

The Chronicle

WEEKLY

ISSUE 0020

OCTOBER 19, 2026

Balanced Budgets: Political rhetoric vs control range

WHEN MEASURED AGAINST FISCAL REALITY, SIFUNA'S 15-MONTH BALANCED-BUDGET PROMISE IS PROVING AS UNREMARKABLE OR IMPOSSIBLE AS RUTO'S 2022 FUEL-PRICE RHETORIC IS UNFOLDING FOUR YEARS LATER.



Ruto's audit: When campaign rhetoric meets governing reality

FOUR YEARS INTO THE BETA MODEL, WE EXAMINE THE GAPS BETWEEN PROMISES ABOUT FUEL, INFLATION, JOBS, AND HOUSEHOLD PRESSURE.

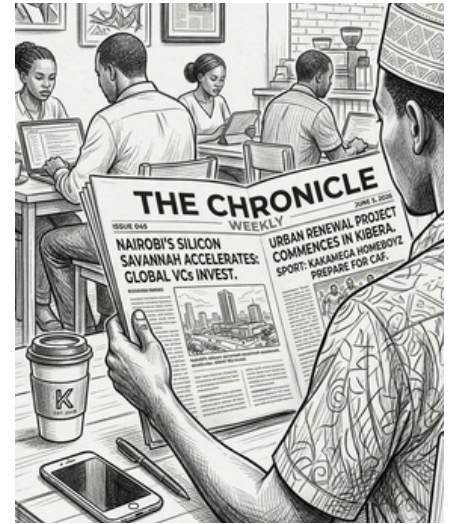
Sifuna's 15-month budget promise is either impossible or unremarkable

AN ANALYTICAL BREAKDOWN OF THE OPPOSITION'S MATH, THE REALITY OF NON-DISCRETIONARY COSTS, AND WHAT A TRUE BUDGET AUDIT REQUIRES.

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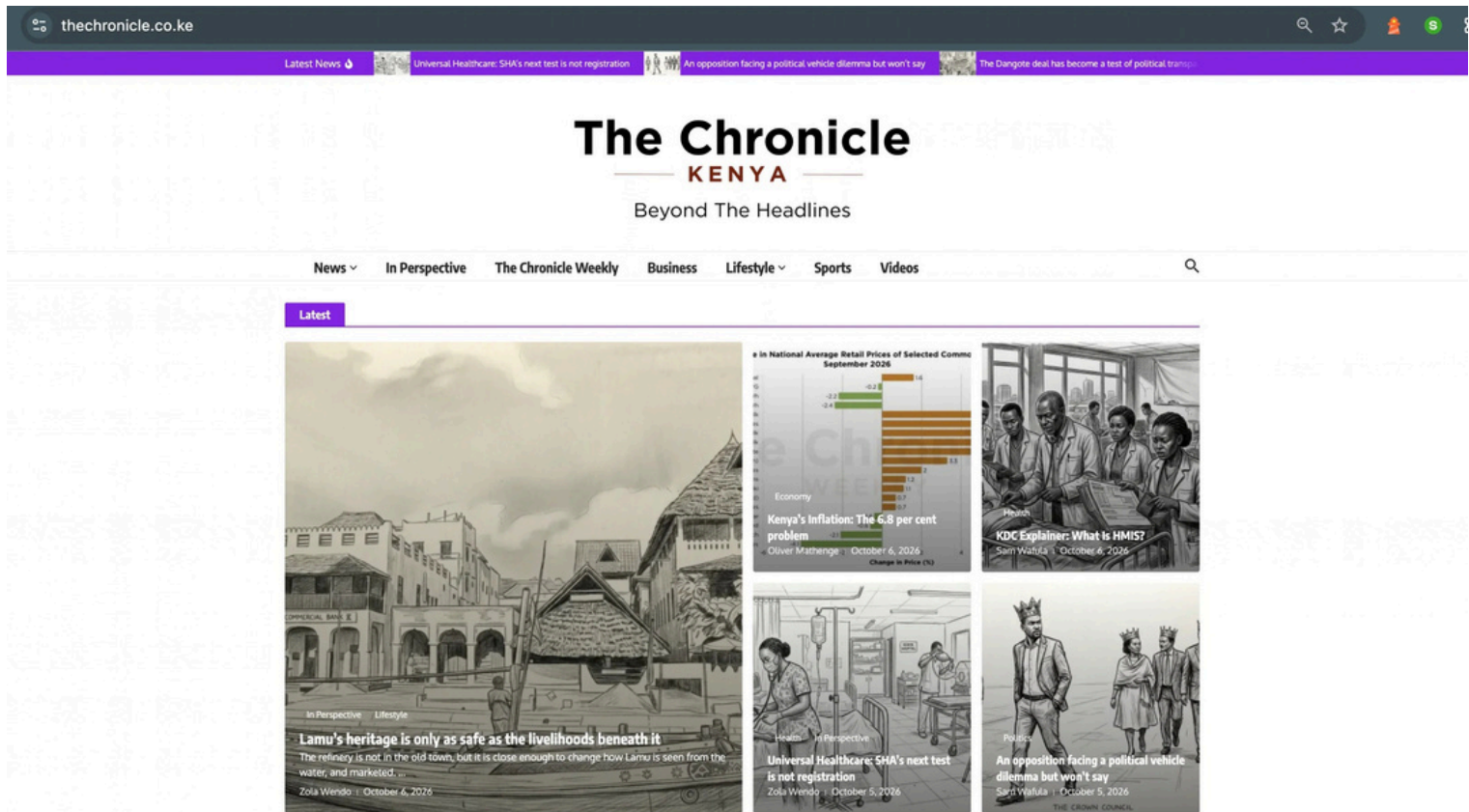
EXPLAINER

What a "Balanced Budget" actually means

A plain guide to which "balanced" a candidate means.

The Chronicle

WEEKLY



The Chronicle Weekly is the flagship publication of *The Chronicle Kenya*, Kenya's trusted digital news platform owned by *StrategiCrest Ltd.*

While *The Chronicle Kenya* delivers a mix of breaking news and real-time updates across politics, business, health, sports, and lifestyle, the Weekly is its considered, curated counterpart; a deeper read for audiences who want more than headlines.

Published every Monday, *The Chronicle Weekly* distils the week's most important stories into a single, authoritative edition. It brings together *The Chronicle Kenya*'s signature editorial strengths: rigorous political reporting, sharp business analysis, contextual perspectives, and vibrant community coverage, in a format designed to be read, saved, and shared.

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Editorial Note



This week, The Chronicle Weekly presents a deeply economic-heavy edition, driven by a singular reality.

Whether we examine presidential campaign promises, first-quarter budget execution, agricultural transformation, county debt crises, or digital procurement, Kenya's fundamental challenges ultimately trace back to shillings, cents, and fiscal discipline.

Politics runs on promises. Governing runs on ledgers. This issue is about the distance between the two.

In our lead perspectives, we test opposition leader Edwin Sifuna's 15-month budget-balancing promise against hard Treasury arithmetic, and audit the four-year economic record of President William Ruto's administration.

Our Data Story breaks down the Sh1.1 trillion question and the sobering revelation that the first-quarter fiscal deficit reached nearly twice the planned target.

We also look beyond traditional commodities into emerging agricultural value chains, investigate the crushing human and economic weight of county pending bills, and assess whether Kenya's new electronic procurement (e-GP) system is genuinely cleaning up public spending.

Because these critical economic realities require extensive scope and depth, this week's edition does not feature our usual Life & Culture or Sports pages.

We believe our readers will find the rigorous, data-driven scrutiny in this issue an essential, timely guide to the choices shaping Kenya's financial future.

Your Chronicle. Your Call.

The Chronicle Weekly asks whether promises deliver in Parliament, county halls, budgets, factories, and stadiums. We report from the desk, but the evidence is often in your clinic queue, fuel receipt, county ward, SACCO statement or fields.

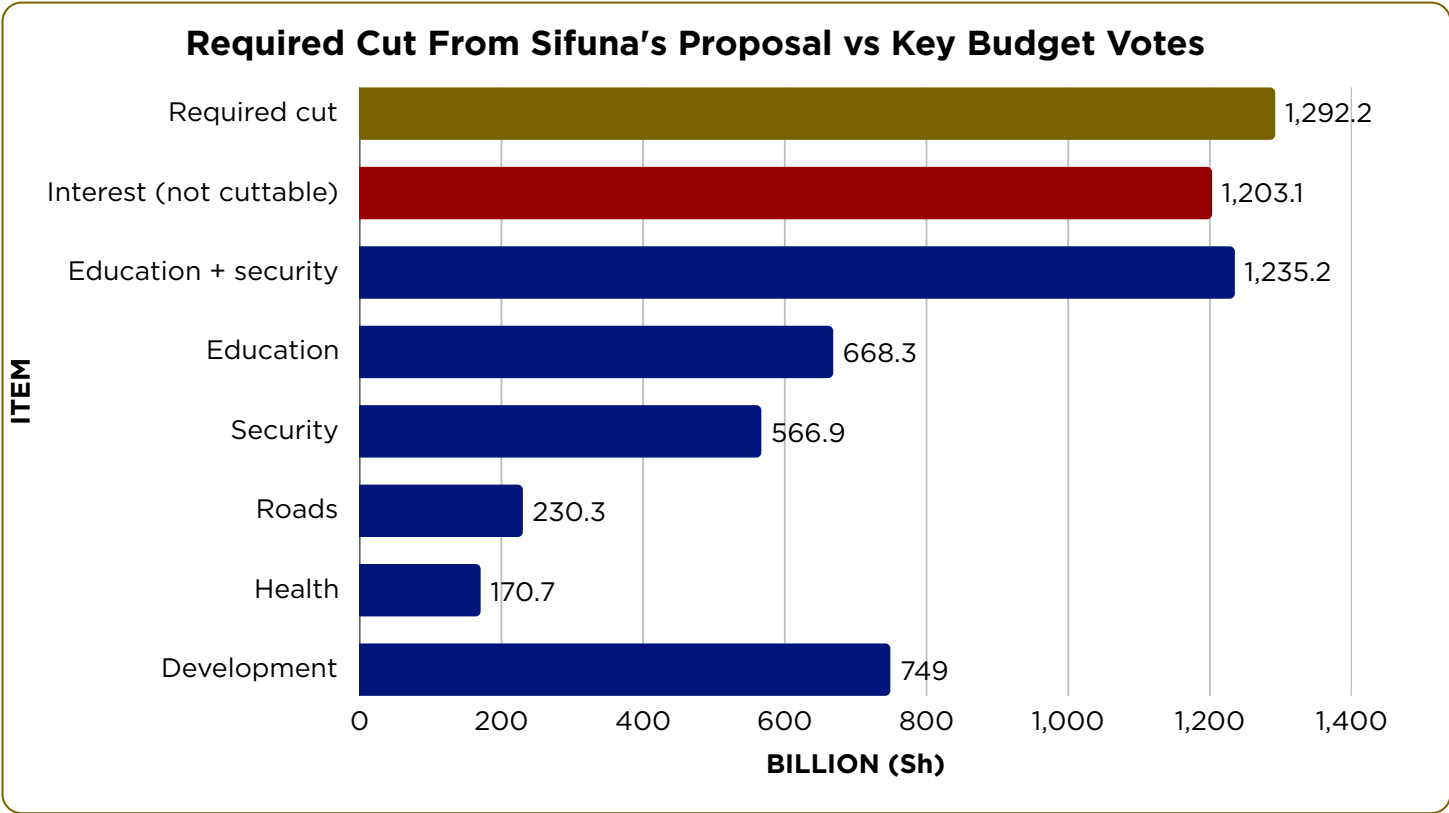
Send us your views. Do you think we got something wrong or missed the point? Tell us. Keep letters under 250 words and make a testable claim; we prefer evidence-based arguments over expressions of mood.

