

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF TAITA TAVETA



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

**STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS BY H.
E. GOVERNOR DR. ANDREW MWADIME,
EGH, ON WEDNESDAY 8TH OCTOBER
2025 DELIVERED TO THE SPEAKER
AND MEMBERS OF THE COUNTY
ASSEMBLY OF THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY
OF TAITA TAVETA**

H. E The Deputy Governor

**Honourable Speaker and Members of the
County Assembly**

**The County Secretary
The County Chief of Staff**

CEC Members

Members of the County Public Service Board

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and Gentlemen

Mr Speaker Sir,

I stand before this Honourable House with deep humility and gratitude, to deliver this year's Annual State of the County Address. Today, as always, I take it as a great honour, to report on the progress, challenges, and future projections of the various aspects of our beloved County, as delivered by my Government, through the mandate bestowed on me, by the Great people of Taita Taveta.

As we convene to reflect on the past year, and chart the course for our future, our gathering here today, is a true testament to the robust accountability and openness, that form the foundation of our governance.

Mr Speaker Sir,

As you are well aware, the Annual State of the County address, is an obligation provided for in the Constitution of Kenya under Article 183(3) as well as section 30(2) of the County Government Act, 2012.

In delivering this State of the County Address, I will be reporting on measures taken, and progress thus far achieved, in the realization of the devolved government aspirations of Articles 174, 175, 186 and 189 of our Constitution, from the time I took over the mantle of leadership of this great County. My address will also contain:

- ◆ a report on measures taken, and the progress achieved, in the realization of the national values;
- ◆ a report on the implementation status of the county policies and plans;
- ◆ a report on the performance reports of the county executive committee and public service, based on the performance management plan, and
- ◆ a report on citizen participation in the affairs of the county government.

Mr Speaker Sir,

Let me begin by expressing my most sincere appreciation to this Honourable House, for the unwavering support, robust oversight, and its deep commitment to the service and advancement of our county. Indeed, it is through the spirit of this valued collaboration, that we continue to build an ever more prosperous, equitable, and resilient Taita Taveta County. Mr Speaker, the enormous challenges we collectively encountered when we were ushered in together, as different arms of the same Government, in this third dispensation of the Devolution era, are well known. I will delve more deeply on these challenges later in my address.

In my interactions, both at official and personal levels, I note with pride, the educational and professional accomplishments of a good number of

Members serving in this Honourable House. The stimulating and probing nature of the debates in this chamber, in this current Assembly, is way above what we had been used to seeing in the past. As they say in Kiswahili: "*Mgala muue, lakini haki yake, mpe!*" Pongezi!

Today, I have come with a message to every member of this House: as leaders, we are here to represent and govern our people; we run their affairs on their behalf; but we should remember that all what matters to them is development and good representation. They are not interested any shenanigans nor side-shows of any kind. The projects you approve, and which we execute, are not for us, but for them - the very people who elected us. Let us therefore, always put their interest first, before our very own interests. We must always - and I dare repeat - ALWAYS, bear in mind the fact that the most impactful projects are usually big, and which benefit and serve the whole County, but may not necessarily be domiciled in your respective Wards. Hence consensus should carry the day. Given the all-too-familiar budgetary limitations we constantly face, as MCAs, you will most certainly come across situations where, you may be required to make such a sacrifice, for the good of the people of this great County. Such sacrifices define the true

hallmark of selfless patriotism that will take our dear County, to the next level. Failure to put this in practice would, unfortunately, lead to a motley of tiny, small-impact projects dotted across the County, (a.k.a. “churuchuru” projects) - that will condemn most, if not all of us - to political oblivion, in the next election cycle!

The Executive and the County Assembly are more than just siblings - we are twins with complimentary duties to the service of our people. Scrutiny of past collective performances vis-a-vis election outcomes leads to one screaming message - “we either swim together, or sink together!” Bickering and grand-standing between the County Executive and County Assembly has often resulted in the electoral loss of incumbent Governors. And when incumbent Governors fall, we all know, unprecedented numbers of MCAs fall, as well. We all know, Mr Speaker Sir, that in 2022, Seventy five per cent of all MCAs fell along with the then incumbent Governor. Seventy five per cent! Honourable members, that was, indeed, a monumental failure! I am sure none of us in this Honourable House today, would wish a repeat of such an unfortunate scenerio, ever again.

Honourable Members, I beseech you that we work and soar together to greater heights, for the greater good of Taita Taveta County, which we all so much

love. This does not in any way, mean the compromise of your core functions of Representation, Legislation and Oversight.

Mr Speaker Sir,

Allow me also, to pass a message to other elected leaders as well, even though I am well aware that they are not present in this House. To the leaders, this, I say: Fate, and the collective will of the people of Taita Taveta, has given us the privilege to serve our people in our various God-given positions. The Constitution of Kenya has clearly spelt out the roles of each Constitutional office. It has also prescribed a five-year period within which elected leaders are supposed to deliver on their promises to the electorate. At the end of this five-year period, there is also a prescribed campaign period so that every prospective aspirant, gets a fair chance to sell their agenda to the electorate. This is the foundation of our Democracy. And this is the way it should be.

