

# Appraisal of Rural Development Policies and Strategies in Kenya

*Job K. Ngetich and Andrew K Kiplagat,*

*University of Eldoret,*

*P.O BOX 1125-30100, Eldoret, Kenya*

*Corresponding Author Email: [ngetichjob@yahoo.com](mailto:ngetichjob@yahoo.com)*

## **Abstract<sup>1</sup>**

*Kenya is a country with a population of about 45 million people and a GDP of USD 70.53 billion. It is predominantly a rural country as evidenced by about 70% of its population living in the rural areas. Since attainment of independence in 1963, Kenya has pursued different pathways in its rural development agenda, with successes and some pitfalls. The adoption of the new Constitution of Kenya 2010 marked a watershed in rural development planning in Kenya, as 47 devolved government systems are now in place which have had a rejuvenating effect on the rural landscape country- wide. The new constitutional dispensation demands that the County Governments should prepare three types of plans which include; the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), County Spatial Plan (CSP) and the County Sectoral Plan (SP), to guide rural development activities at the County level. Currently the government is in pursuit of the Big Four (4) Agenda which seeks to ensure; proper healthcare, food security, industrial take- off and adequate housing. The Big 4 Agenda is expected to give rural development planning a new impetus as the government is expected to allocate resources for implementation of rural-based development priority sectors. This review paper gives a glimpse of rural development policies and strategies in Kenya from 2010 onwards, highlighting their successes and challenges as well as providing the way forward for rural development planning.*

---

*1 This paper should be cited as follows: Ngetich, J.K. and Kiplagat, A., (2018): Appraisal of Rural Development Policies and Strategies in Kenya, in Kinyashi, G.F., Mwang'onda, E., Mdendemi, T.R.K., Mandara, C.G., and Hauli, E., (eds.), Conference Proceedings for an International Conference on Planning and Development under the theme Towards Industrialisation in the Global South: Making Rural Regions Inclusive, held at the Institute of Rural Development Planning-Dodoma June 28-30, 2018.*

## **1. Introduction**

The countries of East Africa, comprising Kenya, Uganda and Tanzania adopted country-specific political ideologies and development agenda after independence in 1960s. Kenya embraced the concept of African socialism as its philosophy also known as *Harambee* (the spirit of pooling together), while Uganda ratified the Common man's Charter. Tanzania implemented a slightly different version of African Socialism within the purview of Ujamaa Villagization (family hood). There is a correlation between the level of socio-economic development of East African countries and the development models which have been effectuated. In the case of Kenya, it is a country with a population of about 45 million people and a GDP of USD 70.53 billion. It is predominantly a rural country as evidenced by about 70% of its population living in the rural areas. Since attainment of independence in 1963, Kenya has pursued different pathways in its rural development agenda, with successes and some pitfalls. The adoption of the new Constitution of Kenya 2010 marked a watershed in rural development planning in Kenya, as 47 devolved government systems are now in place which have had a rejuvenating effect on the rural landscapes country-wide. The new constitutional dispensation demands that the County Governments should prepare three types of plans which include; the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), County Spatial Plan (CSP) and the County Sectoral Plan (SP), to guide rural development activities at the County level. Currently the government is in pursuit of the Big Four (4) Agenda which seeks to ensure; proper health care, food security, industrial take-off and adequate housing. The Big 4 Agenda is expected to give rural development planning a new impetus as the government is expected to allocate resources for implementation of rural-based development priority sectors. This review paper gives a glimpse of rural development policies and strategies in Kenya from 2010 onwards, highlighting their successes and challenges as well as providing the way forward for better rural development planning.

## **2. Post-Independence Rural Development Paradigms in Kenya**

During the colonial period the Swynnerton Plan of 1954 informed rural development strategy in Kenya. The plan was a colonial agricultural policy to restructure land ownership in African areas. The policy provided for progressive African farmers to grow cash crops.

