PUBLIC ADVISORY ON EL NIÑO PREPAREDNESS OCTOBER–NOVEMBER–DECEMBER (OND) 2026 RAINFALL SEASON

ON

THURSDAY 1ST OCTOBER, 2026

BY

H.E. DR. JULIUS M. MALOMBE, EGH

GOVERNOR KITUI COUNTY

AND

MR. ERASTUS MBUI

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

KITUI

Fellow Residents of Kitui County,

Members of Fourth Estate.

We wish to address you on the forthcoming October–November–December (OND) 2026 rainfall season, for which the Kenya Meteorological Services Authority has forecast above-normal rainfall across Kitui County. This outlook is associated with a strengthening El Niño phenomenon, which is expected to result in enhanced rainfall characterized by prolonged wet spells and occasional storms up to January, 2027.

In addition, global and regional climate forecasts indicate a very strong El Niño event, which significantly increases the likelihood of flooding and related hazards across many parts of the country.

While these anticipated rains present a valuable opportunity to improve water availability, agricultural productivity, and livelihoods, they also pose serious risks to lives, infrastructure, and essential services if not well managed.

It is therefore our responsibility to inform, guide, and urge all residents of Kitui County to take early precautionary measures and prepare adequately for the season ahead.

My Government in collaboration with the national government and other stakeholders remains committed to safeguarding the welfare of all residents through proactive planning, coordination, and response. However, effective preparedness requires collective action at the household, community, and institutional levels. We therefore call upon every resident to take this advisory seriously and act promptly.

The expected rainfall conditions during the OND 2026 season would likely be characterized by periods of heavy downpours which may result to mud slides, flash floods and overflow of rivers, streams, and water channels. These conditions may lead to damage of infrastructure such as roads, bridges, water facilities, buildings, drainage systems, loss of lives and livelihoods.

In some areas, households may experience displacement, particularly those located in low-lying zones, along riverbanks or near dams and water reservoirs.

Additionally, the increased moisture conditions may contribute to outbreaks of water-borne and vector-borne diseases, including cholera, typhoid, malaria, and rift valley fever thereby posing additional public health risks.

Agricultural activities may also be affected through waterlogging, soil erosion and destruction of crops. In livestock, losses may be expected through livestock drowning, vector borne diseases such as east coast fever and rift valley fever, if appropriate mitigation measures are not taken.

In light of these potential impacts, it is important that all residents understand that disasters can be prevented or minimized through early preparedness and informed action.

The guiding principle for this season is to act early on credible weather information, protect lives and livelihoods, and ensure continuity of essential services across the County.

At the same time, we wish to emphasize that the anticipated rainfall should not only be viewed as a threat but also as an

opportunity to strengthen food security, improve water availability, and enhance economic activities across the County.

We therefore encourage all residents, particularly farmers and households, to take advantage of the rains by investing in water harvesting and storage. Every household is urged to collect and safely store rainwater using tanks, water pans, and other appropriate storage facilities in order to improve access to water during and after the rainy season.

Farmers are advised to prepare their land early and adopt appropriate agricultural practices that are aligned with the expected weather conditions. This includes the use of certified seeds, adherence to recommended planting windows, and implementation of soil and water conservation measures such as terracing and proper drainage.

Farmers are further encouraged to follow agro-weather advisories issued by the County Government and relevant authorities to guide their planting and harvesting decisions.

Livestock farmers are equally encouraged to take proactive steps to improve pasture and feed availability by planting fodder crops, conserving hay and silage, and ensuring that livestock are adequately protected from flooding, disease and adverse weather conditions.

In addition, we call upon all residents to participate in tree planting and environmental conservation initiatives. The rainy season provides an ideal opportunity to plant and nurture trees, protect water catchment areas, and promote sustainable land use practices that will enhance resilience to climate change.

As we prepare to benefit from the rains, we strongly urge all residents to prioritize safety and adhere to recommended precautionary measures.

Floodwaters can be extremely dangerous, and residents must avoid attempting to cross flooded rivers, drifts, or waterlogged roads on foot, by motorcycle, or in vehicles. It is important to wait until water levels have subsided before attempting to cross.

Parents and guardians are advised to ensure that children do not play or swim in rivers, dams, or stagnant water, as this poses a serious risk of drowning. Residents should also avoid seeking shelter under trees during rainfall or thunderstorms due to the risk of lightning strikes.

Households are encouraged to clear drainage systems around their homes to allow proper flow of water and prevent flooding. Those living in flood-prone areas, including riverbanks and low-lying zones, are advised to identify safer ground and relocate early to avoid emergencies.

Residents are further advised to ensure that drinking water is safe by boiling or treating it, as flooding may lead to contamination of water sources. Maintaining proper hygiene and sanitation practices is essential to prevent disease outbreaks.

Further, households are advised to secure important documents, food supplies, and emergency items such as lighting equipment in preparation for possible disruptions.

The County Government of Kitui has already undertaken a series of measures to enhance preparedness and response capacity in anticipation of the OND 2026 rains.

Measures being undertaken

The measures include the activation of disaster risk management coordination structures, and strengthening of emergency response systems.

We have intensified early warning dissemination through collaboration with Kenya Meteorological Services Authority and local administrative structures to ensure that timely and accurate information reaches all communities.

Public awareness campaigns are being conducted through various communication channels, including radio, community meetings, and social platforms, to educate residents on preparedness and safety measures.

We have also initiated inspection and clearance of drainage systems, culverts, and other critical infrastructure to reduce the risk of flooding.

Health facilities have been supported to enhance disease surveillance and preparedness, including stocking essential medical supplies and strengthening response systems. Emergency response teams, including search and rescue units, have been placed on high alert and equipped to respond to incidents as they arise.

The County Government continues to work closely with the National Government, humanitarian organizations, and development partners to ensure a coordinated and effective response throughout the rainy season.

Fellow residents, we wish to emphasize that preparedness for this rainfall season is a shared responsibility. The success of our

efforts will depend on the level of cooperation and commitment demonstrated by each one of us.

We therefore call upon all community leaders, households, institutions, and stakeholders to work together in implementing the recommended measures and supporting one another during this period.

Residents are encouraged to remain informed by following official weather updates and advisories issued by the County Government and relevant authorities. It is important to act promptly on early warnings and report any emergencies or hazards to the appropriate authorities without delay.

In case of emergencies, residents are advised to contact the Kitui County Emergency Line on **0702 615 888, 0143610403** or the Kenya Red Cross toll-free line **1199** or report to the nearest administrative offices for assistance.

In conclusion, the OND 2026 rainfall season presents both opportunities and risks for our County. With proper planning, vigilance, and collective action, we can protect our communities while harnessing the benefits of the rains.

Let us remain calm, alert, prepared, and united in our efforts to safeguard lives and livelihoods.

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