# REPUBLIC OF KENYA

## COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF LAIKIPIA

## THE HANSARD

**Tuesday, 5th September, 2023**

*The House met at the Assembly Chambers at 2.30 p.m.*

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

PRAYERS

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

VERIFICATION OF GADGETS BY AUDITORS

**Speaker:** Hon. Members, I want to communicate and let the House know that we have the Office of the Auditor General is with us here in the Assembly. They require that a few of our documents need to be verified, especially the gadgets that were supplied previously. They require verification of the same, so for those who have not submitted kindly do so. Thank you.

### PAPER LAID

COUNTY ANNUAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I beg to lay the following paper;

1) County Annual Development Plan (ADP) 2024-2025

*(Hon. John Gichuki, laid the paper on the table)*

**Speaker:** The report shall stand committed to the Committee on Finance and County Planning.

### NOTICE OF MOTION

OPUNTIA ERADICATION

**Hon. Parleto Lekopien thro' Hon. Samuel Gatati:** Mr. Speaker, on behalf of Hon. Sammy Lekopien, I beg to give notice of the following motion;

THAT, Aware that Agriculture, including plant and animal disease control is a function of County Government as stipulated in Part 2 of the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya 2010;

FURTHER AWARE that prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia)*, is among the most common introduced invasive plant in Kenya whose invasion is a major threat to biodiversity and food security in the drylands of Kenya;

FURTHER NOTING that the plant has been present in Laikipia County for more than 20 years and has invaded grazing land, contributing to the death of livestock and wildlife;

CONCERNED that the plant is not only a serious threat to a wide range of wildlife but also to plant diversity;

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FURTHER CONCERNED that the potential costs associated with the invasion in natural pasture are based on reduced grazing land which often leads to human wildlife conflict, replacement of natural pasture, negative impacts to livestock health and reduced mobility of livestock thus leading to loss of source of livelihoods of the affected communities;

This House URGES the County Government to:

1. Declare Opuntia a noxious weed;
2. Enhance and intensify the eradication of Opuntia through biological and mechanical control;
3. Map and list threatened areas and species to improve biodiversity conservation;
4. Increase awareness and understanding of the harmful effects of cactus invasions and their possible, solutions and best practices;
5. Rehabilitate and restore rangeland ecosystems through integrated management plan and put-up guidelines and policies to address restoration and rehabilitation of the reclaimed land to prevent the possibility of invasion by other unpalatable species;
6. Coordinate all stakeholders involved in eradication of Opuntia both government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations in order to fast track the use of biological control and mechanical eradication of Opuntia;

## MOTION

OPUNTIA ERADICATION

**Hon. Parleto Lekopien thro' Samuel Gatati:** Mr. Speaker, I beg to move the following motion;

THAT, Aware that Agriculture, including plant and animal disease control is a function of County Government as stipulated in Part 2 of the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya 2010;

FURTHER AWARE that prickly pear cactus (*Opuntia),* is among the most common introduced invasive plant in Kenya whose invasion is a major threat to biodiversity and food security in the drylands of Kenya;

FURTHER NOTING that the plant has been present in Laikipia County for more than 20 years and has invaded grazing land, contributing to the death of livestock and wildlife;

CONCERNED that the plant is not only a serious threat to a wide range of wildlife but also to plant diversity;

FURTHER CONCERNED that the potential costs associated with the invasion in natural pasture are based on reduced grazing land which often leads to human wildlife conflict, replacement of natural pasture, negative impacts to livestock health and reduced mobility of livestock thus leading to loss of source of livelihoods of the affected communities;

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1. Declare Opuntia a noxious weed;
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3. Map and list threatened areas and species to improve biodiversity conservation;
4. Increase awareness and understanding of the harmful effects of cactus invasions and their possible, solutions and best practices;
5. Rehabilitate and restore rangeland ecosystems through integrated management plan and put-up guidelines and policies to address restoration and rehabilitation of the reclaimed land to prevent the possibility of invasion by other unpalatable species;
6. Coordinate all stakeholders involved in eradication of Opuntia both government agencies and Non-Governmental Organizations in order to fast track the use of biological control and mechanical eradication of Opuntia;

Hon. Speaker and Members, I am moving this motion on behalf of Hon. Lekopien. As we all know for those who are conversant, Laikipia North and West is largely affected by this Opuntia which affects most of our pastoralists. This leaves our community in a quagmire. Mostly, it also brings conflicts in search of grazing pastures. It comes a time when today in my ward in a border called Thome-Mathira area neighbouring Sosian, we are facing demonstration after the herders and farmers had a conflict on some resources.

