

THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 04/09/2024

Assembly Building

The Assembly met at 2.30pm

[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Lemantile) in the Chair]

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PRAYERS

STATEMENT

[STATUS ON SEVERE WATER SHORTAGE WITHIN CHERAB AND OTHER WARDS]

Hon. Halima Gole (Cherab): Pursuant to the provision of article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, every person has right to clean and safe water in adequate quantities; the County Assembly on its sitting on 3rd September, 2024 sought a statement from the chairperson of Water, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee on the status of severe water shortages within the wards and most severely at Cherab ward. The statement requires response from the County Executive Committee Member for Water, Energy, Environment and Natural Resources to:

- a) Give priority to severe water shortages in Cherab as a matter of urgency.
- b) Rehabilitate and improve the existing water points to alleviate water shortages within the wards.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, as we all know, water is life. There is no life without water. No plant will grow without water and here we are talking about water for human beings. As I stand here to represent the people of Cherab Ward, the residents of Dadachabasa, Dhololo and Dadach lafe are facing acute shortage of drinking water and other domestic uses. This has started as far as the month of April. They have been using Dam water that was collected during the small rain received in the Month of April.

The only borehole that the people of Bassa depend on for both livestock and their domestic use is saline. Unfortunately, the borehole has broken down and it is no longer functional since the Month of May. Since the borehole is of no use, they have been forced to use muddy water from Dam which has also dried up now because of evaporation. Communities from Bassa have addressed their plight

through Social Media. Several clips of videos showing muddy water they have been using have been circulating in social media.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the water they have been using is not fit for human consumption because it is too muddy. In order to acquire clean water for drinking, they are forced to walk a distance of not less than 20km. Of those who do not have donkeys to carry water, it really is a big suffering. Women are seen carrying jerry cans of 20ltrs for a distance of 20km. Imagine of that heat from the sun and the long distance mothers walk while carrying 20ltrs of water. The breastfeeding mothers spend long hours away from their kids and also from other responsibilities.

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That is truly unfair, Hon. Deputy Speaker knowing that the Assembly has allocated over one hundred million of fund for emergencies and disaster mitigation in the last financial year and also 2022/2023 financial year. That fund has not helped our people up to now. Even though drilling of underground water in Bassa has a challenge, there are alternative ways because there is a place about 13km from there, where water can be piped. Rehabilitating the broken borehole or drilling another one so that it can be piped would have saved the lives of the people.

As at now, I'm crying for urgent intervention from the concerned authorities. I have contacted the CEC concerned for the last two weeks and he was cooperative in answering my calls but the responses I received are not of any help to my people. Because according to the CEC, the funds for water trucking which is another option are not available and not all contractors are willing to supply water to the communities as even the previous ones were not paid. Yesterday we discussed about this and there was urgent proposal for calling the CEC, CO of the Department by the Committee of Water and Energy so as to get the status report of how they are going to fast-track the intervention for supply of water for Bassa community. So, that is my statement. It is urgent and it cannot wait, the communities are suffering and as leaders who were elected to represent these people, we are equally disturbed when they are not getting the basic service like water trucking and supply for human consumption and domestic use. You know there are institutions like schools and hospitals which need cleanliness to avoid any kind of disease outbreaks. Even within the community it's important to maintain hygiene and healthy lifestyle. I request the department concerned to appear before us so that we get real information about the move to help the community get their basic need. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Well, this is a good statement and is addressed to the Chairperson for Committee for Water. Is he in the House? Any Member of the Committee can take responsibility if the Chairperson is not around. As the statement requires urgency, when are you in a position to contact the department CEC and have a sit down where the Hon. Member has requested to be in the meeting also as she understands the area better.

Hon. Dekha Bonja (Nominated): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, as a Member of the Committee; I request a timeline of a week in order for the Committee to respond to the Statement.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Madam, do you have an objection on the same?

Hon. Halima Gole (Cherab): Yes, I have an objection. One week is too long for this case. Going without water for 24hrs will cause death, what of a week? This is an urgent matter; why does it take one-week to respond to it? Two days is enough.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I think that the matter is urgent. Okay, is it possible on your side to respond by Monday or Tuesday?

