



GENOWA ECHO

ENDLESS POTENTIAL

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A MONTHLY PUBLICATION OF THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF HOMA BAY



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A Word from CECM Communications

We continue to covet input from our readers. One advantage of being an electronic newsletter is the active conversations we can have with readers and the lively conversations among members of the public living or working in Homa Bay County for whom we never tire to serve. If you have not shared your input, please take the time to do so as you read this third issue.

Now, on to the articles in this edition of the Genowa Echo. Someone asked if the Genowa Echo was going to have themed editions. After some thought and wise counsel from the Department of Communication (Editors Lawrence Magware, Bushnell Odhiambo, and Collins Ogutu; Photographers Eunice Atieno, Livone Molo, and Marcel Onyango and; Videographers Geoffrey Khoore, Robert Wera and David Omenge), it seems that every issue is a themed issue: the theme being how can we effectively communicate to you what your beloved government does for you every month.

We seek to support that goal in this issue by including basics onto which the county seeks to secure the health of mother and child and how to make healthcare as easily accessible as it is dispensed. With these kinds of prescriptions, we are getting our healthcare out of the hospital bed sooner and not later. We have delved into the basics that promote a dignified living and tried to bring to perspective H.E Gladys Wanga's all-out-or-nothing service delivery efficiency. We also got pieces on food security, lands and housing, revenue, water, and everything else that makes this county government stand out.

A pleasure I have as the leader of this team is this chance to thank those who have helped with feedback. Along with my team, and with the office of the Spokesperson Rachel Ogutu I also want to thank the department heads for making it possible to piece these items together before relaying them to you the mwananchi whom we serve. I, therefore, invite you to take another glimpse at what we did in case you missed our real-time updates and the weekly dispatches.

Grace Mercy Osewe (Mrs)

Waziri Governance, Administration, Communications, and Devolution



HEALTHCARE: MAKING A BED FOR MOTHER AND CHILD, AND SOME MORE

County Investing In Maternal Health as a Primary Care

Significant and long-lasting benefits accrue from investing in women's and children's health, quality of life, productivity, and economic growth. Despite these benefits, glaring gaps must still be filled to reduce mortality, provide equitable access to quality health care among women and children, and improve outcomes for children who survive past age 5. Because healthy women and children are the linchpin for healthy and thriving societies, investing in the health of women and children is indispensable to achieving the new Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) agenda.

Halfway to the SDGs target date of 2050, it is clear that the "business as usual" approach to the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) 4 and 5 - to reduce child and maternal mortality and achieve universal access to reproductive health - is failing too many people in too many places in Kenya. The lives of women and children are demonstrably affected by the quantity and quality of spending on maternal, newborn, and child health – and both the

county governments and the national governments have the power to fix the problem. It is for this reason the County Government of Homa Bay under the stewardship of Governor Gladys Wanga is prioritizing mother and child health, right from the primary healthcare point.

In Early May, the County Department of Public Health and Medical Services did a groundbreaking for ultramodern Mother and Child units to be constructed at Got Kojowi and Omboga health facilities in Kwabwai and Kanyaluo wards respectively. These units, to cost the government KES 15 million apiece, are part of an ambitious plan of having a model center of excellence health facility in every ward that would have all components for the provision of primary healthcare in a bid to decongest the county and sub-county hospitals when it comes to primary curable and preventable diseases. The ward mini-referrals will thus have a maternity wing with maternity, pre- and neo-natal wards, theatre rooms as well as delivery rooms

Referral's New Look Gives It a Motherly Touch

The cool blue of the newly refurbished maternity wing at the Homa Bay County Teaching and Referral Hospital gives mothers and their newborns a lease of life, even before life begins. Gone are the dilapidated ceilings, ragged walls, open-air wards, and crude labor rooms. The maternity unit, refurbished and renovated at KES 8 million now provides more privacy to the new mothers, safe and secured labor rooms, and two fully equipped operational theater rooms. What is more, the unit

can now oversee at least 40 deliveries every single day, a good omen going forward in increasing the average of 1,488 births in the facility every month.

While opening the doors to the blue-heaven maternity unit, Governor Gladys Wanga reiterated her administration's commitment to investing in mother and child health, terming it an invaluable investment in securing the future of the county.