It also saw the adoption of European-like land tenure systems where permanent land ownership was conferred to the indigenous Africans. The Plan promoted agricultural production through provision of infrastructure and inputs in the areas considered to be of high agricultural potential (Swynnerton,1953). Among the major highlights of rural development strategies which Kenya has pursued after independence 1962 to 2010 include;

a) Adoption of Sessional Paper No.10 of 1965 on the need to plan and control resource use within the framework of the features of African socialism

b) Seven First Generation Regional Development Plans were prepared between 1966 and 1971 with the sole purpose of providing a framework for all development agencies to actualize policies and to provide a detailed basis for actualization of district development plans

c) The Special Rural Development Programme (SRDP) of 1970-71 was a pilot programme on detailed planning of rural development

d) Human Settlements Strategy for Urban and Rural Development had two basic principles involving, development of growth centres to encourage regional growth, and creation of a network of service centres country-wide

e) Regional Development Authorities (RDAs); established on the concept of a shared common natural resource “the water catchment”. The RDAs were to use a common resource to evolve a planning and management process across a varied ethnic population and ecological systems.

f) District Focus for Rural Development (DFRD) where planning and implementation were decentralized to the district in order to coordinate development in the rural areas

g) Sessional Paper No. 1 of 1986 on Economic Management for Renewed Growth which introduced the concept of the Rural Trade and Production Centres (RTPCs), (Masinde, (n.d); Mwangi, 2005).

### **3. Rural Development Planning in Kenya from 2010 Onwards**

An accurate understanding of Rural development planning policies and strategies in Kenya from 2010 onwards can be better examined from the dimensions of Constitutional, legal and non-statutory perspectives.

### **3.1 Constitutional Context of Rural Development**

There was a paradigm shift in the manner in which Rural Development is managed in Kenya following the promulgation of the constitution of Kenya 2010 (CK2010). The CK2010 created 47 County Governments under the leadership of elected Governors. Financial resources amounting to 15% of the National Taxes collected are allocated to counties for development. The Constitutional Commission for Revenue Allocation (CRA) determines the amount of resources to be given to the counties using a formula which takes into account population dynamics and poverty indices. Additionally, the constitution creates another Fund known as Equalization Fund which is a marshal plan for revitalization of marginalized counties, most of which are found in Arid and Semi-Arid areas of Kenya.

Article 42 of the Constitution states that every person has the right to a clean and healthy environment which includes the right; to have the environment protected for the benefit of present and future generations through legislative and other measures .In this regard a clean environment and healthy environment can only be ensured through sound rural development planning.

In the Fourth Schedule, Articles 185 (2), 186 (1) and 187 (2) establishes the distribution of functions between the National Government and the County Government. In Part 1, the National Government is to deal with item number 21, on the general principle of land planning and the coordination of planning by the Counties, while in Part 2; the County government will deal with Control of air pollution, noise pollution, other public nuisance and outdoor advertising. The County planning and development including; Statistics, Land survey and mapping, Boundaries and fencing, Housing, Electricity and gas reticulation and energy regulation, and are to be performed by the County governments.

### **3.2 Legal Context of Rural Development Planning in Kenya**

## **Environment and Land Court Act, 2011**

Section 13 (2) in exercise of its Jurisdiction under Article 162(2) (b) of the Constitution, the court shall have power to hear and determine disputes relating to environment and land including dispute relating to; environmental planning and protection, climate issues, land and planning, title tenure boundaries, rent, rates valuations, mining, minerals and other natural resources; compulsory acquisition of land, public, private and community land (RoK, 2011a).

## **The Land Act 2012**

The Land Act 2012 in section 6 on land management and administration, the cabinet secretary shall regulate service providers and professionals including physical planners, surveyors, Valuers, estate agents and other related professionals to ensure quality control. These professionals in the built environment have various roles that impinge rural development. Compulsory land acquisition is to be done if the land is required for public purposes or in public interest as related to and necessary for fulfillment of stated public purpose including land to be appropriated for rural industrial development. In section 159, (1) on land sizes, it states that within one year of the coming into force of the act, the cabinet secretary shall commission a scientific study to determine the economic viability of minimum and maximum acreages in respect of private land for various land zones in the country ((RoK,2012b).

## **National Land Commission Act, 2012**

The National Land Commission (NLC) is one of the constitutional Commissions whose functions include; management of public land on behalf of national and county governments; recommendation of appropriate national land policy to the national government; conducting research related to land and use of natural resources; monitoring and having oversight responsibilities over land use planning throughout the country; alienation or allocation of public land (RoK, 2012d).

## **The Inter-Governmental Relations Act, 2012**

The Act establishes a framework for consultation and co-operation between the National and County governments and amongst County governments and to establish mechanisms for the resolution of inter-governmental disputes pursuant to Articles 6 and 189 of the Constitution. It creates the National government coordinating summit, comprising President or the Deputy President and, 47 Governors of Counties. The Vice Chairperson of the Summit is elected. The summit shall among other things provide a forum for; monitoring the implementation of National and County development plans and recommending appropriate action and resolve disputes between the National government and County governments using mediation or arbitration (RoK, 2012e).

## **The County Government Act No. 17 of 2012**

In this Context, County government is responsible for county legislation in accordance with article 185 of the Constitution. It creates the County Assembly whose function is to approve county development planning. The County Executive involving the County Governor submits the county plans and policies to the County Assembly for approval as well as promoting and facilitating citizen participation in development of policies and plans, and delivery of services in the county. Section 37 of the Act mandates the County Executive Committee to;

- Monitor the process of planning, formulation and adoption of the integrated development plan by a city or Municipality within the county.
- Assist a city or Municipality with the planning, formulation, adoption and review of its integrated development plan.
- Facilitate the coordination and alignment of integrated development plans of different cities or Municipalities within the county and with the plans, strategies and programmes of National and County governments and
- Take appropriate steps to resolve any disputes or differences in connection with the planning, formulation, adoption or review of an integrated development plan.
- Design a performance management plan to evaluate performance of the county public service and the implementation of county policies.

Section 48 of the Act, establishes at the level of each sub-county office of the Sub-county Administrator and Ward Administrators. The functions of the sub-county and ward administrators; are coordination, management and supervision of the general administrative functions in the sub-county unit, including; the development of policies and plans and facilitation and coordination of citizen participation in the development of policies and plans and delivery of services.

In terms of the County Planning, the objective is to ensure harmony between national, county and sub-county spatial planning requirements. A county government shall plan for the county and no public funds shall be appropriated outside a planning framework developed by the county executive committee and approved by the county assembly. The county planning framework shall integrate economic, physical, social, environmental and spatial planning.

The county government is mandated to designate county departments, cities and urban areas, sub-counties and wards as planning authorities of the county. The County Planning provides for citizen participation. To guide, harmonize and facilitate development within each county the following plans should be prepared;

- a) County integrated development plan
- b) County sectoral plans
- c) County spatial plan and
- d) Cities and urban areas plans as provided for under the urban areas and cities act (No. 13 of 2011). The county plans form the basis for all budgeting and spending in a county. There shall be a five-year county integrated development plan for each county which shall have; Clear goals and objectives; an implementation plan with clear outcome; provision for monitoring and evaluating and Clear reporting mechanisms

A county shall have a ten year county sectoral plan as component parts of the county integrated development plan. There shall be a ten year county GIS database system spatial plan for each county, which shall be a component part of the county integrated development plan providing;

- a) a spatial depiction of the social and economic development programmes of the county as articulated in the integrated county development plan
- b) Clear statements of how the spatial plan is linked to the regional, national and other county development plan,
- c) Clear clarifications on the anticipated sustainable development outcomes of the spatial plan

The spatial plans contains strategies for; desired patterns of land use within the county; to address the spatial construction or reconstruction of the county; provide strategic guidance in respect of location and nature of development within the county; set out basic guidance for a land use management system in the county taking into account any guidelines, regulations or laws as provided for under article 167 (2) (h) of the constitution.

Each county spatial plan is developed by the county executive and approved by the respective county assemblies in accordance with procedures approved by the respective county assembly. Each county spatial plan shall be reviewed every five years and the revisions are approved by the respective county assemblies. A county's integrated development plan shall be used to prepare action plans for the implementation of strategies identified by the county, most of which comprise rural development projects (RoK, 2012a).

### **Community Land Act No. 27 of 2016**

The Community Land Act No. 27 of 2016 has rural development jurisdiction as section 19 deals with Land use and development planning of community land. (1) A registered community may, on its own motion or at the request of the county government, submit to the county government a plan for the development, management and use of the community land administered by the registered community for approval. Before submitting a plan to the county government for approval, registered community must into consideration any conservation, environmental or heritage issues relevant to the development, management or use of the land (RoK, 2016).