Mr Speaker Sir, here in Taita Taveta, however, we seem to have some leaders who want to play their politics using a different script. To them, any time and every time, is time for politics. They politic in Churches, in Mosques, in Schools, in Sports festivities and even in front of bereaved families during funerals! This disruptive and time-wasting practice

must be condemned in the strongest terms possible. We all know that a time will come when it will be perfectly in order for anyone to climb even on top of our famous Vuria Summit, and shout themselves hoarse, to lay their political ambitions bare, to declare the seats they so much crave for.

But not now.

Now is the time to serve our people.

To deliver on our promises.

To work.

Any leader who is out to put our beloved County in a permanent state of electioneering is an enemy of our collective development. Such behaviour is a symptom of a condition where one is driven by blind craving for power and privilege which they feel they do not currently enjoy in their present posts. Mr Speaker Sir, luckily, for Taita Taveta, the majority of our voters can see through the intentions of such greed-driven leaders. And already the appetites of some of them is coming out to the glare of public scrutiny. The people are seeing it for themselves. Wolves in sheepskins, openly hallucinating over how much they will eat when their time comes. What a shame, Mr Speaker! What a shame!

The same warning also goes to supporters of such leaders, who only cheer their leaders on, driven, again, only by the loot they hope to amass, at the expense of our progress and general development. They will all perish, like ticks clinging to a dead carcass, thinking that they will suck in perpetuity.

Mr Speaker, I want to round up whatever I want to say about leadership, by stating my own personal experience and what drove me to leave the comfort of a Bank Executive office - and pushed me into elective politics.

Before the political calling from the people hoisted me into Parliament in 2013, I had to forego the comfort of cosy air-conditioned Bank Offices, to voluntarily join my people on the ground as a local artisanal miner, where I spearheaded the formation of a miner's CBO which catapulted many down-trodden miners into successful entrepreneurs and millionaires. But this meant working long hours with rudimentary tools in the scorching sun, wind and rain. I lived with them; slept with them; worked with them; laughed with them; cried with them. Mr Speaker, we even had to contend with hunger, thirst and the peril of wild animals - out there in the wilderness, surviving only by the Grace of God.

Voters in my Mwatate Constituency, Mr Speaker, gave me the privilege of serving them as their Member of Parliament for two straight terms. After which I got an even bigger privilege of serving Taita Taveta County as the third Governor. However, against my expectations of a quick positive transformation, I found myself at the head of the third least-funded County out of all the 47 Counties in Kenya. Right down there at the very bottom, Mr Speaker.

And what was the reason?

The reason Mr Speaker Sir, is the one-man-one-shilling sharing formula, which negatively impacted on our Equitable Share, since the 2019 census found most of our working-age population having migrated to Mombasa, Nairobi and other cities in search of jobs - a situation brought by the fact that the National Government has, to date, miserably failed to catalyze the establishment of even a single industry in the entire County. The then population of 340 thousand is nowhere near the actual numbers of Taitas and Tavetas. This figure meant that after paying our wage bill, our Equitable share leaves us with almost nothing for development and running other County affairs. To this day, this injustice is the biggest cause of our fiscal challenges as a County.

Mr Speaker Sir, our Fiscal woes did not end with this depressed Equitable Share. The National Government, which through the Kenya Wildlife Services (KWS) occupies 62% of our land mass, has not actualized even the remittance of 5% of their revenues to us as monies due to the Local Communities, since we host the Tsavo East and Tsavo West National Parks. Moreover, it has also failed to implement the Presidential directive of the 50/50 Revenue sharing formula between the KWS and County Government of Taita Taveta. We have been fighting for this, and we are making progress, fortunately - but the bureaucratic red-tape keeps hindering our progress.

Mr Speaker Sir, upon realizing the monumental fiscal challenges this County faced, I took the deliberate step of up-scaling the lobbying of funds from donors and other development partners. We had to fill the development gap. I am happy to report that we have so far made remarkable progress towards this end, and fruits of these endeavors will be enumerated under the various Departmental achievements.

My appeal to all elected leaders from our County is simple: **OUR UNITY IS OUR STRENGTH!**

What is the solution to all this, you may ask?

As a solution, Mr Speaker, It is my earnest wish and hope, that all leaders - political, religious, and even

our sons and daughters who serve in the top echelons of Government and Private institutions - bring our heads together and lobby the National Government to cede to our demands for our rightful share of our stake in National resources. Lets us shelve our individual selfish egos without fighting over who will grab the limelight, who will take the credit, or who will lead the delegation. Mr Speaker, I am the Governor of Taita Taveta County but I can state here and now, that I am willing, and ready, and content to be just part of such a delegation - without necessarily leading it - as long as we achieve the ultimate goal of winning tangible benefits for our people. Let the credit go elsewhere, anywhere, to whoever else craving for it - but so long as we achieve it for our people - it is fine with me.

We have Bishops, we have Sheikhs and Imams, Doctors, Teachers, Lawyers Mr Speaker. Top Executives in Government and Private Institutions. We have people of high standing in the society almost everywhere. And we have to come together and lobby, lobby, lobby for our rightful share. And we have to do it as a matter of urgency, or else we all perish, Mr Speaker!

measures taken, and progress thus far achieved, in the realization of the devolved government

aspirations of Articles 174, 175, 186 and 189 of our Constitution

- ◆ a report on measures taken, and the progress achieved, in the realization of the national values;
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Mr. Speaker Sir, I now wish highlight the key achievements in the various Departments over the past one year.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK, IRRIGATION, COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT, AND BLUE ECONOMY

Crops and Irrigation Directorate

Mr Speaker Sir, in FY 2025-2026, the Crops Directorate was able to acquire:

- two (2) sunflower oil processing machine at a cost of Kshs 99,768. This facility was issued to Jora Sunflower Women Group in Kasighau ward. The group is currently processing

sunflower for the members and the entire community at a cost.

- 15 tons of sunflower seed was distributed to farmers in partnership with Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA). A yield of 230Tons was realised as a result of this initiative. Other Sunflower processing machines were installed Taveta subcounty, Challa ward
- 2.3 Tons of green gram seed were distributed to 833 farmers benefitting mainly Marungu Ward and other parts of the county. From this initiative, Mr Speaker, a yield of 311 Tons was realised for food and commercial use.
- 210Kg of BT Cotton seed in February 2025 was distributed to 105 farmers in Taveta and Taita subcounties, from which a yield of 42 Tons is expected. This is a key booster to the socio-economic well being of the community.

In Soil and water management, Mr Speaker, Nineteen

(19) out of 41 irrigation schemes were rehabilitated in the four sub counties under the USAID STAWI project.

This will be a game changer as the objective is to increase agricultural productivity through Irrigation.

- 120 dam liners were also distributed and installed in 120 farm ponds to support crop production in the entire county under the KCEP

CRAL project.

Mr Speaker Sir, in Agribusiness and market Development the following were realized:

- 16.35 Tons of fertilizers to support rice farmers was distributed to 200 farmers of Uswi cooperative in Mboghoni ward. Farm yard manure was also procured and distributed as follows:
- 875 tons of manure was distributed to 75 farmers in Werugha ward
- 1400 tons of manure distributed to 280 farmers in Wumingu/Kishushe ward

Mr Speaker, the Rice Value Chain has been identified by my Government as a key pillar in our efforts towards establishing food security in our County.

- Expansion of the Rice scheme in Buruma in Taveta, is ongoing, targeting 30,000 acres from the current 18,000 acres.
- A 2.5 Ton/hr Rice Processing Plant has been installed in Mboghoni/Mahoo wards. This is meant to reduce post-harvest losses that our farmers have to contend with, as well as improve rice prices with the paddy being milled locally instead of through brokers, who ferry it to a neighbouring Country. The plant is more than 70% complete.

Mr Speaker, with the completion of the Macadamia processing plant in Wundanyi, the Macadamia Value Chain is set to be vibrant.

The plant, established at a cost of Kshs 6,850,000, in Mghange/Mwanda Ward, is awaiting operationalization.

- Another Macadamia processing plant is being installed at Taita HPC Wundanyi/Mbale ward and is being done in phases, with the first phase of equipment already delivered at a cost of Ksh 5 million. The two plants will benefit the over 2,000 macadamia farmers in Taita and Mwatate subcounties.

In the Banana value chain Mr Speaker, the department has distributed over 70,000 tissue culture banana seedlings to about 1,000 farmers in order to improve banana productivity in the whole county. This has increased acreage under banana by 175 ha from 2300 ha and productivity has also increased from 20 Ton/ha to 30 Ton/ha.

- The government has signed an MOU with Taita Taveta University and MESPT so as to establish a Tissue culture banana laboratory in Ngerenyi campus. The first batch of TC banana are already in the green house nearing distribution. This will enable the farmers have access to quality banana seedlings and an affordable cost.

- The government has also installed a refrigerated banana ripening chamber in Voi to add value and

produce quality ripe bananas. The chambers ripen about 10 tons of bananas per week thus creating ready market for the produce. The project is run by TATABA, a local Banana value addition group.

On the revival of the Banana Processing plant, in Taveta, Mr Speaker, my government is partnering with Orana, an International Company to revive the banana processing plant. An MOU and agreement have been done and the plant will be up and running with expanded coverage to process arrow roots, banana, cassava and

On the promotion of nuts and oils, Mr Speaker, a total 6,500 Coconut seedlings (East African Tall variety and short varieties) were distributed to farmers in all 4 subcounties with highest percentage to Taveta subcounty which were planted in the short and some this ongoing long rains 2025. The number of beneficiaries are over 800 the 4 sub counties.

Crop Insurance

Mr Speaker, 2,808 farmers county wide benefitted from a Crop Insurance compensation valued at Kshs 7,284,769.00.

Extension support services

- Mr Speaker, Farmer profiling and registration – 53,404 farmers countywide were digitized into the Kenya Integrated Agricultural Management Information system (KIAMIS) through NAVCDP. This is the system

through which farmers are able to redeem farm inputs like subsidized fertilizer and seed from the National Cereals and produce board (NCPB).

Mr Speaker, Over 15,000 farmers were trained and are accessing data on Technologies Innovations and Management Practices (TIMPs) in order to mitigate against the effects of climate change. Other approaches that were used to disseminate extension messages include field days whereby over 500 farmers reached at Mwanguwi, Msau, Wesu and Mboghoni among other wards.