Make tips useful: tell us what happened, where and when, and point to supporting documents, data or witnesses. We verify before publishing, so evidence-backed tips beat rumours.

Email editor@thechronicle.co.ke with "Reader View" or "Story Idea" in the subject, or reply to a Chronicle Weekly social post or WhatsApp broadcast. Include your name and county; tell us if you want to remain anonymous in print.

We read every message, though we can't reply to all. The best ideas shape next Monday's issue.

Sifuna’s 15-month budget promise is either impossible or unremarkable



On October 4, Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna outlined what a Sifuna presidency would do with the economy. He diagnosed Kenya’s problem not as insufficient revenue, but as misplaced spending and waste.

His remedy was to scrap the Housing Levy and VAT on petroleum products, ease VAT on electricity, and balance the budget within 15 months by reducing the State’s appetite for domestic borrowing and redirecting credit to the private sector.

Five days later, he supplied numbers. In an interview on October 9, Sifuna said a team of experts told him they could cut between Sh500 billion and Sh1.8 trillion from the budget as wastage, which would pay for removing fuel VAT and the Housing Levy and lowering VAT on electricity.

On 4 October, he had promised a line-by-line analysis so that he could not be accused of “voodoo economics.” That analysis has not been published, limiting the ability to evaluate this proposal in full, but a balanced budget remains a consistent theme.

In a July interview, he described cutting public spending as the first act of a Linda Mwananchi government, something that needed no financing. At a Thika rally in June, he named the State House budget as the first target.

The ambition is clear, but the arithmetic is missing, and it’s where this promise lives or dies.

Two Meanings Of “Balanced”

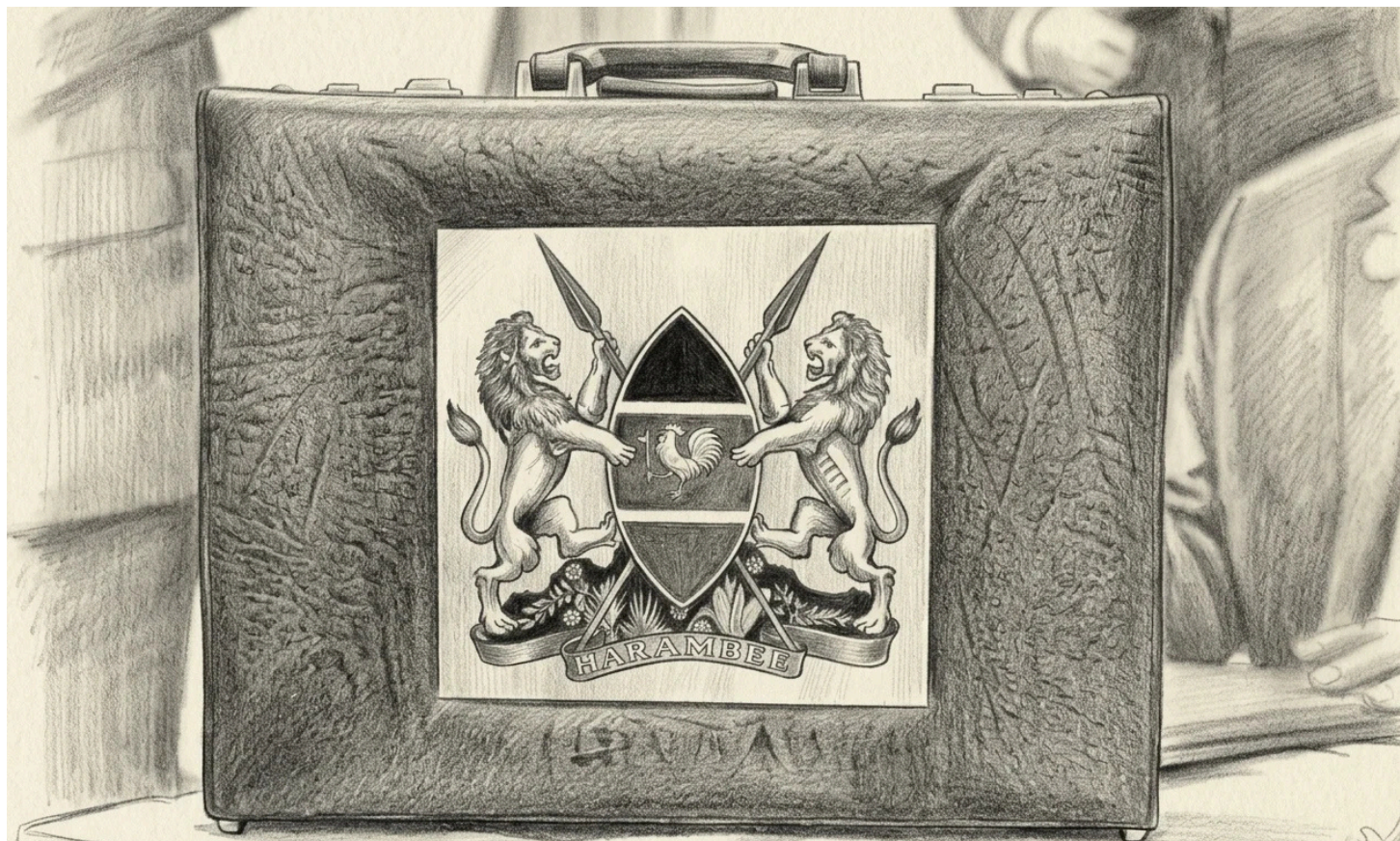
A balanced budget can mean either the overall balance, revenue versus total spending, including interest, or the primary balance, which excludes interest. The promise’s scale depends on which definition applies.

Politicians usually mean the first, but Treasury economists often prefer the second, because interest is a cost inherited from past decisions rather than a choice made in this year’s budget.

Overall, the number is large. Treasury’s Annual Borrowing Plan, published on August 26, puts the net financing requirement for FY2026/27 at Sh1,145.2 billion, or 5.5 per cent of GDP.

On the primary meaning, the number is small. Interest payments are about Sh1.20 trillion in FY2026/27, more than a quarter of the budget. Set against a Sh1.145 trillion deficit, the primary gap is roughly Sh58 billion.

The primary figure is a budget target, and the first-quarter overshoot suggests the outturn may differ, but the target is already set based on that reading.



Sifuna's language about freeing credit for private borrowers points to the overall balance. This piece takes that reading, because it is the only one on which the promise means anything.

The Size Of The Hole

Start with the gap: Sh1.145 trillion, the amount the Treasury must borrow to cover FY2026/27. Now add the revenue Sifuna proposes to give up. Supplementary estimates projected the Housing Levy at about Sh97 billion for FY2025/26.

When the Finance Act 2023 doubled fuel VAT to 16%, the Treasury expected to raise Sh50 billion annually. After it fell to 8 per cent, KRA reported a Sh9.1 billion revenue loss in April-May 2026.

The cut was part of the government's efforts to cushion Kenyans from global shocks that have seen crude oil prices soar. VAT on electricity consumed is set at 16 per cent. Together, they amount to roughly Sh147 billion in forgone revenue.

Sifuna must therefore raise at least Sh1.29 trillion: the deficit plus the forgone revenue, before any electricity relief. That is about 27 per cent of the Sh4.82 trillion budget, and about 35 per cent of what remains after setting aside interest.

Education and national security are allocated Sh668.3 billion and Sh566.9 billion, totalling Sh1.235 trillion. The required cut exceeds their combined budgets.

Hold Sifuna's range against that. At the low end, Sh500 billion less Sh147 billion in forgone revenue leaves about Sh353 billion, closing roughly 31 per cent of the deficit.

At the high end, Sh1.8 trillion clears the gap with room to spare, but only by removing 37 per cent of the entire budget, or nearly half of everything that is not interest.

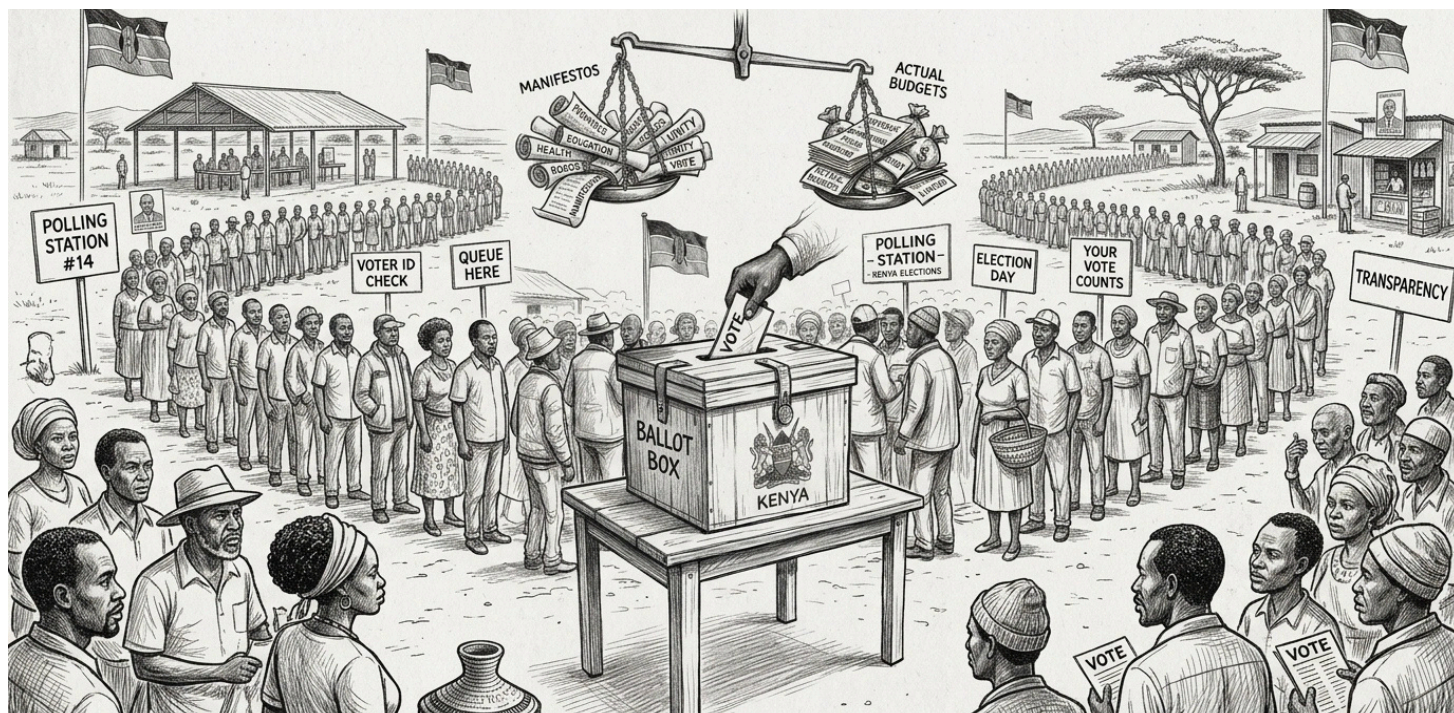
Neither end is a plan. A range that runs 3.6 times from floor to ceiling tells us the lines haven't been costed yet, which Sifuna himself says is still the job to be done.

