REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA

THE HANSARD

Thursday, 13th August, 2020

The House met at the Assembly Chambers at 9.00 a.m.

[The Speaker (Hon. Patrick Waigwa) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

MOTION

CHURCH ADHERENCE TO GUIDELINES DURING THE COVID-19 PERIOD

Hon. Judy Lukio: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the following motion;

THAT, AWARE THAT the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the COVID-19 virus as a global pandemic;

FURTHER AWARE THAT Corona Virus has claimed more than seven hundred thousand lives worldwide with confirmed cases being over twenty million;

NOTING WITH CONCERN THAT the pandemic continues to pose grave danger to all populations particularly those in Sub-Saharan Africa where overburdened health systems continue to struggle with scarcity of human and financial resources;

APPRECIATING THAT the churches were opened allowing congregants to visit places of worship but with strict guidelines put in place;

FURTHER APPRECIATING THAT religious leaders, faith based organizations and faith communities can play a major role in saving lives and reducing illness related COVID-19 since they are primary source of support, comfort, guidance and direct health care and social services for the communities they serve;

This Assembly URGES the County Government in collaboration with the National Government to ensure strict adherence of the Ministry of Health guidelines in all places of worship countywide through the following;

1. Sharing evidence-based information about COVID-19, preparedness and response.
2. Avoiding large group gatherings and conducting crucial and faith-related activities remotely/ virtually as required whenever possible.
3. Ensuring that any decision to convene group gatherings for worship, education or social meetings is based on a sound risk assessment and in line with guidance from National and local authorities.

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4. Ensuring safe faith-based gatherings, ceremonies and rituals when they do occur.
5. Strengthening mental and spiritual health, well-being and resilience, through individual contact (while observing appropriate physical distancing) and through social and other communications media.
6. Addressing stigma, violence and the incitement of hate.
7. Promoting ecumenical and interfaith collaboration and peaceful coexistence during the Covid-19 pandemic.

Thank you, Sir.

Mr. Speaker, may I start by remembering that when COVID-19 was announced in the Kenyan soil, it was like it was very far. That is because it was brought by a person from Coast, a Catholic Priest from Western and a Nairobian. It slowly spread and right now all the 47 counties are not an exceptional of that. The President formed an Inter-Religious Committee led by Bishop Mwiheria, a Catholic Priest.

Last month on July the church doors were opened with conditions of between ages of 13 years to 58 years. Recently, that condition was elaborated well and it is now between 6 years to 65 years. Now that age of 65 is a bit higher we need to have very strict measures because at that age they may have other conditions with their health e.g. blood pressure.

I would personally say that we see to it that hygiene is of high standards, washing our hands, social distancing and without forgetting to wear masks everywhere. Like the church leaders were saying that even at those high ages of 70 years and 80 years are seen in the market places and small children are seen in the supermarket, why not the church. They talked with bitterness as to why not the church. Now that those people who are permitted to go to churches they should adhere to all those conditions. I would wish to hold at that so that other Members can put their input. I would request Hon. Joseph Kiguru from Igwamiti Ward to second the motion.

Hon. Joseph Kiguru: Asante, Mheshimiwa Spika. Nimesimama kuunga na kuafiki huu mswada ambao umeletwa na Mheshimiwa Judy Lukio. Ni vizuri kwa sababu ameeleza vizuri tushirikiane. Ukienda mashinani utakuta ya kwamba tayari kanisa zimefunguliwa. Inatakikana Serikali ya Kaunti iungane na Serikali Kuu kwa sababu kuna shida zilizoko wakati watu wako wengi pengine kwa mazishi ama ibada inapoendelea. Tusipochunga na kuhakikisha ya kwamba utaratibu na mipangilio ambayo imewekwa na serikali inafuatiliwa, tutakuta ya kwamba hii shida na janga hili la Korona zitamaliza watu wetu.

Serikali ikiongozwa na Gavana na idara ambayo inaongoza maneno ya afya, ihakikishe ya kwamba kuna wasimamizi wa serikali mashinani. Unaweza kuta ya kwamba umeenda mazishi na watu wamekaa kana kwamba ni kawaida. Kuwepo wa serikali katika mikutano kama hiyo utawezekana kuhakikisha ya kwamba tuna pata nafasi ya kuwaambia wananchi vile wanavyotakiwa wakae.