Irrigation Development

Mr Speaker, the following waterpans were completed to support crop development:

- Irienyi/Kokua waterpan - 30,000m³ - in Mghange/Mwanda Ward, with 10,000 beneficiaries.
- Mwambiti waterpan - 42,000m³ - Sagalla (11,000 beneficiaries)
- Mwataru waterpan - 15,000m³ - Wumingu/Kishushe (15,000 beneficiaries)

Policy Framework

Mr Speaker, Development The Taita Taveta County Agri-nutrition Strategy 2023-2027 in collaboration with Department of Health which is a 5 year guide for execution of Nutrition sensitive agriculture was completed. It lays the foundation for among other things

the ECDE children nutritious porridge with farmers engaged to produce the ingredients on contract farming arrangement.

Five (5) strategies were developed under NAVCDP for green grams, Irish potato, banana, dairy and chicken value chains.

Key Partners in our Agricultural endeavors are:

➤ NAVCDP

NAVCDP is a County Government/ World Bank project is still on-going but has not received the 2024/25 funds like all other counties

➤ Solidaridad East and Central Africa Expertise Center

An MOU has been signed between County Government of Taita Taveta (CGTT) and Solidaridad East and Central Africa Expertise Center to establish a strategic partnership between the two entities with the aim to:

- a) Enhance food security and nutrition;
- b) Develop sustainable infrastructure and water management systems.
- c) Strengthen climate resilience and environmental conservation.
- d) Facilitate technical training, research, and capacity building for local communities.
- e) Promote investment and innovation in agriculture and other relevant sectors.

The project Targets: 24,000 smallholder farmers in Bura, Ngolia, Marungu, Werugha and Wundanyi-Mbale Wards. The Objective is to boost the production and availability of locally grown nutritious foods in local markets, to address the immediate concern of food stress.

Agriculture remains a cornerstone of our local economy. In the past year, we supported over 5,000 smallholder farmers with improved seeds, fertilizers, and training in climate-smart agriculture.

We expanded irrigation coverage in areas such as Njukini, Challa, and Mbololo, while also reviving livestock dip infrastructure and improving disease surveillance. The Taita Taveta Livestock Market Bill, recently passed by this House, will further streamline animal trade and improve market access for our pastoralists communities.

We remain committed to achieving food security through value addition, agro-processing, and farmer cooperatives.

Partnership Agreements: Formal agreements and action plans for collaborative efforts among stakeholders.

Capacity Building: Enhanced capacity of local stakeholders to implement and sustain proposed interventions.

- **Monitoring Evaluation Accountability and Learning Systems (MEAL):** To help gather quick, actionable

insights about the county's situation or intervention, guiding immediate decisions and long-term planning. It ensures that the programs remain responsive, efficient, and effective in addressing the county's needs.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF WATER, SANITATION, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr Speaker Sir, we all know that the provision of clean, portable water in adequate quantities is a human right across the globe. In spite of the fact that Taita Taveta is a water-surplus County, the Harvesting, Storage and Distribution of this precious commodity still remains a major challenge in vast areas within our County.

My Government has put the provision of water to its people as the number one priority, and we will always strive to satisfy our water needs for both domestic, agricultural and industrial use.

In the past one year, Mr Speaker, we have drilled and equipped 15 new boreholes, expanded piped water supply in Mgeno and Chumvini, and rehabilitated key water pans and dams across the County. We launched the Taita Taveta Greening and Reforestation Program, planting over 100,000 indigenous trees in collaboration with schools and community groups. Through the County

Climate Change Fund, we are mainstreaming climate adaptation and resilience into local development plans.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH SERVICES

Honourable Speaker, the health of our people is a matter of utmost priority for my Government. We are always striving to invest in health infrastructure, equipment, and personnel. Moi County Referral Hospital in Voi now has an operational CT scan unit and enhanced maternal care services.

We recruited 135 additional healthcare workers, including nurses, clinical officers, and lab technicians.

Through the Community Health Strategy, we have deployed over 600 Community Health Promoters to improve grassroots healthcare access.

Mobile outreach programs have also expanded to serve remote regions in Jipe, Mata, and Rong'e.

Mr Speaker Sir, the implementation of the HIF Act, 2024 awaits approval of its Regulations by the County Assembly. The Regulations are currently at validation stage by the relevant stakeholders before forwarding to the County Assembly for approval.

The new HIF Act, 2024 which will enhance service

delivery in our 74 public facilities by ensuring that all revenues collected by the facility will be 100% retained by that facility in line with Section 109(2) (b) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2012.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF YOUTH, SPORTS, GENDER AND SOCIAL SERVICES

Mr Speaker Sir, During the FY 2023/ 2024 and 2024/2025 the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Services managed to achieve the following;

1. Support to Community groups, CBOs and Saccos;

- Grants and empowerment equipment support has been issued to 620 community groups (188 Women Groups, 338 Self-help groups, 25 Men Groups, 36 Youth Groups, 22 PLWD Groups and 11 SACCOS).
- In the current FY 2024/ 2025, grants processing and issuance totaling to Ksh. 37M to various community groups is ongoing and will be completed before end of the financial year.
- Several sports, youth, women and PWD groups in different wards have benefited with items including sports equipment, tents, plastic chairs, egg incubators, public address machines, sunflower oil pressing machines, goats for breeding and breeding cows.

