

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF SAMBURU



THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 5th June, 2018

The Assembly met at the County Assembly chambers at 2:30 p.m.

The Speaker, (Mr. Lempere Solomon) in the Chair

PRAYER

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Speaker, (Mr. Lempere Solomon): Hon. Members, I wish to welcome the Senator for his address and also recognize the presence of H.E the Deputy Governor, Hon. Maison Leshoomo and the entire team of our county executive and members of the public.

I also wish to welcome the members back from the short recess hoping that we have all enjoyed a good time with our electorates. As we resume, members need to take into account that there are a lot of pending business before the House and for that matter, urgent for consideration we have Budget Estimates for the financial year 2018/2019 and expect the Appropriation Bill, 2018 whose deadline for approval is 30th June this year. We also have four Bills that need to be taken for public considerations:

1. The Health Services Bill, 2018
2. The Trade Bill, 2018
3. Livestock Sale Yards Bill, 2018
4. The Spatial Planning Bill, 2018

I urge the relevant committees to fast-track the aforementioned Bills and the Budget Estimates. In this regard, I request maximum co-operation from all the members of the committees of the House so that we meet the deadlines of passing the Bills.

As you are aware, today is a special day for the first inaugural address by the Senator. It is now my pleasure to welcome the Hon. Senator, Lelegwe Ltumbesi, to address the hon. Members. Welcome Senator.

ADDRESS OF THE SENATOR LELEGWE STEVE LTUMBESI

The Senator, (hon. Steve Lelegwe): Thank you Mr. Speaker. The hon. Speaker of Samburu County, hon. Lempere Solomon, the hon. Leader of Majority Party, the hon. Leader of Minority Party, the hon. Members of the Samburu County Assembly ladies and gentlemen good afternoon.

Mr. Speaker Sir, permit me to recognize the presence of the Samburu County's Deputy Governor, hon. Julius Lawrence Leseeto, the Woman Member of Samburu County, hon. Maison Leshoomo and Members of the Samburu County Executive.

Mr. Speaker, this being my inaugural address, I wish to start by congratulating you warmly on your election as the Speaker of the Second Assembly of Samburu County Assembly. I similarly congratulate hon. Members on their election to the Second Assembly. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir, for exercising your authority to activate Standing Order 25(1) of the County Assembly of Samburu, which allows me to address this August House.

I also wish, Mr. Speaker Sir, to register my appreciation of members here today who also served in the First County Assembly, for the support they accorded me during the 2013 – 2017 period when I was privileged to be the First Speaker of this honourable Assembly. On the same note, I thank my predecessor, the First Senator for Samburu County, the hon. Sammy P. Leshore, for his dedicated service during the same period.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am truly honoured and humbled to stand here today and to address this distinguished Assembly as the Senator of Samburu. I remember standing in this same place, and giving my first speech when I was elected as the Speaker of the First Assembly on 22nd March, 2013. On that occasion, the Honourable Judge who administered the Oath of Service upon us asked me, immediately after my oath office, "You can now carry on Mr. Speaker". At that point, Mr. Speaker Sir, I put on a brave face, but the enormity of the task would only sink in later. I did not have a clear understanding of what my roles and responsibilities were because, unlike you, I am a Chemist. Yet, Mr. Speaker Sir, we did what we could in the circumstances. We inaugurated this Honourable Assembly from the scratch; we started with only three interim staff from the Transition Authority, without any supporting infrastructure. We did not even understand what Standing Orders were, let alone the committee structures upon which the Assembly was anchored. This limited knowledge initially slowed down the functioning of the Assembly.

