



**SPEECH BY H E SUSAN KIHKA, NAKURU COUNTY GOVERNOR,
DURING THE FIRST LADY’S MAZINGIRA AWARDS CEREMONY
HELD AT STATE HOUSE, NAKURU ON 8TH OCTOBER, 2025**

Your Excellency, Hon Rachel Ruto, the First Lady of the Republic of Kenya

Hon Rebecca Miano, Cabinet Secretary, Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife

**Dr Eng Festus Ngéno, Principal Secretary, State Department of Environment
and Climate Change**

Amb Julius Bitok, Principal Secretary, State Department of Basic Education

Mr John Gachora, Group Managing Director, NCBA Bank

Distinguished guests,

Teachers, parents, and our young environmental champions,

Ladies and gentlemen,

Good morning!

It is a great honour and privilege to join you today at this momentous occasion—the First Lady’s Mazingira Awards (FLAMA)—hosted under the esteemed patronage of Her Excellency, the First Lady, Mama Rachel Ruto.

Your Excellency, allow me to commend you most sincerely for your steadfast commitment to climate action, environmental sustainability, and youth empowerment through education and innovation. Your leadership in nurturing young environmental champions through the Flama initiative is both visionary and impactful. We celebrate you.

This year’s FLAMA event comes just two days before the national Mazingira Day on 10th October, officially gazetted by His Excellency the President as Kenya’s annual environmental day. This year, we are encouraging all Kenyans to return to schools and plant fruit trees—a simple yet powerful step toward achieving food security and restoring our ecosystems.

Your Excellency, we recognize that this important call to action builds upon the impactful work you have already led through the Mama Kitchen Gardens and Mama Fruit Gardens Programmes. These initiatives have made our schools greener, healthier, and more food secure. As Nakuru County, we fully support your vision and remain committed to its successful implementation.

Ladies and gentlemen

Today, we come together to celebrate the next generation of young environmental leaders, who have proven that age is no barrier to making a meaningful impact.

Your Excellency, I have been informed that the learners who came up with the name *First Lady's Mazingira Awards (FLAMA)*—Samuel Wanyeki and Samuel Mureithi—are from Nairobi Road Secondary School, Nakuru Town East, right here in Nakuru County. Their creativity and innovation gave rise to a name that will forever symbolize the spirit of environmental stewardship among Kenya's youth.

I am equally delighted to share that this year, Nakuru County is home to five winners of the FLAMA 2025 Awards—an outstanding testament to our learners' growing commitment to environmental excellence and creativity.

Your Excellency, we in the counties recognize a unique opportunity to nurture environmental stewardship from the earliest stages of learning. Since Early Childhood Development Education is a devolved function, we are committed to integrating FLAMA-inspired activities within our ECDE centres. This will provide a platform for our youngest learners to participate, learn, and be recognized for their environmental efforts. In doing so, we will ensure that love for nature and climate responsibility takes root early and continues to grow throughout a child's education.

Your Excellency, allow me also to express our deepest gratitude for supporting the school milk pilot programmes here in Nakuru County, specifically at Menengai Comprehensive School and Testai Primary School. This initiative is already transforming lives. It is improving learners' nutrition, enhancing school attendance and concentration, and giving our children a fairer opportunity to succeed. Beyond the classroom, it is empowering our local farmers, strengthening the dairy value chain, and showcasing the potential of inclusive and sustainable development. We are proud that Nakuru is part of this meaningful journey to ensure every child is well-nourished and ready to learn.

The Flama initiative reflects a powerful vision — to nurture, inspire, and empower learners as agents of change in protecting our planet. By engaging primary, junior secondary, and special needs learners across the country, it provides a unique platform for young minds to creatively express their ideas, perceptions, and solutions to the environmental challenges we face today.

Guided by this year's Flama Awards theme, "*End Pollution, Conserve the Environment, Komesha Uchafuzi, Hifadhi Mazingira*," we have made significant strides in promoting environmental conservation and sustainable development. The County has committed to an ambitious target of growing one million trees annually, contributing to Kenya's national goal of planting 15 billion trees by 2032. To date, over 540,000 trees have been planted this year, helping restore more than 300 hectares of degraded land across the County. These restoration initiatives are focused on vital ecosystems such as the Sururu, Dundori, and Bahati forests, driven by strong partnerships with communities, institutions, and environmental organizations.

Through the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) program, the County has launched transformative projects — restoring six riparian zones, including Muro, Mireroni, and Ndarugu rivers — while promoting school-based greening activities that integrate learning with practical action. These initiatives have enhanced local biodiversity, built community resilience, and empowered learners to take environmental leadership roles within their schools and neighbourhoods.

In conclusion, Your Excellency, I sincerely commend you for your visionary leadership. You have given children a national platform to showcase their creativity, raise their voices, and take pride in protecting Kenya's environment. FLAMA is more than just an award; it is a movement of hope and transformation.

Let us walk hand in hand with our children, and support them as they dream, innovate, and lead. Let us all become champions of a cleaner, greener, and more sustainable Kenya.

Thank you

H E SUSAN KIIHIKA, EGH

GOVERNOR, NAKURU COUNTY