

**STATE OF THE COUNTY ADDRESS DELIVERED BY
GOVERNOR JAMES ORENKO ON 29TH DECEMBER
2023 AT THE SIAYA COUNTY ASSEMBLY CHAMBER.**

Mr. Speaker Sir, Honourable members,

1. All sovereign power belongs to the people of Kenya. The exercise of this power is undertaken either directly by the people or through their democratically elected representatives. In the legislative space, this assembly is the constitutional organ of the people of Siaya with the mandate to exercise the legislative authority of the county assembly as vested in it under Article 185 (1) of the Constitution of Kenya.
2. In fulfilment of their respective mandate, the County Executive and the County Assembly must take into account the objects and principles of devolved government as provided in Article 174 of the Constitution.
3. Besides the supremacy of the Constitution as the basic law of the land, the foundational principles, values and aspirations set out in the preamble and in Articles 6, 8 and 10 of the Constitution together with

the Bill of Rights are key pillars and structures of Kenya's democratic state.

4. This august Assembly is the appropriate forum for the County Executive to deliver an annual state of the County address and to submit to it a report of the implementation status of the county policies and plans and other relevant reports.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

5. The County Government of Siaya is required to promote social and economic development in a sustainable way. In doing so the people of Siaya must participate in the exercise of the powers of government and in making decisions affecting them. This is the centrality of the County Assembly and the precept of public participation in our devolved system of government.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

6. Kenya has had a difficult transition after the general elections held in 2022. For the last one year the national economy has suffered shocks that have led to the depreciation of the Kenyan shilling against all the major currencies. Compared to our neighbours, inflows of foreign direct investments have declined.

The debt and tax burdens have worsened and shriveled job opportunities and employment for citizens. Drought and severe floods have been variously experienced all over the country. The cost of living has affected livelihoods and many Kenyans are desperately waiting to see the light at the end of the tunnel. The share of counties of revenue raised nationally has stagnated and the disbursements thereof to counties have not been rendered timeously. These have affected adversely the ability of county governments to perform the functions allocated to them, their fiscal capacity and efficiency and the development needs of counties. As a matter of law and practice counties have a right to stable and predictable allocations of revenue. To date we have not received disbursement of our share of revenue for the months of November and December 2023 and this is the case more or less in all the counties across the country.

7. In our county we have had to deal with incidences of insecurity affecting operations both in the land and in the lake. This being a National Government function, we commend organs involved for their steadfast actions in restoring and addressing insecurity. We

have also engaged with key stakeholders in addressing the problem of Gender Based violence.

8. But it's not all doom and gloom. Despite these problems and worrying trends of the usurpation of devolved functions by the national government, the good news is that devolution remains a strong and irreplaceable feature of our system of government.
9. Let me report on various matters as required by statute before I talk on the state of the county in regard to various sectors.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

10. The County Government has tried in every respect to abide by the Constitution and the law when making decisions or in the implementation of public policy decisions. In doing so, national values and principles have been adhered to. The County Assembly has robustly played its oversight role and taken the Executive to account as it should. Besides the County Assembly, the constitutional commissions and independent offices such as the Auditor General and the Controller of Budget have looked into the financial affairs and management operations of the

county and submitted reports that have been availed to Parliament and indeed the public. The Senate has played its oversight role and summoned both the Executive and the Assembly to examine questions raised by the independent offices. In these we have fared fairly well when called upon to answer to audit queries and related issues. The Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission have also published a report on corruption risk assessment into the systems, policies, procedures and practices of Siaya County Executive. We have had engagements with Kenya National Human Rights and Equality Commission, the Commission on Revenue Allocation and the Salaries and Remuneration Commission in relation to their constitutional functions. The county has played host to a mission of the Judicial Service Commission in addition to a visit by the Honorable Chief Justice and President of The Supreme court. Indeed, all these visits and engagements demonstrate our commitment to engage with key national state organs from all arms of the national government and of course our own County Assembly. We have taken progressive, reasonable and measurable steps and made progress in the realization of the national values and principles of governance referred to Article 10 of the Constitution of Kenya.

11. In June this year The County Assembly approved the Program Based Budget for the Financial Year 2023/2024 and subsequently the County Annual Development Plan 2023/2024. The center piece for the Budget and the plan is the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) which has also received the approval of the Assembly. I will deal with the details of the budget and the plans a little later in my address together with other plans relating to spatial planning and the transfer of functions to newly created municipalities.

12. The County Government of Siaya has experienced a cocktail of historical problems which are detailed in various audit reports including the Ouko Task Force Report that range from revenue collection systems, revenue leakages, management and/or abuse of imprest accounts, pending bills, supply chain management, payroll register with the related problems of ghost workers and a ballooning and/ or fluctuating wage bill. All these malpractices and challenges have been examined and measures taken to ensure that public money or resources are used in a prudent and responsible manner. We do not want to wish away these problems and challenges. We

are on a journey and our goal and destination is to ensure that there is openness and accountability, including public participation, in the management of public finances and the disposal of public assets.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

13. This therefore is an opportune occasion for us to reflect on the journey that we have collectively travelled over the last one year. At the beginning of our tenure in office, we were confronted by the need to re-engineer the development pathway for our great county. Although in our urban areas, towns and municipalities there are signs of a growing and vibrant small and medium enterprise, the county lacked any sizeable industry or factory. That implied a delirious state, given the inadequacies in the provision and delivery of services to our people, against the backdrop of the disturbing levels of unemployment among our youth and the attendant socio-economic upheavals that majority of our people faced and continue to face.