Hon. Speaker, if you come from Laikipia North, Doldol, big areas are nowadays occupied by Opuntia. The irony is, if today you grow weed (Bhang), the government will come arrest you and uproot it. This Opuntia affecting is our pastoralists and the government is silent on it.

Hon. Speaker, since agriculture is part of devolved function, the government should declare Opuntia a noxious weed. If we get anywhere Opuntia is present, we should control it either biologically and mechanically. Having said so, I was working with an NGO like 10 years ago, World Vision Kenya. We had a project called FMNR. That project is in Solai, Nakuru County. That project used to control Opuntia in Solai. We can also suggest and push the County Government through the Ministry of Agriculture to have some specialists who can give us a solution to this Opuntia or else 10 years to come, we shall have no grazing land range in Laikipia North and West.

We can also have those areas mapped and bring other biodiversity conservation to prevent more growth of Opuntia. I understand this is more relevant to MCA's who come from Laikipia North and to some who come from Laikipia West, specifically Salama and Rumuruti wards. This is important and being the people in office, we should put some policies on the same. I want to invite the sponsor of the motion to second since he is now present in the House.

**Hon. Parleto Lekopien:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. Before I support the motion, I need to appreciate the Hon. Member from Salama for moving the motion when I was away. Today as I said, there are conflicts between the farmers and the pastoralists. I think it is partly caused by the farms, ranches, boundaries and Opuntia that has taken more grazing space. I am also glad that you said if you plant weed, the next morning you will find the DCI coming to you.

I would want the government to look more in to the Opuntia. If this is bad as it is now soon not only the grazing land but we will also lose farms. As much as we undermine it or think it is not an invasive plant, if you break a piece and drop it somewhere it grows back to be

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an Opuntia bush taking all the nutrients from the soil and eventually the land becomes bare or full of Opuntia.

As a County Government, we need to do more research to see if there are more useful ways instead of leaving Opuntia to grow. We can look for different ways of making medicine or some wine or something like that. If we cannot do that, it will mean there will be no one taking care of that plant. Being a pastoralist, I know someone will say, it's just a pastoralist's land that is being taken over. Remember, we also have agricultural lands where Opuntia has taken over. It's a collective idea that the government and all stakeholders come together to eradicate Opuntia in this County.

The Member from Salama has just said that if you drive towards Doldol areas, most of the land is bare. Nothing grows on that land. One is because of the Opuntia and the Cactus since they are of the same family. Once the elephant eats them and moves to a different location, they poop and it grow in different areas. As the County Government of Laikipia and us as MCA's, we need to move with speed to get rid of Opuntia. It's about 20 years since we had this invasive plant here which is taking a big chunk of land.

Mr. Speaker, most people use Opuntia for fencing. Unfortunately, it does not grow in one line but it spreads all over the land. I will urge every Member to support the motion so that at the end of five years, we have proper policies that will get rid of all Opuntia in this County. Please Members, lets support it. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

*(Question proposed)*

**Speaker:** Thank you, Members. The floor is open for debate on the motion.

**Hon. Simon Kanyutu:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I support the motion by the Hon. Member for Sosian Ward. I am sure that most of us may not be able to contribute much but we have heard about the Opuntia which we have never seen. Mr. Speaker, as we contribute to this motion, just organize for a trip for all of us Members to know what Opuntia is.

I have heard a history about it that once they are eaten by our animals, when you are eating *Matumbo*, those spikes can harm you. Mr. Speaker, I have heard that history and because I am a lover of meat, this shocked me that most times we prefer eating meat from the northern part. That is where we have good goats. Since it is harmful, I support the motion so that that dangerous plant can be eradicated.

Mr. Speaker, if there is any way that it can be utilised economically for the benefit of our area, we can utilise it. Mr. Speaker, I support.

**Hon. Nicholas Mwaniki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this motion on eradication of Opuntia which is a variety of cactus weed. Being a resident of Tigithi Ward, in the early 2000, our ward was infested by cactus. So, I am conversant with cactus and eating of the cactus fruit. That is not a foreign plant, it is something we had locally. We used it as fodder for our cattle when it was very dry but the variety that is inhibiting Sosian in Laikipia North is another variety that is very prickly.

