

The SENATE

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Ethnic diversity in counties: Watchdog committee demands immediate action from Governors

Public Service Boards are mandated to eliminate employment barriers against persons who do not belong to the dominant ethnic group within the county, gender or marginalised persons



Senator Samson Cherarkey (right), the vice chair of CPAC, and Senator Okiya Omtatah in one of the sittings of the committee.

A watchdog Committee wants County Governments to develop a Diversity Policy that will detail how they plan to address the challenges of ethnic balance and diversity when recruiting staff.

The County Public Accounts Committee (CPAC) says that employment in the counties is being exploited to undermine national harmony while dividing the 47 counties into little ethnic enclaves.

The committee, through its chairman Moses Kajwang, says that through the Diversity Policy it is proposing, Governors will be expected to give a comprehensive plan on how they intend to achieve employment equity in their individual counties as a way of ensuring

national integration.

“The policy should declare intent to comply with the constitutional provisions on diversity, the NCIC Act and the County Governments Act,” said Senator Kajwang during the meeting with Bomet Governor Hillary Barchok on Thursday.

The County Governments Act has imposed quotas to the County Public Service Boards when recruiting staff in the counties, but this has never been complied with in all the 47 counties.

The law compels the Boards to set aside 70 per cent of all the positions in the public service to the local community with the remaining 30 per cent set aside for individuals from outside the county; the minority and other marginalised

groups, including People with Disabilities (PwDs).

Section 7 (1) and (2) of the National Cohesion and Integration Act provides that public offices must seek to represent diversity in the employment of staff and that no public institution should have more than one third of staff establishment from one ethnic community.

However, evidence obtained by the Auditor General when inspecting the books of accounts of the 47 counties and their entities, tell a different story.

In the last 10 years of devolution, the office of the Auditor General has consistently flagged out the issue in the reports of every county government.

According to the Office of the Audi-

tor General all the Public Service Boards and the County Assembly Public Service Boards have breached the law on employment and recruitment policies on diversity.

The committee says the diversity policy will force Governors to take bold steps to address the problem and ensures Counties not only comply with the law but become equal opportunity employers.

The problem was more pronounced when the committee considered Auditor General reports for Embu and Bomet County Executives and the County Assemblies of Kisii and Kericho, all of which failed compliance test on diversity in recruitment.



Senator Moses Kajwang', the CPAC chair, (third left) flanked by Senators Mariam Omar, Edwina Sifuna and Mwenda Gataya Mofire in one of the CPAC sessions.

For example, by the end of June 2021, Bomet County Executive had a total of 4,317 employees on permanent and pensionable terms. However, 4,219, or 98 per cent, were members of the dominant ethnic community in the county.

The situation is not so dissimilar in the County Assembly of Kisii. According to the Auditor General data, the Assembly had 274 employees as at June 2021. The data indicates that 267 employees, or 97 per cent, comprised members of the ethnic community that is dominant in the county.

The County Assembly of Kericho had 100 employees out of which 95 employees, or 95 per cent, were from the dominant ethnic group. In the same year, The Assembly recruited an additional 18 employees, all of which are from the dominant group in the county.

The situation is replicated in all the 47 County Executives and County Assemblies.

In the Diversity Policy the Committee is proposing, members want every County Government to express intent on how it will comply with the constitution-

al provisions and the law on diversity to ensure the country does not slide in ethnic disharmony.

The committee further proposes that the 47 County Public Service Boards should explore ways of inter county transfer for certain cadre of staff for non-local staff as one way of achieving diversity.

The Committee wants the Council of Governors to deliberate the issue and take action on the way forward.

The Committee is proposing that the

law be amended so that in future, the Auditor General must demand for evidence of an employment equity plan in each county before carrying out the auditing process.

"Through the Policy the County Governments should explain how they hope to realise diversity progressively," said Senator Kajwang'.

Governor Barchok told the committee that while he supports the proposal on the policy, employment in counties is hostage of politics.

"There is a lot of politics. We face a lot of resistance from the local community," he said, adding that the process has been undermined by the failure by non-locals to apply for advertised jobs.

Senator Okiya Omtatah said every county that issues an advert for jobs must indicate the quota set aside for non-locals and encourage them to apply.

Senator Edwin Sifuna expressed doubt that the counties will develop the diversity policy. "I don't think any County has an intention to implement an employment equity plan," he said.

"We should impose criminal culpability for those who refuse to implement the plan."

Amend laws to facilitate road safety, Senator Asige tells the House

Senator Crystal Asige wants the House to amend for crucial laws that are crucial in fortifying roads and ensure the safety of road users.

The Senator identified amendments to four Acts of Parliament which he urged members to support. They are National Construction Authority (Amendment) Bill; the Traffic (Amendment) Bill; the National Transport and Safety Authority (Amendment) Bill; and the Kenya Roads (Amendment) Bill.

"I am compelled to action, sponsoring amendments to road related legislation. I implore the support of this House in passing these Bills when they come to the Floor, as it is crucial to fortify our roads and ensure the safety of our fellow citizens," said the Senator on Thursday last week.

The Senator made the comments when she issued a statement on the floor to commemorate the World Day of Remembrance for road traffic victims observed on the third Sunday of November annually.

The day marks a solemn acknowledge-

ment of the toll that road crashes exert on humanity.

Insights gathered from the United Nations Global Road Safety Week held in May this year, illustrate the staggering reality of 1.35 million lives lost annually due to road crashes.

