

THE HANSARD

Tuesday 30th July, 2024

Assembly Building

The Assembly met at 2.30 p.m

[The Speaker (Hon. Mohamed Roba) in the Chair]

PRAYER

MOTION

DEPLOYMENT OF ENOUGH FOREST GUARDS/RANGERS TO PROTECT
INDIGENOUS AND EXOTIC TREE SPECIES WITHIN THE COUNTY

(Hon. Abdirashid Diba)

Hon. Abdirashid Diba (Garbatulla): Mr. Speaker, That Aware that, Water, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources are a function of the County Governments according to the fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Further Aware that, indigenous and exotic tree species have significant importance in supporting soil cover, wild, domesticated fauna through forage and grass including enhancement of microclimate changes in the areas where these trees are growing;

Appreciating that, State department of Environment, Natural Resources and climate change has deployed a limited number of Forests Guards/Rangers to our county to control the destructive and degrading activities that causes adverse effects to our indigenous and exotic tree species in the forested areas.

Concerned that, the increasing environmental degrading human activities such as settlements, subsistence farming, charcoal burning for the indigenous tree species

such as acacia species among others and illegal logging in the forested areas has brought about demeaning effects of flora and fauna increasing effects of global warming;

Further concerned that, these increasing environmental degrading human activities have been due to the limited number deployed forest guards in the affected areas;

This House resolves that, the County Executive Committee Member for Water, Energy Environment and Natural Resources to request from the State Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change deployment of Forest Guards/Rangers to safe guard our indigenous and exotic tree species that have been destroyed by human activities affecting environmental natural ecosystem and generation.

Hon. David Lemantile (Oldonyiro): Seconded.

(Question Proposed)

Hon. David Lemantile (Oldonyiro): Mr. Speaker, I think this Motion as per the Mover, first of all, we have been in this County for a while. And we understand the effect of, the climate change and also human effect in terms of our forests. I think in Isiolo we have only one registered forest, if I'm not wrong. Which I think, is one of the mountain here. And I believe that there's nothing going on there. It's only that human activities are still going on in that forest. We call it, *Nwalengishu*. It was a very good mountain. It has a lot of indigenous trees. But if you go there right now, you get nothing. Because we did a lot in terms of charcoal burning and other human activities that have already finished that forest.

Mr. Speaker, we have a forest department in this County from National Government. But Mr. Speaker Sir, we have never seen them doing effect of trying to control the harmful activities of human beings that is being done in our land. Especially, the charcoal burning. If you go to this part of that mountain, Mr. Speaker, Lorries from Meru transport people and people are living down in that mountain, burning charcoals. They stay there even seven days for those activities. And the police know, because they protect them, because that is a grazing place for livestock. And, when we see clashes within the communities, all of them migrate to that camp. But their work is nothing but to burn the charcoal. Mr. Speaker, if

you go on this road, because I use it everyday, you will find lorries full of charcoal. And that charcoal comes to this town and goes to Meru. I believe, Mr. Speaker, it's high time for us to protect our forest, Indigenous trees, because, Mr. Speaker, with this kind of climate change, this place can become a desert, because now we are cutting trees, even the weaker ones, we will never get it from anywhere again, which cannot even grow.

So, Mr. Speaker, I believe that, we only need to sit down and try to think well, to understand that the forest, is a hundred percent devolved. I think, Mr. Speaker, it's high time for us to ensure that we try to protect it. We are soon going to, not even to get a tree in this side of *Mlango*, I witnessed the same. I tried even to engage the chiefs, but at the end of it, it's like a black market. And people get money from there. Because if you get police protecting those people. Mr. Speaker, I think, we have to be alert to make sure that we change that. Even you see the grass; they are now burning the grass due to that fire. So, Mr. Speaker, I think the most important thing is that we need to see how we can enact laws that also try to ensure that burning of charcoal and also those activities should be minimized, if we cannot do away with it. Mr. Speaker, because, I believe that even if we say it is kind of economic activity to some people but Mr. Speaker, it's a distraction to the majority of the people. And I believe we depend on the forest, because I believe that when I was in school, we were taught that when we have more trees, more forest, they attract rain. But now, when we don't have those trees, it will attract drought. And I believe, Mr. Speaker, we need to stand up and try to come up with a law that governs and protects our environment.

