

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Thursday, 19th September, 2019

*(Convened via Kenya Gazette Notice
No.8549 of 10th September, 2019)*

*The House met in the Kitui County Assembly
Chamber, Kitui Town, at 2.30 p.m.*

[The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka) in the Chair]

PRAYER

Sen. Olekina: Madam Temporary Speaker, the issue of accountability is something very important and we must demand for it. There is no reason as to why we should sit here until 9.00 p.m. fighting for money to go to county governments and yet governors are not willing to account for it. Shame on them!

We want to encourage the citizens of this country; of each and every county, to come to our Committee of CPAIC and submit petitions. It was embarrassing that the auditors would issue an unqualified audit opinion yet, the devil is in the details. When you look at it, it is a shame. When I received this dossier, I made it purposely my mission to visit that county. To my surprise, whatever was written in that dossier was vividly. You could see poles and poles, yet millions and millions of shilling had been used to argue that certain projects had been done. It is embarrassing. It makes me feel very sad.

(The red timer went on)

Madam Temporary Speaker, please allow me 30 seconds. It makes me feel very sad that I sat in the Mediation Committee. I argued as to why we should send more money to counties because we cared about the people. However, those people who are tasked with the fiduciary responsibility think that it is their time to line their pockets. How else are we ever going to progress in this nation and yet those people who are tasked with the most basic responsibility of ensuring that the poor people get water cannot even account for a penny? When they are called to account for public money, they run away.

I fully support this Statement. I want to tell those governors out there that this House will take them to task.

Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I rise to support this Bill. From the outset, I agree with Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr., that Sen. (Dr.) Zani should develop this Bill in a way that it encourages people and not counties to make money.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, when you travel to Europe, particularly to Italy, you will find that people have converted their homes into tourism destinations. The government in that country has supported that initiative by classifying it as agri-tourism, where with any move for one to convert their home into an agri-tourism center, you register it. Once you have done that, you are given subsidies by the government. Consequently, you end up paying less taxes because you are creating more employment and, in the process, solving the biggest problem that we have in this country of unemployment.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, when I briefly looked at this Bill, I realised that some of the penalties are more punitive than they are at encouraging innovation. If you travel to Eldoret today, there is a farmer called Kirwa who, a few years ago, was named as the best farmer in the country. I credit him for having taught me the most important thing on dairy farming. He converted his home into a local tourism-farming destination, where he trains farmers on dairy keeping and on how to develop dairy feeds.

Therefore, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I would plead with the sponsor of this Bill to come up with very radical amendments, which I hope she will consider doing them. The amendments should take away the aspect of county governments making money from this Bill, to which this comes in as a way to classify certain areas as agri-tourism destinations. A good example is Narok, Samburu and Tsavo, where we have tourism destinations; and Narok is completely zoned as a tourist destination. The biggest challenge that we currently have in Narok – where you know we collect about Kshs2.1 billion from tourists visiting Maasai Mara – is that the farms next to the wildlife corridors are littered with white *mabati* roofs. This is because people have gone there and they have created towns. You will even find a street called Majengo on the doorstep of Maasai Mara. This is the same in every tourist destination.

Therefore, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, what we ought to do in this legislation, is to try and empower counties to zone their areas where they intend to help farmers. Instead of putting white roofs in Sekenani, we should encourage the local people from the Maasai community to maintain their cultural activities so that when these foreigners come, they can enjoy our culture. However, what is happening now is that anyone who wants to live close there puts up hostels and houses. In fact, sometimes other hotels prefer to fly their tourists straight into Maasai Mara instead of going by road, because before they enter the park, they will just find all these white *mabati* houses. This Bill should, therefore, introduce an element of zoning, where an entire area is classified as a tourist destination.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I support the idea of promoting local tourism. Local tourism is key and very lucrative. In a few years' time, I will convert my own home into a tourist destination. I was so happy that here, in Kitui, there is one home – where most of us were staying – like that. Someone has created villas in the rural part, which encourages more people to traverse the county and appreciate what that county has. Since I came here, I have only been eating *muthokoi*, because I want to appreciate this culture. Therefore, instead of punishing people--- We should not be creating legislation and putting punitive measures in them. This issue where you can only transfer the license, we

should make it very easy for one to access one. I like that aspect where you can only transfer to an activity similar to that one.

I, therefore, suggest to Sen. (Dr.) Zani to amend that clause and indicate that where it is zoned as an agri-tourism area or a particular field of activities that brings local revenue or creates jobs in that area, that no other activities can be put there. This will encourage more people to invest in their local economies.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I agree with Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr. that we need to come up with a mechanism of private public partnership where that entity will eventually be run by a private entity. I am happy that the enterprise has created so many jobs. It is my hope that other counties will come to benchmark in KICOTEC Factory in Kitui County instead of travelling abroad.

I visited the clothes factory today and I was impressed by what they are able to do. In the past, the Ministry of Interior and Coordination of National Government used to procure their uniforms from abroad. However, they now buy them here. They are creating jobs for over 200 or 300 people. Other county governments should replicate what Kitui County has done through Public-Private-Partnership (PPP) framework. The county governments should not do everything. Big governments are not solutions for democracies. Small governments are a solution for democracies. With a small government, you encourage more people to become innovative and solve the problem of unemployment.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I commend Sen. (Dr.) Zani for this Bill. However, I wish that she could spend some time on it before it goes for the Third Reading. I am not sure how much public participation has been carried out this Bill but I urge Sen. (Dr.) Zani to sample out counties that thrive in local tourism to see what other innovative ideas they have and then incorporate them. Looking at the different classification of local tourism activities and services which are classified as a, b,c,d,e and f, they were classified for purposes of coming up with rates on how much they should charge for licences. I do not think the classification is necessary. We need to ascertain whether our intention is to create own source revenue or providing a solution to the issue of unemployment by encouraging our people to be innovative and create money.

There are many people who live in this country who have never been to Narok. There are many people who live in this country who do not know where the raw product of the bread; wheat, comes from. The farmers in Narok who grow wheat can convert part of their land into agri-tourism centres, put up some condos, and then advertise all over the country for people to come to Narok to learn about wheat growing. Because of the problem of unemployment in this country, people are averse to welcoming people to their homes to show them what they do.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, if you went to a factory in Europe, the owner of that factory would take the time to walk you through. I recently visited Poland and one family took me through their farm and I was mesmerized by it. I love the idea that they were free and willing to share with me. However, here in Kenya, farmers treat their farms as their little secrets. We are in this world for a very short time. The more we care about our environment, the more we live in a peaceful environment.

The county governments need to come up with trade fairs with the intention of making sure that local youths pick up skills from there and that they are supported. In

instances where the youth cannot afford to pay for the skills, the county governments can pay for them because it will lessen the burden for county governments.

I beg to support this Bill with various amendments. I hope that Sen. (Dr.) Zani will look at the HANSARD report to see what the Senators had to say. One of the first amendments is to do away with the heavy fees imposed on the local tourism. The cottages will still make little money. If we are looking for ways of generating more revenue, there are certain services that when people, the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) can still make money. This is a very rich economy if only we follow things the right way.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, sir, we are moving to a cashless society. Most people use Mpesa to pay for services. All businesses should be encouraged to do merchant services. Sen. (Dr) Zani should include in the Bill that the KRA should waive or subsidize the charge for small business. The KRA will make more money when they subsidize the charge.

With those few remarks, I beg to support this Bill.