

MURANG'A COUNTY ASSEMBLY THE HANSARD

Thursday, 12th February 2015

The House met at 3:10 p.m.

(The Speaker Hon. Nduati Kariuki in the Chair)

PRAYERS

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker: Your Excellency Mwangi Wa-iria, the Governor of Murang'a County, Senator Kembi Gitura, MP, the Senator of Murang'a County, Honourable Members of Parliament, Deputy Governor, The Honourable Members of the Murang'a County Assembly, The County Commissioner, The County Executive Committee Members, Religious Leaders, Distinguished Guests, Ladies and Gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure that I welcome you to this occasion of the official opening of the Third Session of the First Assembly of the Murang'a County Assembly. Your presence here is an indication of your interest and dedication not only to this Assembly but the County as well. Together, we can make this County the best model for good governance, public participation, consultation and cooperation among the leaders and the citizens.

Being new, the County Assembly has been confused by a few who still view it in terms of the defunct local authorities. May it suffice to say that the functions of the County Assembly are very different from those of the former local governments. The functions of the County Assembly are as follows: A County Assembly may make laws, not bylaws that are necessary for the effective performance of the functions and exercise of the powers of the County Government under the Fourth Schedule.

A County Assembly, while respecting the principle of the separation of powers, may exercise oversight over the County Executive Committee and County Executive organs.

County Assembly may receive and approve plans and policies for the management and exploitation of the County's resources; and for the development and management of its infrastructure and institutions.

A County Assembly has the responsibility to approve the budget and expenditure of the County Government in accordance with Articles 207, 201 and 203 of the Constitution; it also approves the borrowing by the County Government in accordance with Article 212 of the Constitution.

It also vets and approves nominees for appointment to County public offices as may be provided in law.

The County Assembly participates also where necessary, in rare cases where it may be necessary in the removal of certain state officers.

To achieve and fulfil their mandates Members of the County Assembly are involved in a number of activities which includes, drafting, tabling, enacting and debating bills and motions, seeking answers on behalf of citizens, being involved in leadership in the House, such as Leader of Majority, Whip, Chairmen of Committees and others, also doing a lot of work in Assembly committees. They also do present petitions on behalf of citizens.

As we usher in the Third Session, of the First Assembly of Murang'a County, it offers us a good opportunity to highlight to the people of Murang'a some of the key milestones the Assembly achieved during the Second Session.

The Assembly developed a Strategic Plan for the period 2015-2018 which is there to be perused by any interested member of the public.

The Assembly established and furnished 35 ward offices to facilitate the Members of the County Assembly to be effective and to be closer to the people. Each office is fully equipped and has three staff members the office manager, secretary and office assistant.

To ensure effective and efficient operations of the Assembly, the County Assembly Service Board has recruited key staff to support the administrative and legislative functions of the House.

It has also undertaken capacity building activities for all MCAs as we believe knowledge is power and we want all our Members of County Assembly to be equipped with knowledge and skills to be able to function effectively. The members and staff we have now are adequately equipped with knowledge and skills for the task ahead of them.

The Assembly revised the Interim Standing Orders issued by the Transition Authority and adopted the new Assembly Standing Orders.

Public participation has been a key activity for the Assembly. All Budgets and Bills are subjected to public participation, all Committees and the Plenary Sittings are open to the Public.

The Assembly also has engagement with the media, we operate active social media engagement in networks such as Facebook and Twitter. The engagements in social networks have contributed a lot to our understanding of the views of the public out there. The Assembly has contributed to newspaper articles, press statements and news inserts on print media.

Petitions. The Constitution of Kenya 2010, provides that citizens can now petition their government on any issue. During the second session of the Assembly we received and acted upon several Petitions from the public which include;

A Petition by health workers previously employed under the Economic Stimulus Program and seconded to Murang'a County Government. However, this Petition could not be deliberated upon since the matter is before a Court of law.

We also received a Petition by Kanyenya-ini tea farmers, to the County Assembly for its intervention with regards to the "Green Leaf Supply Agreement".

A Petition was also received from Kikuyu Council of Elders to have Murang'a County forgotten historical figures, events, places and documents preserved for historical purposes;

A Petition from the officials of the Murang'a County French beans co-operative society limited on disputed elections.

There has been also a petition for the removal of the Chairperson of the County Public Service Board.

And through these petitions, the citizens have resolved major concerns and experience the benefits of devolved governments.

Law Making. The Second session of the Assembly passed the following Bills into law:

The Murang'a County Supplementary Appropriation Bill, 2014, the Murang'a County Scholarship Fund (Amendment) Bill, 2014 to provide awarding of scholarship to our

students who are unable to pay their fees, The Murang'a County Appropriation Bill, 2014, The Murang'a County Scholarship Fund Bill, 2014, The Murang'a County Ward Development Fund Bill, 2014, The Murang'a County Finance Bill, 2013 and in order to control the consumption of alcohol which has been a concern of many members of public we also passed The Murang'a County Alcoholics Drinks Control Bill, 2013. The following Bills are currently at different stages of enactment before the Assembly,

We intend very soon to enact The Murang'a County Tea Bill, 2014 which will give guidance as to the way we are going to carry out agricultural activities and marketing of tea in the County

(Applause)

We are also going to pass another law on an issue that has recently has been of a major concern to public of Murang'a that is water

(Applause)

So very soon we are going to have The Murang'a County Water Bill, 2014 generated within Murang'a to take care of our water the way we wish they should be taken care of.

We also have with us The Murang'a County Symbols Bill, 2014 because we want Murang'a to have its own registered coat of arms, County flag and other items required by the law like the seals.

The other important function of the Assembly is to make sure the people who serve in the county are proper people that they are scrutinized, vetted and if there is any that we do not think achieves the standards technically and also morally to be able to serve this county are rejected.

So pursuant to the requirement that all appointees to various public offices must be vetted and approved by the County Assembly, the Appointments committees and respective sectoral committees undertook vetting of the nominees submitted by His Excellency the Governor for appointment to various posts.

Subsequently, the Assembly approved their appointment to the various positions as follows, to the position of County Executive Committee Member Lands, Housing and Physical Planning, appointment to the position of Chief Officer Youth, Culture and Social Services, appointment as the Chief Officer Youth Culture and Social Services in charge of Sports.

And also after receiving the names from the Governor for the formation of the County Land Management Board which will act as the local land management authority we vetted and passed the members we felt were qualified to do the job.

As we open a new session, there are some issues that require our common attention: We are all aware of much debated Northern Water Collector Tunnel Project. The Assembly inquired into the matter of the proposed Northern Water Collector Tunnel Project (NCT) and adopted a report suspending it, pending the evaluation of its social and environmental impact to the people of Murang'a.

