

MURANGA COUNTY GOVERNMENT



OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR

Dr. Irungu Kang'ata

Governor Speech to the Assembly on 27th September 2022 9.30am

Introduction

I take this opportunity to congratulate members on their election and nomination into this assembly. This assembly has very competent members as illustrated by the depth of their intellectual discourse which I have observed during the several occasions that we have engaged. It has a very good diversity of skills and I have no doubt this will be the best assembly since commencement of devolution in Murang'a.

Honorable members, allow me to expound on the vision of the executive for Murang'a people. I hereby plead you help us achieve that vision through your very important roles of oversight, representation and legislation.

Our vision

Healthcare remains a very important agenda for this administration. Out of the 4000 employees of the county, about 2800 are in health sector. The sector takes the lion share of the county budget. Further, the demographic characteristics of the county justifies giving priority to the sector. For instance ,an analysis of census data for Murang'a county in years 1999,2009 and 2019 reveal our population has not been growing .It has remained around 1M residents .Our registered voters are about 650,000. That means there are more adults than minors in Murang'a. That shows Murang'a has an ageing population. An ageing society always gives priority to healthcare. That explains the upsurge of non-communicable diseases (cancer, diabetes, high blood pressure) in Murang'a.

Focusing on healthcare is also the moral thing to do .Jesus Christ, our moral standard bearer, used to feed the hungry and to treat the sick .As the current generation of leaders; we have a moral duty to continue caring for the most vulnerable members of the society –the sick. We therefore propose to intervene in the health sector using several approaches .First; we shall propose to establish a fund that will enroll underprivileged Murang'a residents into NHIF at the cost of the county. That entails setting aside funds in the budget and paying the funds into NHIF. The beneficiaries then access medical services for free.

NHIF covers a full range of health services save optical, dental and morgue charges. We have engaged NHIF to cover these extra services .These include last

expense insurance whereby dependents of a member/ beneficiary who passes on will get Ksh 100,000 within three days of his or her demise. The current budget passed by the last assembly had set aside 170M that can be used safely for this purpose. We can commence the program using the amounts but if this assembly finds it wise, it can increase the allocation. Ksh170M can only cover about 20,000 families because of the extra advantages. This being a government- to -government engagement ,the intended relationship between NHIF and Murang'a county may commence soon since it will not be encumbered by procurement procedures .We recently held a meeting with NHIF officials .We later wrote officially to NHIF to initiate the relationship. We are waiting for their response.

However, this assembly needs to pass a policy and regulations to legitimize the fund .In particular, how to identify beneficiaries is an important area requiring your input .We shall propose beneficiaries be picked from polling center level. We shall be tabling these tools soon for your consideration.

The scheme is very sustainable because we shall recover sums paid to NHIF and probably get a markup .Persons covered under this scheme will seek services from our public healthcare facilities .We shall then claim from NHIF. Currently, this scheme does not exist in Murang'a but the county claims about 150M from NHIF annually. There is the possibility once we invest, say 170M into NHIF and issue cards to residents, we shall claim in excess of 400M. Of course we need to improve

services in our public facilities so that we incentivize patients to seek services there.

Second, we propose to establish a fund that gives Ksh 2000 for three months to every expectant mother seeking pre and post natal services in our public health facilities .The idea is intended to boost maternal healthcare by incentivizing expectant mothers to attend health facilities .Murang'a county goal is to achieve zero maternal death .This can only be achieved if we incentivize mothers to seek pre and post natal care. This scheme will also be sustainable since the county is entitled for refund from the national government for every child delivered in our health care services under the '**linda mama**' program.

Third, we intend to complete stalled facilities and renovate several existing health institutions. Examples include Kirwara and Kandara health facilities that have stalled .Other stalled health facilities include Kigetuni dispensary in Gaturi, Kiharu ,Gacaraigu dispensary in Kangema ,Kigumo hospital in Kigumo. Mathioya and Maragwa deserve additional health facilities .We shall consider upgrading Nyakianga hospital in Mathioya and build a new hospital in Kenol. The county pays about Ksh14M rent per annum for the Kenol hospital .The county can save money if it builds a new hospital on its land in Makenji area .This is the fastest

growing region of the county located along a busy highway hence it can also serve as an accident trauma center.