2. Capacity Building and Support to Youth groups

- The Department has managed to undertake capacity building programs in entrepreneurship, business incubation and proposal development for the youths in different wards in partnership with the DT global through MasterCard Foundation. Policy and Bills formulation;

Development of legislations especially the launch of the Taita Taveta County Poverty Alleviation Policy in November 2024, outlining several ways and strategies of ending extreme poverty in the county and generally how to alleviate those living under poverty.

- Consequently the Department of Youth Affairs, Sports, Gender and Social Services has initiated development of the Taita Taveta County Poverty Alleviation, Empowerment and Enterprise Fund Bill 2025 which will be completed by June 2025. It established procedures to bring to effect the Ultra Poor Graduation model of ending extreme poverty through enterprise establishments in households, management of grants to welfare groups, management of loans and credit facilities.

- This new bill repeals the Datu Sawazisha Fund Act and addresses the various challenges which made the Datu Sawazisha Fund Act not to operate as expected.

Commemoration of key International/ National days

- The Department has been able to organize celebrations for key National and International days.

Other achievements include

- The Wakuja cross country championship which has starts at sub county level is slowly gaining support and it is exposing our talented athletes to the national arena.
- Completion of the Dawson Mwanyumba stadium sheds roof has given the stadium a better shape. More resources will be allocated to complete the fencing and improvement of the gate entry.

Implementation of development projects

- The department has implemented a total of 24 projects, which have been implemented successfully.

Mr Speaker, the Departmental Own Source Revenue Performance is as follows:

Own source revenue: Hire of County lodging/ social premises- Ksh. 3,079,300.00 and Hire of stadium/spaces - Ksh 600,000.00.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC WORKS, INFRASTRUCTURE, HOUSING, AND ENERGY

The Department of Roads, Public Works, Infrastructure, Housing and Energy is charged with the responsibility of designing workable solutions for projects, preparation of contract documentation, and supervision of construction works of all County

development projects.

It is also responsible for the opening of new roads and maintaining to motorable conditions, all existing County roads, overseeing the fire and rescue services with an aim to save lives and properties, managing and maintaining the County Government housing estates, planning and policy formulation on County Government housing matters and largely advising the County Government on technical issues relating to building, housing, transport, roads energy and infrastructure.

1. Roads and Transport (Infrastructure) Directorate

Status of County Machinery

Mr Speaker, The County has successfully refurbished two motor graders and is currently in the process of repairing a third. Upon completion of these repairs, the County will have a total of four operational motor graders, which will significantly enhance the efficiency of road maintenance activities.

Additionally, the County has repaired one single drum roller, which is now fully operational. A low loader is also currently in service and operational.

The County possesses one Tipper, and there are plans to propose the acquisition of two additional lorries in the

upcoming budget cycle to further support road maintenance efforts.

Furthermore, the County has one operational excavator stationed in Taveta.

In the next fiscal year, the County has proposed the procurement of one shovel to further improve the efficiency and effectiveness of road maintenance operations.

Roads:

During the 2023/2024 financial year, the Department successfully implemented a total of fifty (50 No.) road maintenance projects across nineteen (19 No.) Wards throughout the County. These interventions were aimed at enhancing road accessibility, improving safety, and mitigating environmental degradation.

In pursuit of improved connectivity, Mr Speaker, a total of 40.88 kilometers of new roads were opened.

Additionally, 207.197 kilometers of existing roads were graded, and 47.51 kilometers were graveled to ensure smoother and safer transportation.

To address issues related to steep and slippery sections, as well as to enhance slope protection, a total of 556.5 meters of concrete slabs and drifts were cast, alongside the installation of 120 gabion boxes to reinforce embankments and prevent erosion.

In response to drainage challenges affecting road infrastructure, the Department undertook the following interventions:

- 125 meters of stone pitching were constructed,
 - 52 meters (equivalent to 8 lines) of 600 mm diameter culverts were installed,
 - 113 meters (equivalent to 17 lines) of 900 mm diameter culverts were installed, and
 - A single-cell box culvert measuring 2.5 x 2.0 meters was constructed to improve stormwater management.
- In alignment with the County's environmental conservation efforts and erosion control measures, the Department allocated a portion of its budget towards afforestation. As a result, a total of 2,365 trees were planted across various locations within the County.

In the current financial year 2024/2025, the Department is implementing a total of forty-nine (49 No.) Ward-based Road projects across seventeen (17) Wards.

Notably, the Wards of Mahoo, Sagalla, and Ngolia did not receive individual Ward budget allocations for this financial year. The total allocation for the Ward-based projects amounts to Kshs. 103,624,462.00.

Project Implementation Status:

- 15 projects have been fully completed.
- 17 projects are currently ongoing.
- 3 projects are in the procurement process following earlier termination.
- 1 project under the Headquarters vote for countywide road maintenance is ongoing.
- 13 fuel-related projects were processed, and are at different stages of implementation.

Mr Speaker, allow me to give an update on the Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF):

The Department had planned to implement fifty-eight (58 No.) projects under the Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF), with a total budget of Kshs. 223,111,859.00.

However, There has been considerable uncertainty regarding the disbursement of funds under the Road Maintenance Levy Fund. At present, the County is yet to receive confirmation on the availability of these funds.

This follows the National Assembly's decision to exclude RMLF allocations to Counties from the national budget. In response, the Council of Governors (COG) has moved to court to challenge this decision, seeking to have it overturned. The County remains hopeful that the ruling will be made in favor of the Counties, thereby allowing continued implementation of critical road maintenance projects funded through RMLF.

Mr Speaker Sir, some key Policy Development Initiatives by the Department are being formulated:

- 1.Road and Transport Acts
- 2.Taita Taveta County Road Safety Action Plan
- 3.County Fleet Management Policy

Once finalized, these policies are expected to significantly enhance service delivery in their respective areas. They will provide structured

frameworks for improving road infrastructure governance, promoting road safety, and ensuring efficient management and utilization of the County's fleet resources.

Mr Speaker, Key Challenges Faced by the Directorate leading to operational and logistical challenges, include that hinder the effective implementation of its mandates. These include:

- Inadequate supervisory vehicles and facilitation: ▪
- Unreliable machinery due to over-use
- Delayed settlement of supplier debts and
- Inadequate fuel supply
- Insufficient budgetary allocations
- Inadequate staffing

2.Public Works & Housing Directorate

Mr Speaker, The Directorate of Housing has strived to ensure that all requests for design and tender documentation of buildings projects from other departments are completed within timelines stipulated in the service charter.

Besides supervising the above-mentioned projects to successful completion, the directorate has also strived to reduce pending bills related to building projects by ensuring that construction scope of works and estimates correspond to available budgets.

In the financial year 2024/2025, the department managed to design, prepare tender documentation and supervise to completion a total of 23 building projects while 22 projects are at different levels of construction.

Among the flagship projects include the completion of cancer center at MCRH and Taveta rice milling plant.

The department in conjunction with health department is also coming up with designs, specifications and bills of quantities for a model Level 5 hospital in Voi, and Modern Outpatient and Radiology Blocks at Mwatate Sub-county hospital.

Mr Speaker Sir, The Housing directorate is planning to engage the private sector through Public-Private Partnership towards setting up commercial rental housing units on parcels of lands owned by the County government within Voi town. Through the partnership, the county government will provide land, incentives and legal frameworks while the private sector will contribute capital, expertise and operational skills.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF LANDS, PHYSICAL PLANNING, URBAN DEVELOPMENT AND MINING

Mr Speaker Sir, the completion of the County valuation role is a major milestone, and bears a strong testament to enhancing revenue collection through land rates and

rent. Needless to say, this comprehensive valuation role will play a pivotal role in estimating and boosting our revenue collection efforts, ultimately contributing to the overall economic growth of our county.

Furthermore, the procurement of state-of-the-art survey equipment has significantly bolstered our surveying and mapping activities. This strategic investment has greatly enhanced our capacity to accurately map and survey our county, laying the groundwork for effective land management and development initiatives.

In addition, Mr Speaker, the completion of the County Public utility database is also a significant achievement. This comprehensive database will play a critical role in identifying and mapping the assets owned by our county. By doing so, we are better positioned to protect and manage our assets, ensuring their sustained contribution to the welfare and progress of our county. Our department has also undertaken a transformative journey in re-engineering urban management processes, culminating in the chartering of Voi and Taveta towns to Municipalities. This milestone reflects our unwavering dedication to improving and streamlining urban management processes, fostering sustainable urban development and growth in our county.

Moreover, our collaboration with esteemed development

partners has yielded significant progress in the initiation of the County Spatial Plan. This pivotal policy document is poised to provide a comprehensive framework for land use in our county, a seminal initiative that embodies our commitment to prudent, sustainable, and equitable land management. Supported by organizations such as FAO, TTWCA, WWF, AWF, and the National Government, the ongoing work on the County Spatial Plan underscores the invaluable partnerships driving our shared vision for responsible land use.

Mr Speaker, I am thrilled to announce that we have secured funding under the KISIP 2 infrastructural component, marking yet another significant milestone in our quest for sustainable development. This funding will facilitate the improvement of road networks in Upper Kariokor, Aseko, and Mlekenyi to bitumen standard, as well as the implementation of a high mast security lighting program. These initiatives, with a total cost of 150 million, underscore our commitment to enhancing infrastructure and ensuring the safety and security of our communities.

Furthermore, Mr Speaker Sir, we are proud to announce the successful planning and surveying of three informal settlements, including Kijiji Cha Chewa, Majengo Mapya, and Bura Ndogo, in Taveta, through the KISIP 2 land tenure regularization activities. This impactful program has also earmarked other settlements in our county for

similar benefits, including Kaloleni Phase 1, Soko ya Zamani, Kariobangi, Aseko, and Sofia Kati. Through these efforts, we are enhancing tenure security within our county, affirming our commitment to empowering our residents and fostering inclusive socioeconomic development.

