GENOWA ECHO ENDLESS POTENTIAL



NEWSLETTER | VOL. 17 - JULY 2024

A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



Inside this Issue >>>

- Homa Bay's Readiness to Up taking Investors
- United Front Against Triple Threat
- Solid Waste Management Plan Underway
- Roads Restoration After Heavy Floods
- Public Participation Bill Nearing Completion
- Aquaculture Program Leads Countrywide
- Word from the CECM Communications

A Message from the CECM COMMUNICATIONS



GRACE MERCY OSEWE (MRS)

CECM COMMUNICATIONS

his edition of Genowa Echo carries stories about how the county government of Homa Bay is rebuilding the trust and confidence from both the residents and investors. Governor Gladys Wanga is all out to ensure that she accomplishes her mandate to the people, secure the future of our young generation and open up the county for industrial and economic take-off.

Our op-ed has been done by my colleague in charge of investments, Hon Polycarp Okombo. He has given a clear perspective of our readiness in as far as investment is concerned, drawing from the foundations and the projections that will enable the potential investors to choose Homa Bay as their preferred destination.

Our programs on road rehabilitation, aquaculture, agriculture and administration have been highlighted with the focus on enabling the readers peer into what we do in meeting the aspirations of the people.

Enjoy your read!

THE EDITORIAL TEAM

Grace Mercy Osewe - CECM

Communications

Atieno Otieno - Chief Officer

and Editor-in-Chief

Steven Muga - Director

Communications and Editor

Vickery Omwandho

- Deputy Director

Communications

Lawrence Magware -

Managing Editor

Bushnell Odhiambo - Editor

Collins Ogutu - Editor

Eunice Atieno - Photography

Livone Molo - Photography

Geoffrey Khoore -

Videography

Robert Wera - Videography

Philip Ogai - Graphics

Renetech Graphics - Design

and Layout





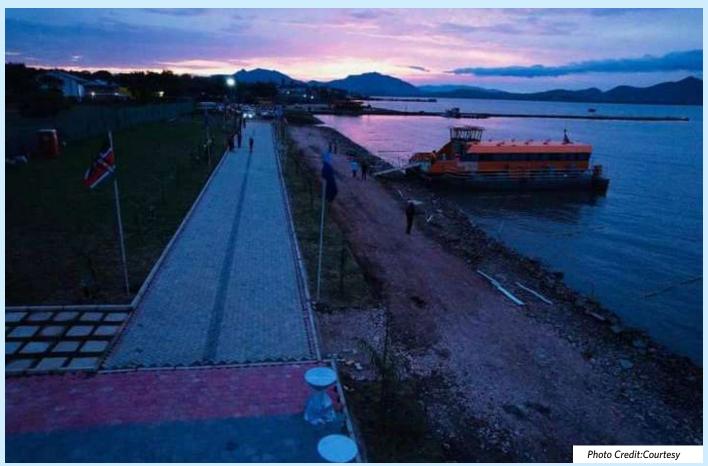




County Government of Homa Bay

Homa Bay County P.O. Box 469 - 40300, Homa Bay.

communications@homabay.go.ke



Rehabilitation of the lakefront is significant for our economic take off.

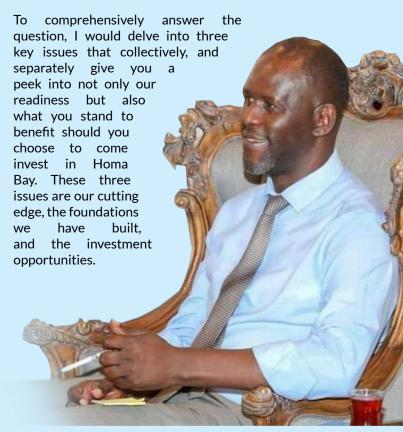
OP-ED: INVESTMENT - IS HOMA BAY INVESTOR READY?

By Polycarp Okombo

oma Bay County under the visionary leadership of H.E Governor Gladys Wanga has pulled all the stops not only to make it investor-ready but to also unlock its enormous potential in tourism, agriculture, industry and general socioeconomic growth. The larger vision for Homa Bay County revolves around transforming it from a Consumer County into a dynamic Producer County with a steadfast commitment to a vision of production.