14. Scanning across our land, we noted with interest the strategic advantage our county enjoys within the

Lake Region Economic Bloc, our long-stretch of Lake Victoria shoreline, our underutilized arable lands with a conducive climatic pattern and youthful demographic dividend to boot, not to forget the great industry and diverse and robust human capital at our disposal.

15. It is therefore our conviction that a deliberate and strategic investment in our agricultural sector including the blue economy as an anchor pillar for our socio-economic transformation is the guaranteed pathway towards a prosperous Siaya County, that is not only food secure but also as the engine of our industrial development and economic prosperity for shared growth.

16. It is for this reason that we have chosen the theme of this address as: ***'Accelerating Socio-Economic Transformation through Strategic Investments and Good Governance'***.

17. This theme is a mirror reflection of our focus on carefully selected development projects and interventions that are geared towards spurring productivity, which when channeled through the robust value-chains will lead to industrialization.

18. For these to be realized, we wish to reiterate that we will persistently be guided by the ideals of democracy and good governance including transparency, accountability, citizen participation and responsiveness to the needs of the residents of Siaya for sustainable development and shared growth.
19. Of these ideals, the right to timely and accurate information and feedback is inalienable.
20. This State of the County address therefore provides such a treasured opportunity for me to inform and remind our people of the milestones we have so far made as well as project what the future portends for us.

Mr. Speakers, Honourable Members,

21. It is now my pleasure to report that during the period under review, our administration made significant progress across the various sectors as mandated by law and aligned to our strategic direction and the **Nyalore** agenda as follows:

A. HEALTH AND SANITATION

Hon. Speaker Sir,

22. For us to optimize our productivity as envisioned in the administration's economic blueprint, we must make every effort to create a healthy society and a conducive and enabling environment for business.
23. This can only be realized with enhanced access to quality and affordable healthcare. In this regard, we have focused on strengthening systems that support demand creation and utilization of preventive and promotive health services, even as we optimize our curative services.
24. Our investment on **building a functional and responsive community health services** as part of the broader agenda of enhanced primary healthcare services has been anchored on **capacitating our indefatigable 2,128 Community Health Promoters**. Over the last one year, we have improved their monthly stipend from Ksh. 2500 to Ksh.3000, with the National Government making a commitment

to top it up with an additional Ksh. 2000. It is my hope that they will honour their commitment.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Honourable Members,

25. We are one of the **few counties that have enrolled CHPs on NHIF**, so that, they too, can be able to access the very essential services that they help provide.

26. Equally, we have aided them with requisite tools including medical kits for disease screening at the household levels, as well as motivational and recognition materials such as uniforms and footwears.

27. To enhance the efficiency and quality of data capture and reporting of CHPs' work, the administration has digitized their operations through provision of smart phones and tablets.

28. The net effect of these interventions is visible in the **increased community-facility linkage, enhanced follow ups, increased frequency and coverage of household visitation, management of minor**

ailments at community-level and referral of clients to health facilities.

29. Our skilled birth delivery has leapfrogged to 95%. Similarly, our immunization coverage has risen from about 80% in 2021 to 93% currently. These outcome indicators are significantly above the national averages which stand at 89% and 80% respectively.

30. Towards **enhancing access to quality healthcare services**, we have deliberately mapped out, equipped and operationalized 19 rural health facilities. This has had the effect of helping us **attain the World Health Organization (WHO) acceptable standard of 3km radius of access to a health facility in all the sub counties except in Ugenya.**

31. In this regard, **we would like to appeal to this Honorable House that our strategic investments in health should now focus more on equipping and enhancing the functionality of our existing health facilities as opposed to building new ones, particularly in the 5 sub-counties where we have attained the minimum standards of access.**

32. To ensure that our **women and their newborns remain healthy before, during, and after childbirth** we have **expanded maternity infrastructure** in a number of our facilities and **scaled up maternal child health services** across the county. In Bondo Sub County Hospital for instance, we equipped the maternity complex. We also renovated Maternity Units and Maternal Child Clinics in Sigomre and Ukwala Sub County hospitals among others. We have recently launched the construction of a New Maternity – Theatre Complex at Yala Sub-County Hospital. The 2023 preliminary data evidence indicate significant reduction in maternal and child mortalities.

33. When we assumed office, we were confronted with **public outcry over intermittent stockouts of essential health commodities which seriously affected the functionality of our health system**, eroded public confidence on our health system and the morale of our hard-working health workers, thereby adversely affecting **public health seeking behavior of our people**. To this end, we procured an emergency medical order that saw the delivery of diverse medical commodities worth ksh.40m delivered by KEMSA. Since then, **Siaya County Government has procured**

and supplied these essential and life saving commodities on a quarterly basis to guarantee their regular availability.