In addition, the establishment of the County GIS Lab is progressing satisfactorily, with the identification of space and completion of the renovation phase. I am pleased to report to this House, that we have received furniture and ICT equipment for the lab, which are in the final stages of dispatch, thanks to the invaluable support of the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO) under the DLGP. This initiative will undoubtedly bolster our capacity for informed decision-making and planning, marking a significant stride towards efficient and effective urban development.

In the realm of renewable energy, the county has made substantial strides towards sustainable energy access and usage. The supply and installation of a power transformer in Manga village within Ngolia ward, funded by the energy directorate, stands as a testament to our commitment to improving energy infrastructure in our communities. Additionally, our collaboration with the Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC) has resulted in the training of community groups on the production and installation of improved cooking stoves, reflecting our dedication to promoting

clean cooking technologies and environmental sustainability.

Moreover, the recent launching of our County Energy Plan (CEP) by none other than the CS for Energy, Hon Opiyo Wandayi, is a milestone that underscores our proactive approach towards energy efficiency and sustainable development. The plan, integrating data from key sectors such as Health, Agriculture, Education, Water, Livestock, and Mining, will play a pivotal role in meeting future energy demands, reducing reliance on fossil fuels, and promoting the uptake of renewable energy. Furthermore, the ongoing energy audit in our major county facilities is a critical step towards addressing the challenge of high electricity bills, through the implementation of energy conservation and efficiency measures.

Notably, Mr Speaker, through the Kenya Off-grid Solar Access Project (KOSAP), we have earmarked 19 public boreholes across the four sub-counties for solarization. This initiative will significantly enhance water supply to remote off-grid communities, underscoring our commitment to improving access to essential services and promoting sustainable energy solutions.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION, LIBRARIES AND VTCS

Mr Speaker, at the Department of Education, Libraries and VTCs, we remain steadfast in promoting inclusive and quality education across the County. It is often said that education is the Great Equalizer for our people, now and in the future. Education is the Great Foundation upon which our success, and that of our future generations, depends.

My Government, in partnership with this Honourable House, has clearly demonstrated our true commitment towards lifting our education standards, by committing KShs Two Hundred Million in the last financial year, in offsetting fees to our needy sons and daughters who were in danger of dropping out of school. Last year alone, over 12,000 students benefited from our bursary program. It is my hope that, with the burden now having shifted from us through a Court proclamation, our Members of Parliament will continue to serve our people with the same unwavering dedication, so that vulnerable members of our society, are not left out. Indeed, it is our collective duty to enlighten the public so that they liaise with our Hon MPs in matters to do with education funding in Primary, Secondary, Colleges and Universities. That burden and responsibility no longer rests on the shoulders of the Executive and the County Assembly.

We refurbished ECDE centers and constructed new classrooms in under-served Wards, including Kasigau and Sagalla.

Youth empowerment programs were scaled up through vocational training support, ICT hubs in Mwatate and Taveta, and the Governor's Youth Innovation Challenge.

We continue to partner with national agencies and NGOs to enhance job creation and digital skills development, particularly among the Youth.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF TRADE, TOURISM, CULTURE, AND INDUSTRIALIZATION

Mr. Speaker Sir, Taita Taveta is blessed with immense tourism and mineral potential. Other than the traditional Tourism circuit, we have intensified efforts to market our cultural and ecological attractions through the "Destination Taita Taveta" campaign. Efforts to revive Tsavo Safari Circuit, promote eco-tourism in Lumo Conservancy, and support community-owned lodges are ongoing.

The Taita Taveta Investment Promotion Bill is in progress to facilitate the Sector and enhance investor confidence. We are in the process of engaging with stakeholders to formalize gemstone trade in Voi and improve transparency in the extractives sector.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF DEVOLUTION, PUBLIC SERVICE AND ADMINISTRATION

Mr Speaker Sir, the Department of DPS&A has in the past year put in place an enhanced performance management, digitization of services, and has also entrenched a zero-tolerance approach to corruption.

We successfully launched the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP 2023-2027) that sets a clear development agenda rooted in the aspirations of our people. Our budgeting and procurement processes have also been opened to greater public scrutiny, enhancing transparency and trust and reducing wastage.

Honourable Members, the spirit of devolution thrives when we embrace partnerships. We have worked closely with the National Government, development partners, civil society, and the private sector to mobilize resources and co-create solutions.

Through the Council of Governors, we continue to champion the interests of our county at the national level—particularly in championing for equitable revenue sharing, natural resource benefit-sharing, and timely disbursement of funds.

Information and Communication Technology

The Directorate of ICT has spearheaded the

Establishment of ICT systems in Revenue collection at access points, and in Hospitals.

◆ DEPARTMENT OF FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Mr Speaker Sir, I am delighted to take this opportunity to celebrate and acknowledge the remarkable achievements of the Department of Finance and Economic Planning. Over the past year, the department has demonstrated unwavering dedication and exceptional performance in several key areas, laying the foundation for robust financial management and sustainable economic growth within our county.

First and foremost, the department has played a pivotal role in coordinating the preparation of all requisite planning and budgeting documents, including the comprehensive County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) for the years 2023-2027.

Strategic fiscal roadmaps, are now firmly in place to guide our county's development endeavors and financial decision-making processes.

