

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Thursday, 11th October, 2018

*The House met at the Senate Chamber,
Parliament Buildings, at 2.30 p.m.*

[The Deputy Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kindiki) in the Chair]

PRAYER

Sen. Olekina, you may proceed.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. On behalf of the people of the County of Narok, I send my heartfelt condolences to all the families whose relatives perished in this accident. Accidents distort people's thinking.

I know the owner of the bus. He is a good friend of mine. His name is Cleophas Toto. At the moment, he is also in a tough position going by what the Inspector-General is saying about this accident.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my biggest concern is to do with the issue of liability. It is time we thought about the liability with regard to accidents on our roads. In other countries, passengers are normally covered and compensated when they are involved in accidents. It is unfortunate that this does not happen in Kenya.

As Sen. (Dr.) Langat said, the NTSA is quick to give statistics of deaths. What is the responsibility of the insurance companies when our people are involved in accidents? Does their insurance policy cover the passengers in our vehicles? We must make sure that our vehicles are roadworthy. Maybe it is time we encouraged a discussion on issues of liability. For example, what kind of insurance policy should Public Service Vehicles (PSVs) have?

Every time we have accidents, we come here and condole with families who have lost their beloved ones. It is a pity that we do not go beyond our debate here. We forget it very fast. We talk about banning night travel and so on. Is it a long-term solution? We, as Senators, are mandated by the Constitution to defend the interests of counties and their people.

We should be more proactive because we are losing many people on our roads. We should now discuss how we can ensure that NTSA works with the insurance companies and the owners of motor vehicles to ensure that when we are in a vehicle we are fully covered.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Sen. Olekina, you have ten minutes as your balance of time to reply. You can now proceed.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, before I reply, considering the importance of this matter, I wish to donate a few of my minutes to Sen. M. Kajwang' and my good friend Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve. I will donate three minutes to each and I beg that you allow me one minute to reply.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): So you will have one minute to reply?

Sen. Olekina: Yes, and if there will be nobody in the House, I will talk until the end.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Okay, let us have Sen. M. Kajwang'.

Sen. M. Kajwang': Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I wish to appreciate the benevolence of Sen. Olekina who has sponsored this Motion, which is the kind of stuff that we should be discussing in this Senate.

I support this Motion. I also take note that Kenya's position in the world economic forum travel and tourism competitiveness index is 80 out of 136. That is not something we need to be proud of yet tourism contributes about 90 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). That is even bigger than what the insurance industry contributes to the GDP because the insurance sector is just about 2 per cent of the GDP. This means that we must do everything to improve Kenya's position.

The Mover of the Motion has cited technology as one of those things that can help us to improve this ranking. Whenever we travel to other countries, you will find most often Members using online tools like Booking.com to identify their accommodation or Airbnb. All these are online tools that have grown by leaps and bounds because they offer some relevance to the people that use them. I urge the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), in pursuit of improvement of that index, that an investment in technology will not be wasted and it will help our country to be much more visible. It will also help to profile a lot of our cultural heritage and sites.

The other day I found a young man working for the KTB at the airport. He was sitting there with booklets, pamphlets and giveaways. When you look at them, they are all about images of the Maasai Mara and our coast. In some countries like Australia, for example, when you go to Gold Coast which is in eastern Australia, they have much more wonderful beaches than we have here in Kenya. We must change the narrative. If we want tourists to come here, we must offer more than sand and the Sun because there are countries that have these.

In my mind, there are certain things that are unique to Kenya. In my home County of Homa Bay, in Ruma National Park, we have an antelope that is found nowhere else in the world. It is only found in Ruma National Park. It is called the Roan Antelope and the number remaining is less than 500 in the entire world. We can do much more than just profiling our game parks and beaches.

There is much more about culture. The Maasai or the "Maa" Community has a very compelling cultural story. Look at other countries. If you climb Mt. Fuji in Japan, there is a story. For every thousand feet you climb, there is a story. In fact, they say that when you climb Mt. Fuji, you never come back the same person. What story are we ascribing to Mt. Kenya or the wonderful Mt. Kilimanjaro which the Mover of this Motion happened to take me to in one of his forays in Maasai land? We have very beautiful scenery but no story to tell.

In Turkana, we have archaeological findings. All these can be put together in a portal using technological platforms. If we use technology, Kenya and our tourism attraction will be more visible.

This appeal does not only go to the national Government and KTB. We must remember that the Fourth Schedule says that local or domestic tourism is a responsibility of county governments. So, let this Motion appeal to KTB, the national Government and also our governors; that they have a responsibility to build content and create visibility of the tourism potential and the heritage that we have.

Finally, I am excited that not too far back, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) and one of the global bodies identified a place called Thimlich Ohinga. It is one of the earliest places where the Luo Community settled. It is a place that is characterised by masonry of those days. It shows how that community used stones to build forts and fortresses to keep away enemies. Those are things we need to talk about and profile. We need to go beyond the Malindi and the Italian tourist circuit.