Hon. Dekha Bonja (Nominated): Alright, Monday is okay.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: The matter is now in the hands of Water Committee; The Committee clerk will take up the necessary step to make this happen. Thank you.

MOTION

[SUPPORT TO THE HERDERS DURING THE CURRENT DRY SPELL]

Hon. Halima Gole (Cherab): Thank you Hon. Deputy Speaker. I stand to move a Motion. That aware that, provision of water for human and livestock is a devolved function of the County Government according to the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010;

Further aware that, Isiolo County normally experiences a long dry spell between the Months of July and October every year which leads to a serious scarcity of Water for both humans and Livestock.

Concerned that, the main water sources during this period under review were boreholes which is used for domestics and livestock.

Further concerned; that these boreholes are managed by the communities, in terms of the provisions of fuel for boreholes generators, payment of technicians, who provides technical services and the guards manning the generators.

Deeply concerned; that these costs of running these boreholes have strain the herders due to the current economic conditions.

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Therefore; in view of the above mentioned circumstances, this House resolves that the County Executive Committee Member for Water, Environment and Natural Resources to cushion the herders against the on-going dry spell and to initiate the following urgent measures: -

1. To distribute fuel to all boreholes in the County to help herders access uninterrupted water until the onset of the rain
2. Rehabilitation and operationalization of the strategic boreholes at Urura, Yamicha and Machallo.
3. Provisions of relief food to the herders.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, it is issue of water again, and this time for our livestock and herders. 70% of the communities living in Isiolo County are herders. Their livelihood completely depends on livestock. As stated in the Motion, usually from the Month of July there have been on set of dry spell.

It is a tradition of our herders to bring livestock closer to the homes for the purpose of the family so that they can acquire milk easily, and during dry season and the pasture diminishes, the animals will be moved far away from homes to the rangelands to seek for pastures and water. The rangelands got boreholes which our herders use its water for their livestock and also for other uses. We have 2-3 boreholes in Cherab which our people use during dry seasons. Because of the periodic use, the status of the boreholes is not known; whether they are in good condition.

Hon. Deputy Speaker; we have a sector that is responsible for this; it is for us to plead in this House for the boreholes to be rehabilitated and herders to be supported during dry seasons. This should be a planned activity by the department, so that when such a season is approaching they ought to have data on functional boreholes and do the necessary so that the herders will have access to clean water for use. Unfortunately, it has never been the case.

As I'm talking here, our people have taken their own initiative to open Yamicha borehole for their use. They have mobilized resources to operationalize the borehole. They have employed an operator and guards, which is a big burden to them. This is a community that is entirely dependent on livestock. The department concerned should take responsibility to take care of the operator, the guard and for the fuel I think. There is that fund that we have allocated for disaster management which I'm sure is enough to cover this until that time when rain comes.

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Yamicha borehole is the only one that is in use now, the rest are not functional because our people have no financial capability to rehabilitate and make it functional again. Our people are asking for assistance from the County Government. They have tried to reach out to all political leaders through all possible means, but all is in vain. That is desperation, Mr. Deputy Speaker. That shouldn't be the case. It is responsibility of the County Government to avail services to the people. There are some things that we cannot preempt, instead we have to make a follow-up and know why essential services are provided for the people and ensure services are given to the people.

One borehole cannot sustain the community and their livestock, Hon. Deputy Speaker that is why they have started to move to another location called Urura. I got a call from them three days ago asking for assistance in terms of fuel. Just Imagine! Can I be able to supply them with fuel, poor me!

Hon. Deputy Speaker, somebody has slept on his job, it is our responsibility to awaken them as Members of the County Assembly of Isiolo. It is our mandate to make the Executive work. Am pleading with Members to be active, let us help our people.

The fund we allocate to help our people is not put in good use. It is not used for what it is intended for. I therefore urge Members of this House to support this Motion. With that, I say thank you so much.

Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker; I forgot to mention about food relief. There is no enough milk to sustain our herders at this dry period. So, there is need to supply them with food relief for this short period of three months the same as we have debated on ECD Schools. Personally, I have tried my best to assist my people at personal level. I used my little money to buy food ration for them which I'm not supposed to. The County has enough capacity to assist its people in this hard time. Remember, those people were displaced by flood, their homes were destroyed, they need assistance to resettle. They were given promises of help but up to now,

nobody has shown up for them to. And, I say herders in Cherab and other parts of the County have rights to be assisted. Herders in Yamicha need to be assisted with fuel and food to enable them take care of their livestock and improve our economy. Thank you.

Hon. Abdullahi Meja (Charri): *Seconded the Motion*. Nasimama kuunga mkono hii Hoja. Nakubaliana na vile Mheshimiwa wa Cherab amesema. Wadi wa Charri, ambayo ninawakilisha kuna shida sana. Sisi tumechaguliwa na raia, lakini tumeshindwa kufanya kazi. Raia wanaumia, na ilhali sisi hupitiza Bajeti kila Mwaka.

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Hon. Deputy Speaker: Order Mheshimiwa. Elewa kwamba, sisi hatujashindwa kufanya kazi. Hii tunafanya ndio ile kazi tunapaswa kufanya. Kuleta hii *motion* ni kazi. Kwa hivyo haujashindwa kufanyia watu wa Charri kazi. Kwa hivyo, *withdraw* ...

Hon. Abdullahi Meja (Charri): Sawa, nime *withdraw*(*laughter*) mimi nataka watu wetu wapate usaidizi. Shule ya Biliqo Marara imefungwa kwa sababu ya uhaba wa maji. Maji ya kukunywa na kupika ilikosekana ikabidi nutumie pesa kutoka mfuko wangu kuwatafutia gari ya kuwachotea maji. Tangu hii Serikali yetu ya Kaunti kuchukua usukani hakuna hata *borehole* moja imechimbwa.

Kile hii Serikali ya Kaunti inafanya ni kuenda kujitajia zile *boreholes* NGO zimechimba. Kaunti imeshindwa kulipa hata *watchman* mpaka *generators* zinaibwa. Juzi nilikuwa kule Babala, niliwapata wafugaji wa kutoka sehemu kadhaa za Kaunti hii, waliomba msaada wa chakula na kile walipata ni kilo tano tano wa unga wa ugali. Kweli watu wetu wameumia.

Ninaongea kwa uchungu sana nikisema Kaunti yetu imeshindwa kutumikia watu wake. Mimi kama Mwakilishi wa Wadi wa Charri, kama ningekuwa na uwezo wa bajeti ninge wafanyia watu wangu kazi vizuri. Kwa hivyo, nawasihi nyote muamke muunge huu mjadala mkono ili tuweze kufanyia watu wetu kazi. Ahsante.

(Question proposed)

The floor is open for debate.

Hon. Salesio Kiambi (Wabera): Ahsante Mhesh. Naibu Spika kwa kunipa nafasi ili niweze kuunga huu Hoja mkono. Lakini naona kwa *order paper* inasoma tarehe Nne Agosti, inapaswa kuwa tarehe ya leo ambayo ni tarehe Nne Mwezi wa Septemba.

Mhesh. Naibu Spika, hii ni Hoja muhimu sana, kama sio kuchaguliwa na hawa wananchi hatungekuwa hapa leo. Wananchi wako na haki wa kusaidiwa katika huu msimu ambapo maji imepungua na kupotea sehemu zingine. Kama vile Mhesh. Gole amesema, haya miezi tatu huwa na shida mingi sana. Hata kwa Laga ya Waso, maji yameisha. Kwa hivyo tuweke akili kwa kusaidia wananchi tafadhalini.

