



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF MARSABIT

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



FIRST ANNUAL STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS
BY
H. E. MOHAMUD MOHAMED ALI
GOVERNOR, MARSABIT COUNTY
DURING THE OFFICIAL OPENING OF
THE 3RD SESSION OF SECOND MARSABIT COUNTY ASSEMBLY
DELIVERED ON
WEDNESDAY, THE 13TH FEBRUARY, 2019, 1400 HOURS
MARSABIT COUNTY ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS

Mr Speaker; Honourable Members of Marsabit County Assembly;

It is with profound joy that I join you today, this Wednesday afternoon for the Official Opening of the 3rd Session of the 2nd Marsabit County Assembly.

As you will recall, I delivered my inaugural address to this August House on 13th September 2017, during the official opening of this Second Assembly. It is exactly **1 year and 5 months** since then and I am deeply honoured and privileged to officiate again over this very important occasion, as I also deliver my First Annual State of the County Address covering the period from September 13th 2017 to February 13th 2019.

Thank you very much, Hon. Members, for joining us today in this chamber. I also want to thank all the people of Marsabit who are following this State of the County Address on local Radios and various social media platforms. No matter how you are following this Address, please understand that I sincerely appreciate your interest in the affairs of our County.

Mr Speaker;

You will note that **Section 30, Sub-section 2(K) of the County Governments Act, 2012**, which requires the Governor to deliver the State of the County Address, contemplates a County legislation that will define the content and the scope of this kind of address. Given that this legislation has not been enacted in our County, I urge the County Assembly and the Executive team to come up with relevant legislation to set the parameters and guide us in future.

Notwithstanding the absence of such legislation in our County, the State of the County Address is always an opportunity to look back on the past year to highlight achievements and progress made in pursuing the critical mission of the County Government.

But it is said that to recall our achievements is to remind ourselves how much we still have to accomplish. So this afternoon, through this State of the County Address, we will reflect on our accomplishments, successes and progress on key initiatives as well as the challenges we have encountered over the past one year.

We will also outline the work still to be done, our plans for the future and opportunities available to us in moving our County forward during the coming months and beyond.

Mr Speaker; Honourable Members;

Over the year, your Government has forwarded to this Assembly a raft of proposed Legislations, 2 Finance Bills, 1 Fiscal Strategy Paper, 3 budgetary revisions in the form of Supplementary Estimates and a total of 27 nominees seeking their approvals for the purposes of appointment to various offices. The Assembly has, always acted with requisite speed and effectively played its roles of scrutinizing the legislative proposals and budgets, vetting and approvals of nominees, thereby enabling us to execute our programmes on time and fill the vacancies.

That is why I was able to establish the Marsabit County Government within a short span of time after assuming office. I sincerely thank the Honourable Members of this Assembly for their unwavering support to their Government. As your Governor I do not take this support for granted.

I must commend you, Mr Speaker for your wise stewardship; just as I commend this Assembly for continuously rising above all partisan politics and maturely playing its key responsibilities of **Legislation, Oversight and Representation**. As you are aware, Article 175 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, spells out the principles of devolved governments, key among them being democratic principles and separation of powers between the Executive and the County Assembly. Whilst we should uphold these principles, we must also remain alive to the fact that without cooperation and mutual goodwill we will fail our people. I urge that we continue working together as we have always done and with that same spirit of close collaborations and regular consultations for the common good of Marsabit People.

Mr Speaker;

In my inaugural address to this Assembly 17 months ago, I enumerated my development plans in all the sectors under the devolved functions. I also pledged to listen to the voices, aspirations, dreams, hopes and desires of our

people, and institute a development plan to turn around the socio-economic wellbeing of our People.

Mr Speaker; We did not just talk the talk, but we walked the walk because I have been listening and continue to listen to the voices of the people throughout this great County - *Not just those who agreed with me during the elections but also those who differed with me.* My goal was not just to listen to people, but to translate their voices and aspirations into a plan that will serve as our blue print over the period 2018 to 2022.

I wish to report to this Assembly that after a rigorous process of engaging all the stakeholders and with the support of the Hon Members, we have now developed *a Demand- Driven, People-Focused* County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) for the period 2018-2022.

The **CIDP** is our endeavour to translate our people's aspirations into priorities, a clear set of outcomes, output measures and the required resources to transform the lives of Marsabit people.

