



**SPEECH BY H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR,
DURING THE LAUNCH OF EMPOWERMENT PROGRAMS IN
NAIVASHA, NAKURU COUNTY HELD ON 13TH MAY, 2025**

H E Prof Kithure Kindiki, the Deputy President of the Republic of Kenya

Honourable Members of Parliament and Senate present

National Government officials

County Government officials

Members of County Assembly

Distinguished Guests

Ladies and gentlemen

It is with both an honour and a privilege to join you, Your Excellency, during this great occasion of launching the empowerment program for the youth and women—a subject that sits right at the centre of the future of not just Nakuru County but the country at large.

At the onset, allow me to profoundly acknowledge you, Your Excellency, for the visits and development tours of Nakuru. It is a demonstration of the esteem with which you Nakuru, the County of Unlimited Opportunities, in your heart and vision. We are truly grateful for your support.

Your Excellency, the term empowerment is so frequently used that it is assuming the dimensions of a cliché. Yet, in the embodiment of that term, lies the key to the most disturbing challenge which we, as a country face—uplifting the plight of millions of youth and women. How can we as governments—both at the national and county level—facilitate the youth and women to gain control over their lives and resources to engender the desired goals of economic and social change? It is all about empowerment for in its broad meaning, we will be granting the youth and women the ability and the means to understand their own needs, recognize their strengths and actively participate in decision-making processes.

Former US President Franklin Roosevelt, in a 1940 address to the University of Pennsylvania, said: “The future is not something we get, but something we make. The future is in the hands of young people (and women). Your Excellency, we are congregated here today to find ways to make that future for our youth and women in Naivasha Sub County by addressing the systemic barriers which hinder them from taking charge of their lives and contributing meaningfully to society. Before us today, we have 100 groups drawing membership from the youth and women in this Sub County who we want to begin with on our transformative mission of facilitating them with resources. This initiative will be replicated in all Sub Counties in Nakuru.

Your Excellency, Indeed, this initiative is a microcosm of the totality of initiatives—policies, legislations and programs which we in Nakuru County have undertaken to empower the youth and women. One of the issues we identified was lack of affordable and readily available credit for the youth and women groups who are handicapped by lack of collateral. To solve this challenge, we came up with the County Enterprise Fund and the County Cooperative Revolving Fund to provide sacco, groups and individuals with cheap accessible credit to either initiate or expand their businesses. We have concluded sensitization meetings of these funds which have Kshs50 million in each kitty and on Thursday in Nakuru City, we will launch the two funds which have already attracted more than 1,000 loan applicants. I call upon all youth and women operating Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) to access these low interest loans.

To equip our youth with skills, two years ago I commissioned the Youth Empowerment Centre at the Bondeni Social Hall in Nakuru East Sub County which features a Textile Hub, Ajiry Digital Hub, and a state-of-the-art recording studio where Nakuru residents can record music and podcasts. The recording studio, Your Excellency, was one of my dream projects for the youth and I am proud they can now record their music. Hundreds of youths have already graduated from the centre and are benefitting from the skills learnt. We have since opened another branch in Naivasha and upgraded more than 10 social halls across the county to provide opportunities for our youth.

Your Excellency, we have also initiated the tools-for-work program which has benefitted hundreds of youths in all 55 wards in the County. Under this program, my government works very closely with Members of the County Assembly to identify the tools needed by the youth to initiate income generating activities. We have, further, opened more than 12 digital centres in the County to assist the youths gain skills and engage in online jobs. As mandated in the Constitution, we are promoting tertiary education and training by equipping, renovating and constructing new Vocational Training Centres by providing a capitation of Kshs30,000 per learner. The population, over the last two years, has increased to over 5,361 from 1,600 in 2022.

Policy solutions, Your Excellency, play a key role in the quest to empower the youth and women. We have increased women's access to training and networking. Approximately 200 women supported through partnerships with different organizations. In a deliberate move, we have ensured that women are included in the of 112 market management committees in the County. Furthermore, we have constructed of markets around Lake Naivasha to support trade in the Blue Economy Subsector. Around 700 traders across 5 Beaches of Kamere, Karagita, Kongoni, Kasarani and Central Beach have access to markets. To cap it all, we have sensitized more than 25 groups with a total of 300 persons have been made across the county through VSLAs (Village Savings and Loan Associations) trainings.

In conclusion, as we celebrate these achievements, let us also recognize that the journey towards empowerment is ongoing. It is incumbent upon each of us—government officials, community leaders, educators, and citizens—to continue supporting and advocating for the rights and opportunities of our youth and women. Let us invest in education, provide mentorship, and create platforms that allow them to showcase their talents and innovations. Together, we can build a Nakuru County where every young person and woman has the opportunity to realize their full potential.

Thank you

H E SUSAN KIHKA, EGH

GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY

