

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 17th November, 2020

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

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

PRAYER

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Madam Deputy Speaker. I rise to make a few comments in our role as a Senate in recording our thanks to the Address by His Excellency the President.

Madam Deputy Speaker, during the last year's state of the nation address, the President used one phrase, "no turning back." One of the things that caught me last April, was the fight on corruption. I want to quote the last year's speech as I make my brief comment on this year's state of the nation address.

Madam Deputy Speaker, from the onset, I must state that I was a bit disappointed. I do not know whether to blame the speech writers, or the COVID-19 pandemic took us by surprise such that this state of the nation address was not in my view, something to write home about.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in the last state of the nation address, the President stated as follows: "No turning back on the war against corruption as it is just war; a war to prevent misuse of public resources for selfish interests by those we have entrusted to manage them."

Madam Deputy Speaker, I expected that during his Seventh state of the nation address - which is something we were all looking forward to - the President will give us a status update with clear milestones and deliverables on the war of corruption. I did not hear this from the President.

Madam Deputy Speaker, the President spoke a lot on the issues of no turning back during the last year's state of nation address. However, clearly in his address, although the speech writers could have indicated to some extent the fight on COVID-19, I do not believe that they gave it the sensitivity that it required.

Madam Deputy Speaker, we have lost doctors. We have lost our men and women who have been working to try and ensure that this country continue to benefit from a good healthcare system. However, I do not know whether the speech writers were not concerned about the human sensitivity, that they did not give it the emphasis that it

required. Maybe later, we will read in the summary or the report which has been submitted, but I was waiting to hear tough measures which will be put to ensure that we fight this pandemic, which is really decimating our cultures.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it is quite clear that our economy has not done well. I expected that during the state of the nation address, the President will come up with drastic measures on how to ensure that the banking sector is tightly hitch on money and lend money to the public.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I expected to hear that the National Treasury bills interest would be dropped, so that commercial banks can start working with the public. There is no money circulating in this country. I would hope that at least, the President would have given us a status update on what each of the Ministry is doing to ensure that this business continue.

Madam Deputy Speaker, it was indeed one of the most forgettable speeches that I have ever heard of a Head of State. I will still go back to the 2019 address and hope that I can check and see how far we have gone because we were not turning back. This speech appeared to have taken us back.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I was pleased with one thing which I must give credit for. It is always good to give credit where credit is due. I was pleased with the status update on the Universal Health Care (UHC). The President clearly stated that during the last year's presidential nation address, he indicated that they had piloted with four counties. I was happy that this year, he has indicated that they have learnt, they have lessons that they have learnt and that the roll out to the entire country has now been finalized. I happen to have participated in that session in Mombasa. That was more promising to me because that give us a future to know where we will start from and end up.

Madam Deputy Speaker, in future, I hope that the speech writers, will keep track of these accomplishments, so that by the time the President retires and goes home, when he is sitting down and writing his memoirs, he can reflect back on the things that he did.

Finally, Madam Deputy Speaker, when the President spoke about the BBI, I hope that the most important thing that this Senate fought for on the issue of revenue will not be taken back. The amendments to Article 203 will be what will make the BBI or the referendum succeed or fail. It will be wrong for us to bring up the argument of per capita when other counties are yet to catch up with counties that have grown.

Madam Deputy Speaker, I do record my thanks.