34. To further enhance the functionality of the health system, we have recruited a total of 156 new health workers of all cadres. While I recognize that we still need more, this intervention has helped in reducing the gap on the prevailing shortage of critical health workforce. Consequently, we have expanded our range of medical services as well as coverage. For instance, in Kagwa Dispensary, as is the case with few other facilities, laboratory services such as malaria microscopy, antenatal profile as well as full blood count and urinalysis are now accessible to our patients. Access to critical and essential radiological services such as x-rays and ultrasound have tremendously improved. This will improve further upon completion of the of the **installations of x-ray machine at Got Agulu Sub-County Hospital and the digitization of the x-ray installations in Madiany and Ambira Sub-County Hospitals**, within the current financial year.

35. The establishment and equipping of eye clinics in all the six sub county hospitals in partnership with the

Fred Hollows Foundation, has **bolstered the delivery of eye care service to our citizens**, thereby **eliminating costs that would otherwise be incurred by patients while accessing services outside the County**. A total of 26,160 patients accessed eye care services, out of which 1,474 patients had their vision restored through cataract surgery in 2022/2023 financial year. By October 2023, 1,567 patients had their visions restored through eye surgeries.

36. The medical emergency referral system in the county has improved tremendously with the acquisition of 3 new Ambulances and 2 utility vehicles with support from Transforming Health System (TSH) and NGIMA for SURE, which increased our medical emergency fleet to 11 Ambulances. In addition, we also acquired one on-shore health surveillance motorboat ambulance that is assisting in referrals from and within the Islands. This intervention improved the referrals from our Islands from 2,173 cases in 2021/2022 to 3,060 cases in 2022/2023.

Mr Speaker Sir, Honourable Members,

Let me now speak to the status of policies, legislations and regulations that touch on health.

37. To consolidate the above gains and accelerate the attainment of our goals for on health, I wish to implore this Honorable House, working in close collaboration with the office of the county attorney, to fast-track the passage and operationalization of the following health-related Bills and Policies: -

- (a) **Siaya County Health Services Act, 2018's Health Financing Regulations**
- (b) **Siaya County Health Sector Strategic Plan 2020-2025.**
- (c) **County Nutrition Action plan 2018-2022.**
- (d) **Siaya County Nurturing Care Strategic Plan 2023 – 2027.**
- (e) **Siaya County Referral Strategy 2015-2020.**
- (f) **Siaya County Reproductive Health Bill, 2019.**
- (g) **Siaya County Universal Health Coverage Policy Guidelines.**
- (h) **Proposed Siaya County Community Health Services Bill, 2022.**

38. In addition, this House and the Department of Health together with the County Attorney need to

examine our array of policies, legislations and regulations on health towards realigning them with the national legislations.

B. WATER, SANITATION, ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE CHANGE AND NATURAL RESOURCES

Mr. Speaker Sir,

40. **The County Government of Siaya broad vision for this sector is to ensure access to clean and safe water within globally acceptable distance of 0.5km radius for all residents of Siaya County.**

It is a concern that despite our proximity to one of Africa's largest fresh water bodies – Lake Victoria, and many other enviable water sources including Lake Sare, River Yala and Nzoia as well as Lake Kanyaboli, nearly 40% of our population are yet to have access to this critical commodity. This puts them in danger of poor sanitation and at risk of many communicable diseases, thereby piling on our disease burden.

41. Equally concerning are our lowly depressing indicators on environmental conservation as well as mitigation and adaptation to climate change, which is now a contemporary global concern.

42. We have **facilitated the rehabilitation and expansion of four water schemes across the county**. These include Abura Dam in Siaya Township, Ahono/Sinaga Water project in East Gem, Wichlum Water Project in South Sakwa and Got Matar in East Yimbo. It is noteworthy that these projects included the component of solarization, to address the inherent challenges of electricity powered water systems.

43. The rehabilitation of the Abura Dam, for instance, has effectively eased pressure on Siaya-Bondo water supply. Previously, these towns were subjected to constant water rationing due to under production at the Yala Intake. The project completion will enable SIBOWASCO to effect regular water supply to Bondo and Siaya Towns and its environs concurrently.

44. Additionally, we have overseen the **drilling, equipping and solarization of 30 boreholes across the County in the period under review**. I recently commissioned Ukela Ngafua Water Project in East Ugenya Ward, Rachar, Got Kojwang' and Pala Kobong' Boreholes in West Uyoma Ward, and encountered firsthand accounts of how these water projects are positively impacting on the lives and livelihoods of our people,

especially the women, who no longer have to travel long distances in search of water.

45. Even as we commission more boreholes, we should be consciously cognizant of the fact that the boreholes are not viably sustainable. This is evidenced by the reduction in water yield overtime in some of the boreholes done in the recent past.

46. We are also aware of the significant challenges posed on the sustainable management of our boreholes in terms of their operations and maintenance.

47. To this end, we must think critically on the effective and efficient management structure of these vital community-based water projects. This will definitely require sector-wide and expert consultations and the development of necessary policies, legislations, regulations, frameworks and action plans.

