REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA

THE HANSARD

Thursday, 21st March, 2024.

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

[The Speaker (Hon. Lantano Nabaala) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

QUORUM CALL

Speaker: Clerk, confirm whether we have got quorum.

(Lack of quorum confirmed)

Speaker: Without quorum, I direct that the bell be rang for ten minutes.

(The quorum bell was rung for 10 minutes)

Speaker: Clerk, confirm whether we have got quorum now.

(Lack of quorum confirmed)

Speaker: I direct that the bell be rang for five more minutes.

(The quorum bell was rung for one minute)

Hon. Mary Gathoni: Mr. Speaker, I think that we have got quorum now.

Speaker: Clerk, confirm if we indeed have got quorum now.

(Clerk confirmed the achievement of Quorum)

Speaker: I direct that the bell stops ringing and we move into the business of the day.

MOTION

MANUFACTURE AND PROVISION OF ORGANIC FERTILIZERS

Hon. Catherine Umija: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I beg to move the following motion;

THAT AWARE THAT implementation Agriculture, including crop and animal husbandry is a function of the County Government as stipulated in part 2 of the fourth schedule of the Constitution of Kenya 2010;

FURTHER AWARE THAT Organic fertilizers are natural products used by farmers to provide food (plant nutrients) for the crop plants;

NOTING THAT Organic fertilizer application improves crop growth by supplying plant nutrients, including micronutrients, as well as improving the physical, chemical, and biological properties of the soil, thereby providing a better environment for root development by improving the soil structure;

FURTHER NOTING THAT High cost of fertilizers is a major concern among farmers in Kenya as it is one of the reasons why most food commodities are expensive; this

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House URGES the County Government to manufacture and distribute organic fertilizers.

Mr. Speaker, noting that the National Government currently is providing fertilizers to our farmers, the fertilizers are not organic but synthetic. We are aware that most of the time the organic fertilizers are natural and good for our bodies, when used for the plants compared to the synthetic fertilizers.

I know that the County Government is not capitalizing on this type of fertilizers, so we urge them to look for other alternatives of providing organic fertilizers. They can do this either by training our farmers on how to use the organic fertilizers. The organic fertilizer is important because recently, there have been high cancer rates which are usually brought about by synthetic fertilizers which are not good for our bodies. By proving knowledge on how to produce organic fertilizers and encouraging the farmers to use the same, it would be important.

I know that the Agriculture Department have got a bit of trainings they provide to the farmers. We need to ensure that part of our trainings would be how to train the farmers on how to produce the organic fertilizers for themselves. If not so, it is also an opportunity for the County Government to ensure that they are pro-active by having companies which can make the organic fertilizers. This is an opportunity for Laikipia County Government to actually capitalize on this and produce organic fertilizers that can be used by farmers not only in Laikipia County, but also in other counties. This will in turn produce even jobs for our youth, women and PWDs.

The organic fertilizer is important for our food and it is not expensive. Remember that currently, synthetic fertilizers are costing around Kshs.2500 but even though it has been subsidized, most of the farmers are complaining that the production of their food is not as per what they expected. We don't know whether the chemical combination was not correct but most of the farmers complained to the government that the fertilizer was not good enough for their crops.

So, the organic fertilizer is the sure bet for our crops. I believe that because it is cheap, the small-scale farmers can be able to use this fertilizer to grow their crops. I would like to call upon Hon. Gathoni to second me on this motion.

Hon. Mary Gathoni: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to second the motion. I believe we cannot go wrong with organic fertilizers. Issuing of fertilizers is one of the grassroots social empowerment programmes that will help us make a difference in agriculture and food security. However, the government cannot be of help when the fertilizer they are issuing is damaging crops. I second, thank you.

(Question proposed)

Speaker: Hon. Members, I open the floor and will start with Hon. Daniel Mugweru. The floor is yours.

Hon. Daniel Mugweru: Thank you, Hon. Speaker for giving me this chance to make my contribution in support of the motion on provision of organic fertilizers. Before I make my contribution, it is also important to address some of the issues that are affecting the House. The issue of quorum is not best for this House and especially in this year. This is now our second year after elections and we are missing quorum, what will happen to us when the year of 2027 comes when we shall go for campaigns? At that time, nobody will stop me from going and I will probably spend 90% of my time with my people campaigning out there.

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Hon. Speaker, if in this second year we are missing quorum, it is a message that in our last year, you will be left alone there presiding over the chairs in this House only. I really do not know what will happen. It is the high time for us to discuss this issue and settle it once and for all. I remember that sometime back we were on training and one of the facilitators by the name of Kiura happened to give us a very logical example. He gave an example of Gakere road in Nyeri County. He said that Gakere road is always closed in the evening for small businesses to operate there.

