

BARINGO COUNTY ASSEMBLY

THE HANSARD

The House met on Wednesday 1st March 2023 at 9:38AM

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi) in Chair

PRAYERS

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Sergeant at Arms we do not have quorum kindly ring the quorum bell.

(Quorum bell rung)

There is still no quorum bell be rung again for five minutes

(Quorum bell rung)

What is it Hon. Tarus?

Hon. Tarus: Thank you Mr. Speaker, there is quorum now we can proceed, thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Now we can proceed with the order of the day we have quorum.

STATEMENTS

STATUS OF RELIEF FOOD PROGRAMME FOR THE COUNTY

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Sharon Jerotich Keter.

Hon. Sharon: I seek statement from the leader of majority party on the following matters of concern;

A mother in Saimo Soi, Ngaratuko area recently passed on three weeks after delivery of her new born, it is alleged that she sadly died due to starvation. It is common knowledge that the entire country is facing serious cases of starvation that has been occasioned by climate change leading to low yield of food crops across the entire country.

Reports indicates that over 3.1 million Kenyans in arid and semi-arid areas are severely food insecure following poor rain seasons that has tampered crop production. It is clear that the national Government has initiated relief food programme to curb hunger menace.

- i. Is Baringo County one of the counties that has benefited from national relief programme?
- ii. How has the national Government gone in the initiated process of giving relief food stuffs to the affected Baringo County residents?
- iii. Who of the affected residents has been reached and how sufficient has the process been?
- iv. Does the department have plans to roll our supplementary programme on the relief food programme as you may be aware the national programme might not be sufficient?

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- v. How is the department going to actualize the plan and how soon considering this is an urgent issue that is touching on the human rights issues of the affected people?

Mr. Speaker sir, I proceed to add that starvation has affected everyone in most parts of the County not only the mother from Saimo/Soi but people are dying of hunger. How is the County Government going to curb this because lives have been lost lack of food? I hope to get the answer in a weeks-time because it is urgent.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): I refer the statement to Leader of Majority before that considering that this question was sought in the month of November and we do not know whether the situation has improved or worsened, I use my discretion also to weigh the issue and allow members to add so that when the Leader of Majority is replying he exhaustively tackle the statement. Allow two or three interventions. Hon. Michael Chebon.

Hon. Chebon: Thank you Mr. Speaker I thank you for giving me this opportunity and thank the Hon. Member for bringing the motion because Saimo Soi is my Ward. Mr. Speaker I confirm that the same exists up to now nothing has changed. People have died; it is only that one was reported and the County Government are interested on what is happening! People are dying of hunger and there is no water.

That area has also been affected by banditry so you can imagine about people whose animals have been stolen, have not been into the farms, there is no food. I confirm to you Mr. Speaker that the situation is even worse right now. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Tarus

Hon. Tarus: Thank you Mr. Speaker. The hunger problem is acute as at now and I believe that in November, we were at an alert stage but now we are at an emergency level where people have serious problem with food and water. Baringo County is one of the most affected place in terms of the climate change and there is also water problem. Like in my Ward, I would sometimes wake up at 6am and find somebody seated outside just...and the major issue is food. Somebody will say that he has stayed 2 days without food.

I believe that we should move with speed as a House to push the County Government and also the National Government because the 2 levels of Government are supposed to look into this matter. I wonder Mr. Speaker at this Century; people are still dying out of hunger. We need to first of all push them to provide food and secondly come up with long lasting solution to this water and food problem by first of all making sure that banditry is done away with. Two, that they provide adequate funding for irrigation and also build new dams so that we can do irrigation. We are in a very big problem as a County. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): I can see two hands but because of seniority, Hon. Lekakimon then Hon. Sialo.

Hon. Lekakimon: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thank Hon. Keter for bringing to our attention the issue of hunger and what is happening in our Couty. This is just a case study from one area but it is reflection in the entire County. I request that when the statement is brought to this House, we should have the media invited to cover our discussions. The issue of hunger and losing a lives to

it is very serious. Media coverage will get the attention of the Government and will make the County Government work fast to save lives.

In every Sub-County, the DCC's normally receives relief food but you will realize that priority is given to so many activities than the activities that save lives. Sometimes the food can be given to RDU who are in remote areas giving security. That is Government and they know the plans that those *Askaris* have and the people don't get that relief food. Even nationally, there is starvation everywhere through the media. Animals and people are dying and it is by surprise that this is the first time in Perkerra Irrigation Scheme River which is a permanent river has dried up. The lower part of the river from Ilang'arua to the lake is almost four weeks without water because the little water that comes serves a small area because of the volume and the amount of water.

So climate change has contributed to many of this and in fact Mr. Speaker if this will be the trend, Baringo County will be one of the Counties that will be in big problems because this is a County that depends on livestock, agriculture and when livestock die, I think we shall be in a horrible situation.

I request that when a statement comes to this House, the ministry or the department in charge answers that statement, let us have facts of what is happening in our County so that we get some donors coming to top up with what the County Government is doing. Otherwise I support that life at the ground is very terrible and our people are starving. Thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Sialo.

Hon. Sialo: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I thank Hon. Sharon for raising that statement. Mr. Speaker sir I want to confirm that the problem of hunger has been across our County and has affected so many of our people.