Phase One of the NCT Tunnel will cover 11.8 km, the Tunnel will be three meters in diameter and will run underground at proposed depths of between 20 meters to 250 meters subject to the terrain.

The Tunnel is designed with adits, portals and drop shafts from Irati intake, and intakes at Maragua, Gikigii and Irati rivers. The project envisions to abstract flood

waters flows from the said rivers. There will be an out fall and energy dissipation structure at Githika river near Makomboki up stream of the existing Ndaka-ini Dam.

In consultation with the Governor and Athi Water Services Board, a consultative forum was held on February 21, 2015 at Golden Palm Hotel, the meeting resolved to appoint a Technical Committee to assess the project's social and environmental impact and report to the County Government and the County Assembly.

We are happy to note that the Governor did appoint a committee and it is now in place. I urge the Technical committee to expedite the preparation of the Report.

I therefore appeal to all, including political leaders, civil group activists and the Athi Water Services Board to give the team time and a free hand to produce their report. In particular, all should desist from making statements and announcements that could be construed as canvassing, influencing the team or swaying public opinion before receiving the benefit of the report by the experts.

We have confidence in the committee because it includes the experts from hydrology, geology, engineering and law, so all I am asking about is let us not try to have the public have a set opinion on the project before we receive the report of this committee otherwise what was the point of appointing such a technical committee?

I do hope that all those who are listening, and I think I will make a press statement early next week on the same they should cease from trying to influence either the committee or the public. Let us hold our horses and wait for unbiased report.

Funding of County Governments. The funding of County Governments remains a major challenge to the implementation of devolution. Whereas powers and functions have been devolved by the Constitution of Kenya 2010, the resources to finance these functions remain held at the National Government. Functions such as Early Child Development, Youth polytechnics and farmers training centres are good examples.

What we are calling on our legislators is to free the county governments and the County Assemblies to make their judgement as to what is good for their counties because there is no use of us receiving the budget here from Governor's office, pass the Appropriation Bill and then somebody in another office says the budget should be amended this way or that way, the money should come from one department to the other department, I think this role is for the county.

The Commission of Revenue Allocation (CRA) set ceilings for expenditure of recurrent expenditure for County Executives and County Assemblies. The County Assemblies declined to comply with the ceilings and petitioned the High Court to declare the action by CRA illegal through the County Assembly Forum. The judgment will be delivered on February 20, 2015. In the meantime, Murang'a County Assembly after discussion with our government decided that in order for Murang'a people not to suffer notwithstanding the difficulties that we have we passed the Appropriation Bill.

The question of ceilings of recurrent expenditure for the Assembly is a very sensitive one and I would like to address this to my dear friend Senator.

Nobody has issues about having ceilings on expenditure, because there can never be a case where any institution has a carte blanche to spend as it wishes. It is also true that some County Assemblies in the last financial year went overboard in expenditure particularly on sometimes unproductive foreign travels, so ceilings were in order.

However, ceilings must be reasonable, it must not curtail the Assembly from doing its legitimate constitutional mandate otherwise there is no use of having County Assembly if they cannot perform their functions.

(Applause)

A case in point is this Assembly. Hon. Senator we have spent negligible amount on foreign travel this financial year. If this was the problem we curtailed it completely, infact, our current budget has provided very little for this vote. Yet despite this we find that by sticking to the budget ceiling we are becoming dysfunctional.

For example we have a strategic plan which we cannot implement, there are no funds to implement it so what is the use of telling us to make the strategic plans?

We cannot employ consultants to take us through in seminars, take us through technical points on various bills, we intend to enact but we are supposed to enact them; do we enact them without having heard of technical information and technical advice? CRA says there is no money.

We are required by law to involve the public in public participation on various bills and policy decision. This is a constitutional requirement yet we are supposed to do it currently with a zero budget. Go and do public participation with no money. In other words walk there and involve the public. A case in point is the meeting that we had at Kenol on very important issue, Northern Corridor Water Tunnel. Everybody agrees that was a very important public participation. Honourable Senator that is the last meeting we shall ever have.

If there is any other issue that comes along we are supposed to just let it go because we cannot hold public participation, we used the last cent on public participation with that meeting. Honourable members we are telling the Senator we cannot hold public participation no matter what and there are very hot issues coming but we cannot hold public participation.

Our committees are called upon by the public to go out and listen to their grievances on various issues. They are always writing to the Speaker tell the committee to come and listen to these grievances, we would like to go but the budget says no. What kind of Assembly are we running?

We are supposed to play an oversight role on the executive, what roles can you play if you cannot be able to visit the sites?

Honourable Senator, the Senate must wake up and play their role.

(Applause)

Not to be just observers as we let the devolution go to the dogs. You left the imposition of ceilings to an institution that does not understand legislative and parliamentary matters. We have spoken to a number of Senators and they always say they understand but don't seem willing to do anything about the issue. In our view it is the Senators being legislators themselves who understand what it takes to run a legislative organ.

And the Senate should not have been too lazy; they should have set a committee to do these ceilings or at least to supervise the ceilings and not leave it to an institution that does not understand legislative matters. So we ask the Senate to wake up because you are supposed to defend the devolution but you are letting the devolution down.

(Applause)

As we prepare the Budget for the year 2015/2016, we have noted remarkable developments in the costing of functions by the County level. An example is the proposed increase from KSh.17Billion to the KSh.24 Billion. CRA has also proposed that the revenues allocated to counties be adjusted to cater for additional costs for the county structures based on the Salaries and Remuneration Commission.

In conclusion, the Assembly would like to inform the general public that all the sittings of the Assembly and its committees are open to the public and the media. The Assembly expresses its desire to see the public gallery full to capacity during sittings of the Assembly.

The committees' proceedings because we have various committees are open to the public so let the public not question about particular subjects before the committees. You are most welcome to come and sit with committees when they are deliberating on these issues.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank almighty God for having brought us this far like the religious leaders noted we have been blessed in this county. There have not been this politics that we have been hearing in many County Assemblies.

(Take 2 ken)

We thank religious leaders for the prayers. I am sure that blessings and the prayers from you and from ourselves will make us even more successful.

I also thank the leaders of this County, we have had a very good relationship with the Governor, the Executive and the Assembly because of the constant consultations that we have, and of course our Senator, who is always available whenever his advice is needed. God bless Murang'a.

(Applause)

MESSAGES

ADDRESS BY SENATOR KEMBI GITURA, MP, THE SENATOR OF MURANG'A COUNTY

The Senator: The Speaker of the Murang'a County Assembly, Hon. Nduati Kariuki, the Governor of Murang'a County, Hon. Mwangi wa Iria, the Deputy Governor of the County, the Hon. Gakure Monyo, the entire leadership of this County Assembly, Hon. Members of the County Assembly, distinguished guests, ladies and gentlemen.

