MERU VISION 2040

A Prosperous, United and Happy Society

MERU VISION 2040

Leaders laud the Meru Economic & Social Council (MESC) team

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TOURISM & INVESTMENT

Meru set to host mountain running

Mountain running is a combination of running, jogging and walking depending on how steep the trail is. It is a sport discipline which takes place mainly off-road in mountainous terrain.

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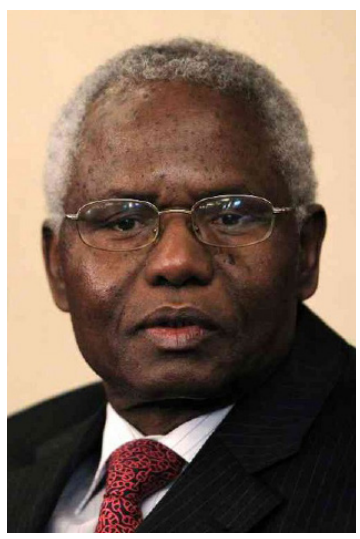
MERU NEWS

MERU NEWS | December, 2019

Big Win For Kiraitu As Meru Vision 2040 Materialize

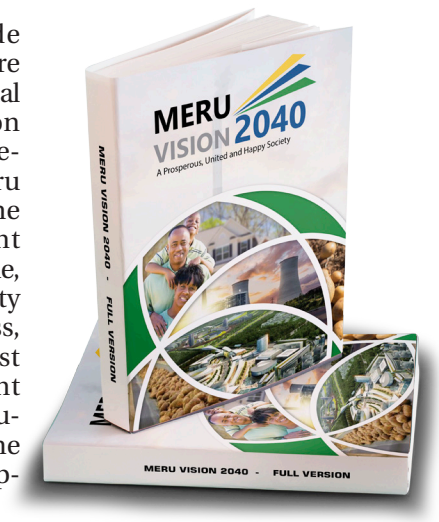
MESSAGE FROM THE MESC CHAIRPERSON



AMB. FRANCIS MUTHAURA, CHAIRMAN, MERU ECONOMIC & SOCIAL COUNCIL (MESC)

I take immense pride on behalf of the entire Meru Economic & Social Council (MESC) upon the successful completion and launch of the Meru Vision 2040 document. The launch of this document marks MESC's first milestone, which elevates Meru County into the realms of greatness, making history as the first county under the current dispensation of the Constitution of Kenya 2010 to come up with a long-term development blueprint.

The journey has been long and winding, with a committed team of highly competent drafters carefully piecing together meagre letters into words, words into sentences, and sentences into ideas. Today, those ideas lie herein as magical seeds, awaiting action before they can sprout into the beautiful industrial parks we crave, the mega factories and processing plants we desire, and the digital cities that greater economies that we envy pride in. The



painstaking efforts of the valiant men and women who put in countless man hours to ensure this document turned out the immense success it is today have finally been vindicated.

Clarion call

I wish to particularly convey my hearty gratitude to the respective Pillar Chairs, the MESC Steering Committee, the drafters as well as the secretariat for their selfless efforts, without which the success of this document may never have been realized. May the good Lord immensely reward your efforts.

The clarion call for this futuristic journey rang with the launch of the Meru Economic and Social Council (MESC) on the 9th of February 2018 by our Patron, Meru Governor Kiraitu Murungi; shortly afterwards entrusting the Meru Economic and Social Council with being the dream-carriers of this ambitious vision. The need for collective pulling never more appealing, elite sons and daughters of this revered county from every imaginable background were drafted into the Council, mandated with charting a development and prosperity blueprint for the county. This burning need and desire for inclusivity has shone bright throughout the process of writing this document. Participatory forums have been held to harness input and feedback from county residents, starting with the Youth, MCAs, MPs, before finally culminating with the public participation by residents in each of our eleven sub-counties. At the tail-end of this rigorous process, it gives me utmost confidence that the dreams, opinion, feelings, aspirations and visions of every Meru resident are fully represented and reflected.

The launch of this document today must however not be seen as an end, but rather as a new beginning; the projects suggested herein must be turned into a reality. The hard work starts now.

The same vigor with which we weaved these ideas, must now be recalibrated towards resource mobilization, with my challenge going particularly to the implementers of the respective flagship projects to now take the mantle and diligently turn this vision into a reality.

When we wake up on the morning of 1st January 2040, let's wake up to a United, Prosperous and Happy Meru. That is what Meru Vision 2040 is all about!

A new dawn for Gakoromone fresh produce market

■ The traders of Gakoromone green produce market finally have something to smile about, as Governor Kiraitu Murungi commissioned the newly upgraded and cabro-paved market as he had promised them early this year in April.

While launching the new look, the Governor reminded them that the last time he was there, he wore mud boots because the market was muddy and dirty, but after the renovation now people can move comfortably since the place is now clean.

"This is what we mean when we say we want to Make Meru Great and we are only beginning. We shall ensure roads along Riverland, Shauri yako and all others are graded to cabro, after which we will move beyond Kathita to upgrade

>> Continued on Pg 7

MERU VISION 2040

FOREWORD FROM THE MESC PATRON

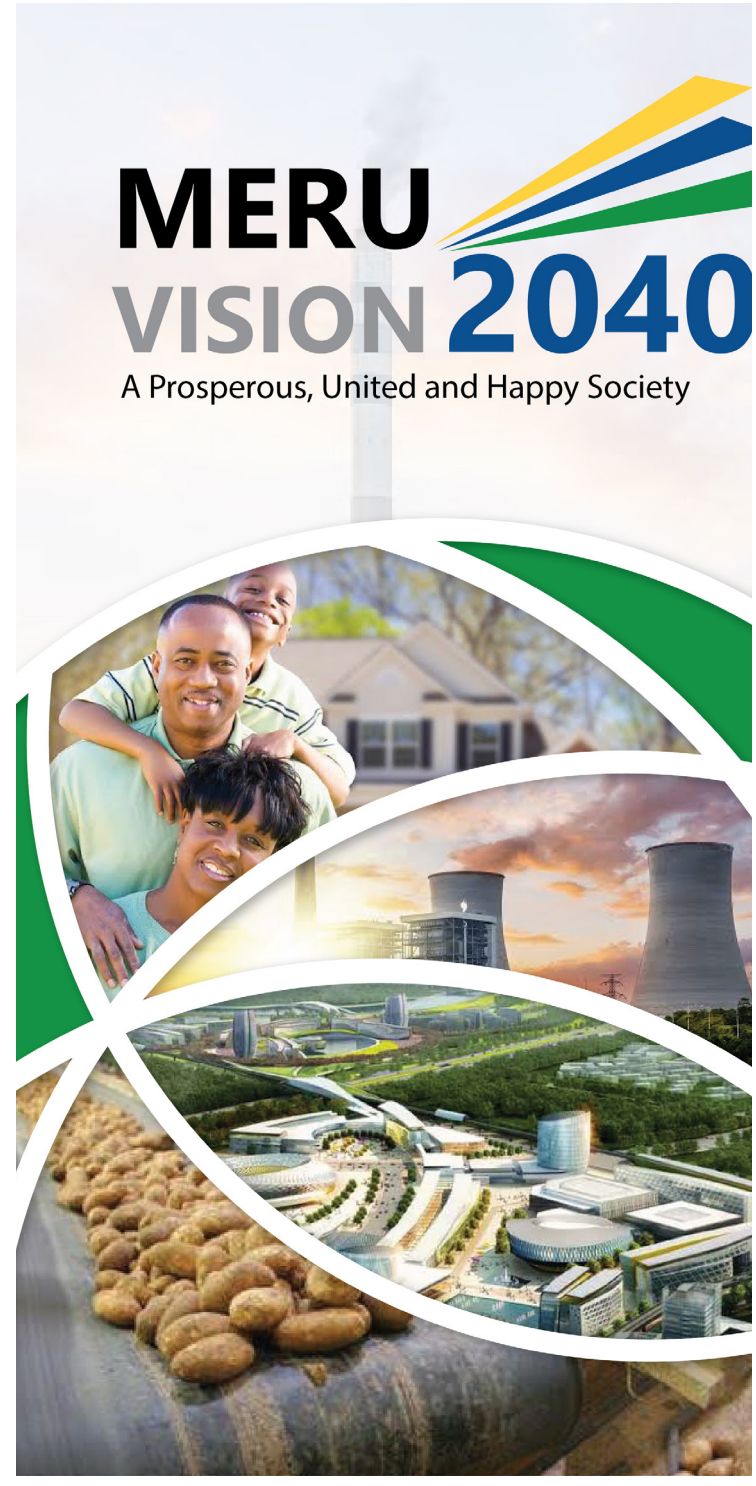
'Vision 2040 to be implemented through short, medium and long-term rolling plans'

> *THE VISION IS AN ENDEAVOR TO REORGANIZE THE GREATER MERU ECONOMY TOWARDS PROSPERITY AND SPECIALIZATION*
>
> *- KIRAITU*

The unveiling of the Meru Vision 2040 heralds a new beginning towards a prosperous future for the people of Meru. It is based on recognition that the greatness of Meru County will grow from collective efforts of all residents in the County, both ordinary citizens and leaders. Indeed, Vision 2040 is founded on the recognition that the future of Meru county lies in, among other things, unifying the various communities, living by values of inclusivity, integrity, accountability to the people, and promoting respect for the rule of law. The future of Meru County is dependent on efforts of every single individual and the collective efforts of all citizens. Having a prosperous county in which residents live happily and enjoy high quality of life is the aspiration of every person. This is the dream that Meru people want to achieve through development plans in Meru Vision 2040.

Vision 2040 has strategies pegged on four key pillars; Economic, Social, Political and Enablers. Under these four pillars, key county flagship projects and other priority initiatives will be implemented for the next 21 years. On the whole, Vision 2040 is a tool that will aid better planning; safeguard the interests of all Meru residents regardless of the administrations of the day; fosters unity, social justice and inclusivity; and be a launch-pad that propels the county towards better regional, national and international interaction, trade and investment.