It is my promise that we shall assemble all efforts and resources to ensure that we attain all the targets in the **CIDP** during my first term in office.

Mr Speaker;

Insofar as the **CIDP** is concerned, I want to make one point clear to the Hon. Members of this Assembly.

Whilst every effort has been made to align the new **CIDP** with relevant plans such as the **VISION 2030** and the **Sustainable Development Goals**, it is worthwhile to note that our **CIDP** process was completed before the **3rd Medium Term Plan** for implementation of VISION 2030 from 2018 to 2022. Given that the **3rd Medium Term Plan** largely focuses on realization of the President's Big Four Agenda, we will continuously evaluate and update the **CIDP** as necessary to achieve full realignment and synergy with all national plans including the Big Four Agenda.

Mr Speaker;

Honourable Members will agree that in any political transition, we not only take over the power, but also inherit the unfinished businesses left behind by the previous governments.

In our case, the previous government left behind a huge amount of pending bills, totalling to **Kshs. 972,862,287**. We also encountered a number of uncompleted projects for which no funds were allocated in the first budget we inherited.

In an effort to address the issue of unpaid bills, we appointed an internal committee to vet and review all the pending bills and make recommendation after verifying the supporting documents. We have already paid **Kshs. 417,281,128** of the pending bills, whilst **Kshs. 555,581,159** still remains unpaid. It is our assurance that all the genuine pending bills and claims will be settled.

As far as unfinished works are concerned, the previous administration left behind several uncompleted projects.

Four key projects are worthy of mentioning. These are **Marsabit Market, Marsabit Stadium, Bongole Resort** and **Marsabit Abattoir** projects.

At the time when we took over the government, **Bongole Resort** project was about 70% complete. We allocated **Kshs. 15M** for its completion and the facility is expected to be operational by September this year.

Marsabit Stadium is a joint initiative between the County and National Governments under VISION 2030. We have allocated **15M** in this Financial Year to complete our part and we have requested the National Ministry in charge of sport to allocate funding for the completion of the whole stadium as soon as possible.

Marsabit Market, which was about 60% complete, has been abandoned by the contractor with no clear plan and roadmap for its completion. We have since then reviewed the design work and added an extra floor with additional 150-stall capacity. We have allocated **Kshs. 65M** in this Financial Year for

completion of the market. We anticipate that the construction work for the market to be completed by the end of the year.

Mr Speaker;

The last of the four projects is the development of **Marsabit Abattoir**, which unfortunately represents the biggest challenge we inherited from the previous government.

Whilst the concept of an abattoir is undoubtedly a viable initiative for Marsabit County, the proposed location of the facility is likely to present a huge and insurmountable operational difficulty.

A quick review of the available documents revealed that the proposed site did not meet any of the requirements, standards and specifications for the establishment of a modern abattoir. Neither the guidelines by UN **FAO**, nor the specifications of Kenya Bureau of Standards (KEBS) for siting of an Abattoir were followed.

It beats all conventional logics why critical location requirements such as; ready availability of water; constant supply of electricity; proper access to tarmac road; proximity to LAPSET corridor and suitability for livestock holding ground were all ignored.

Mr Speaker;

Under the circumstances, we found it necessary to exercise extra prudence prior to any further investment of public resource toward this facility. In this regard, I have commissioned a study to assess the operational viability of the Marsabit abattoir in the proposed location. We will have to await the outcome of this study to inform our next course of action.

I now wish to highlight the progress made by our Government in the key priority areas;

Mr Speaker,

We are blessed with the largest County in Kenya with an area of more than 70,000 sq. Km. If we are to develop this vast land and put it to good use, it is

imperative that every corner of this County – from Merille to Moyale; Shuur to Ileret; Elle Dimtu to Loyangalani and every inch of land between them should be accessible. Unfortunately, the existing road network in our County, which stands at **4,500 Kilometres**, does not serve this purpose.

Mr Speaker; since last year, we have increased the total road network in Marsabit by about **100 km**, that is, *(from 4400 km in 2017 to 4500 km as at now)*. We have improved the existing network by tarmacking **4.3 km** of road in Marsabit town. This is the section from the town centre to Chief's Office of Central Location through Shauri Yako.