Senator said statistics are haunting, especially considering that the majority of these tragic losses affect individuals who are between five and 29 years old.

A report by the Ministry of Roads and Transport indicates that over the past six years, 20,907 precious lives have been lost due to road crashes.

An additional 3,760 were lost as of October 15, 2023, with the highest number of crashes being attribute to motorcycle users at 1,213 deaths.

The National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) reports that 80 per cent of road crashes are caused by human error.

The Senator urged the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport Kipchumba Murkomen, through both Houses of Parliament, to put pressure on NTSA,

Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA), Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) and Kenya Roads Board (KRB) to stop cutting corners when building roads infrastructure.

"The United Nations (UN) notes that the burden of road traffic fatalities weighs disproportionately on vulnerable road users such as pedestrians, cyclists and motorcyclists," Senator Asige told the House.

She pointed out that despite concerted efforts to meet the 2013 UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) of reducing road traffic deaths by 50 per cent, progress remains far from adequate.

"The trend in Kenya has been increasing rather than decreasing from 2,919 deaths in 2017 to 4,619 in 2022. In 2022 alone, Kenya had over 21,000 road accidents.

She said a responsive legal system which must include well thought policy and legislative frameworks, encompassing road design and comprehensive road safety education for drivers and pedes-



Senator Asige

trians.

"Safety by design plays a pivotal role in promoting road safety, serving as a fundamental factor in preventing accidents and minimising their severity. Additionally, the consideration of Non-Motorized Transport (NMT) infrastructure that accommodates various road users including road users including pedestrians and cyclists, is crucial. Properly designed sidewalks, bicycle lanes and designated crossings enhance their safety reducing the risk of crashes."

Public interest should come first in negotiations, Speaker Kingi tells politicians



Speaker Kingi is joined by Senator Edwin Sifuna (left), Governor Mungaro (in blue shirt), Senator Okongo Omogeni and Minority Leader Stewart Madzayo during the fund raiser at Mnarani, Kilifi town.

Speaker Amason Kingi has urged leaders involved in the National Dialogue process to put the interests of Kenyans first as they seek solutions to the problems facing the country.

The Speaker said that emotional exchanges and grandstanding among the leaders from across the political divide is uncalled for and would only delay realisation of the expectation of Kenyans.

"We are all living in this country. We all know the problems we are going through did not start today," he said,

when he presided over a fundraiser in aid of Joy Fellowship for completion of a church building project in Mnarani, Kilifi town, Sunday, November 19.

"To get solutions, we must put aside politics and talk openly. My plea to Kenya Kwanza and Azimio leaders is to put Kenyans first and then those of your political formation."

The Speaker was accompanied by Kilifi Governor Gideon Mungaro, Minority Leader Stewart Madzayo and Senators Okongo Omogeni (Nyamira)



Speaker Kingi addresses congregants at the Joy Fellowship at Mnarani, Kilifi County.

and Edwin Sifuna (Nairobi).

"I am well informed of the positions of both sides of the political divide but the best way out is concurrence on how to solve the problems facing Kenyans. We must explore where the rains started beating us and purpose not to repeat the same."

Citing the cost of living, which has been a thorny issue in the country's political discourse, the Speaker said practical measures would take the country out of the quagmire.

"Let focus on production, getting seeds and fertilisers and planting in order to realise better harvests and eradicate the food scarcity," he reiterated, even as he defended President William Ruto on accusations he was overtaxing Kenyans.

"No government takes pride in causing any suffering for its people. The President's fiscal intervention are well intentioned and time will bear this out."

Speaker Kingi at Senator Allan Chesang football tournament finals

Speaker Amason Kingi was the chief guest during the finals of Allan Chesang Super Cup tournament which was played at the Kitale Polytechnic grounds in Trans Nzoia.

The final match pitted Bwayi FC from Kwanza Constituency and Sikhendu FC from Kiminini Constituency.

The tournament provided participating teams the opportunity to showcase their football talent besides serving as the perfect platform for residents and their leaders to meet, interact, and deepen their engagements.

Sponsored by Senator Allan Chesang, the tournament was also an avenue through which hundreds of youths were rehabilitated from drugs and substance abuse.

Sikhendu FC were the winners of the tournament and bagged the Sh1 million prize fee courtesy of Senator Chesang



Speaker Kingi and Moses Wetangula when they met at the finals of the Senator Allan Chesang football tournament in Kitale.



Speaker Kingi, Speaker Wetangula and Senator Chesang follow the final match of the tournament at Kitale Polytechnic grounds in Kitale town.



Speaker Kingi addresses the football fans who attended the match.

Ombi la taarifa ya kifo cha mwanafunzi Harders Mutahi



Seneta Nyamu

Seneta Karen Nyamu anaitaka Kamati ya Elimu kutoa taarifa kuhusu kifo cha mwanafunzi wa gredi ya sita kwenye Shule ya Msingi ya Kimathi iliyoko Bahati, Eneo bunge la Makadara Kaunti ya Nairobi.

Mwanafunzi huyo Harders Kanyora Mutahi alifariki kwenye bwawa la kuo-gelea shuleni humo tarehe 11 Oktoba 2023.

Seneta Nyamu, kwenye ombi la taarifa alilowasilisha kwenye Seneti, anataka taarifa kuhusu mtiririko wa matukio yanayozunguka kifo cha Mutahi kwenye siku ya tukio, ikieleza bayana hali iliyojiri kuelekea kifo chake cha kusikitisha na ikiwa kilitokea ndani au nje ya shule hiyo.

Nyamu anataka taarifa kamili kuhusu hatua iliyochukuliwa na shule baada ya

kuthibitisha kifo cha mwanafunzi huyo, mchakato wa kutoa taarifa kwa wazazi, habari kamili za jinsi ya kuripoti kuhusu kifo hicho na hatua iliyochukuliwa na afisi mbalimbali ikiwemo Wizara ya Elimu.

Kamati hiyo pia inawajibishwa kutathmini madai ya majaribio ya kuhitilifiana na uchunguzi unaoendelea na pia madai ya mashahidi kupatiwa mafunzo ya jinsi ya kujieleza na ya kusema, pamoja na wanafunzi wenza wa marehemu wali-oshuhudia tukio lililofanyika kutishiwa dhidi ya kueleza ukweli.

Zaidi, Kamati hiyo ina wajibu wa kuchunguza madai ya matumizi mabaya ya afisi na mwalimu mkuu, yakiwepo madai pia ya ubaguzi wa kidini, na kiwango cha juu cha malipo yanayotozwa na shule hiyo kwa masomo ya ziada

kinyume na mwongozo wa Wizara ya Elimu.

Nyamu vilevile anataka maelezo kuhusu mipango yoyote ya Wizara ya Elimu kuhakikisha kuwa haki inatendeka kwa marehemu Mutahi, ikiwemo fidia kwa wazazi wake ambao wamefadhaishwa mno kisaikolojia na kifedha kutokana na kifo cha mwanao.

Kamati hiyo chini ya uenyekiti wa Seneta wa Murang'a Joe Nyutu inawajibishwa pia kutoa maelezo kuhusu mikakati yoyote iliyowekwa na usimamizi wa shule hiyo na Wizara ya Elimu kuhakikisha usalama wa wanafunzi kwenye Shule ya Msingi ya Kimathi na taasisi nyingine za elimu na pia kutathmini uwezekano wa kuwahamishia shule nyingine nduguze Mutahi ambao inawezekana wametam- aushwa mno na kifo cha ndugu yao.

Seneta Khalwale ataka majibu kuhusu hali ya ajira kwenye Kaunti ya Kakamega

Seneta Boni Khalwale anaitaka Kamati ya Leba na Maslahi ya Umma kutoa taarifa kuhusu hali ya kandarasi za utendakazi za wafanyakazi wa Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega.

Kwenye ombi la taarifa hiyo, Khalwale anaitaka kamati hiyo kutoa maelezo bayana kuhusu idadi ya wafanyakazi walio na mkataba wa kudumu na wale ambao ni vibarua kwenye kaunti ya Kakamega.

Aidha Khalwale anataka kujua ni kwa kipindi gani vibarua kwenye kaunti hiyo wamekuwa wakihudumu wakiwa vibarua akidai kuwa baadhi ya vibarua wamekuwa vibarua tangu mwaka wa 2015.

Seneta huyo anataka kufahamishwa ikiwa upo mpango wowote wa kuwaajiri vibarua hao kwenye mkataba wa kudumu.

Kwenye ombi hilo la taarifa lililowasilishwa kwenye Seneti, Kamati hiyo inayoongozwa na Seneta wa Pokot Magharibi Julius Murgor itatakiwa pia kutoa taarifa kuhusu ni muda upi umepita tangu mshahara wa mwisho utolewe kwa wafanyakazi vibarua na wenye mkataba wa kudumu kwenye Kaunti ya Kakamega, kisha kiwango cha pesa zilizotolewa kwa mshahara kwenye kila kitengo.

Vilevile Seneta huyo wa Kakamega anataka kujua sababu zilizochangia kucheleweshwa kwa mishahara kwa

wafanyakazi wa Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega hasa kutokana na kuwa Serikali ya Kaunti hiyo haiidai Serikali ya Kitaifa fedha zozote kwenye mgao wake kutoka Hazina ya Kitaifa.

Kwenye ombi jingine la taarifa, Seneta Khalwale anaitaka Kamati ya Seneti ya Fedha na Bajeti kutoa taarifa kuhusu uzalishaji mapato na matumizi yake kwenye Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega.

Kulingana na ombi hilo la taarifa, Khalwale anataka kueleza ni kiasi kipi cha pesa kilikusanywa na Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega kwenye mwaka wa kifedha wa 2021/2022 na 2022/2023 na mapato kiasi gani yanatazamiwa kukusanywa kwenye mwaka wa kifedha wa 2023/2024.

Seneta Khalwale vilevile anataka kujua vyanzo vya mapato yanayokusanywa kwenye Kaunti hiyo.

Dakta Khalwale anataka taarifa ya Kamati hiyo kujumuisha pia mipango yoyote ambayo imewasilishwa na Serikali ya Kaunti hiyo kwa Wizara ya Fedha na Mipango ya Kiuchumi kuhusu jinsi inalenga kukuza zaidi mapato inayokusanya.

Wakati uo huo, Seneta huyo aliyechaguliwa kwa tiketi ya chama cha UDA anaitaka Kamati ya Fedha na Bajeti kwenye Bunge la Seneti kutoa taarifa



Seneta Khalwale azungumza na Spika wa bunge la Kaunti ya Turkana Christopher Nakuleu wakati wa vikao vya Seneti Mashinani kwenye Kaunti ya Turkana mwezi wa Septemba.

kuhusu kodi ya nyumba inayoigharimu Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega.