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Juzi kuna pahali nilienda mazishi Kiandege na isipokuwa uwepo wa serikali unakuta watu wamepika kana kwamba ni kawaida. Nilishukuru kwa sababu mimi na chifu wa eneo hilo tulihakikisha ya kwamba hata kama chakula kilikuwa kimepikwa watu wafungiwe ili waende wakila njiani. Kama hakungekuwa na uwakilishi wa serikali maneno yangeharibika kwa sababu unakuta watu wametoka Nairobi na kwingineko. Ninamuunga mkono Mheshimiwa Judy kuhakikisha ya kwamba yale mambo saba tunataka serikali ya kaunti iungane na serikali kuu kuhakikisha maneno hayo yamekuwa sawa.

Ninajua ya kwamba wewe pia unaelewa ya kwamba makanisa mengine yanategemea zile sadaka zinazotoka kwa waumini. Wakati mwingine unakuta ya kuwa washirika wamekuwa haba kwa hivyo wengine wanatakiwa kusaidiwa kupata hata vile vifaa vya kupima joto. Serikali inaweza kutenga kiwango cha pesa kuyasaidia hayo makanisa kwa sababu shida za jamii na tunazopitia wakati huu wa magonjwa tunawahitaji wachungaji na makanisa.

Hii ni kuhakikisha ya kwamba wanapata utulivu katika neno kutokana na ile kasumba inayoletwa na magonjwa. Hata kusaidia hayo makanisa itakuwa vyema kwa sababu hata wachungaji wengine wamekaribia kuwekwa kwenye orodha ya wale watakaopewa chakula. Kwa kuwa wao ni watu kama wale wengine tunahitaji kuwasaidia. Wale wawakilishi walioko hapa tafadhali ni vizuri kwenda katika hayo makanisa yaliyoko eneo unalotoka ujue vile kuko na kile kidogo ulicho nacho uhakikishe umewasaidia wachungaji hao. Ninasimama kuuafiki na kuunga mkono mswada huu. Asante.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Simon Kanyutu: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I stand to support this motion by the Hon Judy. This is noble because on this COVID-19 thing, previously we used to hear of it in far areas but of late it is with us. Yesterday I learnt that we just had nine cases amongst the hundreds we are getting in the country. With that trend I am sure this is a challenge that has befallen us. Even now I am mourning a friend of mine who passed on in Nyahururu due to COVID-19. I am not aware how many people have contracted it and are already infected with the virus. Unfortunately we have a challenge with us but we the politicians are the ones failing the most because we are not adhering to the rules. When we hold meetings people are congesting and that is a challenge.

We may say that in churches rules are followed but we should also set a good example. Recently I saw a meeting where His Excellency paid a visit to Uthiru area launching projects. When the community saw that a senior person was paying a visit to the area they forgot that there is Corona or COVID-19. I am sure we should adhere in the church and also outside we work together. I support the motion and it is good that we ensure our people and even us set a good example. I support.

Hon. Daniel Mugweru: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also rise in support of this motion. Having church gatherings going on at this time we also need to take serious precautions. However much we say about the County Government we also as an Assembly are the representatives of people. We should also do something so that our Members are able to go to those churches. Having information coming from your representatives has got more weight

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especially on addressing stigma, violence and incitement of hate as we have observed this in many areas.

Mr. Speaker, as we were making contributions you could even hear people saying that there are gatherings consisting of people from Nairobi and that is stigmatization. It has turned out that if you happen to see people from Nairobi you just see Corona. We as representatives of people should be enabled to go to those churches at least every Sunday. For example, we should be hearing that Hon. Suge from Rumuruti has visited three churches addressing the issue of stigmatization and also the issues of incitement.

If we have such an arrangement as an Assembly, it will really help the churches because as at now the only big gatherings that are allowed are the churches. The only way to communicate and deliver messages is by going to the large gatherings. So we are only left with churches and telling the members of the community in those churches about incitement of hate. You will find that today if my family has got someone who has died of Corona, you will find that the neighbours and the people whom I have been brought up with together with in the same area refusing to visit my home.

We must speak this and share information that carries evidence so that we will not just take messages that lacks evidence because at the end of the day if we share messages that are not based on evidence, we might even put our people into more problems. As much as we are urging the County Government, the Assembly itself which has got representatives from all over should also take a step and send the Members to the churches and in return we will be coming back here to report the number of churches we have visited. With that Mr. Speaker, we are really going to help our people. Thank you.

Speaker: I wish to call the mover to give a reply.

Hon. Judy Lukio: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I will start by thanking those who have contributed towards this pandemic motion. It is very true that Corona Virus is here with us and we should take the lead and observe all the government rules on health pertaining to this pandemic. Thank you.

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker: This House now stands adjourned until Tuesday, 18th August, 2020 at 2.30 p.m.

The House rose at 9.25 a.m.

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