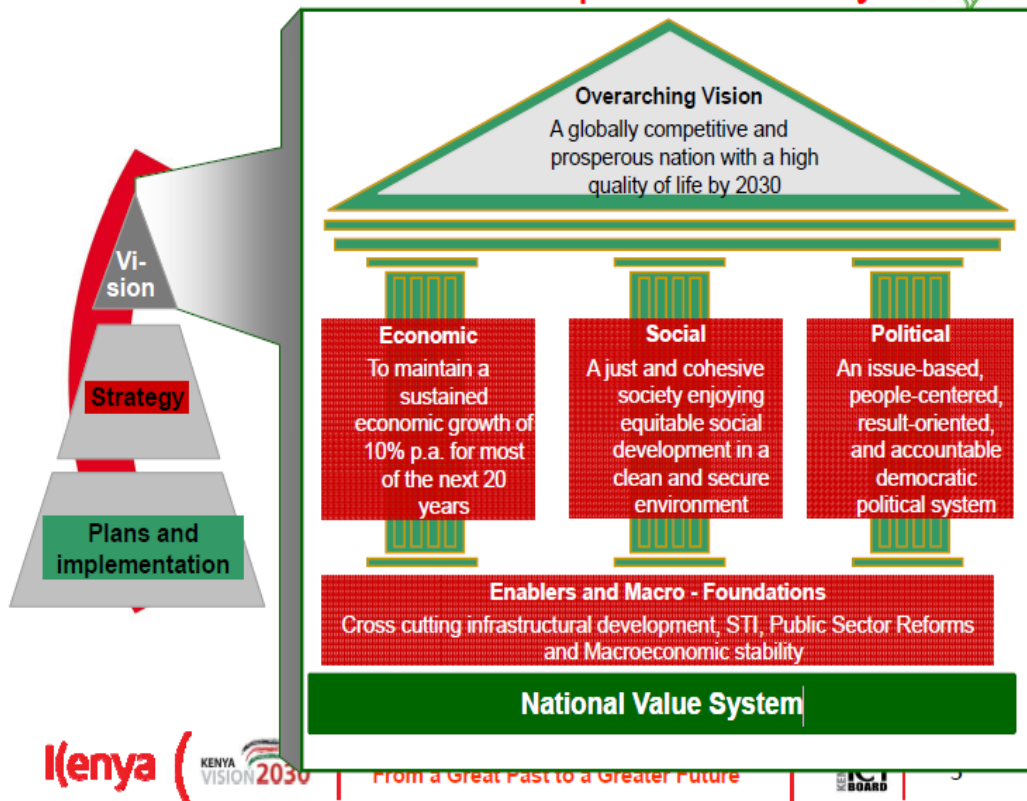
### **3.3 Non-Statutory Rural Development Strategies**



## **Vision 2030**

Kenya Vision 2030 is new long-term development blueprint for the country. It is motivated by collective aspiration for a much better society, by the year 2030. The aim of Kenya Vision 2030 is “the globally competitive and prosperous country with a high quality of life by 2030.” It aims at transforming Kenya into “a newly industrializing, middle income country providing a high quality of life to all its citizens in a clean and secure environment”. The Vision is anchored on three key pillars: Economic; Social; and Political Governance. The economic pillar aims at providing prosperity of all Kenyans through an economic development programme aimed at achieving an average Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth rate of 10 % per annum in the next 25 years. The social pillar seeks to build “a just and cohesive society with social equity in a clean and secure environment”. The political pillar aims at realizing a democratic political system founded on issue-based politics that respects the rule of law, and protects the rights and freedoms of every individual in the Kenyan society (Kenya, 2007). Plate 1 shows diagrammatic illustration of Vision 2030.

# A Vision for a Competitive Kenya



**Plate 1: Kenya Vision, 2030**

**Source:** Kenya, 2007.

In terms of rural development, manufacturing sector has a role to play in delivery of Vision 2030 as it seeks to create employment and wealth. A number of interventions are proposed in the Vision which will lead Kenya to be globally competitive and prosperous including;

- Development of the iron and Steel Industry through establishment of an Integrated Steel Mill
- Development of Small and Medium Enterprise (SME) Parks, Industrial and Technology Parks, Industrial Manufacturing Clusters,
- Upgrading of products from small and medium enterprises (Kenya, 2007).