A Look into the MCH Numbers in the County



Governor Wanga with jubilant CHVs drawn from Rangwe Sub County

The maternal mortality data for Homa Bay County provides valuable insights into the trends and changes over the years. Notable findings include a decline in the percentage of deliveries conducted by skilled birth attendants, a relatively stable cesarean section rate, fluctuations in the facility maternal mortality rate, a slight decline in the fresh stillbirth rate, a decreasing trend in the stillbirth rate, and fluctuations in the facility-based neonatal death rate.

The percentage of deliveries conducted by skilled birth attendants has shown a gradual decline, with a significant drop to 25% in 2023, warranting further investigation to ensure safe deliveries. The cesarean section rate has remained relatively stable, indicating balanced obstetric interventions. However, the facility's maternal mortality rate fluctuated, with a concerning spike to 133.9 in 2023, demanding immediate attention and interventions to improve maternal outcomes.

The fresh stillbirth rate has shown a slight decline over the years, with a minor increase in 2023. Efforts to improve antenatal care and emergency obstetric care should continue to further reduce stillbirths. Similarly, the stillbirth rate has demonstrated a decreasing trend, with a small increase in 2023. Continued focus on comprehensive maternal and newborn care is vital to drive down stillbirth rates.

The facility-based neonatal death rate remained relatively stable, with some fluctuations. However, there was a notable increase in 2023, indicating a need for closer examination and improvements in neonatal care practices and healthcare infrastructure.

In conclusion, the mortality data highlights areas of concern and progress in Homabay County's healthcare system. It is essential to address the decline in skilled birth attendants, the spike in maternal mortality, and the fluctuations in neonatal mortality. By identifying and addressing the underlying causes, implementing appropriate interventions, and strengthening healthcare services, Homabay County can continue to improve public health outcomes and ensure better healthcare for its population.

CHVS to Enhance Primary Health Indicators Agenda

Community Health Volunteers (CHVs) in Homabay help improve access to and use of essential health services by communities within the County. Governor Gladys Wanga this past few days made it a duty to meet in their respective sub-counties to deliberate on how to offer effective and efficient health services to the county residents. During the meetings, the Governor reaffirmed her commitment to building a progressive, responsive, and sustainable healthcare system by strengthening primary healthcare. She further said that her government will continue to pay CHVs their monthly stipend of KES. 2000, and a further KES 500 towards their national health insurance coverage.

She stated that her Administration will partner with the National Government to offer CHVs training on the new model of community health strategies. She asked the CHVs to work around the clock to help improve the health indicators in the county. "I am



counting on you to help us improve on the poor health indicators like new HIV infections, Infant mortality rates, and Gender-based violence among others." She said

He stressed that the 2954 CHVs in the entire county are the cornerstone of health and urged them to work with zeal. He assured them that the government has committed to offering personal protective equipment (PPEs), smartphones, and CHV kits to supplement the formal health system in the struggle to achieve universal healthcare at the community level.



One of the houses built by the Habitat for Humanity Kenya

HOUSING: EMPOWERED SHELTER – IT’S MORE THAN A HOUSE

County Government of Homa Bay, Habitat for Humanity Kenya Partner on Housing

The County Government and Habitat for Humanity Kenya have partnered to deliver 25 homes constructed for widows in Kagan Ward, Rangwe sub-county as well as 2 EYE classrooms, 3 ablution blocks of 16 doors, 5 10,000-litre water tanks to Manga Primary School, and 4 ISSB machines to use in making interlocking concrete blocks by the local self-help groups. This joint initiative is meant to promote access to decent and affordable housing as well as build decency, dignity, and hope in the local communities.

While presiding over the handing over ceremony at Manga Primary School in Kagan, both Deputy Governor Hon Oyugi Magwanga and Habitat for Humanity Kenya country director Mr. Anthony Okoth reiterated their commitment to addressing

land, shelter, sanitation, and learning challenges in the entire county, revealing that the Kagan project is only serving as a case study.

