

“THE NEW ROAD FINALLY BRINGS THE FUTURE HERE”



High power mast has
Increased security

For the last six decades, Joseph Ndeti has been a trader at Mukukuni market, a sleepy rural market center deep in the Machakos countryside. He is, in fact, the pioneer of this little shopping center having built the first commercial building here 50 years ago which still stands to date.

Now at Ndeti, 95, lights up with a smile as he watches vehicles ‘zoom’ past. For him it brings vivid memories of years gone by when he used to transport supplies for his shop using an ox pulled cart.

The construction of the Kshs 4.2 billion Konza-Machakos-Kangundo-Kenol road by the National government with the support of World Bank, through the Nairobi Metropolitan Services Improvement project (NaMSIP), has injected a new lease of life to this nondescript market center.

“I would spend a whole day travelling to and from Tala town, a distance of only about 21 Kilometers, sometimes



spending the nights in the bush. During extreme weather conditions like when it rained heavy or drought ravaged the area and the cows had no food they could

Joseph Ndeti, 95, a trader at Mukukuni Market, Machakos sits outside his shop

barely walk or when the cart broke down I would sleep in the bush, resulting into lose as

the fresh produce would go bad It now takes only about half an hour to cover the same distance using public transport.” Joseph recalls.

As we talk, Joseph gestures with his walking stick towards a section on the new 75 kilometer road which he explains was highly insecure before the installation of high mast security lighting also by NaMSIP.

“You see that section over there, it was impassable at night as thugs used to block the road and steal from vehicles or waylay pedestrians. ‘Sasa wakora wame mulikwa na stima ya juu,’ to literally mean, “now the high mast security light has exposed he thugs.”

Joseph beams as he continues to stare at the direction of the then dangerous spot on the road before he opines. "Had this road been developed earlier, Mukukuni would have realized a lot of development long ago." Nevertheless, Joseph is quick to point out that the partnership between the Government and the World Bank is still timely as his descendants will still reap the full benefits of this road.

"My children, grand children and great grand children still live here. It is now upon them to embrace the benefits of this new road. Even this family land has since increased its value." As we continued with our conversation with Joseph, a sizeable group of people had already gathered around us, many of them eager to contribute to the story. One of them, a middle aged man who identified himself as Mutua quickly adds.

"What *Mzee* (title of a senior man by age in Kiswahili) is saying is correct. This market center has become freely accessible from both Machakos and Tala towns, our two major towns in this area. These new developments have also led to a sharp increase in land

prices. About one year ago, an acre of land at Mukukuni costed Ksh 400,000 but currently, to buy the same piece of land will cost you not less than Ksh. 1.5 million."

For *Mzee* Joseph, he is happy now that his four acre parcel of land by the road will appreciate in value giving his family more utilization options.



Rural town in Machakos County

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