## ***National Spatial Plan***

The National Spatial Plan aims at creating a spatial planning context that enhances economic efficiency and strengthens Kenya's global competitiveness, promoting balanced regional development for national integration and cohesion, optimizing utilization of land

and natural resources for sustainable development, creating livable and functional human settlements in both urban and rural areas, securing the natural environment for a high quality of life and establishing an integrated national transportation network and infrastructure system. This Plan forms the foundation for implementation of national projects by providing spatial illustration of projects and identifying a strategy for land development (Rok, 2015).

### ***Big Four Agenda***

The latest rural development strategy which is set to be implemented in Kenya is the ‘*Big Four*’ agenda, which aims at guiding the development agenda of the country in the period 2018-2022. It focuses on key basic needs that are critical in uplifting the standard of living of Kenyans on the path to becoming an upper middle-income country by 2030. Prioritized is affordable and decent housing, affordable healthcare, food and nutritional security, and employment creation through manufacturing. These four areas are expected to bolster strong inclusive economic growth.

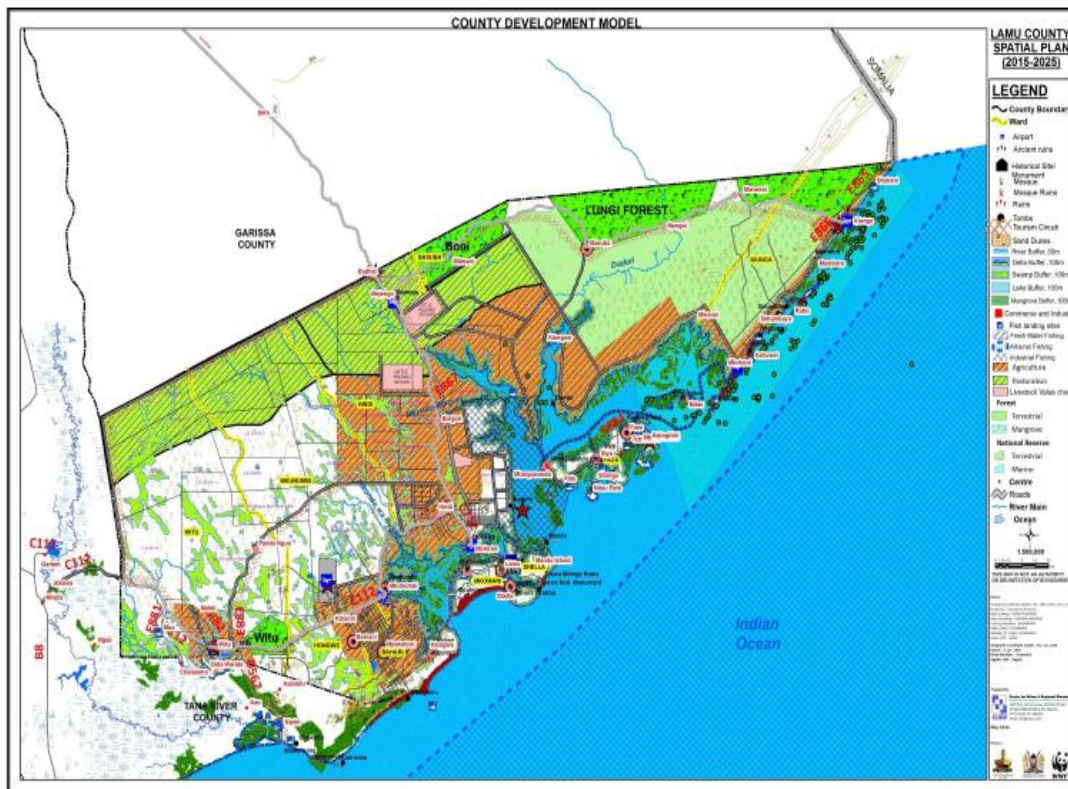
The agricultural sector is a major driver of the economy, but Kenya is still classified as a food deficit country. To improve on food and nutrition security, efforts need to focus on promoting indigenous food consumption and diversifying the staple food stuffs; enhancing reduction of food wastage and food loss; strengthening the supply chains and linkages to value addition; improving on food information market systems; and increasing investment especially in agriculture infrastructure. Manufacturing has the potential to advance socio-economic development through increased and diversified exports, reduced import bills and enhanced employment creation. As such, policy interventions towards promoting the competitiveness of the manufacturing sector should aim at enhancing product diversity and complexity, improving the business environment, developing relevant infrastructure, enhancing credit and market access, strengthening technology transfer and innovation, and building an industrial culture (KIPPRA, 2018).