This shift entails harnessing the county's potential for agricultural, industrial, and economic growth, thereby ensuring self-sufficiency and contributing significantly to the national economy. By strategically investing in key sectors such as agriculture, fisheries, and manufacturing, Homa Bay aspires to not only meet its own consumption needs but also emerge as a net producer, creating a ripple effect of prosperity for its residents. Further, this transformation involves comprehensive urban planning, infrastructure development, and economic diversification, positioning the town as a hub for transport, commerce, logistics, education, and culture. So, in a simplistic way,

Is Homa Bay Investor Ready? There can only be one answer – YES.



So, what is our cutting edge that should make you choose Homa Bay over any other region in the county? Firstly, *Our Central Geographical Location*: Positioned as a vital hub in the western and lake basin, it is a significant rural, urban and commercial center. The centrality also facilitates easy access to neighboring counties and markets, making it an ideal location for businesses looking to establish a strategic presence in the region. *Secondly*, *Agriculture and Natural Resources*: *Over 70%* of the county's land mass is arable and fertile land supporting the cultivation of various crops. The lake resource is a head start in aquaculture and blue economy investments.

Thirdly, Economic Diversification and Private Sector Development: This economic diversification is a testament to the resilience and adaptability of businesses in Homa Bay, creating opportunities across various sectors. Fourthly, Tourism Potential: Homa Bay's scenic landscapes, including 80% of Kenya's Lake Victoria shoreline, present untapped tourism potential. Development in this sector could boost economic growth through increased tourist activities and related services. Political Stability and Security: Homa Bay County has consistently demonstrated political stability, creating a secure environment conducive to business growth. This stability, even amid regional and national political changes, is a crucial factor in fostering sustained investment and development.

To make Homa Bay investor ready, and to position it as an investor destination, Governor Wanga and her administration had to lay the foundations onto which the investments would be built, foundations that would foster the growth of the investments and both investors and the locals mutually benefit from the investments. These foundations have been about changing a people's mindset, offering firm leadership and showing the people direction to follow to meet their aspirations and ringfencing both legal and policy frameworks that would make investing in Homa Bay an easier thing to do since it would offer better business-friendly environment.

To show our commitment in attracting investors, we went a step further to set aside 536 ha of land in Riwa City for investments. The entire parcel has since been gazetted as a Special Economic Zone and we are in the process of obtaining both the operators and developers licenses. Within the Riwa City, there is the County Aggregation and Industrial Park (CAIP) which the County Government is developing in collaboration with the National Government Ministry of Trade and Investment. Riwa City SEZ is the only one in the western part



of the country and like other SEZs, it offers highly attractive tax incentives to the industries and business establishments that will set up therein.

So far, we have over 5 investors setting base in the zone showing the confidence they have in investing in the County. Additionally, we, in collaboration with other development partners earlier in the year conducted a successful investments conference that brought together over 3,000 delegates and investors. The 2nd Homa Bay County International Investment Conference held from 27th February 2024 to 29th February 2024 at Tom Mboya University with the theme of Unlocking the Bay of Endless Potential took advantage of the investment potential and opportunities available within the county. It showcased the investment opportunities in the county and positioned the county as the preferred investment destination in the region. 9 MOUs were signed during this conference, a testament to the investors' confidence in the county.

On legal framework to anchor both investor and development partnership, Homa Bay County became the first local government to ratify



Former Prime Minister and his entourage at the HoBIIC exhibitions

the County Infrastructure Financing Act that establishes a clear framework for financial negotiations enabling us to secure funding for vital infrastructural projects most of which will be on enabling and expanding our investment potential. With this Act, the county government of Homa Bay can spend on infrastructure within its means and without incurring loans and expenditures that would otherwise undermine the completion and utilization of such projects thus deterring potential investors and partners from committing to the projects.

The investment opportunities are in the key value chains which we have identified and are out to be market leaders in. These include cotton, edible oils, fish and tourism. However, Homa Bay also boasts significant production potential in Pineapples, Sweet Potatoes, Maize, Rice and Sorghum. We are ready to receive investors on our value chains and have set aside nuclear land for planting and agroprocessing. In terms of a priority value chain, we pick Cotton. The Country aims to produce 100,000 tons, and Homa Bay has the potential to produce 40,000 tons to bridge the national gap. We hope to

rope in investors in our ambitious farm-to-fashion concept.

Other than cotton ginnery, Homa Bay County is ready for investments in multi-fruit processors, fish processing plants, edible oil refinery plants and investments in eco-lodges and beachfront resorts among others. The opportunities are limitless.

We invite strategic corporate and individual investors, mutual funds, venture capitalists, social impact investors, PPP undertakers, Seed capital investments and Innovation funds, development banks and financial institutions, development partners and all strategic partnerships, Kenyans at large here and abroad, including sons and daughters of Homa Bay. Come invest in Homa Bay, we are investor-ready.

