

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 9th April, 2019

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

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

PRAYER

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

VISITING DELEGATION FROM LAIKIPIA
COUNTY ASSEMBLY

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I waited until you finished talking. After that, I bowed, then I ---

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kindiki): It has nothing to do with the Chair talking. It has to do with a Senator who is on the Floor and the Chair. No Senator should come in between.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I walked very fast before the distinguished Senator rose on her feet.

(Laughter)

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kindiki): You did not saunter?

Sen. Olekina: No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I did not.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kindiki): Order, Members! Standing Orders are there for a purpose. Sen. Olekina might survive because the Chair did not see what he did. We request that we respect our Standing Orders because they are made for a purpose.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, thank you for the opportunity to comment on the Presidential Address and also thank the President for taking time to tell Kenyans what he, as the Head of State and Government, has done.

I had an opportunity to keenly listen to the President on various issues that he spoke about. Briefly, although I am not here to criticize, I will state certain things or put the record straight.

During his Address, the President mentioned various projects that the Jubilee Government has completed. At that point, I asked myself if those who prepare the Speech for the President really verify some of the things they say have been done. I heard the President making reference to a road from Kakamega to Kisumu. As a Member of this House, I have had various opportunities to travel through that road while attending functions organised by Parliament. I do not know whether there is any other road between Kisumu and Kakamega but the one road which is there, which is around 47 kilometres, is not completed. The road is completed towards Kakamega County but on the side of Kisumu County, the road is still incomplete. I am yet to see a road that the President mentioned in his Address.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I was quite impressed that the President gave a lot of recommendations to the unity of this nation. He spoke heavily about the Building Bridges Initiative (BBI). I hope that the President will now take it further and ensure that it does not become an academic exercise. Let the views that will be collected from Kenyans – by this group of eminent personalities and distinguished Kenyans who were appointed by the President and the former Prime Minister to travel across the country to collect the views – be taken into consideration. That way, for once in the history of this nation, this country will be united.

The President spoke about corruption. Corruption is something that is eating this economy. It is a huge cancer. However, I was quite surprised that even during the Presidential Address the figures which were quoted are not the same ones which are being quoted by the newspapers. Sometimes there is a huge disconnect. I would want to believe what the President said but I also question the source of information from these other entities like the media that talk about the work which we have been doing to try and recover resources or public funds that have been illegally misappropriated by people who have been elected or appointed to ensure a fiducial responsibility.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I was quite disappointed because I expected the President to talk about how he intends to achieve the Big Four Agenda. This is something that every Kenyan looks up to. The President clearly spoke about 175,000 Kenyans who had registered to be considered for affordable housing. However, the President in his Address did not tell Kenyans how, during his tenure in office, he will ensure that at least, even the 175,000 Kenyans will qualify and benefit from the housing units.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the President appreciated the work that this Parliament does in considering legislation. However, I was quite shocked that the President, who assented into law certain legislations which were amended in the National Assembly but not brought to this House to be considered, did not point that out. I am particularly perturbed by this issue of names. I have stated clearly that if legislation is not brought before this House, I will not support it, and I stand by my words. I have seen many Kenyans queuing to be registered in this magical *huduma* number and yet not even a single Senator in this House knows what the number is all about.

Although I support the President, I will also be first to point out where I think we are just hearing stories and no tangible facts. Yes, our economy is growing, there is no doubt. However, the economy is growing only to those who want to continue taking advantage of the poor. One of the things which was very interesting to me here is that the President clearly indicated that funds will be available for lending to Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs). This is where the money is. I wanted to hear the President tell

Kenyans that we borrowed Kshs350 billion to build the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR) and this is how much we have paid back so far or he should have said this is how we will ensure we continue paying so that we do not continue burdening Kenyans.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the President spoke about the second phase of the SGR. I wanted to correct him that the SGR is not from Nairobi City to Naivasha Town but Nairobi City to Narok County unless the President will get another big loan to divert the already concluded SGR from Suswa, Narok or Duka Moja, to Naivasha. If the President has not been clearly informed that this SGR currently terminates in Duka Moja in Narok County, let me be very graciously and inform the President that the second phase of the SGR is actually from Nairobi to Narok County. I thank him for having considered extending the SGR to Narok County instead of Nakuru County or rather, Naivasha, which they keep on forgetting.

I was a bit concerned and taken aback by the Address of the President with regard to the sugar industry. I expected the President to focus heavily on how our farmers, who have been suffering a lot, will benefit from Government incentives that will ensure that one, we stop the illegal importation of sugar into this country and two; we ensure that we support particularly cane farmers so that they too can feel that the crop that they have chosen to invest in will continue supporting them but not send most of them to an early grave because they can no longer afford to pay for their basic human needs.

Farmers in western Kenya are crying. There are big cartels in this industry. I wanted the President to give us a roadmap or deliverables on how we will ensure that the needs of those farmers are taken into consideration. There are so many farmers in this country who have not been paid. I really wanted to hear that.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I am so glad he did not talk about the land which has been purportedly given to Uganda to build a dry port in Naivasha. One thing that I wonder is: What will we do to the farmers of this nation? What will we do to small enterprises or to Kenyans who want to set up those ports and ensure that they can make money from the neighbouring countries? I have nothing against our countries working together but I want to see more business opportunities for Kenyans living here who are struggling rather than setting up a dry port somewhere in Kenya so that another neighbouring country can continue benefitting. I would like to see Kenyans benefiting more.

It will be important for us to know whether at the end, if indeed, the President will give land to Uganda, what process and where will that land come from. If it is a private land, I have no problem with it but if it is community land, then of course, the people of that community ought to be consulted and shown how they will benefit.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, finally, I would like to reemphasize this issue of building bridges. I am happy that the President spoke very passionately about it but I would like to see action. I would like us to either set aside this debate of having a referendum or embrace it if we will ever be able to have a referendum in this country so that we can unite the entire nation.

This issue of not being included in Government is already causing a lot of problems in this country. In neighboring countries such as Rwanda, the Constitution is very clear. I stand with them in the 25th Anniversary of the terrible genocide. I hope that will never happen to anyone else in this world. There is no winner takes it all. In fact, as

we speak, President Kagame has only 50 per cent of people from his political party in Government. The other 50 per cent is from the Opposition.

There are a few things that we may end up doing that may not even require a referendum so that people in the whole nation can feel included. I hope that the President will follow through with his Address and the promises that he made, to ensure that by the time he leaves office, people will remember him, not as the President who spoke so much but as the President who ensured that whatever he spoke about, he walked that talk.

Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir.