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SPEECH BY H.E DR. JULIUS M. MALOMBE, GOVERNOR, KITUI COUNTY, DURING THE SIGNING OF MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING (MOU) BETWEEN THE COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KITUI (CGoK) AND THE SOUTH EASTERN KENYA UNIVERSITY (SEKU) AT TANA-ATHI BOARDROOM ON TUESDAY 12TH MAY, 2015 AT 10.00 A.M.

Introduction

Good morning ladies and gentlemen, It's my great honour and pleasure today to be here with you to witness and celebrate the County Government of Kitui (CGOK) and the South Eastern Kenya University (SEKU) collaborative milestone to mutually offer attachments/placement for students from SEKU pursuing various academic programmes in the field of Health Sciences at the Kitui County Referral Hospital.

CGoK/SEKU Collaborative Benefits

Ladies and gentlemen, the collaboration between SEKU and the County Government of Kitui is expected to:

1. Facilitate the training and capacity building of medical students as well as other personnel
2. Engage in health research whose findings will inform and facilitate relevant health interventions and innovations
3. Attract experienced medical staff including consultants and specialists in the health sector who will provide care to Kitui people
4. Complement the health staff and in some cases reduce the necessity for the county to spend money hiring various staff cadres

Kitui County Vision for Health

The collaboration will help the county government of Kitui to actualize its health vision which is a "county with healthy residents that embrace preventive health and have access to affordable and equitable healthcare services". It also resonates well with our county vision of being a prosperous county with vibrant rural and urban economies whose people enjoy high quality of life.

This collaboration on training health personnel and improving health is a fitting reminder of Mahatma Gandhi's believe that "***It is health that is wealth and not pieces of gold and silver***". It's for this reason that

the county has prioritised health as one of the drivers of the county's economic prosperity. This means that the county can only realise prosperity if its population is healthy. Further, a healthy population will increase the county's productivity, and minimise costs incurred on treatment, time take to seek for treatment and by the patient scare givers and transport cost to the facility.

Access to Affordable and Equitable Health Care Services

Ladies and gentlemen, Access to affordable and equitable health care services is essential in ensuring a health population. According to the World Health Organisation (WHO) standards, one should live within a 5km radius to the nearest health facility or be able to reach a health facility within 30 minutes using locally available transport means. Based on the population parameter, Kitui County requires to be served by a total of 165 equitably distributed healthcare facilities. However, when the health function was formally transferred to the county Government of Kitui through the Transition Authority's (TA's) gazette notice of August 9th, 2013, the county inherited:

- A total of 230 health facilities, the highest in the Republic of Kenya, as indicated in the master list of facilities in the District Health Information System (DHIS).
- The bulk of the facilities the county inherited are however concentrated in certain areas and are therefore inequitably distributed.

The inequitable distribution of the health facilities has created marginalization contrary to the spirit of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. For example:

Sub- County	Ward	Underserve area	Distance to nearest facilities	Time taken walking to the nearest Facility
Kitui west	Mutonguni	Yalatani	15Km	5hrs
Kitui East	Endau/ Malalani	Twambui	18Km	6Hrs
Kitui Rural	Yatta/Kwa	Mwakini	14Km	4hrs,

	Vonza			30Mins
Mwingi North	Ngomeni	Kasiluni	18Km	6Hrs
Mwingi Central	Waita/ Endui	Mwambui	18Km	6Hrs
Kitui South	Mutha/ Mathima	Katene	23Km	7hrs

