REPUBLIC OF KENYA

COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 24th June, 2025

The House met at the Assembly Chambers at 10.12 a.m.

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

PRAYERS

QUORUM CALL

Speaker: Clerk, confirm if we have quorum.

(Lack of quorum confirmed)

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

(Quorum bell rang for two minutes)

Hon. Catherine Umija: Mr. Speaker, I think we now have the quorum.

Speaker: Clerk, confirm if we have quorum now.

(Clerk confirmed achievement of Quorum)

Speaker: Now that we have quorum, we shall proceed with the business of the day.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

PLENARY DELAY

Speaker: Hon. Members, today we have begun a few minutes late than normal. I want to apologize because we had a few things that we were sorting out in the office. We are glad that is sorted.

NOTICE OF MOTION

DROUGHT MITIGATION MEASURES IN THE COUNTY

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

THAT, AWARE THAT Article 43 of the Constitution of Kenya guarantees every person the right to be free from hunger and to have adequate food of acceptable quality;

FURTHER AWARE THAT recent weather patterns, including prolonged dry spells and unpredictable rainfall, indicate a high risk of drought in various parts of the County;

CONCERNED THAT drought leads to loss of livestock, crop failure, water shortages, increased food insecurity, and displacement of communities, especially in arid and semi-arid areas;

RECOGNIZING the need for proactive measures and timely interventions to mitigate the adverse effects of drought on livelihoods, health, and local economies;

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This House URGES the County Government to;

1. Conduct a countywide drought risk assessment to identify the most vulnerable areas and populations.
2. Establish and stock drought emergency response centres equipped with food, water, and medical supplies.
3. Allocate emergency or contingency budget funds towards drought preparedness and response activities.
4. Invest in sustainable water harvesting, storage, and irrigation systems to improve resilience in drought-prone areas.
5. Collaborate with National Government agencies and development partners in implementing drought mitigation strategies;
6. Launch public awareness campaigns to educate residents on drought preparedness, efficient water usage, and sustainable farming practices.

Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

MOTION

DROUGHT MITIGATION MEASURES IN THE COUNTY

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

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5. Collaborate with National Government agencies and development partners in implementing drought mitigation strategies;

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6. Launch public awareness campaigns to educate residents on drought preparedness, efficient water usage, and sustainable farming practices.

Mr. Speaker, just as the motion says, this is a motion on draught mitigation strategies that the county should employ. Since the rainy season is almost over, I know we have been having some few rainy days. Looking at the weather pattern, we are going towards the drought season. We have been bringing this motion over and over again to this County Assembly in ensuring that the County Government prepares adequately to face the drought season that might come.

We are praying to God that we shall not have the drought season. Looking at the current weather pattern, we cannot avoid the drought season because of the way we have messed up with our environment. There is the possibility of having more drought season compared to the rainy season. We want the County Government to ensure that our population and especially the most vulnerable population have been taken care of.

Right now, I know that most of the people will be harvesting. Can we ensure that when we are harvesting plants or crops, we do not have a lot of wastage so that we can be able to maximise the way we are harvesting. We will be able to store these grains to be used during the drought season.

Secondly, I know that the County Government had allocated some funds, especially on ensuring that the water harvesting strategy; that every household can get a drum to collect the rainy water and ensuring that there are water ponds, and boreholes. I think the County Government has done so, but have we done so to all the households, especially those people who are staying in town? We know that most of them do not have places where they can harvest water. We should ensure that the County Government also educates these people and tells them that they need now to use water well, since we are going towards the drought season.

Mr. Speaker, collaborating with the National Agencies, the County Government needs to bring on both the development partners and the National Agency in ensuring that these drought mitigation strategies are working, so that they can collaborate together and ensure that when we are putting these strategies and we are actually working on them.

Lastly, just as I've said, we need to ensure that we have made the public aware and we have educated the residents to prepare for drought that is coming. I know that it's well to prepare early so that when the drought comes, we will not start saying that we need the funds and, people are dying because of hunger. If you prepare early enough, this is something that we can avoid early enough.

I know some countries that do not have adequate rainfall, but we have never heard of them crying of hunger. Our nation has been blessed, we are having enough rainfall. It's high time that we take care of our harvest and water to ensure that when the drought season comes, we are well prepared. Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I'd like to ask the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Anthony Theuri, to second the motion.