Vision 2040 will be implemented through short, medium and long-term rolling plans. Implementation will begin from financial year 2019/2020 for short-term goals, and spread to 2039/2040 for long-term goals. The performance of county administrations shall therefore be scored on basis of progress towards achieving the various objectives under each of the pillars and the enablers. Implementation will be through short-term and medium-term plans (ranging from 1-5 years) and reviews will be carried out on an annual basis.



The programs in this important Vision, are the results of wide consultations by Meru people to make the County a prosperous and a happy county by 2040. The Vision was coordinated by a Drafting Team under the Meru Economic and Social Council (MESC). The Council was constituted by Meru Governor H.E. Kiraitu Murungi, in early 2018, with membership comprising of professionals and other opinion leaders from all the sub-counties in Meru. MESC's mandate is to prepare a blueprint roadmap to guide Meru's development agenda up to the year 2040. The priority of the Council has been to identify and fast track short, medium- and long-term development opportunities that ensure no-one is left behind. Inclusive development is indeed an important goal for any people wishing to have a peaceful, prosperous and a happy future and thereby Make Meru Great.

Prosperity

The Vision is an endeavor to reorganize the greater Meru economy towards prosperity and specialization. It has identified the key competencies that give Meru County a comparative advantage.

The focus of future development programs is to consolidate and amplify gains from every sector of the economy The scope of the Vision is to quantify the potential, to ensure that the development programs deliver sustainable and viable jobs, generates revenue for the county and distributes the benefits of development to all the citizens of Meru County in an equitable and fair manner. The journey to 2040 for the great County of Meru begins now. The responsibility is on each Meru resident and partners of goodwill to play their role in this future-defining moment. Of course, challenges lie ahead.

Overcoming them and translating them into opportunities require the collective efforts, hard work, and commitment of everyone to a prosperous future. The National Government will provide enormous support and good will to drive this Vision.

This is a new phase of common focus and unity of purpose for the Meru people in the endeavor of Making Meru Great!

H.E. KIRAITU MURUNGI EGH., GOVERNOR MERU COUNTY AND MESC PATRON

Meru leaders acknowledged MESC team's coordinated efforts that bore the Meru Vision 2040 development strategy. They also expressed hopes for a brighter future under the stewardship of Governor Kiraitu who is the vision carrier.

Leaders laud the Meru Economic & Social Council (MESC) team

Speaking during the MESC's wrap up meeting aimed to review the blueprint before its adoption on December 5th 2019, the governor said the vision intends to make Meru County more habitable, prosperous, united and a happy society.

The team is there after expected to exchange thoughts to draw the implementation plan, for the vision's sustainability.

The document had gone through a series of public participation meetings across all sub counties a few months ago, in order to incorporate people's opinions.

As a guiding tool to the economic, social and political transformation of Meru County in the next 20 years, the vision seeks to identify concrete flagship projects for Meru County in line with the national development goals -Vision 2030.

MESC Chair, Ambassador Francis Muthaura was articulate that the strategy offers a long-term roadmap in transformation of the County through economic, political, social and enablers pillars, besides fostering unity and cohesion.

VISION 2040 HAS BEEN AN EXCITING JOURNEY FOR ME IN MANY WAYS INCLUDING BEING PART OF GREAT SONS AND DAUGHTERS OF MERU IN CREATING A LONG-TERM DEVELOPMENT VISION FOR AN ORGANIZED, PROSPEROUS AND HAPPY COUNTY.

MRS. ESTHER NGAINE. VICE CHAIRPERSON, MESC

CS Public Service Margaret Kobia, was impressed to note that it is only Meru County which has such a blueprint. She argued, 'the national government is after improving the quality of life at the County levels, hence can't fail to support such a blueprint that is aligned to the national development goals.'

Imenti North, Igembe Central and Tigania West legislators, Dawood Rahim, Kubai Kiringo and Dr. John Mutunga respectively, spoke to their commitment in support of the strategy. They held that their views as the Meru's elected Members of parliament, were considered in the final draft.

According to MP Kiringo, the vision is a unique idea that will transform the larger Meru. He challenged Meru leaders and the general public to embrace the vision as Meru's development strategy and not for the Governor alone.

On his part Dr. Mutunga, the blue print comes at the right time when Meru's development agenda needs reinforced.

Rahim's assertions had it that the governor provided good leadership to involve the relevant stakeholders who would guide him in executing the vision.

At the same time, Key Munya's camp defectors led by his running-mate, Peter Kaberia, the then Meru County Revenue Manger, Eng. Thilange, former CECs Lands & Cooperatives, Martin Bikuri and Ntoitha M'Mithiaru respectively are some of people who came to support the Vision.

Residents follow proceedings during the public participation drive on Meru's Vision 2040. RIGHT: CS Public Service Margaret Kobia. She noted to note that it is only Meru County which has such a blueprint.

EU DELEGATION IN MERU

Meru among top counties, EU Ambassador to Kenya Mordue says

AT A GLANCE

- Amb. Mordue noted that Meru is among top counties in the country that have an impressive track development record, citing proper utilization of the World Bank grant that was used to rehabilitate Gakoromone market and its environs to dust-free status.

European Union Ambassador to Kenya Mr. Simon Mordue has praised Governor Kiraitu's move to empower the youth through Meru Youth Service (MYS), drilling of boreholes to arid areas improving of towns and markets to Cabro standards, an inclusive governance through MESC, the upcoming mountain marathon and his commitment to improve tourism and food production in the County.

Speaking at Giaki in Imenti North, Sub County during the inauguration of Nduruma-Giaki Miamponi Road which was financed by the European Union and the Government of Kenya, Amb. Mordue noted that Meru is among top counties in the country that have an impressive track development record, citing proper utilization of the World Bank grant that was used to rehabilitate Gakoromone market and its environs to dust-free status.

On his part, Governor Kiraitu assured the Envoy that he will continue to deliver all the promises he made to Meru residents and called upon other international bodies and other partners to join the EU in supporting development programs in the County.

The Governor thanked the ambassador and the European Union for the Continued support saying that his administration will continue to work with the union for the betterment of the Meru resident.

EMPOWERING THE YOUTH

Why Governor Kiraitu is the envy of all

The Meru Youth Service (MYS) program, first if its kind in Kenya, has been a success, with graduands going on to become fully blown out entrepreneurs embarking on businesses such as hair dressing, beauty and therapy, automobile and agribusiness.

Of the a thousand, 400 of the MYS serving men and women were deployed to serve in various functions such as community health works, as guards/soldiers, cess points Mann power and other positions.

The 600 are renowned chefs, stewards, servicemen and women in the hotel industry, while some are offering ICT services, plumbing, building and construction and electric services among other things. The second batch of the 600 recruits are now in session at MYS training Igoji.

The Governor's intent to eradicate poverty in Meru County and to completely rid the County of alcohol plus drug addiction and youth apathy, saw him initiate the MYS program, and the positive results are ones celebrated widely, with several counties benchmarking with Kiraitu's Government to learn from the MYS program, among other much appreciated programs such as the bore hole project cutting across Meru, in bid to provide residents with an opportunity to farm all year round, and such like projects.

Following the Governor's promise to empower the youth, he went on to formulate the MYS program that has benefited over 1500 youths so far. Of the number of recruits in the system, 400 went through training as CHVs, 600 went to the Meru Polytechnic where they went through various courses and the rest are new recruits, who have now embarked on their training. We firmly believe that Meru's economic growth is pegged on every resident being financially independent and according the youth an opportunity to make an honest living is essential."

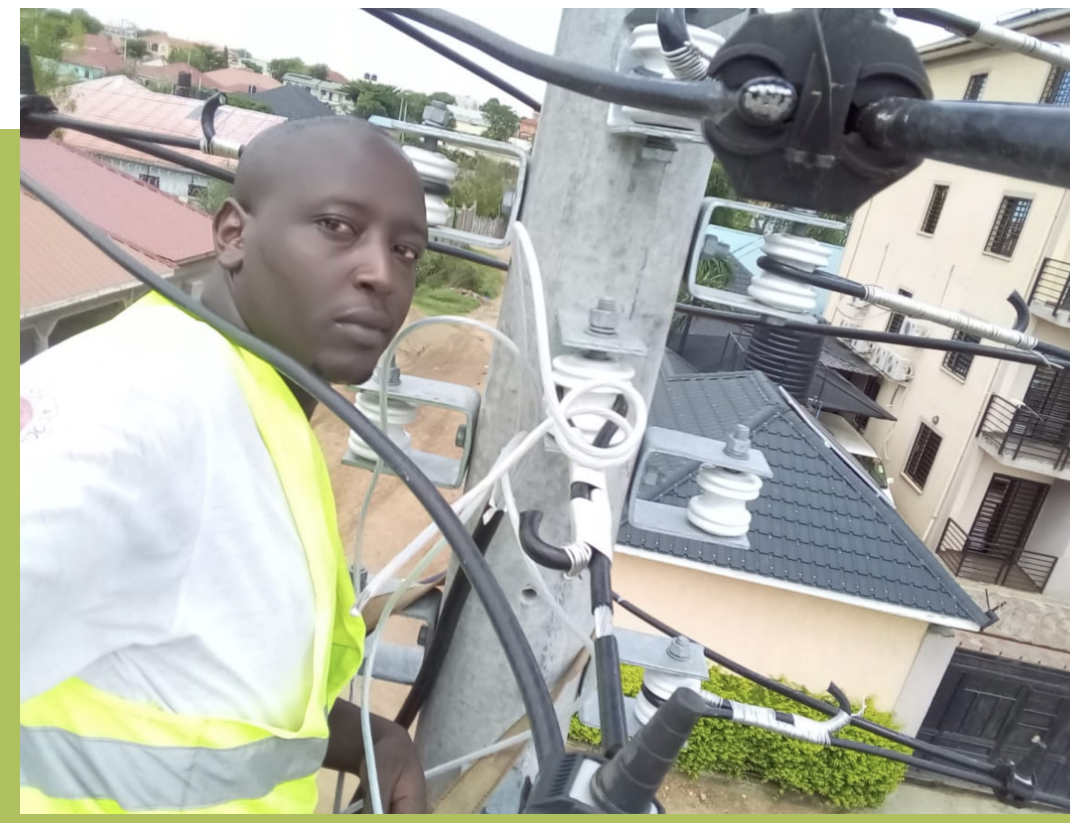
KOOME JAMES
CEC, YOUTH AFFAIRS & SPORTS

MYS TESTIMONIALS

I can't contemplate what I went through after secondary education, being brought up by a single mother who was overwhelmed by educating me and my siblings. As one of the luckiest youth to have joined the MYS, I trained in Food and Beverage, a skill that worn me an internship with the Meru Slopes Hotel.