It is with great pleasure to be with you today during the opening of the 3rd Session of your Assembly. I wish from the outset, to register my pride in being associated with this Assembly and once again, thank the Hon. Speaker for inviting me for this very important occasion.

Hon. Members, we have in the recent past been on the news for positive accomplishments as a County, one being the improved performance of our children in the 2014 KCPE examinations and the exemplary means by which we are trying to resolve the challenge of sharing one of our greatest natural resources, water. Please accept my congratulations for the part you played in achieving these successes.

Hon. Members, ladies and gentlemen, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate all those young boys and girls from our county who performed well in the KCPE examinations and to wish them a successful future in their educational journey. For those who did not for one reason or the other make it to their secondary school of choice

despite the fact they had passed well, I wish to encourage them that with hard work and perseverance, they will be able to achieve their goals and dreams regardless of the schools they have been admitted to. For the others that did not fare too well in the examinations, there is hope for a future through alternative paths of education.

It is indeed my hope that this third session the Assembly will intervene to ensure that technical and vocational institutions or youth polytechnics in the County are well supported with sufficient budgetary provisions to absorb and equip our young people with life and work skills. In our county, like in many others throughout the country, there is a very large shortage of skilled artisans in all fields. In my considered opinion, there is a very dire need to strengthen not just middle level colleges, but also our polytechnics, bearing in mind that this is a devolved function falling squarely within the armpits of County Government.

Hon. Members, the Senate also commenced its third session this week and during these first few weeks, the main agenda will be the budgetary process. Allow me to take a few minutes to highlight some of the important issues that we shall be considering in this session.

For the very first time, the Senate will consider the Budget Policy Statement, a paper that guides the revenue allocation process by stating the general financial outlook and priorities for the national government. It is an important paper in terms of Article 10 of the Constitution because it sets out general principles that apply to the whole country so that while each County may have different priorities, the national government must have priorities that help to unify the country as a whole.

The other paper that the Senate will consider is the Debt Management Strategy Paper which spells out the national government's debt management strategy over the medium term with respect to its actual and potential liability for loans and guarantees and its plans for dealing with those liabilities.

This year, the Debt Management Strategy is of interest because there are Counties that have expressed interest in taking loans from external sources and such loans have to be guaranteed by the National Government. I invite you, Hon. Members, to follow this process and give your input to this strategy as it is your duty to ensure that liabilities incurred by this generation are sustainable and fair to future generations of this County. You will need to note that any external borrowing by a County must have the approval of the Assembly under Article 212 of the Constitution, and that this is an extremely important oversight role bestowed upon you by the Constitution.

We shall also be considering the report on the revenue sharing formula proposed by the Commission of Revenue Allocation (CRA), where some changes will be made to the current formula. This will be informed by some of the lessons we have learnt during the past few years of devolution and with a view to enhancing equitable development among all the Counties of Kenya.

Hon. Members, eventually, we shall also be debating the Division of Revenue Bill and the County Allocation of Revenue Bill, which once enacted at the national level, will give impetus to the Counties to debate the County Finance Bills. I know that the Hon. Speaker to this Assembly has raised several issues in which he has pushed to me as the Senator for Murang'a County and as a Senator in general.

Suffice it to say, and I say this without fear of contradiction, the Senate is not asleep.

(Laughter)

The Senate does not need to wake up, we are in terms and even today as I address you this afternoon, the Senate is dealing with the paper on the allocation of revenue in all the Counties.

It is in that context that we are working and have also worked on the ceilings. I accept the challenge by the Speaker, that the ceilings must be reasonable but it must also be realised that the expenditure by the Counties must also be reasonable because there is not inexhaustible amount of money coming from the national government to the County Government.

The County Governments appear to be spending all their money on recurrent expenditure, and this defeats devolution. So, it is not that the Senate is asleep or is going to sleep. No! The Senate is doing what it has to do, and the Counties must also reciprocate by being accountable and by spending the allocation to the benefit of the people that it is meant to benefit.

But I have taken the challenges in good faith and I know that I am going to follow up what I can so that we can in pursuit of our legislative authority, duty, and mandate, see what is best for the Counties. But this, Hon. Members, must be done in the context of the fact that the national government does not have inexhaustible resources with which to give to the Counties, if the Counties appear not to be spending the money all the time for the benefit of the people that we are supposed to represent. But I am going to do what I have to do for the best interest of Murang'a County and other Counties.

We shall also be deliberating, Hon. Members, on numerous Petitions by the public among them one Petition by some Murang'a tea farmers and another on the Mara Triangle in Narok County. The Petition from Murang'a tea farmers is extremely important and I want to thank those from Murang'a who brought it to the Senate because for the very first time, the issues that were raised by the Murang'a tea farmers, those that have been raised by Kericho tea farmers, and Nandi tea farmers, are going to be considered by the Committee on Agriculture and we are going to look into ways and means of once and for all resolving the issues that so much bedevil the tea industry.

As you may be aware, the Senate is in the process of vetting the Commission recently appointed by H.E. the President for the suspension of the Makueni County Government. Now, this is very important process under Article 192 of the Constitution which provides that suspension can only be with the authority of the Senate after the President is satisfied that the allegations are justified.

You must remember, and always guard this, because the citizens of Makueni are the ones who have forced their hands into having the President appoint a Commission to see into whether or not Makueni County Government should be dissolved. If the President recommends that it be dissolved, that matter will come to the Senate and the Senate is going to decide whether or not Makueni County will be dissolved. In which case, 90 days thereafter, they shall have elections to have a completely new County Government. So, these are extremely important oversight roles.

The third session has therefore started on a high note and it promises to be exciting as we move along the journey of devolution. This session for both this Assembly and the Senate also comes in the middle of our term and it is, therefore, incumbent upon each one

of us to reenergise so that we have enough reserves to finish our term on a strong note and without having to start the election campaigns too early because we still have our people to serve.

Hon. Members, I have always and at every opportunity emphasised on the need for us as leaders to stand together and speak with one voice on matters that affect our County. I have on this score been very encouraged by the fact that when the issue of extraction of water from rivers Maragua, Irati and Gikigie, to supply the Nairobi City County, came up all of us as leaders from this county rose to the occasion and dialogued with a view to coming up with both a common position and an equitable solution.

I must appreciate the direction and leadership shown by this Assembly with your Speaker at the helm on this matter and I remain hopeful that by speaking in one voice, we shall find a lasting solution that serves the common good of our people.

Hon. Members, this matter is of particular interest to the whole country because the solution we adopt will probably be replicated in resource sharing in other Counties. We, therefore, owe a duty not only ourselves but the people of Kenya to design a practical model for sharing of natural resources. Let me reiterate that I am confident that we have the capacity and ability to do this task. It is not too difficult if we work together and remain focussed on our goals.