Mr. Speaker, Honourable Members,

48. The Rift valley Water Works Development Agency (RVWWDA) with support from African Development Bank (ADB) has recently completed the construction

of Ugunja -Sega-Ukwala water project which is projected to benefit 57,000 residents of Ugunja and Ugenya Sub Counties. This project is in the process of being handed over to Siaya Bondo Water and Sewerage Company (SIBOWASCO).

49. Our administration intends to prioritize the last mile connectivity component which was omitted in the initial project funding so that this project can effectively benefit the target population. The component is currently estimated to cost Ksh. 260 million. To realize this, I appeal to Honourable House to support this proposal so that we can improve on our provision of clean and safe water.

50. Going forward, we need to deliberately execute highly impactful water projects. In the interim, as we develop an exhaustive long-term sectoral plan towards this goal, The County Government will undertake a comprehensive audit of the supply systems and develop, for the consideration and subsequent adoption by this Honourable House, a roadmap towards their rehabilitation within the next three financial years.

Mr Speaker Sir, Honourable Members,

51.

To

address our concerning levels of tree cover which stands at 5.2% against the national average of 7%, we have rallied stakeholders to intensify tree planting and growing efforts. During the national Tree Planting Day observed on 13th November 2023, we managed to plant 57,000 trees across the county. I wish to commend the efforts of the various stakeholders, including Honourable Members of this house, who provided leadership and inspiration to this important activity.

52. On this, we can't fail to recognize and appreciate the genius and forward-thinking young men and women who make available different species and varieties of tree seedlings through their tree nurseries. I am particularly impressed that a significant number of residents are increasingly taking up the planting of indigenous trees.

53. We now need to upscale our efforts to guarantee a safe, secure and sustainable environment, in a format that incorporates the participation of these industrious

women and youth who eke a living from environmental entrepreneurship.

54. As you all vividly remember, not long ago, we were hit by an environmental calamity scare which existentially threatened one of our most treasured natural biodiversity gems – the Africa’s second largest ox-bow lake – Kanyaboli.

55. As a result of uncontrolled human activities upstream coupled with the effects of climate change, the lake burst its banks, thereby damaging the dyke. Consequently, the lake drained and swept with it the farmlands and entire livelihoods along its course into Lake Victoria thereby displacing some residents of Siaya and the neighboring Busia County.

56. In addition, this catastrophe threatened the lake’s rich biodiversity and the entire food chain, limiting the nutrition needed for people and animals, as livestock were unable to reach water and grass around the lake. Human mobility was also disrupted.

57. Our response to this disaster was both swift and effective. Out of the urgent necessity, our office was

able to combine efforts with our Busia counterparts, by quickly convening prompt response from multi-agencies. Siaya County Government's speedy intervention ensured the reconstruction and rebuilding the dykes, and within only one month, the Lake was restored and the entire biodiversity preserved.

Mr. Speaker sir,

58. This occurrence is a stark reminder to us that environment remains healthy, friendly, and productive to us only when we protect and conserve it well.

59. It also calls on us to consciously make budgetary provision to not only conserve the jewel we have in the Lake Kanyaboli ecosystem but to also optimize its tourism attraction potential and livelihood support.

60. To ensure effective response to climate change mitigation, adaptation and resilience concerns, the County Government of Siaya, working closely with this Honorable House has established County Climate Change Management Structures and Frameworks with effective linkages and coordination from the County down to the ward-level. This has been achieved

within the provisions of Article 19 of the Climate Change Act, 2016 (Amended, 2023) as read together with Section 15 of the Siaya County Climate Change Act 2021. A key notable impact of this is that the County attained the compliance criteria for inclusion into the World-bank supported Financing Locally-led Climate Change Action (FlloCA) program.

Mr. Speaker and Honorable members,

61.I call upon the concerned department to work collaboratively with the Assembly in expediting the Siaya **County Climate Change Fund Act**. This law will provide us with an impetus to attract the various funding and partnership opportunities available locally and globally in addressing the climate change agenda.

C.AGRICULTURE, FOOD SECURITY, LIVESTOCK AND BLUE ECONOMY

Mr Speaker Sir, Ladies and Gentlemen

62. As I stated earlier, our focus on Agriculture as the anchor pillar for the socio- economic transformation for our County is deliberate and calculated to positively change livelihood and to attain improved standard of living for our people.

63. The target is to produce adequate food for domestic consumption and surplus for sale, produce agricultural raw materials for industrial take off while also harnessing the large potential of the Blue Economy that is within our disposal.

64. At the onset of our term in office, Siaya county faced biting food shortage occasioned by erratic rainfall patterns, prolonged droughts, and declining farm yields due to land overuse, reliance on poor quality seeds and lack extension support to farmers.

65. To turn around this situation, we procured several tractors and deployed them to our subsidized mechanized farming to increase the aggregate acreage for food production. Additionally, we supported our farmers with 159 metric tonnes of certified seeds and 228 metric tonnes of fertilizer at subsidized prices.

66. This saw an aggregate of 15,774 acres of land under maize production during the long rains of 2023. Consequently, maize production increased by 180,300 (90kg) bags. In terms of percentage, our interventions accounted for up to 16.96% of the total maize production realized at the end of the 2023 long rains season.

67. To ensure that **our farmers have access to agricultural extension services we have recruited 71 extension officers** and procured motorcycles to enable their mobility to the farms.