He said that most of the time a mother is selling fruits and her young children are doing their homework there using light from a *mulika mwizi* because there is probably no one at home. In the evening, we get taxes from those people in order for me to get paid, and I get paid for no work done. We need to be very serious on this issue of quorum and know that God gave us this chance to be here. It is important for everybody to feel that they are not earning without working for it. It is also a bad precedence especially in the second year of the Third Assembly. We need to work on that.

Hon. Speaker, on the contribution to this motion, it has come at the right time. It raises more than a thousand questions because this is the only way for us as the County Government of Laikipia to help our people. I always say that if in Laikipia we are given a chance to get organic fertilizers for our farmers, Laikipia can feed itself as well as the neighbouring five counties. We are very lucky that we have fertile soils but we are not supporting farmers in the best way. It is unfortunate that we are not even able to distribute the synthetic fertilizer that is distributed by the government. The free fertilizer that is given out by the government, whether good or contaminated, we are not even able to distribute it.

Yesterday it was shocking to read in the newspaper that the CEO of KEBS said that the fertilizer we are distributing is not fit, and we are not able to distribute even the one that is unfit. We are only giving dates on the walls.

Last week, I saw somewhere that the fertilizers would be taken to Umande and Mukogodo West but nothing came. We are not even able to distribute the ones that we are given for free. Now, it is a high time we take agriculture seriously. I know that in Umande alone, if we support the farms, we can feed Nanyuki or even three wards. If we don't invest heavily on the farm inputs and maybe water, then we are putting our county into problems.

Mr. Speaker, we put everyone into the angle where whenever they see a politician every now and again, they feel that he\she is the one who is supposed to feed their children, pay their school fees, raise funds in their fundraisings in churches and all that. If we empower them, in one way or the other at least we are going to reduce the dependency rate.

Hon. Speaker, we are told even though I am not sure, that some of these chemicals in fertilizers are the ones which are causing cancer and we know that, everybody here fears death. When you hear the word cancer, you run even when no one is chasing after you.

Therefore, if this can be a solution to our farmers and our health, then we should invest heavily in it. Today, the most expensive way of farm input is getting manure and if I happen to pass by Hon. Leshuel's place, and find him with goat manure, definitely I will carry it with me whether he allows me to or not. I would rather come at night and carry it for my farm.

The Government should now invest heavily on this because it will help all of us. So, this is a good Motion, a timely one and now the only important thing is to make a serious follow up in making sure that this motion is implemented by the Government. As a House, when we

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are budgeting, let us always note down these issues so that we don't forget some of the most important things when budgeting.

When we pass a Motion in this House like this one, it should be recorded somewhere so that when we are preparing the budget, we ask ourselves this question 'now that we have passed the Motion to manufacture organic fertilizers, what percentage of budget are we giving? Because if we pass the motion then during budget time, we don't set aside budget for the same, we will be seen as people who are just preaching here and no one is getting saved.

Mr. Speaker, we have to be very serious to note down serious issues like this one because it will help all of us. Let us set aside funds for this year so that if we don't get it this year, at least in the next budget we will know that the Government will implement this Motion. This is a good Motion and I hope the Committee on implementation will make a follow up on the same and then the Budget Committee together with the entire House will get ready to support in setting aside a budget for this.

Fortunately, these things go concurrently. If we don't set up a Budget then what is the Committee of Implementation following up? They are following nothing; they will push for nothing. A Motion has come and the House has proved because I know they will support this Motion.

Therefore, we should ask ourselves that, do we have a budget? From that, we set the budget there then when the proposed budget comes, all Members support it. Later, we ask the Implementation Committee, now that we have the budget, why is this not happening? We then push the Executive to implement the same because it is a collective responsibility. Everyone in this House should do something to attain this for our people. Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I support.

Hon. Paul Leshuel: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I also stand to support this Motion. I want Members to underline what Mugweru has said on having a Budget for this because it is very important. I stand to support this Motion and I want to appreciate the mover of this Motion because it is very important. I am a privileged person because I am a pastoralist and a farmer hence, being an expert of both.

If you go to these ranchers, you can see that there are garden farms around there using organic fertilizers, very important and it gives us high produce. Around the organic, there are so many things that have to happen.

Mr. Speaker, you can also manufacture your organic fertilizer if you have the capacity to do so. What we need to do first is that we need to have a serious training for our farmers to know how they will move from farming to *ukulima biashara* which is very important so that you minimize the cost and produce the highest. Mr. Speaker, part of Laikipia is the best area for farming despite that, we are saying Laikipia is semi-arid. Part of Laikipia is a farming area and it is very important.

The other thing is that we have soil sampling. The County Government must do a serious soil sampling so that they can exactly give us what this soil needs. If you do not get advice properly, then you will be using fertilizer in the wrong soil. Soil is like a body and you must know whether you need salt, sugar and other things the body needs. The same case applies to the soil.