The second important pillar of our vision is agriculture .Murang'a county Integrated Development Plan 2018-2022 indicates 60% of our county economic activities are related to agriculture. More than 70 % of our residents are employed, directly and indirectly, by the sector. However, our ecological zones are three – the upper zone comprised of about 10 wards where tea and milk does well; the middle coffee and milk belt and the lower zone where fruit farming can do well.

Our interventions will focus, on pilot basis, on Mangoes and milk to ensure we cover all ecological zones of our county. These two products can be added value easily hence create employment and have a local market .If the pilot works, we can extend to many other crops like avocado, coffee, and tea.

We intend to create an input subsidy program for mangoes and milk. As rightly argued by our President Ruto during his inauguration, consumers should not be subsidized. Government can only subsidize the producer to boost production and create employment.

We shall be tabling policies and regulations soon before this assembly to create a legal framework to underpin this agenda .The framework will indicate how much will be given to each farmer and method of identification of beneficiaries.

Milk sector is more organized since there are many strong cooperatives .The county might need to organize mangoes farmer and probably negotiate our growers contracts with good fruit juice manufacturers .This creates necessary market linkages to sustain the program .

The third pillar of our vision is the community projects program .We intend to establish a distinct vote in the budget under the Department of Roads and infrastructure to handle ward projects .Article 174 (f) of the Constitution 2010 provides one object of devolution as being to promote social and economic development and the provision of proximate, easily accessible services throughout Kenya. Further (h) provides to facilitate the decentralization of State organs, their functions and services, from the capital of Kenya. This can only be realized by projects at the ward level. We intend to involve your good offices without offending recent Supreme Court decision of the need to separate powers between executive and legislature. Projects relating to water, lighting, roads Murram, dispensaries and renovating ECDEs will fall under this vision.

Renovation of ECDE is particularly important. This is an exclusive function of devolved units. Further, this agenda will give an opportunity to support local contractors at the grassroots level. We also intend to reestablish porridge program for ECDE learners to boost class attendance and participation. However, our

program will not entail central planning that is prone to abuse and corruption .We shall establish an IT system where ECDE teachers and parents will access e-money and buy porridge at the local level .County officials will establish the right standards of porridge provided.

On education, despite the huge budgetary constraint of about Ksh230M, it is our humble opinion it is immoral to discontinue children benefiting under the Nyota Zetu program. However ,we intend to make it better by pivoting towards day schools .The children who attend day schools represent UDA bottom up philosophy .We shall propose to set aside sums to benefit day scholars . This pivoting will help more students and hence promote equity in society. In any event, these schools are in our communities .They employ our local people .Any support rendered to them makes Murang'a economy to thrive more.

To start off this pivot ,we have issued instructions that every day secondary student in Murang'a county who passed KCSE this year and is set to join university be issued Ksh 10,000 .From next week Tuesday ,we shall go to the best day school in each sub county to issue these cheques to help these young students .The greatest financial burden for parents who have children in the university is always in first year .Murang'a county will be helping parents in this regard .We urge honorable members to join us next week during these occasions .

It has been projected that humans will in future live mainly in urban areas. In the West ,85% of citizens on average live in urban areas .Africa now has the fastest urbanization rate .To plan for this future ,we need to invest resources in Murang'a urban areas .Towards this ,we intend to hasten processes of establishing Kangari and Kenol municipalities .Next budget ,there will be an allocation for 'smart city programs'. It is intended to allocate funds for urban renewal in terms of paving more roads, street lighting, sewerage systems and public housing.

Honorable members ,land remains an important factor of production .It is our vision to create land policies that spur economic development .As a county ,we need to consider establishing economic zones that give tax break for investors .As I said during my swearing in ceremony previous county government entered into a deal with Del Monte and 1400 acre of land was ceded to the county. This assembly and Executive must think creatively on how to utilize that land in ways that can create employment .Agro processors would greatly help create market for our agro-products.