What Cannot Be Cut

The usual defence of such figures is that wastage is large and the State knows where it is. Perhaps. But the budget structure limits how much of the total can be called waste.

Interest is not discretionary. Public debt stood at Sh13.01 trillion at the end of June 2026, up 9.22 per cent in a year, according to Treasury figures. Interest has risen from 15 per cent of the budget in FY2018/19 to more than 25 per cent in FY2025/26.

Then there is the rest of the budget. Of Sh4.82 trillion, Sh3.53 trillion is recurrent, and only Sh749 billion is development spending. Here is the difficulty for the wastage thesis in one line: if development spending were cut to zero, it would still not cover the Sh1.29 trillion required.



The savings must come from recurrent spending, wages, pensions, operations, and transfers, and a line-by-line audit doesn't delete any of that in 15 months.

Cutting spending also does not cancel what is already owed. Pending bills had passed Sh520 billion when the Cabinet approved payment of Sh23.74 billion of verified bills in October.

A government that balances its books by delaying payment moves the deficit into arrears; it does not remove it.

Sifuna's own pledge to pay hospitals within 30 days of service pulls cash forward in the opposite direction.

Finally, "balanced" does not touch maturing debt. Treasury's gross financing requirement for the year is Sh1.996 trillion, so about Sh850 billion is refinancing debt that falls due.

Reducing the appetite for domestic borrowing as that wall comes due means refinancing elsewhere, at a time when no IMF programme anchors the terms.

The Clock And The Cushion

Then there is the calendar. The general election falls in August 2027, and a president-elect would be sworn in around September.

The outgoing Treasury will write and pass the FY2027/28 budget, which starts on 1 July 2027. The first budget a Sifuna government would write is FY2028/29, tabled in June 2028, roughly nine months into the term.

Fifteen months after a September 2027 inauguration is December 2028, midway through that budget's first year. In plain terms, Sifuna would spend his first year executing Ruto's budget, and the promised balance would have to come halfway through his.

The cushion is thin, and Kenya is unlikely to sign a new IMF deal before the 2027 election, with Fund staff due back in December for Article IV consultations.

The earlier programme ended early because Kenya failed to meet conditions, including higher domestic revenue mobilisation, State-owned enterprise reforms, and disclosure of ring-fenced spending.

Kenya has leaned on the World Bank, which approved a US\$750 million (Sh97.3 billion) loan in June after a year's delay. A government that arrives promising to scrap three taxes will face a lender that wants more revenue, not less.

The revenue base is also weakening: KRA missed its FY2026/27 first-quarter target by Sh58.2 billion, narrowed to Sh40.4 billion after an Appropriations-in-Aid surplus.

A government that starts a term with a revenue shortfall and has promised to give up three taxes must find the money elsewhere.

What He Gets Right

This doesn't make the premise false: waste is real, as Controller of Budget data has often shown. At an October 8 Jamhuri Park town hall, President Ruto said a dispute over the Kenya Sugar Board prevents spending about Sh4 billion in sugar levy.



A report tabled in Parliament in 2025 found more than Sh30 billion of Housing Levy proceeds sitting unspent in Treasury bills. Idle money is waste even when nobody steals it.

Crowding out is a respectable argument too. Treasury plans to raise close to Sh1 trillion in net domestic borrowing this year, and private borrowers compete with the State for the same savings.

Slower government borrowing would, other things equal, free up credit. And Sifuna has done something campaigners seldom do: he has promised to show the lines.

The Test He Set Himself

The Chronicle will hold Sifuna to the analysis he has promised. When it lands, five things will tell us whether it is a budget or a slogan.

- Vote-level lines. Every shilling attached to a named vote head in the FY2026/27 estimates, not a percentage of “wastage.”

- A stated definition. Overall balance or primary balance, said plainly.
- Declared exclusions. How much interest, wages, pensions, and county transfers are treated as untouchable.
- Arrears. How pending bills and the 30-day hospital pledge will be paid.
- A timetable. A quarterly path across the FY2027/28 and FY2028/29 budgets, with the revenue given up shown beside the savings.

The same standard applies to the other side. The incumbent’s record includes a 5.5 per cent deficit of GDP, debt up about Sh1.2 trillion in a year, a first-quarter revenue miss, and a Treasury that keeps reaffirming its commitment to consolidation owes the public lines too.

Taking an ambition seriously means asking everyone for lists, not slogans. Waste is a finding. A budget is a list. Until Sifuna publishes the list, 15 months is a slogan, not a schedule.

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Serving Families Across Kenya

Ruto's audit: When campaign rhetoric meets governing reality



In the final days of the 2022 campaign, William Ruto cast himself as a champion of ordinary Kenyans' economic concerns. He argued the economy should serve hustlers, small traders, farmers, job-seeking youth, and struggling households.

The ambitious bottom-up economic model aimed to lower living costs, improve food security, expand jobs, support small businesses, and make housing and healthcare more accessible. The government would also review taxes driving up everyday expenses.

Four years later, the gap between that campaign message and governing reality defines Ruto's presidency. The latest fuel-price review has brought the question back into sharp focus.

From October 15 to November 14, Nairobi motorists will pay up to Sh226.96 per litre for super petrol, Sh227.76 for diesel and Sh219.87 for kerosene—up by Sh12.93, Sh9.90 and Sh28.49, respectively. The Energy and Petroleum Regulatory Authority cited higher global fuel prices and import costs. Since Kenya imports all its refined petroleum, it remains vulnerable to external price shocks.

A Kenyan president cannot control crude oil prices, shipping costs, or geopolitical tensions disrupting global energy markets. But what did Ruto promise about fuel costs, which prices could his government change, and how well has it protected consumers when global conditions worsen? The answers offer a useful way to assess the wider economic record.

The Fuel Promise And The Cost of Living

During the 2022 presidential debate, Ruto said taxes drove Kenya's high fuel prices, accounting for nearly half the cost across 15 separate levies. He proposed reviewing and reducing them to ease the burden on households.

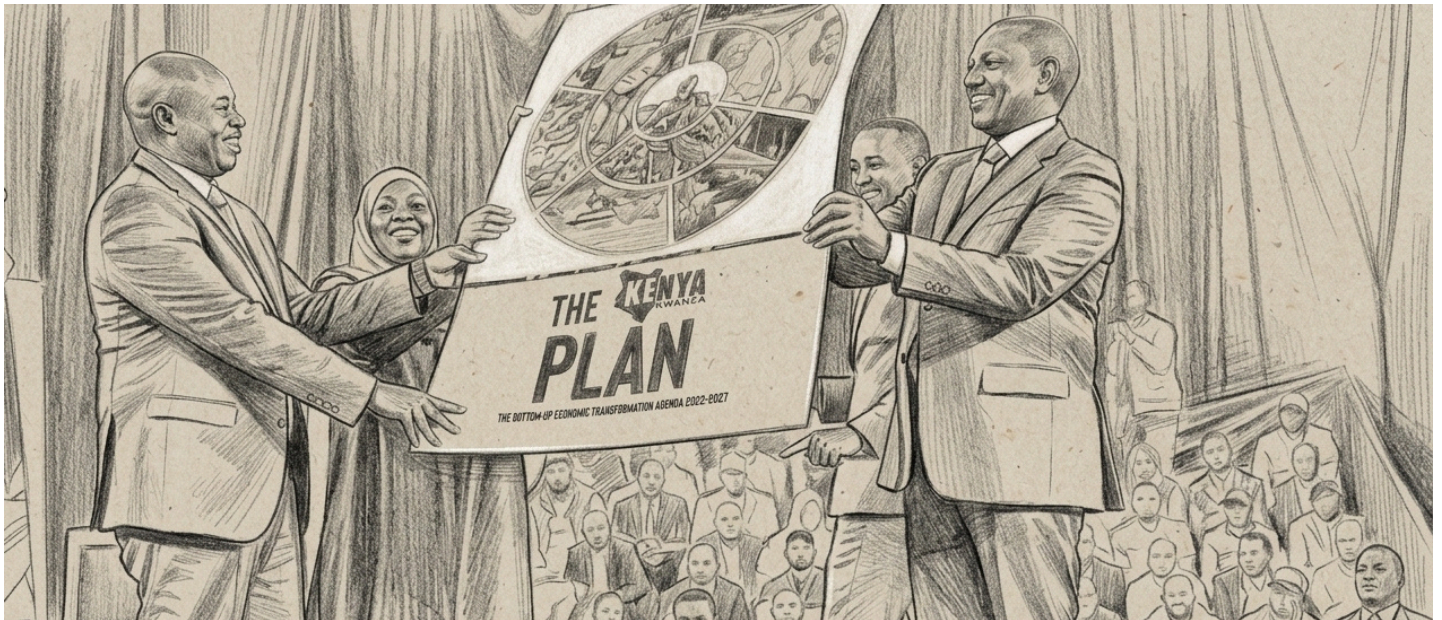
Those claims were disputed. Fact checks found taxes and levies made up about 40.3 per cent of petrol and 37 per cent of diesel prices in July 2022; the regulator listed nine, not 15.

The distinction matters: the campaign argued that domestic policy, especially taxation — not just high international oil prices — contributed to the problem and could change.

Fuel taxation persists, forcing the government to balance demands for cheaper fuel with revenue for public services and infrastructure. In 2024, the road maintenance levy rose from Sh18 to Sh25 per litre. More recently, fuel-price stabilisation measures have included using the Petroleum Development Fund and cutting VAT from 16 to eight per cent.

In May 2026, the President said the government spent Sh28.19 billion on fuel-price support and tax relief during April–June, preventing higher prices. October's increase showed the limits of these measures amid rising import costs.

This doesn't prove government inaction or that every increase reflects a broken campaign promise.



It highlights the gap between promising fuel-price relief and building an economy resilient to external shocks without passing high costs to consumers.

But aggregate growth is an incomplete measure of the success of a bottom-up agenda. The relevant question is how much of that growth reaches households and small businesses, and whether it creates a material improvement in living standards.

Fuel costs affect more than motorists; higher diesel prices ripple through supply chains — from food and goods transport to machinery and services — raising costs even for households without vehicles.

For families spending most income on essentials, further increases quickly cut into what remains. The government must prove its interventions are effective, affordable, and sustainable — not merely explain rising prices.

Growth Is Not the Same as Relief

Inflation alone cannot settle the cost-of-living debate. It measures how quickly prices rise, not whether they have returned to previous levels. Kenya's inflation rate was 6.8 per cent in September 2026, according to the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics. Year over year, food and non-alcoholic beverages rose 9.5 per cent, transport 15.6 per cent, and housing, utilities, and fuel 3.2 per cent.

These figures challenge claims that economic pressure has eased: slower inflation doesn't lower prices, so households still pay more unless prices fall. If incomes lag, purchasing power declines.

Economic growth can still leave many struggling when benefits are unevenly distributed, essential costs outpace incomes, or jobs are insecure and poorly paid.

The bottom-up model succeeds when people at the economic pyramid's base gain a more reliable path to earning, saving, and building assets — not merely when national output rises.

Jobs, Hustles And The Quality Of Work

Employment tests that promise. The 2026 Economic Survey reported 822,100 new jobs in Kenya in 2025, bringing recorded employment to 21.6 million; 87.2 per cent were informal.

Informal work sustains millions of Kenyan families and contributes to the economy. Small traders, artisans, boda boda operators, domestic workers and digital freelancers should not be dismissed for working outside conventional employment.

