

MADARAKA DAY CELEBRATIONS SPEECH BY H.E. PROF. HILLARY BARCHOK, EGH, GOVERNOR OF BOMET COUNTY HELD IN MERIGI PRIMARY SCHOOL GROUNDS IN MERIGI WARD, BOMET EAST SUB-COUNTY

63 years ago, on the first day of June 1963, our founding fathers stood tall and declared that the destiny of this great nation — Kenya — would henceforth be shaped by its own people. They dared to dream. They dared to sacrifice. They dared to build. That act of courage, of self-determination, of Madaraka — self-governance — is what we gather here today to honour, celebrate, and renew our commitment to.

Today, as we join the rest of this great nation in marking this historic occasion. I want to sincerely express my warmest wishes to His Excellency the President of Kenya and Commander of the Kenya Defense Forces, Dr. William Samoei Ruto as he leads the nation in celebrating this momentous occasion in Wajir County. I also acknowledge the Chair of Council of Governors H.E FCPA Ahmed Abdullahi Jiir for accepting to host the entire Kenya in his county which resonates with his steadfast leadership in chairing the 48 governments.

To the people of Bomet County — from Sotik where factories hum with the promise of value to Konoin the green crown of Bomet. From Bomet Central where commerce and community converge and radiate, to Chepalungu our bold and forested land reminding us every day that we are just stewards of nature. And finally to Bomet East where the morning sun first touches the highlands and the spirit of our people burns as bright as the dawn while breaking over the rolling green hills. I say to you today happy Madaraka Day! We are moving forward and we are moving together as five verses of the same song and five chapters of one proud story called Bomet.

This year, our national celebrations are guided by the deeply resonant theme, ***“Education, Skills and the Future.”*** This theme reminds us that true self-rule is not merely about political independence; it is about equipping our youth with the tools to conquer the global digital and economic landscapes. In Bomet County, we have firmly placed learning, innovation, and skills development at the center of our development agenda. True freedom in the 21st century means ensuring our young people are highly skilled, employable, and globally competitive. To achieve this, my administration has prioritized strategic collaborations that directly uplift our educational and technical institutions.

In our efforts to empower the youth through digital literacy, we have partnered with the Safaricom Foundation to renovate and equip an ICT center at Kaplong Vocational Training Center (VTC). This facility has successfully become a vital digital center for our youths to learn and gain essential digital skills. Furthermore, we are working hand-in-hand with the national government to deliver on the Mulot ICT hub, a flagship project which is currently at 60% completion. Once complete, this hub will profoundly shape the digital skills of our youths and position Bomet as a technology epicenter. We also extend our sincere thanks to the Safaricom

Foundation for the Kimawit South Rift Digital Hub, which was successfully delivered in partnership with other dedicated stakeholders to expand our digital footprint.

Beyond digital infrastructure, we recognize that true education must be inclusive and accessible to all, regardless of economic background. A number of needy secondary school students have benefited from our full and partial scholarships over the years, enabling them to realize their dreams despite the economic challenges they may have had. By safeguarding the education of our vulnerable children, we are breaking the cycle of poverty and preparing a generation that will lead Bomet into a prosperous future.

Our commitment to skills and the future extends beyond the traditional classroom into the arena of talent development, particularly in sports. We have fully operationalized the Tegat Athletics Camp to give a meaningful platform to our youth to develop and sharpen their talents. Moving forward, we are going to work with other partners and stakeholders to ensure this facility places our county on the national and global maps in terms of sports, especially athletics. As we celebrate this Madaraka Day, let us remember that the future belongs to the prepared. By investing in education, digital skills, and the diverse talents of our youth, we are honoring the sacrifices of our freedom fighters and ensuring that our independence translates into tangible economic prosperity. Let us remain united, peaceful, and focused on building a greater Bomet. Thank you very much, God bless Bomet County, and God bless the Republic of Kenya.

Distinguished Guests, Fellow Citizens of Bomet

Allow me to now turn to the remarkable strides we have made in the Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries sector which is the backbone of our county's economy and the foundation of our people's livelihoods.

In the area of animal health, the department achieved a key milestone through the dipping of over 1,000 cattle in Chebunyo as part of deliberate strategies aimed at controlling ticks. This intervention is protecting our livestock from tick-borne diseases and supporting our farmers in maintaining healthy, productive herds.