Mr. Polycarp Okombo is the CECM for Trade, Industry, Investment, Cooperative Development and Marketing, Homa Bay County

TRIPLE THREAT: HIGH-LEVEL EXPERIENTIAL LEARNING VISIT TO HOMA BAY, LEADERSHIP DIALOGUE FORUM REAFFIRM COUNTY AND STATE COMMITMENTS ON TRIPLE THREAT



By Communication Team

oma Bay County hosted major state and non-state players united on eliminating the triple threat of new HIV/AIDS infections, teenage pregnancies and sexual and gender-based violence for a high-level experiential learning visit and later a leadership forum focused on reaffirming the commitments towards achieving the underlined goals.

Governor Gladys Wanga, while hosting the delegation that included the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC) CEO Dr Ruth Laibon-Masha, Youth Ambassador Miss Cherlene Ruto, Sharon Dimanche of IOM, Dr Shaheen Nilofer of UNICEF and other multisectoral stakeholders, affirmed her administration commitment towards reversing the numbers, acknowledging that Homa Bay awkwardly ranks high on the triple threat indicators.

Kenya remains steadfast in its determination to end new HIV/AIDS and reduce adolescent pregnancies by 2030. The country has also pledged to eliminate sexual and gender-based violence by 2026. This was the rallying call during the high-level experiential learning visit and leadership dialogue forum on triple threat held in Homa Bay County early last month.

Recognizing the interconnection of new HIV infections, unintended pregnancies, and sexual and gender-based violence among adolescents, the National Syndemic Diseases Control Council (NSDCC), the National Council for Population and Development (NCPD), the State Department for Gender and Affirmative Action and the County Government jointly decided to tackle the triad challenge.

To achieve the ambitious goals of the Commitment Plan, the players are fostering a whole-nation approach while bringing in other key partners. Established partnerships include the United Nations Joint Programme on Ending the Triple Threat, which brings together seven United Nations agencies (UNAIDS, UN Women UNESCO, UNICEF, UNFPA, IOM, and ILO), religious leaders, and other nongovernmental organizations.

After site visits to Ndhiwa, Tom Mboya and Othoro hospitals, the teams converged at the Bay Park, Homa Bay Town where they made commitments that should enable each sector player to work toward ending the triple

threat. These commitments include: Reducing new HIV infections among adolescents and young people; Increasing access to HIV diagnosis and treatment among adolescents and young people; Reducing sexual and gender-based violence cases against adolescents and young people as well as Increasing the mean age of sexual debut in Kenya.

Others include an increase in the proportion of adolescent girls who have access to menstrual



health and hygiene products; Increased uptake of the Human papilloma vaccine among teenage girls; Reduced pregnancies among adolescent girls; full implementation of a re-entry policy of back to school for teenage mothers; Increased proportion of pupils transitioning to secondary school; Reduction in drug and substance abuse among adolescents and young people; Increased proportion of young people transitioning to gainful employment and Increase the proportion of community members sensitized on ending the Triple Threat.

GIRLCHILD: COUNTY TEAM WITH PARTNERS TO END TEEN PREGNANCIES AMONG THE FISHERFOLK

By Lawrence Magware



fforts to end teen pregnancies in the fishing community are gaining momentum following mentorship programmes carried out by the County Government of Homa Bay and the Dream Believe Repeat (DBR) an organization for adolescents. The latest efforts have targeted the fisherfolk in Suba North, and specifically Rusinga Island.

Rusinga is among the largest islands in Lake Victoria in Homa Bay County. It has 18 beaches where fishing takes place. Statistics from the Department of Gender and Social Services indicate that one out of four adolescent girls in the county have had a pregnancy or abortion. This has also put Homa Bay among the counties in Kenya with a high prevalence of teen pregnancy. It stands at 23 per cent.



The DBR undertakes girls' mentorship programmes in Rusinga Island during half terms and holidays to salvage their education.

While presiding over a mentorship program on the island, the organization's programmes manager Farida Abdul and CECM Gender & Social Services Sarah Malit and the department director Evelyn Ododa said they are working together to end the triple threat.

Many girls who are at the adolescent stage on the island are at risk of dropping out of school due to triple threat. The sensitization sessions they undertake for the girls include refraining from early sex, concentrating on their studies and exploiting their talents.

"The objective is to nurture the girls and inspire

The objective is to nurture the girls and inspire them to pursue their education for a better future. We urge girls who have fallen victims of triple threat to remain courageous and get back to school," Abdul said.