The key question is whether this work brings higher earnings, greater security and a path beyond daily survival. Self-employment may count as employment statistically, yet provide too little income for basic needs. Businesses without affordable credit, reliable electricity, predictable taxes or enough customers can remain at subsistence level.

The Hustler Fund and similar credit initiatives should be judged not just by loans issued, but by repeat borrowing, repayment, business survival, income growth and borrowers' ability to access cheaper, more productive finance.

The administration's promises about digital jobs and the creative economy deserve scrutiny: success means sustainable work, fair earnings, and opportunities beyond a small, digitally connected group.

The bottom-up proposition is compelling, but success depends on the economic mobility it creates, not its label.



The Debt And Taxation Dilemma

The government's fiscal position helps explain why some campaign commitments have been difficult to fulfil.

In 2022, Ruto criticised the previous administration's borrowing and pledged fiscal discipline. Yet public debt has risen. Treasury figures put public and publicly guaranteed debt at about Sh13.1 trillion in June 2026, up from Sh8.76 trillion in September 2022.

Not all of the increase stems from new borrowing. Exchange rates, refinancing and other factors affect reported debt, while the administration also inherited major financing needs, limited fiscal space and exposure to rising global interest rates.

Still, debt's scale matters: servicing it competes with spending on healthcare, education, roads and support for vulnerable households.

The government must raise revenue to meet obligations and fund development, but higher taxes burden households and businesses. Tax cuts offer relief but may widen the financing gap without spending cuts, greater efficiency or stronger growth.

Fuel taxes show the trade-off. Removing all levies could lower pump prices but reduce public revenue; retaining or raising them protects revenue while increasing transport and production costs.

The issue is not whether taxation is inherently good or bad. It is whether the overall tax system is fair, predictable and productive, and whether the public can see credible returns from the taxes it pays.

This reality offers Sifuna a basket of lessons when as he promises how he will balance the budget.

For a government elected partly on the promise of changing the relationship between the state and ordinary earners, the credibility of that bargain is critical.

The Promise And The Delivery

The broader bottom-up agenda centred on agriculture, small and medium-sized enterprises, affordable housing, healthcare, and the digital and creative economy.

Each offers a legitimate route to expanding opportunity, but each also raises questions about implementation and distribution.

Agricultural subsidies, particularly support for fertiliser, can reduce input costs and help farmers raise production. Yet their ultimate success should be judged by productivity, farm incomes, food availability and consumer prices, not by the volume of subsidised inputs distributed.

Affordable housing can create construction jobs, stimulate demand for local materials and expand access to formal housing. But the number of houses built is only one part of the test. Affordability, access to financing, development location, and the relationship between contributions and benefits also matter.

Healthcare reform is equally consequential. Changing financing institutions and expanding coverage may aim to improve access and sustainability, but patients, providers, and employers' experiences determine whether the reforms deliver on that promise.

Administrative changes cannot substitute for reliable access to treatment and manageable out-of-pocket costs.



Across these sectors, distinguishing a policy announcement from an economic outcome is essential. A programme can be well-intentioned yet poorly implemented. It can deliver visible benefits to one group while imposing costs on another. It can make long-term progress while offering limited relief to people struggling today.

The fair assessment is therefore neither that the bottom-up model has failed in every respect nor that the existence of programmes proves it has succeeded. Instead, the administration must demonstrate, with comparable data, which interventions have worked, who has benefited, what they have cost, and whether they can be sustained.

The Verdict Belongs To The Household

Any Kenyan administration faces real constraints. International oil prices are beyond State House's direct control. Public debt accumulated over many years cannot be resolved overnight. Weather shocks, global financing conditions and geopolitical conflict can disrupt even a sound economic plan.

Those constraints are part of governing reality, but they do not remove the responsibility to make choices, explain trade-offs and account for results. Indeed, a campaign promise becomes most meaningful when the conditions under which it was made become difficult.

Ruto's 2022 message offered Kenyans a specific economic bargain: a government focused on the hustler, the farmer, and the small trader could change the direction of opportunity and ease pressure on ordinary households.

The record since then contains growth, policy interventions and programmes that warrant recognition.

It also contains rising debt, persistent affordability concerns and a heavy dependence on informal work.

The decisive question is whether the economic gains are reaching people in ways they can feel and sustain.

When a motorist pays more for fuel, a trader pays more to transport goods, a family faces higher food costs, or a young person takes another informal job without a dependable income, macroeconomic explanations can sound distant.

They may be correct, but they must be accompanied by evidence that the government is using the policy tools available to it effectively.

The test of leadership is not that every campaign promise survives contact with reality unchanged. Governing requires adaptation, prioritisation and sometimes difficult decisions.

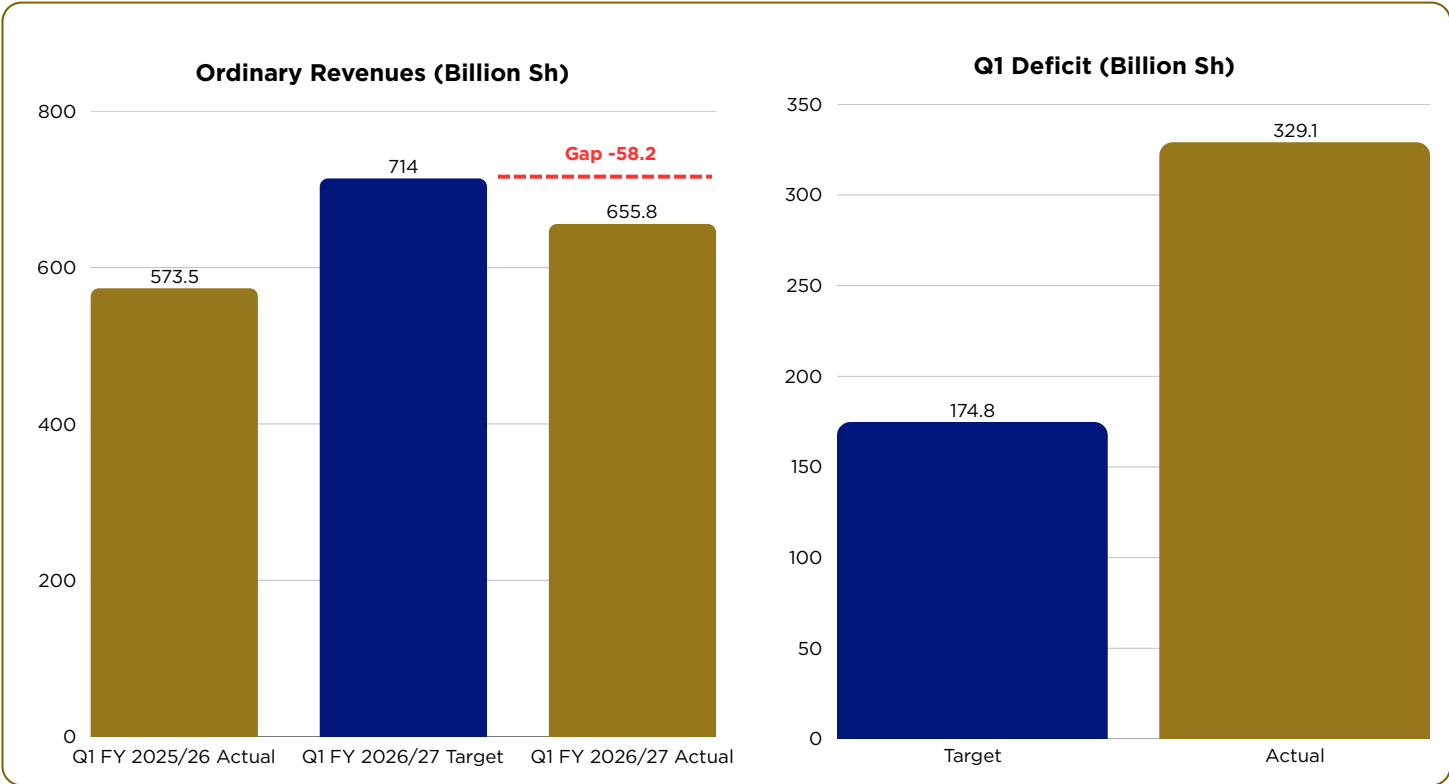
The test is whether those decisions remain consistent with the original promise, whether their costs are fairly distributed and whether the results justify the sacrifices demanded of citizens.

Four years after the campaign, Kenya's economic story is not simply one of promises kept or promises broken. It is a contest between ambition and constraint, growth and affordability, public investment and household pressure.

The bottom-up promise will ultimately be judged not by how often it is repeated, but by whether it changes the economic choices available to ordinary Kenyans.

That is where campaign rhetoric meets governing reality, and those seeking to unseat Ruto must be aware of it.

One Quarter in, the deficit is almost twice the plan



From July to September, revenue fell Sh58.2 billion short of target, spending exceeded it by Sh116.9 billion, and the deficit reached Sh329.1 billion — nearly twice the Sh174.8 billion target. This is the incumbent’s record and the baseline for assessing every fiscal promise this season.

Revenue: Growth, But Not Enough

Revenue rose 14.4 per cent year on year to Sh655.8 billion, reversing a 2.9 per cent first-quarter decline. Still, collections missed the target by 8.2 per cent: growth is measured against last year, while the deficit reflects the shortfall against plan.

Customs drove the quarter: imports rose 25.6 per cent, and September collections reached Sh90.05 billion, Sh965 million above target, boosted by fertiliser, palm oil, rice, and iron and steel shipments.

PAYE, corporation tax and domestic VAT fell short of expectations. Analysts project domestic revenue will drop to 13.9 per cent of GDP this year, from 18.1 per cent a decade ago.

Spending: Over Plan On Every Line

Spending exceeded the quarterly projection by Sh116.9 billion: Sh59.3 billion in recurrent spending, Sh34.7 billion in development, and Sh22.9 billion in county allocations.

The Treasury proposes tax rationalisation, expanding the digital tax net, and shifting infrastructure costs to the newly capitalised National Infrastructure Fund. Only the latter changes where costs are booked, not how much is raised.

The deficit gap is Sh154.3 billion. Revenue and spending variances total Sh157.3 billion, leaving about Sh3 billion attributable to other items, probably grants.

What It Means For Promises

The Q1 deficit of Sh329.1 billion was 28.7% of the annual Sh1,145.2 billion net financing requirement, exceeding the 25 per cent for the year elapsed and the 15.3 per cent target.

Reducing the deficit from 6.8 per cent of GDP last year to 5.5 per cent now looks harder, with interest alone budgeted at about 41 per cent of ordinary revenue.

A recurring Sh154.3 billion quarterly overshoot would total about Sh617 billion annually, exceeding the Sh500 billion low end of Sifuna’s wastage range.

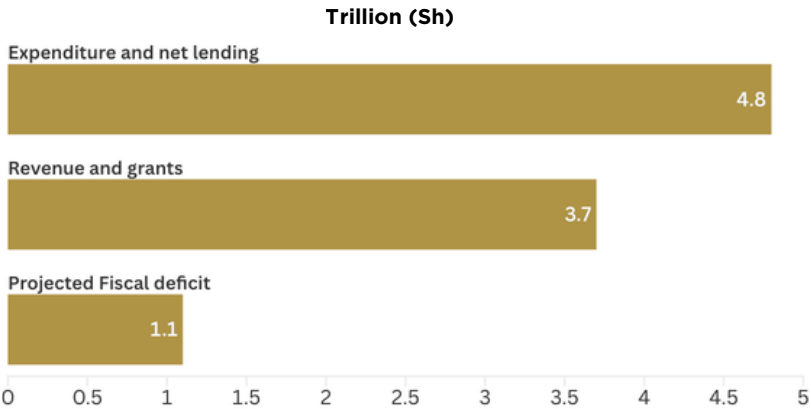
This illustrates scale, not a forecast; quarterly figures are seasonal. Both the challenger’s promise to “cut waste” and the incumbent’s pledge to consolidate face the same problem: neither is moving the needle.