I would like to add that the technical committee we resolved to create at the Golden Palm stakeholders meeting recently is the one we expect to come out with the way forward. In the meantime and as agreed at that meeting, I expect, and I want to reiterate what the Hon. Speaker has said, that all works for the proposed project will be put on hold until a lasting solution is reached and a binding agreement signed between Murang'a County, Nairobi County and Athi Water Services Board.

I know that the on-going media blitz by the Athi Water Services Board to the effect that 2.5 billion shillings will be used to avail water to every homestead in Murang'a makes good politics for them, that is the Athi Water Services Board.

Indeed, I believe that, that media blitz is made with a view to alienating us as leaders from the County from the people that we represent. They want us to look bad that we are the ones who are stopping this water from going to Nairobi when we are going to benefit with 2.5 billion shillings worth of water in our County. Indeed, that is the position as I see it.

But I wish to remind all of us here that firstly, water provision is a constitutional right, and secondly, over and above the fact that we shall pay for the water thereafter once it is brought to us in Murang'a, this much advertised sum of 2.5 billion shillings is a one off payment. It is meant to lure us to drop our right as a County to the revenue sharing demand that we have made. I would advise very strongly against rushing in this matter before everything is clear. This is a matter with substantial ramifications now and in the future. And I wish to reiterate the fact that we cannot repeat the Ndaka-ini mistake.

This Assembly has a very major role to play in this regard and everyone, not just in Murang'a but in Kenya as a whole, is watching. Remember that everybody is watching us. Do you want us to give our water for 2.5 billion shillings? That is the question which you as an Assembly must answer. That is a question that you must determine because what the Athi Water Services Board is trying to do, and we hear them on Kameme every morning saying how much favour they are doing us as people of Murang'a by giving water to the

people, what they are not telling you is that they are giving us our water and we are going to pay for that water once it is transmitted to our houses.

In the meantime, for the next 30, 40, 100 years, they will be benefiting with our water by selling it to Nairobi, the way they have been doing with Ndaka-ini. It is your choice to determine whether you are going to accept 2.5 billion, or you are going to demand revenue sharing, and I, personally as the Senator for Murang'a County have my mind very clear that the time is now to negotiate for our natural resource, which is water, so that we get that which is rightfully ours and that nobody should think that they are doing us a favour. Do not be lured by little money to give away our heritage which is water.

(Applause)

Hon. Members, with the foregoing in mind, I encourage each and every leader here present to continue to provide support to each other on matters pertaining to our beloved County. I am aware that there are many other challenges that we are yet to resolve. The dualisation of the Kenol-Sagana-Marua road where the current proposal by the Ministry of Transport and Infrastructure has left out the section from Kenol to Murang'a Town still remains.

However, with our concerted effort, we can convince the national government that our County headquarters should not be bypassed in this significant development. On my part, I have discussed and even written to H.E. the President on the importance of having the proposed dual carriage way pass through Murang'a town, the capital of our County.

(Applause)

I am convinced beyond doubt that proceeding in any other way will kill our town. On the other hand, if the road passed through the town, it would unlock the very great potential that exists here. I am optimistic that with your support and involvement as a County Assembly, this matter shall be resolved.

And I assure you that I have written to the Cabinet Secretary. I have discussed this issue with the President himself and I have written to the President on this issue. I am expecting that we are going to get answers. If we again keep quiet, and this road passes not through Murang'a Town, I do not know what we shall tell the future generations where Murang'a Town is our headquarters complete with a university is dead and we shall not be able to revive it. So, I seek your support and I want us to speak with one voice on this issue.

Hon. Members, as I come to a conclusion, allow me to remind all of us of the importance of collective energy, and, or synergy in development. As I have said many times, development is a factor of many things, including but not limited to good laws, good governance and resources. But successful development must be human centred. All the roads, hospitals, schools, milk plants and other structures may be constructed; but if they do not serve the person for whom they are intended to benefit, they would come to nought.

As leaders we must respect and recognise that the people we lead have their own ideas and ideals for improvement of their lives. And this is the reason our Constitution stresses so much on public participation so that the people may take ownership. Our role as leaders is merely to translate the people's aspirations into tangible projects.

It therefore cannot be gainsaid that as leaders we must never lose the connection with the people. I urge you to continually create awareness among the people on what our

respective roles are and how we are achieving our mandate. I also urge that we support one another by telling the people about each other's roles and achievements. This way, we shall have a shared vision in Murang'a where even the people participate meaningfully in governance. Remember, this is their County. It is their government. We are mere servants and trustees.

Hon. Members, with these remarks I wish you a productive session. May you achieve and surpass your goals. I wish you Godspeed as we work towards making Murang'a County the model County in Kenya. I also wish to register my personal and Senate's commitment and availability to support you in your endeavours during this session and beyond. I look forward to our interactions in the County, at this County Assembly and in the Senate. I thank you; may God bless this Assembly; may God bless Murang'a; and may God bless Kenya! Thank you very much.

(Applause)

ADDRESS BY H.E THE GOVERNOR OF MURANG'A COUNTY

The Governor: Our Senator, the Hon. Speaker, Members of our County Assembly, Members of the Executive from the County Government of Murang'a, I take this opportunity to first of all, thank the House for inviting me during the opening of your Third session. This session also coincides with the near start of our third year in office. Come next year, devolution will be three years old and this County Government, just like other County Governments, will be in its third year in office.

As a County Government, I am proud that we have set this County in the map of Kenya over the last two years and I think I attribute that, 50% to the County Assembly and 50% to the Executive of this County because we all have a shared objective.

(Applause)

I would like to underline the fact that over the last two or so months, this County has been rated high. A report which was released by CRECO, which is a consortium of local and international NGOs, funded by international finance agencies, like USAID, rated this County as County number one in the Republic of Kenya.

(Applause)

That is not a local enterprise, it is a consortium of both local and external agencies and the funding is done by reputable organisations. We were rated at a score of 73% while the second best was rated at 69%. I attribute that to this Assembly, which might be at 50 or more than 50% because we have been working together. This rating was about a week away and was underlined further by the report which was released by the World Bank which again positioned the County Government of Murang'a among the five best spenders in as far as development spending is concerned and I think those are two ratings which have been done by an external eye. Again I would want to dedicate those ratings to the Assembly in a shared passion with the Executive of the Murang'a County Government.

(Applause)

As a government and as the score indicates, we focus ourselves nearly exclusively on development and although we were rated to have spent 35% of revenue on development as at the close of June, as at the close of December, using our own internal margins, we were at about 52% in terms of the money we spent vis-a-vis the recurrent, meaning that we have a very clear and strong indicator that by the close of this financial year, we are likely to be ahead of the 30 % threshold, where the national average or the recommendation from Treasury is usually at about 30%. So, that is an indicator that working together without appearing to be blowing our trumpet, we are headed in the right direction, and thank you very much to the Assembly and the Executive.