ENVIRONMENT: GOVERNOR RECEIVES SOLID WASTE MANAGEMENT REPORT, PLEDGES IMPLEMENTATION

By Livone Molo

overnor Gladys Wanga received the Homa Bay County Solid Waste Management Survey Report from the African Clean Cities Platform by the UN-Habitat at a ceremony in Nairobi. The report reveals significant opportunities to expand waste collection coverage by improving the current disposal facilities besides it exposes the county's potential for organic waste recovery.

While receiving the report from Mr. Oumar Sylla, Director, Regional Office for Africa, UN-Habitat, Governor Wanga reiterated that her administration will use the report to come up with effective solid waste management interventions that should help keep Homa Bay County clean and pollution-



free. "Through our commitments to sustainable development, our county aims to balance the broader economic and social challenges of development and environmental protection. For this reason, the county subscribes to the vision of a prosperous and equitable society living in harmony with the environment as envisioned in Article 42 of our Constitution under the fundamental right to a clean and healthy environment," she said.

The survey found that only 2% of total solid waste generated in Homa Bay, which is around 1 ton per day is recovered at the moment, out of 64 tons per day of potentially recoverable waste generated. This, the report adds, should be acknowledged that the entire recycling now is fully achieved by the informal sector, without any financial support from the county Government.

Recyclables are collected from households and disposal facilities by waste pickers and CBOs are also engaged in sales of recyclables from primary collection. Plastic materials are processed in chips or flakes and sent to Nairobi, Kisumu and Uganda for manufacturing of plastic materials. Similarly, paper and metal are sent to Kisumu, Nairobi and Uganda for further processing. All surveyed recovery facilities are categorized as 'no control' according to the operational control ladder. Considering that there are only two formal and a small number of informal stakeholders involved in the waste recovery sector in Homa Bay, the survey attempted to interview both, but this was not possible because some of the informal actors feared participation and refused to grant interviews.

On sources of revenue and revenue collection

mechanisms, the survey revealed that currently in Homa Bay County, there is no established legal framework for revenue collection in place. However, the county administration has set its sights on implementing a comprehensive policy for revenue collection within the next five years. This initiative aims to establish a structured framework that will facilitate efficient and transparent revenue collection processes in the county.

Private waste collectors are servicing residential areas, catering to low, middle, and high-income communities. These collectors operate under contracts, and the collection fees are largely determined by the operators themselves in an open competition framework. However, there is a lack of specific regulations in place to govern their operating and pricing structure for households (HHs) and the corresponding revenue return to the county. Consequently, private collectors may be hesitant to disclose the specifics of their collection fees, further underscoring the need for a transparent and standardized system to ensure fair practices and effective revenue sharing.



ROADS: REHABILITATION AND OPENING OF ROADS HAS RESTORED WHAT FLOODS DESTROYED

By Wycliffe Ochieng

Road development and rehabilitation services have been the highlight of the County Government's infrastructure program, especially after the heavy damages caused by recent flash floods and long rains. These efforts are a catalyst for further initiatives in our mandate to facilitate the movement of people and goods within and beyond the county.

The improvement of access and mobility in the county is exemplified by the construction of 2,463 km of new roads, surpassing the target of 1,500 km. A total of 2,463 km of classified roads were maintained and rehabilitated to ensure a reliable and sustainable road network. Additionally, 109 km of roads were upgraded to bituminous standards against a target of 50 km, an achievement attributed to emergency interventions and ongoing construction by road agencies such as KeNHA and KURA.

The County Government of Homa Bay, through the Department of Roads, Transport, Infrastructure, and Public Works, continues its exemplary work on opening and rehabilitating roads. As part of the 2023/2024 fiscal year initiatives, the projects target two roads per ward across the county to ease the movement of goods and services. H. E. Gladys Atieno Wanga noted that there is ongoing work on roads spanning 243.3 kilometers, providing 24.68 kilometers of access to facilities across the county.

"This was my main agenda: to embark on road improvements because it's a game changer for our county and a way to improve our economy," the Governor stated. She emphasized that roads are significant in the daily lives of citizens as they facilitate various sources of income and requested the cooperation of stakeholders.