The hotel won confidence with me and later, absorbed me. Thanks to Meru Governor who has made a turn around in my life,"

-**JOSEPHINE KAYUME**



JULIUS KOBIA from Kiegoi/Antubuchiu ward, Igembe South, presently situated in South Sudan, while on phone, said that his training with the MYS is what has seen him transverse the country and beyond, using invaluable skills he learned while under the MYS umbrella, to make a decent living.

"I am now a well-paid electric engineer and my peers here in South Sudan respect me because I am able to work and deliver quality work without supervision. I owe my success to Governor Kiraitu because he ensured those of us that came from humble backgrounds but were interested in learning, received the trainings we desired. I am now happy I can make him proud in Kenya and beyond." Said Mr. Kobia and went on to challenge the youth to see beyond tribal boundaries and support the government that is showing concern for the youth and their welfare.

Governor Kiraitu launching the Mountain Race on 11th October 2019 at Kenya School of Adventure and Leadership.

Meru Governor, Kiraitu Murungi registers himself for the mountain run. Looking on, Chairman Sports Council Mr. Kinyua, CEC Sport James Koome, County Secretary Rufus Miriti and Chief Officer Sport Mercy Ndiira

Meru set to host mountain running, first of its kind in Africa

Mountain running is a combination of running, jogging and walking depending on how steep the trail is. It is a sport discipline which takes place mainly in mountainous terrain

Athletic Kenya President, Lt. Gen.(Rtd) Jackson Tuwei goes through the Mt. Kenya Run communication pack with Governor Kiraitu Murungi at a recent sponsor engagement forum.

The county government of Meru is working to develop and promote the county as an investment, sporting and tourism destination of choice by diversifying the sporting offered in the county. Apart from the traditional rugby, athletics, volleyball, netball and football, mountain running has been identified to have great potential.

Mountain running is a combination of running, jogging and walking depending on how steep the trail is. It is a sport discipline which takes place mainly off-road in mountainous terrain but if there is significant elevation gain on the route, surfaced roads may be used.

It is a worldwide sport and a discipline of athletics recognized by the IAAF and managed by The World Mountain Running Association (WMRA) that organizes world championships since 1985.

> *AS A MAJOR STAKEHOLDER IN THIS INITIATIVE, WE LOOK FORWARD TO ENGAGE WITH LIKEMINDED PARTNERS AS WE KICK OFF THIS JOURNEY THAT SEEKS TO RID MERU OF THE SCOURGE THAT IS CANCER, WHILE RAISING THE PROFILE ON MERU'S LARGELY UNTAPPED TOURIST DESTINATIONS.*
>
> *MS. FELICITY BIRIRI, BOARD CHAIRPERSON - MCDIC*

The sport is quickly gaining popularity in the country, with Kenya's like Lucy Murigi winning the 2017 & 2018 World Mountain Running Championships.

In 2020, Kenya will host its first ever mountain running championship dubbed 'the Mt. Kenya mountain Running championship-Meru 2020 this being an initiative of the Meru County Investment & Development Corporation and the Meru Sports Council aimed at Promoting Mt. Kenya and Meru County as a sports, tourism & investment destination.

The course will largely be seeking to raise funds that will support the Meru County Cancer Institute and tourism conservation of environment (Flora & Fauna) through the establishment of a Bongo & Rhino conservancy in Mt. Kenya. This inaugural race dubbed 'Challenging the heights' will be held on February 22 next year at the foot of the scenic Mt Kenya Forest at the Kenya School of Adventure and leadership (KESAL).

The event targets more than 5000 spectators and participants. The event will see elite runners, Institutions, Corporates, junior elderly and executive runners participate. Participants will check-in to the venue on Friday 21st February and depart on 23rd. After the mountain running, there will be two days of adventure and fun in the Village. This will serve as the event's melting point for both participants and spectators of the run and will feature the following entertainment, food Festival and games like zip lining and paintballing.

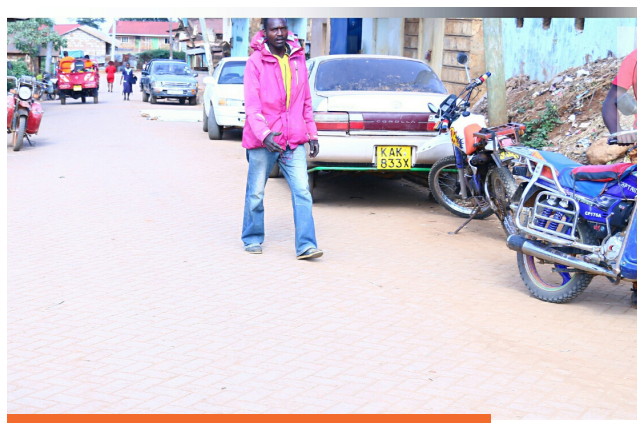
Sports plays a pivotal role in bring people of different walks of life together. With this in mind, we hope next year'S Mt Kenya Run will bring like-minded individuals to join the global fight against cancer whistle challenging the heights of Mt. Kenya and driving Meru's Environmental conservation mantra global."

-JOSEPH KINYUA, CHAIRPERSON, MERU SPORTS COUNCIL

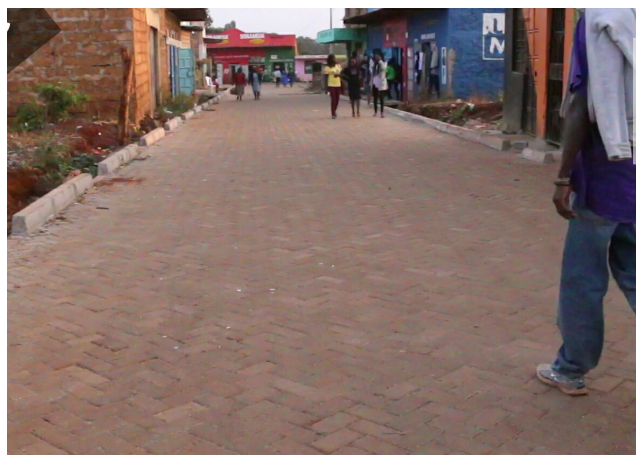
MODERNIZED URBAN CENTERS

The 'Big six' set pace in towns modernization

The move has been geared at promoting a conducive environment for business operations across the county



KANYAKINE MARKET CABRO PAVED



NCHIRU MARKET CABRO PAVED

Modernization, proper planning and creation of dust free towns and urban areas has been the pursuit for Meru's government since August 2017.

The move has been geared at promoting a conducive environment for business operations across the county.

True to the promise, Meru governor, has formed strong town management boards that comprise of local business community.

According to the governor, the boards formation would ensure that revenue collected is retained for respective town's development.

However, a keen concentration on the 'big six' has seen Meru, Laare, Maua Mikinduri, Nkubu and Timau towns with an expanded infrastructure; water and cabro pavements, with some areas floodlighting to create a 24-hour economy.

At the same time, paving of other small towns and market's loop roads has also been effected with others set to be done.

Nchiru, Mwichiune and Kanyakine are some of the market centers paved to cabro standards.

Prison- Hospital loop road has also been upgraded to surface dressing, while Gitimbine/ Cereals Board- Mwendantu road has been cabro paved to reduce traffic.

Paving of Three steers loop road is underway, while yet more roads and markets are set to be paved through the town beautification program.

> *PRISON- HOSPITAL LOOP ROAD HAS ALSO BEEN UPGRADED TO SURFACE DRESSING, WHILE GITIMBINE/ CEREALS BOARD- MWENDANTU ROAD HAS BEEN CABRO PAVED TO REDUCE TRAFFIC.*

LAARE MARKET CABRO PAVED

MAUA TOWNCABRO PAVED

TIMAU MARKET CABRO PAVED

MWICHIUNE MARKET CABRO PAVED

Kiraitu's move to uplift small scale traders

In his Manifesto, the Governor promised to promote entrepreneurship so as to attract private investment to the county

The County government is keen on the implementation of a 5-year plan for upgrading towns across the county, in order to uplift small scale traders.

According to the governor, the construction of Modern Kiosks, paving of Gakoromone market, Laare, Mikinduri, Timau and Maua towns, ongoing construction of Makutano fresh produce market and other market centers is part of the plan.

Kiraitu who was flanked by his deputy, Titus Ntuchiu when he issued letters of allotment to successful occupants of County Modern Kiosks, added that more Kiosks and floodlights would be factored in the subsequent budgets, as paving of areas stretching from River Land, Standard bank, Mosque road and back to Gakoromone are earmarked for phase two.

The DG asked occupants to take care of the kiosks and cleanliness of business premise in line with Governor's 'My Town, My Business' Mantra.

As held by the CEC in charge, Maingi Mugambi, over 500 successful applicants went through an open, free and fair balloting process at Kinoru Stadium for the 64 phase one kiosks located at Gitimbine, Tuskys and Makutano

(Insert pic)Tuskys Kiosk

A number of MCAs led by the Meru Assembly Trade Committee chair, Dr. David Kaithia, and Municipality MCA, Murega Elias, called for increased national revenue allocation to counties that would necessitate the construction of more Kiosks and undertaking of other projects alike, to ultimately uplift the bars of more small scale traders across the County.

Both Murega, Ntima East, Mithika Mauro and Ntima West, MCAs Paul Bagine, asserted that the allocation process was a true demonstration of consultative and fair leadership.

Meru Town CBD Traders Association Chair, Owen Kithinji, praised the governor for initiating the formation of market development association first, a leadership model trader embraced in creating social order.

The establishment of County Government modern kiosks is a three-pronged approach intended to uplift Women, People living with Disabilities, whilst bolstering entrepreneurship amongst small scale traders. This move coupled with our "MyTown-MyBusiness" will empower mama mboga & street hawkers towards economic stability. I would like to thank the public for the transparent and peaceful Gitimbine and Tuskys balloting that saw 52 traders allocated kiosks."