THE SH1.1 TRILLION QUESTION

If elected President, Edwin Sifuna says he could balance Kenya's budget within 15 months by cutting Sh500 billion to Sh1.8 trillion in waste while lowering some taxes. It's an ambitious promise, but the figures reveal a major gap and unanswered questions.

THE BUDGET GAP

The National Treasury's 2026 Budget Statement projected the following fiscal framework for the 2026/27 financial year.



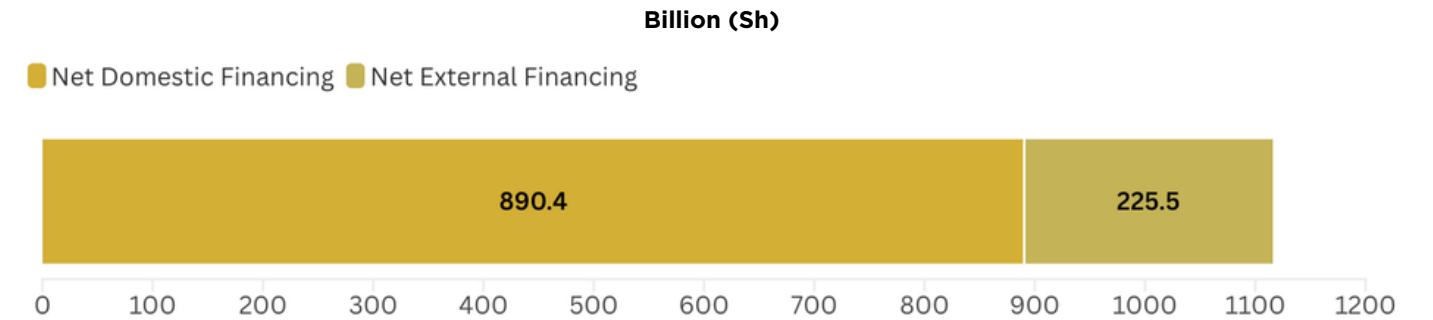
THE QUESTION BEHIND THE NUMBER

Can Kenya eliminate more than Sh1.1 trillion in annual borrowing needs without shifting the cost to households, through other taxes, reduced services or delayed public payments?

That is the test Sifuna's proposal must pass, and the test any government promising fiscal discipline should face.

HOW THE GAP IS FINANCED

The Treasury's fiscal framework identified two principal sources of net deficit financing.



THE WASTE CLAIM

Senator Edwin Sifuna says his administration, if elected, could identify between Sh500 billion and Sh1.8 trillion in government waste.

Sifuna's stated estimate

Sh500 billion - Sh1.8 trillion
(alleged waste)

Equivalent share of 2026/27 deficit

Sh500 billion ~45%	Sh1.116 trillion ~100%	Sh1.8 trillion ~161%
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WHAT WOULD IT TAKE TO BALANCE THE BUDGET?

Verified expenditure savings	Revenue performance	Tax policy decisions	Spending priorities	Debt management
Protecting cost of eliminating unnecessary, inflated or duplicated spending.	Concluding the cost of complex and convoluted and redefining how they would be funded.	Concluding the cost of proposed tax cuts and redefining how they would be funded.	Ensuring the cost of services while reviewing programmes and projects.	Accounting for costs, repayment needs, and the financing needed during the transition.

Beyond Maize and Tea: The agricultural transformation Kenya rarely talks about



Kenya's agricultural debate has long centred on familiar commodities: maize and food security, tea and coffee exports, and sugarcane, which returns to the headlines when millers struggle, farmers go unpaid, or imports threaten local production.

However, the October 8 Presidential Agriculture Town Hall at Jamhuri Park previewed a shift toward an agricultural economy spanning overlooked regions, production systems and industrial markets, not just familiar crops.

From Tana River sugarcane and Western Kenya Robusta coffee to Cayenne chillies for extraction, these developments show Kenya's strategy shifting beyond food production toward commercially viable industries built around its agricultural products.

The question, then, is whether these emerging opportunities can move from policy announcements and investment commitments to reliable markets, productive farms and improved incomes.

To bridge the gap between intention and impact, clear frameworks for public-private coordination will be needed to direct investment toward infrastructure and extension services.

Policy should enforce market contracts, monitor production, improve access to affordable inputs and finance, and ease market entry and export regulations.

Tana River: Emerging Sugar Belt

For decades, Kenya's sugar industry has relied on smallholders in the western and Nyanza regions, who supply factories such as Mumias, Nzoia, Sony, and Chemelil. Production is limited by ageing factories, unreliable cane supply, fragmented land, and slow-maturing rain-fed varieties.

The town hall highlighted an alternative in Tana River, where irrigated sugarcane is being developed under a model that combines large-scale cultivation, mechanisation and industrial processing.

Forum figures were striking: trial production reportedly achieved cane maturity in nine months and yields of 50 tonnes per acre. If independently validated at commercial scale, these results would show how irrigation and agro-climatic conditions can boost productivity.

Two private investors reportedly have commitments covering 50,000 acres each, creating the prospect of 100,000 acres of new sugarcane production in Tana River. According to figures presented at the town hall, the national ambition is to expand production to achieve net-exporter status by 2029-2030.

Beyond sugar, Tana River could produce ethanol, generate electricity from bagasse, and support other processing, creating multiple revenue streams from one crop.



However, projections rely on assumptions: trial yields may not scale to 100,000 acres, and commercial success depends on water, irrigation costs, soil, seed-cane supply, factory capacity, and transport. Mitigate these risks by investing in water infrastructure and adopting efficient irrigation to reduce vulnerability to water scarcity.

Improved access to certified seed cane, phased infrastructure development, and flexible, scalable processing capacity can help manage supply and demand uncertainty. Targeted government support and private-sector logistics and technical services are essential to close implementation gaps.

Local communities matter: large-scale irrigated agriculture competes for land and water, while pastoralism and other livelihoods remain vital. The project's performance assessment must therefore include benefit distribution, the protection of community interests, and sustainable water use.

Inclusive planning will require establishing consultation forums, local stakeholder committees, and regular feedback sessions where community members can raise concerns and help shape implementation.

Mechanisms such as participatory monitoring, community representatives on oversight bodies, and transparent reporting structures are essential to ensure that local voices are heard and emerging issues are addressed in real time.

Tana River, then, tests whether Kenya can build a new agricultural production frontier without repeating the structural weaknesses that have troubled its established sugar industry.

The Hidden Robusta Opportunity

Kenya is known for highland-grown Arabica, but the town hall highlighted an opportunity to grow Robusta at lower altitudes, boost domestic processing, and reduce reliance on imported instant coffee.

This matters commercially: instant coffee is manufactured, not grown, and local production requires suitable beans and industrial extraction, drying, packaging, and distribution.

The town hall cited demand for instant coffee, reported distributing one million Robusta seedlings to farmers in Busia and nearby areas, and said some of a Sh1 billion national seedling allocation would support Robusta production.

The shift is visible in western Kenya. In June 2025, Busia County said it distributed over 400,000 Robusta seedlings to 2,500 registered farmers and stressed the need to build local production and processing capacity to revive the crop.

Robusta could expand Kenya's coffee economy beyond premium Arabica, support farmers in suitable lower-altitude areas, and supply manufacturers serving the instant-coffee market.

This could transform Kenya's coffee industry from one focused almost entirely on export-grade beans into a diversified sector serving international speciality markets, domestic consumers and industrial processors — advancing value-added production.



Seedling distribution is just the start: Robusta needs suitable varieties, agronomic support, adequate production, reliable buyers, and viable processing.

Key bottlenecks include aggregating smallholder supply, providing affordable financing for farmers, delivering technical extension, and securing reliable processor procurement.

Address these constraints by supporting cooperative marketing, expanding smallholder coffee credit, scaling field extension, and enforcing processor-farmer group contracts.

Plants need reliable supplies; farmers need predictable demand and competitive prices. Kenya's success depends on linking growers, processors, and consumers—not just planting more coffee.

Cayenne Chillies: Industrial-Export Proposition

A lesser-known opportunity discussed at the town hall was supplying Cayenne chillies to Chinese industry. Beyond fresh produce and spices, red chillies contain capsaanthin, a pigment used in food colouring and other applications.

Industrial demand could create a market for farmers growing the required varieties, quality, and volumes. The town hall outlined Chinese manufacturers' need for natural colour additives and efforts to establish regulations and phytosanitary arrangements for direct Kenyan exports.

The reported work with China's General Administration of Customs matters because access to a foreign market depends on formal compliance requirements, not simply buyer interest.

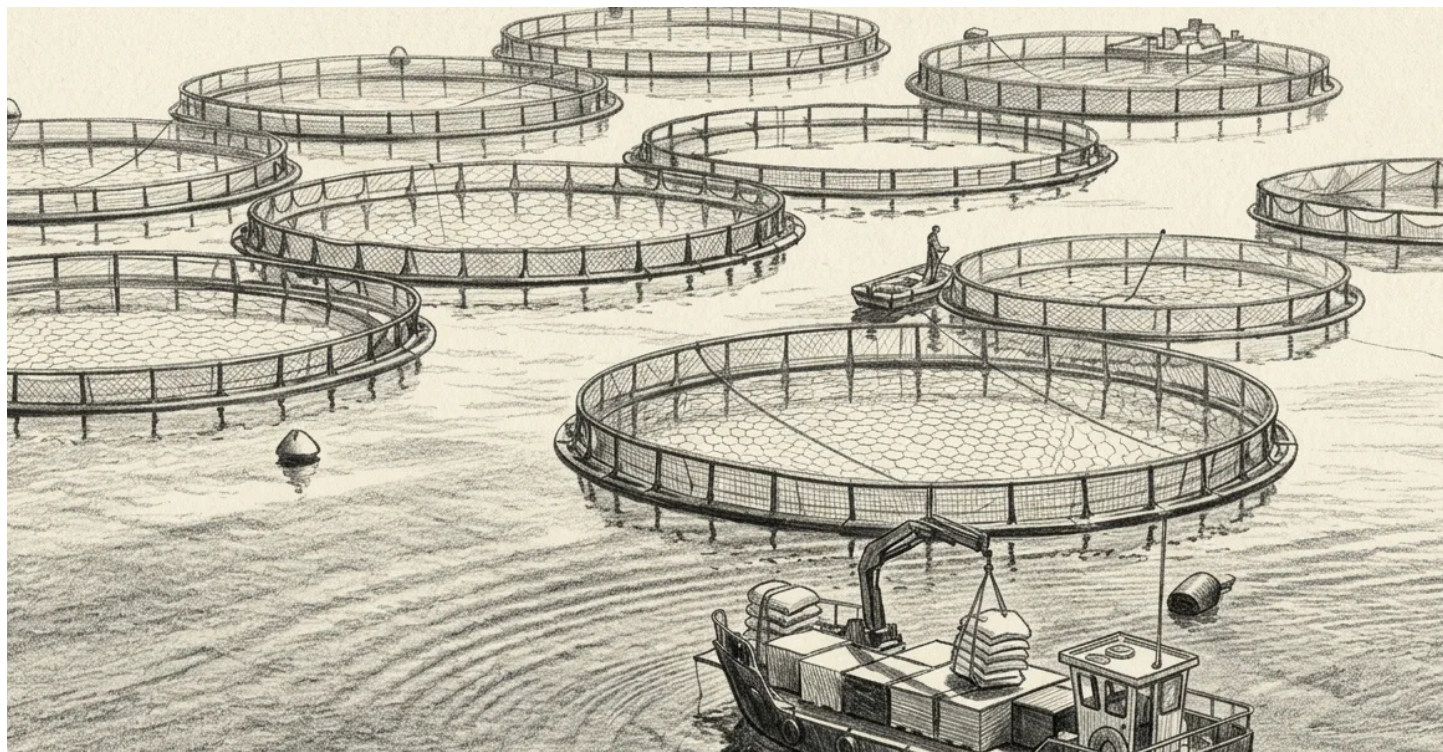
The discussion highlighted climate adaptation in Kerio Valley crop-damage hotspots, where elephants eat maize and pawpaw. Chilli was presented as an alternative, since wildlife generally avoids it.