The method that we use to eradicate Opuntia in our areas is by burning, digging them up and burying the cactus weeds but still, this variety is very harmful. Burning it would still be considered a very tricky method of eradicating Opuntia. That is where the Government comes in with its machinery and its resources and we need to do our budget on eradication of Opuntia in Sosian and Laikipia North so that they do not inhibit on the grazing areas.

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As we have witnessed, the pastoralists require large tracts of land so that they can be able to do their business and be able to benefit from their livestock livelihood. Eradicating Opuntia should be part of the government's budget or business. Laikipia North people depend on livestock and if at all the large tracts of land can be used for grazing because they have been inhibited by Opuntia, then that is where the government should come in.

As the Chairman of the Budget Committee, we should sit with the Members of this House we allocate some funds so that Laikipia North people can feel being part of this government. The concern of this government on their livelihood should be paramount. As I support this motion, I request all the Members that as we sit down to do budget on the allocation of funds, we consider Laikipia North and the major problem of Opuntia. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

**Hon. George Karuiru:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the Hon. Member for Sosian Ward, Hon. Sammy Lekopien. Allow me not to say the other one because it is a little bit complicated. Mr. Speaker, I am neighbouring part of Sosian Ward. I have gone around because God has blessed me since I was in the Assembly last regime. We went around and observed out what the Honourable Member has said which is true.

Hon. Speaker, as Hon. Kanyutu from Marmanet Ward has quoted on the goat or sheep that have gone through the hardship area eating Opuntia, I know you are also a lover of the meat and especially the tongue which you cannot eat. If you see it alive and then that goat or sheep is slaughtered, you will be given the part of the head which you might not be able to eat.

This particular crop does well in the dry season. Yesterday, we had a National Climate Change Summit on and I know Mr. Speaker, you did a post on the social media wall of this Honourable House. We need to know the measures that we should take as the heads of this county so that we also do not go about the dry spell with the things that we know we can uphold. As Hon. Mwaniki has put it, as long as we need to eradicate the Opuntia, we might not have a big budget to do the same.

Mr. Speaker, about five years ago, we had an invasive plant in Lake Victoria and there was a problem which I think is still persisting. There was a foreign thing that used to kill fish around Lake Victoria and other lakes. As long as we want to eradicate, we need to have a budget. We need to get donors. I know we have LCDA and other corporate organisations that are outsourcing funds to see that despite of our little budget from the National Government, we might not be able to manage some of the invasive species like the Opuntia plantation.

We can still have it from our own budget but it is still hard because last week, I moved out because we had issues of how we should wait and try to fight the El Nino threat that is coming. It is just the other day that I learnt that they are highlighting Laikipia West as one of the places that will experience El Nino. Because we have departments that are underway to following measures on the absolute things that might come that we are not expecting, I think it is the high time we should think.

The debate that was about El Nino, we should now think deeply of how we should fight Opuntia. Mr. Speaker, out of what we have heard that our brothers and sisters from Laikipia North do livestock rearing, we must have a mechanism of how we can remove the rocks from the land so that when we are dealing with issues of fighting drought, we change the soil.

Sometimes, I talk with Hon. Gitahi from Githiga because he was in Israel and said we are getting the best fruits from Israel which is a very dry land that have maximised the soil to be able to fight drought. Mr. Speaker, one of the measures that we should think of is how we

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fight Opuntia so that we can have those changes. I love the way the mover of this motion is putting it from experience with examples from areas that has this menace.

I think the way we fight with bandits, Opuntia is a big bandit and we can fight it to the end by doing water pans, big dams and drill boreholes. Because we are capable of having our own initiative that drills many boreholes, if we do that, Laikipia will never be counted as one of the dry areas.

Mr. Speaker, the other time we had a debate with some of the Members in this Assembly. We were arguing that out of the persistent drought, especially in Laikipia East and Laikipia North, a child that was born five or six years ago, if he goes around a farm and gets a maize plantation, Mr. Speaker, he will ask what it is. This is because of the dry season rate that we have had that has brought this due to insufficient rains.