MAINGI MUGAMBI,CECM TRADE, TOURISM AND COOPERATIVES

DEVELOPMENT

A new dawn as Gakoromone fresh produce market gets new look

>> Continued from Pg 1

WE ARE HAPPY AS THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT FOR THIS SYSTEM, OUR GOVERNOR PROMISED TO MAKE MERU GREAT AND ONE WAY TO MAKE MERU GREAT IS BY INCREASING OUR LOCAL REVENUE.

-NTUCHIU

Gitimbine, Kwanthambi carwash and Majengo, as we aim to deliver the promises of a dust-free Meru town where you can walk and work without soiling your shoes with dust and mud," he said.

Addressing the visibly animated and elated crowd, Governor Kiraitu also said that at the Council of Governors where he co-chairs the Committee on Referendum with Makueni Governor Prof. Kivutha Kibwana, he aims to agitate for additional of funding for Counties to enable the devolved units to achieve such high impact projects, through the Ugatuzi Initiative. He added that if the drive to amend the constitution will not bring more funds to the counties, then he will oppose it.

Speaking at the event, Deputy Governor Hon. Titus Ntuchiu dismissed the recent polling of performance of county governments, noting that as the Executive in charge of finance, he ensures that County funds are only to be used for delivering high impact projects such as the newly done market, MYS, Ward Development, Water provision and other services, but not to pay "briefcase research firms" who move around seeking to be given offers in order to rank the county favorably.

County Executive for Urban Planning Jeremiah Lenya, said that his Department is continuing with robust programs to deliver on transformative projects to change the towns and markets.

COUNTY REVENUE

County revenue springs from 399m in 2016 to 542m in 2019

MYS officer at a cess point. The MYS team helped the revenue department realize a 110% increase in revenue collected on a daily basis. PHOTO: FILE

The government is firmly committed to streamline revenue collection

Keen on ensuring Meru develops at a quick rate, Governor Kiraitu sort to streamline the revenue collection process after the decision to develop markets and towns using their own proceeds was made. The Governor asked that residents see the changes, deployments, strict measures put in place and need for speedy development in Meru as a collective responsibility.

"We knew we were being undercut; we just didn't know by what margin. With this knowledge in mind the Governor instructed us to deploy MYS graduands to all cess points and to serve as parking attendants.

Imagine our surprise when the MYS team helped the revenue department realize a 110% increase in revenue collected on a daily basis. We have gone on to streamline the sector, curb the loot and seal all loopholes. We even automated the parking system and I can say for sure, that Meru now is at a better place than it was before in terms of revenue collected." said an officer.

2013 - 2014	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 343,805,959.75**
2014 - 2015	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 420,087,704.70**
2015 - 2016	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 399,879,514.00**
2016 - 2017	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 447,323,961.00**
2017 - 2018	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 321,051,885.80**
2018 - 2019	Total revenue Collected: **Ksh 542,553,123.30**

Deputy Governor's spouse, Lucy Ntuchiu gives hope to society

Mrs. Lucy Ntuchiu, has recently led the "Great 8 Ladies" association in a drive to distribute foodstuff, clothing and other household materials to the less fortunate and vulnerable children from Mbeu, Kianjai, Miathene and Twale in Tigania West subcounty.

The group is an association of rural schools' alumni, friends and co-promoters of Lucy's community-based empowerment programs that started last year targeting high school and primary school learners, their parents, women groups as well as the vulnerable population.

Over 300 vulnerable children to whom the materials were given, are under the 'Gutethia Kurera Kaana' orphanage which she is the patron.

The orphanage started way back in 2005 under stewardship of Pst. Stephen Munjuri, End Time Restoration Church, Kianjai. Four class eight leavers were spotted for support through high school education.

County government welcomes private public partnership

The County Government of Meru is happy to welcome Public-Private Partnership programs geared towards youth empowerment and talent development. This is according to the County Secretary Dr. Rufus Miriti. He added that it is Governor Kiraitu Murungi's core objective to ensure youth from across Meru County are supported and guided to identify, nurture and grow talents in various sporting fields, so that they can join the vastly growing and lucrative sporting industry, and become economic contributors in the achievement of the vision to Make Meru Great.

CS Miriti spoke at Kinoru Stadium during the Betika Na Community football tournament which was organized by Betika Betting Company. The Company MD Mr. John Mbatia thanked Governor Kiraitu and his Government represented at the function by Dr. Miriti, Executive for Sports Koome Miriti and MCAs Martin Makasi and Elias Murega, plegding further cooperation in many other areas of community empowerment and development, including music and art.

Mr. Mbatia and his team had earlier met and held consultations with Governor Kiraitu in Nairobi, on November 11, 2019, where the Company agreed to work closely with the County Government in supporting and promoting sports in Meru.

Creating an educated and skilled society

In the last two years, 20 more Vocational Training Centers (VTC) workshops, 3 hostels and 2 ablution blocks have been established in order to meet the demand for the increasing VTC enrollment

112 ECDE classes were constructed across the County, during the FY 2017/18

Governor Kiraitu's administration has laid down structures and plans to support the education system, with a key mandate to create an educated and skilled society for sustainable development.

A number of strides ranging from infrastructural and social development, have been made through provision of quality education, mentorship, research, innovation and capacity building to promote both Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) as well as vocational training.

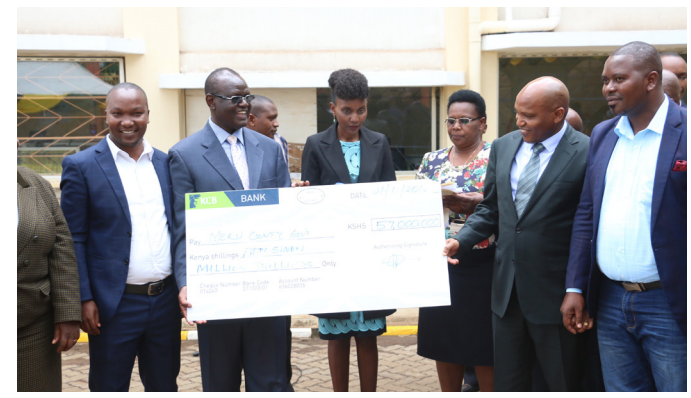
112 ECDE classes were constructed across the County, during the FY 2017/18 at a cost of about Ksh.750,000 per class, relatively cheaper compared to Ksh.1.2 million per class (23 classes constructed in a year out of 225 earmarked for FY 2013/14 through FY 2016/17, compared to our 112 classes put up in less than two year- 2017/18 and 2018/19).

Progression of some of the classes whose construction was incomplete, have been taken up by the current leadership, where part of the 20 million allocated to every ward as Ward fund is used to complete pending projects while constructing newly planned for classes across the county.

In addition, the education department during FY 2018/19 procured a Ksh.20million worth of ECDE curriculum designs-teaching and learning aid materials that were distributed to all ECDE classes across the county and with ECDE teachers capacitated to match the needs of the new curriculum.

Arrears have been paid for over 400 ECDE teachers recruited during the last regime, and the same were also confirmed on permanent basis.

Keen also to promote a shift from labor to skill intensive industries intended to improve employability and job creation, requisite to address the national youth question, the county administration has invested over Ksh. 119 million in expanding technical and vocational education.



On scholarship, over 50 VTC trainees in different trade areas have benefited from KCB Tujiajiri program, a Governor Kiraitu's doing.

Already the County government has in the last two years subsidized the NITA Grade 3 Trade test booking fees, to about 64% for improved numbers of certified technicians, requisite for the success of not only the Big 4 Agenda, but also the flagship projects envisioned in Meru Vision 2040.

In the last two years, 20 more Vocational Training Centers (VTC) workshops, 3 hostels and 2 ablution blocks have been established in order to meet the demand for the increasing VTC enrollment.

About Ksh.108.5 million conditional grants disbursed to 25 VTCs annually to increase retention and enrollment, benefitting 6492 trainees.

Kiraitu's government also procured 14 welding machines for metal processing technology, EFI Engines for motor vehicle technology, made partial payment (64%) for Grade 3 test NITA exam booking fees in 2018/19, benefitting 1525 second years at Sh. 3,278 per trainee, to enhance completion rates and capacitated 300 and 30 VTC instructors and managers respectively.

FIRE&RESCUE

Fire and rescue team shine country wide

The Meru fire Fighters have recently topped in Kenya as the top performing team, following a stiff competition with other counties in a National Symposium organized in Muranga County early December 2018.

Preceded by a five-day training, the symposium dubbed "Fire Medical Service Symposium and Competition 2018" with a theme "A day out with an emergency responder" and a sub theme," Profiling EMT and a fire fighter," covered fire service leadership, community fire safety, tactical firefighting, emergency medical service and fire engine operation. The competition was organized in a partnership between the Africa Fire Mission, Polish Center for International Aid PCPM, Poland, Kenya Medical Care Technician (KMCT) and Kenya National Fire Brigade Association (KENFIBA). The team emerged the best winning a trophy that will be competed for in the year 2019 in a symposium to be held in Nairobi County

> *THE MERU FIRE FIGHTERS HAVE RECENTLY TOPPED IN KENYA AS THE TOP PERFORMING TEAM, FOLLOWING A STIFF COMPETITION WITH OTHER COUNTIES IN A NATIONAL SYMPOSIUM*

Earlier this quarter, the County Government in collaboration with the PCPM- Polish Center for International Aid from Poland, had trained the County Fire and Rescue Team on the best rescue services.

The 5-day training led by Mr. Piotr RAK began on Monday 19th to 23rd November, with a deep focus on the Rope Rescue Services.

Governor Kiraitu and his Deputy Hon. Titus Ntuchiu received 3 Fire Fighting Engines donated by Bedfordshire Fire and Rescue Services - England, to help in Fire and Rescue services across the County.

SOCIAL EMPOWERMENT

Behind the first lady's office;

...county Twaweza program for social and economic empowerment.

With the objective to empower the marginalized groups and enforce affirmative action for increased gender awareness, empowerment and inclusivity for positive outcomes, Governor Kiraitu launched the ambitious Meru County Twaweza Program that would propel the ideas under the stewardship of the First Lady, Ms. Priscilla Murungi.

This has been affected through a mind opener economic, political and social empowerment trainings to lift the bars of women at the grassroots.