68. In this regard, 78,000 farmers were reached with extension services compared to the target of 50,000 for the period under review.

69. Towards **full exploitation of our full potential with blue economy resources which is immense**, for the benefit of communities around the lake and the county at large, we have invested significant number of resources in upscaling fish production through our broad aquaculture programme.

70. We have constructed **218 new fish ponds and rehabilitated and stocked another 353 ponds with fingerlings** in the last one year.

71. In addition to this, we have **supplied our farmers with 167 metric tonnes of fish feeds and 403,000 fingerlings.**

72. As a result of the above interventions, **our fish production has increased to 30,000 metric tonnes** from Lake Victoria and Kanyaboli, with an additional **186 metric tonnes of farmed fish.**

73. The financial worth of this production is estimated at Ksh. 5.3 billion.

74. **Towards realizing our vision of multiplying the above output to raise the value ten-fold,** we have capacitated 1,008 Beach Management Units (BMUs) on fisheries resources management as well as surveillance and patrols to curb illegal fishing gears use and bad fishing practices.

75. Further, in order to **enhance the safety of our hardworking fishermen**, Siaya County Government has procured and distributed safety gears.

76. We have also acquired five engine- boats and two patrol boats in order to mitigate water related incidents and improve surveillance in water bodies within the County.

77. As the initial bold step towards Agriculture-driven industries that promote commercial farming as the accelerator of a vibrant and productive economy that generate decent work, the County Government of Siaya has initiated the construction of Siriwo Rice mill in Usonga.

78. The project is designed to spur up production of rice across the County, facilitate post-harvest handling and storage, enable value addition and provide market linkages and will cost an estimated Ksh. 120 million. The building has been completed awaiting installation of the machine which has been procured and will be onsite in the beginning of January 2024.

79. Towards strengthening **households' food security and economic resilience**, we have distributed

10,434-month-old chicks to farmers in across the county, and 10 Hatching incubators to farmers in Yala Township Ward. This has led to improved production and incomes from sale of poultry related products.

80. The department further rehabilitated 5 water pans namely: - Achar and Tinga Agege in North Uyoma, Nyadong in North Sakwa, Kogola in South Sakwa and Panyako in West Uyoma. These projects were undertaken with the support of Kenya Climate and Smart Agriculture to support livestock and horticulture farming.

81. In order to increase the farm acreage under irrigation, the department supported 20 farmer groups undertaking horticulture farming with 20 portable irrigation water pans and 800 water pumps in South Uyoma.

82. To enhance sectoral coordination within sound legal framework, the department has developed: the **Agriculture and Soil Management policy; the Siaya Youth in Agribusiness policy and Siaya County Dairy Strategy**. The sector also managed to develop three bills, namely; **the Coordination Bill, Grants and Subsidies Bill and the Mechanization Bill**.

These three Bills will soon come to the floor of this house for consideration by the Honorable Members.

D. TRADE, ENTERPRISE AND INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT

Mr. Speaker sir,

83. Whereas Agriculture is the anchor pillar as demonstrated from the fore-going, Trade and Enterprise development is the fuel that drives the engine of socio-economic transformation agenda.

84. This is built on three key components viz: **improvement of our market infrastructure, strengthening of our cooperative movement and creating effective industrial value chains that will feed into the County Industrial and Aggregation Park (CAIP).**

85. Towards providing conducive trading facilities for our industrious and innovative traders, we have constructed 11 new market shades and facilitated the completion of 3 modern markets including

Wang'arot in West Asembo, Boro in Central Alego and Nyadorera Market in Usonga Wards respectively.

86. We have also improved drainage infrastructure and secured through fencing, an additional 10 markets.

87. To enhance security for our traders and elongate trading hours, we have **installed 99 high mast flood-lights in various markets within our county**, including Obama market in Bondo Municipality which is **fast on its way to realizing 24-hours economy**.

88. Through the intersectoral coordination between the Departments of Enterprise and that of Agriculture, we have facilitated the promotion and registration of 17 new of cooperatives.

89. As I alluded to earlier, there exists not a single and major commercial industry in the entire county of Siaya. To provide a foundation for industrial growth, Siaya County Government is currently setting up a Kshs.500 million **County Aggregation Industrial Park (CIAP)** at Got Akara in Central Alego.

This project is a product partnership between the National and County government.

90. The Construction work is on course and we are already supporting our farmers in various value chains, the objective being to ensure a steady supply of raw materials ahead of the completion of the CAIP.

91. It is our firm believe that the CAIP will eventually be able a game changer in stimulating production of various value-chains, create employment for our people, for our farmers' and various cottage industries that are coming up.

E.ROADS, PUBLIC WORKS, ENERGY AND TRANSPORT

92.To enhance trade, ease of movement for people, and to facilitate service delivery and our prompt response to emergencies, we need well maintained motorable road network. During the period under review my administration oversaw the opening of 71.2 kilometers and maintenance of 447.3 kilometers of roads. We have recently launched the Construction of Ugunja and Yala town’s ring roads to bitumen standards and we will do the same for Rabango Road in Siaya Town.