## 4. Achievements and Challenges

### 4.1 Achievements

Since 2010, a considerable amount of progress has been made in Kenya in the area of rural development planning. 47 county governments are in place of which they implement their projects under the guidance of the County Integrated Development, resulting in overall improvement of the welfare of the rural communities. As an example, in Uasin Gishu County, the county government has been implementing two programmes; *Kijana na acre* (Youth and one acre) and *Inua mama na kuku* (empower women through poultry farming). The *Kijana na acre* program entails funding of youth groups by the county to engage in agricultural activities such as: greenhouse tomato production, tree nursery establishment, passion fruit production, Irish potato production, cabbage production and horticulture business strategy. The *Inua mama na kuku* project is targeting a group of 15 women who then are assisted with 200 chicks per group as income generating activities. These two programmes have enabled women and youths to meet their daily socio-economic demands (University of Eldoret, 2016).

Unlike the CIDP whereby the Constitution and by extension the County Government Act which makes it mandatory for the County Governments to prepare the plan before resources allocated are committed, few counties have attempted to prepare County spatial plans (CSP). Lamu is one of the Counties in Kenya that has formulated a County Spatial plan. Plate 2 shows Lamu County spatial Plan.



**Plate 2 Lamu County Spatial Plan** Source: Lamu County Government, 2016

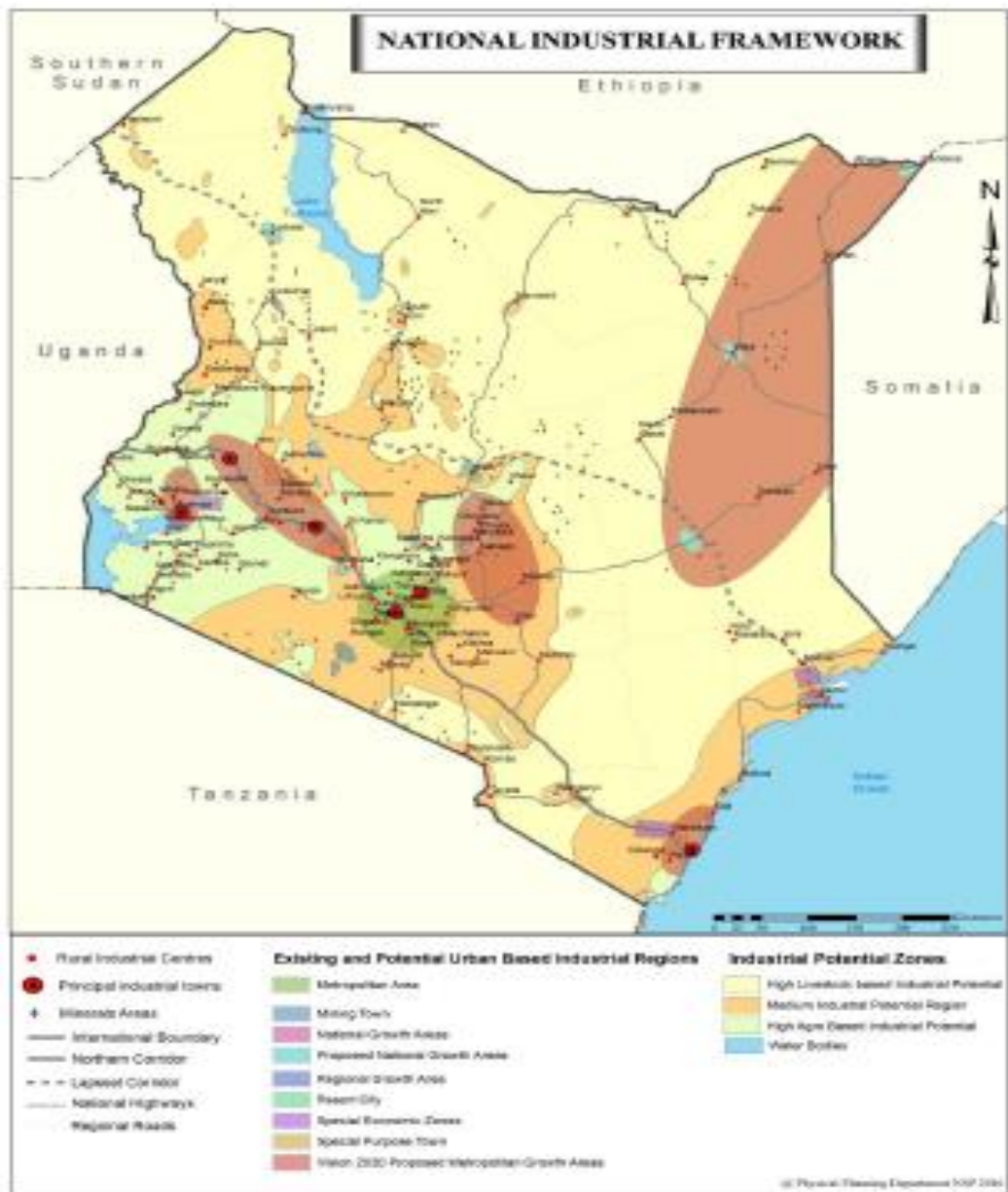
Some Counties have made some milestones in the implementation of their respective County Integrated Development plans and the County Spatial plans. For example, Makueni County which lies in a semi-arid part of Kenya has completed the construction of a Mango processing plant and it is currently functional. Makueni Mango processing factory is considered as a game Changer in rural industrialization in Kenya. Over 72 Metric tons of raw mangoes all from Makueni county farmers are being delivered to the factory for processing and for onward marketing. The plant has contributed towards curbing the post harvest losses and empowered farmers through value addition. It is estimated that the value of the mango sector in Makueni County is about 3billion Kshs<sup>2</sup>. Plate 3 shows Makueni Mango processing plant.