Mr. Speaker, the County Government should move with speed to advise the farmers on the kind of fertilizer they should use, the kind of organic and what is the importance of using organic but not using the fertilizer. Mr. Speaker, if it is not the garments, give farmers

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subsidized fertilizers. We could not have been able to farm and cultivate our lands because the fertilizer is rising to Kshs. 6,000 and 7,000.

If you calculate the amount of fertilizer and the produce that you produce from the acreage of maize including labour, you will realize that you are doing zero work. Mr. Speaker, it is very important to have an alternative way. If people are trained well in organics, it will be very cheap and again it will produce the highest produce. Mr. Speaker, I want to confirm that we should go that direction with serious training.

The government does not have enough staff to be in every farm in every house. The moment you call thousands of people and train them, the people will implement their skills. Mr. Speaker, we want to have a budget for training on this and come up with a plan. When we are talking about organics, what do we need? What is the role of the government? What is the role of the farmer? What is the role of the technical person? What is the role of the extension officer?

All this should be discussed holistically. Mr. Speaker, I want to support this motion and we must have a small budget even if it is not big so that we can roll the implementation of organic fertilizer. Mr. Speaker, I want to appreciate the Member who has moved this motion. It is timely since all of us depend on farming. We know the farmers and farming is contributing a big percent of tax in this country. Mr. Speaker, I support, thank you.

Hon. Nicholas Mwaniki: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for giving me this chance to support this motion. I thank the Hon. Catherine Umija for bringing a motion of substance to this House. On the issue of organic fertilizers and the fertilizers being availed to our farmers, is to have bumper harvest in our localities. This country mostly depends on agriculture. If at all we do not support agriculture, then we know our people will go hungry.

Economically, this is a viable thing to do because most of our farmers are commercial farmers. Having commercial farmers in our areas, there will be provision of labour, provision of livelihood and provision of food. That is where we derive our livelihood. Having the government support on organic fertilizers manufacturing and training on how to manufacture organic fertilizers, is something that can be able to push our economy in this country far. It will also improve on provision of taxes and revenues for our government.

Having the government's support on this can be a major step forward to our farmers. This is something that can be able to be manufactured locally. If at all the government can provide incentives, the agricultural extension officers who have the knowledge on how to manufacture this fertilizer can be rolled out to our farmers. They can be trained on how to manufacture these fertilizers.

This is a natural thing and mostly the ingredients that are used to manufacture these fertilizers will be available locally and this is something that can be done by our people on the ground. They can manufacture their own and still we can use small amounts of finances to manufacture this.

There is an advantage in using organic fertilizer because it adds more humus in our soil. When we add more humus, plants are able to thrive well in such kind of texture. The composite of organic fertilizer doesn't decay fast. It can stay in the soil long resulting in more productivity. With such fertilizer, you can plant twice. The availability of other organisms in the soil help speed up decomposition of such fertilizers. We have worms in the soils that add more nutrients resulting to soil fertility. This is an advantage of natural fertilizers.

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Mr. Speaker, most of the materials used to make organic fertilizers are natural not chemical ones. The synthetic fertilizer leaves some chemicals in our soil which is not healthy to our livelihoods. Having organic fertilizer, we are able to have fertile soil, more productive and that can be able to enhance cohabitation of more organisms for more productivity.

I will urge the Members to support this motion. If at all we come to budget, we do have funds that can kick start these kinds of projects in our localities and so that we can roll out training of farmers on how to manufacture and use organic fertilizer. Thank you. I support.

Speaker: Thank you. I want to invite the mover to give a reply.

Hon. Catherine Umija: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to thank the House for supporting the motion. I was sitting here listening to Members contributing. I want to thank Hon. Mugweru for saying that we need to allocate some funds specifically for ensuring we provide organic fertilizers. It has been lauded by Hon. Mwaniki that now when they sit down in the Budget Committee, these are the things they will be looking for ensuring that this thing is budgeted for in our budgets.

Secondly, I wanted to say that going the natural way right now is the way to go. Produced natural food right now is fetching for good prices. Foods that are produced naturally using organic fertilizer has a higher value compared to foods that are produced using synthetic fertilizer. This is an advantage we can take as a County and actually export if we do it in the correct way. Not only for local consumption, but also for export. I thank the House. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Question put and agreed to)

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

ATTENDANCE OF FUNERALS IN NAROMORU AND NYAHURURU

Speaker: Before I forget, just to let the House know that one of our staff members has lost her parent. The burial is today at Naromoru. You are all invited including our staff. On Monday, there will be a burial of one of one Member's Spouse in Nyahururu. You are also welcome.

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker: The sittings of this House now stand adjourned until next week Tuesday, 26th March, 2024 at 2.30 p.m.

The House rose at 9.48 a.m.

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