Honorable members, it is our vision that Murang'a needs to boost its image as a bastion of free private enterprise .Murang'a has produced some of the Kenya's best business minds .Therefore, ours is a pro-business government .Our finance bill will be very conservative and it will avoid raising fees and charges .We believe the county can survive without increasing fees and charges if it can create effective

revenue collection systems .That way, we attract investors and boost revenue.

Therefore, our administration will be big on matters IT. We have already engaged a good soft ware developer .We shall soon be rolling our software programs to boost efficiency in revenue collection.

Honorable members ,we inherited a county with huge pending bills .The assumption committee was informed by county staff that we have Ksh1.7B pending bills .Later on, this figure shot up to 2.7B. This compelled us to form a task force to investigate this matter. We invited EACC to observe the committee. We are happy EACC has lauded our efforts and urged other counties to adopt our style. We closed receiving claims last week on Thursday .We are happy to report to the assembly only claims worth about Ksh900M were lodged .That means ,even without verification ,we have already saved the county in excess 800M .This figure of about Ksh900M will come down once we do the verification .

On matters staff, it is irrational to expect good performance of a county where staff are demoralized .We inherited a county that delays salaries for more than 3 months. Many reasons have been given for this including exchequer delays .However, exchequer delays is a universal problem and there are some counties that pay workers on time .We have engaged various stakeholders on ways of

addressing this issue .We shall be tabling instruments before this assembly that would help us address this issue with finality. Further, we have created a task force to investigate gaps in our human resource. Today and tomorrow, a head count will be mounted in the entire county to weed out ghost workers. This task force will make recommendations that will ultimately benefit employees.

Honorable members, let me now turn to the role of the assembly in actualizing this vision.

Assembly role

The law clearly gives this assembly powers that can support or torpedo this vision .We ask this house to enrich our vision .Ours will be a collaborative and open engagement .We prefer consensus building and mediation .We shall be tabling before this house tools needed to actualize this vision. They include third generation CIDP; amended ADP; regulations / bills and policies all requiring your input .We shall be tabling names of persons whom you will vet and, if they pass the test, help us in the executive. We promise to nominate men and women of great honor and competence to move Murang'a forward. Despite the fact that we are yet to fully constitute the government, we have had some achievement

Achievements

On health matters, we found a county that buys drugs 100% from the private sector. Government drugs supply entity KEMSA had closed Murang'a accounts for nonpayment of supplies. This means Murang'a procured drugs expensively and possibly of poor quality. We settled entire KEMSA debt and reactivated more supplies. We have issued policy directive that Murang'a will get its medical supplies exclusively from KEMSA unless there are stock outs. To boost local hospitals and dispensaries, we have issued Executive Order No.1. Its effect is to abolish central planning and procurement which was centralized at Murang'a county Offices. The order now allows local hospitals to retain, from 1st October 2022, 30% of NHIF funds as imprest for running local expenses like purchase of fuel, engaging casuals and other forms of local needs. Further, we have facilitated the release of donor funds (DANIDA) by releasing the matching funds. Hence all health facilities have some funds for use at the local level released on Saturday.

On IT, we have created IT systems to manage pending bills data collection. At the click of a button, I am able to trace activities of that committee. The same applies with HR committee. We shall launch next week pilot for cess at Kandundu quarry, parking fees in Murang'a town and market fees collection in Maragwa town. These systems were generated for free unlike in other counties where they expend billions to buy them.

On education, today we shall be releasing Nyota Zetu cheques in Kimorori.
Next week, we shall release funds for day scholars joining Universities.

On garbage collection, we have undertaken a campaign to collect garbage that had piled up for the last 10 months .We have also engaged various stakeholders on ways of reviving various sectors.

Yesterday, I had a meeting with dairy sector stakeholders and we shall soon unveil our policy intention for the sector.

Conclusion

We thank you honorable members for the support you have rendered so far. We shall remain engaged for the betterment of the county.



Dr. Irungu Kang'ata

The Governor Murang'a County.