Hon. David Waithaka (Bulapesa): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Protect me from Hon. Abubakar who is still talking and, Yeah, he started a long time ago and he's distracting my thoughts, my flow of thoughts. This one is a very worthy Motion, deployment of enough forest guards and rangers to protect our indigenous and exotic trees, species within the County. As all of us are aware, as a County we are very lucky that we have got indigenous trees that other Countries look for, you know, you can get even some of our medicine we get from these indigenous trees. And, our people, even before they reach hospitals, they use those indigenous trees to produce medicine for treating our people. So, it is important that we make sure that we look after our trees seriously. This place, we are also aware that rain comes because of having trees and, the way we have destroyed our forests in this

area, it is quite bad, it is disheartening. And if we had these rangers, they could take care of our forest. We know our people are not helping, though there are others who have commercialized well, we also need to do something about it to make sure that, we remove them from burning charcoal and making sure like, the irrigation that, we were to do in Ngaremara, if everybody knew how to do a bit of farming, I think most of our people would move away from, burning charcoal.

Another thing, because as I usually say, here in Isiolo we are endowed with a lot of resources, if that dam could be built and irrigation is done, that would be another way of making sure that we protect our forest. This one, you know most of the time we do rely on the National Government, but as Deputy Speaker has rightly put it, it is both devolved partly and the other partly. But what are we doing ourselves as a County to make sure that we employ our people to make sure that they look after our forest? Because if we keep on relying mostly, on the National Government, it is the way out of the shoe, who knows where the shoe pinches. So, it is upon ourselves as a Government, as a County, to make sure that we also do employ our people to look after our ecosystem. You know, I remember, we as Africans, we are endowed with a lot of resources. You remember, a baobab tree in Mombasa, the American had to come and uproot it and take it to America. And the cost of it was enormous. And surely the amount that they were paying us around 25 million, I believe so, you can imagine what we have here. I remember also in Baringo, the Americans came and discovered something that was in Baringo ecosystem, and they made billions of money without our people benefiting. So, it is good that we make sure Mr. Speaker, this one is a worthy Motion, we need to take it seriously. Today I'm happy, I can see most of the Members are here. I wish it was always like that. Otherwise, Mr. Speaker Sir, thank you for eyeing me and giving this opportunity to air my sentiment because the people of Bulapesa, although we don't have a forest, I do know the climate that is good in Bulapesa is because of the trees that are within Isiolo County. Thank you, Sir.

Hon. Halima Gole (Cherab): Thank you very much. I stand to support the Motion, on the deployment of enough forest guards and rangers to protect indigenous and exotic trees within our County. (*Silence, as the Muslim call for prayer(Adhaan) is called*)

It's true that the forest is mainly the sector which is not devolved; It is with the National Government. But at the County level, we are the ones who are suffering when the forests are destroyed and they're not replaced meaning, the afforestation program is not happening. Mainly in our area, like along the river line, most of the exotic trees which are usually known with the root at least to absorb and maintain, the water because river Ewaso Nyiro runs along my Ward; and right now along the bank of the Ewaso Nyiro the current prosopis has taken over the indigenous trees. The eradication of the prosopis and replacement with the indigenous trees will bring the lost glory, of the flow of our river. Because right now, you know, most of the time when the river fills up during heavy rainy seasons, usually there's a lot of overflow, unlike previously such was not experienced. I think it's because of the roots, the strong root, the natural exotic trees that are able to protect, to catch the soil that comes with the river and that maintains the flow of the river; and there is no current flood which has been experienced previously. But off late, with the destruction of the indigenous trees and replacement by the prosopis, every season we are experiencing floods and it is as if the sand has piled up and the flow of the river is now getting higher surface than the usual. So, I'm really supporting this because the distractions are mainly, or even the maintenance depending on the number of forest officers who are within. Previously, you know, these forest officers were in the villages educating the people. Also, the forest seedlings being planted and the people protecting even go outside within the forest to do that and ensure the trees are not cut down; but currently with the retirement of the previous officers, the forest is now open to destruction. So, I'm supporting this so that despite the forest department not being devolved, but since this is also our concern, maybe the County can get some more officers to deploy as forest officers, so that these indigenous tree seedlings are planted. We make an effort of eradicating the prosopis and replace it with the indigenous trees; While also the guards protect the remaining ones. This is a very important Motion, and I hope that the department will take action. Thank you.

