



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

OF THARAKA NITHI

*A Prosperous, Industrialized
and Cohesive County*

**ANNUAL STATE OF
THE COUNTY ADDRESS**

2020

By

H.E MUTHOMI NJUKI

GOVERNOR

15th December 2020

Theme:

***Building Resilience Amidst the
COVID - 19 Pandemic***

**OFFICE OF THE
GOVERNOR**

**THE STATE OF THE COUNTY
ADDRESS BY HIS EXCELLENCY HON.
MUTHOMI NJUKI, GOVERNOR-
THARAKA NITHI COUNTY, DELIVERED
ON 15TH DECEMBER 2020 AT THE
COUNTY ASSEMBLY CHAMBERS AT
KATHWANA**

© Annual State of the County Address
2020

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Honourable Speaker

*Honorable Members of the County
Assembly,*

The Deputy Governor,

*County Executive Committee
Members,*

County Chief Officers,

*National Government Officials
present,*

Our Development Partners,

Invited Guests,

The People of Tharaka Nithi,

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Mr. Speaker and Honorable Members; I am delighted to address this 2nd Assembly and deliver the Annual State of the County Address as required by Article 183 of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 and Section 30 of the County Government Act, 2012.

Mr. Speaker,

I appreciate the continued collaboration between this Honourable house and the executive serving our great people of Tharaka Nithi. In a special way, I would like to thank the residents of Tharaka Nithi County for performing their civic duty in supporting our development agenda.

Additionally, I recognize all the stakeholders who are positively

contributing to the agenda of transforming the lives of the residents of Tharaka Nithi County.

Mr. Speaker,

As you are aware, we are living in a time that the world is fighting an invisible enemy, the Novel Corona Virus. This pandemic has not only affected the global community in matters of health, but also in terms of international trade,

macroeconomic indicators and financial markets. We are living in an extraordinary time characterized by changes in working patterns, a struggling economy and numerous health challenges caused by the COVID-19 Pandemic.

The first confirmed COVID- 19 case was reported in Kenya on 13th March 2020. Following confirmation of this pandemic, Tharaka Nithi County put in

place a number of key COVID-19 mitigation interventions such as;

- ❖ Establishment of County Emergency response committees with structures at sub-county level which continues to offer oversight role on response system and coordination with national task force on COVID 19 preparedness and response.
- ❖ Continuous awareness creation and appropriate

- hygiene practices to the public.
- ❖ Established partnerships to support creation awareness and health workers trainings in the county.
 - ❖ Functional 24-hour call Centre/Emergency Operation Centre (EOC) for channeling COVID-19 surveillance reports/alerts.
 - ❖ Active Surveillance using a combination of strategies

including CHVs, Sub-county administrators, ward administrators, area Chiefs, Nyumba Kumi initiative and general public among many others;

Tharaka Nithi County reported its first confirmed COVID-19 case on 17th July 2020. To date, the total case load stands at 213 persons (106 males and 107 females) from all the samples tested to date. The County's

disease prevalence is 0.5/1000 population. Tharaka Nithi County is among the bottom ten (10) counties in Kenya with the lowest COVID-19 attack rate. The total number of deaths stands at 9 persons across the County.

I take this opportunity to thank our health care workers in a special way and particularly the front line workers who have gone above and beyond the call of duty

to ensure that critical services were availed to our people.

Honorable Members,

The biggest promise of devolution and its associated benefits was to increase grassroots access to services and decision-making. Indeed people's expectations of county governments continue to be extremely high. My government remains committed to progressively changing people's

lives through sustainable socio-economic initiatives. Over the last three years, we have made tremendous progress and achieved extraordinary success, despite facing numerous challenges.

At this juncture allow me to highlight the progress achieved by my administration over the last one year and our agenda in the years to come.

The latest County Track Performance Index of 2020 Survey Report independently conducted by InfroTrack placed Tharaka Nithi among the top-performing counties in Kenya. Among the counties in the Eastern region, Tharaka Nithi topped the list in many sectors that include; Health, Agriculture, Education and Environment. Overall, Tharaka Nithi County was ranked position **8 out of 47**,

which was a remarkable improvement from position **34 in 2016.**

Mr. Speaker,

We have and will continue to utilize our resources prudently. The audit opinion on our financial statements indicates a significant improvement in our financial management compared to previous years. This has enabled us to qualify for financing and other forms of

support from development partners like the World Bank's Kenya Devolution Support Programme and Kenya Urban Support Programme. It is also important to note that financial performance is one of the parameters used in the new county revenue allocation formula. Therefore, we have to keep on improving our performance to retain these benefits.

Mr. Speaker,

I wish to thank this Honorable House for adopting the Tharaka Nithi County COVID-19 Social Economic Re-Engineering Recovery Strategy paper for the Fiscal Years 2020-21, 2021-22, and 2022-23. This strategy will be mainstreamed in development plans to help re-engineer the current processes, support recovery from socio-economic

shocks caused by COVID-19 pandemic and enhance resilience in emergency response in future. Policies and laws make an integral pillar of any government since it is the legal framework that facilitates formulation and implementation of County Government functions.

In the FY 2019/20, the county executive drafted various bills and policies which were forwarded to the house for debate

and adoption. I commend this Honorable House for having scrutinized the legislative proposals without delay and passed them into county legislations.

I have just assented to The Tharaka Nithi County Youth Empowerment Bill of 2020, among others that this house enacted. The Youth Empowerment Act seeks to involve and invest with youth

groups to empower them attain economic independence as well as providing guidelines which will help them play a major role in the re-engineering process of getting the County back on its feet from the ravages of COVID-19.

Other legislations that have been enacted include:

- The Tharaka Nithi County County Flag, Emblem and Name Protection Act, 2020.

- The Tharaka Nithi County Tea Act, 2019.
- The Tharaka Nithi County Traffic and Transport management Act, 2020
- The Tharaka Nithi Climate Change Fund Act, 2019.
- The Tharaka Nithi County Investment and Development Corporation Act, 2019.

I humbly request this Honorable House to fast-track various bills

and policy documents already tabled which include:

- Tharaka Nithi County Reproductive Health Rights Bill of 2020
- Alcohol Drinks (Control) Amendment Bill 2020
- Public Nuisance Bill 2019
- Livestock Sale Yards Bill 2019
- Pre-Primary Education Bill 2019

- Disaster Management Bill
2019
- Co-Operative Societies Bill
2019
- Persons With Disabilities
Bill 2020
- Disaster Management Bill
2019

Honourable members, it is paramount to note that the Building Bridges Initiative is offering counties an opportunity to thrive. Of importance, is the

35% proposed allocation to counties of the national ordinary revenue and the 5% to be set aside for ward development fund. This house will be key in the Constitutional amendment process and hence I urge you honourable members to support the process.

Mr. Speaker,

Public participation is a key promise enshrined in the Constitution of Kenya Article 118

and imbued in the national values and principles of governance provided in Article 10. My administration is committed to strengthen citizen engagement in governance and development. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the opportunities for physical public participation were limited this year. However, the citizens were given the opportunity to share their contributions through other

channels including written memoranda and the County toll free number.

As I promised during my last state of the county address, I am happy to report to you that my government has already established a 24/7/365 **CUSTOMER CARE CENTER** to support response to disasters and connect the people with their government through a Toll-Free number **1513**.

In order to mitigate and prepare to respond to emergencies that would greatly affect the lives of our people, my government has constantly ensured that our four fire engines are in good working condition. We have established three fire stations with six fire engines strategically located to ensure timely response to emergencies when they occur. One fire engine is located in **Marimanti, 1 in kathwana, 2 in**

Chuka and 2 at Chogoria. All staff in the Disaster Management Unit are well equipped with skills which have enabled them to offer services to the victims in various situations. This level of preparedness has enabled us to respond to over 140 incidences with major ones being road accidents and fires.

Mr Speaker,

Devolution was intended to foster local participation,

accountability, transparency, efficiency and responsiveness to the needs of the citizens. The aspects of good governance are clearly defined in Article 10 of the Constitution 2010 as part of the national values and principles. The existing legal framework has established an elaborate institutional framework to provide clear checks and balances. We have prioritized the sharing of information in order to

enable our citizenry actively participate in the county processes for example development of key county documents such as budgets, county plans and policy briefs. Beginning last year, the department of budget and economic planning generated the *mwananchi version* of our budget documents and reports which are simplified, user friendly and available on the county website.

They are also provided during our public participation meetings.

Mr Speaker

Lately, the Office of the Governor has steered the *County Mashinani* model where the executive visits all projects in all 15 wards, analyzes their impacts and collects views from *Ciambai* through a Participatory Rural Appraisal initiative. We have harnessed the citizens' interest

in development to enhance civilian oversight and collaboration. Additionally, we have also been carrying out Service Delivery Clinics in order to raise general awareness of the services offered by the different departments and the modalities of delivering them.

My administration is keen on delivering excellent services to the citizens. As the *County Worker Number One*, I have been

able to articulate our vision and set direction for the county, promote a healthy organizational culture and establish clear lines of responsibility and measures of accountability. This has been possible due to the immense support we have received from the county staff in all cadres. My government has been able to formulate a staff establishment that has enabled rationalization of the public service. A number

of staff had stagnated in the same job group for years while others were not matched to their skills and many more on casual terms. My government has in the last three years promoted 833 employees, redesignated 251 for skill realignment and reviewed engagement terms for 108 casuals. Notably, many employees had not been enrolled in any pension scheme. Following an Agreement between

Tharaka Nithi County Government and County Pension Fund, we have enrolled 1142 employees into the pension scheme.

Mr Speaker,

The agriculture sector continues to play a vital role in the county's economy as it provides inputs and markets to other sectors. Strengthening and improving the performance of the agricultural sector and enabling the

engagement of the most vulnerable in this process is therefore a prerequisite and a necessary condition for economic growth.

To improve crop production and productivity, the county has continued to support farmers with high quality certified seeds. This year, we procured 20 metric tonnes of beans and 20 metric tonnes of green grams which were distributed to over 20,000

farmers for free to cushion them from the effects of Covid-19 and drought. In addition, the county also distributed 30 metric tonnes of maize to 15,000 farmers. The county government also donated 10,500 bags of fertilizer to 3,500 farmers. Additionally, more than 4000 seedlings of Macadamia and 4000 seedlings of Avocado were also distributed.

Tea and coffee have been the major cash crops in the County.

However, the sector has faced numerous challenges over time. Among them is poor handling of produce resulting in perennial high post-harvest losses. To address this challenge, the county government has upgraded to ISO standards 11 tea buying centers in FY 2019-20 which includes **Gatonyero, Wiru, Kiang'onde and New Kiereni and Kiamuriuki A&B** among others.

The county has adopted the value chain concept in enterprise development, which recognizes the importance of both private and public actors in bringing about change. The County government through the Kenya Climate Smart Agriculture Programme is promoting green grams, bananas, dairy and indigenous chicken enterprises where 101 micro-projects have

been funded along the four value chains.

Mr. Speaker,

Early this year the county was invaded by Desert Locusts. Crops and pastures were destroyed threatening the county food security. My government responded quickly by mobilizing control teams and providing the necessary tools to control the locusts. To ensure continuous

surveillance, livelihood protection and rehabilitation, I have signed a participation agreement with World Bank to implement the Emergency Locust Response Project for the period covering fiscal year 2020/21 to 2022/23

Mr. Speaker,

Livestock rearing is a key economic activity for most households in the county. As a

county we have been experiencing High cost of insemination services and poor breeds due to slow uptake of Artificial Inseminations. This prompted my administration to provide the subsidized A.I. services with charges for ordinary semen at home reducing from a high of Ksh. 1,500 to Ksh.400, ordinary semen at county designated crushes from a high of Ksh.

1,500 to Ksh.200 and sexed semen from a high of Ksh. 10,000 to Ksh. 4,000. Additionally, the county has established a semen collection center at Chuka Livestock offices. To date the county has offered 6,391 subsidized cattle Artificial Inseminations.

I call upon our farmers to use the County Farmers Registration platform for a self-registration via mobile phones through the

USSD code *452# so that they can access county services.

To address the current milk marketing challenges and increase the value addition of milk and other dairy products, the County Government is supporting Muthiru Dairy to process subsidized dairy meal for farmers.

Mr Speaker,

As you are aware, one of the sources of county funding is county own source revenue. In FY 2019/20 the County Own Source Revenue collected rose to Kshs. 271.6 million from Kshs 242 million collected from the previous year despite the COVID-19 pandemic that threatened the global economy. This upward trend in County Own Source Revenue collection is attributed

to enhanced stakeholder involvement, automation of revenue collection, effective supervision, staff rationalization, well-coordinated enforcement and hence minimizing pilferage.

Mr. Speaker and honorable members

In the health sector, my administration is committed to offer quality and affordable health services. During the 2019-20 financial year, we constructed

and equipped 9 new dispensaries across the county bring to a total of 105 health facilities in the county. This coming year, we target to open another 10 facilities.

To improve our level 4 facilities, we are in the process of completing several infrastructural projects key among them construction of an oxygen plant which supplies oxygen to all health facilities; a

modern out-patient block which is 70% complete; an additional theatre; maternity, pediatric and male wards; a modern kitchen and installation of a blood bank at Chuka Referral Hospital. Other projects include Construction and equipping of a modern kitchen and Construction of a modern OPD at Marimanti Hospital, expansion of OPD block and operationalization of a theatre at

Magutuni Hospital and Construction of an operating theater at Kibung'a Hospital among others. My Administration is committed to ensure a steady supply of pharmaceuticals and other crucial medical supplies required around the clock in all our health facilities. Further, we have purchased medical equipment to enable specialized medical care services that were initially not

available in our public health facilities. These includes

- ❖ A High resolution 64 slice CT Scan
- ❖ Mammogram for Cancer screening
- ❖ Digital x-ray
- ❖ Computerized orthamoscope that has supported over 2,000 eye operations countywide
- ❖ Modern Ultra sound machines

- ❖ Renal dialysis machines
- ❖ Screening X-ray that can help in imaging of the entire digestive, blood and reproductive systems.

In addition, we have specialized services that include Orthopaedic surgery, Pediatric services and radiology; these services initially were not available in our public health facilities. In order to improve specialized health services in the

county, my government has released a number of medical officers to pursue specialist courses and improve their skills. This will immensely reduce the costs related to seeking such services from private practitioners.

Pursuant to the specialist services offered by our medical personnel, I am delighted to highlight a success story of a preterm baby who weighed 700g

at birth and its life was saved by our dedicated pediatric team. At the time of discharge, the baby weighed more than 3 Kgs. This is just one of the many success stories.

It is encouraging when I see two of our senior citizens, LG Marangu and BM Njau who were blind for more than 7 years can now see; thank you to our surgeons and the medical teams at Magutuni level 4 hospital for

conducting a successful cataract surgery last month where more than other 50 patients benefited from the free surgery by my Government.

To enhance immunization coverage in the county, my government has procured and installed vaccine storage equipment in various health facilities and increased the number of immunizing health facilities from **78 to 106**.

Mr. Speaker,

Tuberculosis remains a global and national concern. Globally, 104 million people are infected with TB of which nearly 1.5 million die each year. In Kenya, TB is the fifth leading cause of death. To increase testing capacity and prompt diagnosis, we have acquired and installed a Gene expert machine which can diagnose multiple drug resistance TB. It is worth noting

that our county was ranked 2nd Best performing County nationally in 2019/20, in TB services.

My Government is aware of the importance of Community Health Strategy (CHS) and its contributions in improving primary health services. Therefore, we have fully embraced a community health strategy which has 127

Community Health Units (CHUs), spread across the entire county.

My Government has taken more measures to scale up community health strategy in the county. These measures include the recruitment of twenty-eight (28) more Community Health Assistants and training of 1,000 Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) on COVID-19 prevention and risk management communication. Through

Community Health Volunteers, the county government was able to identify 6,673 vulnerable households that directly benefitted from relief food interventions and enhanced disease surveillance especially for COVID-19. The enhanced implementation of the community health strategy has led to the declaration of 457 villages as Open Defecation Free in the county.

My Government installed an Electronic Medical Records system in our four major hospitals to enhance inventory management of health products this fiscal year. Additionally, my Government has enhanced delivery of health care services through supporting efficient transport services. We have procured two ambulances bringing the total number of

ambulances to 9 to support emergency services

Public health and disease surveillance are key in the prevention of disease outbreaks. We have taken measures to strengthen the public surveillance activities including procurement of eight motor cycles to support the department activities.

Mr Speaker,

Access to water and proper sanitation is one of the most important development priorities to improve the quality of life of our citizens. During the Financial year 2019/20, we drilled and equipped 9 boreholes, supported 5 community water projects and supported 9 irrigation projects.

As we strive to achieve our development goals, we should be

alive to the fact that the world today faces an existential threat in the form of climate change. The extreme climate events such as floods and drought are capable of causing massive loss of lives, diminishing livelihoods, reduced crop and animal productivity and damage to infrastructure. As a county we have put in place a robust legal, policy and institutional framework to ensure proper

coordination of climate actions by the different actors so as to achieve harmony. We have endeavoured to mainstream climate change mitigation and adaptation in the county budgeting and planning process in various areas such as afforestation and reforestation, waste management and other clean energy development, water resource management, climate

smart agriculture and drought management.

Apart from the County Climate Change Act 2019, we have also formulated a Climate Change Policy (2019), a County Climate Change Response Strategy (CCCRS), County Adaptation Plan (CAP), County Climate Change Resource Mobilisation Strategy and the County Determined Contributions (CDC), as policies on climate

change actions in the County. Our primary focus is to ensure that adaptation and mitigation measures are integrated in all government planning, budgeting and development objectives.

Mr. Speaker,

To achieve any meaningful development, it is essential to have the facilitative infrastructure in place. Therefore, reliable transport network is a key enabler for

economic development. My government through a combination of interventions both policy and financial has progressively prioritized activities such as low volume seal tarmacking, gravelling, muramming, grading and construction of bridges and footbridges.

In the effort to improve road network, my government embarked on tarmacking of

different roads in the county. To this end we have completed the tarmacking of Chogoria Town Roads, Kathwana town roads and Kibugua Market roads. This has opened up the towns including the back streets, improving security, enhanced trade activities and spurred the value of property.

Mr speaker,

Since the onset of devolution, the county has heavily invested in

routine maintenance of roads through grading and gravelling. To eliminate costly and unsustainable maintenance of our major roads that comes especially after rainy seasons, my administration has adopted modern road construction technology such as the low volume seal mechanism as a long term solution to this perennial challenge.

Mr Speaker I can confirm to this house that the tarmacking of Kaanwa –Mitheru, Kambandi - Cheera – Ruguti and Tunyai - Nthaara roads is on course and my government remains committed to ensuring their completion.

My government has in the past financial year upgraded approximately 1,118 Km of county roads through grading and gravelling. Over the time, my

government has acquired heavy road machineries to minimize the cost of roads maintenance and opening of new roads. So far, we have acquired 3 graders, 1 lowbed prime mover, 3 tippers, 2 dozers, 1 excavator and one roller.

Mr. Speaker,

To ensure proper linkages and easy access to basic services, my administration has constructed to completion 10 bridges and 12

footbridges. We are also completing construction of 9 Bridges and 3 foot bridges across the county. These projects have been life changing by reducing travel distances thus saving resources and time for our people. For instance, the Gakurungu Karocho bridge that connects Tunyai, Kibunga and Nkondi has shortened the distance by approximately 12KM without having to go through

Marimanti town. Similarly Igogwa bridge that connects Chogoria (Munga) and Ganga (Kiamaogo) wards has shortened the distance by approximately 5KM for residents who initially used the Kiriani-Katharaka route. The Kamuu bridge has shortened the distance for Magenka residents to Itugururu by 10KM.

Mr. Speaker,

The ICT infrastructure is equally vital for development. It makes service delivery and access of information easy to ensure full participation in the development of our county. My administration during the year 2019-20 established a **County Toll-free Call centre (1513)**. The ultra-modern call centre handles emergency and disaster response, AI services,

agriculture, health, business permits and general inquiries.

My administration has installed **Hospital Queue Management System** at Marimanti, Magutuni and Chuka hospitals. This system gathers data about the service and turnaround time for patients. It's also a management tool that informs decision making by providing information on patients traffic.

Hospital Management & Information System (HMIS) has also been deployed and upgraded at Chuka, Marimanti and Magutuni Hospitals. This has facilitated the hospital to efficiently manage patient records and optimize its internal operations.

With the goal to provide county citizens and all stakeholders with an online presence offering them essential information about the

County Government, my administration has continually been upgrading and updating the County website (www.tharakanithi.go.ke). This website acts as a platform where county government information is published and accessible to all members of the public.

Mr Speaker

To create an enabling business environment for the traders, we have completed constructing

modern markets at Kaanwa, Itugururu, Magutuni, Kaare, Nkondi and Mukothima. Further we have constructed traders' cubicles and a crèche (a nursery where babies and young children are cared for while their mothers are trading) at the Chuka open air market. The crèche facilitates easy trading for mothers and offers security for children. The county government has also engaged caregivers who offer

training on early childhood development at the facility. We endeavor to adopt this model to all open air markets in Tharaka Nithi County.

In pursuit of enhancing economic activities and improve security for the small and medium scale traders and encourage a 24 hour economy, we have installed 38 floodlights county wide.

My administration is keen on improving social recreational amenities in order to promote active lifestyles and build healthy communities. In this regard, we have completed the rehabilitation of the Chuka picnic Gardens (former DC ground) which will soon be opened to the public.

Mr speaker,

Following the directive by the Salaries and Remuneration Commission to construct official residences for Governors and Deputy Governors, we began the construction of the said residences within Kathwana Municipality, which are 90% complete. Further, I wish to inform this honourable house that the issues surrounding the construction of the county

assembly chambers have now been resolved and we are committed to ensure that the project is completed.

The Kathwana Municipality has prepared policy documents to ensure regulated development for the municipality which includes Kathwana Investment Attraction Plan, Strategic Plan for 2019-2024, Kathwana Municipality Integrated

Development Plan and Municipality of Kathwana – Urban Development Policy Framework 2018-2030.

The county government through the Kenya Urban Support Programme (KUSP) has started the construction of the Kathwana modern market in the aim of improving economic activities around the area and at the same time offering a conducive

environment for the traders. Kathwana municipality among the municipalities that is set to benefit from the Sustainable Urban Economic Development Program from UK government. This will enhance the development of a sustainable urban economic plan and attract investment for critical climate-resilient infrastructure and value chain projects.