A project steered to building strength, stability, and self-reliance through shelter has seen the partners inject over KES 45 million in a major upgrading of the living conditions of the people in the rural of Rangwe to not only shelter the families but to also provide them with means to eke a living. While noting that a house is more than the four walls, Habitat for Humanity Kenya’s Anthony Okoth alluded that it can only be sufficient if the people also find water, quality education, and economic activity that will make them put food on the table – a holistic approach to providing a healthy living.

Hon Magwanga reiterated the county government’s commitment to reverse the numbers that now show only 30% of Homa Bay County residents have access to clean and safe water while another 40% still use open defecation due to a lack of toilets or latrines. To do this, the government is looking futuristic – expanding the uptake, treatment, and provision capacity of HOMAWASCO as well as an enhanced ward-based borehole drilling that should see the residents of Homa Bay travel not more than a kilometer for water. As part of addressing the shortage of water, especially in the rural, the county government is already launching a ward-based borehole drilling exercise across all the wards in the county.



The ISSB machines used for making interlocking blocks

SOCIAL SERVICES: AN EMPOWERMENT BEYOND USUAL

Disability Integration and Mainstreaming Take Off

The Government of Kenya has made notable efforts to address social development over the past years. It has designed and implemented various social policies to promote development through the redistributive, protective, and transformative functions of social policy. Examples are cash transfer programs to assist vulnerable groups, safety net programs, food subsidy grants, child support grants, and integrated basic education assistance programs. Homa Bay County has equally made tremendous attempts in streamlining the vulnerability agenda and integrating all the key groups in its programs and activities. The agenda has been deliberate in addressing the situation of Persons with Disabilities within the county. A proposed Disability Policy, already in its formative stages, will provide focus on persons with disabilities, implementation of the Disability Act 2020, and operationalization of any national legal framework that needs to be domesticated into the County structures.

Homa Bay County is the second highest county with disability prevalence with 4.3% of the over 1.2 million people in Homa Bay County living with disability. Medical advancements have also improved survival rates and contributed to longer life expectancy among persons with disabilities and society in general. Persons with disabilities until the county government intervened, were among the county's poorest and most marginalized groups. They face a significantly higher risk of

not having access to quality education, employment, and opportunities to fully participate in society. While recent emphasis has been laid on empowering persons with disabilities in general, most of it has been skewed toward particular demography (e.g., children with disabilities or the elderly), leaving out others e.g., youth and women.

Deputy Governor Hon Oyugi Magwanga, on behalf of H. E Gladys Wanga, presided over the flagging off and distribution of assistive devices and tools of the trade to over 200 beneficiary persons with disabilities at a colorful event held at Lake Victoria Field of the Seventh Day Adventists headquarters in Lala, Homa Bay Town sub-county.

In a speech read on her behalf by her deputy, Governor Wanga applauded the extraordinary partnership between her administration and the SDA church that has yielded this noble initiative aiming to help the county government not only streamline and ring-fence disability issues but to also advance the socio-economic empowerment of the persons with disabilities in Homa Bay County. This, she said, is an undertaking her administration, through the county Department of Gender and social services, will make an annual program to reach as many PwDs as possible.

In the partnership, the church acquired 120 tricycles and wheelchairs while the county government procured tools of the trade which included sewing machines, laptops, salon equipment, and carwash machines. Other partners including Plan International, Sightsavers, Homa Bay County CSO Network, and the National Council of Persons with Disabilities also contributed to the success of the event.



DG Oyugi Magwanga, Pastor Ochorokido and Hon Sarah Malit trying the tricycles during their flagging off



Part of the beneficiaries on their tricycles

TRADE AND INVESTMENT: POSITIONING THE COUNTY FOR INVESTMENT BOOM

Homa Bay Joins G14 on CAIPs, Aims at Jobs, Food Security



Homa Bay County joined 13 other counties this week, including Busia, Muranga, and Migori, in meeting the threshold for the KES 500 million funding for County Aggregation and Industrial Park Projects (CAIPs). The project, aimed at building on the value chain addition and agro-based manufacturing in cotton, nuts, pineapples, fish, livestock, sweet potatoes, sorghum, and sunflower, is going to be a game changer both in job creation and food security for the general socioeconomic growth of Homa Bay County residents.