During the same period, the department provided targeted support to our coffee sub-sector. Farmers in Kapsimbiri, Merigi Ward in Bomet East, as well as those in Chebirbelek in Kapletundo Ward and Lelboinet in Kongasis, benefited from coffee distribution programmes. In total, farmers were supported with 15,000 certified coffee seedlings to improve productivity and strengthen long-term coffee farming across the county. This is a direct investment in the future of our farmers.

To further safeguard our livestock sector, the department implemented a subsidized vaccination programme at a cost of only KSh 50 per cow to control the dreaded Foot and Mouth Disease.

This intervention is reducing the spread of this serious livestock disease and encouraging our farmers to vaccinate their animals, thereby safeguarding their incomes and household food security. Healthy animals mean a thriving economy.

To strengthen crop production and improve household nutrition, the department distributed 750,000 biofortified sweet potato vines targeting no fewer than 2,500 farmers across the county. Biofortified sweet potatoes are important in supporting better nutrition while also improving agricultural resilience. This initiative benefits both farming livelihoods and the health of our communities.

Ladies and gentlemen Kapkwen Town has already established itself as one of the most thriving and rapidly growing commercial centres within Bomet Town Municipality and as the host of one of the most vibrant livestock markets in the South Rift. The New Kapkwen Livestock Saleyard takes this legacy to an entirely new level. It represents our continued commitment as a county government to strengthen the livestock value chain, empower our farmers, and create more opportunities for economic growth.

This modern livestock trading facility, located in Kapkwen Town in Nyangores Ward of Chepalungu Sub-County, will play a key role in organizing and centralizing livestock trade while improving market access for our farmers and traders. It will also provide a fair, transparent, and competitive environment for buyers and sellers alike, while enhancing revenue collection for the county.

Beyond trade, the saleyard will strengthen animal disease surveillance through on-site veterinary inspection and the issuance of movement permits. This means better biosecurity, better standards, and better outcomes for all those engaged in livestock trade. This facility is expected to boost livestock trade in the area, improve incomes for farmers, and contribute to the overall growth of the livestock sector in Bomet County.

Fellow citizens, the cooperative movement has always been central to our county's economic architecture, and we have been deliberate in strengthening it.

I am delighted to announce that the Cooperative Development Policy has been approved by the County Assembly and gazette. I will formally launch this policy very soon. This landmark policy will enhance the development of our cooperative sub-sector by ensuring growth, good governance, and seamless support through county government funding. It lays the foundation for a more structured, accountable, and prosperous cooperative movement in Bomet.

I am also pleased to report that we recently received 9 coolers from the national government in support of our county value addition initiatives. These coolers will directly benefit our farmers by preserving the quality of produce and adding value to agricultural outputs before they reach the market.

Under the Neighbourhood Value Chain Development Programme, NAVCDP, our county has been implementing transformative interventions across all wards with a clear development objective: to increase market participation and value addition for target farmers in select value chains. The priority value chains are Dairy, Chicken, Irish Potatoes, Avocadoes, and Pyrethrum.

On farmer capacity building and e-voucher support, we have mobilized and strengthened 4,600 Common Interest Groups and Vulnerable and Marginalized Groups enrolled in NAVCDP. A total of 77,640 farmers have been trained on climate-smart agricultural technologies. Through Community Driven Development Committees at ward level, 125 demonstrations have been completed across all value chains and wards, with KSh 8,692,000 cumulatively disbursed to wards for the procurement of demonstration materials.

Further, 180,000 farmers have been registered and are now able to access subsidized government inputs, including fertilizers, through the e-voucher system. This is digital inclusion in action — ensuring no farmer is left behind.

On cooperative-level climate-smart value chain investments, 30 cooperatives have been supported with Enterprise Development Grants amounting to KSh 42,593,250 disbursed so far. This includes KSh 22,625,080 for the sustainable development of the dairy value chain through improved livestock feeds and breeds — covering the procurement of Juncao grass, liquid nitrogen, 70 AI tanks, 7,500 semen straws for improved breeding, 5 silage balers, and 6 milking machines for farmer demonstrations. Additionally, KSh 19,968,170 has been disbursed to support digital cattle identification for traceability and the vaccination of Foot and Mouth Disease — with an impressive 155,257 cattle vaccinated across all wards, benefiting 54,839 farmers.