Now it has been a problem for such a kid to identify a maize plantation. Mr. Speaker, I join hands with other Members and I also urge this Honourable House to support this urgently either by doing a Supplementary Budget or outsourcing donors but Opuntia should be declared a national disaster. Thank you, Mr. Speaker, I support.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Asante, Mheshimiwa Spika. Leo nimefurahi kujua ya kwamba kuna hayo matunda yanaitwa Opuntia. Mheshimiwa Spika, nimekula sana haya matunda kwa sababu ni matamu. Sijui wanasema yaondolewe kwa nini. Kama hiyo picha wanasema ni ile ambayo nimekula Ethiopia, serikali inastahili kutafuta njia mwafaka ya kuleta haya matunda kwa soko na sio kumaliza...

**Speaker:** Hon. Majority Leader we are discussing the invasive Opuntia which has no fruits and not the normal cactus. Thank you.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** But Mr. Speaker I have...

**Speaker:** It is actually an invasive alien plant from Holland. Thank you.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Mr. Speaker, I have googled here and the Opuntia that I see is the same I am talking about that is sweet.

**Speaker:** Proceed.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Mheshimiwa Spika, sioni haja ya kung'oa Opuntia kwa sababu ukienda Ethiopia, Opuntia inatumika kama *famine food* ambayo ni ile chakula inakuliwa wakati wa kiangazi. Tunda moja linauzwa shilingi thelathini, pesa ya Kenya. Mheshimiwa Spika, nafikiria Opuntia inaponya magonjwa mengi sana. Ningeulizwa, kama Opuntia ni ile naona hapa naomba serikali ipate njia mwafaka wafanye kama vile Serikali ya Ethiopia inafanya ili ilete pesa kupitia Opuntia lakini sio kung'oa...

**Hon. George Karuiru:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. It is on a point of information. The Hon. Majority Leader might not be conversant that in our localities, we have so many seedlings such as beans. We have so many types of them. I think as Hon. Kanyutu had put it, we need, your Office and that of the Clerk, to take us around so that the Hon. Leader of the Majority can realize what we are talking about in terms of the Opuntia plant, the tough one. In medicine there is this thorn melon that we are always advised to eat for our bodies to be healthy. He has not understood that there are those plants which are very lethal and dangerous to us and even the livestock. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Karuiru. The floor still belongs to the Majority Leader, so I just wanted to let you know that the motion today is on IAS – Invasive Alien Species, which

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is in the class of opuntia but the imported one, not the normal opuntia, but the invasive one which is alien to Africa. Thank you. I will allow the Majority Leader to continue then get back to you, Hon. Stephen, unless it is a point of order.

**Hon. Stephen Ndiritu:** Naam, ni hoja ya nidhamu kwa sababu nahitaji ufafanuzi. Nimesikia Mheshimiwa Karuiru akisema opuntia na sio ile ambayo Kiongozi wa Walio Wengi anazungumza kuhusu. Mimi nilienda kuona Opuntia kule Doldol. Opuntia ina matunda yanayotumika hata kutengeneza juisi. Mimi nimeshuhudia hapa Doldol. Kwa hivyo, tujue hii Opuntia ni gani. Kama ni hiyo, ni kweli inachukua nafasi kubwa lakini kama tutaitumia kwa njia inayofaa, tuwezeshe kuwafundisha watu wa upande wa Kaskazini kutumia hiyo opuntia kwa vile inaweza kuwa nzuri hata zaidi isipokuwa inamaliza nyasi. Asante.

**Speaker:** You were seeking information?

**Hon. Stephen Ndiritu:** Naam, kutoka kwa Mheshimiwa Karuiru iwapo hiyo opuntia ni ile yenye matunda mekundu. Kama ni hiyo, inatumika sana.

**Speaker:** As the floor still remains for Hon. John Gichuki, I will allow Hon. Karuiru to respond to the information sought.

**Hon. George Karuiru:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. Sometimes when we agree on things… The Hon. Majority Whip and Majority Leader are neighbouring each other and we do not know what they are discussing. I might own a gun to kill bandits but Hon. Mugweru here owns a gun to prevent his farm from elephants. I think Hon. Ndiritu; we were with him in this Assembly. I might not be conversant with the colour of the fruits he is saying, but what I want to mean is that it has eradicated. Eradicating means that I am attracting thieves.