<sup>2</sup>[www.kenya-today.com,1/6/2018](http://www.kenya-today.com,1/6/2018) at 10:30 hrs



**Plate 3: Mango processing plant in Makueni County**

Although the National Spatial Plan (NSP) is neither anchored in the constitution nor in any statutory instrument, the Government Department responsible for physical planning has finalized the preparation of NSP. The Plan details the national spatial vision that will guide the long term spatial development of the country for a period of 30 years. It defines the general trend and direction of spatial development for the country with aim of achieving an organized, integrated, sustainable and balanced development of the country, hence informing the future use and distribution of activities by providing a framework for better national organization and linkages between different activities within the national space. The NSP seeks to set aside land for industrial development in every county with appropriate infrastructure to support industrial developments. Plate 4 shows the industrial aspect of NSP.



**Plate 4: National Spatial Plan**

**Source:** Republic of Kenya, 2015

## 4.2 Challenges

It is too early to come up with an accurate assessment of the efficacy of rural development policies and strategies in Kenya from 2010 onwards as the devolved system of government is still in nascent stage. The focus on rural development planning still revolves around institutional strengthening. The county governments have not yet fully established their structures at the grassroots levels, including the establishment of Sub-County

Administration, Ward administration, Village administration offices which are important for execution of rural development plans.

Inadequate allocation of resources from the national government, coupled with the delay in the release of funds to the Counties, all contribute towards the slow pace of rural development and non-implementation of the priority projects. Additionally, most County governments have fail to meet their targets in terms of collection of revenue from internally generated sources, the resources which the counties could otherwise be used to augment niggardly allocated funding from the national government to leverage on rural development. It has been noted with justification that even in areas where the defunct local authorities of ;the County Councils and the Municipalities, had surpassed their revenue collection targets, the County governments have not been able to match their revenue collection base and as such little funding is generated from within the counties which make insignificant developmental impact.

In terms of spatial planning, there are various types of plans which are prepared to guide rural development activities, which are overlapping and contradictory as well. The County Government Act, 2012, provides for the preparation of the CIDP, CSP and the County Sectoral plans which operationally cover the same jurisdictional area and addressing similar rural development issues. This underscores the need to harmonize planning instruments in order to avoid duplication of efforts resulting in real savings for rural development.