Let this be a wakeup call. I hope one day we will have a County Tourism Development Bill, because it is our job as Senate to come up with good legislation that will spur and encourage counties to take up the functions that are devolved.

I congratulate the Mover of the Motion. We look forward to profiling the antelopes of Ruma National Park, the crocodiles and hippos of Lake Victoria and the story of Luanda Magere; which is a story which I believe that every person living in this world needs to understand.

I support, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): I call upon the Mover, Sen. Olekina, to reply.

Sen. Olekina: I thank you once again, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. From the outset, I thank my colleagues, the distinguished Senators, who contributed immensely to this very important Motion of trying to use technology to increase opportunities that can be harnessed to build this economy.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, since yesterday, when we began discussing this Motion, Sen. Sakaja spoke heavily about what happens with the talent relating to the use of technology that we have in this country. I thank him for pointing out that there is a hub that focuses on building tools. If the Ministry of Tourism; and it has now been reiterated by Sen. Kajwang; and the Kenya Tourism Board (KTB), can tap into this talent that we have locally, we can then move away from the traditional land and sea tourist opportunities.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, there is a lot in Samburu County, where you come from, that tourists can learn about. Using this location-based data analytics, it can help us to tap into these tourists who come here and who are interested in not only going to my county to see the wild animals – which I love and want them to come more – but also our culture. Leaving that money locally is very important.

One of the things that all Senators have spoken about is that we are really underutilizing our opportunities and resources that we have in this country. It is time that, because of all these levels of unemployment--- I agree entirely with Sen. Dullo when she stated that it is imperative that we now start including tourism as part of our curriculum

as a course at an early level. That way, when these children are growing up, they can particularly use this new technology of location-based data analytics, which is raw. That technology helps you to improve more on your business. In terms of tourism in this country, we have to look at it as a business.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, when you look at Kajiado, Samburu, Homa Bay and every part of this country, there are certain aspects of culture that can be used to increase revenue. When a tourist lands in this country, we should not only be giving them an opportunity to see our wildlife and beautiful beaches and forego tapping into their interest. When they come here, particularly the young children who are in school in the United States of America (USA) – and who come here for the summer holidays – they are interested in community development and environmental issues.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, climate change is becoming problematic. All the Senators who contributed to this matter raised concerns that unless we now diversify, then the tourists coming in will not be of any good use to us. It is embarrassing that as we currently stand, we are listed as number 80 out of 136, yet we have 43 different ethnic groups in this country that tourists can tap into.

Yesterday, Sen. Halake talked about looking at these tourists as a way to help counties increase their revenue collection. I could not agree with her more. It is important that with these correct tools – all of them technology – all these counties can now carry out their skills and say, “with all the tourists coming here, we have community development here.” Today is the International Day of the Girl Child. There are women who came here from abroad but we are unable to tap in and tell them that there is an event taking place in Marakwet today or on Saturday. Or that there is probably an event taking place in Narok County; and they are interested in it. When these tourists go there, they will spend US\$100, and the money will go directly into helping that community.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I do not want to deliberate more on the issues that have been raised, but every Senator spoke about an opportunity that we have and which we can offer to our tourists without charging them more money. They are already coming here; we should give them a safe environment and introduce them to our culture. We should not subject them to a situation where when they go to the Maasai Mara, there are so many of my fellow tribesmen standing at the gate selling them beads; no! Let them come and experience a day in the life of a Kenyan. When we extend that, then, of course, we can improve on our position, particularly on the culture in terms of our ranking worldwide.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, what we have in this country is amazing. Sen. Kajwang’ spoke about the Gold Coast, where we had an opportunity to travel to together. They did not really have a lot, but with the little they had, they made sure that they maximized on it. While there, we had a chance to go up a mountain and just look at the view. Look at Nairobi; Sen. Sakaja said clearly yesterday that this is the only county with skyscrapers and a game park. In fact, we should even now go to the extent of knowing that when these tourists land in Nairobi, we should not only be concerned about when they are going back. Let us try and partner with these companies to know where they are going and what it is that they are interested in. With that, we can lure them to come back more and more to enjoy our beautiful culture.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I thank all the Senators, including Sen. Wario, for their contributions. Let this country know that we have a great thing here. It now

behooves the Ministry of Tourism and Wildlife; and the KTB to now take home the resolutions of this House. Let them ensure that they partner with these companies that use these location-based data analytics so that we can improve our position around the world in terms of tourism.

I do not want a situation where, as Sen. M. Kajwang' said, at the airport there is a gentleman with just information. We want a situation where those tourists are the ones who come in. In fact, now that we have 47 counties, every county should have a visitors' desk or welcome centre. When one leaves Massachusetts in the United States of America (USA) and drives to Rhode Island; when they go to the first rest area, they will find a tourism information desk. One can use technology to know what they can find in Rhode Island. When one traverses further into Connecticut before getting to New York, they will also find a tourism centre. The 47 counties can tap in and the unemployed youth can actually benefit.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, with those few remarks, I reiterate again that I thank all the Senators who contributed to this.

