



**REPUBLIC OF KENYA**

COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY

OFFICE OF THE GOVERNOR



Homa Bay County Headquarters  
P.O Box 469-40300 Homa Bay - Kenya

E: [governor@homabay.go.ke](mailto:governor@homabay.go.ke)  
[www.homabay.go.ke](http://www.homabay.go.ke)

**Speech by H.E. Gladys Nyasuna Wanga, EGH, CBS  
on the Launch of Community Tree Nurseries Initiative  
at the Governor's Park  
Date: 15<sup>th</sup> November, 2024**

Ladies and Gentlemen,

Today we embark on an ambitious journey towards restoration of our environment and our degraded ecosystem in general towards climate resilience, and community empowerment. Today's initiative reflects our collective commitment to protecting Homa Bay County's natural environment while providing our communities with new avenues for sustainable livelihoods. Allow me to express my gratitude to all the stakeholders involved, from the National Government's Treasury through the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) program to the community groups that have stepped forward to bring this initiative to life.

As we all know, ecosystem degradation and climate change have been critical challenges for Homa Bay County. Our once-thriving ecosystems face multiple pressures from rapid population growth,

deforestation, expansion into marginal lands, soil erosion, drying riverbanks due to sand harvesting, and overgrazing. The Koderia Forest, Gembe Hills, and our vital water sources are constantly under threat from human activities such as illegal logging and encroachment. These environmental stresses have not only diminished our natural resources but have also compromised agricultural productivity, which is now threatened by prolonged dry spells and higher temperatures.

To address these challenges, the County Government of Homa Bay engaged partners and secured support from the County Climate Resilience Investment (CCRI) grant under the FLLoCA program. This funding aims to finance priority climate resilience projects as outlined in the Homa Bay County Climate Change Action Plan for 2023-2027. With a special focus on water, agriculture, and the environment, these investments are strategically designed to help

communities adapt to the impacts of climate change, with special attention given to the inclusion of women, youth, and People Living with Disabilities (PWDs).

One of the most prioritized interventions which was identified during community engagements, was tree planting. Our communities recognized the urgent need to restore our landscapes, preserve biodiversity, and mitigate the impacts of climate change. To support this goal, we launched a call for proposals, encouraging youth and women groups across our 40 wards to submit their plans for the establishment of community tree nurseries. Today, I'm happy to announce that a total of 82 youth and women groups have been selected, with each ward having two groups to manage these nurseries.

The selected groups have been trained in tree nursery establishment and management, ensuring they are well-equipped with the knowledge and skills to cultivate high-quality seedlings suited to our local ecological conditions. Each group will receive a grant of Kshs. 150,000 to facilitate the establishment and management of their nurseries, with an ambitious target of propagating at least 100,000 tree seedlings per group. By the onset of the long rains in 2025, we anticipate having 8 million seedlings ready for planting across the County.

This initiative brings with it several critical benefits:

**First, the Environmental Benefits:** By rehabilitating degraded lands, this program will restore natural ecosystems, increase biodiversity, and improve soil fertility and water retention across Homa Bay. Our aim is to plant Indigenous and climate-resilient trees which will

ensure that our interventions support native flora and fauna and contribute to increased carbon sequestration, a vital tool in mitigating climate change.

**Second, the Economic Benefits:** With this initiative, we aim to create substantial economic opportunities for our youth, women, and PWDs. The establishment of tree nurseries will generate employment, not only directly within the nurseries but also through other nature-based enterprises that are expected to spring up as a result. The sale of tree seedlings will offer a significant income generating opportunity, empowering local groups and individuals, thus ensuring that money rotates within our communities as part of our economic stimulus initiatives.

**Third, the Social Benefits:** This initiative strengthens the fabric of our communities. By engaging local groups in meaningful, community-

driven projects, we foster a sense of ownership and environmental stewardship. Schools and other community groups will have opportunities to participate, turning these nurseries into learning centers that educate the next generation on the importance of conservation and sustainable development.

**Finally, the Climate Benefits:** Through increased tree cover, our county will contribute to global climate change mitigation efforts by sequestering carbon dioxide, thereby reducing our overall carbon footprint. This is not just a local endeavour but a contribution to a larger global effort to curb climate change and ensure a sustainable future for all.

While we have a solid foundation, we must also recognize the challenges that lie ahead. Currently, we rely on tree seedlings from neighbouring counties, and most tree nurseries within Homa Bay

County face limitations in terms of quality and genetic diversity. Many of our nursery operators still use traditional seed collection methods, often gathering seeds from felled trees, which limits genetic vigour. By establishing local community nurseries, we aim to enhance seedling quality, increase local availability, and reduce our dependence on external sources.

This program also provides an opportunity to address some of the longstanding community practices that have hindered past efforts. Traditional practices like free grazing after harvest along the lake shore and an attitude that trees will regenerate naturally have affected previous tree planting initiatives. This time, we are involving local communities in every stage, building respect for indigenous knowledge while introducing more sustainable practices.

Ladies and Gentlemen, today marks the start of a new era in Homa Bay County's journey toward environmental sustainability. The establishment of community tree nurseries represents more than just an environmental intervention; it's a catalyst for economic growth, social cohesion, and climate resilience. We envision a county where our youth, women, and communities thrive while contributing to the health of our planet.

In closing, let us acknowledge that true success lies in collaboration and sustained commitment. To the youth and women groups selected, you carry the hopes of our communities and the future of our environment. We are counting on your dedication, and in return, we commit to supporting you through resources, guidance, and continuous partnership.

Together, we can make Homa Bay County a greener, more resilient, and prosperous place for current and future generations. Thank you and let us look forward to seeing the fruits of our labour as the landscape of Homa Bay flourishes once again. Thank you.