A number of women have benefitted from Business Financing and Financial Management Trainings, through the County Government - AHADI partnership

The program has long since stressed on the need for using the table banking concept, a group funding strategy which is more secure and with increased growth due to attractive interests, value for money and attractive dividends as well, unlike other convectional ways of banking.

135 organized women groups forms part of the groups set to benefit from about Ksh. 10 million seed capital for enhancing women's social mobility, through table banking.

Twaweza program has also been raising awareness in healthy lifestyle for both men and women across the county, targeting increased number of women and men screened for cancer.

TWAWEZA

In a few months of operation, the Twaweza program has shown the potential to ease the situation by reducing or eradicating women exclusion and promoting their involvement in every aspect of growth and development.

First lady, Priscilla Murungi gives a secondary school student sanitary pad during a twaweza drive launch. RIGHT: First lady Priscilla Murungi during the TWAWEZA Launch at Meru National Polytechnic.

Government vouched for launching sexual & gender based violence policy to enhance war against anti-social vices

The need to reduce the rising cases of SGBV/FGM, teenage pregnancies and early marriages in Meru, by at least 5%, necessitated the development of Sexual & Gender Based Violence (SGBV) Policy.

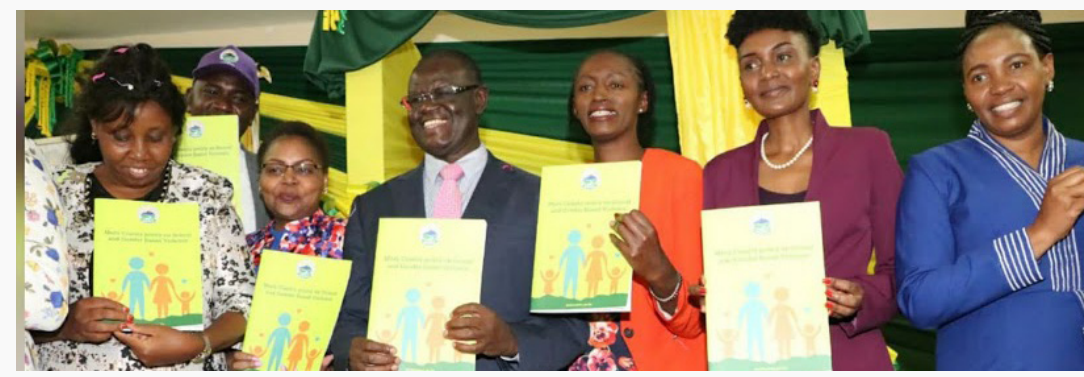
The women in all sub counties have been enlightened on the various aspects of leadership and social injustices, which range from verbal, physical and economic violence.

The county government, through Gender& Social Development department has partnered with various governmental and non-governmental institutions through a concerted effort to curtail the alarming SGBV cases in Meru.

The Institutions which includes but not limited to National Council for Persons with Disabilities (NCPD), CREAW, KANGAROO, I Choose Life (ICL) and Ripples International, have greatly helped in the war against gender violence.

STWG

This has been strengthened following the formation of a technical working group dubbed STWG, and various stakeholders; the judiciary, Ameru Council of Elders-Njuri Ncheke, taken through a sensitization program on the state of the county's social violence in preparedness for this fight.



Meru Governor, Kiraitu Murungi during the launch of the Sexual & Gender based violence Policy.

The 50 members have so far been trained to champion the fight against SGBV. The team has been acquainted to the scope of WG work, responsibilities of the lead agency coordinating and the relevant action plan.

In addition, forms, causes and consequences, the role of various bodies in prevention and response to GBV, care for survivors and legal framework as pertains Children Act 2001, Sexual Offences Act 2006 Matrimonial Property Act2015 and Protection Against Domestic Violence Act 2015.

Adequate and clean water for improved livelihoods

During FY 2017/2018 and the 2018/2019, 150 solar powered boreholes have been drilled and equipped as part of the Governor's annual water flagship projects

Ngare ndare resident celebrate improved access to water via borehole dug in the area.

"I am now able to farm tomatoes and vegetables which allow me to make quick and legit money. I have the intention of buying three cows from the proceeds I get from the farm produce sales come January, just so I get an even bigger income from selling milk and heifers. I'm glad I won't have to worry about seasonal rains going forward because the boreholes provide us an opportunity to farm all year round." Said Paul, now a celebrated farmer.

Mr. Ikamati, a livestock farmer, is one happy resident of Ruiri-rwarera. "Because of the boreholes in this region, we no longer have to trek through dangerous terrains to water out livestock. I have lost 7 fully grown cows, several heifers and over 20 goats to bandits and wild animals. However, this now is a thing of the past because our watering points are within reach so that leaves both my herd and I safe from attacks. For this, I wish to thank His Excellency Governor Kiraitu Murungi for solving a problem that Meru has had for years, within a very short time."

"People know me as Mama Kaloina. I am happy to say that I no longer have to battle with headaches and a painful back following the long walks the village women had to make to fetch water. Our animals are well watered and our children now go to school bathed, in clean clothes and with a full stomach. The solar powered boreholes have provided a great relief to us all." Said an obviously enthusiastic mama Kaloina.

This is the excitement of residents and farmers in different villages in Meru, who have turned Kiraitu's borehole water into opportunities.

The department of Water and Irrigation has increasingly continued to provide domestic and irrigation water to households, to add to the little available water resources

Several community water points in the towns and rural areas have been established in a bid to reduce shortage of water for domestic use as well as watering of livestock.

Various community-based water supply projects in rural areas have also been undertaken to supplement services provided by mainstream water service providers

> *PEOPLE KNOW ME AS MAMA KALOINA. I AM HAPPY TO SAY THAT I NO LONGER HAVE TO BATTLE WITH HEADACHES AND A PAINFUL BACK FOLLOWING THE LONG WALKS THE VILLAGE WOMEN HAD TO MAKE TO FETCH WATER. OUR ANIMALS ARE WELL WATERED AND OUR CHILDREN NOW GO TO SCHOOL BATHED, IN CLEAN CLOTHES AND WITH A FULL STOMACH.*
>
> *- MAMA KALOINA, RESIDENT*

More than 20 irrigation and water supply projects were undertaken during financial years, 2017/18 and 2018/19, some of which includes the construction of Giumpu Water project in Abogeta West, Makobo in Igoji West, supply and delivery of UPVC pipes for lower Kithangari water project, Abogeta East, Construction of 28 million Iraru water Project, in Imenti South field demonstrations farm 100% pipeline 100% complete water running, 20 million Gikui Mweru water projects in Imenti South, Sh. 22.9m Tumutumu in Igembe South, 4Km Kiija Mutethia project in Imenti Central, Maua Water supply. Others includes Laare water supply, Nturukume in Kiirua Naari -ongoing, Kiagu-Gaitu in Mwangathia, Karwarera-Tutua at 90%, Uruku project union construction - Nkuene, Runogone project in Nyaki West and Rugene in Ntima East.

During FY 2017/2018 and the 2018/2019, 150 solar powered boreholes have been drilled and equipped as part of the Governor's annual water flagship projects.

The boreholes sunk targeted the arid and semi-arid areas with grazing zones stretching from Tigania, Igembe and Buuri benefitting more.

The water department has also renovated and solarized 5 of the boreholes drilled during the previous regime.

BETTER HEALTH CARE

Why meru teaching & referral hospital is the go-to place in meru

Doctors at the Meru level V hospital conduct a rare operation on a patient. The Facility currently is utilizing most of its state-of the-art machines to serve the public.

"We promised to provide better health care services for all residents of Meru County. I must admit that we have many challenges in this sector, but we are determined to overcome them.

We are currently expanding the health facilities in our County. We are constructing 40 new dispensaries and 8 new maternities at a total cost of Kshs. 132 million. Construction of a new ward at the Meru Teaching and Referral Hospital is ongoing at a cost of Kshs. 350 million. We are also constructing a Renal Unit and an Intensive Care Unit at Meru Level 5 Hospital. For the first time in the history of this County, we have employed an oncologist, and we are now treating cancer patients in Meru Level 5 Hospital. Cancer has been an epidemic in Meru County.

In order to focus and allocate more resources in the fight against cancer, we have drafted the Meru Cancer Institute Bill, 2019, which we shall soon introduce to the Assembly. Once established, the cancer institute will mobilize financial resources and personnel for preventing and minimizing cancer in Meru County through public awareness campaigns, cancer screening and cancer management strategies.

We have created a Hospital Inspection Unit to ensure an attitude change among the hospital staff; improve our efficiency, and to ensure that our hospitals and dispensaries don't lack medicines at any time."

H.E KIRAITU MURUNGI, GOVERNOR, MERU COUNTY

AT A GLANCE

Following a gazette notice of 2008, Meru Level V was officially declared The Meru Teaching and Referral Hospital, and has been serving as the referral hospital for all 9 Sub Counties within Meru County and other neighboring Counties such as Isiolo, Marsabit, Laikipia and Tharaka Nithi County. The facility is equipped with several specialists and is able to handle a traffic of between 700-1200 outpatients on a daily basis and 400-450 patients at any given time.

"I am particularly proud of the fact the Meru Teaching & Referral Hospital has had a positive turn around these past years, we have operationalized essential machines that have aided in diagnosis, we have a functional oncology department and this has by a large, helped us give the much needed cancer treatment, we have systems in place that allow us collect revenue and put it into good use. We serve as a referral hospital for all sub county and private hospitals in Meru and the neighboring counties and this is because we are well equipped with doctors majoring with different specialists.

DR. JAMES KIRIMI. CEO, MTRH

PROJECTS DONE AT THE MTRH SINCE DEVOLUTION INCLUDE;

FIRST FIVE YEARS OF DEVOLUTION

1. Merged Equipment Services (MES) which focuses on supporting the
2. Radiology with X-ray equipment
3. MRI (equipping)CSSD (Sterilization department) at the Theater
4. CT Scan (equipping)
5. 2 standby 500KVA generators (purchase)
6. Equipping of the Renal Unit
7. Cabro paving at 50% completion
8. Purchase and installation of 125 CCTV cameras
9. Purchase of 7 Morgue coolers and installation of 4.
10. Purchase of 2 laundry machines
11. 1 oxygen compressor
12. 2 ambulances and the controversial curtains that allegedly cost Ksh. 7.5M.