Hon. Anthony Theuri: Thank you, Honourable Speaker for giving me this opportunity to second the motion on the same and I'm going directly to supporting the motion. I think the biggest difference between an animal and a human being is only reasoning. All of us have been in this group or this earth for more than 6,000 years, according to the scientists, and more than 3,000 years, according to the Bible. We are not a new species in this world and we know how the climate and how the seasons behave, Mr. Speaker.

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Just as Honourable Umija has said, Mr. Speaker, it is the high time we start preparing ourselves. We all know, like in Laikipia, we have less than two to two and a half months of rain and then we have a whole year. We have a population of 550,000 to feed. We have the land, the money and so it is only our stupidity that is going to lead us to drought.

Mr. Speaker, on the same as Honourable Anthony Theuri, I have done the mitigation on my personal part. As we are speaking here, it all depends on the water. Water is everything. We are doing a borehole in Nturukuma to supplement the agricultural purposes in that area. So at least our lands can be productive.

On the same, we have also done in Nkando. We're doing a lot of water pans in this way. On the same, I would like to urge this House to consider wastage. Speaking of wastage, Mr. Speaker and I don't know whether I should call you, because we are in the news for the bad news. It is said, wherever there is smoke, there must be fire. I understand that we have been globe-trotting from Zimbabwe, Tanzania, Uganda, and maybe it might take us to Sierra Leone according to Inooro FM.

On the same, it is a shame that we are on the news for the wrong reasons, and if we are trying to conserve this one, we must also curb wastage. I as Anthony Theuri, Mr. Speaker, and you, being as Zimbabwean like me, according to what is trending now, it is the high time we lead from the front. We need to get deeper to these things. We need to know who went to Zimbabwe and for what purpose, because I included, and each and every Member of this House is being crucified. I have no problem going to Zimbabwe.

We can even go to Burundi or wherever, but let it be on record, whatever the person wants to do. On the same Mr. Speaker, if at all what we are saying here is true, let us lead from the front. Let the budget of the Assembly be an example to Executive and others. It is a shame that we cannot account for more than Kshs.50 million. That's a lot of money. It can do a lot of wonders. It can buy certified seeds; it can buy tractors for this and even displacement for cattle and sheep.

On this I support, but the key point, Mr. Speaker, let us lead from the front, let us be accountable and let us have a good name. The Bible says a good name is better than riches. Tomorrow, I won't say because I'm not a coward yet they say a coward dies many times before the real death. Tomorrow they are celebrating the Gen-Zs and they are commemorating the death. If you can remember last year time like now, we were here, and we are casualties and they will be doing that, Mr. Speaker.

Let it not happen. I'm asking this House once and for all, let us cleanse ourselves. We know we have haters. Not everybody loves us and I have no problem with that but if you are blameless, and you believe your conscience is well, then you are good to go. People have changed my name, and being called Mugabe, which is a very good name, because Mugabe stayed for power for very long. I pray to be in power for long, but for good purposes.

When they say in Kiswahili, *Dalili ya mvua ni mawingu*, I pray after this House we converge and we try to forge a way forward. Thank you, I support whole heartedly.

(Question proposed)

Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members. I want to open the floor for Members to contribute towards the motion.

Hon. Nicholas Mwaniki: Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I rise to support the motion. This motion is timely because we are harvesting and it is the time when we are experiencing the end

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of the rainy season. This is also the time we are heading to the completion of the budget process. As a County Government, we should plan ahead because if we don't plan our people will fail. Some people right now have got a bumper harvest whereas others don't have anything.

If at all you do survey work across the county, you will be able to realize that livestock rearing, in some part of the regions there is a lot of grass that have sprouted and we are about to harvest a lot of it. Still, some other places are very dry where they are experiencing loss of livestock in this county.

As a government, if we don't plan how are we going to salvage the situation, we will be failing our people. As we discuss the motion on mitigation measures in the county concerning drought, as a county we should be able to plan ahead. I have been able to cut across this county and there is a time when we had machineries that were bought for enabling grass harvesting. In my ward, I have got a storage facility for grass and bales which has got a capacity of Kshs.3 million bales.

As of today, it is very empty whereas in the same region there is a lot of grass that have been planted by the farmers in acres and is bound to be harvested. The other day, I saw a drafted list that we are auctioning our machineries which were bought for baling grass. They are being sold because they have been classified as dilapidated and non-economic in this county whereas our farmers don't have grass and are not able to harvest their grass due to lack of machinery. It is expensive to hire a private machine to bale grass because it is costing Kshs.90 shillings per bale.