Other counties in this group are Embu, Garissa, Kirinyaga, Meru, Mombasa, Nakuru, Nandi, Nyamira, Siaya, and Uasin Gishu. CAIPs will concentrate scarce fiscal and human capital in the counties, focusing efforts in a concentrated space, reducing transportation and communication costs, and hopefully creating a growth pole with economic multiples spilling over to surrounding areas. Spaces designed to contain companies designated to locate within them also contain hopes that they will function as learning districts – places where tacit knowledge is exchanged that will advance the level of value added in products and production processes, leading to increased efficiencies and profits, and thus securing jobs, food security as well as enhancing economic growth.

The idea behind the decentralization of Government into devolved units was a noble one. Its main intent was to ensure that every Kenyan citizen can have an equal chance at living a productive quality life. The devolved function of Government was envisioned to enhance the equitable distribution of wealth and increase access to social amenities, which are central to our collective goal of poverty reduction.

So we find ourselves in the current situation, where very few counties can be said to have figured out how to turn their natural resources into sustainable revenue generation sources. Additionally, out of 47 counties, less than a dozen have come up with tailor-made economic solutions that supplement the social welfare needs of their citizens. The question then becomes, how can we move from having Makueni County as the sole outstanding example of homemade economic solutions to making it a norm across the country? Of paramount importance is the need to attract long-term, sustainable investments into counties, and H. E Gladys Wanga this month spent a huge chunk of her duty time courting investors while at the same time benchmarking on the prospective investments.

Governor Wanga Courts Diplomatic Missions for Partnerships, Investment

With the national government leaving it free for county government to enter into bilateral talks with foreign missions as long as such talks do not compromise diplomatic relations with the respective countries, Homa Bay County Governor H.E Gladys Wanga has over time sought to lure the foreign missions to the county with intent to partner with them on various sectors including agriculture, healthcare, water and sanitation, infrastructure as well as capacity building.

The latest in this installment is the Iranian mission to Kenya. The governor held robust discussions with the Iranian Ambassador to Kenya HE Jafar Barmaki on partnership with Homa Bay in the areas of Agriculture, Health, Vocational Training, and Marine Technologies. While acknowledging that the relations between Kenya and the Islamic Republic of Iran have grown over the years despite the Islamic nations occasionally being



Governor Wanga sharing a light moment with Iranian ambassador HE Jafar Barmaki

at variance with the Western countries which are from Austria, the Netherlands, Japan, and the Kenya's leading foreign partners, the governor United Kingdom. This camaraderie has yielded expressed optimism that investments that the construction of ACAKORO Sports Academy benefit the people directly go beyond diplomatic in Ndhiwa by the Austrian investors, Dunea Water meanness, adding that Homa Bay County is still a Project in Karachuonyo by the Dutch embassy, and virgin county with arguably the greatest potential on the Yamaha Water treatment and supply project in the blue economy. The governor has in the recent Seka, Wang'chieng ward. past hosted ambassadors and heads of missions



A bilateral discussion between the county government of Homa Bay and the Iranian embassy in Kenya



Why not Oil Palm?

Uganda has achieved substitution of nearly nine percent of its annual vegetable oil imports and lifted thousands of smallholder farmers out of poverty, a decade and a half after launching oil palm growing in the Ssesse Island district of Kalangala. Some 1,850 smallholder growers are earning regular incomes from the sale of oil palm seed to OPUL, a joint venture between Kenya-based Bidco Oil and global palm oil behemoth Wilmar International, the government's private sector partner.

After registering success in Kalangala, the government of Uganda now wants to replicate the project in other poverty-stricken communities in the Lake Victoria Basin. There are plans to develop new plantations in Buvuma, where 900 hectares of a planned 5,000-ha plantation have been planted since January. Other areas are Mayuge, greater Masaka, and Sango Bay in southern Uganda. But across the lake from where this godsend investment lie is Kenya, and specifically Homa Bay County, with the same climatic conditions, weather patterns, topography, and soil type.

First conceived in the 1970s, oil palm growing in Uganda only gained traction after Oil Palm Uganda Limited (OPUL) came on board in 2003, under a \$100 million project sponsored by the International Fund for Agricultural Development IFAD.