Under the SACCO support component, one SACCO per ward has been identified and supported. Inclusion grants of KSh 21.3 million have been disbursed to all 25 SACCOs to assist them in member mobilization, registration, purchase of furniture, stationery, and ICT equipment, as well as payment of bookkeepers. A total of 18,256 members have been registered, all SACCOs have been supported with automation, and KSh 7,850,000 in Financial Inclusion Matching Grants has been disbursed to 7 SACCOs to boost their lending capacity. An additional KSh 10,300,000 has been approved for disbursement to 12 more SACCOs.

On farmer-led irrigation development, the Nogirwet Irrigation Scheme has been approved and is ready for tendering at an estimated cost of KSh 18 million, which will bring an additional 109 households covering 45 hectares under irrigation. Additionally, 40 farm ponds of 300 cubic metres each have already been excavated in Kiprerer Ward as part of a broader programme targeting 16 wards in the lower parts of the county.

On market infrastructure, the Berur Avocado Aggregation Centre in Kembu Ward has received concept approval and is at the feasibility analysis stage. This facility is expected to cost approximately KSh 40 million and will aggregate up to 14,500 tonnes of avocado annually — a

major boost for our avocado farmers. Furthermore, 182 agripreneurs have been recruited at sub-location level to assist ward officers in farmer training, cooperative mobilization, and registration of farmer data in the national farmer information system. This is agriculture going digital.

Fellow Residents of Bomet,

The efficient delivery of services to our people depends on a professional, motivated, and well-structured public service. Our Department responsible for Public Service has been implementing a series of reforms to build exactly that.

The county has successfully coordinated and published recruitment advertisements across various departments to address staffing gaps and improve service delivery in critical sectors. We have also undertaken a comprehensive review and updating of our staff establishment to align staffing levels, designations, and organizational structures with approved schemes of service and operational needs.

Career progression guidelines have been reviewed and harmonized to ensure compliance with public service regulations, enhance employee career growth, and improve staff motivation and succession planning. County staff have been trained on Human Resource Information Systems — HRIS and GHRIS — to enhance efficiency in personnel management, payroll administration, leave management, and employee data management.

We have continued the adoption and implementation of Government Human Resource Information Systems and are supporting the transition towards integrated e-salary and payroll management systems. Employee records are being improved and digitized through continuous updating of HR databases and integration with government HR systems. Human resource policy development — including a human resource manual and staff deployment policy — is also progressing well.

Validation and harmonization of employee records, job designations, and payroll data are ongoing to ensure accuracy and compliance with national government HR standards. These reforms are not bureaucratic exercises — they are investments in the people who serve the people of Bomet.

Distinguished guests, as I reflect on all that we have achieved and all that is still underway, I am filled with a deep sense of purpose. The work we are doing in every sector — from the farms of Chepalungu to the cooperative boardrooms across our wards — is transforming Bomet County into a place of opportunity, dignity, and prosperity.

On this Madaraka Day, we renew our commitment to the people of Bomet. We commit to keep working. We commit to keep investing. And we commit to keep delivering.

Ladies and Gentlemen

The world is changing at a speed no previous generation has ever witnessed. Artificial Intelligence (AI), digital finance, e-governance, and the data economy are no longer the future — they are the present. A county government that is not digital is a county government that is falling behind. And Bomet County is not falling behind.

Over the past years, our Department of ICT has continued to play a critical and transformative role in advancing our digital agenda — and the results are visible in how we collect revenue, how we serve patients, how we engage our citizens, and how we plan for tomorrow. On revenue and service delivery, we have successfully implemented the Integrated County Revenue Management System — BometPay — a modern, transparent, and accountable platform for revenue collection that has tightened our financial systems and reduced leakages. In our hospitals, we have rolled out TaifaCare across all facilities, digitizing patient management and improving the quality and speed of healthcare delivery. When a patient walks into a Bomet County hospital today, their information, their history, and their care are managed on a modern digital platform. That is the standard we are setting.

On citizen engagement and open governance, we have embraced Digital Public Goods by developing the Bomet Public Grievance Redress platform and a Projects Dashboard — tools that allow our residents to engage their government, track development projects, and hold us accountable in real time. Transparency is not just a value we preach — we have built it into our systems.

On infrastructure, we have strengthened our digital backbone and expanded connectivity across the county to support these services and power the next generation of innovations. But perhaps the most exciting announcement in this space is this: the County Government has acquired 50 acres of land for the establishment of the Mulot ICT Hub Centre of Excellence. This facility will be a game-changer. It will position Bomet County as a regional leader in technology, digital skills, and talent development. It will be a space where our young people learn to code, innovate, build startups, and compete in the global digital economy without ever having to leave Bomet County. The future of our youth is digital, and we are building them the infrastructure to own that future.

Our digital transformation journey is well underway — and we will not stop until every service, every system, and every citizen of Bomet County is connected to a smarter, faster, and more responsive county government.

Fellow Citizens

A county that leaves no one behind is a county that truly thrives. It is for this reason that our Department of Gender, Culture and Social Services continues to make significant strides in promoting inclusive empowerment programmes aimed at transforming lives, strengthening communities, and creating sustainable opportunities for vulnerable groups across Bomet County.

Through a deliberate partnership with Kindred Hearts Alive International and the Jiinue Programme, the department continues to implement impactful community-based initiatives focused on skills development, financial empowerment, entrepreneurship, and social inclusion — with a special focus on widows, widowers, and Persons Living with Disabilities.

One of our ongoing milestone initiatives is the three-month training programme for widows and widowers in Tarakwa. This programme is equipping beneficiaries with practical skills and knowledge that can improve their livelihoods, promote self-reliance, and create sustainable economic opportunities. Participants are gaining valuable exposure to entrepreneurship, financial management, and income-generating activities — all aimed at improving household stability and building economic independence from the ground up.

At the same time, in Konoin Sub-County, the Department of Gender, Culture and Social Services, in collaboration with the Jiinue Programme, successfully conducted two-day training for Persons Living with Disabilities beginning in Boito Ward. This initiative will continue across other wards within the sub-county. The training focused on empowering participants through financial literacy, business development skills, and economic empowerment programmes designed to strengthen their capacity for self-sufficiency and active participation in community development.

These initiatives are not charity. They are a statement of belief — a belief that every person in Bomet County, regardless of their circumstances, deserves the chance to live with dignity, contribute to society, and build a better future.

I wish to take this opportunity to make a special appeal to members of the public. I urge you to ensure that Persons Living with Disabilities within your households and communities are registered with the relevant government agencies. Registration is the gateway to government services, empowerment opportunities, support programmes, and other essential interventions aimed at improving their welfare and quality of life. If you know someone who has not been registered, help them. That act of kindness can change a life.

Through partnerships, community engagement, and empowerment-driven programmes, the County Government of Bomet remains firmly committed to building stronger, more inclusive, and self-sustaining communities — communities where every individual is given the opportunity to grow, thrive, and contribute meaningfully to the development of our great county.

Together, we are creating pathways for empowerment, inclusion, resilience, and sustainable community development across every ward, every sub-county, and every corner of Bomet County.

Ladies and Gentlemen

A county that works for its people is a county that stays lit — literally and figuratively. Under our Department of Trade, Energy, Tourism, Industrialization and Innovation, we have been extending our infrastructure reach to ensure that our markets, trading centres, and public spaces are safe, vibrant, and accessible — day and night.

I am pleased to report that the county government has installed floodlights across key commercial and public spaces in Merigi Ward, bringing light, security, and renewed economic activity to our communities. The following centres have been equipped with modern floodlighting:

Bukacha Shopping Centre, Kiromwok Shopping Centre, Tendonok Shopping Centre, Chepkositonik Shopping Centre, Merigi Market — where two floodlights have been installed — Molem Shopping Centre, Kiptogoch Shopping Centre, Tamason, Burgei — at the Kamukunji grounds — Bomet Stage, and Belgut.

This is not merely an infrastructure project. When we light up a market, we extend the hours of business for our traders. When we light up a public space, we enhance the security of our residents. When we light up a shopping centre, we signal to investors and entrepreneurs that Bomet County is open for business — morning, afternoon, and long after the sun has set.

These floodlights represent our commitment to ensuring that every corner of Bomet County benefits from the county government's investments, and that our people can go about their daily economic activities in a safe and well-lit environment.

The Great People of Bomet

The County Government remains committed to enhancing connectivity and improving transport infrastructure across our county, and the progress we are recording on the ground is testament to that commitment.