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Pia kama Wakilishi wa Wadi, tunafanya kazi. Na kazi ni kama hii tunaendelea nayo sasa. *Executive* wakishindwa kufanya kazi, basi tuwaeleze waziwazi kwa *media*, ndio wajue sisi tunafanya kazi na hawa ndio wamelala kwa kazi zao.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Order, Member; you are here debating on a Motion to be presented to the Executive. Implementation is on the side of the Executive. We have a way to do things outside this House, so don't talk about the media, just talk about the Motion.

Hon. Salesio Kiambi (Wabera): Narudia tena kusema ninaunga hii Hoja mkono na wananchi wasaidiwe. Tulikuwa na Hoja kama hii jana lakini ina tofauti kidogo. *Boreholes* zichimbwa kwa wingi tafadhali. Na kama kuna shida ya mafuta ya *generator*, kuna bajeti ilitengwa kwa ajili ya jambo kama hayo.

Executive watumie pesa ya umma kwa njia inayofaa. Kama vile Mhesh. Gole alisema, binadamu kukosa maji ya kukunywa kwa zaidi ya masaa kumi na mawili anaweza kukosa uhai wake. Na haya shida yako katika Wadi zote ya hii Kaunti. Kwa hivyo, nawahimiza *Executive* wafanye kazi ile waliandikwa kufanya. Sina mengine, ninaunga mkono huu mjadala. Ahsante.

Hon. Abdirashid Diba (Garbatulla): Hon. Deputy Speaker, I stand to support this Motion. Before I continue, I would like to appreciate Hon. Kiambi for being so detailed in analyzing the Order Paper. It has an error of date. He has twice identified mistakes of dates in our other meetings. Order Papers are legal documents; it should be thoroughly checked before it gets into this House.

Secondly, before I go to the Motion, I would like to ask Members to check around and see how this House looks, from the gadgets we are using to tables before them, so dirty, it needs to be thoroughly cleaned. That is my concern. Members must be able to transact their business in a very conducive environment. I urge the Office of the Clerk in collaboration with the Office of the Speaker to speed up the process of maintaining the sound system that we are using in this House. Sound systems are not functioning well and the tables we are using are almost collapsing. We must be serious with the set-up of the House.

Hon. Deputy Speaker; whatever is written in this Order Paper is more appropriate. It needs quick intervention from the Executive. Hon. Dekha, was fair in saying that she will provide an answer by Monday next week. If only the system works properly, I think a day is enough to retrieve information as sort by Members. Because she is not working in the Executive arm, she is one of us, going into that office and asking for information, must be given sufficient time for her to prepare a very serious document to present before this House.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, pastoralism is not sustainable. The global warming and the climate change are affecting us. Before we talk about the intervention, the sensitization on the changes of lifestyle must be addressed by the Civic Education department in both South and North of the County. I am saying this because rain patterns are becoming unpredictable. We are experiencing severe drought across the County, soon after the end of rainfalls specifically affecting the Northern Kenya, Isiolo being one. For the people to change their mindset, Government has a role to play. We represent 10 Wards that makes up this County. Our contribution is of utmost importance.

Having said so, last year when we experienced heavy rainfall, our people lost large numbers of livestock, and remember that is their livelihood. The remaining few are facing a big challenge as a result of drought. The Government must supplement the effort of the community by undertaking need assessment. They do that by going around checking the severity of the drought. The rural Wards are more affected than the urban Wards, Mr. Deputy Speaker. We need to be serious in coming up with a Motion that can have a positive impact on our herders.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, Children are not spared. The department of Public Health in conjunction with Non-Governmental actors stationed in Isiolo should go around assessing the malnutrition index of our County. We move with our animal... (*Hon. Meja on phone call*) Hon. Deputy Speaker; I seek your protection; another Member is interrupting me.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Order, Hon. Meja, you can go out and make your call.

(Hon. Meja goes out)

Hon. Abdirashid Diba (Garbatulla): Hon. Deputy Speaker, we move with our animals and our families, some with children who are barely eight years to seek water and pasture. How is the Government planning for them? They are in rangeland, far away from health facilities, what plan are we having for them?