Governor Gladys Wanga recently led a team of the Homabay county executive and assembly on an extremely enlightening visit to Ssesse Island in Uganda together with the leadership of Bidco Africa. They were hosted in Kalangala by Oil Palm Uganda Limited (OPUL) who have over the years

invested massively in growing nearly 1 Million Oil Palm trees creating massive wealth and jobs among the communities.

"The weather patterns and soil types are fairly similar around Lake Victoria and we are determined to discuss with our people the option of investing massively in the cultivation of oil palms and processing of palm oil with the effect of job and wealth creation," enthused the governor shortly after jetting back to the county.

The major social impact of oil palm on communities is not the amount of money it gives farmers but the regularity of income. With that, one can plan and save, which is not possible with many other crops.



Governor Wanga and her delegation during the benchmarking tour at OPUL

CLIMATE CHANGE: CABINET ESCALATES THE COUNTY'S RESOLVE ON CLIMATE CHANGE



The cabinet at a past sitting

In an unprecedented move towards Climate Change adaptability and resilience relevance, the Executive Committee approved the first-ever Homa Bay County Climate Action Plan (HCCAP) presented by the Department of Water, Irrigation, Sanitation, Environment, Energy, Forestry, and Climate Change. The plan is anchored on 7 key pillars: Disaster (Drought and Floods) Risk Management aimed at reducing risks to communities and infrastructure resulting from climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods; Food and Nutrition Security targeting increasing food and nutrition security by enhancing productivity and resilience of the agricultural sector while reducing Greenhouse Gas (GHG) emission through the adoption of low carbon technologies.

It also contains Water and the Blue Economy to enhance the resilience of the blue economy and water sector by ensuring adequate access to and efficient use of water for agriculture, manufacturing, domestic, wildlife, and other uses. Forestry, Wildlife, and Tourism aimed at increasing tree cover to 10% of the total land area in the County; rehabilitating degraded lands including rangelands, and increasing the resilience of wildlife; Health, Sanitation, and Human Settlement to mainstream climate change adaptation into the health sector and increase the resilience of human settlements, including improved solid waste management in

urban areas; Manufacturing impacted on by a scarcity of resources including water, electricity, and other inputs because of climate change; Inefficient energy use in the manufacturing sector (such as charcoal production and cement production) increases GHG emissions; and, Energy and transport to ensure an electricity supply mix based mainly on renewable energy that is resilient to climate change and promotes energy efficiency, thereby encourage the transition to clean cooking that reduces the demand for biomass.

The approval of this plan now headed to the County Assembly in line with the requirements of the law, increases the breadth of the County in pushing the climate change agenda, as part of the framework for the implementation of the aspirations of the GENOWA EN DONGRUOK manifesto. The plan is built on the first National Climate Change Action Plan (2018-2022) and is anchored on the provisions of the Homa Bay Climate Change Act 2022 and the Homa Bay County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP) III (2023 -2027). It will guide climate actions of the County Government up to the grassroots level, the private sector, civil society, and other actors as Homa Bay transitions to a low-carbon climate-resilient development pathway.

FINANCE: OWN SOURCE REVENUE TARGET WITHIN SIGHT

One of the key takeaways from the sixth revenue roundtable hosted by H. E Gladys Wanga, CBS Governor Homa Bay County at the county headquarters was how close her administration is to hitting the self-imposed target of KES 1 billion revenue collection. The Revenue Roundtable, a monthly engagement with all the county government's heads of department and sector leads was institutionalized by the governor to discuss the status of her administration's Own Source Revenue (OSR) regularly.

With a total of Ksh 103. 43 million collected within the month of April, the county government has now raked in Ksh 657.17 million as OSR as of 30th April 2023. This makes it just Ksh 300.78 million short of the Ksh 1 billion targets with two months to go.

Of the county revenue streams, health facilities continue to contribute the lion's share, leading the park at Ksh 29. 44 million, a show of confidence in the improvements the government has put in place within the healthcare, trade licenses, and cess collections, which all went cashless with the onset of the governor's reign.