Kwenye taarifa hiyo, Kamati hiyo inayoongozwa na Seneta wa Manderu Ali Roba inatakiwa kutoa maelezo kabambe kuhusu kodi ya nyumba ya mwaka mzima inayolipwa na Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega kwa ajili ya afisi na maeneo mengi kunakolipiwa kodi hiyo na kutoa maelezo kamili ya mikataba yote kati

ya Serikali ya Kaunti na wenye nyumba hizo, ikijumuisha majina yao kamili.

Kamati hiyo aidha inatakiwa kueleza mikakati iliyowekwa na Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega kuhakikisha kuwa kuna uwazi na uwajibikaji ili kupunguza uwezekano wa hasara na ufujaji wa fedha za umma kupitia kwa ulipaji kodi za nyumba.

House gives blast compensation committee more time

Senators have resolved to extend the term of the Ad Hoc Committee that is pushing for the Compensation of the victims of the 1998 bomb blast.

The House gave the committee, which is chaired by senator Agnes Kavindu, another 100 days to wind up its investigation into the compensation of victims of the 1998 bomb blast of the America Embassy.

The committee has until February 24, 2024 to table its report in the House.

Senator Mohamed Chute, a member of the committee, who moved the motion on the behalf of chairperson, said the renewal of the Committee's mandate will enable them to finalise their work and table the report on time.

"It has been 25 years and the victims are awaiting compensation. We have done a lot. We met the Prime Cabinet Secretary about three weeks ago. We intend to meet with the American Embassy soon," said senator Chute.

"We also intend to visit the United



Members of the Committee pushing for Compensation for the 1998 bomb blast victims seen here in session.

States of America to convince or lobby the Senate to pass a law for the compensation of the 1998 victims. We are seeking 100 days," said Senator Chute.

While seconding the motion, Senator William Cheptumo said there are com-

PELLING reasons and justification for the extension.

Kenyans suffered a great deal during the bombing in 1998. Several Kenyans died and many were maimed. 25 years down the line, they have not been com-

pensated. It should be known that the suffering Kenyans were going through for that period arose out of a bombing by terrorists, not because they were fighting the Kenyan population or the Kenyan Government."

Senator Danson Mungatana cautioned the members of the Ad Hoc Committee that they should use the 100 days to wind up on their work warning that the House will not give them a further extension should they seek.

"Ad hoc committees are not supposed to stay in perpetuity. They should finalise the job, give us a report and we conclude with the matter. The same people who are waiting for that report are the same people who are going to complain that you are taking long," he said.

Senator Joyce Korir supported the mandate of the Ad Hoc Committee saying that it involves a number of stakeholders in terms of finding out on how best they can address the issue of the victims.

Lands Committee to assess the construction of Changara water Pan in Busia County

The Land, Environment and Natural Resource Committee has decided to conduct a fact finding visit to the World Bank-funded, Changara Water Pan Project in Busia County.

During the visit the committee is expected to engage the community before inviting other stakeholders to understand the challenges the project has faced since inception.

The committee made the decision during the consideration of a petition in which residents of the area are seeking the intervention of the Senate to have the project concluded.

The Changara Water Pan project was funded Sh24.8 Million in June 2019 by the World Bank through the National Government.

The project is being implemented by the County Government of Busia through the Department of Agriculture and Fisheries Development and the project was to benefit more than 5,000 families living in Changara through the clean piped water and irrigation.

Changara Petitioners also informed the Lawmakers that Despite the amount allocated, the project which was to be completed by February 2020 instead has stalled due to massive irregularities.

The Project Management Committee



Senators Steven Lelegwe, Okiya Omtatah, Beatrice Ogola and Mariam Omar during the Land Committee meeting.



Senator Wahome Wamatinga (right) and Senators Marian Omar (middle) and Beatrice Ogola during a session of the committee.

was denied oversight documents, Bill of Quantities Plan (BQs)-and the Environmental Assessment report.

"The pipes drawing water from the water pan to the beneficiaries' farms are all exposed since they were not laid to the recommended depth and the project was conceived and implemented without public participation," said Mr Bildad Masake, one of the petitioners.

The Petitioners revealed the issues have been raised before the County Government of Busia, the Public Procurement Regulatory Authority, EACC and the World Bank but no solution has been given.

Finance committee tours Kakamega County, engages MCAs on financial autonomy



Members of the Finance and Budget Committee pose for a picture with some Members of the County Assembly of Kakamega during the visit. On the right, Senator Ali Roba chairs a meeting with the Finance Committee of County Assembly at the Assembly premises.



Senator Ali Roba, the Chairman of the Finance Committee, chairs a meeting with the counterpart committee of the Assembly during the visit.

The Committee on Finance and Budget has challenged the leadership of the County Assembly of Kakamega to construct a decent Assembly Building.

The committee issued the plea after a tour of the Assembly in which they came face to face with the deplorable state of the facility.

“MCAs are conducting their legislative business in a building that is in deplorable state,” observed Senator Ali Roba, who is the chair of the committee.

The Committee was in Kakamega County in response to a question by area Senator Boni Khalwale.

The Senator wants the House furnished with information on the pending bills of

works done for various road projects in the County.

The tour offered the committee the opportunity to traverse parts of the county. It started off on Navakholo Road, through Sitirire-Malava Road, Eregi Road, ending up on Matungu Road where members inspected projects.

The committee later held a site meeting with the County Executive and the Assembly to deliberate on responses to the issues raised.

In the statement, Senator Khalwale wants a statement on the status of pending bills; the rental fees incurred by the County Government of Kakamega and revenue generation and usage by the County Government.