Supplementation of food for the miners must be given consideration. Hon. Deputy Speaker, we are sharing borders with rogue communities.; from Garissa, Marsabit and other areas. I know it is not our function as a County Government, but we have a role to play for our people to live harmoniously. The County Government needs to see how it will address the issue of insecurity in the County. The killing of innocent souls of our people is a total loss to us. We are rampantly experiencing this across all wards. (*Inaudible*)

The boreholes at the rangelands needs appropriate maintenance. There is a provision in our Budget which addresses the gaps of the fuel and maintenance of the rangeland boreholes. If we have domestic water challenge, are we able to address as a County? I think the Committee in charge of Water must come up with a clear roadmap on how they are going to handle these challenges. The department of water receives huge budget allocation. The reason we deliberately did that is because of our people. But, if the allocated fund is not put into good use, I think we will have an alternative department that we are going to finance more, I suggest. Hon. Deputy Speaker; the security guards manning those boreholes are not being paid and I'm not privy on how they are paid. But if it is the role of the County Government to pay them, then they have to take the responsibility. They must do it; they have no option, that needs to come out in the Committee report.

The boreholes of Urura, Yamicha and Machalo are very strategic in the rangelands. It serves a lot of interest of our community. If the said boreholes are not functional, that silently tells us that County Government of Isiolo has no interest of its own people at heart.

Lastly, Hon. Gole talked of provision of food relief. Hon. Deputy Speaker, this should have been done long time ago. Why am I saying so? It is because livestock have no market value as we speak. Animal health is becoming a big concern. What is the fate of our herders if their livestock cannot provide them with milk and meat and at the market they are valueless? We are in town, hence cannot see their fate, but if an elder from Bassa is given a chance to address the same in this House, he will tell more than what we have spoken here today. We only address what we think is right, but he will go into a lot more details.

Hon. Deputy Speaker; the Motion is weightier on our shoulders. The department of Agriculture and Livestock should up their game and address the challenges as stated in the Motion and verbally addressed by the Members of this Honorable House. The report as sought by this House should be availed a day before it is

presented to the House so that Members will have sufficient time to see, interrogate and challenge the same Committee and make good analysis from it. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: The directive from the Mover is that the Executive will come before the Committee, you are part of it. Mover, you can now reply.

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Hon. Halima Gole (Cherab): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker; I appreciate my Honorable Colleagues for their inputs. To sum-up, I can say that, it is important to sit with the Department concerned. It is not the Department of Water only because there is a Department responsible for disaster in the Office of the Governor. Emergency fund is at the Department of Special Program. It is not good to point fingers entirely where the problems cannot be solved. Therefore, besides Water Department, we also need to sit with the Department of Special Program which is under the Finance. We need to know what program they have, mitigation and all that as soon as possible, because the situation is worse. The issue of water is very critical and needs quick intervention. The first step should be water trucking for the communities affected and then the rehabilitation and maintenance of the existing boreholes. Also drilling of boreholes where there are no other options, like in Bassa.

Hon. Deputy Speaker; that is my take and I appreciate Members for supporting my Motion. I urge the Executive wing of the County Government to make speedy implementation of this Motion. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: So, I put the question; That aware that, provision of water for human and livestock is a devolved function of the County Government according to the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010;

Further aware that, Isiolo County normally experiences a long dry spell between the Months of July and October every year which leads to a serious scarcity of Water for both humans and Livestock.

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Further concerned; that these boreholes are managed by the communities, in terms of the provisions of fuel for boreholes generators, payment of technicians, who provides technical services and the guards manning the generators.

Deeply concerned; that these costs of running these boreholes have strain the herders due to the current economic conditions.

Therefor; in view of the above mentioned circumstances, this House resolves that the County Executive Committee Member for Water, Environment and Natural Resources to cushion the herders against the on-going dry spell and to initiate the following urgent measures: -

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5. Rehabilitation and operationalization of the strategic boreholes at Urura, Yamicha and Machallo.
6. Provisions of relief food to the herders.

ADJOURMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: There being no other business, the House stands adjourned until tomorrow, at 2.30 p.m.

The House rose at 3:30 p.m