As a County Government, during the last two years, we have prioritised our activities mainly around agriculture and infrastructural development, of course without sacrificing the other sectors. In the sector of agriculture, and I committed to this when I took over office, we have focused a lot on the transformation of our dairy sector. And we started off by making sure that we equipped our dairy landscape with milk cooling facilities. We did that because I know for sure there is no country which you can find doing well in dairy development without refrigeration services, that is a condition for development of dairy because milk is not water.

So far, we have installed 35 coolers and I am happy to report that we have launched about four or five of those coolers. We have created cooperatives which are meant to manage all those coolers.

Before we took over, this County has only four dairy cooperatives and we have shifted that game up to 26 dairy cooperatives and created one umbrella dairy cooperative which we are calling Murang'a County Creameries. The mandate of that cooperative is actually to drive the entire dairy development agenda for this County, all the way from marketing to value addition and other relevant activities around dairy.

We started collecting milk under the umbrella ship of the Murang'a County Creameries, about five days ago and I am happy to report that, as at yesterday, we have hit a 10,000 litres dairy collection mark having rolled out about four or five coolers.

(Applause)

Meaning that, as we walk this journey of 35 coolers, we are going to hit a very high point as far as milk collection is concerned. We have already negotiated together with Murang'a County Creameries, an average and stable price for our milk farmers in the County and we have already facilitated an agreement between the Murang'a County Creameries and one of the giants of the dairy processors in this country and they have given us a constant stable price which will enable us pay our dairy farmers a price which is not lower than 35 shillings per litre, all the time from the month of January to the month of December.

(Applause)

That is already in contract, so, we are not doing guesswork in the engagement. Murang'a County Creameries has already signed a deal on a constant price and that is the price which we have communicated to the farmers and that is our promise because we know what is ailing the dairy industry in this country is the insinuation of prices. Prices moving up to 35 when it is dry, to 20 when the rains fall, yet we have abundance in fodder.

So, we have been able to ensure that we have a minimum guaranteed return for our dairy farmers in the country.

Around dairy, as you can remember we also introduced subsidised A.I service and I would like to report that the service is working. We moved the price which the farmer in this County is paying for A.I service from an average of 1,500 shillings to 500 shillings per serve. As we speak, that service has served over 15,000 cows in this County, meaning that, the farmers in this County have saved a net of Kshs. 15 million just out of that service.

Going forward, now that we have coolers on site and cooperatives, we are actually migrating that program to be managed by the Murang'a County Creameries so that we only become an oversight and let it be managed at that level.

The other area around dairy development is that we have come out as a government to support fodder development because there is now way we can talk about milk if we do not talk about feeds, since one is an output of the other.

During the last rainy season, we were able to give out nappier grass and it is not a small deal because we are giving out nappier grass because we want to create capacity of feeding our animals. On the nappier grass that we gave, an ordinary farmer would not walk to the Kenya Agriculture Research Institute to buy nappier grass, it is nappier grass with about 15 to 16% of protein content compared to the ordinary one at 7%, so, we are talking about a fodder crop which would nearly substitute a dairy meal technically.

The other area which we are driving around dairy is making sure that we offer our dairy farmers, high quality animal feeds at the most competitive price. The Murang'a County Creameries through our assistance, is again investing in an animal feed production just like the dairy in Nyeri for example and we are going to make sure that in the next couple of months, we roll out an animal feed program which is farmer produced, farmer managed and farmer owned to make sure that the cost of production of milk in this County has gone down.

The other area which we focused on is in the area of crops because we need to convert our crop output or harvests into money, otherwise there is no point in keeping harvesting while that harvesting is not converting into improved income to the farmer and, therefore, improved economic wellbeing for the farmer. We focused on the avocado crop because this County is the leading producer of avocado in the whole country. We are the largest producers of Hass avocados which are an explosive of the export market. That produce has been going at a cost of Kshs. 1.50 at the maximum and an average of one shilling per fruit.

We went and negotiated with Kakuzi and we did a deal which made sure that we supply the right quality of avocado directly to Kakuzi and we created a direct channel, they promised a price of Kshs. 8 per fruit all the way from one shilling and then at the end of the year, they gave a bonus element of Kshs. 2, meaning that, the fruit turned from a one shilling value fruit to a Kshs. 10 value fruit.

Going forward, because that is a major crop for us, we are going to make sure that we facilitate farmers with seedlings because reports clearly indicate that the European market, I think in the next 20 or so years, the Kenyan producer cannot satisfy the export market for Hass So, we are actually rolling out a development program using the hybrid Hass seedlings to make sure that we enhance availability of the fruit in the County, and that should directly translate into improved earnings for our farmer. That program is on-going

and come the next harvest which kicks off in around April, we expect farmers in this County to reap out of that County Government program.

The other area which we are focusing on in agriculture is the area of French beans. Last year, we were able to set up a cooperative which is geared towards marketing of our horticulture produce, and in particular French beans. We linked that cooperative to external markets, in particular a market in Switzerland and I think we have been able to sign some memorandums of commitments to our understanding and they have promised that they will be able to take our produce to begin with at 10 tonnes going forward to 15 tonnes at a price of not less than Kshs. 60 per kilo. That is a major shift from the previous average assured price of Kshs. 30. The farmers were paid in the month of December and we are walking with that cooperative to make sure that we enhance our agricultural front through development of the French beans.

On coffee, coffee has been riddled with a lot of challenges and we realised that when we came on board, what we said was that we take a back step and first of all study the situation. There are two major players as far as coffee marketing is concerned, before I talk about production, and those two players are the Murang'a Union and the society. So, we said before we put our hands in this not knowing what was inside, we agreed that we first of all needed to audit the two players.

We started off by auditing Murang'a Union, we brought Delloitte on board and they have been on it and they are through with the report, we do not know what is in the report, but we are going to interrogate that report as the Executive and the relevant committees of the Assembly. We will be involved so that we look at the kind of recommendations which they are giving and we create a very clear way forward as far as restructuring of the organisation of the union is concerned because that is the overall and it belongs to the farmers. That is like an apex for the cooperatives or the societies.

So, we expect that, that will be interrogated by the relevant committee of the Assembly and requisite recommendations on the way forward be agreed on and then we roll out a program that will make sure that the farmers interests are secure and safe at the level of the union because when all is said and done, even if we are going to engage the private millers, it is the farmer owned miller that is going meant to lead the pack, and again, it is meant to be a minimum price setter so that we encourage others to come and pay over and above what our miller and what our cooperative union is paying.

