

**SPEECH DELIVERED BY H.E. JOHN OBIERO NYAGARAMA
DURING THE FARMERS EXHIBITION AND AVOCADO LAUNCH
ON 7th NOVEMBER, 2019 AT NYAMAIYA STADIUM, NYAMIRA
COUNTY.**

**THE CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE SECRETARY, DR. ANDREW
TUIMUR,
HONOURABLE GOVERNORS,
THE KEPHIS CHAIRMAN,
DISTINGUISHED GUESTS,
LADIES AND GENTLEMEN,**

It gives me great pleasure to host this important event for farmers' exhibition and avocado launch in our County. Agriculture remains the main livelihood sector for residents of Nyamira County and the region at large. Socio-economic growth of the people is measured in part by the extent of food and nutritional security. Thus, Agriculture promotes equitable access and availability of food in the country.

Global Sustainable Development Goals, number one and two aims at ending poverty and ensuring there is Zero hunger. In order to achieve these goals, great emphasis needs to be put in agricultural production and Agri-business.

Ladies and gentlemen,

Avocado is not only a fruit to be enjoyed in our delicacies but also has crucial benefits that we can't just ignore. Numerous studies have found out that a diet that includes avocados can help to decrease the risk of obesity, diabetes, heart disease just to mention but a few.

Avocado has a role to play in cancer treatment, with some research finding that phytochemicals extracted from avocado can selectively inhibit the growth of precancerous and cancerous cells. While encouraging the rapid increase of immune system cells called **lymphocytes**. On this note, I want to encourage all farmers to embrace avocado farming for its numerous benefits.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Nyamira County, just like other Counties in Kenya, is undertaking various initiatives and programs that contribute towards the President's Big Four Agenda and particularly the Food and Nutrition Security Pillar. One such initiative is Avocado production with emphasis on producing for the export market.

Currently, the total acreage under avocado production in Nyamira County is estimated at 1,455 Hectares with an

estimated annual production of 10,200 Metric Tonnes of Avocado fruits. However, this is largely under the local avocado variety (Jumbo Variety) which has mainly been for local market consumption.

It's important to note that, Nyamira is well endowed with favourable climate and soils suitable for Avocado production.

To promote the Avocado value chain, my Government, through the Department of Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries, has in this financial year budgeted to procure over 5,000 seedlings of **Hass** and **Fuerte** varieties to be distributed to farmer groups as demonstration materials. This is in addition to training of 500 farmer groups across the entire county on production and marketing of avocado.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

We have several challenges facing avocado production, the major one being low access to certified seedlings, mainly the export varieties. In collaboration with KEPHIS and Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA- Horticultural Crops Directorate), we have trained and licensed 10 nursery operators. This will go a long way in improving farmers' access to quality seedlings as well as cutting cost of purchasing seedlings.

To improve production and increase productivity, our technical officers in all the Sub Counties will be trained on the latest technologies on avocado production and same knowledge passed to the farmers.

To improve on access to markets and better income to our farmers, I urge our farmers to start avocado producer and marketing groups or cooperatives which will enable us to produce adequate volumes to meet local and export markets.

Since we are part of the Lake Region Economic Block, I propose that we explore the available marketing opportunities and invest in the avocado value chain so as to tap into the export market potential that has been negotiated by our National Government and thus, ultimately benefit our farmers as well as generate more revenue through trade to our County Governments.

Ladies and Gentlemen,

To all our esteemed partners and stakeholders led by KEPHIS, I salute and appreciate the efforts we are all putting together to ensure that our farmers get the best out of their farming endeavors. Your participation in this Exhibition today has made this event a success and most importantly, our farmers have learnt a lot.

The collaboration between the County Government of Nyamira and the National Government will be enhanced to create a conducive environment for our farmers' development.

There are several programs and Projects in Nyamira County that have been incorporated with the National Government and have positively impacted the lives of our farmers and we hope that this partnership will continue.

In the recent past, the Lake Region Economic Block (LREB) organized an agribusiness investment forum in Vihiga County. Nyamira County is organizing a similar event in the near future. I call upon all producers to take advantage of the existing market opportunities in the region to market their produce.

Agriculture remains the economic backbone of Nyamira thus, there is need for its the County to partner with KEPHIS in implementing the Big Four Agenda.

The only existing KEPHIS office that serves the whole of Lake Region Economic Bloc is based in Kisumu thus, my Government is requesting KEPHIS to consider putting up an office in Nyamira, to serve the farmers of this region, since we have sufficient land.

Under the Cooperate Social Responsibility we request KEPHIS to partner with our secondary schools to set up green houses and provide seedlings so as to improve in providing food security in our county.

My government is ready to sign an MOU with KEPHIS to formalize the framework for collaboration in supporting the Kenyan Agriculture through Scientific solutions aimed at empowering farmers and supporting agribusiness in external markets.

Finally, I want to urge our partners, collaborators and stakeholders to continue investing in Nyamira County and more specifically in the agricultural sector.

Thank You

May God Bless You

May God give strength to our farmers