Mr Speaker Sir,

93.To streamline the management of our roads, transport and energy infrastructural development the following sectoral policies and legislation have been prioritized:

- a. Mechanical Transport Fund policy
- b. Labour based roads maintenance policy
- c. County Transport Management Bill, 2023
- d. County Plants and Equipment Management Bill, 2023
- e. County Roads Maintenance Policy
- f. Siaya County Public Works Act 2015

**F. DEPARTMENT OF LANDS, PHYSICAL PLANNING,
HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT**

Mr. Speaker Sir,

94. Land is a key factor of production and socio-economic development. This sector plays an important role in developing and enforcing Physical, Land Use and Spatial planning, spearheading our urbanization agenda as well as implementing the affordable housing program.
95. To achieve order in our Physical development, we have completed and operationalised **The Siaya County Physical and Land Use Development Plan**. This Plan provides the Spatial Framework that guide and coordinate land use and urban development for sustainable livelihoods. Similarly, Physical and Land Use Development Plans for Boro, Segla and Nyamonye trading centers have also been completed.
96. The County Government of Siaya has facilitated the elevation of Bondo and Ugunja Municipalities, joining Siaya Municipality that was established earlier on.

97. Our focus is to creating thriving and flourishing urban enclaves that are safe and friendly for all as engine hubs of economic growth.
98. To achieve this, we have enhanced our investment in infrastructural upgrade of the Municipalities, ring-roads around the markets and key business areas, cyclists' lanes, pavements and walkways, drainage systems and sanitation facilities in Siaya, Bondo, Ugunja and Yala.
99. We are in consultation with the National Government, Directorate of Urban Development on Construction of Modern Market within Siaya Municipality.
100. The County Government of Siaya has previously appealed to this house to pass the **Siaya County Valuation and Rating Bill 2022** as well as the **Siaya County Spatial Plan**.
101. I am proud to state that this Honorable August House has passed the two critical documents that will go a long way into effecting and improving administration of rates and taxes on ratable

properties as well as help in achieving sustainable development as guided by the County Spatial Plan

102. To further support the operations of the department in executing its mandate, the following legislative proposals will be key: The Gender Participatory Framework; Solid Waste Management Policy; Grievance Redress Mechanism; Public Private Dialogue and Funding Framework and the Public Participation Framework. These have been considered by the County Executive Committee and will soon be tabled before this honourable House for consideration and adoption.

G. EDUCATION, YOUTH AFFAIRS, GENDER AND SOCIAL SERVICES (EYAGSS)

Honourable Speaker,

103. An underpinning aspect of holistic societal development is the need for capacitated human capital with the requisite skills. The foundation is best laid with a proper Early Child Development Program. I am persuaded that establishing strong foundations right from infancy through to the early childhood phases are pivotal in shaping progressive societies.

104. In nurturing our fountain of life, the Siaya County Government has continued to further the gains made in regards to our county's nurturing care program that has been lauded all over the country which has made Siaya a leader in this regard. It is really inspiring when other counties come to benchmark with us. We are yet to achieve our best!

105. At the time we assumed office, the county had made significant strides as far as establishment of new ECDE centers are concerned. The existing facilities were however deficient in critical elements

including furniture, recreation and cognitive development materials.

106. We therefore prioritized full-equipping of 315 ECDE centers. At the same time, we built 22 new ECDE centers across the County.

107. Very significantly for us is our bold step, executed with the support of this Honourable House, in transitioning 602 ECDE instructors from contract to permanent and pensionable terms of employment and employing a further 250 instructors. The instant impact of this is this betterment of instructor-child ratio. Overall, these interventions have had the impact of improving the enrollment ECDE learners by 17%.

108. On Vocational and Technical Training for our youth, my administration has: provided capitation for our TVETs to the tune of Kshs 30,000,000; enhanced infrastructural development through renovation of dilapidated premises in various VTCs including Segwa and Ndere; as well as the construction of Educational Resource Centre, at Bar Sauri in Yala Township Ward which is in progress.

109. On bursary and scholarships allocations and disbursements, my administration has laid a strong emphasis that **NO DESERVING CHILD** will be denied the right to access education. To this end, my administration allocated **Kshs. 100 million** for bursaries that has now directly supported a total of **14,000 needy students**. This allocation signifies an improvement of 33% from the previous year's allocation.

110. I wish to acknowledge the valuable contribution made by our financial institutions, particularly Equity Bank, KCB Bank, and Cooperative whose scholarship programs have enabled many vulnerable children to access education and realize their dreams.

111. On Gender, Youth Affairs and Social Services, we have been able to initiate and process the following pieces of legislation:

- a. **Siaya County Persons with Disability Bill, 2023**
- b. **Siaya County Widows Protection Bill, 2023**
- c. **Siaya County Gender Mainstreaming Bill, 2023**
- d. **Siaya County Youth Development Bill, 2022**

H. DEPARTMENT OF TOURISM, ARTS AND CULTURE

Mr. Speaker Sir,

112. The Department aims to position Siaya as a tourist destination and to deepen our rich culture and showcase it to the World. Attached to this is our ambition to nurture and produce worldclass sports personalities.