This work, which is 60% complete, has already improved storm water drainage which has been a serious challenge in the area and has enhanced the access of Shauri Yako residents to market, social amenities and town's CBD. Our plan is to tarmac **at least 8.5 Km of roads** within Marsabit and Moyale town centres in this Financial Year.

To improve the dilapidated road conditions caused by heavy rains and flash floods, the Department of Roads gravelled **131 km of roads** across the 4 Sub Counties *(this is Murrum road category)*.

This work includes **26 km** of Murrum roads in Laisamis; **30 km** in Saku; **39 Km** in Moyale and about **10km** in North Horr which are already complete.

Additionally, about **300 km** of roads have been graded across the county to enhance accessibility to market centres, water points and grazing zones and improve security among others. Of these graded roads, **111 km** is North Horr while **80, 53 and 50 kilometres** are in Moyale, Saku and Laisamis sub counties respectively.

Mr Speaker; our road network is still less than 50% of our requirement, and therefore substantial investment is required which is currently beyond our capacity. The condition is made worse by the fact that only **8.6%** of the county's road network is tarmacked. To remedy this, we intend to engage in broad based partnership with all stakeholders and development partners to secure their support in this sector.

Mr Speaker,

While still on road networks, I want to mention an issue of concern related to the Fuel Levy Fund, a Conditional Grant that we normally receive for the purposes of road maintenance. As you know, in the current budget the Assembly sub-divided this fund to finance various projects across the county. I want to inform the Hon Members that we got a serious reprimand for our action (*or is it your action?*). – *That* we did not abide by established rules and regulations for the Conditional Grant. We have been guided that the fund is SOLELY meant for roads maintenance and should be managed by the Department in charge of roads. I urge that going forward we take heed of this and that we remain guided on the handling of this fund.

Mr Speaker;

The Constitution of Kenya, 2010 defines health as an economic and social right. Article 43(1) (a) stipulates that, “Every person has the right- to the highest standard of health, which includes the right to health care services”. It is therefore in line with the intent to promote, *in every respect*, the Marsabit people’s right to **quality, affordable** and **accessible** healthcare services that we have put in place measures and mechanisms for an overhaul of our health sector.

As part of our efforts to improve healthcare service delivery we have in the last one year recruited **175** Community Health Extension Workers, **80** Nutritionists, **10** Pharmacists and **3** Medical Officers which are evenly distributed across all the sub-counties.

During my inaugural address to this Assembly, I reiterated my promise to work towards a Universal Health Care in Marsabit through a progressive increment in the number of persons with a medical cover.

Today, I can report that we have fulfilled that promise.

Thanks to the support programme we initiated, a total of **60,000** vulnerable persons (*10,000 Principal Members, 50,000 dependents*) in Marsabit can now access

medical insurance cover through the **NHIF** medical scheme anywhere in the Country.

Mr Speaker; Barely three months after launching the programme, we got recognition from the Head of State, H.E. President Uhuru Kenyatta and that was not a mean recognition!

Many counties have since then emulated our example, but I can tell you that we still boast of the highest number of beneficiaries enrolled into NHIF programme by a county government.

As of last month, over 200 beneficiaries of the programme who were admitted in various hospitals across Kenya have had their medical bills covered by NHIF. This programme will be progressively up-scaled with the view to achieving Universal Health Coverage in Marsabit.

Mr Speaker; I also made a promise of a free ambulance services in Marsabit – *A promise which has been fulfilled.* As at last month, over 1,000 critical case referrals, *within and outside the County*, have been recorded and all the costs of the ambulatory services was borne by your government with no financial burden shared with patients.

Our effort to make the Marsabit County Referral Hospital operate at full level-5 capacity is well on course. As part of Kenya-Cuban Agreement that was signed earlier last year, we have received 2 medical specialists - a General Surgeon and Family Health Specialist who have been placed at the Marsabit Referral Hospital.

The Department of Health Services, also recruited a specialist gynaecologist to work at the hospital, effectively eliminating the need for delivery-related referrals, except for the most critical cases requiring ICU services. Further, we have installed the Dialysis Machine at the Marsabit County Referral Hospital and from November last year the Renal Unit has been fully-functional.

As of last week, the unit is providing 14 dialysis sessions per week to 10 patients who could have been sent elsewhere.