PROJECTS DONE IN THE LAST 2 YEARS

1. Construction of a 4 storied Ward block (on going)- GG0A2493: Governor during the ground breaking ceremony
2. Construction of the Renal ICU (70% completion)
3. Refurbishing and equipping of the Oncology/Cancer unit
4. Employment of an Oncologist
5. Doctors and nurses for the Oncology department
6. Purchase of Chemotherapy Administration chairs
7. Purchase and operationalizing a Bio Safety Cabinet (used for mixing chemotherapy drugs)
8. Construction of a waiting bay at the oncology unit with a capacity to hold 100 patients in one sitting
9. Installation of 2 Morgue coolers
10. Operationalizing the laundry machines drier
11. Refurbishing and equipping the main theater with machines such as monitors
12. Life support machines
13. Recovery beds and the laparoscopy machines + the training of staff on how to handle the aforementioned machines.
14. Operationalized the MRI machine and training of the staff that handle them
15. Purchase of consumables such as films, Contrasts materials etc.
16. Installation and commissioning of a 1000KVA transformer which allows the hospital to have all machines operate thorough out the day without power interruptions.
17. Installation of a 50kg capacity laundry machine
18. General renovations/face lift of the hospital which include the NHIF ward Mafuko ward, psychiatry ward, the Lab etc.
19. Accreditation & licensing the Medical Lab (on going) by the Kenya National Accreditation Service (KNAS)
20. Health Management Information System (HMIS) which is a system that allows the hospital to go paperless right from the patient registry, treatment, management of supplies and medicines. This is bound to make the hospital services more effective, easier and allow for an easy flow of information and monitoring.
21. County Government has shown a keen interest on Neglected Surgical Diseases such as cataract, whose free surgeries have already been done, club foot, hernias and cleft lip. The Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) have already mapped 3600 people in 3 Sub Counties with cleft lip condition and are due to get free surgeries in September. The exercise will continue until all Sub Counties are covered.

Kiraitu's administration set to open up 800km of roads in the county

The Project which is fully funded by the County Government will see the opening up and grading of 800km of roads across all the 45 Wards in the County

Governor Kiraitu Murungi launched the Mechanical Transport Fund (MTF) Project equipment, comprising of 30 heavy road graders and other machinery which are expected to go to all Sub Counties for commencement of works.

The Project which is fully funded by the County Government will see the opening up and grading of 800km of roads across all the 45 Wards in the County, with the works expected to conclude early next year.

While launching the equipment at Tuskys grounds in Meru town, Governor Kiraitu said his Government aims to create real and meaningful change in the transport sector this year, and a complete transformation in the County by the end of the five years. He also thanked the MCAs for approving the funds to Finance the Project.

"As you know, we have already laid cabro in all major towns in the County, including here at Gakoromone in Meru town, ongoing construction of the 3-storey Makutano market, Maua, Laare, Mikinduri, Timau, Kanyakine among others. This year we are extending these cabro projects to other towns such as Kamurita in Kithirune, Kirua and Kibirichia markets in Buuri," said the Governor.

Deputy Governor Hon. Titus Ntuchiu speaking at the launch, said that the project will greatly cut the costs of opening of the roads, since it is being executed between Governments, which is one of the ways to ensure prudence and maximization of utilization of Counties resources. Hon. DG dismissed those who are politicking using the ongoing developments, saying that such individuals are only after own personal interests.

The DG's sentiments were echoed by Chief of Staff Hon. Gideon Kimathi and County Secretary Dr. Rufus Miriti, who both reiterated that the County Government under the leadership of Governor Kiraitu, is firmly focused on delivering life changing development to Mwananchi, and has no room for political theatrics, rhetoric and drama. The two leaders warned opponents that Governor Kiraitu will be reelected in 2022, based on his impressive development record.

The ministry representatives, Chief Engineer Roads, Eng. James Kungu who represented PS Ministry of Transport, Infrastructure, Housing and Urban Department, and Charles Nzuka, Chief Mechanical Engineer, praised Governor Kiraitu for his efforts in lobbying for the partnership, pledging that the ministry will work closely with County to ensure the project is executed seamlessly.

County Executive for Roads Julius Taitumu, said that his Department will expedite the works by ensuring strict adherence to timelines and project execution guidelines.

The MCAs from all the 45 Wards who were present at the launch, expressed commitment to cooperate with the engineers to ensure all roads that were agreed upon are graded. Majority Leader Mutuma Karithi, assured that the Assembly will continue to support the Governor and his administration in lobbying and implementing such projects which are highly impactful to the common Mwananchi at Ward level.

Chief of Staff cautions political mischiefs

The county administration is keen on promoting the growth of Meru's economy.

This is according to the Chief of Staff Gideon Kimathi who holds that the county has no time for irresponsible exchanges with political shenanigans, other than partnerships on how best to develop the county. Kimathi has more than often reiterated that leaders must lead by example and not behave in a rip - off complain directed characters.

These comes amid excessive political gimmicks by some leaders whose rhetoric's he said would not dissuade the governor from enhancing the actualization of his big dream for Making Meru Great.

"Meru is neither about a single person nor protecting self-interests" said Kimathi.

He added this is why the county boss has been implementing a bottom up leadership, embracing more collaborations to further uplift the people of Meru. Kimathi who spoke at Devine Mercy Primary School, Kithatu during the 12th graduation ceremony of ECDE learners, insisted also on the need to invest in children, the society's future hope, hence the need to invest more on them rather than building an 'investing-for-them' attitude. Rev. Fr. Eliud Mwenda who was chief guest, reinforced his statement (Kimathi's) saying Kiraitu's development programs are vivid and that he should not throw back stones to every dog that barks at him as this only seeks to disrupt and disorient his development plan for Meru.

MERU IS NEITHER ABOUT A SINGLE PERSON NOR PROTECTING SELF-INTERESTS - KIMATHI

Residents urged to take part in cancer screening...

...as county escalates efforts to combat the disease

Meru County Secretary Dr. Rufus Miriti has called on Meru residents to come out in their numbers and be screened for cancer regularly, even as the County Government steps up efforts to contain the disease, following rapidly rising cases of cancer where Meru has been ranked top nationally in the disease prevalence.

Dr. Miriti said that the County Government is already embarking on robust programs to fight the cancer menace, such as the cancer bill which has already been drafted and approved by the cabinet, and is awaiting tabling before the County Assembly.

The bill will operationalize other programs such as the upcoming establishment of the Meru Cancer Center and Cancer Institute. "Once established, the institutions will among other things, spearhead research on cancer causes, possible prevention and cure for those who are diagnosed at early stages, hence ease the current burden of heavy cost of cancer treatment and management that is being experienced by Mwananchi," said Dr. Miriti.

The CS added that in the short term, the County has employed an oncologist and continues to carry out other measures to empower Meru Level 5 Hospital to enhance its capacity to handle cancer cases.

> ***ONCE ESTABLISHED, THE INSTITUTIONS WILL AMONG OTHER THINGS, SPEARHEAD RESEARCH ON CANCER CAUSES, POSSIBLE PREVENTION AND CURE FOR THOSE WHO ARE DIAGNOSED AT EARLY STAGES***
>
> ***- DR. MIRITI***

Health CECM, Misheck Mutuma makes his round after arriving at a cancer screening camp in Maua. The Health department has been conducting Cancer screen across the county in a bid to arrest the rapidly rising Cancer cases.

He was speaking when he flagged off the annual Cancer Walk organized by Meru Hospice, to mark the Cancer Awareness Month. The theme of this year's commemoration is "Palliative Care Because I Matter".

The CS also said that the County Government will continue to support institutions such as the Meru Hospice which are carrying complementing the efforts to combat cancer in the County. He was accompanied at the event by MCAs for Nyaki West Mworia Kiongozi, Murega Elias of Municipality and Julius Mbijiwe of Mwanganthia Ward.

A 'Moses' for the Ameru: residents in remote Mulika market welcome new development

Deputy Governor Hon. Titus Ntuchiu has said that Governor Kiraitu Murungi's administration is committed to develop all corners of Meru County as promised during the campaigns.

Speaking at mulika, Mikinduri ward in Tigania Central Sub County during the commissioning of Mulika Livestock market that was fully funded by the County Government, Ntuchiu noted that for the last two years Governor Kiraitu's government has done notable developments in the area which include the new market, high mast floodlight installation among others. "Residents in many parts of the County are confessing that for the last two years, this Government has done more than the last regime did in five years, and I want to promise you that by 2022 we will have completely changed Meru, including Mulika. So far, we have cabro paved Mikinduri town, sunk several boreholes in this ward, and opened several roads among other notable developments," he added.

> ***RESIDENTS IN MANY PARTS OF THE COUNTY ARE CONFESSING THAT FOR THE LAST TWO YEARS, THIS GOVERNMENT HAS DONE MORE THAN THE LAST REGIME DID IN FIVE YEARS, AND I WANT TO PROMISE YOU THAT BY 2022 WE WILL HAVE COMPLETELY CHANGED MERU***
>
> ***-HON. TITUS NTUCHIU***

He said that they will not be distracted from continuing with the development agenda by political noisemakers who have nothing to offer but empty rhetoric for their own personal gain, urging residents to distance themselves from such leaders.

On her part the CEC in charge of Agriculture, Livestock Development and Fisheries Mrs. Carol Mutiga, noted that her Department has plans to upgrade several livestock market to a modern standard. Mikinduri ward MCAs Hon Gabriel Chokera thanked the County Government for upgrading Mulika Livestock market which is the largest Livestock market in the area.

He pointed out that through the Ksh 20 million ward kitty that Governor Kiraitu administration allocated the MCAs to develop their wards, he has been able to deliver many developments in the ward.

The event was attended by Chief of Staff Gideon Kimathi and several CECs Among other country officials.

Hope in the Village

My name is DR. Phinehas Muthomi, a medical doctor currently in private practice in Chuka in the neighboring Tharaka Nithi County since July of this year.

I'm here because I was a beneficiary of the Kiraitu Murungi Foundation during my high school life. It is important to note that this or these benefits did not just stop after high school education.