When Hon. Lekopien's livestock eat the cactus, he comes to my farm to steal livestock. I do not mean the Hon. Lekopien who has just moved the honourable motion for this eradication. You have clarified that this is an important one, so I think the honourable thing to do as Hon. Members is to visit the site and observe and identify the type of Opuntia that we are talking about. I just said that we have so many types of beans. We have jikarianthe, Rose Coco and others, and they are all beans. I do not declare that Opuntia is bad, but we must be categorical that the opuntia we are saying is a dangerous species that is causing the death and eradication of our livestock. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you. I would like to give the floor back to Hon. John Gichuki to finalize then I will give to the other Members. Welcome, Hon. Gichuki.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Bwana Spika, mimi bado nasema hiyo Opuntia tunayoongea kuhusu ni ile ya matunda, isipokuwa utupangie safari twende tuambiwe ni gani tunataka kumaliza. Huo ndio wakati nitaunga huu mswada mkono, ila kwa sasa siungi mkono kwa sababu... mimi ni Naibu Mwenyekiti wa Kamati ya Bajeti na siwezi kubali pesa yoyote itengwe ya kuenda kuondoa huo mmea hadi nijue ni gani. Nikiangalia kwenye mtandao opuntia ninayoona ni ile yenye matunda.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Member. The originator of the motion, Hon. Lekopien, wanted to make a response, then I will come back to…

**Hon. Parleto Lekopien:** Asante, Bwana Spika. Niruhusu tu nitumie Kiswahili kwa sababu naona kama Kiongozi wa Walio Wengi, kama tusemavyo kwa Kiingereza, hakuelewa vizuri. Opuntia tunayoongea kuhusu sio ile iliyo na matawi makubwa, ambayo unaijua. Sio ile iko Doldol ambayo imesaidia sana wafugaji wakati wa ukame, na pengine kwa sababu huna ng'ombe, ungekuwa umejua opuntia tunayoongea kuhusu.

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Ili nikupe hii habari vizuri, ukizunguka kwenye wadi yako pale African Location ambapo unapajua vizuri, kuna zile mimea zingine ambazo ni duara na zina miiba mingi na ambazo zi za asili. Hiyo ni ile imetoka Uholanzi na ikaletwa hapa miaka ishirini au thelathini iliyopita na ndio inaenea.

Natamani ungekuwa na nafasi kesho au keshokutwa, ama wakati utakuwa Rumuruti nikutembeze vizuri na kukuonyesha tofauti ya mimea tunayoongea kuhusu sasa hivi kwenye Bunge. Ile unayojua ni ile tofauti na ambayo ni ya asili na wamejaribu pia kutafutia wadudu. Ukitembea pale Doldol na kuenda karibu na Loisaba, wamejaribu kuleta wadudu wanaokula Opuntia ile kuimaliza kwa sababu imekuwa nyingi hadi hakuna mimea inayomea chini yake.

Tunayoongea kuhusu sio hiyo. Kwa hii miaka miwili ambapo kumekuwa na ukame, watu wengi, hasa wafugaji, wamepata kufaidika kwa sababu walikuwa wanachoma hio miiba na kuwapatia ng'ombe kula. Tunayoongea kuhusu ni ile nyingine na ningeomba mtu aniambie jina lake kwa Kiswahili. Kwa hivyo tunaongea kuhusu hiyo, sio ile ya Doldol. Ni ile iliyo kwenye African Location na hata ndani ya mtaa wa Rumuruti. Ahsante.

**Speaker:** I would like to give to the Members who have not contributed, and I want to give to Hon. Daniel Mugweru.

**Hon. Daniel Mugweru:** Hon. Speaker, I rise in support of the motion. I was not prepared to make my contribution, but just to give clarity to Hon. Ndiritu, but I still have my contribution to this motion. The most important thing is to make sure that Members go to the site and are able to see the opuntia we are talking about. For clarity, the Opuntia we are talking about is a family of cactus, and the cactus is what the Hon. Majority Leader is talking about, which has very sweet fruits. The Opuntia we are talking about is the one that usually fences prisons. If you go to Nanyuki Prison, it is fenced with opuntia, the one that is dangerous, harmful, and we are traditionally told that if the thorns of that opuntia get into your blood stream it moves deeper and deeper up to the heart. That is the tradition that we have been having. I have never seen one but it has been a tradition.

The most important thing for the House and the Hon. Members to know is that it is of no use to the community and to us in general. The other thing that we need to know and understand is that it does not only affect Laikipia North. Now that it is in Nanyuki Prison it means that it can spread to a large area. In my village, that is Umande Ward, there is a place called Ndemu and there is opuntia there that lies on land just next to a road. It is really spreading and the family is not even able to remove that plant. They called me to help them remove the plant and I took a grader there but it is not even possible for a grader to remove it, unless we go with a bulldozer.