In addition to these efforts, the department has successfully established, inaugurated, and operationalized two pivotal statutory bodies: The County Budget and Economic Forum (CBEF) and The County

Executive Audit Committee. It is worth noting that the department has also executed comprehensive capacity-building programs, ensuring that the members of these bodies are equipped with the necessary knowledge and skills to fulfill their mandates effectively.

Furthermore, the department has actively engaged members of the public and various stakeholders in the preparation of planning and budgeting documents. Notably, the department organized a groundbreaking diaspora forum in Mombasa, providing a platform for our esteemed citizens abroad to contribute their invaluable feedback and perspectives, enriching our planning processes with diverse insights and experiences.

In a significant stride toward enhancing financial management, the department established and launched the County Integrated Revenue Management System (CIRMIS), a pivotal milestone that underscores our commitment to efficient and transparent revenue management practices. Additionally, comprehensive capacity-building sessions have been organized for all staff, empowering them to leverage the capabilities of this system effectively.

Over the past year, our dedicated efforts have yielded significant results in two key areas: the management of pending bills and the mobilization of own-source revenue (OSR).

Recognizing the importance of financial accountability and vendor relations, the department established the pending bills review and verification committee. The committee was tasked with meticulously reviewing all eligible pending bills, with the primary objective of facilitating timely payments, fostering positive relationships with our suppliers and service providers while ensuring financial prudence and accountability.

Furthermore, the adoption of a First in First Out (FIFO) policy has enhanced our ability to systematically settle these outstanding obligations in a fair and efficient manner.

On our efforts to enhance our own source revenue, I am pleased to announce that the County Integrated Revenue Management System (CIRMIS) stands as a testament to our commitment to revolutionize revenue management. The significant investment made in the establishment and operationalization of this advanced automated system sends a clear message of our dedication to enhancing the efficiency and effectiveness of revenue collection. Under the leadership of the Taita Taveta County Government, the CIRMIS was launched as a deliberate measure to create a robust framework for bolstering our own source revenue generation and management.

Furthermore, the County Treasury's commitment to conducting a comprehensive baseline survey to determine our OSR potential demonstrates a proactive approach to harnessing untapped fiscal opportunities. Leveraging the findings of the survey conducted by the Commission on Revenue Allocation, which revealed an OSR potential exceeding Kshs1 Billion, we are set to capitalize on these insights and identify the optimal avenues for revenue generation.

Additionally, the completion and impending implementation of a new valuation roll represent a pivotal step forward in our quest to ensure equitable and accurate property assessment. Through the enactment and enforcement of this updated valuation framework, we aim to ensure that all properties are appropriately valued and charged at current rates, addressing previously unrated areas and enhancing revenue collection.

In line with our unwavering commitment to fostering the professional growth and expertise of our personnel, the County Treasury is steadfast in its resolve to support the capacity building efforts within the Revenue Management Directorate and the Enforcement and Compliance Unit. We are dedicated to providing optimal staffing, enhanced mobility, modern equipment, and the necessary motivation to empower these vital departments. By investing in the professional development and

operational resources of our skilled workforce, we are poised to elevate the efficiency and effectiveness of revenue collection and compliance enforcement.

Furthermore, recognizing the imperative nature of accurate data and streamlined insights, the County Treasury has undertaken to establish and maintain an updated database encompassing all revenue streams. Through this initiative, we aim to capture and centralize pertinent information, including the specifics of businesses and properties, their respective types and natures, detailed locations, necessary permits and rates, and other relevant details. This robust database will serve as a foundational pillar in our pursuit of informed decision-making and resource optimization.

CONCLUSION

Mr Speaker and Honourable Members, as I bring this State of the County Address to a close, I am filled with a profound sense of gratitude for the opportunity to share our collective journey and aspirations for Taita Taveta County. We have done well, despite massive challenges – including historical injustices upon us from pre-independence days. Your attentive presence and active engagement throughout this address underscores the depth of our commitment to fostering a brighter future for our county.

I am heartened by the progress we have made, the resilience we have exhibited in the face of challenges, and the innovative spirit that permeates every sector of

our county. The milestones we have achieved, stand as a testament to our collective dedication to progress, inclusivity, and sustainable development. However, we are equally mindful of the challenges that persist and the work that lies ahead. What gives me renewed hope is the fact that, after much lobbying, our Equitable Shared has finally been increased – albeit not by the margin we expected. This increase, nevertheless, is most welcome, as it will enable us to do much more.

As we depart from this gathering, let us carry with us a renewed sense of purpose and a steadfast commitment to building a Taita Taveta County that leaves no one behind. Let the conversations sparked today continue to inspire meaningful action, collaboration, and innovation in our pursuit of a more vibrant and prosperous community.

In closing, I extend my heartfelt appreciation to all our residents and stakeholders for your enduring commitment to Taita Taveta County. Let us depart from here today with renewed hope, deepened unity, and a shared determination to realize the immense potential that lies within our county.

Together, let us build a future where every resident of Taita Taveta has the opportunity to thrive, where our communities flourish, and where our county stands as a beacon of progress and unity.

Thank you, and may our collective efforts continue to propel Taita Taveta County to greater heights.

God Bless Taita taveta !!!

God bless Kenya !!!

**H. E. DR. ANDREW MWADIME, EGH
GOVERNOR
TAITA TAVETA**