeking the approval of this Honourable House in putting in place stringent measures in a supplementary budget aimed at mitigating the situation in the short run to begin with. We are compelled beyond measures to suspend key development undertakings and channel allocations towards the immediate well-being of our people in terms of emergency relief food, healthcare and water provision.

Mr. Speaker, to meet the increasing demand for basic education, my administration will be building new ECDE centres and upgrading others across the county. The government will also be relooking and re-evaluating the teams of engagement for the entire ECDE teachers. My assurance to the people of Laikipia is that the provision of quality education remains important to this government.

Mr. Speaker, the future of the county largely lies on our young people. In this regards, we will rehabilitate, modernize and equip our TVETs with machinery and qualified instructors. In these institutions, the youth will be equipped with necessary skills thus enabling them become self-reliant in the labour market. We will also set up innovation funds, challenge funds for young people to test new ideas. In full understanding that we are living in a digital era, ICT and automation will be given adequate prominence by providing internet connectivity in constituency youth innovation and incubation centres. This will come a long way in establishing linkages with national level youth ICT tech businesses to train youth from Laikipia on how to monetize their tech savvy skills.

The government will also be investing heavily in Sports and creativity. Talented youths in the county will be identified and nurtured. Sporting and recreational facilities will be improved and the county's immense but untapped potential in sports tourism well harnessed.

Mr. Speaker, in a couple of weeks, I will be convening the Governor's Youth Conference aimed at bringing together young people to air and share their opinions on various issues affecting them and the general populace in the county.

The baseline is that I am committed to fulfil my pre-election promises to the people of Laikipia in terms of bringing services closer to them. Let me thus inform this August House that I am already pushing hard for the gazettement of Nyahururu and Nanyuki urban centres to municipalities in conformity with the Urban Areas and Cities Act No.13 of 2011.

Once this quest is accomplished, the towns will be bound to receive extra funding from the National Government and other development partners. We will then aim at establishing 24-hours economic hubs which will create more employment for our people. For this to happen, we are soon embarking on rapid solarisation of these towns to make them secure and attractive to investors.

Mr. Speaker, in the financial year 2022/2023, the County Government had a development and operational budget of Kshs.1.9 Billion and Kshs.1.2 billion respectively. Kshs.3.4 Billion was budgeted for salaries indicating a wage bill of 53% for the whole county including the County Assembly.

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This falls way short of the required wage bill of 35% by the PFM act 2012. It is worth noting that my administration is inheriting pending bills exceeding Kshs.4 Billion. This includes commitments made against the infrastructure bond that have not been approved and long-term leasing obligations made by the previous regime outside the planning frame work. The reality is that contractors and suppliers for some intriguing reasons were convinced that the bond would sail through and consequently committed their funds.

Mr. Speaker, I have no fear of contradiction to state that in the process, there was serious breach of procurement procedures and especially in awarding some of these projects such as the Smart Towns Initiative. The most worrying fact is that some contracts are at near-completion yet the infrastructure bond they are banking their hopes on is a mystery. However, I have mandated a team of officers to look at circumstances that led to allocation of these massive contracts without a committed vote head. But as it appears for now Mr. Speaker, all our allocations for development this financial year could be channelled towards servicing debts.

Mr. Speaker, yet another fiscal burden is a six-year lease contract of 128 items including motor vehicles and medical equipment that was entered into by the previous administration amounting to Kshs.1.9 Billion. This excludes the running cost such as fuelling and other minor repairs. The cost of the delivered items currently stands at Kshs.1.4 Billion.

So far, Kshs.0.5 Billion has been paid for the lease and a significant amount of Kshs.1 Billion remains in the arrangement. This therefore means that the same has to be reviewed accordingly. But Mr. Speaker, in full understanding that the men and women in this House are the true representatives of the people of Laikipia, I am sending a very passionate appeal to them, to use the legislative powers bestowed upon them and save the county from this cash draining programme before it impoverishes our people beyond redemption.

Mr. Speaker, to comfortably fund our operations, I am already in negotiations with various development partners who are willing to undertake resource mobilization to generate additional development funds in our pursuit for prosperity. I believe we shall walk the journey together.

Mr. Speaker, as a county, we must remain united if we have to sustain the gains we have achieved in the 10 years of devolution. And to foster this unity, let us continue to dialogue with each other at all times. It is only through dialogue that we will resolve our issues and focus our energies on the wellbeing of our people. We are in the process of doing the County Integrated Develop Plan which will be a guideline on various development undertakings. We will subject it to dialogue and consultations with our electorates. I am calling upon the honourable members to champion this process within their respective wards.

As I conclude, Mr. Speaker, I am in full recognition of the divine role played by the religious leaders across the county. I am calling upon them to active agents of good governance. It is through them that our people will be enlightened and hope restored. As a gesture of good cooperation between the government and religious institutions, I wish to reiterate that all religious gatherings conducted on public grounds will be exempted of any charges.

Mr. Speaker, as we embark on serving our people, let us not forget the importance of good morals and ethics. Let us renew our pledge to uphold our national values and principles for a better Laikipia. Let us build a county that leaves an indelible impact in the whole nation. And in all our

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undertakings, we must look upon our Creator for wisdom, guidance and strength as we execute our leadership roles.

Mr. Speaker, with positive attitude and energy, together we will succeed. With positive approaches towards service, we will strive to achieve. With positive service culture we must progress. It is now my honour and privilege to declare the 1st session of the 3rd national County Assembly of Laikipia officially opened. May God bless our Great County, Laikipia

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker: Hon. Members, Standing Order No. 21 (2) reads; *at the conclusion of Governor's address, the sitting shall stand adjourned or suspended as the Speaker may direct until such a time or such a day as may be specified by the Speaker.* Consequently Hon. Members, the sittings of this House shall now stand adjourned until tomorrow Wednesday, 12th October, 2022 at 9.00 a.m.

The House rose 3.22 p.m.

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