So, that is the much we have done at the top and as far as the lower level is concerned, that is, at the level of the societies which feed into the unions, again we are rolling out an audit. We have already awarded Jomo Kenyatta University because they have a business enterprise angle and unit. Again, they are going to audit the union and after they audit the union, then we are going to consolidate the output of the society audit and the union audit and therefore be able to put a very clear way forward as far as the organisation of the coffee management is concerned.

At the production level, we do recognise the fact that for you to attain the best price of any produce, then you need to produce the best quantity and the best quality for that matter. We have seen factories like Kamacharia fetching a rate of Kshs. 80 per kilo and that is where the Majority Leader comes from, they are doing that or they are earning that because of quality and again, their revenues are much more because of quantity.

So, we are rolling out a program to make sure that we reactivate and re-energise production. What we have done as a County Government is that we have committed to re-new our coffee crop. The philosophy behind that is that coffee is actually nearly the backbone of this economy. If you look at it, it is about coffee, tea and milk, and if we do not intervene as a government, which is our role, then the coffee farmer will never get out of the pit in which he or she is.

So, we have rolled out a program of changing our coffee crop from the current SL series to Batian or Ruiru 11. The philosophy behind that is that we know very well, and this is scientific, that, Batian yields 10 times than the current crop, meaning that if you put a *debe* of manure or if you fill a *debe* of manure on the current crop of the SL, and then it gives you one kilo, and you do the same to Batian, then Batian will automatically yield 10 kilos. What we are talking about is like a sheep which bears twins; I mean, which one would you, chose?

So, we have to walk the farmer in that direction and we are in collaboration with the Coffee Research Foundation because for the farmer to change his coffee trees, one seedling of Batian goes at about Kshs. 45, which the farmer cannot afford. So, we are in collaboration with the Coffee Research Foundation whereby we have chosen to buy seeds and then using youth and women groups and societies, we are therefore incubating the seeds and the cost will be much less because the other one is a commercial rate and come the month of April, during the long rains, because we have put 8,000,000 seedlings, which we expect to give out to farmers through a logical organised program, we expect that each farmer should be able to get an average of about 200 seedlings. That is enough for a small scale farmer. Therefore, we expect to touch an average of 40,000 farmers. We should be able to convert their coffee from SL to Batian.

Going forward, we also know that we can still transform our coffee through grafting. What we have committed is that we have put the program in place, that from the month of around June, then we are going to roll out a team of youth to do grafting on the existing crop with an effort of transforming the same into Batian.

And we believe that in the next three years, we should be in a position to ensure that our coffee yields have gone up by 10% even if we do not change our agronomical practices, even if prices remain the same, the earnings of the farmer will go up.

The combination of that, plus an accelerated programme on improved economy and the output of what we are doing in terms of the unions and the societies, the combination should be able to give us a major leeway as far as coffee development is concerned, to drive the project, we have already advertised the position of a director of coffee exclusively. Those are the lead activities and the rest are ongoing.

The other area we are focusing on is Infrastructure, this is one of the areas we scored very high in the appraisals, in the last two years, we have done 10,000kilometres of roads which is a combination of opening up new roads, grading, gravelling and repairs and that has brought accessibility nearly across the county and the programmes are ongoing.

However, as far as roads developments are concerned, we have a challenge because the amount of money devolved to county governments is just peanuts, we have been engaging as the Transition Authority, we have been engaging as the council of governors and various other players and clear categorization was done and roads are to be categorized as either county or national roads. The County roads were clearly defined as

roads starting and ending within the county, the rest which are across counties are actually classified as national roads.

I understand the whole issue of devolving this function followed by requisite resources was approved by the Senate, unless someone somewhere sat on the documents. Again, I will challenge the Senate, if you are the defenders of county governments, you need to wake up and come out to defend because you approved but someone decided not to implement, someone decided not to gazette and there we are.

So again Sen. Kembi, please fight for us, I know you did your job at Senate, Senate is meant to have some muscles so that if you approve, then there is no other body that can sit on a side desk and decide not to gazette, so our Senator we send you, please go and push on that. You did it to the best of your level but you need to go further and ensure that the decision was implemented, that would help us a lot as counties, in particular Murang'a to make sure that we further develop our infrastructure which is the foundation of our development.

The other infrastructural area concerns markets. As a county government we are committed in making sure that we create decent market trading centers. Within our budget this year we have earmarked eight markets across the county which we have started developing, e.g. the market of Njiru-ini which is ongoing and other markets like Kahuro and others, so this is one of the areas we are moving forward in.

The area of supplies, the area of water, I do not want to add on what the Senator and the Speaker have said, we are speaking in one voice that we need a continuous source of revenue from water, that is our position as the county government and no one will append signatures on an MOU which is not well discussed across the leadership of Murang'a County.

That is our assurance as the county government, however we also have a lot because the Northern collector and other bulk projects are just bulk projects are meant to provide mainstream lines and then we are supposed to take water to our residents of this county. As a county government we have started off and so far we have already installed over 10,000 pipes and that have enhanced the availability of water close to 70,000 new beneficiaries.

Going forward, I will seek the support of this Assembly so that we make water our main item in the next financial year and our proposal is we just get out of our way and dedicate a huge figure, although this is something we will discuss with our Assembly. A figure to the tune of a billion so that we make sure that we uplift the current availability from an average of 36% to over 70% because it is only the 36% of residents in this county who have access to clean, hygienic piped water. So in our next financial year, we are going to scale down the infrastructural activities and make sure we provide water in a big way across the county. That way, even after the Northern collector tunnel project is agreed on and rolled out then we shall be set to make sure that water is not only in the main trunks but also gets to our people.

On the area of water, we kicked off in the last two years with two irrigation projects, one in Kandara and the other one in lower Kiharu, the projects are just about to be launched, they are already through and we expect the two projects to impact on not less than 60,000 people. We are going to develop similar projects with the lower Kiharu one targeted at making sure that we start growing rice and I think Hon. Wakuthii is really set on

that in the ground, while the other one will mainly focus on the horticultural projects. Those are the key irrigation projects that we are running.

Despite the provision of water in other areas especially the lower Murang'a, within the last one year, we have revived three major dams, and we have done 20 water pans especially in the areas of Ithanga, meaning that as we wait for the bulk water projects to go to lower areas like Ithanga, then we have a midway solution towards provision of water in the meantime.

We are trying to reactivate all stalled water projects and I call upon the members of this House, you have projects that were started sometimes back, like the one for Kanyenya-ini that was started in year 2004, we went in and in the next three months it will be through. We are calling upon you to bring all stalled water projects on board, because they are our projects anyway, we inherited them, so that we can be able to complete the current infrastructural budget.

