

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 13th April, 2021

*The House met at the Senate Chamber,
Parliament Buildings, at 10.00 a.m.*

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

PRAYER

ADMINISTRATION OF OATH

*(The Senator-Elect for Garissa County entered the
Chamber escorted by the Senate Minority Leader
(Sen. Orengo) and Sen. Dullo)*

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker. I rise to support this Division of Revenue Bill. I register my appreciation for this Senate, and to let Kenyans know out there that this Senate fought for them to get more money. When people ask what a Senator does, a Senator comes to fight for more money.

In the Financial Year 2020/21 Narok County was getting Kshs8 billion, but because we passed the revenue formula in this House, Narok County will get Kshs8.8 billion. When I sit at my home, I am happy to have done my job that Narok County will get that money.

As is support this Bill, I am quite happy with the Committee on Finance and Budget for the recommendation they have brought because this Division of Revenue Bill is cleaner now. I love the recommendation that the Committee has proposed, and I will go directly to them. It says “total revenue share; National Government Equalization Fund and County Equitable Share.” County Equitable share is Ksh370 billion.

I want to correct my colleagues who are saying that we are touching money from conditional grants. No! If the national Government wants to give country governments money from conditional grants, let them bring money from somewhere else, but the money which will go to counties as shareable revenue is Ksh370 billion with the amendment. That is the naked truth.

I am annoyed by the Equalization Fund. As I speak, this country is ravaged by the COVID-19 pandemic. There are 84 hospitals that have been built in marginalized counties, which were supposed to benefit from the Equalization Fund, but they are rotting because the national Government has not paid the contractors, and we are saying that we do not have hospital beds.

The Cabinet Secretary for Health, Hon. Kagwe, instead of promising Kenyans that we are going to get Kshs4 million vaccines by June, which we know will not come, should sit down with these counties. Since health is devolved, they should see how they can move that money from the Equalization Fund from the National Treasury, and pay those contractors, so that we can create more rooms for the people who are sick.

As we pass this Bill, I encourage counties to continue putting more emphasis on raising own-source revenue. The Majority Whip will bear me witness that I shared---

(Loud consultations)

Sen. Olekina: I was given five minutes. The Speaker rules, not me.

Most counties do not concentrate on own-source revenue. It is about time that you do because we are all complaining here that the national Government is not releasing money on time. If we look at the Division of Revenue Bill, Page 247, Column G, the net balance left for the national Government for the last financial year was a deficit of Ksh161 billion.

With money having gone to Kshs370 billion we might be sitting down here, patting our shoulders and saying that we have done a good job as the Senate. This country will not have a deficit of Ksh384 billion. What does that translate to? More debt and taxes. We cannot bake our cake and eat it. We have to be factual.

We are doing a good job in fighting for more money to go to counties, but we also have to be cognizant of the fact that during a pandemic period, when the Government cannot raise more money, there is no money that goes to the county governments. The best thing that county governments can now do is to raise more own-source revenue. Governors, please, now that you know you are not getting the billions you were getting from the national Government, focus on own-source revenue.

Finally, let me correct the Senator of Wajir. I am not a proponent of BBI, but if it was to pass, Wajir would get Kshs11 billion. It will not lose money. We have to speak facts, as they will help us. Every county will get more money. Those are the facts, and the truth has no shades of grey.

I support this with the amendments. I congratulate the team that worked very hard to be able to bring the amendments.