I'm the quintessential product of the Kiraitu Murungi Foundation.

I went to Nkiriana primary school, a small government school in a tiny sleepy village called Antuambui in Igembe north. Sadly, the only life I knew was struggle. We are eight siblings but my parents worked hard to provide for us all.

My mother dropped out of form 3 in the early 70s because after her dad died no one was available to pay her school fees. My dad could not go past class seven because of similar circumstances. Fortunately, they still understood the value of a good education and worked hard to give us all exactly that. But they could do only so much.

I sat my kcpe in the year 2006. I remember when I saw my kcpe results I was so happy but could not believe that despite having obtained the highest marks ever from my school, our financial situation gave no hope for joining high school. Others did not seem so surprised though. Not my teachers, classmates nor my parents. You see? That's what growing up poor does to you. It first limits your options in life, takes away your optimism and the confidence in your abilities and then it robs you of your dignity.

Anyway, a month later I got my call to the Alliance High School in Kikuyu, at which point I was dumbfounded. Fast forward to a while later when we reported to school, and my dad had only 5000 Kshs in his pocket. He had no fare to go back. The biggest shock was yet to strike. We found that the admission fee of 40000 for the first term but dad was not unsettled at all.

> ***THIS FOUNDATION DID MORE THAN PAY HIGH SCHOOL FEES FOR A STRUGGLING POOR BOY. IT GAVE ME A BRANCH TO CLING ON IN THE FACE OF FEAR AND UNCERTAINTY. A SPRINGBOARD INTO A DIFFERENT LIFE. A BETTER LIFE, A DIGNIFIED LIFE.***
>
> ***- DR. PHINEHAS***

Academic scholarship

With his limited grasp of the English language, and his brand of Kiswahili mixed with Kimeru he engaged the then principal Mr. Christopher Khaemba in one of the most heart to heart conversations I have ever seen. I was officially admitted and dad promised he will go back and look for money. Mr. khaemba gave him back three of the five thousand shillings as fare back home and he gave me the remaining two thousand as pocket money. I had never seen such grace before. Mr. Khaemba would often ask me how my old man was doing every time we happened to meet.

The total annual fee for the year was about 95000 Kshs. I had no idea where that would come from. Then somewhere in the mid of first term, Mr. Khaemba called me into his office and showed me a letter from the Kiraitu Murungi Foundation.

Apparently, I had qualified for an academic scholarship by virtue of having been the top KCPE student from public schools in all of the then greater Meru, currently Meru County.

Basically, my life changed! I had a peace of mind and I could study with clarity of mind and focus so my grades improved greatly. I will always be grateful for that.

I have seen people give handouts which is a welcome practice but from my own experience it is obvious the most effective way to improve people's lives, and develop a country or county is education. Equal access to quality modern education. Education gives someone a bargaining value. It gives you your dignity and self-esteem back. It spurs your creativity and shows you what you are capable of. There is no better investment!

This foundation did more than pay high school fees for a struggling poor boy. It gave me a branch to cling on in the face of fear and uncertainty.

A springboard into a different life.

A better life, a dignified life.

Most people don't get that.

If we could give every child an equal opportunity to education, we would ensure an equal start in life for everyone. Education is the greatest equalizer.

Again, thank you so much to the Kiraitu Foundation, to you my governor and to our first lady Madam Priscilla for everything you have done for me and this great county.

I believe this county has a very bright future ahead of it.

Thank you for being our savior- Igembe residents tell Governor

Igembe leaders led by Meru Senator Hon Mithika Linturi praised governor Kiraitu, whom they referred to as their savior for solving what they termed as their most pressing problem since independence.

It was a dream come true for Igembe residents as Governor Kiraitu Murungi commissioned the infamous Kore Road which was fully funded by the County Government. The road was among the most impassable roads in the region and has been for many years used by politicians to hunt for votes.

Igembe leaders led by Meru Senator Hon Mithika Linturi, Igembe Central Member of Parliament Hon Kubai Kiringo and a host of MCAs from Igembe, praised governor Kiraitu, whom they referred to as their savior for solving what they termed as their most pressing problem since independence.

"I want to thank the Governor and his administration for considering our people. This road has been nearly the most difficult road in Kenya since independence, and it is only your government which has come to our rescue and I thank you for that," Hon Linturi noted. His sentiments were echoed by all Igembe MCAs who thanked the Governor for giving the region priority in developments such as water provision, roads, ECDE classes, health facilities among others, saying that for the last two years they have witnessed real transformation of the region. Area Member of Parliament Hon Kubai Kiringo thanked Governor Kiraitu Murungi for his commitment and more so, for uniting all Meru leaders, adding that the current political atmosphere in the County is very conducive for development.

> *I WANT TO THANK THE GOVERNOR AND HIS ADMINISTRATION FOR CONSIDERING OUR PEOPLE. THIS ROAD HAS BEEN NEARLY THE MOST DIFFICULT ROAD IN KENYA SINCE INDEPENDENCE, AND IT IS ONLY YOUR GOVERNMENT WHICH HAS COME TO OUR RESCUE*
>
> *- HON LINTURI*

Hon. Kiringo committed to continue working with Governor Kiraitu's administration for the betterment of Igembe central residents.

On his part, Governor Kiraitu noted that his Government is committed to honor all the promises he made during the Campaigns, citing Kore road as one of them.

"My administration has empowered our MCAs through the Sh20 million Ward Development fund each year, and by the end of five years every Ward in Meru will have received a total of Sh100 million, and I want thank the MCAs and the Ward Development Committees for the good use of the kitty," he said.

The Governor thanked the Meru leaders for the unity, saying that he will continue to work with them and urged residents to be patient as he and other top County leaders decide on the referendum issue whose debate is ongoing in the country, where maintained that Meru County will only support the proposal that increases funds allocation to County Governments.

Addressing the event, Deputy Governor Hon Titus Ntuchiu urged the residents to fully support Governor Kiraitu's government saying that they will deliver all what they promised.

The DG who is also the CEC for finance noted that they are developing all corners of Meru County and urged Meru residents to ignore politicians who are making political noises without any development to show themselves.

County Executive for Roads and Transport Mr. Julius Taitumu said that his Department has plans to improve several other roads across the County which are in bad condition.

Empowering people abled differently

> *THE GOVERNMENT IS ALSO MAPPING UP BASELINE SURVEYS TO CREATE A DATA FOR PWDS ACROSS THE COUNTY.*

Rigorous sensitization has been done to increase the numbers of PWDs subscribing to Meru PWDs SACCO.

The number has rose from 400 to 550members. This has enhanced inclusivity of affirmative groups in self-sustenance.

The government is also mapping up baseline surveys to create a data for PWDs across the county. Already a data sheet has been created for the county and 4 officers trained on gender response budgeting.

A 7 member PWD committee was this year formed in accordance with 2012 County PWD Act.

In addition, PWD SACCO has been revamped with a 10 million seed capital and 5 million capacitation boosts for the members.

UNITY

A unity of purpose: Njuri Ncheke leaders bury their differences

Meru leaders led by Governor Kiraitu Murungi have lauded Meru Council of Elders for uniting the common agenda of taking Meru forward

Meru Governor Kiraitu Murungi his Tharaka Nithi counterpart Hon Muthom Njuki and CS Peter Munya have lauded Meru Council of Elders, Njuri Ncheke, for uniting for the common agenda of taking Meru and Tharaka Nithi Counties forward. They thanked Njuri Ncheke leaders for keeping their personal differences apart, noting that the unity has brought peace and stability not only to Njuri Ncheke members but to all residents of the two counties as well as entire Mt. Kenya region where the Council is regarded with great respect.

Governor Kiraitu said that he fully supports the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) report that was recently launched by the President Kenyatta.

Unity

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His sentment we're echoed by his Tharaka Nithi Counterpart hon Muthomi Njuki and CS Peter Munya who said that there is need for the for the report to be brought to the mwananchi to read and make decisions.

They were speaking at Chiru shrines during a unity meeting that brought the two conflicting Njuri Ncheke parties together, which be also saw installation of new council leaders

ENVIRONMENT

County's environmental conservation efforts

The Environment department, has with the stewardship of the CEC, Prof. Karwitha Kiugu, been managing solid waste across the county and promoting environmental conservation through various programs.

They have, in two and a half years, already gazetted 39 public hills and of the 39, they have managed to secure a partnership that has enabled them plant trees at Nchuura Hills in Tigania West and Mweru Hills in Imenti Central, where they are through with phase one of a 4-year program. The government has also secured a partnership between the Ministry of Energy and the County Government to run the Keep Fund (Kenya Environment & Energy Program)

As part of the RRI, the government is also in the process of entering into a partnership with KTDA with an intention to have KTDA adopt and 'afforestate' part of the gazetted hills, which will see them harvest their trees form specific hills.

They environment docket has also constitutionalized and operationalized the county environmental committee which is to serve as the advisory body for environment conservation activities in the county.

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GLANCE **BOX**

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The school greening program in partnership of the Kenya Water Tower Agency (KWTA) is yet another achievement, where they have planted trees in schools such as the Bishop Lawi Imathiu pry sch, Gikumene Girls, Amung'enti pry sch and Karumo Technicaln Training Institute among others. This program is geared upon fostering a conservation culture among the young ones.

A new garbage lorry and 7-liter bins for the Maua town have been procured and construction of receptacles across the major towns done. All these, are geared towards boosting efficiency for waste collection and management in Meru county.

The department has also, alongside NEMA, enforced the national government's directive to ban the use of polythene bags, in a bid to help conserve the environment. They have also secured a partnership with JICA and are working on a project to convert organic waste into biochar that can be used in farms to increase soil fertility and consequently, yields. Further, they are making briquettes, to help manage organic waste from charcoal and providing an alternative source of cooking fuel that is more appreciated for they last longer than the ordinary charcoal while burning.

IMPROVED**AGRICULTURE**

Some of the recently distributed Macadamia and Avocado seedlings.

