



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT - (THIRD SESSION)

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

(No. 004 of 2024)

ON

**BICAMERAL RELATIONS BETWEEN THE TWO HOUSES OF
PARLIAMENT**

Honourable Members,

1. You will recall that when I took the oath of office and assumed the role of the Speaker of the National Assembly on Thursday, 8th September 2022, I also solemnly undertook to uphold comity between the two Houses of Parliament and between the National Assembly and other arms of Government.
2. In undertaking to ensure the improvement of bicameral relations between the two Houses, I was cognizant of the unpleasant disputes relating to the processing of legislative business between the Houses. Regrettably, the disputes culminated in court action that is currently on Appeal at the Supreme Court of Kenya.
3. Subsequent to my election, I have consistently engaged the Leadership of the House and the Leadership of the Senate in discussions to reach an amicable resolution of outstanding matters relating to the processing of legislative business, between the Houses.

I am glad to note that the Leadership of Parliament is united in its abhorrence to previous incidences where the Houses have publicly exhibited discord and division while engaging each other on respective mandates of the Houses.

4. Honourable Members, I therefore wish to inform the House that the Leadership of Parliament, comprising the Speaker of the National Assembly and the Speaker of the Senate, and the Leader of the Majority and Minority of the National Assembly, Senate Majority and Minority leaders met on **Thursday, 29th February 2024**. As part of the agenda, the meeting deliberated on enhancing bicameral relations between the two Houses.

5. Honourable Members, the meeting addressed the status of the ongoing litigation between the Houses, noting that the Supreme Court of Kenya granted the Houses an extension of one hundred and twenty (120) days to engage in out-of-court negotiations and record consent.

6. Further, Honourable Members, the Leadership of Parliament observed the tremendous progress made in the negotiations and interrogated various options for formalizing the processing of legislative business in Parliament. In this regard, the Leadership noted that the National Assembly is already seized of the **Houses of Parliament (Bicameral Relations) Bill, 2023 (National Assembly Bill No. 44 of 2023)**, which is sponsored by **the Hon. Samuel Chepkong'a, M.P.** The Bill was **read a First Time on 17th August, 2023**.

7. For purposes of expeditiously arriving at a legislative solution to govern bicameral matters, the Leadership of Parliament **adopted the Houses of Parliament (Bicameral Relations) Bill, 2023,** as the **lead/compromise Bill** on bicameral relations.

8. In addition, the leadership of both Houses of Parliament agreed that the National Assembly would fast-track the processing of the Bill. Once passed by the House, the Bill shall be promptly referred to the Senate, with a view to conclude its consideration soonest possible.

9. In the spirit of fostering comity between the Houses, the Leadership of Parliament further resolved to engage in **Alternative Dispute Resolution (ADR) mechanisms in any future bicameral disputes** before resorting to court action. This will ensure that bicameral matters are addressed internally in a manner that upholds and respects the privilege of Parliament.

10. **Honourable Members**, I have conveyed the resolutions of the Leadership of Parliament to the House Business Committee at its meeting held today, Tuesday, 5th March 2024. I wish to report that the House Business Committee adopted the letter and spirit of the resolutions by the Leadership of Parliament. Further, the Committee **resolved to prioritize** the Second Reading, Committee Stage, and Third Reading of the Houses of Parliament (Bicameral) Relations Bill, 2023. This shall enable the House to conclude with the Bill before it proceeds for the Easter Recess that is scheduled to commence on **Friday, 22nd March 2024**.

11. **Honourable Members**, the meeting of the Leadership of Parliament and its resolutions reflect the shared commitment of the two Houses to the seamless processing of legislative business. Both my counterpart Speaker and I have accorded key priority to the amicable resolution of disputes between the Houses.

12. Honourable Members, As aptly observed by the Leader of the Majority Party at the meeting of the Leadership, both I and the Speaker of the Senate have served in the National Assembly and the Senate. You will agree with me that no other persons are best placed to ensure that the Houses of Parliament uphold comity and maintain the best of relations as contemplated by the framers of the Constitution.

13. Honourable Members, in light of the foregoing resolutions by the Leadership of the Houses of Parliament and the House Business Committee, I, therefore, direct the Departmental Committee on Justice and Legal Affairs to **urgently conclude its consideration of the Houses of Parliament (Bicameral Relations) Bill, 2023** and table its Report on the Bill on or before Tuesday, **12th March, 2024** for the reasons given.

The House is accordingly guided.

I thank you!


THE RT. HON. (DR.) MOSES F.M. WETANG'ULA, EGH, MP
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

Tuesday, 5th March, 2024