The most unfortunate thing is that if you remove it with a bulldozer, where are you going to dump it? I suggested that we get a pit then we cut a piece of it and see the reaction. When we got that pit and cut some stems and buried them in it, after the rains started it became another plant in the same place. So, it is a very dangerous species which if allowed to grow and spread it can destroy the nature all over. Now that it has started in a place like Umande which is in Laikipia East and not Laikipia North; that is why I am saying that it is not necessarily in Laikipia North.

I have heard the Minority Leader telling the Majority Leader of the one that is in Rumuruti, which is in Laikipia West. So, this is a dangerous species that has invaded our county and in the years to come, we might find ourselves without even places to farm. Not just livestock but even ourselves when we want to farm, we cannot find anywhere to farm.

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Hon. Speaker, if a young kid goes to that specie of Opuntia, you just forget about that kid. That is death, it is more dangerous than a snake. That is why I concur with Hon. Karuiru who has just said that we are fighting a bandit called opuntia. We can only classify it as another bandit that is affecting all of us. Those in Laikipia North, those who are livestock farmers, those who are agricultural farmers, we are all affected by opuntia. In many years to come, whether it is twenty or forty because I am sure that in the next fifty years all of us here will still be around, if we do not eradicate it now, it will affect us severely in this county.

So, I really support this motion. Having supported it, still on the floor of this House, I remember about two or three years ago I stood here on the same motion and nothing was done. So, our concern should be, now that we have brought the same motion into this House, in relation to Opuntia, what action are we going to take? One, you need to organize a trip for all Hon. Members first to understand what we are talking about. When we understand what we are talking about, we can then take an action from there. We might just come here and talk about the risk of Opuntia then after five years, in 2028 the same Members who are here, because I am sure they will be blessed by God and will be back here, we will find ourselves talking of the same thing.

So, we need to act, we need to take action. I have said that it was here before and nothing happened, now it is the high time we started working on it. I will say that because not all of us understand the Opuntia we are talking about, let us get a day to go and see the effects of Opuntia. Let us listen to the community. We are representatives of people. Let us go to them as we represent them here and represent their views. Let us go and listen to them and get to understand the harm they get from opuntia, and get to understand how the invasion has affected so many people.

Hon. Speaker, we need to take a step. Instead of arguing here that it is or is not cactus or sisal, all those are in the same family. Let us go there and see the Opuntia we are talking about. Hon. Majority Leader, if God helps you to go there and see it, just touch yourself with that thorn or even inject yourself with it and we will see your reaction. Be our litmus test on that day so that on that day we may be able to face the issue. I support and I am sure that Hon. Members will support it as we plan to go and visit the site for everybody to see and touch and start believing and acting on how to eradicate Opuntia. Thank you.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Mugweru. I think it is a simpler exercise because we have this opuntia we are talking about in Nanyuki Prison. I have also been a frequent visitor of Hon. Stephen's ward and it is spreads all over Kilimo. Most sheep are limping because of the prickly thorns of Opuntia which never dry up but are always green. Whether there is rain or not it is ever green and it has no fruits. So, I want to give this opportunity to Hon. Stephen.

**Hon. Stephen Ndiritu:** Asante, Bwana Spika. Nasimama kuweza kutoa mchango wangu kuhusu mswada ambao ni wa mimea wa Opuntia. Kwanza niweze kupongeza mwenye mswada na pia wale wote ambao wamechangia lakini kwanza nimkosoe Mheshimiwa Lekopien kwa kusema ya kwamba ataongea Kiswahili ili Kiongozi wa walio Wengi aweze kuelewa. Kiongozi wa Walio Wengi anaelewa Kingereza sana ama ni masomo inaangaliwa amesoma hadi mwisho? Kwa hivyo, mimi nashindwa ni lugha ipi ambayo hataweza kuelewa.

La pili, lugha ya Kiswahili ni lugha ya taifa na tunajivunia kuiongea kwa sababu sisi ni Waafrika. Lugha ya Kingereza ni ya mkoloni na mtu kama mimi ni wa Mau Mau. Nimelelewa kwa familia ya Mau Mau halafu uniambie nitumie lugha ya mkoloni ambaye aliua babu yangu. Wengine hata kama hawaongei Kingereza, sio ya kwamba hawaielewi, ni kuidharau kwa sababu hiyo sio lugha yao. Lugha ni mbili, ya Kiswahili na ya mama lakini hizi zingine ni za kujitafutia huko mbele.