Equally with the aim of reducing referrals related to imaging services, we have equipped both Marsabit Referral and Moyale Hospitals with CT-SCAN machines. The CT-SCAN at the Marsabit County Referral Hospital has already been installed, ready for use; while the one in Moyale is awaiting installation. Likewise, the construction of Blood Bank Unit at Marsabit Referral Hospital has been completed and is only awaiting equipment for it to be operational.

Finally, the constructions of **Medical Training College**; a **Regional Level 2 Bio-Safety Laboratory** and the construction of an Incinerator within the Marsabit Referral Hospital are on-going.

Mr Speaker; Overall we have greatly improved access to health care services in Marsabit over the past one year. We have increased functional health service delivery points from **101 in 2017** to the current **117**; likewise functional Laboratories increased from 22 to 34, while Maternity Units functioning in the County increased from 37 to 51.

In the current year, we have allocated a total of Kshs. **275 Million** for the construction, equipping and/or upgrading of **95** Health Facilities across the County. The department also plans to commence the construction of a Level 4 Hospital in Sololo Makutano to serve the populations of Uran, Obbu and Sololo Wards and their environs.

Mr Speaker; Hon Members;

Before I leave the Health sector, I note with concern that the on-going strike by nurses across the Country is affected the delivery of health services in our County.

Given that I have addressed a number of their concerns, it really saddens me that the nursing fraternity in Marsabit found it necessary to participate in this strike and are denying our community essential services we dearly need. I find this as a lack of consideration on their part. I want to take this opportunity to appeal to their conscious and return to work. It is the only logical and appropriate step for them to take at this time.

Mr Speaker; Hon Members: From day one in office, your government focussed on making education and training services, not only accessible and affordable but also of high quality.

Our investment in Early Childhood Development and Vocational Training sector over the past year include; construction of 20 new ECD classrooms; continuous supply of learning materials and meals to ECD centres; recruitment and posting of 204 ECD teachers across the County; rehabilitation of 6 public Vocational Training Centres and provision of tools and equipment to the Centres; as well as waiver of all tuition fees to make access to training free for all eligible and interested youths.

This investment resulted in increased enrolment in ECD from 17,000 learners in the year 2017 to 18,193 in 2018, while transition to grade 1 increased from 4,500 in 2017 to 5,000 in 2018. Equally investment in the vocational training led to increase in training enrolment by almost 300%, that is, from **245 students** in 2017 to **625 students** by 2018.

During the 2017/2018 FY the County Government disbursed scholarship funds totalling to Kshs. **45M** to **1,498** needy students in universities and middle-level colleges. Further, a total of **1150** students and **650** TVET trainees are expected to benefit this year.

Mr Speaker; Recognizing the financial challenges facing many parents with students in secondary schools, we amended the County Scholarship Act with the support of this House to increase the Scholarship Fund to Kshs. **60M** and extend the Fund's coverage to secondary schools students from poor background.

It is because of that Amendment that early this year, **194** students joining Form One received Full Scholarship from the County Government to support them through their secondary education.

Mr Speaker; it was one of the most gratifying moments for me when on the 4th of January, this year, I issued cheques to 194 young scholars, all of whom are from needy families in Marsabit.

Through those cheques we settled all their **Form One** fees in the schools to which they are admitted - *No Matter the Location of the School; No Matter the Amount of the Fees.*

Equally, all the fees for remaining years will be catered for by their Government as a key priority.

I am proud that here in Marsabit our priorities and values are focused on Governance that is compassionate and caring.

It is my determination that we will sustain this effort every year to reach at least **1,000** beneficiaries cumulatively by the year 2022. Priorities such as this are what help to define us as a caring community.

Mr Speaker; Hon Members;

You all know that we are grappling with high rate of youth unemployment. It is clear that in the past, Kenya as a Country did not respond, quickly and sufficiently, to the changes in the job market demands. But now the world is changing. Kenya is changing. And we in Marsabit too must adapt to the changes around us.

We need to employ pragmatic approaches to combat the real challenges of unemployment. We must first and foremost realize that white collar jobs are becoming fewer every year, and other alternatives must be pursued. However, despite our best intention the past one year, to give due priority to Marsabit youths, our responses to youth issues have been somewhat ad hoc. This was so because a purposive policy that is supportive of youth agenda has been lacking. This challenge has now been addressed through the development of Marsabit Youth Service Policy which has been approved by the Cabinet and **Marsabit Youth Fund Bill 2018**, to anchor the policy in our legislation and create funding for priority youth issues is currently before this Assembly.