However, with our own striving and with the support of many other actors, we triumphed and laid the foundation of our County Assembly. For this, Mr. Speaker Sir, I am grateful to your office and the leadership of the County Assembly of Samburu; I thank the Honourable Members

of the County Assembly of Samburu. I am grateful to all of you for this opportunity to come back and to speak to you now in a different capacity. As I do so, Mr. Speaker Sir, I recognize that it is vital that we, as leaders, reflect upon our successes and challenges and take measures to review our goals in order to meet the expectations of our people, even as we celebrate the few years of devolution implementation. I have no doubt in my mind that devolution ushered in new opportunities meant to mitigate against the problems of previous marginalization of this County. I am also aware that we must confront the challenges of devolution and overcome them in order to reap its intended fruits.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe that under your leadership, we can achieve this noble objective. We acknowledge the foundation we already have, which gives us an advantage in pushing our development agenda that was handed down to us by the visionaries in the First Assembly and their experiences. We are also fortunate that you have worked in a parliamentary setting before; that you have experienced staff that has been trained on matters of parliamentary procedures and functions, and, importantly, we have now a fully refurbished chamber. In a word, Mr. Speaker Sir, we have all the supporting infrastructures that can enable us go forward. I am quite optimistic, therefore, that this Assembly will realize its mandate better.

Mr. Speaker Sir, this is a historic occasion for me that I hope will mark the beginning of a solid, mutually beneficial working relationship between this Assembly and myself, as your Senator. Indeed, I extend my appreciation to you and the honorable members for according me the opportunity to share with you my aspirations, expectations and thoughts about our county while linking them to the Constitution, Vision 2030, the Big Four Agenda, Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP).

Mr. Speaker Sir, as I noted earlier, I stand here today because you graciously invoked Standing Order 25(1) of the County Assembly of Samburu. For that, I thank you. I also speak here today because Article 96 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 affirms the Senate as the representative of the counties at the national level, and protects the interests of the counties and the county governments. For the record, Mr. Speaker Sir, the Senate's Standing Order 241(1) states that a *Senator may, in accordance with the rules of procedures of the County Assembly in which he/she is a voter, attend or address the County Assembly or a committee of the Assembly.* The same

Standing Order further provides, however, that the Senator requires written permission of the Speaker of the County Assembly to do so. I am grateful, Mr. Speaker Sir, for your permission to address this Honourable Assembly. Therefore, Mr. Speaker Sir, I address this Honourable Assembly today because I consider it to be the ultimate foundation of my office. I trust that the hon. Members of this Assembly also consider this responsibility as the very reason for the Assembly's existence.

As you are definitely aware, Mr. Speaker Sir, Devolution is a fundamental pillar of our Constitution and the biggest contributor to the country's growth. It has opened up the once marginalized parts of the country; it has improved healthcare system, it has enhanced agricultural services and spread early childhood education, among other devolved functions. To reverse the previous inequalities, the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 lays the foundation for a shift in the distribution of incomes that favour poorer people, strengthens labour markets and increase access to healthcare, education, water and sanitation. It is by addressing these issues, Mr. Speaker Sir, that we can eradicate poverty, ignorance, and disease among our people.

Mr. Speaker Sir, without over-emphasizing my constitutional mandate as a Senator in lobbying for increased share of revenue allocation to Samburu County, it is equally important, to highlight the role of the Senate under Article 96(3) to exercise oversight over the national revenue allocated to the county governments. I shall diligently and solemnly play that critical role. Many counties, including Samburu County, accumulated massive debts in form of unpaid bills, most of which are owed to SME's owned by vulnerable youth, women and PWD's. The County Executive in consultation with the National Treasury needs to explore options on alternative sources of funds or on creative payment plans in order to pay off these debts. Aware of its direct impact on local businesses, I shall firmly perform my constitutional responsibility of exercising effective oversight over the administration of revenue allocated to the Samburu County Government.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I acknowledge that Samburu County is currently ranked the third poorest in the entire country, and is considered highly marginalized with 42.2% of its people living below the poverty line. As representatives of the people, it is therefore our constitutional, political and moral duty to make use of the provisions of devolution to reverse this situation and ensure that

our people emerge from poverty and begin to live free, informed, healthy and prosperous lives. We really have no option, but to ensure that we uplift our people from decades of marginalization, poverty and under-development.

