

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ride on the statement by the distinguished Sen. Seneta. The Chairperson of the Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources, when responding, to tell us what the Government is doing in terms the people who plant tomatoes along the rivers. When you go to Narok County, the Mara River is actually drying up. Let us call it dry. Sen. Seneta should know that in the riparian lands there are many different species of animals that live and depend on water on that part of land and do not survive anywhere else. So, what happens to these mammals which are no longer there? Secondly, why are people allowed to cultivate the riparian lands?

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I would like to ride on that Statement sought by the distinguished Senator. When the Chairperson will be responding to that question, I would like to get a definite explanation as to whether the City of Nairobi has a policy on how to acquire firefighting equipment and also where they are placed. Given that Nairobi is such a large city, I would like to know whether all that equipment is just placed at the City Hall or it is spread out in the suburbs of Nairobi.

It will also be important for us to understand whether the disaster management system which is national and the fire fighting systems which are for counties have in their budget, provisions to buy firefighting equipment and what they do. Are they only for water or do they have any chemicals, in the event that they run out of water?

Thank you.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to oppose this Bill. I do so for the following reasons. First, when we talk about a small country like Kenya having several cities based on population, I think we miss the point. This is because we are forgetting the problems that are brought about by rural-urban migration. We have witnessed a lot of people settling in the urban areas in this country. As a result, we have seen mushrooming of slums in those areas.

Secondly, I am opposing this Bill because of the issue of land ownership. I come from Narok; I know a lot of people who own land right next to Narok Town. The moment we say Narok Town has over 250,000 people, which I am sure it does, it ceases to be a town and becomes a municipality. This will affect the ownership of land in Narok County. For example, if I own a freehold land, the moment this town turns into a municipality, that land will become a leasehold land. That will bring in a lot of problems to our people.

In my view, what this Bill ought to have looked into is maintaining small cities in this country. We are still grappling with issues of devolution. Many people are spending a lot of time arguing whether we should have 47 counties or not. Here we are saying a town with a population of 250,000 be converted into a municipality. The moment it has 500,000 people then it becomes a city. How many cities are we going to have in Nairobi County?

The problems we are now experiencing in this city are enormous. When you go to Kileleshwa, for instance, there are a number of highrise apartments coming up. We are not talking about provision of services to them. Karen, for example, was zoned for one residence per hectare. There will be a lot of pressure such that those zoning laws will be disregarded. People will be putting up apartments on one hectare.

The drafters of this Bill ought to have looked at the provision of services and how devolution would work effectively. Earlier on, a statement was sought here by the distinguished Senator with regard to firefighting machines. There are a lot of problems we are facing with them. Why do we not address ourselves to basic needs?

In this Bill, there are so many good things. They look very good here on paper. That so long as a town has 500,000 people, it can become a city. I am sure Kisii Town has more than 500, 000 people. So, it will become the City of Kisii. I am sure the distinguished Senator from Kisii County will be very happy to have a city. What about essential services?

I am concerned about land ownership. I want to encourage more services to go to the rural areas rather than trying to push and have more cities in this country. I would rather even encourage the reverse. Instead of rural-urban migration, there should be migration from urban to rural areas because devolution is supposed to really help us.

I do not want to deliberate on these issues, I oppose it based on the issue of the ownership of land. Talking about converting Narok Town into a municipality, I am very concerned just like other residents there. I own land next to the town. Now I will be told that my freehold land will be converted into a leasehold land. Those are the things that I am worried about. Until the time we can adequately manage the provision of basic services like water in a city like Nairobi, there is no point for me to stand here and talk about creating more cities in this country.

Around the world, cities have millions of people. In fact, I know a city that has about 20 million people. There are millions of people in some cities in Japan and Brazil. This Bill is completely ill-advised. We need to consider getting certain things right first. I would have been happy to support this Bill if we were talking about creating suburbs. If we say that Karen is a suburb of Nairobi City, I would support it. When we talk about a population of 10,000 people, that should be a suburb or a town. My only worry is that when you talk about a city having 500,000 people, Narok Town will never become a city because we are sparsely distributed.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with those few remarks, I oppose this Bill.

Sen. Olekina: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

I rise pursuant to Standing Order No. 90 (2) which states as follows:

“It shall be out of order to introduce an argument or any specific question upon which the Senate has taken a decision during the same Session, except upon a Motion to rescind that decision made with the permission of the Speaker.”

Is it in order for the hon. Senator to discuss a matter that has already been disposed of?