Hon. Salesio Kiambi (Wabera): Ahsante sana Mheshimiwa Spika kunipatia nafasi hii kuchangia hii ajenda, kwa sababu itasaidia mambo ya ukulima na mvua. Leo ndio nimesikia kuna msitu Isiolo. Kwa hivyo inafaa kuchungwa vizuri. Mimi nafikiri kuna upungufu wa *rangers*. Hapo awali walichapisha nafasi sitini ya

kuandika hawa afisa. Mimi nigeomba waandikiwe ndio waweze kuchunga msitu wa Isiolo. Sisi tunapata mvua kwa sababu ya misitu wa Meru na Nyambene. Kwa hivyo ni muhimu kutunza misitu. Ahsante Mheshimiwa Spika.

Hon. Peter Losu (Ngaremara): Thank you Mr. Speaker for giving me the opportunity. I wanted to contribute, the last because I head that sector. I stand to support the Motion as it addresses what we are supposed to do as the County. Mr. Speaker, I think, the intention of the Mover was maybe to have these forest guards around those can maybe deployed to various forest around, not only the forest, Mr. Speaker, even the parks because our National reserve is in pathetic situation. I can echo the wordings of Hon. Kiambi. But, Mr. Speaker, even though we need more additional guards or even the rangers from the National Government, Mr. Speaker, we need to ask ourselves about the issue of rangers. Mr. Speaker, it's not something, good for us as a County to start even, imagine recalling retired people to come and continue with the service.

Mr. Speaker, coming from a Ward which is surrounded by parks, we are getting a lot of problems. And it's good for our people to know that we are losing our heritage day by day. One of it being exotic trees. Because Mr. Speaker, as maybe Hon. Lemantile just said, there is a lot of charcoal burning happening around. More especially, in Ngaremara and Burat, which are now the two Wards that are bordering the parks. Mr. Speaker, to your surprise, we only have like between 15 to 20 rangers who are active, it used to be 12. They have recalled around 5 people from retirement to continue with their service; just to man that park. And Mr. Speaker, these 15 or even 20 people, they cannot man Samburu, Buffalo Spring Lodge, Sarova Shaba, Bisanadhi. Mr. Speaker, if you try even to distribute these people, and even the gates, we have even like, three gates; If you try to distribute them, Mr. Speaker, the rest of the park is just left for people to burn the charcoal, and even the grass, to kill the wild animals. And yet, Mr. Speaker, we advertised 60 rangers. Mr. Speaker, I think this is the role of this House, to ask the Executive to hasten the process of recruiting the rangers, so that even protecting these exotic species we are talking about.

In the first place, we are supposed to take that role as a County, even before inviting the National Government to do it. It is our duty, our role as a County to make sure we have protected our parks and at the same time the trees.

Mr. Speaker, outside the parks, people have now finished the trees; they have burned everything. To your surprise now, people are burning within the parks. And that's why, now and then, you hear of fire. Because people are burning charcoal there, and nobody is there to protect the trees, or even to arrest these people and bring them to justice. Because we have few rangers in our parks, So Mr. Speaker, as much as I agree with Hon. Abdirashid, the Leader of the Majority because of this Motion, there is need for us also to question the Executive on the same, on the employment of the rangers. They need to employ these people to protect our parks, wildlife, and even the tourists.

Mr. Speaker, the other time, I think three months ago, the tourists were looted by the thugs, simply because even people graze in that park with guns and these few rangers cannot do anything, and if they try to even to trigger or even try to protect even these animals from entering the parks, these people are harmed. They have a lot of guns. So, Mr. Speaker, there is need for us, as a County to employ the rangers so that they can take that mandate. As much as maybe we are demanding the additional slots from the National Government from the forest department they deploy even some for our forest. In the first place, we need to take up that role as a County. So that, Mr. Speaker, going forward, these people stop destroying our forest. So, again, Mr. Speaker, and also, secondly, Mr. Speaker, on the same, we need also to come up with a policy of receiving our rangelands, because without receiving our rangelands, Mr. Speaker, we cannot have good forest around. Without receiving our rangeland, we cannot experience adequate rainfall. And that's why we are receiving unreliable rainfall and we are lucky that maybe Meru is just adjacent to Isiolo, that maybe we're receiving some little rain because of the the islands around Isiolo. We need to come up with a policy, at the same time, even our schools to have a policy of planting trees when the Government is saying, it is maybe tree planting day. Let's come out and make sure that maybe our schools have adequate trees and also available lands need to receive them. Thank you.

Hon. Speaker: Thank you, Honorable Losu. As the Chairman of that particular Departmental Committee, I think you will take it up and inform the House on the steps that you take. The Mover you can reply.