Mr. Speaker Sir, Article 202 (1) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 provides that revenue raised nationally shall be shared equitably among national and county governments. The Senate divides these national revenues among counties through County Allocation of Revenue Act. Article 202 (2) further states that counties may be given additional allocations from the national government's share of revenue, either conditionally or otherwise.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I note that since inception of devolution, Samburu County and this very Assembly have so far appropriated KShs. 17,718,736,710. While we all appreciate that this is a significant amount of money, I note that this money came in at a time when there were no clear structures because, devolution was a new system. Most counties – including Samburu – struggled to put in place administrative, work processes and structures that would facilitate strategic and effective investment of the monies appropriated to the county governments. With all these in place, it is now time to ask: what have we done with all the money that we received so far? Answering this question correctly will enable us plan better for the next disbursements from the national government and the revenues that we collect locally as a county.

In the next Financial Year 2018/19, the Senate is considering the County Allocation Revenue of Bill, 2018, in which Samburu County is expected to receive Ksh. 4,427, 400,000. Again we ask ourselves: what are we likely to do with this money to uplift the socio-economic status of the people of Samburu County? The good news is that in the Financial Year 2018/19, the Commission on Revenue Allocation has proposed to the Senate an award KShs 6.8 billion to eighteen counties for improved revenue collection and our County is one of them. With the kind of allocations we receive, there is no excuse whatsoever for the County not to uplift the Samburu people. We should envision and work towards a future where we do not need to borrow money to pay our workers, a future where our health institutions will have sufficient drugs and other medical supplies at all times. This is why while we celebrate financial allocations from the national government; we also need to strive for financial independence in order to increase our spending capacity on development projects for the benefit of our people. We can only do this if

we increase our revenue allocation and ensure accountability on the use of the revenue that we collect. An increased revenue base will be possible if the county streamlines its operations including business licensing procedures.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Article 209 (3) of the Constitution of Kenya empowers county governments to raise revenue by imposing taxes in specific circumstances. Unfortunately, most county governments including Samburu have consistently been unable to attain annual revenue targets. This has entrenched the dependency of counties on allocations from their share of the national government's revenue leading to rampant cases of unpaid bills in many counties.

Therefore, as an Assembly, we need to examine the revenue potential streams proposed by the CECM in charge of Finance and determine whether the estimates are realistic and why we have been consistently unable to achieve the projected revenue targets year-in year-out. We also need to interrogate the authenticity of unpaid bills and ensure that only genuine ones are honoured.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Commission on Revenue Allocation (CRA) has proposed a new generation formula to henceforth reward counties that increase their locally generated revenues. The funds are determined by examining how much the counties collected and banked in the consecutive years, and sharing this among counties on account of their fiscal efforts.

In light of this, I wish to encourage the Honourable Members of this Second Assembly to read the Draft National Policy to support enhancement of County Governments' own-sourced revenue that provides various ways through which county governments could enhance their revenue. I note that the document envisages important roles played by county assemblies.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Assembly needs to work closely with the County Executive to attract investors for the greater benefit of the people of Samburu. We, therefore, need to create an enabling environment for investment by providing adequate social amenities such as water, health facilities and good access-roads as provided for in the Constitution. At the same time, the county should aggressively market Samburu as a tourist hub to local and international audiences. This calls for partnerships with relevant actors to ensure that positive developments and aesthetic resources in Samburu are exposed to the outside world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also need to be aware of policy developments in the country and align our actions accordingly. In this regard, I urge the Honourable Members of this House to participate in the on-going review of the County Integrated Development Plan (CIDP), to make it more responsive and relevant to the needs of the people of Samburu County, while anchoring it to the Vision 2030, SDGs and the Jubilee Government's Big Four Agenda.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have adequate human resource to do this; all we need is to empower them. According to the 2009 Population and Housing Census, the population of Samburu County was estimated at 223,947. Given a population growth rate of 4.45% per annum, compared to the national growth rate of 3%, our County population is projected to increase to 400, 000 by 2022 and slightly over 450, 000 by 2025. These changes represent about 25% population rise between 2017 and 2022. This increase is significant and calls for commensurate expansion of basic amenities and infrastructure in the County especially in Early Childhood Development Education Programmes (ECDE) and Health and Sanitation, among others. The projected growth rate calls for scaling up of the ECDE centres establishments as well as preparing for transition of our children to the next level.