I beg to move.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, once again, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I rise to support the Motion by the distinguished Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve. From the outset, I have to say that I am very impressed with her presentation and passion for the People with Disabilities (PWDs) in this country. It is time that every Kenyan, educator and leader out there should take cognizance of the fact that they do have, in this Senate, someone who cares about the PWDs. I congratulate her for coming up with this Motion.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the issue of disability is something that is completely ignored in this country. It is not only about the children who have difficulties in hearing or seeing, but it also ranges into other areas that can render a child completely – I do not want to use the term useless- disabled in a way that they cannot express themselves by speaking or writing. Others cannot comprehend what they are being taught.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, we have a lot of challenges on issues of dyslexia, for instance. I speak on this out of experience because my friend was diagnosed with dyslexia, but I could not believe it. I also know someone else who is very dear to me who was diagnosed with another form of disability. The most important thing is that the Ministry of Education ought to accept and appreciate the fact that there are people who are brought into this world and, not by their own liking, they are unable to perform other things that other people are able to do.

It is imperative for the Ministry of Education to set up schools for children with disabilities. We need to devise methods teaching these children the English language, as Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve observed. Some of our children were brought up in very humble backgrounds and their parents were unable to speak English. When a child is diagnosed, for instance, with dyslexia, it is important for us, as a country, to provide him with the conducive environment for learning.

We know very famous people in this world who are dyslexic. Some people did not believe in them. Today, some of them are great mathematicians and scientists. For

example, Albert Einstein is a great scientist irrespective of the fact that many people did not believe he could achieve that status in life.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I support this Motion and I hope the current Minister knows the importance of having a child. A child, whether disabled or able should be accorded the opportunities that every human being must have in this world.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, focusing on the immediate, when the child is young, at the intermediary level, those skills should be introduced. We have got to bring a balance. English language should be taught in our schools, but we must also promote our cultures. There is a distinguished Senator who brought a Motion before this House on introduction of Kiswahili sign language in schools. Our Constitution recognizes two languages as the national languages in this country. That is English and Kiswahili. However, we have to think seriously about our mother tongues. We have to equip our schools with the necessary equipment.

Last year, we were talking about the laptop project. However, very few pupils have been provided with laptops by this Jubilee Administration. I wonder whether they have started schools with laptops centres so that they benefit as many children as possible.

It is imperative that we look at different strategies. This is because the needs of our children are different. For example, a disabled child in Narok County may not learn as fast as a child in Nairobi County. We know it is very expensive to teach children with disabilities. I realised this when I took a child who is dear to me to a very expensive private school. However, that school was unable to handle the child. The child is dyslexic. They advised me to take him to a public school with facilities to handle such children.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, it is important and I hope the Ministry will take this matter seriously. We need to equip our schools with the necessary facilities so that they can take care of our physically challenged children. I suggest that every school in this country should have a class with two or three dedicated teachers to teach children with disabilities.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, for this child to understand what they are being taught in school, they have to learn in a conducive environment. I know Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve is a trained teacher. She says some teachers did not understand the curriculum. I agree with her that once the report is done and forwarded to the Ministry, they come up with programmes of training teachers to handle children with disabilities.

They need to understand how to handle a child who has a hearing problem, who has dyslexia or has any other form of disability. Therefore, this curricular should not only be limited to people with hearing or eye disability, but all forms of disability. If we ignore other forms of disabilities, we will not be helping in any way.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I agree with Sen. Wario that universities should also start to teach courses that focus on advances made. Many teachers are using technology because it is the future; it will help us to move forward. For example, there are games which are developed through technology. Like what other Senators have said in the House, this country has a lot of talent. Let us come up with computer games that will help these children understand different things.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, unless this matter is taken seriously by this Government, we will be coming back here every year to discuss how to start introducing

different forms of sign language or Signing Exact English (SEE). Eventually, we may have to advance.

I hope that Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve will advance this into sponsoring a Bill so that it can become law. Sometimes, we may have a Motion but unless we follow it up to make sure that every county implements it, it will not work. Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) is devolved. However, if the Ministry of Education carried out an audit today, they will find that out of the 47 counties, only one county has a curricular on ECDE that focuses on people with disability.

Therefore, this is something which is very important and that requires all of us to sit down and come up with a law that will help this country to identify all forms of disabilities, carry out an audit and see what our counties have in preparation to help the children or people with disability live a normal life.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I will be happy to see an elected disabled person in the Chamber, who will be able to express themselves and live a normal life because God has created us equally. In fact, most people disregard people with disability but when they fall sick, the person with disability might be the one to donate blood which will enable them to see tomorrow.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, we only have one minute. Therefore, I end by saying that I fully support this Motion. I will support Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve to ensure that once this House adopts this report, we will follow through to ensure that whatever we resolve is implemented fully.

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Lelegwe): Hon. Senators, it is now 6.30 p.m., time to interrupt the business of the House. The Senate, therefore, stands adjourned until Tuesday, 16th October, 2018, at 2.30 p.m.

The Senate rose at 6.30 p.m.