Governor Fedinard Barasa provided tender documents relating to the road projects, a detailed breakdown of annual rental fees for office and utility spaces incurred by the County, disclosing details of the respective contracts including the names of the landlords.

He also outlined measures put in place by his Government to manage and reduce the rental costs. ‘The County government has constructed Sub-County Administrators’ offices across the 12 Sub-Counties, thus reducing the expenses on rent,’ said the Governor, adding that the county has plans to build new headquarters in Kakamega Town to house those Ministries operating from rented premises.

The Governor told the Committee that they have projected to collect Sh2.4 billion in the 2023/24 financial year as its own source revenue.

The streams of revenue are Health services user fees, Farm inputs, Liquor licenses, Bus parking fees, Cess on factories, and Single Business permits, among others.

The committee also held a meeting with the Speaker of Kakamega County Assembly, Hon. James Namatsi, and the Committee on Finance and Economic Planning of the Assembly.

The meeting discussed the need for County Assemblies to have financial autonomy.

Trade Committee inspects development projects in Busia County

The Committee on Trade, Industrialisation and Tourism was in Busia County over the weekend to inspect matters related to trade, industrialisation and tourism.

During the meeting, it was observed that the County has not explore its full potential in terms of trade.

The visit was led by Senator Esther Okenyuri, who was the leader of the team, Senator Karungo Thangwa and area Senator Okoiti Omtatah.

While it is the gateway to East and Central Africa, the County has nothing much to show for it. Busia is among the 18 counties that have signed the Inter-governmental Partnership Agreement with the Ministry of Investment, Trade and Industry for the implementation of the County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs).

Under the agreement, the National Government will transfer Sh250 million to Busia County Government as conditional Grants while the County Government shall allocate Sh250 million to Nasewa Industrial Park.

The Committee visited the project site which is underway and expected to be completed by February 2024.

Further, the committee learnt that the



Senator Esther Okenyuri addresses the media after the meeting between the committee on Trade, Industrialisation and Tourism and Governor Paul Otuoma. Senators Karungo Thangwa and Senator Okiya Omtatah look on. Below, Senators Okenyuri and Senator Thangwa at the One Stop Border Post.

County Government in collaboration with the National Government is working towards establishing a Trailer Park within Busia town. The park will be a whole ecosystem accommodating all social amenities and at the same time increase the County’s own source revenue.

During the visit, the Committee held a meeting with the Governor Paul Otuoma who sought the indulgence of the Senate in the amendment of the Cooperatives Act which contains provisions that are detrimental to counties.

“Cooperatives is a devolved function but their registration is still being done by the National Government,” said Governor Otuoma.

The committee also visited the One Stop Border Post (OSPB) where it learnt the daily activities at the Border and the challenges.

The narrow road leading to the OSPB and inadequate verification space at customs yard have been the major causes of traffic jams.

The committee observed that there is need to redesign the OSPB infrastructure and check on the frequent power fluctuations affecting systems and scanner operations.

FP-ICGLR meet ends in Nairobi



Senators Ali Roba and Wahome Wamatinga during the FP-ICGLR meeting in Nairobi.



Senator Ali Roba delivers closing remarks to the FP-ICGLR Ordinary Executive meeting in Nairobi on behalf of Speaker Amason Kingi.



Delegates to the 27th Ordinary Session of the FP-ICGLR Executive Committee pose for a picture after the Nairobi meeting.

Senator Ali Roba has thanked the delegates from the 12-member states who attended the 27th Ordinary executive committee session of the Forum of Parliaments of Members States of the International Conference on the Great Lakes Region (FP-ICGLR).

While officially closing the session held in Nairobi from November 21 to 24

2023, Senator Roba said the meeting had fruitful discussions and urged the delegates to make the resolutions a reality.

During the meeting, the FP-ICGLR Executive Committee received an update on the preparations for the Joint ICGLR/FP-ICGLR Electoral Observation Mission to DRC and reviewed the recent developments on the security situation of

the Central African Republic, South Sudan, Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

The FP-ICGLR is an inter-parliamentary organisation composed of the 12 National Parliaments of the ICGLR Member States, which include Kenya, Uganda, Rwanda, Tanzania, Angola, Burundi, Zambia, South Sudan, Central

African Republic, the Republic of Congo and the Democratic Republic of the Congo.

It aims to make a significant parliamentary contribution to the implementation of the Pact on Security, Stability and Development in the Great Lakes Region.

Senate keen to help County Assemblies to deliver on their mandate, says Deputy Clerk Gichangi

Deputy Clerk Eunice Gichangi has said the Senate is keen to ensure that counties deliver on their mandate as provided for in the Constitution.

The Deputy Clerk told members of the Library and Broadcast Committee of the County Assembly of Embu that the Senate's mandate is specific and oversight of devolution as stipulated under Articles 94 and 96 of the Constitution.

"Under this mandate the Senate will ensure that County Governments and their entities deliver on their mandate for the success of devolution," she told the delegation.

The delegation, comprising seven Members and four officers of the Embu County Assembly, was on a weeklong benchmarking tour of Parliament to acquire skills and knowledge on how to run live broadcasts for the assembly's legislative sessions on Radio and Television,



Deputy Clerk Gichangi and Members of Broadcasting and Library Committee of the County Assembly of Embu

including live streaming on social media.

Ms Gichangi recounted to the team the history of Parliamentary broadcasting from the days of Parliamentary Broadcasting Unit, which started in 2008, under one House (National Assembly) and now offering live broadcasts for the bicameral House, the Senate and National Assembly.