Governor's bid to increase food production in Meru County

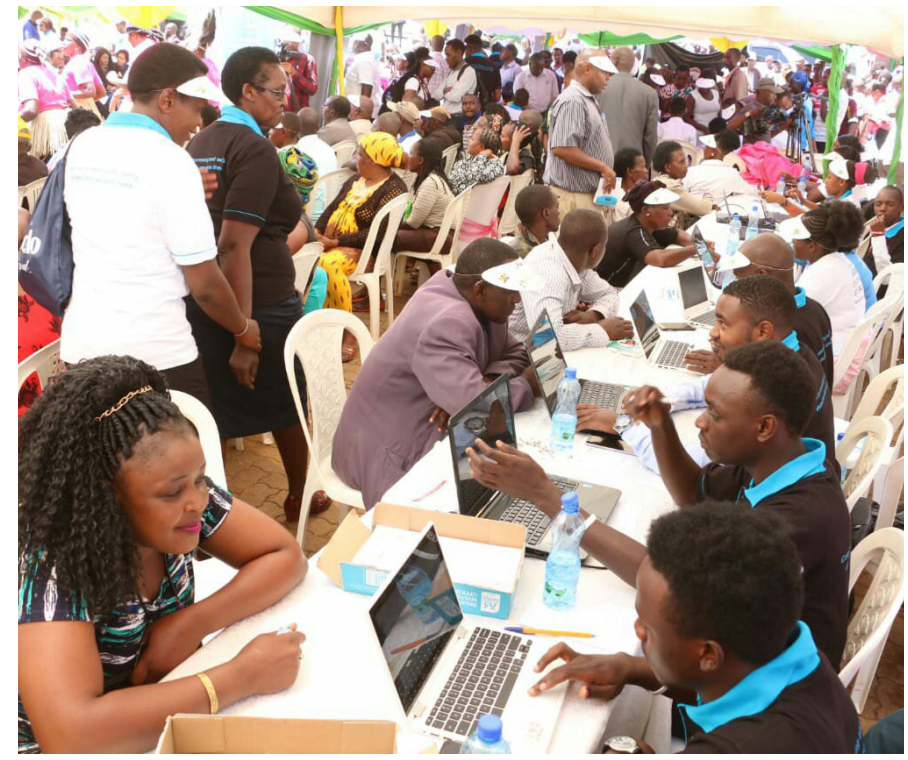
■ In an effort to ensure increased agricultural productivity in Meru County, the government has invested in several projects that have seen Meru enjoy food security, increase their yields and consequently, have more they are supplying the rest of the world.

Insert pic: Some of the recently distributed Macadamia and Avocado seedlings.

At the end of 5 years, The County Government hopes, through the farmers, to have planted over 1M new macadamia and avocado trees. Projects implemented since Kiraitu's assumption of office include; potato cooperatives which already have a membership of over 15,000 members, distribution of the Hass avocado and Macadamia seedlings across the county in a bid to diversify the variety of crops farmers are farming and to provide them with an opportunity to farm crops that are on very high demand both locally and internationally.

PICTORIAL

Governor Kiraitu awards a diligent taxpayer during last years. The revenue board conducted the awarding ceremony in a bid to reward committed taxpayer while encouraging more citizens to cultivate tax paying culture.



Meru residents attend a cancer screen at the Tuskys stage, town. Cancer cases in Meru have been on a rapid increase with a village in the county recording 55 new cases in one year.

The New look Kiosk at Gitimbine. The over 60 Modern stalls have been set up as a means of boosting entrepreneurship and small business. The stalls, which have already been allotted through a public ballot.

Water & Irrigation PS, Joseph Irungu dances with resident during a tour of the County's water projects. The National Govt has been keen on Meru's steady growth in water supply to the people.

Trade, Tourism & Cooperative CEC Maingi Mugambi & his counterpart, Environment CEC Prof. Kiugu engages with a Coffee Expert from globally recognized IllyCafe SPA, an Italian based coffee buyer. Mr. Stefano Scanferia is illycafe's representative in Africa. Illycafe SPA buys coffee, blends it and sells it through its café's and stores.

The County Government of Meru engaged members of the public during a public participation drive on Meru's #Vision2040. The document hopes to align Meru's economic, social and political growth.

As part of supporting small scale traders, the County government is currently working on modernizing the Meru Makutano Market into a 3-storey complex that will house fresh produce business people while setting up facilities to service the populous.

Governor Kiraitu alongside Mike Makarina, Chairperson of the PWD Sacco during the launch of the Sacco. The County Government injected Ksh. 15M into the Sacco to support people living with disabilities promising more once advised by the Census data.

Governor With the chair of the Meru Cultural board, Dr. Mwirigi Amanja. At the unvail of the board, the governor announced the establishment of a Meru cultural festival to be held annually.

Windlab Global CEO, Roger Price flanked by Meru County's investment Chair, Ms. Felicity Biriri during a site visit in Athwana Ward. Windlab seeks to set up Meru Energy park which will see the 1st phase channel over 80Mw into the National power grid.

Governor Kiraitu's manifesto promise to make our towns dustless is slowly taking shape. With 6 markets getting a major face-lift, traders can now sell their produce in a clean environment.

Meru County CECs sign performance contracts. Public Service CEC Kiautha Arithi hands over the signed copy of the contract to the Governor.

Public Service boss, Kiautha Arithi hands Governor Kiraitu his signed contract. In a bid to bolster performance delivery, the county top leadership signed Performance contracts that seeks to ensure the government delivers on its promises. This has trickled down with All county employees being appraised too.

Governor Kiraitu, deputy Governor Titus Ntuchiu & Senator Lituri during a courtesy call from Meru Council of elder- Njuri Ncheke. Part of the discussion were the upcoming cultural center in Nchiru.

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MERU NEWS

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MERU COUNTY
CALL CENTER

Meru County Government Headquarters has established a functional contact center where you can call and be assisted.

0709 241000

Meru County fire and rescue emergency contacts

020 2300 217

0726 173 505

Ambulance (red cross) hotline

0700 395 395

Let's support BBI Report: Meru leaders urge residents

Governor Kiraitu Murungi has said that he fully supports the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI) report that was recently launched by the President Kenyatta.

The Governor noted that the report has good recommendations which will help the country to unite and move forward hence eliminating some injustices that have been experienced in the past. He said that as the Governors they are welcoming the proposal to allocate more funds to the counties.

He said that the recommendation by the BBI team to expand the executive is welcoming since it will give all communities an equal representation at the top hence avoiding after election violence that have been waitnesed in the past

Meru Governor Kiraitu Murungi addressing the gathering during the launch of BBI report at the Bomas of Kenya, Nairobi.

His sentiments were echoed by his Tharaka Nithi counterpart Hon Muthomi Njuki and CS Peter Munya who said that there is need for the report to be brought to the mwananchi to read and make decisions.

" Recommendation in this report are made to benefit the mwananchi therefore it is important for the leaders to give Kenyans time to read and make there own decisions, "Munya added.

The leaders were c speaking at chiru shrine during a Unity meeting that brought the two conflicting Njuri Ncheke part together, which also saw installation of new council leaders.

Why Meru must get more resources as per 2019 population census

Several leaders in Meru and Tharaka Nithi have casted doubts in the 2019 census saying it was doctored against the accurate and factual population as reflected in the county.

The Meru leaders also want the national government to allocate more resources for the county to equally run smoothly developments projects for its populous residents after the county emerged among the top five most populated counties in Kenya.

Meru governor Kiraitu Murungi and his Tharaka Nithi Governor Muthomi Njuki disputed the 2019 census claiming the results did not reflect the situation on the ground.

Kiraitu alleged that some residents of Meru had been wrongly counted as Isiolo county residents whereas they live and get Meru services despite being within the disputed boundary areas between the two counties.

Kiraitu's Chief of Staff and Public Service Chief Officer Gideon Kimathi said the governor was annoyed by the shift and warned consequences of court case against the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS).

"Meru county government was computing the numbers wrongly placed in the neighboring county, we would go to court if the KNBS does not correct the anomaly. We are however happy with the population numbers attributed to Meru and hope that the figures would translate into increased budgetary allocation from national government," Kiraitu said. The total Meru population stands at 1,545, 714 people. Igembe Central is the most populous region with 221,412 people with Meru National Park recording a population of 385 people. The rest of the population is distributed in South Imenti (206,506), North Imenti (177, 5670), Buuri (157,360) Central Imenti (133, 818) and Mt Kenya Forest with 463 bringing the total population in Imenti region to 675,714.

> *THE RESULTS GIVES US AN OPPORTUNITY TO MAKE SOME CLEAR THINKING ESPECIALLY WHERE IT HAS BEEN SHOWN THAT SOME SUB COUNTIES IN THIS COUNTRY ARE MORE POPULATED THAN COUNTIES ELSEWHERE*
>
> *-DAWOOD*

In the Nyambene region, which includes, Igembe Central (221,412), Tigania East (177,279) Igembe North (169,317), Igembe South (161,646), Tigania West (139,961) and Meru National Park (385) had a total population of 870,000 according to the figures released by the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics on Monday.

Meru Senator Mithika Linturi said "We had always said that we have more population and deserve a bigger national cake to take care of those numbers."

Igembe Central MP Kubai Kiringo hailed his constituents and asked the national government to reconsider resources allocated to the sub county.

But North Imenti MP Rahim Dawood said the results had shown that maybe some areas in the country are not as populated as was previously thought and claimed.

"The results gives us an opportunity to make some clear thinking especially where it has been shown that some sub counties in this country are more populated than counties elsewhere," Dawood said.

Demographics

Dawood said the figures give the nation an opportunity to realign the boundaries and also some important demographics in matters such as unemployment and poverty levels that will inform distribution of public resources to counties and constituencies in the next decade.

Kiraitu said counting these residents in Isiolo would take Meru resources to the neighboring county whereas the county uses resources to develop those areas.

"We would like to petition the Kenya National Bereau of Statistics (KNBS) to revert our people who have been wrongly placed in Isiolo back to their rightful areas," Kiraitu said through CoS Kimathi.

Kiraitu claimed residents of Epinding and Ngaremara in Tigania East and Kachiuru in Igembe North had been wrongly placed in Isiolo North when their enumeration codes clearly indicated they were in Meru county.

"We are angry because when the enumeration codes were generated, the Meru County Commisioner Allan Machari wrote to the KNBS in October 2018 asking them to correct the anomaly but it seems that was never bothered," Kiraitu claimed.