

**ECONOMY**

By Mwangi Wajumbi

In the first classes of an environmental science course, students study how rocks on the earth's service give way to growth of moulds, followed by lichen and finally trees, which naturally result to huge forests. Alongside, small crawling insects venture into the young vegetation eventually attracting small animals. The overall result, if things happen naturally, is development of a full-grown ecosystem supporting a whole range of wildlife before the encroachment of human beings.

Likewise, you may have observed the happenings when major roads are being constructed especially through the rural areas. It starts with women setting up strategic feeding points for the road construction workers. As the road works continue taking shape, an enterprising villager will build a mabati kiosk at the roadside and install a kerosene pump for example. Another one will join him and set up a charcoal business.

This may be followed by another one who may soon set up a kiosk for selling domestic provisions. The new businesses are meanwhile stocked by suppliers heading towards the far end of the road, which may even be unknown to the new entrepreneurs.

As the businesses increase, a market is born which may soon become a small town complete with restaurants, and other recreational and entertainment facilities. This sequence of events including that of the ecosystem may be a representation of the occurrences that may shortly take shape in a newly devolved nation.

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budget to the constituencies, the country has undergone an economic revolution. Coupled with rural electrification and continued construction of roads in the countryside, there can never be better opportunities of reversing the rural urban migration, a phenomenon that has in the past been heightened by many years of economic stagnation.

Opening up of the rural countryside will

# Opportunities galore in Devolved Nation



**Road construction engineers at a site in rural Kenya. Such projects have opened up much of the hinterland.**

inevitably create great employment and business opportunities that were previously inhibited by lack of access and poor infrastructural facilities. This situation can easily be understood through detouring from the Nairobi-Naivasha road on the way to Nyahururu and vice versa.

It is now possible to follow the newest road, which cuts through Kinangop constituency branching off from 'Flyover' and cutting through Engineer town and others, all the way to Ol Kalou Town. Understandably, the road eventually gets to Nakuru.

Despite being slowed down (but enjoying the experience) by the meandering of the road alongside the Aberdare Range, it is a great experience witnessing a part of the country that would ordinarily have been out of the way. One cannot fail to imagine the agony such a productive area of our country was undergoing, without tarmac or even all-weather roads. Mind you, the Kinangop area feeds the city with most of its daily vegetable requirements, amongst other farm produce.

Anybody who may have witnessed those recent developments can conceptualize the massive economic transformation that

is now likely to be ushered in by the new constitutional dispensation. With new administration centred on counties, the services will be taken closer to the people.

At the same time, if 2.5 per cent of the national budget has brought so much change in the rural economy, then 15 per cent will certainly hold the rural population from seeking opportunities elsewhere and instead be contained in the counties. Effectively, rural-urban migration much of which has turned Nairobi into a shanty city will be controlled naturally if not reversed.

So, we only need to look out for opportunities arising from the new constitutional order as we progressively benefit from the provisions of Vision 2030.

But then, are our mindsets changing in line with the times? Indeed, we only need to identify the opportunities worth exploiting, therefore creating employment and wealth as the Government continues improving the enabling environment.

The opportunities in counties are so appealing, such that it will not be surprising if this writer relocates to his rural county to be part of the new light as opportunities start trickling in.