The County Government of Homa Bay continues to reiterate the importance of Own Source Revenue as a means of cushioning us from the adversity sometimes occasioned by the delays in disbursement of the equitable share from the national treasury.

A sound revenue system is a critical prerequisite for the success of fiscal decentralization in Kenya. Adequate mobilization of own-source revenue (OSR) – income generated from local sources in the form of taxes, and charges – is key to improved provision of various public goods and services to eradicate poverty and achieve development goals for the county.

Strengthening OSR mobilization can improve fiscal autonomy through more predictable access to revenue. This would allow the county government to have greater ownership and control over its development agenda.



A revenue director making presentation during the latest revenue roundtable

WARD-BASED: MULTIPLE DEPARTMENTS OVERSEEING GRASSROOT PROJECTS

Health, Roads, Education, Others Doing People-Targeted Projects

The county government of Homa Bay is rolling out another round of ward-based projects for various sectors.

After the long rainy season of March and April, the County Department Of Roads is on a ward-based roads maintenance program, especially targeting those roads whose constructions were halted due to the rains or have been damaged in part by the heavy downpour, and in order to improve access to public health facilities, market centers, lakefront/beaches and general mobility for the public, the Department of Roads, Transport, Public Works and Infrastructure is spending Ksh 191.2 million for use in rehabilitating, maintaining, grading and graveling as well as carrying out minor drainage works on 52 road projects in 33 Wards across 8 Sub Counties.



As part of the continuing plans to improve health service delivery, the Department of Health is doing fencing of health facilities across the county, with some employing wired fences while others doing concrete fencing. This is expected to deter cases of loss of property as has been witnessed in the past where between 2015 to date there have been theft incidences, and property worth millions of shillings including those donated by Development Partners have been lost. Besides the fencing project, the department is also face-lifting some of the health centers.

The Department of Education has set aside funds aimed at improving learning conditions across the 856 EYE Centres in the County. It is going to acquire wooden chairs and tables for all the 85,600 ECDE learners in Homa Bay County. With Ksh. 80M set aside for this initiative, the county government anticipates that close to Ksh. 2M will roll over to carpenters in each of the Wards, thereby stimulating the economies of the local market chains. The furniture will be based on unempirical research, and help motivate the learners.

The County Department of Blue Economy and Fisheries has already done an inspection of fish ponds in readiness for fish feed distribution at all 8 sub-counties and piloted the distribution of fish feeds in Suba, Mbita, Ndihiwa, Rachuonyo East

and Rachuonyo South sub-counties. This follows the deliberations during the Aquaculture Day that was marked at Homa Bay, Tourist Hotel where fish farming was identified as the new frontier in economic empowerment, especially for the youth and women.

The Department of Agriculture and Livestock is doing a ward-based livestock vaccination exercise against anthrax and black quarter diseases. This targets goats, cattle, and sheep and the farmers are urged to avail their livestock for this exercise being carried out by the county ward extension officers. Further, the department is doing county-wide training of crop farmers on the African Army Worm and the Foul Army Worm.

As part of Governor Wanga's pledge of water for every two kilometers, the county department of water is on a robust mission to drill boreholes in every ward as well as open dams and water pans where appropriate. The department has already handed over sites for the construction of water projects for the Kanan water project, Atili Primary water project, Othoro water project, wire water project, and Kawakungu water project. The Dei River Dam Project at Onywera in Kakasingri-Ruma is almost complete with huge support from the state Department of Irrigation



ENVIRONMENT: COUNTY READYING FOR WED

The County Government of Homa Bay received the survey results done by the UN-HABITAT on solid waste management and further received the recommendations generated from the said survey. The objectives of the survey and the advisory thereof touched on the assessment of total Municipal Solid Waste (MSW) generated in Homa Bay County, assessment of household waste generation and composition, determination of per capita MSW generation rate, assessment of the proportion of MSW collected and managed in controlled facilities (i.e., recovery and disposal facilities), determination of plastic leakage into the environment, determination of total uncollected waste, and determination per capita of food waste as well as determination of recovery rate.