Hon. Abdirashid Diba (Garbatulla): Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Before I address myself on the Motion that I personally moved, I want to appreciate the presence of

the Members of the County Assembly for overwhelmingly availing themselves for this session. Another equal measure I will want to thank God for bringing back our Speaker after a long unsubstantiated leave. This reminds me that after a week after we were sworn in, you will see the Speaker marching through the corridors of the Assembly guarded by the Clerks and the Sergeant at arm in full regalia of the Assembly uniform. We missed that, Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you for being here. And, we want this spirit to continue living with us in our stay as Members of the County Assembly; and I will want to thank Members who made their contributions, to this Motion. One will wonder why I was moving a Motion that is not devolved, it must be understood that our climate, surroundings, our environment, need us more than the segregated powers bestowed upon us by the crafters of the law and the Constitution. We have a primary role, as a resident of County to talk about something which has an effect, both positive and negative on our life. The Motion addresses the key issue on deployment of forest guards, and the Members also addressed themselves on the issue of Rangers; being the Chairman, who is sitted on my left, talked about the effect and the impact that we have on our parks and the environment.

Mr. Speaker Sir, on a Saturday, I visited my Ward, we celebrated 50 years' anniversary; that is the Golden Jubilee of Garbatulla High School, the famous one. The surrounding totally shocked me. The acacia trees that have been there for over 50 years were being cut down by the Board of Management. And the alumni asked the same question on who authorized the cutting down of those trees. They don't live in Garbatulla, but those, trees mean something to them. We, the pastoralists, have an attachment with an Acacia tree. During the pattern of the weather that is currently being disrupted by the human activity, there is a rainy season when our flocks, the sheep, the goats and the camel used to graze in an open area. After the rainy season, the acacia trees blossom with cotton like seedlings, that is used by herders to feed on their livestock. It has nutritious benefit; soon after that, the seeds of acacia tree are fed to goats and sheep also. It will fatten them because it has a nutritional benefit. Those, benefits are no longer there. We, the residents have resorted to cutting down those trees, which takes 100 years to mature. So, destruction of those trees will have an effect on our heritage as a pastoralist and the residents in equal measure. Final word, Mr. Speaker Sir, we are having a challenge on following up on the Motions that we discuss in this

House as a Members of the County Assembly. There is no actual tracking or the implementation of the Motions that we discuss in this House, because we really discuss something we feel that has an effect or an impact, on the people of Isiolo but we do not actually implement the Motion and following up, to that effect is becoming a challenge.

So, it is discouraging for Members to discuss a Motion, that is timely, and is important, but with no result. Through the Speaker, I will ask the Chairman, let's treat this as an example, to bring to us something that we will have to smile about, then you will encourage maybe other Chairs, so that if you lead by an example, more result will come to this House and we will have something to report back to the to the people we represent. So, I will, ask the Chair through the Speaker also, to give us the feedback, which is timely, and also follow up with the CEC Member, if it requires you, to approach the state department or the Natural resource that is led by the National Government, so that the office of the Speaker will facilitate you and, the CEC Member to be facilitated by the Executive so that, we will have total benefits for the Motions that we are discussing. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Abdirashid. I now put the question, That Aware that, Water, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources are a function of the County Governments according to the fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010.

Further Aware that, indigenous and exotic tree species have significant importance in supporting soil cover, wild, domesticated fauna through forage and grass including enhancement of microclimate changes in the areas where these trees are growing;

Appreciating that, State department of Environment, Natural Resources and climate change has deployed a limited number of Forests Guards/Rangers to our county to control the destructive and degrading activities that causes adverse effects to our indigenous and exotic tree species in the forested areas.

Concerned that, the increasing environmental degrading human activities such as settlements, subsistence farming, charcoal burning for the indigenous tree species such as acacia species among others and illegal logging in the forested areas has

brought about demeaning effects of flora and fauna increasing effects of global warming;

Further concerned that, these increasing environmental degrading human activities have been due to the limited number deployed forest guards in the affected areas;

This House resolves that, the County Executive Committee Member for Water, Energy Environment and Natural Resources to request from the State Department of Environment, Natural Resources and Climate Change deployment of Forest Guards/Rangers to safe guard our indigenou and exotic tree species that have been destroyed by human activities affecting environmental natural ecosystem and generation.

(Question Put and Agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Speaker: Honorable Members, we now adjourn the House until tomorrow, Wednesday 31st July, 2024 at 9:00 a.m.

The House rose at 3.30 p.m.