- Out of the 230, nine (9) of the inherited facilities are temporarily non-operational due to uncoordinated staff transfers during the transition period. In some of them, temporary arrangement to serve residents by getting medical staff to come for some days in a week have been put in place as a stop gap measure pending the planned recruitment and posting of permanent staff during the next financial year.
- In order to promote equity in accessing health facilities for people in all areas of the county, the County government plans to operationalize additional 90 facilities at an average of 22 facilities per year over the next four financial years
- Amongst the facilities planned to be operationalized, 23 are complete, 39 are incomplete (courtesy of past CDF and LATF funding initiatives)
- The county government will however construct 28 new facilities in areas that do not have either complete or incomplete CDF and LATF financed existing facilities and are grossly underserved
- A total of 50 building structures that were reportedly put up to serve as health facilities through CDF and LATF funding are not proposed for operationalization after rationalization analysis by county health staff since their operationalization will enhance over-concentration and marginalization we seeking to cure. 15 of these are complete facilities while 35 are incomplete.
- Consultations with the elected and local community leaders will be held in due course on the best options for utilizing these building structures to deliver other equally desirable services to the people of this county.

After operationalizing the 90 health facilities across the county in four phases in the next four years, the population living within 5km radius of a health facility will increase to 97% in all the sub-counties and wards of the county. The remaining population comprising of 3% will

however also access health care services between a distance of **5-6.5 Km** and be able to reach the facilities within 30 minutes. Due to other complementary initiatives such as ambulance services, mobile clinics and improvement of roads and mobile telephony network connectivity. The emerging picture will be as indicated in the table below:

Sub county	Area in sq. kms	Population (2009)	Pop. Currently living 5kms radius (2015)	Pop. To be Within 5kms radius after rationalization			
				phase 1 (2016)	phase 2 (2017)	Phase 3 (2018)	Phase 4 (2019)
Mwingi North	4821.6	139,967	85.5	89.33	90.85	92.37	96.2
Mwingi West	1082.9	103,774	95.8	95.8	95.8	97	98.2
Mwingi Central	4140.6	141,207	84.8	86.7	87.7	92.4	98.4
Kitui West	667.2	102,314	98	98.3	98.6	98.9	98.9
Kitui Central	667	131,715	95.6	95.8	96.8	96.8	98
Kitui Rural	1560.8	104,443	71.4	77.8	77.8	84.5	96.8
Kitui East	5119.7	123,239	62.7	74.6	83.1	88.2	96.9
Kitui South	6133.7	166,050	51.2	58.5	78.6	912	96.8
Total		1,012,709	80.625	84.603	88.656	195.27	97.52

Focus on Promotive and Preventive Health Care

Ladies and gentlemen, Good health is not a function of numerous health facilities but an outcome of our lifestyles and the environment we live in. Therefore, building of more health facilities is not a sustainable way of improving the health of our people. Consequently, the county government of Kitui will in future focus more on promotive and preventive health care to confront the current challenge posed by communicable and non- communicable diseases resulting into double burden of diseases. This health paradigm shift is what has come to be known **wellness orientation** as opposed to the **traditional medical orientation**. The wellness approach to health emphasis is on promotive and preventive health care whilst the traditional medical approach pays

little or no attention to prevention of illnesses and focuses more on *'sickness, hospital attendance and drugs treatment'*. It is from the modern wellness orientation that the Kitui county government's ***'Pamoja Tujikinga Magonjwa'*** Integrated programme was born. The programme is anchored on the Kitui County Health Policy 2014-2030.

County Government of Kitui Commitment

Ladies and gentlemen, my government assures SEKU leadership of our commitment to our obligations as stated in the MOU or additional obligations which might arise from time to time and agreed upon by both parties. As a county where SEKU is located, our government will render support to SEKU to enable the institution to realize its vision of becoming *'A globally competitive Centre of Excellence in Teaching, Research Innovation and Service'*.

In this regard, it worthy to note the county has collaborated or assisted SEKU in the following aspects:

- Kwa-Vonza –SEKU road
- Kwa-Vonza –SEKU Streetlight
- Bursaries for some of the SEKU students who hail from the county through the pro-poor education support programme
- Consultancy services in our sand dams programme
- Collaboration in mining related research and related potential investments; and
- Lately the collaboration we are initiating today through the signing the MOU today to facilitate the training of medical students at our Kitui County Referral Hospital.

Long live Kitui County!

Long live South Eastern Kenya University

**THANK YOU VERY MUCH, AND
GOD BLESS YOU ALL.**