The team was led by Hon Muriithi Kiura, who is the Chairperson of the committee. Others in the delegation were Hon Jane Njue, the Vice-Chairperson, Hon Mary Kavinda, Hon. Daniel Githinji, Hon. Duncan Mbui, Hon. Yvonne Mati, Hon. Augustine Njeru, Mr Martin Mugendi, Mr Mutugi Njue, Ms. Caroline Mbogo, Mr Nicasio Machak

Hon Kiura thanked the Senate for offering them the opportunity to learn reiterating the Assembly's desire to be the pioneer county to roll out live broadcast of their proceedings as the one of the ways to communicate to their electorate in real time.

Explain bursary Fund expenditure, watchdog committee directs Bomet Governor Barchok

The Committee on County Public Investments and Special Funds (CPISFC) has directed Bomet Governor Hillary Barchok to submit a detailed report indicating how the County disbursed Sh9.7 million set aside as Bursary fund for the 2019/20 financial year.

According to the Auditor General, the county allocated Sh9.7 million to the account which was disbursed through the Higher Education Loans Board.

However, the audit indicates that HELB only disbursed Sh7.4 million to beneficiaries, resulting in a remainder of Sh2.2 million within its accounts.

“I instruct you to ensure the Fund administrator provides statements verifying that Sh2.2 million is still with HELB,” the committee directed through Senator Ojienda, who chaired the session.

Senator Ojienda is the vice chair of the committee.

“Additionally, I want you to confirm



Senator Tom Ojienda

that the Fund’s legal framework with the County Government of Bomet and HELB adheres to the HELB Act’s section 12 and Regulation 197 of the Public Finance Management (County Governments) Regulations, 2015.”

Senator directed the Governor to take



Members of County Public Investments and Special Committee in session.

decisive action plans designed to bolster the transparency and fiscal prudence of the Fund to bring about substantial improvements in the way the Fund operates.

The Committee also unearthed discrepancies in the financial statements, where the costs of administering the

Fund had been inaccurately documented.

As a corrective measure, Governor Barchok was instructed to address this inconsistency, ensuring that such charges are correctly listed as expenses in future documentation.

ON THE FLOOR

The House concludes debate on the President’s State of the Nation address

Senators have concluded debate on the Presidential Speech on the State of Nation address with an acknowledgement that high cost of living is hurting a majority of the population.

During the three days debate, a section of lawmakers assured the country that all is not lost and that the national government has good plans to turn around the economy.

Standing Order 27 (5) of the House rules provide that the President’s speech may, as soon as practicable, be tabled in the House after it has been delivered.

Part 6 of the rule provides: “A Senator may give a notice of Motion, that ‘The Thanks of the Senate be recorded for the exposition of public policy contained in the Address of the President’ but debate on the Address shall not exceed three sitting days.

Majority Whip Boni Khalwale tabled the address and while moving the motion recounted to the House how elected leaders have been subjected to humiliations due to high cost of living.

“Things are so difficult such that for a man who has never been heckled across

the Luhya nation for the first time, I was not only heckled but I was heckled at Malinya Stadium. Malinya Stadium is my home and polling station,” said Senator Khalwale told the House.

He advised the lawmakers on the need to work together regardless of political affiliation in finding a solution to the economic woes facing the country.

“I urge colleagues, whether in the opposition or not--- We have been there and now I am in the Government. Let us work together even if we are going to oppose each other in the forthcoming elections. Members of the opposition kindly push us hard enough so that we can deliver,” he said.

Senator Danson Mungatana said the government interventions toward the high cost of living have started bearing fruits while citing his county as one of the areas where the Kenya Kwanza administration is rolling out key projects.

“Kenyans usually pay Sh60 billion to import rice from Pakistan and other countries because we don’t grow enough rice. Therefore, the President’s plan in Tana River has helped to reduce the

amount used by the country to buy rice from Pakistan. The rice is now being grown in the Tana River,” said senator Mungatana.

Senator Edwin Sifuna said the President erred by saying that the prices of maize flour have come below Sh200 pouring water on the interventions taken by the government like subsidized fertilizer to arrest the high cost of living.

“I have tried to convince this Senate that, in fact, the definition of food security includes a reference to people’s preferences. If, for instance, my household has been eating Jogoo Unga and I was buying it at Sh100 and it goes to Sh250, you cannot then try to convince me to start buying another brand that I have never heard of, and I do not know where it comes from because it is retailing at Sh150,” said Senator Sifuna.

Senator Ali Roba lamented that the government was only focused on the agricultural sector by underscoring the subsidised fertiliser while forgetting the pastoral sector.

He noted that President Ruto failed to tell the country what his administration is doing to address the El-Nino which is

wreaking havoc in various regions.

“The State of Nation Address is supposed to touch on, create and give hope to the population of this country,” said the Senator, pointing out that roads have been cut off in the northern region.

“Flooding has affected hundreds of thousands of the population in the region as a whole. The President’s Speech fell short of creating hope and discussing the impact that the El Nino phenomenon is causing in our region,” said Senator Roba.

Majority Leader Aaron Cheruiyot asked his colleagues who are not convinced by the government interventions to arrest high cost of living to provide the alternative instead of criticising the Kenya Kwanza administration.

“If you disagree with the policies being proposed, be it on financial inclusion, taxation or subsidy programmes being run, kindly offer an alternative,” he said.