As part of addressing the environmental challenges revealed by the report, the County Department of Water Sanitation Irrigation Environment, Energy Forestry, and Climate Change is already on the build-up for World Environment Day on 5th June 2023. The World Environment Day is celebrated annually on the fifth June. The theme for this year is 'Beating Plastic Pollution'. To this end, the Department plans a series of meetings with different stakeholders on the 3rd and 4th of June to sensitize them to the impacts of plastic pollution, their roles and responsibilities on the same, and what actions we need them to undertake to assist the HBCG in fighting littering and plastic pollution. This will culminate in a cleanup exercise at the Homa Bay Town beachfront and pier on 5th June 2023.

As part to World Environment Day 2023, the county department also organized a dialogue forum to sensitize the stakeholders on plastic waste management and pollution in Homa Bay Municipality and to discuss how the private sector can help in keeping the town clean by providing litter bins in front of their business premises.

The county government led by Governor Gladys Wanga has in the recent past institutionalized monthly town cleaning. In the month of May, Deputy Governor Hon Oyugi Magwanga led a host of county officials, elected leaders, and locals in the town clean-up in Ndhiwa Municipality. A similar event was also conducted in Sindu town in Suba South where there had been reports of a cholera outbreak, a situation that has since been arrested amicably.



ECHOES FROM THE CITIZENS: THE PEOPLE'S VOICE

Finally, we came to ask you about your thoughts on what the government of Governor Gladys Wanga is doing and your sincere feelings about her programs and projects for the people. There were loads of your feedback but here are just a sample.

"That from Kowuor deep in Kanyaluo one can now easily access the highways of Kisumu and Kisii is something to behold. Reaching Oriang', or Adiedo or Sae has never been quicker. The ward-based road projects that opened Kowuor to the world was God-sent." – Evance Ochieng', a bodaboda operator from Kanyaluo, Karachuonyo.

"With this tricycle, am as good as owning a car. I get to my shed quicker and most conveniently. I must thank the county government to remembering us with these items. We can now move." – Ochiel, a PwD and cobbler in Homa Bay Town.



"Sena Health Center is now even better than the Mbita Sub County Hospital. We now no longer need to travel to the mainland for medication. There's nothing we lack here and the staff have also been equally good." – Ochieng Jim, resident of Mfangano, Suba Central.

"Sindo never used to be this organized. Wachana na mambo ya cholera, am talking about the done paths where we can now move easily from one side of the market to another." – Everline Caltex, trader and resident of Sindo, Suba South.

"Our biggest challenge here at Manga has always been water and access roads to our only two schools, Manga Primary and Secondary. Imagine the governor is doing for us the road while she has also brought for us people who have done us water tanks and water!" – Salome Nyaradi, resident of Manga, Kagan, Rangwe.

"Connecting Kodiera to Kobodo is every Kologi resident dream. It is now possible. The county did for us the road through Ndere and now we don't struggle." – Alphons Owira, farmer at Ongeng, Ndhiwa Sub County.



Governor Wangari, Roads Minister Danish Onyango, Spokesperson Rachel Ogutu and Homa Bay Ward MCA Monoflorita Ondiek pose with the management of Renegade Air. The airline will resume Kabunde-Wilson flights from June 2023

CONNECTIVITY: OPENING THE COUNTY TO THE WORLD

The county government of Homa Bay has been on charm offensive to lure transport providers to robustly invest in connecting the county to the region and beyond. Over the past few months, there have been talks of rejuvenating and reinvigorating the lake transport with plans to re-establish the lake transport between Homa Bay, Kisumu and Siaya counties already at advance stages.

The piers and landing sites at Kendu Bay, Homa Bay Town, Mbita and Sena are already being renovated jointly by the county government and Kenya Ports Authority. This will see a return of busy passenger and cargo steamer shuttles between the once vibrant ports.

Further, the county government through Governor Gladys Wanga has hammered a deal with the Renegade Air to resume daily passenger flights between Kabunde Airstrip and Wilson Airport in Nairobi. This program, to begin June 10 2023, will see the airline fly straight to the city thus saving Homa Bay County air passengers the agony of connecting through Kisumu.

Homa Bay County boasts three other airstrips, albeit they all only have dust runways. These are Mfangano, Rusinga and Ruma. As part of boosting tourism in the county, the county government is set to upgrade these runways to help attract direct flights.