So far, significant progress has been made in the construction and rehabilitation of roads across all our sub-counties. In Chepalungu Sub-County, 17.5 kilometres of roads have been completed. Bomet Central has achieved 29 kilometres, while Konoin has recorded an impressive 30 kilometres. In Bomet East, 31 kilometres have been completed, and Sotik Sub-County has achieved 25 kilometres.

When we build a road, we do not simply lay tarmac or grade murram. We connect a farmer to a market. We connect a mother to a hospital. We connect a child to a school. Every kilometre of road constructed in Bomet County is a kilometre of opportunity opened up for our people.

In addition to road construction, key bridge projects are also progressing well across the county. In Chepalungu Sub-County, the construction of the 48-metre Chepkosa–Tilangok Bridge is ongoing and is expected to greatly improve movement and accessibility in the area once completed. In Sotik Sub-County, the Etyet ab Tindinyek Bridge in Kipsonoi Ward is now 90 percent complete, bringing us ever closer to providing safer and more reliable transport for the residents of that area.

We are also proud to report that the Targambei Bridge and Kolongei Bridge in Konoin Sub-County have been completed and are already in use by the public. These are not just bridges — they are lifelines that were long awaited by the communities they serve. Furthermore, the Chelelach Box Culvert in Siongiroi Ward, Chepalungu Sub-County, is another important infrastructure investment aimed at improving accessibility and drainage within the region.

These projects are designed to improve connectivity, boost economic activities, ease transportation, and enhance the delivery of services across every corner of Bomet County.

Ladies and gentlemen, we are building a county that works — a county that is physically connected, economically integrated, and socially united. Together, we are building a stronger, more connected, and more prosperous Bomet for all.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Good health is the foundation upon which every other achievement is built. A people that is healthy is a people that can work, learn, build, and dream. It is for this reason that the County Government of Bomet has made healthcare one of its most deliberate and sustained areas of investment — and the results speak for themselves.

Since devolution, we have nearly doubled the number of health facilities in Bomet County — from 90 facilities to over 163 today. We have completed 51 capital projects across all five sub-counties and all 25 wards, with more than 10 projects currently under active construction. Every dispensary we build every maternity wing we open, every theatre we equip — these are acts of self-determination. These are a people deciding that their health matters.

Allow me to walk you through what we have delivered across the county.

In Bomet Central, the Kapkoros Sub-County Hospital has been completed. Maternity wings have been constructed at Masese, Mugango, Silibwet, Segutiet, and Tarakwa facilities, and a WASH Hub has been established at Bomet Health Centre, alongside works at Njerian.

In Bomet East, major upgrades have been undertaken at Longisa County Referral Hospital, and the Sitotwet, Belgut, and Irwaga facilities have been operationalized to bring services closer to the people.

In Chepalungu, new dispensaries have been constructed at Kapkesosio and Chelemei/Kibisoronik. A theatre and X-ray facility at Sigor Sub-County Hospital are currently underway. The Ndamichonik facility has been renovated, Saunet constructed, and a maternity wing added at Cheboyo.

In Konoin, new dispensaries have been established at Kapsengere and Kirimose. Chepchabas has been equipped, Kiptulwa extended, Cheboet constructed, and Keronjo commissioned — bringing quality care to communities that previously had to travel long distances for basic services.

In Sotik, the inpatient wards at Ndanai Sub-County Hospital are now fully operational. The Rongena laboratory has been commissioned, and consultation rooms at Chebilat are in place.

Ladies and gentlemen, we have not stopped at infrastructure. We have been equally deliberate in expanding the range of specialist healthcare services available to the people of Bomet. Services now available or actively being developed include Orthopaedics, Psychiatry, Oncology, Pediatric Oncology, Obstetrics, General Surgery, Neurosurgery, and Family Medicine. No mother should have to travel hours for emergency obstetric care. No child should be denied specialist treatment simply because of where they were born.

This vision is embodied in our flagship project — the Dr. Joyce Laboso Memorial Mother and Child Wellness Centre. This centre is more than a health facility. It is a monument to one of the greatest daughters of Bomet, a promise kept to every mother in this county, and a landmark that brings Obstetrics, Pediatric Oncology, and Family Medicine under one roof. We honour her memory by building the county she believed in.

On innovation, Bomet County is also embracing the future of healthcare delivery through telemedicine. In partnership with the World Tele-Health Initiative, we have deployed telemedicine robots at Ndanai Sub-County Hospital, St. Clare's Kaplong, and the Mother and Child Wellness Centre. These robots connect our patients in remote areas to specialists in real time — breaking the barrier of distance in healthcare once and for all.