With suitable varieties and production systems, chilli could boost farmers' income and reduce wildlife damage. But it cannot resolve human-wildlife conflict, which also involves land use, conservation and community safety.

The commercial challenge matters too: industrial buyers need consistent volumes, traceable production and agreed quality standards. Farmers need reliable contracts, inputs and transparent prices; exporters must meet food-safety and phytosanitary rules.

Before treating China as an established export market, key questions remain: Are protocols finalised and shipments underway? What prices are buyers offering, and how much value will reach growers?

Cayenne's significance lies in linking a relatively unfamiliar crop to a defined industrial market, rather than encouraging farmers to grow a commodity first and search for buyers later. It is another example of the broader agricultural shift this article is tracing.



Production And Marine Aquaculture

Kenya's fisheries sector offers another illustration of the same shift: moving from dependence on natural resources towards more structured production systems that can support the broader agricultural transformation.

The town hall reviewed progress on the Kabonyo Fisheries and Aquaculture Research Centre in Kisumu, plans for hatcheries beyond freshwater tilapia, and grants and deep-sea fishing boats for coastal communities. It also discussed rabbitfish, shrimp and other marine species.

The initiatives aim to expand aquaculture and help coastal communities access higher-value fisheries. Inland cages and hatcheries could secure fingerling supplies and inputs; marine aquaculture could diversify products if hatcheries, sites, feed, expertise and markets advance together.

Kabonyo could help address a key constraint: reliable fingerling supplies. But the centre must do more than open—it needs to provide quality fingerlings, assist farmers and enable commercially viable fish farming.

Cage farming requires controls on stocking, feed waste, disease, and impacts on water. Marine aquaculture brings technical and ecological challenges, while coastal communities need sustainable access to resources and viable markets.

The aim is to ease pressure on wild fisheries while creating fish, jobs and income.

Success depends on infrastructure and support that boost production, improve post-harvest handling and make fishing-community earnings more reliable.

Industrial Value Hidden in Livestock

Livestock policy often focuses on milk prices, beef production, animal disease and pastoral livelihoods. The town hall highlighted another opportunity: using hides and skins to build a domestic leather industry.

Discussion covered a directive to source military and police footwear from Kenyan leather, develop the Kenani Leather Industrial Park in Machakos, invest in effluent treatment and attract finished-leather manufacturers.

Kenya's livestock sector supplies hides and skins, but their value depends on proper preservation and processing into competitive products. Government purchasing could secure demand, spur investment and jobs, and boost demand for livestock products.

Higher export duties on raw hides are proposed to retain processing and value addition in Kenya.

Success depends on manufacturers meeting quality, cost and delivery standards. Hides must be collected and preserved properly, tanneries must have reliable supplies and meet environmental rules, and finished goods must compete beyond government contracts.

The leather industry illustrates a broader lesson for agriculture: livestock's value extends beyond meat and milk.



Hides and skins can support a manufacturing chain that creates jobs and keeps more economic value local, but only if the links between farmers, traders, tanneries, and manufacturers work efficiently.

Common Thread: Value Addition, Not More Production

The five developments signal a shift in Kenya's agricultural policy: identifying production opportunities, linking them to industrial demand, and building infrastructure to capture more domestic value.

Tana River sugar aims to expand production into a new region and link it to processing and energy. Robusta coffee aims to build a domestic supply base for a product Kenya consumes but also imports.

Cayenne chillies can connect farmers to specialised industrial-export markets. Aquaculture expands fish production through controlled systems, while leather turns livestock by-products into inputs for domestic manufacturing.

Despite their differences, these industries need viable production, reliable inputs, infrastructure, financing, skilled labour, clear rules, and buyers willing to pay sustainable prices.

They show why announcements alone can't measure agricultural transformation: committed sugarcane acreage isn't productive acreage, distributed seedlings aren't mature coffee trees, and buyer negotiations aren't completed export markets.

Construction progress does not guarantee a functioning hatchery, while a local procurement directive does not automatically make domestic manufacturing competitive.

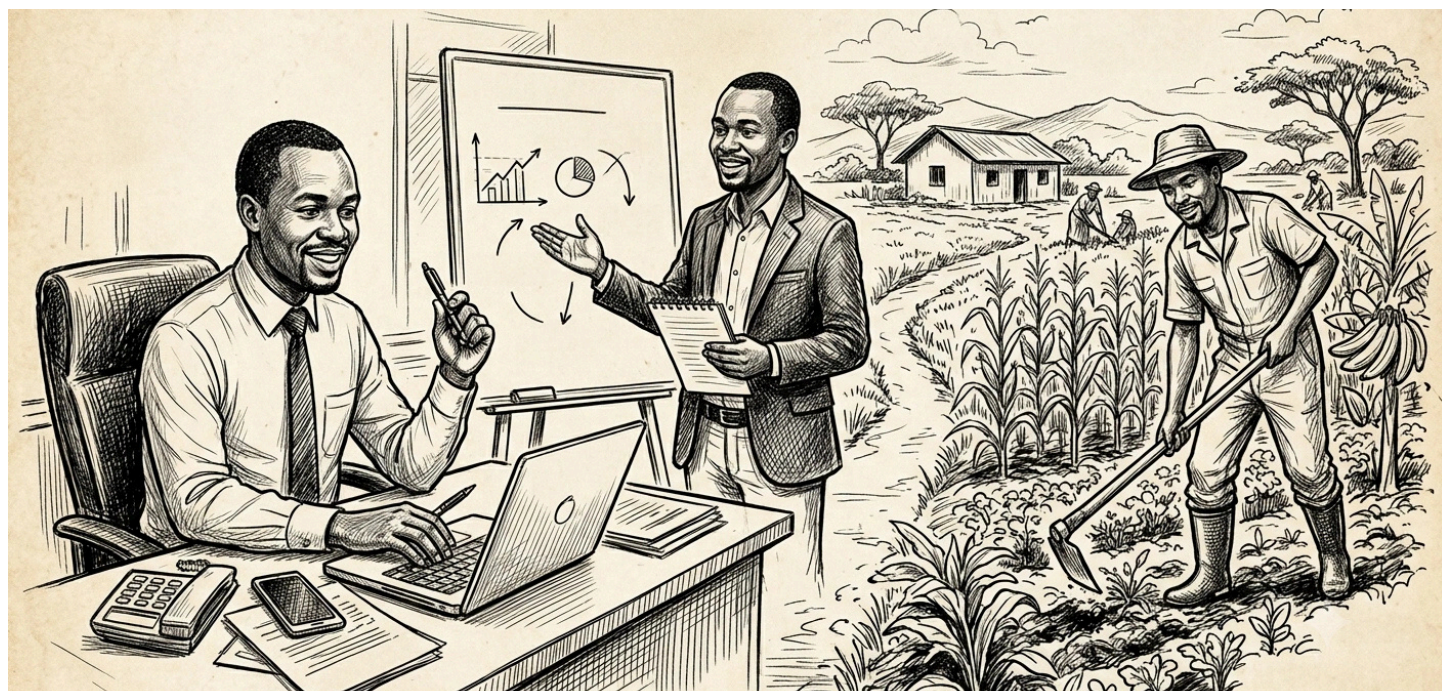
Kenya needs to track these initiatives against measurable outcomes, including actual production, processing capacity, farmer participation, market access, employment and the share of value retained within local economies.

Clear project KPIs—such as yield, processed volume, export growth, and farmers benefiting—set benchmarks for success.

Periodic reviews, independent audits, and progress reports will show whether policies deliver results and where adjustments could improve impact.

Integrating stakeholder feedback and documenting lessons learned will further strengthen accountability and support ongoing improvement across the sector.

Counties owe billions; who is paying the price?



Devolution was intended to bring government closer to people, direct resources into local economies and make spending more responsive.

Yet thousands of businesses supplying county governments face a painful contradiction: counties can award contracts and receive goods or services, then leave bills unpaid for years.

The problem is substantial. Counties reported about Sh174.4 billion in pending bills at the end of 2024/25, according to the Controller of Budget.

The National Treasury's subsequent Budget Review and Outlook Paper put cumulative county bills at Sh195.5 billion, using a broader measure of outstanding obligations.

These figures are not interchangeable: Sh176.8 billion reflects counties' reports, while Sh195.5 billion is the Treasury's cumulative assessment.

Both, however, show a fiscal problem counties have struggled to contain.

An unpaid bill may be one line in a national report. For a small contractor, it can mean being unable to pay staff, repay a loan, buy materials or keep the business running.

Communities may face unfinished roads, delayed facility maintenance or projects whose promised benefits remain on paper long after the financial year ends.

Public debate often frames pending bills as a technical issue between government accountants and suppliers, overlooking their wider economic impact.

County governments buy construction, transport, food, medical supplies, professional services and more. When payments stall, businesses that employ people and sustain local markets bear the pressure.

The issue is not just how much counties owe, but how an institution entrusted with public money can keep accumulating obligations without a credible, verifiable plan to settle them.