The National Spatial plan (2015-2045), Vision 2030 and more recently the proposal by the government to implement the Big Four Agenda focusing on food security and manufacturing, are all expected to revolutionize development in Kenya. However these noble initiatives have no legal grounding. Theorists of institutions aver that, anchorage of policies and strategies in the legislations dictates on the budgets and the flow of resources together with institutional arrangements for implementation which are lacking in this regard.

The Urban Areas and Cities Act, 2011 provided for the creation of designated, Cities, Municipalities and Towns and to be under the management of Cities and Town management Boards (RoK, 2011b). However to date, most counties have not constituted



these institutions and as such, urban areas and rural areas are operationally managed as a one entity and thus disadvantaging rural areas as resource allocations are usually skewed towards the urban areas.

## 5. Conclusions

There are opportunities to improve the standards of living of the low income population in rural areas and making the process of their development self-sustaining as espoused by Uma Lele (1975), through re-engineering and re-alignment of policies and strategies at the national and the County levels. Rural development planning in Kenya needs to be re-invigorated in order to stem rural-urban migration. Every year, over 300,000 people migrate to urban areas in Kenya from the rural areas, occasioned by push and pull theory, in search of better opportunities. The rural-urban drift has negative effects on the rural areas as the brain-drain sets in leaving out only non-elites to remain in the villages, thus retarding rural development. There are also opportunities for bench-marking from other countries with success stories on implementation of policies and strategies for rural revitalization. Kenyans can learn many lessons from *Kibutzim* and *Moshavin* in Israel and "One Village and product" version of rural development in China, for application into the Kenyan context. Tanzania has a long history of implementation of Ujamaa Villagization strategy, and which has left Tanzania stable and not influenced by the 'tribal' and political schisms which have characterize many parts of Africa, and therefore some lessons from Tanzanian rural development model can be learnt and embraced. Opportunities exist for collaborations and partnership among Training and Research institutions to train and nurture ambitious professionals who are innovative and transformative in the formulation and effectuation of sound rural development policies and strategies to meet the expectations and needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century rural dweller.

## References

County Government of Lamu, (2016): Lamu County Spatial Plan, County Government of Lamu.

County Government of Makeni, (n.d): Amazing Devolution Miracles in Makeni, Downloaded from [www.kenya-today.com](http://www.kenya-today.com), 1/6/2018 at 10:30 hrs

- KIPPRA, (2018): Realizing the “Big Four” Agenda through Energy as an Enabler, KIPPRA, Nairobi.
- Masinde A.K, (n.d): Integrated Regional Development Planning (IRDP); accessed from [www.uncrd.org](http://www.uncrd.org). 31/5/2018, 19hrs.
- Mwangi I Karanja, (2005): Regional Development Strategies for Enhancing Urban-Rural Linkages: Experiences and Implications for Local Economic Development in Kenya, UN Habitat, Nairobi.
- University of Eldoret, (2016): Rural Environment Plan for Kapseret Ward, Uasin Gishu County 2016-2030, Unpublished Studio Report, University of Eldoret, Eldoret
- Republic of Kenya, (2012e): The Inter-Governmental Relations Act, 2012, Nairobi Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2012a): The County Government Act, 2012, Nairobi, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2010): Constitution of Kenya 2010; Nairobi, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya (2012b): The Land Act 2012, Nairobi, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2012c): The Land Registration Act No. 3 of 2012, Nairobi Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2012d): The National Land Commission Act No. 5 of 2012, Nairobi, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2011a): Environment and Land Court Act 2011, Nairobi Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2011b): Urban Areas and Cities Act 2011, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2007): Kenya Vision 2030, Government of Kenya. Nairobi, Ministry of Planning and National Development.
- Republic of Kenya, (2012): Community Land Act No. 27 of 2016, Nairobi, Government Printer.
- Republic of Kenya, (2015): National Spatial Plan (2015-2045), Ministry of Lands and Physical Planning, Nairobi.
- Swynnerton R J. M, (1953): A plan to intensify the Development of African Agriculture in Kenya, Ministry of Agriculture and Water Resources, Nairobi.
- Uma Lele, (1975): The Design of Rural Development: Lessons from Africa A World Bank research publication. Baltimore