113. To realize this, the sector has developed strategies for marketing our diverse tourism products; preserving and promoting cultural heritages; improving ICT enabled service delivery; and nurturing and exposing art and talent.

114. When we assumed office, the construction of Siaya County Stadium had run into headwinds due to contractual technicalities which hampered fast-tracking of its completion. We have since resolved some of these concerns and the project is now on course towards its completion with significant milestones accomplished. For instance, the roofing structure is expected to be complete in January, while other works such as the ticketing booths on-

going. In the current financial year we have provided for the installation of floodlights and laying of tartan track.

115. In addition, our administration has also undertaken the improvement and construction of pavilions in other areas including at Nyangera sports ground in East Yimbo.

116. In a bid to promote our sports and cultural endeavours, our sportsmen have variously participated at intercounty sports events and competitions, including recent appearances at the KENYA YOUTH SPORTS ASSOCIATION games in Tharaka Nithi where they performed exemplarily, placing Siaya in the befitting position in the national and regional map as a home of talent. I wish to express my sincere appreciation and acknowledgement to all who have represented us at the various outings, including our choirs, for your exemplary performance in promoting our county as the land of Heroes that it truly is!

117. Through the NYALORE GOVERNOR'S CUP that I recently launched and is currently on-going across our Wards and Sub counties, we have begun our

ambitious journey of promoting and nurturing the sporting talents of youth from the grassroots. The culmination of this tournament will be at the historic Migwena Grounds, which is an annual arena for showcasing diverse cultural and artistic talents. I invite all of us here today to join me after this event to witness some of the great performances that are to be staged.

I. FISCAL OUTLOOK, FINANCE AND ECONOMIC PLANNING

Mr. Speaker Sir,

118. For us to roll our ambitious but practical development agenda, we need financial resources.

119. Siaya County operates within the global and national economic framework. This implies that the actual performance of the global and national economy has a direct bearing on the performance of the County Economy.

120. The global and national economic dynamics thus impact both directly and indirectly on county fiscal decisions and operations as it influences national government transfers to the counties.

121. During the period under review, FY 2022/2023, the County had budgetary allocation of Kshs. 8,602,864,673.00. This presented a shortfall of Kshs. 2,621,380,081 or 23.35% from the total Annual Development Plan (ADP) budgetary requirement of Kshs. 11,324,244,754 to implement its programs as

developed through a rigorous ward-level participatory process.

122. During the same period, the county realized an own source collection of Ksh. 468,556,711 against a target of Ksh. 700,998,234. Despite the target shortfall, this collection was however an increment from the previous financial year in which Ksh. 446,379,627.00.

123. This improvement in OSR is because of the invigorated efforts of our administration to enhance efficiency and coordination in the collection and reporting of revenue.

124. To further ensure that we meet, if not surpass our revenue target; the department has developed a detailed raft of measures as captured in the Finance Act 2022/2023.

Mr. Speaker Sir,

125. Additionally, my administration has prepared an updated valuation roll to support administration of property taxes and rates. The new Valuation Roll considers the elevated status of Siaya, Ugunja, and Bondo into Municipalities. Other towns to consider for re-valuation include Yala Township and Usenge – which our administration is keen on fast tracking their appropriate classification.

126. To ensure the management of our OSR is optimized, my administration has procured a revenue automation system, which will soon be deployed to enhance revenue collection and reporting.

127. On budget and economic planning, the sector coordinated formulation and implementation of sound fiscal policies that outlines the development aspirations of the county. This was achieved through preparation of County Annual Development Plan (CADP 2023-2024); County Budget Review and Outlook Paper (CBROP 2021-2022); County Fiscal Strategy Paper (CFSP 2023-2024) and MTEF Budget (2023-2024). The sector also developed the County

Integrated Development Plan (CIDP 2023-2027) that outlines the county's development aspirations for the next five years.

128. Finally, our administration has put in place systems to guarantee reforms in the financial operations and management. Notably, we have reviewed the imprest management system through establishment of requisite guidelines.

129. Our pending bill balance has reduced from Ksh. 741,559,698 as at 30th June 2023 to Ksh. 469,469,379 as at 15th December 2023, representing a 63% reduction. Earlier reports by the Controller of Budget showed that we had large balances but evidently as at 30th June 2023 onwards there has been considerable improvement.

130. We have ensured timely and consistent remittance of salary by-products and related statutory deductions to relevant agencies. This is in contrast with the practice before this administration was elected into office whereby gross payments of salaries were received but the remittances were not made, accumulating to big debt owed to Kenya Revenue Authority, the Pensions Funds, NHIF, and

staff contributions to individuals cooperatives and saccoes where they are members.

131. Above all, our payment of salaries, despite late disbursements from the Treasury have been within reasonable timelines and never going beyond arrears of the month due for payment and certainly never extending to two months arrears of salary. Indeed, we have paid our staff their December salaries despite not receiving the disbursements for November and December 2023 as I indicated earlier.

J. GOVERNANCE, ADMINISTRATION & PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr. Speaker Sir,

132. At the very onset of our administration, we committed to protecting, upholding, and implementing the Constitution and the rule of law.