This bill once finalised will create fund to support programmes for Youth Empowerment, Community Service; Skills Development; Sport and Sporting programme; Youth Enterprise and Business Development; and Post Training Support, including Paid Internships.

I urge that the Assembly dispenses with this Bill, as soon as possible, to enable us operationalize the Youth Policy.

Mr Speaker; Hon Members of Marsabit County Assembly;

We have remained focused on our commitment to improve access to clean water both for domestic and livestock use.

That is why in the last one year, your Government constructed **10 underground** water storage facilities, erected **14 masonry tanks**, dug **4 water pans** and drilled **12 boreholes** across the County. Of the **12 boreholes** drilled **9** were successful.

In North-Horr sub-county, 3 boreholes drilled in **Ileret**, **Goricha** and **Maikona** areas were all successful. The borehole in **Ileret** has already been fully equipped, and local communities are expected to benefit immensely. In Laisamis, boreholes were successful drilled in Ngurunit, Kurkum, Ballah and Ongeli areas, whilst in Moyale sub-county, the Government drilled boreholes in Lataka, Karbururi, Godoma and Sololo with ALL but ONE being successful - *the borehole in Sololo yielded little water*

Mr Speaker;

Of all the four sub-counties, Saku sub-county remains the worst hit by water scarcity. Unfortunately, two boreholes that were drilled in Saku, namely in Boru Haro and Kubi Bagassa areas did not yield water, denying us a success we much needed.

But we are far from giving up and we will commission as many hydrological studies as would be necessary to establish potential areas for drilling of Boreholes. With our plan to upgrade Boru Haro Dispensary to a Level 4 hospital, access to water in that area is more urgent than ever before. We will give our best to meet that urgency.

In Marsabit town, the County Government in partnership with the National Government has commissioned a **1.6B-Shilling** Project to construct and install sewerage system. The Contractor, a Chinese company is already on site, undertaking the excavation works on sewerage sites and expansion of water pipeline infrastructure.

Mr Speaker; Hon Members;

In **Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries** sector, we are driven by an overall goal to create a food secure County; increase household incomes and achieve sustainable economic prosperity.

To realize this goal we seek to increase crop production and productivity by providing high quality seeds and support services. We also aim to increase livestock production and productivity in Marsabit, safeguard livestock health and promote trade in livestock and livestock products.

Equally, increasing sustainable fish production for subsistence and commercial utilization is an objective we will pursue to make it a reality during our term in office.

Mr Speaker;

Over the past one year, we purchased and distributed about **18 Metric Tons** of assorted drought tolerant seeds to farmers while providing additional support and extension services to them. During the same period, and thanks to the State Department of Livestock, we received **198 Metric Tons** of livestock feed supplements and distributed them to livestock keepers in the areas that are worst hit by drought.

Mr Speaker;

In view of the unreliability of rain-fed farming in Marsabit, we plan to make substantial investment in irrigated farming. We seek to increase areas of land under irrigation from **150 acres as at 2017** to at least **750 acres** by 2022.

With the support of partners, we have already rehabilitated **100 acres** of land in Kalacha and Songa irrigation schemes and another **65 acres** in Walda; we have expanded irrigation land in Loglogo from **5 to 20 acres** and in Kinisa we have increased irrigable land from **6 to 20 acres**.

Further, the Department with the support of **GIZ** conducted a pre-feasibility study to map sites with potential for irrigation farming.

In the area of livestock health, the Department provided veterinary services all-round the year, all over the County. In total, about **800,000 goats/sheep; 80,000 cattle;** and **23, 000** camels were vaccinated against various diseases-causing pathogens, while a total of **550,000** goats, cattle and camels that were already afflicted by various diseases were either dewormed or treated during the past year.

Mr Speaker;

Blessed with the largest Desert Lake in the world, covering over **6,000** square Kilometre, our potential in the Blue Economy is huge, yet remains unexploited. Whilst fishing is a key activity in Loyangalani, Ileret and the El-Molo Bay, the fisher folks face great constraints in capacity, fish processing and access to market.