He added: “If you have a better idea, we are willing to listen. We will be convinced by the strength of the argument that you carry not the loudness of your noise.”

Government is working as one unit to address effects of el nino, Roads CS tells Senators

Roads and Transport CS Kipchumba Murkomen has revealed that all the Ministries are working together to respond to the effects of El nino rains. He said his Ministry is dealing with the infrastructure challenges but there is not so much they can do at the moment regarding construction of the roads since the rains are still ongoing.

In a statement to the House, the CS said the Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA) has been appointed as the lead emergency response agency to help in opening the roads in the affected areas in the Country. The CS urged the Senators to sensitise Kenyans both motorists and pedestrians to remain vigilant during this rainy season and to stop

crossing swollen rivers to avoid loss of lives.

“Essential commodities will be airlifted to the affected areas to ensure that the affected persons do not suffer,” he told the lawmakers during Questions Time on Wednesday.

The Cabinet Secretary had appeared before the House to respond to questions by Senators on status of various roads in the Country and the government plan to upgrade Kakamega Airstrip to an international Airport.

“Kakamega Airstrip runway can only be extended up to a maximum of 1,400m. Ultimately, if the future traffic may necessitate bigger aircrafts requiring a longer runway, the airport relocation is to be considered.”



CS Murkomen addresses the House during last week's Question Time.

Government keen to complete construction of stadia across the country, CS Namwamba tells the House



CS Ababu Namwamba.

The government has subjected the stalled construction works for football stadiums to forensic audit to determine their viability, Sports Cabinet Secretary Ababu Namwamba has told the House.

The CS told the lawmakers during Questions Time on Wednesday the construction works will only resume after the audit and that the State is determined to complete the projects.

“There are a number of stadia that commenced under the previous administration. We have done a quick assessment of those facilities. We have gone further to subject these projects to forensic audit just to determine value for money. That forensic audit is at the tail end,” said the CS.

Once the exercise is concluded, said CS Namwamba, the Kenya Kwanza administration will revive the stalled stadiums adding that the government has no plans to abandon the projects.

“As soon as that audit process is concluded, we have every intention to complete every project that has already expended public resources. We don't intend to let these projects go to waste. For standards, I am pleased to inform this House that the Ministry has now developed a Sports and Creatives Infrastructure masterplan.”

The CS said the master plan will be used in setting up sporting facilities at various levels.

“The master plan is very clear on what kind of a facility to do at the International level, regional and community levels. That masterplan will guide all future Sports' facilities in the country,” he said.

Apart from Moi International Sports Centre, Kasarani, and Nyayo National Stadium, a majority of sporting facilities outside the capital are in a sorry state.

Stadiums such as Kipchoge Keino in Eldoret (Uasin Gishu County) and Wilson Kiprugut Chumo Green Stadium (Kericho County) have been named after big sports names but remain an eyesore. Other stadiums are Wote, Marsabit, Mombasa and Kisumu among others.

CS Namwamba insisted that the government is committed to complete the nine stadiums which were announced in 2016 when President William Ruto served as deputy president.

“We have visited all the nine stadia and we have made an assessment of what need to be done and I am assuring this House that the completion of these nine stadia is a top priority for the Ministry and this administration,” he said.

Parliament's clocktower: walking back in time



A section of the Parliament Buildings with the Clocktower.

History is fascinating. From it, we learn from the past which helps us to understand the present while shaping our future.

So that you know, history is not abstract. Over generations, it has been preserved in various ways; through buildings, monuments, art and culture – the kind of things we can feel, see and touch.

Buildings, or monuments, have a way

of telling you: “Look, I was around long before you were born.”

Take a stroll along Parliament Road, for example. The sight of Parliament Buildings, complete with its iconic clocktower, is a reminder of Kenya's rich history.

An edifice from the colonial time, Parliament Buildings, which host the Senate and the National Assembly, have

survived the test of time and stand out as a repository of the rich history of our country.

The clocktower, which symbolises the august House, shares a close semblance with the Big Ben's Clock Tower in London and the Tower of the Palace of Westminster in London only that Kenya's is a miniature version.

Amyssa Connel, the architect behind the design of the clocktower, and the Parliament Buildings, must have drawn inspiration from the Gothic architectural design characteristic of most Parliaments constructed at the height of the British Empire in the 19th Century.

Featuring a bell and clock, the clocktower was a gem of its time. The ringing of the bell and chiming of the cloak were used to guide time both in Parliament and Nairobi City in general.

Those were the days long before wrist watches and house clocks, that we are accustomed to in modern times, were discovered.

Over time, the clocktower has been reduced to an antique piece of aesthetic work, a stark contrast from the days of yore when it was central to the lives of residents in the cities of UK.

Locally, the clock tower shares a

close semblance to the clocktower sitting atop Nairobi City County Government building a few meters away.

It is decades since the British Union Jack flag was lowered and the Kenyan flag hoisted in its place, signaling the dawn of self-rule.

But the colonial imprints are still here with us, thanks to buildings and monuments that speak about their heritage.

More fundamental is the fact that societies are embryonic and keep evolving. Whereas brick and mortar were the in thing, today we talk about smart technology which is characterised by glass and steel.

The times we live in afford us the luxury to check time on our wrist watches and cellphones, the technological sophistication which didn't exist in the eighteenth century when clocktowers were all the craze.

That Parliament and the County government buildings have clocktowers should be less of a surprise because the two buildings belong to the epochal times when Kenya was still under the chokehold of colonialists, the British.

