Start of a new era of health care in Makueni

REMARKS BY THE GOVERNOR

The commissioning of this Mother and Child Hospital is a great achievement for me as Governor and for all the citizens of our beloved county. It is a day when the Department of Health and other supportive departments are again putting us in the national and global picture.

The official commissioning marks a major milestone in the infrastructural expansion of the county public sector towards supply side strengthening in the provision of Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health services. I am very delighted that we have managed utilising limited resources to complete this massive project, indeed a reproductive health centre of excellence.

This facility, phased over the last four years, will provide a whole continuum of care ranging from routine check-ups to specialised reproductive health services. The county government is committed to expanding access to quality healthcare services. In the last six years or so of devolution, we have doubled the number of health care facilities, tremendously expanded our human resources for health, and strengthened the supply chain for medical commodities, vaccines and technologies.

At the start of devolution, Makueni County had only three facilities providing comprehensive emergency new-born and obstetric care. This meant mothers in need of these services had to travel long distances to these three facilities. Today we celebrate that this number stands at 11 facilities excluding the mother and child hospital we are commissioning.

We have been keen to strengthen primary health care in all corners of the county. This we have done by expanding the number of dispensaries and health centres to extend the geographical reach of our services.

The use of the community health units is also notable where the community health volunteers (CHVs) have played a critical role in health education. I note with delight that places with active CHVs like Kanzokea, have never experienced a case of home delivery or maternal death in the last 14 years.

All these investments have strengthened the county’s resolve to geographical and financial access of our health services. With the MakueniCare health scheme, which we launched on October 1, 2016, about 62.3 percent of the county population has pre-paid access to health services and are covered under the county scheme. This excludes those over 65 years who are covered free of charge without paying annual Ksh500 charge per household. This is a significant increase, given that four years ago, Makueni County was among the 15 counties where NHIF coverage stood at less than 10 percent. This is clearly a big milestone that shows that counties can play a big role in hastening the attainment of the Big 4 Agenda on affordable housing, manufacturing, food security and more importantly universal health coverage.

The Beyond Zero Campaign that H.E. Margret Kenyatta, the First Lady, initiated here three and a half a years ago is still vibrant. While supporting outreach services, this Mother and Child Hospital will offer specialised care to those patients. As we commission this project, I want to thank the leadership of the Department of Health for making this vision a reality. I also welcome all our county citizens to utilise the quality services offered by our Mother and Child Hospital. Yes, indeed devolution is working. Asante.

REMARKS BY THE DEPUTY GOVERNOR

It is a proud day for me as the Deputy Governor, Makueni County, to see this project finally launched. This is a fruit of devolution. The operationalisation of this facility brings closer to citizens, services that they would otherwise have to seek in hospitals in Nairobi at exorbitant costs. This centre of excellence is therefore a great effort we have made to ensure quality services are available right here in Makueni for our mothers and children.

I also take this opportunity to congratulate the Department of Health and allied departments for this feat: Delivering a world class centre of excellence in Reproductive, Maternal, New-born, Child and Adolescent Health. This project is a big win for the universal care project which we have been rolling out for the last three years now.

The facility will provide specialised care in the screening, treatment and follow-up of patients with reproductive tract cancers, which have become a major killer in our times. In addition, victims of gender based violence will find this a place where best multi-disciplinary care will be accorded to them.

I call upon all our health care workers to work tirelessly and selflessly to serve the people of Makueni and other neighbour counties that will seek care in this facility.

The governor and myself are committed to support the Department to continue excelling in health services delivery and become a centre of medical tourism regionally and country-wide. I call upon our stakeholders and partners to continue working in the county to support different areas of service delivery.
New Hospital to offer more than you may imagine

**REMARKS BY THE ECM-HEALTH SERVICES**

I am delighted that we are finally officially open the ultra-modern Mother and Child Hospital. The new facilities here at the hospital will radically improve the quality of care for patients in the immediate future and in years to come.

Building work on the site commenced in 2013 and a phased implementation over the years has brought us where we are today: Commissioning the third biggest Mother and Child Hospital in Kenya after Pumwani Maternity and Nakuru Mother and Child Hospitals.

This new hospital has state of the art facilities, which incorporate the following aspects of care: Gynaecological, obstetric, neonatal consultation services, antenatal wards, ultramodern new born unit with neonatal intensive care unit complete with a phototherapy unit, post-surgical wards, labour ward with private rooms and six delivery beds, twin operating theatre, gynaecological wards, neonatal ward (for both sick and well neonates), aqua-birthing facility (a first in public hospitals in Kenya), specialised units like pre-eclampsia rooms for mothers with pregnancy related hypertension complications, and Kangaroo mother care room (for preterm neonates).

The facility has twin operating theatres, bringing the total number of theatres in the county to 12. These theatres will be a major boost in the expansion of Comprehensive Emergency Obstetric and Newborn Care services.

As far as this facility is concerned, the future development plans include introduction of laparoscopic surgery, operationalise the high dependency unit, which will ensure the optimum use of intensive care units, beds and improvements of the potential for elective admissions.

This hospital will also improve the quality of medical training, especially for students from the Kenya Medical Training College and other interns, where students will learn in an environment that provides state of the art learning facilities.

I would like to pay tribute today to the pioneer staff and management of this hospital who have ensured that everything is ready for this day, but most importantly, who will continue to offer care to our clients.

The improved physical infrastructure here and new ways of working will also assist the hospital in attracting top talent and therefore enable us to be the centre of medical excellence and medical tourism that we are anticipating to be.

**REMARKS BY THE CHIEF OFFICER-HEALTH**

I believe that as we launch this new facility, we are witnessing the beginning of a new era for this county in terms of provision of quality health care services. This has been the result of public participation in determining community development priorities.

We have a complete new hospital building which enables us to move forward into a new era of service delivery. We also have new ways of working and new approaches of caring for our patients. Indeed in Wote, we now have two hospitals in one.

This hospital has been developed as one of the public sector facilities for the management of patients with reproductive health needs, and is part of a dedicated strategy to combat the maternal mortality and morbidity as well as child mortality and morbidity.

I am honoured to have been part of the team that conceived and delivered on this project. I would also like to pay tribute to and congratulate the management and staff for their enormous contributions to the quality of health care services that are provided here at the Hospital.

I would like to thank the Health directorate, the County Health Management Team, Dr Daniel Gichogo, the Medical Superintendent, Mr Momanyi Bernard, the Hospital Administrative Officer, Regina Kyalo, the Nursing Officer In-chARGE and the other staff of the Department and hospital for their dedication in bringing this major project to fruition and taking up the leadership of the facility.

I believe this new facility will be a great credit to our health services. I wish to congratulate everyone who made it to happen.

I believe that moving forward, we shall work together as a team to improve the quality of services in this facility as we position it as a preferred destination for medical tourism in this region and beyond.

God Bless you all.

**REMARKS BY THE COUNTY HEALTH LEADERSHIP**

Maternal and child health is a cornerstone in achieving universal health coverage. This modern facility will provide the much needed specialised services at the highest attainable quality of care. It will certainly lead to improvement of reproductive, maternal and child health indicators in keeping with the Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).