133. The words of the former UN Secretary General, Mr. Kofi Annan, should always inspire us towards creating a well-developed, prosperous and inclusive society for Siaya County:

“Good, healthy democratic societies are built on three pillars: there’s peace and stability,

economic development, and respect for rule of law and human rights. And where all three are present, you stand a very good chance a good go of it.”

134. As I said in the beginning, we must ensure our full compliance and fidelity to the Constitution and all the laws of our land.

135. In doing so, we must always ensure that our service delivery is built on the foundation of **A Rights-Based Approach.**

136. You all recall that when we assumed office, I formed a taskforce on Siaya County Systems Audit and Governance Reforms to undertake an assessment, evaluation, and determination of Siaya County’s status in terms of its operations.

137. The Taskforce chaired by the Former Auditor General, FCPA Edward Ouko and published a report, now famously referred to as the “Ouko Taskforce Report” that recommended a raft of measures to be implemented in order to improve quality of services delivered by Siaya County Government to its citizens. Some of the recommendations required immediate

attention while others need medium- to long-term actions.

138. The department has strengthened internal audit controls in the County by implementing the recommendations of the Ouko Taskforce Report on systems audit and governance reforms. For instance, we have developed and approved the Siaya County Imprest Management Policy and conducted special audits on revenue collection and the county payroll systems.

139. The department coordinated preparation of quarterly and annual progress reports as tools for evidence-based decision-making. A total of four quarterly performance reports and one County Annual Progress Report were prepared.

140. To fully entrench accountability in our administration, the County website has been revamped and updated with requisite documentation to facilitate access to information.

141. We have enhanced public participation and civic engagement by providing avenues for public complaints handling and feedback mechanism.

142. In particular we held extensive engagements with Civil Society Organizations (CSOs) on a number of concerns including our budget making processes.
143. Additionally, we have held barazas with different stakeholders including teachers, Jua Kali sector players, Persons Living with Disabilities, Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industries – Siaya Chapter, Trade Associations, Farmers, Community Health Promoters among other groups Mechanism/policy.
144. These engagements have been very constructive and insightful in generating useful information and immediate feedback on the County Government’s performance, which has been incorporate in planning and design of service delivery.
145. The above measures, has earned Siaya County recognition by the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) on the resolution of complaints and access to information. In this regard, both the County Executive and County Assembly of Siaya were awarded Compliance Certificates and ranked 2nd Nationally (in their categories).

CONCLUSION:

Mr Speaker Sir,

146. The above summarized outlook of our departments could not have been possible without the support that we enjoy from both state and non-state partners. I therefore wish to take special cognizance of all development partners supporting various programs and projects across the departments.

147. In particular, I acknowledge our partners working in the sectors of Health, Water, Education and Agriculture and most sincerely thank you for your immense contribution in the development and progress of Siaya.

148. I also recognize the vital contribution of the Media, who convey information that hastens and makes service delivery responsive.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Honourable Members,

149. I wish to singularly thank this Honorable House for steadfastly executing your legislative, oversight and representation roles, I further applaud all the well-meaning citizens of our great county for their

support and goodwill as we undertake service delivery in the critical service areas.

150. The pursuit of the well-defined roadmap to socioeconomic transformation will require foresight and forward-looking approaches in our budgeting and deployment of resources.

151. I therefore urge each one of us to support our flagship projects agenda which include the progressive transformation of Siaya Referral Hospital to a ultra-modern level 6 medical facility, and the upgrade of other subcounty hospitals to levels 4 or 5; Establishment of a Cotton ginnery in Madiany and other cottage industries per subcounty; Completion of Siaya Stadium; Construction of Migwena Cultural and Sports; Implementation of the affordable housing program in in partnership with the National Government; Construction of Gombe and Segwa Airstrips; Elevation of Usenge, Yala and other trading centers to municipality status among other definitive programs.

152. To achieve the above, I call upon the civil servants within the Executive to perform their work with the required level of seriousness and adopt a

positive culture of public service, devoid of lethargy and laidback attitude. The people of Siaya have given us an opportunity to serve and they expect nothing short of excellent public-centric service delivery at all times.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Honourable members,

Lastly,

153. I wish to make a special appeal to residents of Siaya in general and particularly the Siaya Professionals and the Diaspora Community to selflessly claim their spot in the development and growth of our County. Their contribution in the growth of county is so critical.

154. This contribution can be channeled in several ways: by offering professional skills and various areas of expertise, direct investments, participation in social causes targeted at uplifting the vulnerable segments of our population and in every way possible towards the goals we have set forth for Siaya County.

155. My administration will continue to expand the structured engagement channels, platforms and

opportunities through which our citizens can contribute in our development agenda.

156. I wish to extend our appreciation to the ODM Party Leader Rt. Hon. Raila Odinga, for his steadfast support. Similarly, I thank Senator Hon. Dr. Oburu Odinga, County MP Hon. Dr. Christine Ombaka, Alego Usonga MP Hon. Samuel Atandi, Minority Leader of the National Assembly and Ugunja MP Hon. Opiyo Wandayi, Rarieda MP Hon. Dr. Otiende Amollo.

I thank you for listening to me.

May God bless Siaya County, the home of heroes and heroines.

Wishing You a Happy and Prosperous New Year

NYALORE!