On emergency medical response, we have established a Centralized Emergency Coordination Centre, and our county-owned ambulance fleet is now operating 24 hours a day, 7 days a week, in collaboration with disaster management and ambulance services. When a life is on the line, Bomet County responds.

The numbers tell a powerful story. Our county now has 1,376 health professionals and 2,469 Community Health Promoters working at the grassroots level. Most significantly, all four core

mortality indicators in Bomet County are below the Kenya national average. We are not just keeping up — we are leading the way.

Through our Barchok Care Medical Camps, we are reaching thousands of underserved residents with free medical services right in their communities. We have also integrated Social Health Authority registration into our outreach programmes, ensuring no resident is excluded from national health insurance. I am extremely proud to report that Bomet County currently stands second nationally in SHA registration, with a coverage rate of 76 percent. That is a testament to our people, our health workers, and our community health promoters.

Looking ahead, in the Financial Year 2026/2027, we will complete the Bomet Town Comprehensive Hospital at Level IV, finalize the Sigor Sub-County Hospital Theatre and X-Ray facility, and upgrade Togat, Siongiroi, and Sotik Health Centres to Level IV under KDSP II. We will also strengthen medicine supply chains through our collaboration with KEMSA and recruit additional health workers to address existing shortages.

The health of our people is not a campaign promise. It is a daily commitment — and we will not rest until every resident of Bomet County has access to quality, dignified, and affordable healthcare.

Ladies and Gentlemen

Growing county needs growing infrastructure — modern markets for our traders, decent housing for our families, better roads for our towns and world-class facilities for our youth. Through the Department of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, the County Government of Bomet is delivering on all fronts.

On our ESP Modern Markets programme, we are constructing modern, secure, and conducive trading spaces for traders and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises across the county. Construction of the ESP Modern Markets at Kapkwen and Koiwa is currently at the foundation stage, with steady progress being recorded in line with project standards and implementation timelines. At Sotik, works are 20 percent complete. Mulot Market is 50 percent complete. And I am particularly pleased to report that Chebunyo Market is now 85 percent complete — very nearly ready to serve the traders and businesses of that community. These markets will transform the way business is conducted across our county — organized, modern, and dignified trading environments for the engine of our local economy.

On housing, I am delighted to report that the Bomet Affordable Housing Project is now 98 percent complete, comprising a total of 220 housing units. Decent, affordable housing is not a luxury — it is a right, and we are delivering it. The Phase Two of the project, located in Sotik Sub-County, is currently at the foundation stage and will deliver a total of 596 housing units

upon completion. When fully realized, this project will transform the lives of hundreds of families across our county, giving them a place they can truly call home.

On transport and connectivity, construction works at the Itembe Airstrip are ongoing and currently at the foundation stage. This facility will improve connectivity and open up Bomet County to greater investment, movement, and economic activity. We are building a county that is accessible not just by road, but by air.

On sports infrastructure, I am glad to announce that the construction and development of the Kyogong Kipchamba Stadium is set to commence very soon following a successful groundbreaking ceremony and the official handover of the site to the contractor. This stadium will be more than a sports facility — it will be a source of pride, a home for our athletes, and a venue that puts Bomet County on the regional sporting map.

Finally, our urban roads construction and upgrading programme is progressing at an impressive pace, with approximately 70 percent of the works already completed. When finished, this programme will significantly improve accessibility, mobility, and the overall urban infrastructure within our towns — creating a cleaner, better-connected, and more business-friendly environment for residents, investors, and visitors alike.

Ladies and gentlemen, what we are building today are not just structures of brick and mortar. We are building the foundations of a transformed Bomet County — a county where our people live better, trade better, move better, and dream bigger.

Fellow Residents

Climate change is no longer a distant threat — it is a present reality that our farmers feel in every failed rain season, that our communities feel in every drying spring, and that our children will inherit if we do nothing today. The County Government of Bomet has chosen to act — and through the Fund for Local Climate Adaptation, FLLoCA, we are taking bold, measurable steps to build a climate-resilient Bomet.