On health, we know we are generally tracking well, I do not want to overemphasize on what we have done, you know about ambulances and the others but as a county government, we started off an initiative on dialysis in Murang'a hospital but we are happy that the national government has again come up with the same initiative and they are going to bring dialysis machine in ICU and Cancer set.

The hospitals that we have selected is Murang'a hospital and I saw in the papers Muriranjias but we are saying no, that will be skewing distribution too much and so we have said that we are going to take on board the Maragua hospital

(Applause)

I really do not know where the name came from; I do not want to be accused of creating an imbalance in the distribution of resources.

However, as a county government, we had started the initiative on trying to develop a Cancer centre and we are committed to this. We selected Kenol. We need a center that can take care of three key elements, Cancer, Dental and Optic because as we speak, the nearest affordable eye care center is Kikuyu, there is no privilege in Kiambu that makes it hold such resource. If you look at dental, again it is Kabete and Kenyatta hospital, so we are owning that programme and that will be a specialized center.

What we agreed with the Minister, because it is very expensive to install a fully-fledged cancer facility and the government through the current hospital equipment programme, we agreed we leverage on that, even after we take some equipment there, it will not be enough. If we put in some extra investment as a county government, then we will have an opportunity to create a model Cancer centre, so the equipment which will come from the national government, we have agreed that one of the Cancer sets will go to Kenol and then we can agree on what we can do to upgrade it because it will only provide the general diagnostic services but if we come in and put in some extra money, then it means that our Cancer center can be a cut above the normal cancer facilities provided in the level 2, and 3 hospitals.

It has been in media that the County governments are opposed to national governments hospital equipment resourcing programme, that is not true. As a county government, I have actually signed off the MOU between the national government and the county government, as far as the equipment are concerned. I think it is really important for

us to take that position because the national government is not charging us anything for the equipment.

It must be a war around procurement, who buys, if you start asking who buys, then that answers the next question on what are the stakes, what is the point of interest, so it is not a matter of whether the concept is wrong. I think this is our position as a county government and as I have said, we have already signed off the MOU.

On alcoholism, this Assembly went ahead and enacted the Alcoholic Drinks Control Act, we have started operationalizing it but we need a proper system in doing that. We have procured the services of the former NACADA managing director and she is now setting up the process. If you saw in the papers we have now advertised for the director of Alcoholic Control but there was no sense in us advertising and we are not telling the director what to do. We started by making sure we have a setup which can be able to operationalize the whole Act, a lady called Jennifer who was the CEO of NACADA and understands the game inside out. We procured her services to make sure that the Act which you people made and approved is effectively rolled out.

On Education, I would like to thank all stakeholders. Since we came into office we have stopped decline of the standards. We were at 240; we were on the southern direction there before, in the second year we have been able to shift performance from an average of 240 to 247 and it is not usual, the usual average in terms of improvement is about two points, but we were able to make a shift of two points. We are headed to the right direction. Some of the things that we attribute to this are the county exams and I would like to thank the Assembly because education is not devolved per se, but I always insist that the results are devolved, if you fail, then it is you. We have been able to create interventions and mitigate around it, the exams have helped standardize evaluation.

There before, the county was administering 30 different exams set up by 30 different minds, that game can lead you to 30 different directions. We have been able to harmonize that and now we can be able to set up a yearly examination council made up of the best brains in each subject and now they are able to set up a very standard exam which has contributed a lot in improving performance.

The Bursary, I would like to thank this Assembly, it is only six months ago that we dished out bursaries of Kshs. 70 million, you went ahead and approved another bursary of Kshs. 70 million to coincide with the return to school and the Form one intake programme. The bursary is under discussion and we have the relevant committees as guided by the Scholarship Act and we should be ready to release the money anytime from now after the names are vetted.

The other area in Education is the polytechnics, that is a fully devolved function; we found our polytechnics at a very low level in terms of infrastructure, equipment and staffing. We have spent Kshs. 20 million equipping all the polytechnics in the county.

Regarding staff, this is a different issue. The polytechnic staff had been taken through the programmes which are still running and by the time we take over, I think there is a discussion where the Ministry of Education is trying to look at how and when some of these support programmes will elapse so that we can be able to take over and employ the right people according to the budget. However, the key area around polytechnic is the infrastructure. Going forward, we are going to dedicate more funds to make sure as we buy the equipment, we also make sure physical infrastructures like workshops are there.

ECDE centres have been a challenge. That is a fully devolved function, we provided them with requisite learning aids but the most critical thing is the ECDE teachers. There is a tug between the Teachers Service Commission and the Kenya National Union of Teachers. We wanted to employ teachers, we advertised over 800 vacancies but it could not complete the process because the matter went to court and still there, we were stopped from recruiting any ECDE teachers, that is where we are.

I know there are tricky ways of doing it by renaming them caretakers but by the end of the day from a court perspective you cannot have a caretaker who is teaching kids how to write ABC, because the role of a caretaker, is very clear, even a maid in the house, we do not want to break that role of a caretaker since there is a stalemate around that but going forward, I believe the court will give directions.

On university education, I know there have been a lot of push towards upgrading the Murang'a university college which is currently a constitute college of Jomo Kenyatta University. The process is through. I talked to the principal the other day, the approvals are set and we are only remaining with few documentation. The general agreement is that from next month we are likely to get the Charter as Murang'a University so that we become independent.

However, the key challenge around this university is accommodation. It is one story getting a Charter and freedom to recruit our own students and a different story accommodating those students. The academic and other facilities are in place, we can be able to manage around it but they cannot manage around accommodation. We have been trying to create an intervention; we tried creating a deal with Jamii Bora and the University to encourage hostels. It is coming up well but it is way behind schedule.

You as legislators need to help us to engage the investors around here and make sure that we invest enough in hostels. We will get a Charter but we won't go anywhere because if you cannot be able to expand by getting students we cannot accommodate and thus the whole essence of Charter will be meaningless even with the local investors and groups like cooperatives and the rest, such that immediately we get the Charter we will get into a growth trajectory.

Regarding the disadvantaged, we have moved forward, I think in the last couple of months we were able to facilitate all those people who are abled differently with the various aides with wheelchairs and the rest and so far we have given close to a 1000 facilitations and we made it an open cheques because there you cannot argue about budgets. How many people are we discussing about? And it is still ongoing. As a county government it is our responsibility to make sure that we take care of them and the cheque is still open, any person who is disabled will be assisted either with hearing aids, walking aids and other facilitation about movement and the rest, we took care of that and I think it is tracking well.

The other area is on the disabled vocational training, there is the Muriranjias rehabilitation centre that used to be a premier vocational training center for the disabled but over the years it has gone through neglect and currently it is a pale shadow of its own past. If you walk to the institution, it has only 40 students and it is the only institution of its kind in Central Kenya and it has only 40 students. We have committed to double the figure and factor enough in the budget so that we can even raise the figure to over 500 students, that is a major project for us and it should be a centre where all the disabled who want to

get vocational training should go and we then make sure that we give them affordable training.