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Jambo ambalo nitasema kuhusu huu mmea ni ya kwamba wengi hatujafafanuliwa huo ni mmea upi na hapo tunakubaliana kabisa. Ukisema Opuntia halafu tuangalie maana yake kwa mtandao, tunapata ya kwamba Opuntia iko na matunda lakini ile ambayo nilikuwa nimeoneshwa huko Doldol na Mheshimiwa Matunge ilikuwa nyekundu na hiyo ni dawa. Watu wengi huwa wanaitumia mpaka kwa kutengeneza juisi na divai kama vile tunajua ya kwamba Kanyutu anapenda divai sana.

Mheshimiwa Spika, mmea ambao tunaongea kuhusu kama vile Mheshimiwa Mugweru amesema, sasa nimeuelewa kabisa. Kwa kweli huu mmea hauna matunda lakini pande zingine huenda ukawa ni mzuri kwa sababu huu mmea hauna matunda na wakati mwingine unachukua nafasi kubwa na pia nyasi inakosa kumea na hapo ndipo nakubaliana. Wakati mwingine huu mmea unaweza kuwa wa maana kwa sababu unatusaidia kutengeneza ua.

Bwana Spika, kama unaweza kuweka ua la Opuntia, inafaa uondoe mlinzi kwa sababu hakuna mtu ambaye anaweza kuruka hapo. Wakati mwingine unaweza kuonekana kama ni mbaya lakini ukitunzwa vizuri unaweza kusaidia. Sasa hivi ukienda katika gereza la Nanyuki, hiyo ndiyo imepandwa kwa sababu hakuna mfungwa mbaye atajaribu kutoka. Ni kumaanisha ya kwamba huu mumea ukitunzwa kwa nia ambayo inayofaa, unaweza kuwa wa umuhimu kubwa. Kama utawekwa vibaya, basi hautatusaidia.

Kwa njia nyingine ni kama stima ambayo ni hatari na huua kwa sababu ikikupata inaweza kukutingiza hadi chini lakini ikitunzwa vizuri basi inakuwa nzuri. Hata sasa hivi nikiongea ninatumia stima na vile tumekaa hapa Bwana Spika tunatumia stima. Kwa hivyo kuna uzuri na ubaya wa kitu. Kwa hivyo tukisema ya kwamba tunataka kuumaliza, nakubaliana na kuupunguza lakini sio kuumaliza kabisa. Ni lazima tujue ni njia ipi ambayo tutakayotumia ili kupambana na huu mmea kwa wale ambao hawauhitaji na kwa wale ambao wanagandamizwa.

Bwana Spika, naweka Opuntia kwa njia ingine na ninaizungusha tena kwa njia ya kuleta faida. Ukiwa na pesa, kuna mtu ambaye anaweza kutumia pesa yake vibaya mpaka imuue. Kuna mwingine ambaye atatumia hiyo pesa kujiinua kimaisha na kukaa maisha ya starehe na ni ile pesa tu. Kwa hivyo, tunafaa kufundisha wafugaji jinsi ya kuumaliza kabisa ama waitumie kwa njia ambayo inayofaa. Huu mumea sio mbaya. Nimeona kwa mtandao ya kwamba huu ni mmea ambao unatoa hata maua. Kuna wengi ambao huupanda kama maua kwa kona za nyumba. Kwa hivyo ni kulingana na vile ambavyo utaitumia.

Mimi ningependa la muhimu kwanza tuone mumea mwenyewe kwa macho ili tuweze kujua kama ni hao watu wanashindwa kukaa na huo mumea ama ni mumea tu wanataka tumalize ili tukae hatuna zote. Kwa hivyo mimi natoa mchango wangu nikisema ya kwamba ni vizuri tutembee ili tuone ni Opuntia ipi ili tujue vile tutaishughulikia. Mimi na Kiongozi wa Wengi tumeomba ya kwamba Mungu utujalie tupate pesa na tutapata kwa sababu sisi hufanya kazi kwa bidi ili tununue shamba ndio wezi wa ng'ombe wanaotumia bunduki wasitupate tunapotumia ua la huo mumea. Tutaweza kukaa starehe kwa sababu hakuna mwizi au mnyama ambaye ataweza kupita.