The County Spatial Plan, which is in the final stage of preparation, will provide a clear vision setting out strategies and programs that will guide long term development of the county. The plan will provide an important framework for efficient, productive and sustainable use of land as advocated for in both the Kenyan Constitution and National Land Policy.

Mr Speaker,

My administration has established the Geographical Information System (G.I.S) lab, Land Information Management System (LIMS) for management of public lands and Electronic Development Applications Management System (e-DAMS) to ease and manage development applications. We are in the process of doing Chuka town

cadastral surveying, titling and planning. In collaboration with National Lands Commission, we are in the process of digitizing and reviewing of the market data to regularize the tenure by issuing lease titles deeds. This will help in fixing and controlling subdivisions within the town boundary as well as controlling growth and development of the town.

Mr Speaker,

The county government is mandated by the Constitution to provide pre-primary education and vocational training. This year my administration has recruited 453 caregivers and confirmed 399 into permanent and pensionable terms.

My government is committed to progressively construct and equip ECDE classes to provide a conducive learning environment

for our learners. The county government also provided teaching and learning materials distributed across the 15 wards. I am pleased to report to this House that we have been able to achieve a transition rate of almost 100% from ECDE to primary schools.

Honorable members,

My government is committed to promoting the affordability and

accessibility of education to our people. In the FY 2019-20, we managed to disburse bursaries worth Ksh 23 million to over 5,000 needy students in our secondary schools, tertiary colleges and universities. In the financial year 2020-21, we have set aside Ksh 31M for the bursary fund.

Mr. Speaker,

The youth remain a critical segment of our population.

Equipping them with the necessary skills is critical to ensure that they are able to earn a living. In this regard, my administration embarked on rehabilitating all the twenty (20) Vocational Training Centres in the County by constructing workshops, dormitories, kitchen among others.

Mr. Speaker,

My administration is committed to develop talents and boost sporting activities in the county thus harnessing the untapped talent, creating a cohesive society and ultimately promoting national unity. As you are aware, we are in the process of completing our three stadia in Nyangumi, Kairuni and Kathwana. In addition, we have procured sports equipment for

county clubs and participated in the annual Kenya Youth Intercounty Sports Association games in Busia in 2019.

My administration is constructing the Kathwana Social Hall at the headquarters which will be a state-of-the-art amphitheatre. This shall serve not only the county government's functions but also the local community. Besides

participating and facilitating several organized cultural events across the county, my administration financed a cultural team to take part in the Regional Jumuiya ya Afrika Mashariki Festival (JamaFest) which is a Cultural Exchange Program in Dar el Salaam Tanzania in September 2019.

My government has also been keen and mindful of the welfare

of our brothers and sisters who are differently abled. The county government has supported people with disabilities with assorted assistive devices to improve their quality of life. A total of ninety four (94) wheelchairs and other assorted assistive devices have been issued to various deserving beneficiaries across the county.

Honourable members, over 90% of children with disabilities are more likely to be out of school. Consequently, we have identified children abled differently who have attained school going age for enrollment in schools and training at vocational training centers.

As I conclude Mr speaker, I affirm to this house and the citizens of Tharaka Nithi County that my

commitment is to have a cohesive county that embraces diversity thus creating an enabling environment for socio-economic prosperity, “*Siasa baadaye!*”. This state of the county address just highlights the key achievements realised by my government in the financial year 2019-20.

Honourable members, Rome was not built in one day; I wish to

thank employees of this great county for their support as we progressively make strides that will impact on the quality of our lives. I reiterate that *“If it doesn’t add value to Ciambai, it’s better left undone”*

To this end, **Mr. Speaker** and honorable members, I report that the State of our County is **STRONG, RESILIENT and PROMISING.**

I take this opportunity to wish the citizens of Tharaka Nithi County and all our stakeholders a merry Christmas and a prosperous new year.

As Henry Ford stated, *“Coming together is a beginning, keeping together is progress and working together is success”*

God bless you,

God bless Tharaka Nithi County,

God bless Kenya.