

COAL DEVELOPMENT IN KITUI COUNTY

(Joseph M. Ndolo)

- Kitui County is situated in the eastern part of Kenya which falls in arid and semi-arid climatic environment.
- The County is poorly developed and requires aggressive plans to develop and uplift the standard of living of her inhabitants.
- Kitui has lived on famine relief for all its lifetime. This is a phenomenon which should be terminated as the County has adequate resources, which have not been tapped to change the status quo.
- The discovery, assessment and the planned development of the coal resource, thanks to the Ministry of Energy, will change the landscape of Kitui County and the environment while generating power for the development of the Nation as we strive to realize the expectations of Vision 2030.
- It is understood that the main mover of industrial development is reliable and affordable energy and we understand that Coal is among the cheapest source of energy.
- Our country has failed to take off industrially as a result of high cost of manufacturing, scaring potential investors away from Kenya.
- We understand that all the developed nations started with the discovery of the coal resource and they still continue to prosper due to use of power generated from coal.
- The discovery of coal in Mui Basin, Kitui County, Kenya should be the turning point for this great country, to stand on its legs.
- This should be possible if the resource is prudently developed, taking into consideration the human and environmental concerns and positively mitigating any negative impact while enhancing the positive impacts.
- Energy consumption in Africa has an average annual growth of about 2.3 percent from 2004 through to 2030 (*Energy Information Administration, 2007*) and Kenya should not be left behind.
- Coal reserves will undoubtedly continue to be part of Africa's energy portfolio as it grows in the future and we should join hands to contribute positively to its development.
- Block C in the Mui Basin has coal estimate of about 400 million tones. The other three blocks also have substantial amount of the resource. We look forward to have the other blocks evaluated and the development to be accelerated. The coal resource will be used mainly for power generation and other uses will include cement manufacture, iron and steel industry, industrial boilers, domestic furnaces, drying of tea, pharmaceutical industry among others.

- It is our responsibility to make sure that our Kitui County and the Nation as a whole is provided with sufficient power for industrial development to create wealth for the citizens. This will only be possible if all of us join hands in pursuit of this eagerly required energy resource which is a major input in achieving industrial development.

IT IS NOW OR NEVER.