As a County Government, we should be able to subsidize the same. If at all we don't plan for our people, they will experience a massive loss of livestock. We should be able to plan well as a County Government so as to harness that energy so that we can allocate funds to subsidize on pricing to enable farmers to harvest the grass in a cheaper and affordable prize.

Mr. Speaker, Laikipia West are the people who do more of grain harvesting in maize. As a county are we providing driers for our people to enable farmers in drying the maize for better storage? As of now, there is bumper harvest of grains across the county and we are having a challenge of minimal rainfall that we are experiencing of now. When it comes to harvesting, we are harvesting the maize and beans while they are moist. If at all we don't provide driers for our people, then the produce will rot in our stores.

These are the mitigation measures that we should be putting up across the County so that our people can be able to store their produce in the best quality and be able to sell to the rest of the population that did not harvest. There is also the issue of water harvesting. I think we bought a machine during this financial year that will enable us to build more dams across the County so that we can harvest more water. After harvesting, however, we need to have the best measures of harvesting more water for farming across the County.

Are our farmers are being catered for, in terms of the requisite skills being instilled in them that will enable them to conserve more water? Are we providing the systems of drip irrigation for our people, which will enable us to prevent water misuse across the County? That will enable us to have enough water throughout the season until the next season starts. Those are the measures we should be putting up for our people so that we can be able to raise more revenue as a County Government.

Mr. Speaker, as we proceed with budget making and planning on what will be of help to our people, these are the measures that we should be putting in place so that we can have more produce and of better quality. We will also be able to conserve more water. When we

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have more water bodies across the County, we will experience more rainfall, more farming will be done and more produce harvested. That way, we will be able to avert famine. Thank you and I do support the motion.

Hon. Veronica Ikunyua: Thank you, Mr. Speaker for giving me this chance to give my views. First, I want to thank Hon. Umija for coming up with this good motion. I think we need to change our way of doing things in both the County and National Governments. There are so many things that we ought to ignore. When we went to Tanzania, I was asking myself why those people were doing large scale maize farming. I was wondering who was the rich person doing that kind of farming. I then understood that it is not individuals but the government doing that large-scale farming.

Mr. Speaker, that is why when there is drought in this country, we rush to those countries to buy maize and food for our animals, and that is a shame. Even us in this country have large farms where we can do large scale farming. There is another habit that we have in this country, and especially in this County. In the last government, I was in the Health Committee and during a field work exercise, I realized that our dispensaries do not have gutters. Yet, you will hear people complaining that there is no water. It is a shame.

We need to come up with a good idea and good mitigation measures. We should put up gutters in our dispensaries and schools so that we can harvest rainwater, even if it is just for drinking and nothing else. There is a lot of water wastage because we are using the old piping system. Here in Nanyuki, the piping system was constructed about fifty years ago by the colonialists. Those pipes are now leaking water because they are wearing out. Therefore, we need to come up with a new methodology and new ideas in order to replace those pipes and reduce water wastage.

We have a machine in this County for constructing water pans. I ask myself, however, are we doing proper research to find out the kind of soil that we have? Can our soil retain water? If it cannot, what are we going to do to save that water? We do not just need to buy machines. We need to do proper research and know whether when we construct water pans, the water will be retained. If it cannot, then we should buy dam liners in order to save the water. When we do that, water and food for our animals will be plenty.

I have heard the Honourable Member from Tigithi saying that we had a machine but now we are selling it out. It is a shame because it is we the Government, we support our community; by retaining the machine we will be helping our farmers to bale the hay. We build food storage because we allow our farmers to sell their produce when the produce is a lot, then the customers will be many and they will be buying at a throw away price. Let us encourage our people to store their produce so that when the drought comes, they will be able to sell even to our neighbouring Counties.

We need to retain the machine so that we can be harvesting the hay and sell it when the drought come or we feed our animals. Therefore, this motion is very important at this time so that we can encourage our people not to sell their produce and wait until the drought comes, we start selling by that time to make money and be able to feed our families. Therefore, I support the motion. Thank you.

Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Veronica, for that good contribution. Now honourable Members, allow me to welcome the mover of the motion.

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Hon. Catherine Umija: Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I would like to thank the House for contributing to this motion about drought mitigation measures that the county should undertake to plan early. Thank you, Hon. Speaker.

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Speaker: This House now stand adjourned until later today Tuesday, 24th June, 2025 at 2.30 p.m.

The House rose at 10:49 a.m.

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