Going forward on the area of disadvantaged, and I think we have discussed this with a couple of the members, I think we should start touching some of the very disadvantaged within our wards. We are proposing that we have an NHIF scheme targeting specific families so that they can be able to access health care in cases of inpatients. I think a bill will be developed between us and the Assembly to see how best we can develop this because there are so many people within the county who cannot access the money for the aged from the national government. We need a local solution.

To make sure we mainstream the gender issues, affirmative action and access to 30% threshold of access to government tenders and generally empower them, we have created a sacco for women. We have made sure that we have a sacco in every sub county and we syndicated them into an umbrella sacco which should then be able to give direction and way forward. So far we are working well and the cooperative has 22,000 women spread across the county and they are in a saving scheme of minimum Kshs. 30 per day. As a County government we are hooking them to government tenders and as we speak they have Kshs. 16 million savings and we want to engage them in projects not lending schemes. As we speak, they are actually lending them to one of the hostels of Murang'a University, I think they kicked off yesterday if I am not wrong and we expect to see some sort of action as affirmative action around our women is concerned.

On sports, we are set; we have started by making sure we have decent sporting grounds. We rehabilitated Ihura stadium and our objective is to have two key stadiums, Ihura and Gakoigo which will be at a much higher scale because of its location and size. We can be utilizing it with the international games that are around. The programmes are ongoing but going forward we need to make sure we have a decent stadium per ward, at least an average stadium that can be able to cater for the sporting activity in every ward.

I would like to report that we have set a wonderful soccer team. Through the local soccer tournaments; we have been able to set together a team which is a representative of almost all wards in the county. As we speak, within a short time, it is in division one, it is in the GOTV league and it is the current champion in the inter-county games and to make sure we get to the right direction we recruited the immediate former AFC Leopards coach so that he can nurse the team and go the ground seeking for talent.

On culture and as I conclude, Mukurwe -wa- Nyagathanga is the origin of our community. As a County government, we are like the trustees; we have started off a scheme to make sure we take leadership in the rehabilitation and development of Mukurwe- wa- Nyagathanga as a cultural shrine. We have contracted Kenyatta University which has the best school of African Studies in the region, so we have contracted them to drive the programme of the shrine and we have brought together all the elders in the county, the Kikuyu Council of Elders and other players and now there is a clear platform for them to deliver.

We expect the engagements to start, digging into the history. They are talking to all stakeholders and soon a programme on revival of Mukurwe- wa- Nyagathanga from a very professional perspective will be ready, although it is a community thing, we are the current gatekeepers, we are leading the process.

Lastly, on the issue of revenue collection and sharing, The Speaker alluded to that. I think for the Senate should be a little bit sensitive on the issue of horizontal sharing of the devolved revenue. There is a high degree of inequity in the way the national revenue is split in between counties. A county like Murang'a and other counties that have an eighth of the population in Murang'a, you find a county getting national revenue of Kshs. 10 billion with a third of our total population, whereas we are getting Kshs. 5 billion, you cannot imagine, we are even having situations where some counties are unable to absorb. You find a county with billions in the revenue account lying there because it has struggled to engage.

I think that formula needs to be truly relooked into and be based on the number of human beings living within that particular county and not the issues of unoccupied distances and space on the ground and then that space is allocated funds vis a vis a situation where human beings in more populated counties like Murang'a are not allocated. It is a very sorry state because the fact that we want to accelerate growth in areas which had lagged behind does not mean that we put a break on areas which have realized better growth. These are the areas which also deliver a lot of revenue in terms of taxes.

There is a lot of unfairness and somebody needs to look at it and challenge it at the Senate level and you have Murang'a with Kshs. 4 billion and you have others and I do not want to quote, some other counties with Kshs. 10 billion and they cannot even absorb and we are here struggling to do the least that we can with very meager resources.

In terms of revenue collection, I know there have been statements on air that county governments have been collecting less revenue than the defunct authorities were collecting, that is not true of Murang'a. As far as Murang'a county is concerned, during the defunct local government period, we were collecting an average of Kshs. 319 million per year, we are now collecting an average of half a billion per year, that is a growth of 52% in revenue collection without necessarily taxing on chicken or making other weird taxations.

So our position is, and this needs to be very clear, that as a county government we have been able to balance in terms of the common man weight and making sure we close loopholes. However, going forward, our agenda is to automate so that we can be able to seal the loopholes and the next big agenda is ensuring that we invest in income generating projects because we shall never collect enough by following the market lady who is selling tomatoes, but if we identify income generating projects which we can invest in as a government, then we are assured of consistent returns. As the Ministry In charge of Finance, we are coming up with something and we will sit with the relevant committee to make sure as we spend our money with the general developmental factors, we also put our money into income generating projects so that we will have consistent and incremental revenue collection.

Lastly, I would like to thank the Assembly, this is an exemplary Assembly. Everywhere I go I am told that "Governor you have a very good Assembly", I do not know whether you are told that you have a very good Governor because you have never told me

(Laughter)

, but everywhere I go I am always told that you have a very sober Assembly and I think this is the way to go because it is very hard for a legislative entity to practice nearly 50% politics and 50% business because the norm is to practice 80% politics and 20% business

in the name of 80:20 rule which you have critically defied and that is what have fuelled our growth going forward.

Our working relationship with other elected leaders is fairly ok and I think we and the Senator and the others, at a scale with other counties, I think we are very much ahead. The Speaker has also been very supportive, I do not know whether because he is a fairly elderly man compared to other Assemblies

(Applause)

But I think he has steered this county with a lot of wisdom, I feel very comfortable, he is able to clearly shoot issues from a platform of reasoning and we are able to keep engaging, we are able to argue and he advises me a lot. We meet often and the small things that come along, due to his wisdom age and previous experience, we have been able to do it.

My call is, let us walk that journey together in the remaining three years and given the mark that we have made in the last two years, I believe that the sky is the limit. Thank you very much

(Applause)

PAPERS

ADDRESS BY H.E THE GOVERNOR OF MURANG'A COUNTY

Hon. Peter Kihungi: I hereby wish to lay on the table the address by H.E The Governor today February 12, 2015, thank you Mr. Speaker sir.

(Hon. Peter Kihungi laid the paper on the table)

NOTICES OF MOTION

Hon Peter Kihungi: Mr. Speaker sir, I beg to give a notice of motion to discuss the address of H.E The Governor. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

(Hon. Peter Kihungi laid the notice of motion on the table)

ADJOURNMENT

The House is now adjourned until Tuesday 17th February 2015 at 9 a.m.

NATIONAL ANTHEM

The House rose at 5:09 p.m.