Some of the roads launched include the Wiamen





- Obwaore - Kijawa - Gogo 1.8 km in Homa Bay Town West, the 2.8 km Sinema-Marera road in Gem East, the 2.1 km Pedo access road in Arojo Ward, the Nyarut Health Centre access road in Kochia, the 6.1 km Got Kokech-Oneno Nam-Kopiyo Shopping Centre-Nyalkinyi-Range River Road in Homa Bay West Ward, the Sikri-Nyajwelu road, the Kitare-Gode Ariyo road in Gembe, and the Mikai-Kajoroho-Mariwa-Muga Jwelu road, among others.





GOVERNANCE: COUNTY MOVES CLOSER TO INSTITUTIONALIZING PUBLIC PARTICIPATION THROUGH LEGISLATION

By Collins Ogutu



The County Government of Homa Bay, through the Department of Governance, Administration Communication and Devolution (GACD) has made a further step in having a law guiding public participation, keeping up with both the dictates of the constitution and Governor Gladys Wanga's people-centric governance model.

In June, the department held a two-day workshop on validating the Public Participation Bill 2024. The seminar in collaboration with County Aid Transformation Group (CATAG) and Network for Adolescents and Youth of Africa (NAYA) Kenya focused on developing a validated Public Participation Bill which will culminate into a Public Participation Law.

The meeting which was facilitated by staff from the County Attorney's office was attended by GACD staff.

Giving his closing remarks on behalf of the CEC for GACD Grace Mercy Osewe, the Director for Stakeholder Management and Public Participation Teddy Oginga lauded the participants for active participation. "We have exhaustively looked at the bill engaging legal minds pointing out where

corrections should be done and will continue engaging them to come up with a sound Public Participation Bill." Said Oginga.

He added that the bill will ensure inclusivity and accountability to the tenets of good governance by ensuring that the county residents will own county projects thus giving the best to the success of the project thereby reducing delays and opposition to a project implementation process.

This workshop marks a significant step towards the realization of a Public Participation Law which will be beneficial to the County Government since it engages the public in coming up with their input in all the county projects.





URBANIZATION: HOMA BAY COUNTY WELL ON COURSE TOWARDS IMPLEMENTATION OF MAJOR WORKS UNDER KISIP2

By Abnery Okoro

Preparations for the commencement of major works under the Kenya Informal Settlement Improvement Program are in advanced stages in Homa Bay County.

The County Government of Homa Bay's Department of Lands through the County Project Coordination Team has sensitized the various committees representing the various informal settlements in the county on their roles and responsibilities.

Settlement Executive Committees (SEC) and the Grievance Redress Committees (GRC) of the informal Settlements benefited from the exercise which covered issues around social and environmental safeguards, Gender-Based Violence, grievance and conflict management as well as communication skills.

This is in line with the provisions in the Project Operation Manual (POM) which spells out the processes and procedures to be followed when implementing the project in the community.

County Project Coordinator Madam Norsea Bayer expressed confidence that the training will equip the officials with the knowledge and skills required to properly manage emerging issues within their settlements.

"We are committed to full adherence to project guidelines. We take issues of environmental and social safeguards as seriously as we do financial issues." Said Madam Norsea.

The coordinator further expressed her confidence that the project will meet the conditions and meet the timeline set by the implementing partners.

The SEC chair for A Thousand Street Informal Settlement, Madam Roseline Kajo expressed satisfaction with how the PAPs have been handled adding that, "the transparency of the processes has greatly reduced the risk of conflict."





She further stated that the interventions like installation of high mast lights will significantly reduce cases of insecurity as well as increase hours for doing business.

Mr. Peter Ombai, a bodyguard rider who resides in Makongeni expressed his enthusiasm about plans to upgrade a major road within his settlement.

The County government has received the Project Affected Persons (PAPs) report. The report contains among other things the details of project-affected persons along with the valuation of the property

affected or targeted for relocation. This will pave the way for the commencement of the major works, which will greatly improve the lives of the people living in those informal Settlements.

Shauri Yako, Sofia, Makongeni, A Thousand Street, Nyandiwa and Rusinga Old Town Informal Settlements are earmarked for infrastructure upgrading, an initiative that will see the construction of roads, stormwater drainages, vending platforms for connection to piped water among others.

PARTNERS WITH AGENCIES, AND PBOS TO ENHANCE OUTREACH, BLOOD BANK CAPACITY

By Veronciah Nyasoro

s the world marked World Blood Donor Day, the County Government of Homa Bay sought partnerships with development partners, agencies, and public benefit organizations to enhance its capacity for blood banking and medical outreaches. This year's theme, "20 years of celebrating giving, thank you, blood donor," emphasizes the importance of every donation in making a difference.