This Week in History



I come from a county that has a wealth of natural deposits including coal, iron ore and manganese. One of the biggest challenges that we face as a county is the lack of clarity as to where the extractors should go for what licences. It is not clear whether they should to the national Government or county government, and what roles each of the level of governments should play to facilitate the exploitation of these resources. This Bill puts that matter to rest. The roles and duties of especially county governments are clearly stated in this Bill.

Senator Enock Wambua during the debate on Local Content Bill, 2018 on **November 28, 2018.**



We are gifted or given resources by God, as our provider, and if you look at the Bible, Genesis 1:28 directed us to this. That is the first commandment which God gave us, which is to multiply, fill the world, and conquer it. In my view, we should manage this process in a sustainable way. Managing the environment sustainably is key because it is something that we have also put in our Constitution. We are aware that as we extract these minerals, there is a lot of degradation, wastage and, consequently, most of these minerals get exhausted.

Senator (Dr.) Ochillo-Ayacko during the debate on Local Content Bill, 2018 on **November 28, 2018.**



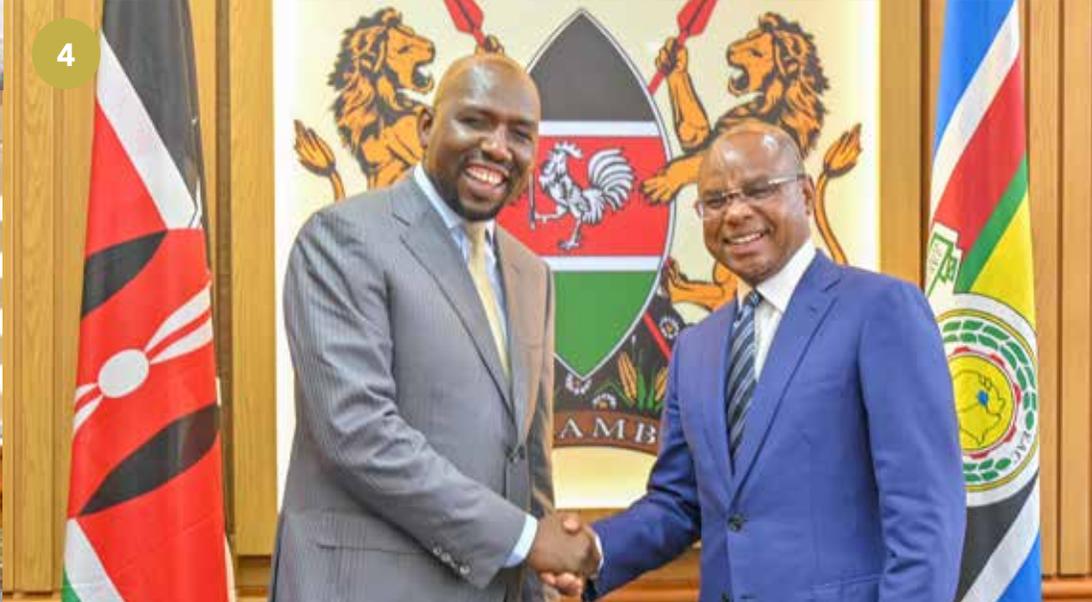
Currently, there is no legislative framework, especially in regulating early childhood education in Kenya. The private sector also seems to have monopolized the provision of early childhood education in the country. This is despite the fact that public education caters for 90 per cent of the children in primary and secondary schools. The Basic Education Act, 2013 focuses on primary and secondary education and provides very little regulation for the crucial foundation needed to ensure the success of the education sector.

Senator (Dr.) Christopher Langat during the debate on Early Childhood Education Bill, 2018 on **November 28, 2018**



For a long time, we know that in education, when you are educating a child, you are creating an impression about their education and life. Therefore, the issue of quality of education becomes very critical including the type of education that is offered to this child. This Bill specifies, for example, the sort of desks and furniture which is appropriate for the pupils. And teachers must be diploma holders. Thus, right from the beginning, we are handling the education of our children right and ensuring that they have an enabling environment to learn and enjoy.

Senator (Dr.) Agnes Zani during the debate on Early Childhood Education Bill, 2018 on **November 28, 2018.**



1. Minority Leader Stewart Madzayo (right) and Minority Whip Ledama ole Kina escort Sports CS Ababu Namwamba out of the House after the CS responded to members questions on Wednesday last week.
2. Members of the Committee on Delegated Legislation in a group picture with MCAs from the counties of Lamu, Mombasa, Kwale and Taita Taveta who are members of the Committees on Delegated Committee of their respective County Assemblies.
3. Speaker Kingi looks on as Roads CS Kipchumba Murkomen signs the Visitors' Book when he visited the Office of the Speaker on Wednesday last week. CS Murkomen was in the House to answer members' Questions.
4. Speaker Kingi welcomes CS Murkomen to his Office.
5. Students of Maasai Mara University at the public gallery of the Senate Chamber during their familiarisation tour of Parliament Buildings.
6. Speaker Kingi addresses the gathering on the first day of the 13th annual Marsabit - Lake Turkana Cultural festival in Loyangalani, Marsabit County.
7. Marsabit Governor Ali Mohamed receives Speaker Kingi for the 13th Annual Marsabit -Lake Turkana Cultural festival. The Speaker was accompanied by Senator Fatuma Dullo.
8. Speaker Kingi joins traditional dancers for a jig during the Marsabit - Lake Turkana cultural festival in Loyangalani, Marsabit County.



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