This Government is determined to reverse this by providing support to the local fisher folks to enhance their capacity and access to market. We have already procured and distributed fishing nets to **475** practicing fishermen and women, while procurement of 20 fishing boats and rehabilitation of cold rooms in Illeret and Loiyangalani are underway. Further, the construction of a **100-Million-Shilling** fish factory in Loyangalani, *which is one of my flagship projects*, is set to commence soon as the work has been already awarded and plans for ground-breaking is in top gear.

Mr Speaker;

I am sure Hon Members will remember Loyangalani as the place where in June every year we come together to celebrate our shared descent as Marsabit family, embrace our unity in diversity as a County, and showcase to the world the rich cultural heritage of Marsabit people.

You will recall that last year's Marsabit Lake Turkana Cultural Festival was really spectacular. This year, we will even plan early, mobilize more resources and invest more efforts to showcase once again the multi-faceted splendid cultural and linguistic diversity that makes Marsabit.

Every year, the month of December also offers us yet another opportunity for strengthening our cohesion through two cultural festivities in Kalacha town and Gadha Moji Cultural Centre.

By the way, the local community in Jaldesa Location through the stewards of Gadha Moji Cultural Centre requested support towards further development of the Centre – a request we honoured and subsequently allocated Kshs. 7.5M for the construction and refurbishment of Gadha Moji Cultural Site.

Given that such events will not only attract culture lovers but also bring business opportunities, the local community proposed construction of Market stalls in the near-by centre of Dirib Gombo. And Kshs. 5M has been set aside in this Financial Year to implement that proposal.

Mr Speaker;

Hon Members of Marsabit County Assembly;

The **Land, Energy and Urban Development** sector in Marsabit is in total disarray.

Haphazard settlement in urban areas due to poor planning of the yester years is a notable characteristic in the entire County, posing a great challenge to the proper use, planning and management of the land.

A classic example of this mess is depicted in Manyatta Otte here in Marsabit town, where even responses to emergencies such as floods, fire outbreak and other rescue missions cannot be done because there is no access road to most residential homes. Settlement in Manyatta Otte is so disorganized, congested and crowded together so much so that spaces for any development and public utilities cannot be designated. This phenomenon is replicated in most, *if not all*, other existing and upcoming towns across the County.

To correct this mess as much as possible, the Government has commenced a rigorous physical planning of all towns, land surveys and development of town by-laws. Already, Integrated Master plan for Marsabit town has been developed and is currently before this Assembly for approval while final consensus on the establishment of Marsabit Municipality is on-going.

The Land department has also prepared over 15 development plans for a number of centres including Sololo Makutano; Gurumesa and Merille towns. Similarly, local physical development plans for Lami, Sessi and Upper Technical area of Marsabit town as well as regularization plan for Manyatta Otte are all in place, while physical planning for Bubisa and Uran centres are slated for completion within this year.

I urge that the Hon Members deliberate on the Plans and Town By-Laws that are before them as soon as possible to grant us the required approval and power to correct the existing mess and curb future occurrences of the same in our settlement patterns.

Mr Speaker; with the view to enhancing land ownership through the issuance of title deeds, we have undertaken a number of surveys and adjudication exercises across the County. Last year, we secured and issued **252 letters of allotment** to plot owners in Nyayo road areas of Marsabit Central Ward and Just last month I issued **145 title deeds** in Dub Gobba village of Sagante/Jaldesa Ward. The processing of title deeds for the 252 parcels in Nyayo Road is in the final stage.

Additionally, **1,400** parcels in Sagante/Jaldesa Ward and **800** others in Karare Ward have been surveyed and demarcated and title deeds are at final stages of printing.

The issues of physical planning and acquisition of title deeds will remain a key focus because land is a key factor of production and any effort towards enhancing the security of tenure will go a long way in increasing county productivity and competitiveness.

Mr Speaker;

During the past one and half year, Marsabit, *like all other Counties*, faced unprecedented financial challenges which made the operations of the County Government almost impossible.

In addition to the late remittances of funds from the National Treasury, we also faced serious challenges in appropriation of the remitted funds.

These challenges were mainly centred on the operation of the IFMIS as the central IFMIS system in Nairobi proved to be a great hindrance to procurement and payment of services. Oftentimes, the IFMIS system was either inaccessible or too slow in connectivity.

This greatly hampered the flow of cash in the counties, disrupted our plans, and delayed procurement and delivery of services. Even payments for projects already completed and services rendered could not be done on time and many contractors and suppliers had to wait for far too long.

This was not a problem of our making, but it was a challenge we had to endure due to the difficult economic time in the Country, coupled with the unreliability of the IFMIS system. However, there are now indications of some improvement in the remittance of funds from the Treasury and management of IFMIS system. Hence, we are likely to face minimum challenges in meeting our financial obligations and the overall service delivery.

It is our commitment to this Assembly and to the people of Marsabit that henceforth we shall pay our contractors and suppliers on time and we shall settle our bills within the timelines agreed in the contracts.

However, I want to add a rider here; anyone who seeks to work for the people of Marsabit through the County Government of Marsabit must be ready to deliver **QUALITY!**

> Quality Works! > Quality Goods! > Quality Services!

We demand value for money. That is our only precondition to settlement of bills.

Mr. Speaker;

Financial prudence and accountability are fundamental public finance principles as outlined in Article 201(d) of the Constitution. Further, the Public Finance Management (**PFM**) Act, 2012 outlines the fiscal responsibility principles to ensure prudence and transparency in the management of public resources. In particular, Section 107 of the **PFM** law states:

1) That the County government's recurrent expenditure shall not exceed the county government's total revenue.

2) That over the medium term, a minimum of 30% of the County government's budget shall be allocated to the development expenditure.

As your Governor, I have remained committed to ensuring compliance and strict spending measures that focus more on development.

This is why the Department of Finance and Economic Planning probably has the toughest regulations and instructions to follow in the county. They have to design a fiscal strategy that maintains recommended ratio between recurrent and development expenditures, create a delicate balance between departmental and Ward priorities and ensure availability of funds for my flagship programmes, while adjusting to changes in government structures, community needs and emergencies which are oftentimes unexpected.

I am happy to report that in the current financial year (*which is the first ever budget we prepared*), we allocated 49% of the budget to development programmes, which is almost a 50:50 share between recurrent and development expenditures thereby surpassing the minimum 30% requirement set in the PFM Act. It is important to note that we did not just increase the allocation for development, but we also gave the people of Marsabit more control over their development aspirations.

You will recall that we allocated Kshs. 75M to each of our 20 Wards to meet the specific priorities as expressed by the people in their respective Wards. The total Ward allocations stood at Kshs. 1.5B which translates to 19% of our total budget and 39% of our development budget. That is one of the highest Ward allocations across all counties! This however meant that all other development programmes including priority projects for the 10 departments and flagships projects had to share the remaining Kshs. 2.4B.

Mr Speaker, whilst the decision to allocate more funds to development and specifically to support Ward priorities is commendable and remains worthy, we have to understand that our needs as a County are subject to change and so are our priorities. Consequently, we may be forced, from time to time, to adapt our

fiscal planning to reflect the ever evolving needs and plan for any changes in our priorities.

Planning for changes means we may have to devise cost cutting measures and waste reduction strategies with the view to increasing more resources for development. Equally, we may have to prioritize investment decisions in key infrastructures and critical facilities while reducing the number of small projects to make funds available for implementation of transformative but capital-intensive decisions.

In this regard, I have directed the CEC Member in charge of Finance and Economic Planning to develop the **County Fiscal Strategy Paper for 2019/2020 FY** that will accommodate any possible changes in our development priorities and strategies for the coming year.

The Fiscal Strategy Paper, which will provide relevant guide on resource allocations and set new budget ceilings on various expenditures, will be submitted to this Assembly for consideration before the end of the month in line with the PFM Act, 2012.

Hon Members; there will be no doubt that some measures might appear unpleasant to take, but we must do what it takes to create an enabling environment for economic development and prosperity of our people.

Mr. Speaker;

The local revenue base of our County remains weak and undependable. The overall implication is that we have a large portion of our county budget funded by the National Government transfers.

From the inception of the Marsabit County Government, the proportion of our budget funded by local sources has always been less than 3%. Specifically, in the last financial year, we encountered challenges in the collection of revenue and we were not able to meet our revenue target. This was mainly due to spill over of insecurity situation from neighbouring countries which made the environment unbearable for revenue collectors and many of our revenue collection streams had to be abandoned.