Blood is a vital component in various medical procedures, including surgeries, cancer treatments, trauma care, and emergencies such as accidents. It is crucial to ensure that blood is readily available whenever and wherever it is needed. Donating blood is considered the most precious gift one can give to another person.



During the event, which took place from 7th-14th June, and on World Blood Donor Day commemorated on 14th June, 545 pints of blood were collected from generous donors, highlighting the community's commitment to saving lives and supporting those in need. Partners included Lwala, MSF, Zip Line, and Janeiro Hospital.

Regarding medical outreaches, the County Government of Homa Bay, in partnership with Aga Khan Hospital, Kisumu, conducted a free medical camp that included triage services (weight, blood pressure, and height measurements), consultation, laboratory services, pharmacy services, and cancer screening at the Governor's Park. Additionally, in collaboration with doctors from the Church Missions Network (USA), free medical camps were organized in the communities of Mfangano Island, Rachuonyo North, Rachuonyo South, and Rachuonyo East sub-counties.

The County Government of Homa Bay also celebrated World Sickle Cell Disease Day in Shauri Yako, Homa Bay town, with the theme "Hope through progress: Advancing Sickle Cell Care Globally." Sickle Cell Disease (SCD) is an inherited red blood cell disorder causing pain and other complications. Treatment includes blood transfusions, IV therapy, and medication. Partners present at the event included MSF, LVCT, church-based organizations, and private facilities.





AGRICULTURE: HOMA BAY COUNTY RESIDENTS EMBRACE NAVCDP SETTING A NEW DAWN FOR AGRICULTURAL VALUE CHAIN DEVELOPMENT



By Abnery Okoro

gricultural stakeholders and value chain actors from all 40 wards in Homa Bay County have unanimously endorsed the National Agricultural Value Chain Development Project (NAVCDP). This endorsement followed a series of barazas held across the wards, where draft Community Development Plans (CDP) and Micro Catchment Action Plans (MCAP) were validated as part of the Participatory Integrated Community Development (PICD) process. This process is designed to foster community participation in identifying issues, developing plans, and proposing solutions.

Madam Skeeter Otieno, a key figure in the PICD process, emphasized its achievements: "We have received reports generated by all 40 wards. These reports will guide our engagement moving forward. They have developed community action plans and micro catchment action plans."

During the barazas, various opportunities were highlighted through value propositions and potential returns on investment in the five main value chains: dairy, cotton, coffee, rice, and bananas.





FISHERIES: HOMA BAY COUNTY SHINES IN KENYA'S AQUACULTURE TRANSFORMATION WORKSHOP IN NYERI COUNTY

By Okech Bernard

n a remarkable display of excellence, Homa Bay County has emerged as the Best Overall performer under the Aquaculture Business Development Program, a groundbreaking initiative being implemented across 15 counties in Kenya.

The program, which aims to revolutionize the aquaculture sector, has seen Homa Bay County rise to the top, showcasing its unwavering commitment to sustainable and productive fish farming.

At a prestigious event attended by Chief Executive Committee Members (CECMs) and County Officials (COs) from the participating counties, Homa Bay was recognized for its outstanding achievements. Not only did the county secure the coveted title of Best Overall Performer, but it also claimed the second runner-up position in fish production and the first runner-up spot in Quality Reporting and Data Management.

Speaking at the event, the Chief Officer in charge of Blue Economy and Fisheries, Mr. Joshua Orero, acknowledged the milestones made in the aquaculture field. "This remarkable achievement is a testament to the hard work, dedication, and innovative spirit of the people of Homa Bay County," he said. He added, "By embracing the Aquaculture Business Development Program, we have demonstrated our ability to harness the vast potential of this sector and drive the economic growth of Homa Bay."

The Aquaculture Business Development Program, which spans Nyeri, Tharaka Nithi, Embu, Meru, Kirinyaga, Kiambu, Machakos, Kajiado, Kakamega, Kisumu, Busia, Kisii, Migori, and Homa Bay counties, has been a catalyst for transforming the aquaculture landscape in Kenya.

On his part, County Program Coordinator (CPC) Mr. Michael Omondi alluded, "The success of Homa Bay County serves as an inspiration to the entire nation." He added, "Our leadership in fish production and data management sets a new standard for excellence. We are confident that our achievements will inspire other counties to follow suit and unlock the full potential of this vital industry."

As the Aquaculture Business Development Program continues to drive progress across Kenya, Homa Bay County's remarkable performance stands as a shining example of the power of innovation, collaboration, and dedication to sustainable development.