Under FLLoCA Cycle 1, we have delivered on multiple fronts. On water infrastructure, we have reached 100 percent completion on critical projects, including the solarization of Bomet Town Water Supply and the drilling and equipping of high-yield boreholes at Olbobo in Kiprerer, Chepkolon in Merigi — right here where we stand today — and Akshar Kibiti in Chemagel. Clean water is not a privilege. It is a right, and we are delivering it. We have also fully protected 9 natural springs, including Arap Togom in Embomos Ward, Oinap Tibik and Oinap Werik in Silibwet Township and Singorwet wards respectively, and Birir Bei in Kutarajiwa Ward — securing reliable water for more than 4,200 households across the county.

On agro-resilience, we distributed over 100,000 avocado and mango seedlings to 4,560 direct beneficiaries, boosting food security and diversifying household incomes. On aquaculture, we established 24 community fish-farming projects across all sub-counties, with fish now nearing maturity in several ponds. We have already sampled fish from Rongena Elders CBO and Kakimor Widows Group in Rongena Manaret and Kapletundo wards — proof that this programme is not just working on paper, but producing real food and real income for our people.

Building on the immense success of Cycle 1, we are now pressing forward with even greater ambition. We are constructing 26 modern fishponds across the county, introducing a new and sustainable economic stream for youth and women's groups while improving community nutrition. We are distributing over 85,000 high-yield fruit tree seedlings — avocado, mango, and coffee — to organized farmer groups to simultaneously enhance tree cover and generate direct household income. We are continuing the protection of springs at Oinap Werik in Ndarawetta, Chepkirib in Kutarajiwa, Bukunye Spring in Chemaner, Kerundut Spring in Nyangores, Chebaibai in Kipsonoi Ward, and Chepkiram in Meri Ward. We are also extending water pipelines in Olbobo, Meswondo, and Kaptengwet, and undertaking water works at the Saramek Water Pan in Kongasis Ward.

On tree cover, our county currently stands at approximately 23 percent tree cover against a national target of 30 percent. We are committed to closing that gap. Working with partners and local communities, we are actively restoring the degraded Chepalungu Forest — because a forest lost is a future mortgaged. We will not bequeath to our children a bare and barren land. We will leave them rivers that flow, springs that are protected, forests that breathe, and a county that is green, resilient, and alive.

Before I conclude

Allow me to speak one final and special word — to the people in whose home we are gathered today. To the great people of Merigi Ward.

It is no accident that we chose to celebrate this Madaraka Day here among you. Merigi Ward is not just a venue — it is a statement. A statement that this county government sees you, values you, and is working for you. And the best way I can honour your hospitality today is not with words alone, but by accounting to you for what we have delivered right here in your midst.

Your ward office has been completed and fenced — a permanent home for local governance, standing as a symbol that Merigi Ward has a seat at the table of development. Your children now have better learning environments, with ECD centres at Kinawet, Muso, and Kamoyo awaiting commissioning, and the Kiromwok ECD already commissioned and serving our youngest learners. When we invest in a child aged three, we are investing in Bomet County's future for the next fifty years.

Your markets are better lit. Floodlights have been installed at Molem Centre, bringing safety and extended hours of trade to your business community — because a lit market is a living market.

Your people now have cleaner water. The Chepkolon Borehole has been commissioned and is already serving the community, while works at Kiromwok Water Spring are ongoing. We will see that project through to completion.

Your movement has been made safer and easier. The Chepkositonik Bridge and Sugutek Bridge are both waiting commissioning — two structures that will transform connectivity for communities that have long needed them. We do not build bridges for political credit. We build them because your time, your safety, and your daily journey matter to us.

And to our farmers — avocado seedlings have been distributed in Chepkolon and Kapsimbiri to grow the next harvest of prosperity right here in Merigi soil. Agriculture is not just a livelihood in this ward — it is an identity, and we are strengthening it.

People of Merigi, you have been patient. You have been resilient. And you deserve every single one of these investments. This is your Madaraka — your freedom made real, delivered to your doorstep. We are not done. This is only the beginning.

Fellow residents, as we mark 63 years of Madaraka, let us carry in our hearts the spirit of those who came before us — their courage, their sacrifice, and their unshakeable belief that a better Kenya is always possible. Everything we have built, every road, every hospital, every market, every bridge, every classroom — is our generation's answer to their struggle. We have not arrived, but we are firmly on the right road, and we will not stop. To every farmer, every mother, every young person, and every resident of this great county — your county government sees you, and we are working for you.

Happy Madaraka Day, Bomet. God bless Kenya. God Bless Bomet County