Worth noting, Mr. Speaker Sir, is that as we progress, we should remain aware that one of the key variables in our progress is the question of inclusivity of marginalized population groups in planning and implementation of development strategies. In Samburu County specifically, we need to think about development initiatives that mainstream women, youth, people living with disability and ethnic minorities as part of us. For instance, statistics indicate that over 80% of the population in Samburu is youthful (below 35 years old), which means that we cannot possibly attain any significant levels of development without their input; nor can these initiatives be sustainable if they do not focus on the future needs of these youth. Like the youth, women also constitute a huge percentage of our population and play critical roles in development. Therefore, we need to design investment ideas and products that bear in mind the unique and special needs of youth, women, and people living with disability in the areas of skills development, entrepreneurship and micro-enterprise to ensure that as many of people as possible gainfully take part in the emerging knowledge-based economic growth.

Mr. Speaker Sir, all these will also contribute to the elimination of social ills such as cattle rustling, highway banditry, substance and drug abuse, petty crime and other socially unacceptable occurrences and ultimately reduce the different forms of vulnerability. This, however, calls for a greater performance of our oversight roles as provided for in the Constitution.

Mr. Speaker Sir, in doing all these, we may draw on critical lessons from our neighbours and other devolved units. Indeed, a number of devolved units have succeeded to generate revenue directly by partnering with other partners who continue to pump hundreds of millions every year into devolution. Samburu County can equally benefit from such initiatives. One notable Project is the North and North Eastern Development Initiative (NEDI) by the World Bank that was launched recently in Garissa and in which Samburu is a member; World Bank has pledged KShs. 120 billion. For maximum benefit from this project, Samburu County needs to be fully involved in this initiative. We also take pride in a number of Counties in the Arid and Semi – arid (ASAL) areas, who despite starting from a low base due to decades of marginalization, ended up diverting the bulk of their resources to development expenditure. I call upon us to always endeavor to direct more resources to development.

Mr. Speaker Sir, farmers are experiencing challenges of storage facilities in the county; there are only a few silos, with one owned and operated by National Cereal Produce Board (NCPB) in Maralal town. This means that a number of our farmers do not have access to storage facilities, and they therefore, suffer losses due to post-harvest related challenges. Although the County Government is in the process of constructing two cereal stores in Poro and Loibor Nkare areas, there is need to construct more cereal stores next to proposed irrigation schemes as initially aimed at making Samburu County food-secure.

Mr. Speaker Sir, most people of our county practice pastoralism as the main economic activity. There are limited agricultural production and livestock services, a challenge that continues to impact on agricultural and livestock production, yet the county relies heavily on the sector. Cases of animal welfare and health concerns are widespread in the county, which has equally impacted on livestock production and its products. In the end, the products remain uncompetitive both

locally and internationally. This has affected economic development of our people. As leaders in the county, we need to prioritize establishment of modern livestock production programs.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the county has also suffered from vagaries of climate change and environmental degradation, seen in perennial droughts, flash floods, reduced vegetation cover and diminishing surface water volumes overtime. These have greatly affected crop farming and livestock farming, which have contributed to outbreaks of livestock diseases and worsened the poverty situation.

Indeed, Mr. Speaker Sir and Hon. Members, you may recall that last year, our livestock farmers left for other counties in search of pasture due to prolonged drought. In the end, a number of our people lost their livestock either due to long distance, lack of pasture, and banditry. This does not have to be the case always.

Mr. Speaker Sir, you will recall that H.E President Uhuru Kenyatta unveiled “The Big Four” development agenda in his address to Kenyans during the 54th Jamhuri Day celebrations on December 12, 2017. His Excellency President emphasized the need for a new outlook geared towards shifting the country’s mindset from politics to economic development, and reiterated that his administration would focus on food security, affordable housing, manufacturing and affordable healthcare as key pillars during his second term in office. I wish to remind hon. Members that this is a devolved function and therefore, the County Assembly needs to devise ways in which the County Government can engage with the National Government for the benefit of our people.