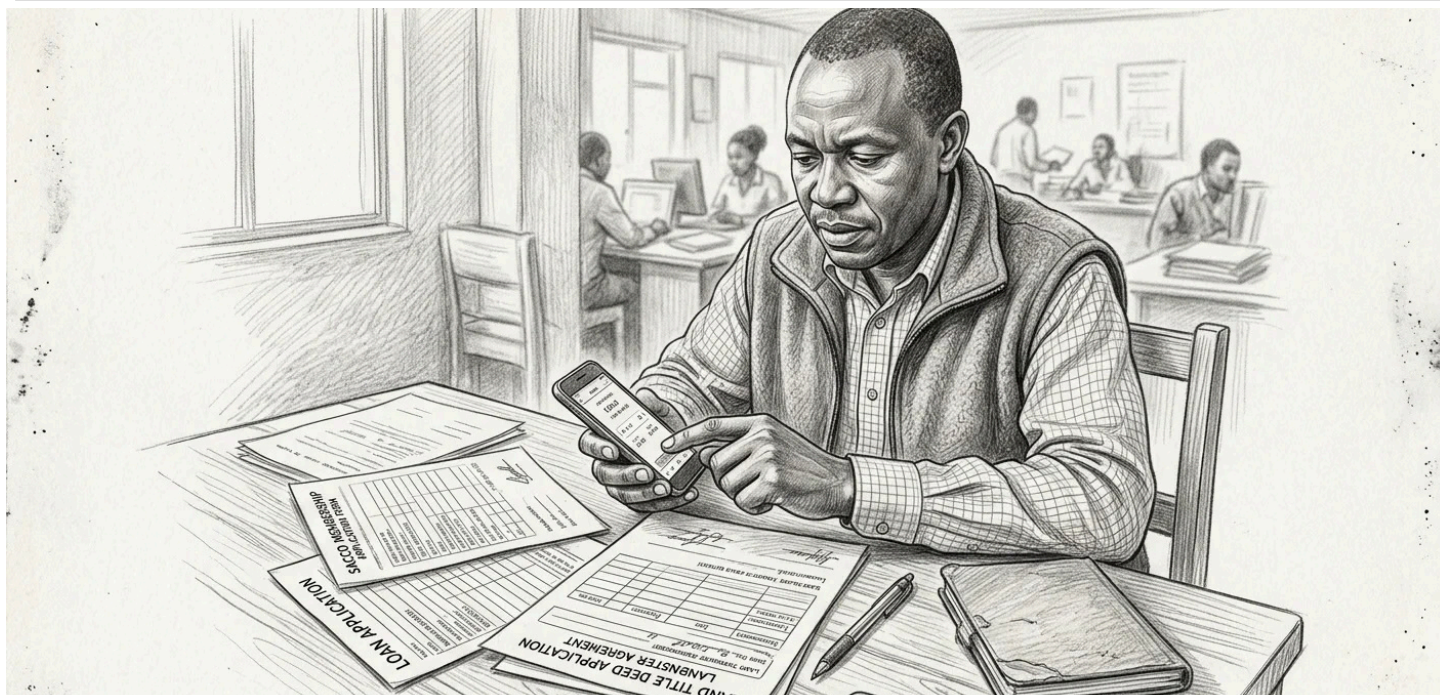
The Weight Of Old Debts

The age of these bills reveals the scale of the problem. The Controller of Budget's FY2024/25 report showed that about Sh85.42 billion in pending bills had been outstanding for over three years.

Another Sh20.34 billion was two to three years old, Sh19.78 billion one to two years old, and Sh48.88 billion less than a year old.

These figures show that temporary invoice-processing delays or routine year-end payment timing cannot explain much of the problem.

Bills unpaid for three years or more point to deeper weaknesses in financial planning, expenditure control, revenue collection and management of inherited obligations.



They also raise accountability concerns because administrations change, priorities shift, and promises are made, but debts remain. Suppliers may face officials who dispute inherited claims or demand new verification.

Verification prevents public funds from paying fictitious invoices, inflated contracts or unlawful expenses, but must not indefinitely delay legitimate claims. For disputed bills, government should identify the defect, disclose evidence and provide a process to establish validity.

For verified bills, counties should specify payment timing, funding sources, and safeguards against competing demands. Otherwise, each administration can blame its predecessor while suppliers bear the cost.

Nairobi's Outsized Burden

Pending bills vary widely: Nairobi City County accounts for about 49 per cent of the county total — roughly 199 per cent of its approved FY2024/25 budget. Bills equal 43 per cent of approved budgets in Kilifi and Machakos, and 34 per cent in Kiambu, according to the National Treasury.

These comparisons matter because debt alone tells only part of the story. A county's ability to meet its obligations depends on reliable revenue, spending commitments and funds remaining after essential services.

A large backlog relative to the annual budget limits flexibility. Even when the national government releases the county's equitable share, the county must fund salaries, health services, operations, development, and legitimate obligations.

Shortfalls in own-source revenue intensify the pressure. The Treasury says weak own-source revenue collection contributes significantly to counties' pending bills, even though the national government transferred the full equitable share in FY2024/25.

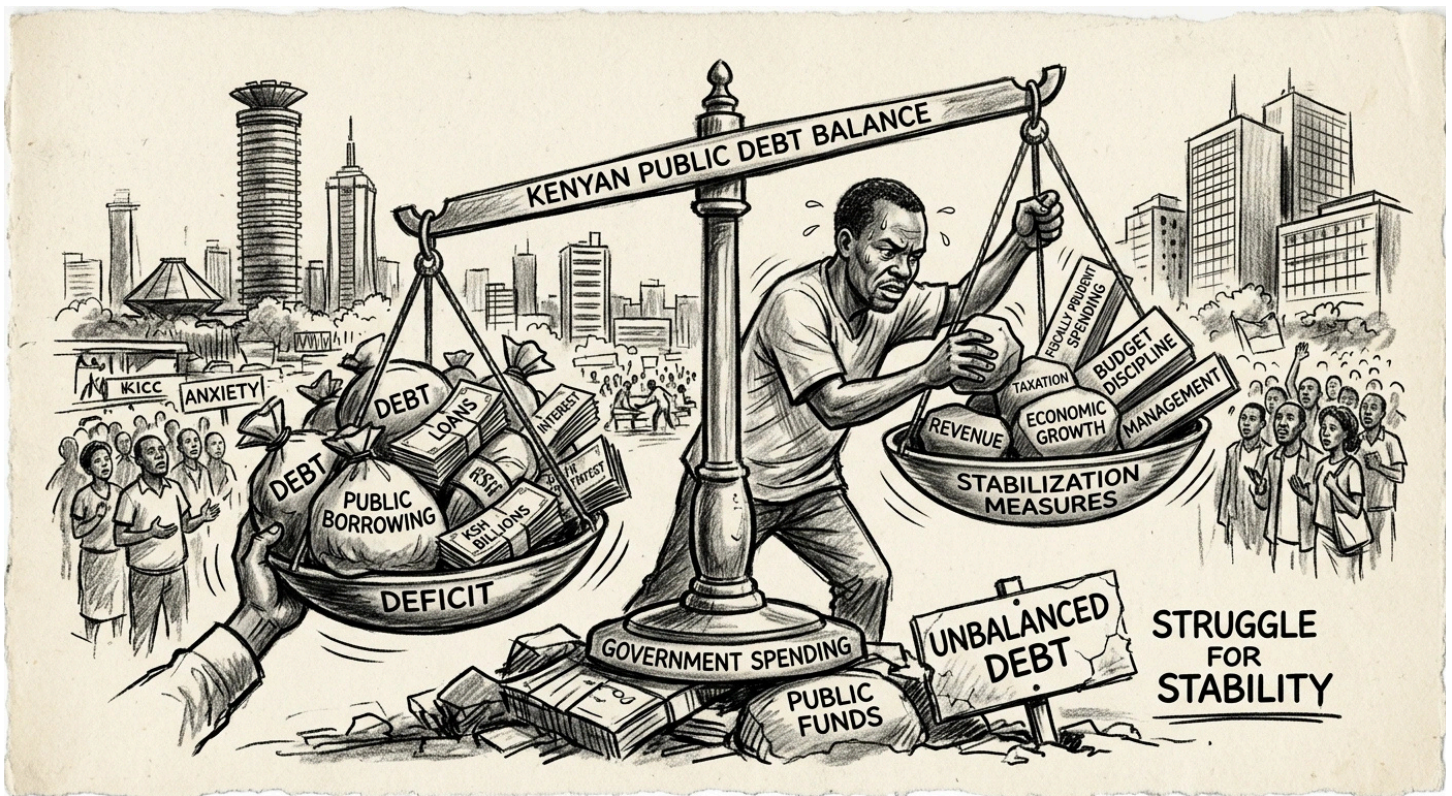
That helps explain the arrears but does not excuse them. Revenue shortfalls should lead to adjusted commitments and cautious procurement — not indefinite delays in paying for goods and services already received.

Elgeyo Marakwet and Lamu offer a counterpoint: pending bills were just 0.2 per cent and 0.6 per cent of their approved budgets, respectively. Though these figures do not prove sound financial management in every respect, they challenge the notion that large arrears are inevitable under devolution. Differences in budget discipline, revenue administration, procurement and expenditure management warrant scrutiny.

Action Plans Must Become Payment Records

Counties have a framework to address the problem. In June 2025, the Intergovernmental Budget and Economic Council adopted an action plan directing counties to tailor and implement measures to clear obligations and prevent new arrears. The national government has also backed accrual accounting and county payment plans to improve debt recording and management.

A credible action plan should separate verified bills from disputed or ineligible claims, set payment priorities, protect settlement funding, monitor progress, and prevent new obligations from outpacing payments on old ones.



A plan is not a payment. Progress depends on whether verified arrears and old bills are declining, while new bills remain manageable. The Controller of Budget has flagged counties that failed to follow payment plans, showing that commitments have not always led to action.

County assemblies should review pending-bill schedules alongside budgets, supplementary estimates and quarterly reports. The Controller of Budget should track opening balances, new bills, payments and closing balances — not just totals. Auditors should verify that liabilities are complete, documented and supported by procurement records.

The public also needs details on payments: which bills were settled, their age and whether the total backlog fell. Paying Sh2 billion in old bills while incurring Sh3 billion in new ones does not resolve the crisis.

The Cost Of Postponing Payment

Pending bills are not only a cash-flow issue but an economic-governance problem. Businesses relying on public contracts may borrow against expected payments to cover wages, suppliers and loans. Delays increase financing costs and reduce working capital. Smaller firms have fewer options: they may struggle to withstand delays, obtain affordable credit or find other markets.

The consequences can extend beyond the original contractor. A supplier who cannot pay employees or upstream vendors transfers the pressure through the local economy.

A business that closes after years of waiting means lost jobs, less competition for future tenders, and a weaker tax base.

Unpaid county obligations threaten the delivery of public services. Suppliers may avoid new contracts, raise prices to offset payment risks or commit fewer resources. Repeated delays can therefore increase costs and reduce competition.

Paying legitimate arrears is essential to restoring trust in public procurement and enabling counties to deliver services affordably.

But counties should not indiscriminately divert funds from hospitals, essential operations or ongoing projects to settle every claim at once.

They must verify and prioritise liabilities, publish realistic payment schedules, and include settlements in fiscal plans. They must also stop making commitments without credible funding.

Progress means fewer old bills, fewer new arrears and public records that let citizens track the change.

Devolution promised to bring resources and accountability closer to people. When counties commission work but fail to pay suppliers reliably, they weaken local businesses, service delivery and confidence in responsive government.

The test for county leaders is not whether they have a plan, but whether suppliers receive payments, arrears decline, and budgets reflect affordable commitments.

In Numbers

Sh226.96**PRICE**

The new price of super petrol in Nairobi following the Sh12.93 hike that was announced by EPRA on October 14

Sh329.1bn**DEFICIT**

Kenya's Q1 budget deficit against a Sh174.8bn target; marks an almost double figure against target.

Sh23.74bn**PAYOUT**

The amount of money the Cabinet approved to be paid out to suppliers who are owed Sh50 million or less.

5.1%**GROWTH**

The growth of the Kenyan economy in the second quarter of 2026 despite Iran war and inadequate rainfall, according to the KNBS.

Quote of the Week



What is wiser: staying out of government for more than 30 years or supporting a government where we are already represented? Do not cut your nose to spite your face. You may think you are punishing Ruto, but you are punishing yourself.

- Kirinyaga Governor Anne Waiguru

KDC Explainer: What a “Balanced Budget” actually means

When a candidate promises a balanced budget, ask which kind: the overall balance compares revenue with all spending, including interest; the primary balance excludes interest, showing whether the Government covers current costs before debt payments. A debt anchor is a legal ceiling on State debt, not a budget balance.

