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**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

**COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY**

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**H.E Hon. Gladys A. Wanga, Governor Homa Bay  
County**

**Speech Delivered at the ROSH Stadium  
during the 60<sup>th</sup> Jamuhuri Day Celebrations  
12<sup>th</sup> Dec 2023**

## **Salutations**

Dignitaries present, ladies and gentlemen, good afternoon

## **Introduction**

Today marks a significant milestone in our nation's history—a day that symbolizes our unity, resilience, and the unwavering spirit of our people. As we gather to commemorate and celebrate 60 years of Kenya's independence, we reflect on our journey as a nation, celebrate our achievements, and reaffirm our commitment to a brighter future.

Over the years, we have overcome numerous challenges and obstacles on the path to progress. We've witnessed remarkable growth in various sectors—be it education, healthcare, infrastructure, or technology—thanks to the collective efforts of all Kenyans. However, we acknowledge that there are still hurdles to overcome, disparities to address, and dreams to fulfil.

## **Strides in Health Care**

In Homa Bay County, we've made tremendous strides towards development. Our commitment to improving Healthcare services to our people has seen the revamping of our

healthcare facilities, both infrastructural and consumables. Since we last celebrated Jamhuri Day, a year ago, we have greatly renovated and equipped our referral hospital with modern technological equipment. We have also facelifted our sub county hospitals and given them a titivated face. We have ensured consistent medical supplies to all our hospitals across the county. Through continuous skill transfer and capacity building, our healthcare champions are well equipped to handle medical emergencies. This has seen a steady decline in child and maternal mortality.

The recognition of the critical role Community Health Promoters play in our communities, has revolutionized accessible and affordable healthcare, a concept deeply embedded in our agenda and vision 2030. We recently equipped 2,954 CHPs with kits that included thermometers, mobile smart phones, blood pressure monitors and glucometers which will be essential in managing health indicators at household level. With these kits, they will be able to effectively advocate for undeserved individuals or communities to receive services and resources to address health needs. They are now also able to provide informal counselling, health screening and referrals. Our CHPs now work with an assurance of regular stipend every month over and above basic medical insurance cover for them and their loved ones. We tak pride in that fact that that is now regular.

We have also made bold interventions to address the triple threat problem with the aim of reducing HIV infections, teenage pregnancies and gender-based violence by 75% before 2027. Our action plan includes but not limited to;

1. **Education and Awareness:** Providing comprehensive education on safe practices, contraceptives and respectful relationships to mitigate risk factors.
2. **Accessible Healthcare Services:** Ensuring easy access to healthcare facilities offering HIV testing, counselling, contraceptives and support for victims of gender-based violence.
3. **Community Engagement Programs:** Implementing community-based initiatives that focus on addressing cultural norms, gender inequality.
4. **Legal and Policy Support:** Enforcing stringent laws against gender-based violence, alongside policies that promote reproductive health and rights.
5. **Support Systems and Resources:** Establishing robust support systems, shelters, hotlines and counselling services

The recent mass net distribution campaign reaffirmed our concerted efforts to combat malaria. We distributed 841,000 treated mosquito nets to the people of Homa Bay. This exercise re-ignited the county's effort to eliminate malaria.

### **Steps Made in Agriculture**

In food production, our agricultural sector stands on the brink of an unprecedented transformation. Our concerted efforts towards integrating cutting-edge technological interventions into our farming practices, has seen tremendous increased confidence in farmers. With a vision that speaks into empowering our farmers and elevating agricultural productivity, we're embracing innovations such as cash crop value addition, precision farming techniques as evidenced in ***the climate information center***, smart irrigation systems, adoption of advanced crop varieties. Our climate information center gives farmers the opportunity to engage in smart farming through availability of accurate information on weather patterns, advise on planting season, what to plant and Ph level of the soil. These are all possible through geo referencing technology supported by our partners, TomorrowNow.

***The Special Economic Zone*** is another clear indication that we are committed to ensuring that our farmers benefit as Agripreneurs in value addition through targeted training, access

to modern technologies, and streamlined market connections via digital platforms, we're not just revolutionizing farming methods; we're securing sustainable livelihoods, ensuring food security, and bolstering economic growth for our beloved county. Together, we hope to seize this opportunity to propel Homa Bay's agriculture into a realm of unprecedented success. I am happy to announce that we have indication to the effect that our SEZ in Riwa will soon be gazetted, thereby paving way for solid engagement with serious investors. As we speak, the Trade Department is on course with preparation for the Homa Bay County International Investment Conference scheduled for 27<sup>th</sup> to 29<sup>th</sup> Feb 2023. We look forward to hosting tens of interested investors who will in turn stir value addition to our locally products as well as create job opportunities for our people – we have a plan.

In sports we take great pride in the strides we have made over the last 14 months starting with this venue today - the ROSH Stadium. In the history of Kenya, Homa Bay today hosts Premier League soccer matches! Homa Bay is the reigning National Inter County Under 23 Soccer Champion and our girls Under 19 soccer team are the 3<sup>rd</sup> best in Kenya. Later today, our Boys Under 19<sup>th</sup> team will be playing in the finals for the Talanta Hela competition. All great achievements.

## **Conclusion**

As we celebrate our achievements, we must remain vigilant in addressing the challenges that lie ahead. We are determined to tackle issues of unemployment, improve agricultural productivity, and enhance infrastructure to facilitate economic growth in our county.

Unity remains the cornerstone of our progress. Together, as one people, irrespective of our diverse backgrounds, we are stronger. Let us embrace inclusivity, foster peace, and uphold the values that define us as Kenyans.

On this auspicious day, let us remember and honor the sacrifices made by our forefathers in the struggle for independence. Their vision, courage, and dedication laid the foundation for the nation we cherish today.

As your Governor, I pledge to continue working tirelessly for the betterment of Homa Bay County. I call upon each one of you to join hands in building a prosperous future for us and for generations to come.

May the spirit of unity and patriotism guide us as we strive for a more prosperous and inclusive Kenya.

Thank you, and God bless Kenya!