Vile vile, niliona hii Opuntia ikitolewa hiyo miiba yote na kusiagwa na baadaye hiyo maji yake inatengeneza gesi. Kwa hivyo kile kitu ambacho ningetaka ni ya kwamba tuumalize kama vile ambavyo mswada umesema na mimi naunga mkono lakini tuumalize kwa sehemu ambayo haitakikani. Kwa wale ambao wanauhitaji na wanaweza kuutumia kwa faida, huo ni mumea ambao tunafaa tuangalie lakini kulingana na mwenye mswada, Opuntia ni mbaya na ing'olewe Sosian, Doldol na Mukogodo lakini kwetu na Mheshimiwa Karuiru ambapo tunahangaishwa na wezi wa ng'ombe, tukubalishwe tupande huu mumea kwa sababu wezi

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hawataweza kuingia. Bwana Spika, nimetoa mchango wangu na ninakuomba tuweze kutembea ili tukaone huo mmea na sehemu ambayo imeadhirika. Asante.

**Speaker:** I can see that the Members have spoken and I will give an opportunity to Hon. Mwaniki before getting back.

**Hon. Nicholas Mwaniki:** Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I rise on a point of clarification. Being the Chairman of the Budget Committee, I have not heard a day that we have changed the Chairmanship or the Vice Chairmanship and it seems as if the Vice Chair of the Budget Committee, Hon. John Gichuki Maina. I want a point of clarification if the Chair still exists or we have changed the vice chairmanship. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Mwaniki for seeking a point of clarification from Hon. John Gichuki. Hon. Gichuki, I would like you to respond before we conclude on the motion.

**Hon. John Gichuki:** Asante, Sana Mheshimiwa Spika. Mimi nilisema ya kwamba mimi ni Mwanachama wa kamati ya Bajeti. Nilisema ya kwamba nitaongea na naibu mwenyekiti ambaye tuko naye hapa halafu tuwe Pamoja na tuseme ya kwamba hakuna pesa ambayo itatengwa kuenda kumaliza hiyo Opuntia.

Bwana Spika, naamini pengine bado mwenyekiti wetu ni Mheshimiwa Mwaniki na hatuna nia yoyote ya kumtoa kwa hicho kiti. Akalie chote kwa matako mawili na hiyo lugha sio mbaya kwa sababu hicho kiti ni chake.

**Speaker:** Thank you, Hon. Gichuki for the clarification. Now I want to call upon the mover to reply top the motion.

**Hon. Samuel Mugambi:** Thank you, Hon. Speaker and thank you Hon. Members for your contribution. It was noted with a lot of concern, your concern about the identification of Opuntia. I think they recommended of visiting the areas where the Opuntia is growing and also the Agriculture Committee to take the matter seriously. Where I sit from my third eye, Opuntia is a noxious weed that is affecting the livelihood of pastoralists in Laikipia County. From the history, Opuntia is an alien species from the British colonialists who brought it to control elephants and wildlife but now it is spreading adversely affecting the rangeland where we are getting grass.

Hon. Speaker, from where I sit, I listened to what Hon. Mugweru said while talking about the same matter three years ago but now I can see that there is light at the end of the tunnel. Last week I attended a meeting by COPAD (Cooperation on peace and development) formerly known as AMAYA Triangle and we had met as four counties, Laikipia, Isiolo and Samburu and we discussed various issues including forming COPAD. Very soon in the House we shall have a Bill called COPAD whereby we shall introduce COPAD legally as an institution.

From the CEO Alfred, we have good news that we already have donors and one of them is willing to contribute up to Kshs. 2 billion and this money shall be spent and we shall put this House and the County Government of Laikipia on its toes to ensure that that money goes first to Opuntia control. As the English men says that "*whoever knows the torture of the grave is the corpse".* Therefore, whoever is talking here jokingly should know the effects of Opuntia. Personally, I visited parts of Naibor and that species is dangerously affecting the livelihood of those people.

I do not refute that this Opuntia might have some fruits or flowers that might be beneficial but as per now, the Opuntia is doing more harm than good. Therefore, that is why I

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think that Hon. Lekopien who is the originator of the motion and a representative of people, I think that this is a serious matter where all stakeholders need to put all resources human and financial to control Opuntia. Thank you, Hon. Speaker and I hope that the motion will be approved.

*(Question put and agreed to)*

## ADJOURNMENT

**Speaker:** The sittings of this House now stand adjourned until tomorrow Wednesday, 6th September, 2023 at 9.00 a.m.

The House rose at 3.35 p.m.

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