On food security, President Kenyatta noted that the government will introduce targeted taxation to put idle arable land to use. As earlier noted, Samburu is one of the counties in Kenya considered to be food-insecure. Therefore, hon. Members, we need concerted efforts to make Samburu County food-secure. To improve on this situation, we need to support more agro-sectors, such as large scale irrigation schemes and increase production of staple foods such as beans, maize, potato, rice and animal feeds. We further need to invest heavily in securing our water towers and river ecosystems to harvest and sustainably exploit the potential of our natural water resources.

Hon. Members, we also need to launch initiatives aimed at reducing post-harvest losses of food crops; capacity development and financing, as well as cultivation of good working relationship between ourselves and the County Government. In other words, hon. Members, we need to fight hunger; that is the first step towards development. Ultimately, it is our duty and responsibility, hon. Members, to ensure that the County Government of Samburu also prioritizes the Big Four Agenda.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I wish to remind the hon. Members that they bear a critical role of oversight of County Funds. The Assembly is constitutionally empowered to exercise oversight over the functions of the County Executive including its policies, organs and county spending by approving the county budget and expenditures. These are duties enshrined in Article 185 of the Constitution of Kenya and Section 8 of the County Governments Act, 2012. I emphasize this role because it is critical creating an environment of transparency and accountability in the administration of county funds.

As I move towards the conclusion, Mr. Speaker Sir, I wish to reiterate that the grace period for the Second Assembly is now over. The high expectations and aspirations of the people of Samburu must be met. They will be looking up to this Assembly to ensure that fiscal discipline is maintained in county expenditures and that county funds are utilized to realize positive impact on the lives of the people. It is important, therefore, that the County Assembly expedites the enactment of any pending County Assembly Bills that are necessary for the effective use of county funds and for monitoring of expenditures. This will also enable the Assembly to ensure that it does not approve any budgets and expenditure without proper budgetary and legal provisions. I pledge my support to the Assembly in this regard. If all the Big Four agendas are effectively rolled out in the County, it will guarantee trickle-down effects to all, thereby enhancing the welfare of Samburu people. This will, however, be realized if you, hon. Members adopt the agenda by playing your rightful roles as enshrined in the Constitution and the various relevant laws.

As leaders, we can steer our people to economic prosperity. That is why we need to accept the honour that the people of Samburu bestowed by allowing us to sit in this chamber. We must remember that our mandates are neither easy nor impossible.

In all these, however, we remember that when the history of this county is eventually written, our children will read about our performance, about the foundations you laid for this county and about the leadership you provided in developing this county. I am delighted to be here today, and to note that so far, we are doing our part relatively well. I hope that, as we march into the future, our vision for our county shall be clearer and the commitment to our mandate greater.

For these reasons, Mr. Speaker, I reiterate my commitment to collaborate and work closely with the County Government of Samburu for the good of our people. Under my watch, my office shall always offer a hand of commitment and partnership with the government and the people of Samburu. I shall be happy to also work with the people of Samburu in addressing the challenges that may arise during my tenure. I welcome you, Mr. Speaker Sir, and you hon. Members, to join me in building a greater future for the people of Samburu county, a future of promise and prosperity for all who live in the county, a fair, just and equitable Samburu where everybody – man or woman, young or old, local or foreigner, the rich and the not-so, can have something to look forward to and to be proud of.

Indeed, I hope that my address to the Second Assembly of Samburu, today, is the beginning of an effective working relationship based on mutual respect, collaboration and dedicated service to the people of Samburu County.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir, for your indulgence. Thank you, hon. Leader of the Majority, and the hon. Leader of the Minority, and the hon. Members for your time. Thank you Woman Representative. Your Excellency the Deputy Governor, thank you for your patience and I thank you all. Esteemed county men and women, I am grateful for your faith and trust in me. God bless you all, May God Bless Samburu, May God Bless Kenya.

I hereby table this inaugural speech to the 2nd Assembly of Samburu County for purposes of record, and for appropriate consideration and deliberation by this hon. House.

The Speaker, (Mr. Lempere Solomon): Hon. Members, the time being half past 4 o'clock and there being no other business, this Assembly stands adjourned until Wednesday, 6th June, 2018, at 9 am.