Additionally, the outbreak of Rift Valley Fever which resulted in the banning of livestock sales and consumption of livestock products affected our revenue generation. *But over and above there are notable loopholes in our revenue collection and administration system.*

Mr Speaker, there is no doubt that to effectively transform our County and attain sustainable development, this has to change. And in this regard, we have already initiated structural reforms to ensure efficient, transparent and sustainable generation and administration of local revenue in the County.

As part of these reforms, and with the view to streamlining revenue collection and seal loopholes in the administration of revenue, we have appointed a substantive Director of Revenue Services; initiated the process for establishing a fully automated revenue system and recruited on average 20 revenue officers in each sub-county to assist in revenue collection. We have further initiated training for all revenue staff to build their capacity and enhance their skills for better output.

The Director of Revenue Services now has the necessary powers, system and support to manage revenue services without undue hindrances.

Mr. Speaker;

We have also made a number of other internal adjustments in our governance structure to improve coordination and planning; enhance efficiency, effectiveness and accountability. Allow me to highlight a few:

In December last year, I re-structured the Department of Finance and Economic Planning and appointed a Chief Officer to specifically head the County's Socio-economic Planning Unit. In the same month, we set up County Internal Audit Committee with overall mandate to oversee and enforce compliance to process and procedures as required by the PFM Act.

Additionally with the view to establishing an integrated, whole-of-the Government Result-Delivery culture, I have established the Governor's Result Delivery Unit headed by a Chief Officer. Delivery Unit will ensure government priorities are understood, implemented and monitored. It will also oversee

Performance Contracting to help align performance with strategic priorities of the County Government.

Lastly, early this year we established a Project Inspection and Verification Committee which has been tasked with roles of inspecting, verifying and validating all projects before any payments are done. Any possibility of shoddy work, poor workmanship and/or payment for uncompleted or unaccomplished work will no longer be anticipated.

The Finance Bill for the coming year will reflect these changes in our governance structure; and I know I can count on your unreserved support. I am also counting on your support to take devolution to the lowest administrative level – the village unit, as outlined in the County Government Act 2012. The Village Administration Bill 2018, which will guide us in the creation of Village Units, is already before the County Assembly for approval and enactment into an Act of County Assembly.

These are just but a snapshot of the progress we have made in select sectors over the last 17 months. But similar progress and success have been registered in all other sectors.

We will continue to work tirelessly to accelerate the development of all necessary internal policies, plans and programmes to make this administration more accessible, responsive and accountable to the people of Marsabit. I remained convinced that there can be no better community to serve than Marsabit community, and there can never be a better job for me than to serve and deliver for them – That was my solemn promise to the people of Marsabit prior to my election as the Governor, it was a commitment I made 17 months ago during my inauguration; and it is now my sacred duty to live by that promise and commitment every day and every hour of my leadership.

Mr Speaker;

I live by the understanding that the most fundamental obligation of this County Government is the promise to care for all of its citizens, because this County is their County. This government is their Government.

That is why we have always responded to all emergencies in our County with requisite speed without taking into account where they occurred and to whom they happened.

Political persuasions of the victims, real or perceived, expressed or hidden, have NEVER been and will NEVER be a consideration for access to life-saving interventions from the Government I lead.

After all, what we need in Marsabit is not division, hatred or violence. What we need is love and compassion towards one another and especially towards those who face difficulties and suffering within our County.

We know we have had difficult times in the past. We have been set against each and at times grappled with death and destructions in our midst. But even in the middle of all those, as difficult as times may be and as hard as some will want to divide us - *the vast majority of our people wants to live and stay Together.*

So Hon Members; Let us dedicate ourselves to that common desire for togetherness and say a prayer for our County and for our people.

I am confident, that with your prayers and with God's Grace, we will know and live by the age-old truth that light will always defeat darkness and love will always conquer hatred.

Mr Speaker and Hon Members of Marsabit County Assembly;

I want to conclude this Address, this Afternoon with firm understanding that - ***That DESIRE*** of our people to **LIVE TOGETHER** in peace and harmony, and **MOVE FORWARD** as one people with common abode and common destiny is the **FOREMOST** reason why **THE STATE OF OUR COUNTY REMAINS STRONG, HEALTHY & PROMISING!**

May God bless you all and may God bless our County.

H.E Mohamud Mohamed Ali
Governor
Marsabit County