Kenya's record

Parliament's Budget Office tracks Treasury figures from FY2022/23. The overall deficit, including grants, was 5.9 per cent of GDP in FY2022/23, 5.6 per cent in FY2023/24 and 5.9 per cent in FY2024/25. The budget set it at 4.8 per cent in FY2025/26 and 5.5 per cent this year.

The primary balance improved from a 0.8 per cent deficit to a 0.9 per cent surplus in FY2025/26, then to a 0.3 per cent surplus in FY2026/27. Treasury data shows a ten-year average deficit of 6.8 per cent of GDP.

The deficit is now smaller than interest costs, suggesting borrowing covers past debt service but not current expenses. The government budgeted interest at Sh1,203.1 billion this year. Long-term results remain poor: one widely used series records the best outcome since 1998 as a 0.8 per cent surplus in 2000.

The Rules That Already Exist

Kenya has no balanced-budget rule. The Public Finance Management Act sets two at-risk fiscal rules.

Public debt must stay below 55 per cent of GDP in present value, but it reached 65.3 per cent in 2025 and is projected to exceed the limit through at least 2029; development spending must comprise at least 30 per cent of total spending.

The Plan Already on the Table

Treasury projections matter when assessing a challenger's promise. The Budget Statement forecasts the deficit falling from 5.5 per cent of GDP this year to 3.3 per cent in FY2028/29, month 15, for a government sworn in around September 2027.

Thus, the gap between the incumbent's plan and a balanced budget would be about 3.3 per cent, not 5.5 per cent. Whether that's achievable is another question: the first quarter of FY2026/27 recorded nearly twice the planned deficit, according to our Exchequer Tracker.

Three Questions For Any Candidate

1. Which balance? Overall, primary or the debt anchor, said plainly and with a date.
2. Against which baseline? Treasury's 3.3 per cent path for FY2028/29, or today's 5.5 per cent.
3. Paid for by what? Named vote heads and named taxes, with the revenue given up shown beside the savings.

A promise that names its balance, its baseline and its lines can be checked. One that names none of them cannot.

Kenya has put public procurement online; has it made it cleaner?



Public procurement is where government policy meets the private economy.

Roads, hospitals, schools and public institutions require goods and services, creating commercial opportunities but also risks: inflated prices, restricted competition, conflicts of interest and contracts awarded to favoured businesses.

Kenya's electronic government procurement (e-GP) system aims to change how these transactions are conducted and recorded.

The National Treasury launched e-GP on April 7, 2025, following a presidential directive to accelerate procurement digitisation. The platform aims to improve transparency, efficiency, accountability, and value for money by bringing procurement into a single digital environment.

Designed to cover the full cycle — from planning and tendering to evaluation, awards, contract management and payment tracking — the system also connects with the Integrated Financial Management Information System, Business Registration Services and iTax.

Digital records can show when tenders were advertised, who participated, how awards were made and whether contracts were recorded.

Standardised processes may limit discretionary interference, while better data can help identify unusual patterns and monitor spending.

But digitisation alone does not ensure accountability: a system may record a transaction without showing whether prices were reasonable, competition genuine, or contractors qualified. Greater visibility does not necessarily mean stronger competition.

The real test is whether e-GP improves public spending — not simply whether the platform exists.

Adoption Tells Two Stories

The rollout has made measurable progress, though figures require careful interpretation.

In its June 2026 Budget Statement, Treasury reported 1,543 registered procuring entities, more than 40,000 registered suppliers, over 22,000 trained public officers and more than 12,000 trained suppliers or contractors. It also reported 652 published annual procurement plans and over 8,000 tenders on the platform.

A subsequent update from the State Department for Public Investments and Assets Management said 1,546 entities had been onboarded by June 2026, with 4,470 contracts awarded through e-GP worth about Sh18.3 billion.

These figures show institutions and suppliers use the platform to process contracts electronically. However, registration does not mean full operational adoption or effective compliance: institutions may fail to publish all plans, process every tender electronically, or update contract details.



Supplier totals do not show how many businesses actively compete, win contracts or represent a diverse field.

Parliamentary scrutiny underscores the gap. In June 2026, a Senate response said 1,543 public procuring entities were registered and onboarded, but only 679 had published consolidated annual procurement plans on the platform.

The figures don't show exactly how many entities meet every requirement, but they show why onboarding totals are inadequate measures of success.

A useful public dashboard would distinguish registered entities, active e-GP procurers, and those meeting disclosure and reporting requirements. It should identify institutions not yet transitioned, explain why, and set deadlines.

Citizens should be able to see how much of the government's transparency promise has been delivered.

When Reform Meets Government Operations

The rollout has faced challenges: the Parliamentary Budget Office cited slow e-GP uptake as limiting county budget execution in the first quarter of FY2025/26, while the Controller of Budget reported technical and operational problems affecting procurement and development projects over the first nine months.

These problems disrupt service delivery: tender delays postpone essential supplies or approved projects, while inadequate training, infrastructure, or support can make a new system a bottleneck despite sound objectives.

Parliamentary debate has raised concerns about internet and electricity access, remoteness, and the technical capacity of public institutions and suppliers.

In October and November 2025, the National Assembly considered objections to mandatory rollout directives, including whether they addressed procuring entities' operational realities.

The legal dispute matters. In 2025, the Assembly raised concerns about enforcement circulars, their compatibility with procurement law and whether manual and electronic processes should run concurrently during transition.

The controversy showed that major administrative reform cannot rest on executive directives alone when statutory authority and implementation requirements are disputed.

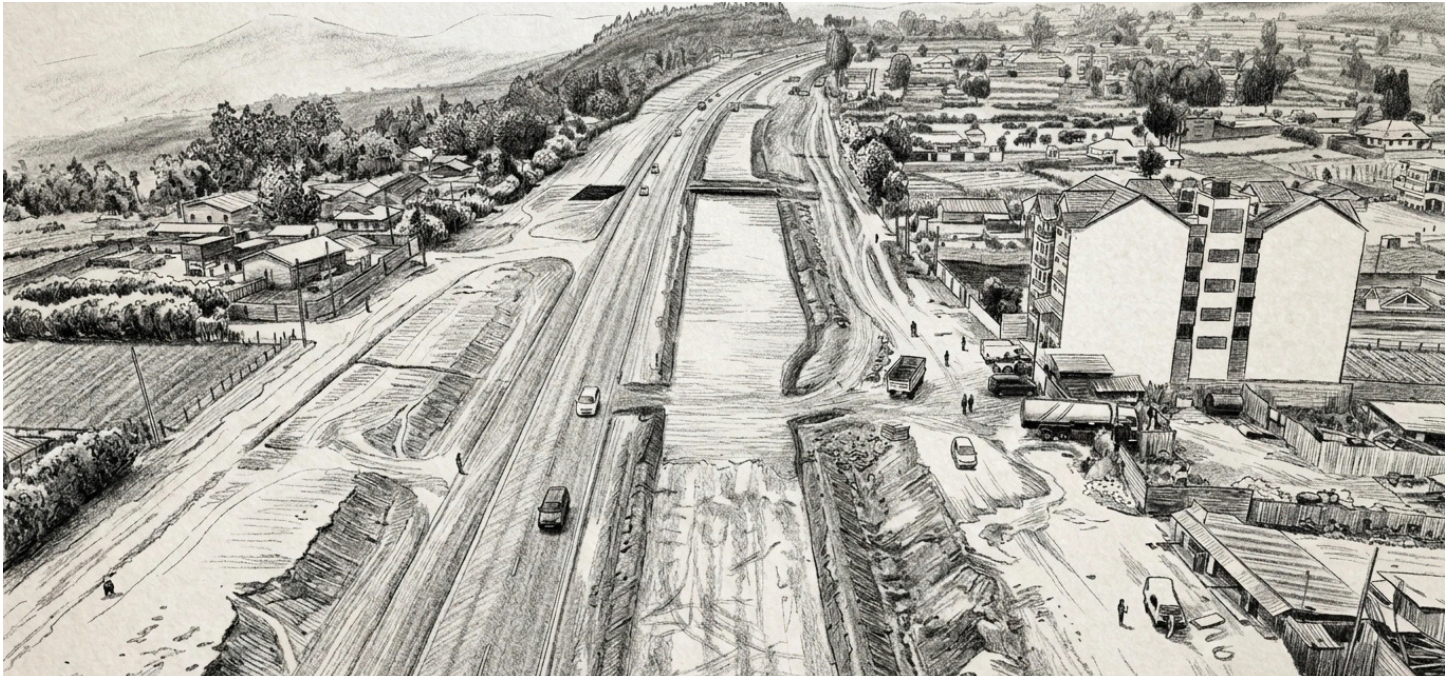
The government later reaffirmed its intention to make e-procurement compulsory. The June 2026 Budget Statement said that, from July 1, 2026, procurement outside the system would receive no exemption.

This signals a renewed push for universal adoption, not proof that every entity is compliant. Nor does the announcement resolve questions about legal instruments, operational support or safeguards needed for consistent implementation.

For the reform to work, government must address both sides of the transition: institutions must use the platform, and the platform must support them.

Digitising A Tender Does Not Eliminate A Cartel

The key question is whether electronic procurement reduces corruption or merely changes how it happens.



A well-designed platform can deter manipulation through time-stamped records, standardised submissions, better traceability and easier tender comparisons. But many risks extend beyond digital transactions.

Competition suffers when specifications favour one supplier, bids are collusive or rotated, or sham offers make a preferred bidder appear competitive. Even compliant processes can yield poor value: excessive prices, substandard goods, or unfinished work.

Digitisation alone can't address these risks; scrutiny must cover specifications, bidder relationships, prices, evaluations, beneficial ownership, contract changes, and delivery. Kenya's e-GP platform aims to improve transparency, but rollout figures don't show whether corruption has fallen or money has been saved.

The Treasury cited a World Bank estimate that efficient procurement could save over Sh85.9 billion annually. These are projected — not verified e-GP — savings. In August 2026, officials still described up to Sh86 billion as a potential annual gain if public entities fully adopted the system.

To demonstrate impact, the government should publish comparable before-and-after data on prices, competition, procurement times, and contract delivery, and disclose contracts flagged by audits, cancellations, major variations, or other red flags. Suspected collusion or manipulation should be traceable, with responsibility established.

The Supplier's Test: Can Government Pay On Time?

Procurement reform must extend beyond awarding tenders to contract execution, work certification and payment.

A platform that publishes tenders but leaves suppliers waiting indefinitely solves only part of the problem. Linking plans, awards, delivery records and payment tracking could help identify bottlenecks and delays.

What Genuine Success Should Look Like

Kenya has taken a significant step towards a shared electronic procurement system. The next phase should shift attention from registrations and technological ambition to measurable results.

First, the National Treasury should regularly publish adoption data by ministry, department, agency, state corporation, county and other procuring entity. It should distinguish registration from active use, plan publication, and compliance with disclosure rules.

Second, publish data that lets citizens assess competition and value for money: bidders per tender, award distribution, prices, variations, completion and payment timelines. Safeguards can protect genuinely confidential information without hiding how public funds are used.

Third, enable independent oversight. The Auditor-General, Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, Parliament and other authorised bodies should be able to examine data, investigate anomalies and follow up on recommendations. The system should help establish not only what happened, but whether procurement was lawful, competitive and beneficial.

Finally, distinguish technical compliance from integrity. A tender can complete every digital step and still offer poor value. Procurement should be judged by competition, award integrity, delivery quality and price.

President Ruto addressing Eldoret residents on October 17 during his tour of Rift Valley.



ISSUE 0020

OCTOBER 19, 2026

The Chronicle

WEEKLY

www.thechronicle.co.ke