Recently, in Mogotio I have had problems with school feeding programme and we have raised the issue to the County Executive but we don't know what has happened. In our County we have a special program that has allocation of funds that is supposed to take care of the school feeding program for our ECDs.

We are addressing the National Government on this issue yet we also have the capacity as a County Government to actually arrest the situation. Mr. Speaker, I have lost so many elderly people in my ward and all the cases are connected to starvation.

Mr. Speaker, you will find an elderly person having one meal per day and even if such a person have other underlying conditions when he/she does not have food definitely that person will not survive.

Mr. Speaker, this statement should be addressed urgently and the Executive should also tell us what they are doing to address the situation as we wait for the National Government to act we also need to do something as a County Government. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Sitoi.

Hon. Sitoi: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Allow me to congratulate my sister Hon. Sharon for considering this matter. Mr. Speaker until Monday I never thought the issue of drought has affected the people of Baringo to the extent of what I saw on Monday.

Mr. Speaker, I never thought that the Ward that is represented by Hon. Sialo and Hon. Purity felt the effects of this climate, until on Monday I had the opportunity to traverse the remote parts of Emining and Mogotio.

Mr. Speaker, I just want to confirm that the situation as it is even now worse than we think, it is worse than Hon. Sharon than when sought this statement, in my Ward when Hon. Sialo said people are going with one meal, in my Ward I can confirm Mr. Speaker that people go for three days without a meal and I know that is also happening in Tiaty, parts of Baringo South.

Mr. Speaker, we have a great responsibility to compel the County Government to move with speed and see that our children are going to school. Most of the ECDE schools are now having less than 10 students due to lack of food. There was a photo that was circulating in social media of a child in Tiaty that was eating cactus; I don't know whether members had an opportunity to see it. That is only one case we have several and in these Government we have a budget and we have disaster funds. It is good that those who are given the responsibility of handling issues disaster traverse through our entire County. We may think that the ward represented by Hon. Tarus, that is Sacho is heaven but wait until you are in Kapkelewa and realize that you are in hell.

You may think that the ward represented by Hon. Kiplagat, which is Kabartonjo is heaven but wait until you are in a place called Mormorio. And you may also think that where Hon. Lemlem is representing is in a town called Marigat but wait until you are in somewhere between Marigat and Emining, you will meet with the reality that is biting.

Mr. Speaker even with the formulation of this statement, I don't know if it is possible to amend this statement because it is not clear which department should respond. This is for the County Government and not the department it is the governor to convene all the CECs and get them to work. Mr. Speaker sometimes I say there are two things which are very important one is food and the other one is health. If we can sort out these two all the other things like opening of roads can wait, I want to beg members that let's put food on the table for our children and medicine in our facilities, thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Kiplagat): Hon. Lemlem.

Hon. Lemlem: Thank you Hon. Speaker and I want to congratulate Hon. Sharon for bringing this to the attention of the House. These were five months ago and the situation now might be worse. Mr. Speaker the word climate change was mentioned and I am the Chair in charge of environment and climate change, I want to bring to the attention of this House that climate change by itself is a contributing factor to even the destruction of the environment because it pushes the people to the edge and in search of day to day livelihood they end up destroying the same environment.

Mr. Speaker, I want to divert the attention of the members a little bit because it is common as a human being when a problem is brought to your attention you focus more on the problem instead of looking outside the box on the solutions that can really cure this problem. The issue of drought and relief food has been there since I was born. I remember when I was a class one child my father used to send me to go and queue in the chief's office so that I can collect two kilos of

maize because drought and hunger was really serious and indeed that was the only food we had that time.

Mr. Speaker, 30 years down the line I am standing here as a leader for this County of great diversity. I have looked at the entire Baringo we have more and we have the potential to change the equation. As you drive today from Marigat just before you come to Sesia on your right hand side there is someone who dug a borehole about six months ago and even now they have planted a lot of cabbages there, vegetables, greens and I'm sure that family is self-sustainable. In 2017 when I was elected I went to a place called Chebaruswo, we did water tracking for that place because people were making a lot of noise that we don't have water. The previous Government had allocated close to 19 million. As we speak today last week I was sent a picture of a community that is now harvesting maize because of that borehole. Mr. Speaker we have a County rigs and machines. As we speak the County is busy opening roads for people who do not have business, vehicles, people who do not have anything to so. While the water pans are silted, the communities have potential areas where we can do dams that they can become self-sustainable.

Mr. Speaker my proposal is that we stop the careless life especially as leaders and make serious decisions. I am proposing that as you look at the Tugen hills facing the Eastern side and the hills again facing the western side that is the Keiyo area we have natural escarpments, we have natural gullies that if this County can invest on check dams this issue of drought and water shortage will be something of the past. Until we build these check dams, until we protect the environment today as you travel from Nakuru all the way to Marigat you will meet with so many Boda boda carrying charcoal from Tiaty, Baringo South, what are we doing? We are destroying the environment that is supposed to support water and eventually we cry we lack food.

Mr. Speaker my proposal is that as the Leader of Majority comes to respond to this issue can he give us a short term measure in terms of those who are vulnerable at the moment and then give us a careful well thought solution that the Government is doing. I am for the idea that if we protect our environment, if we put more money into water and irrigation and we decide that when it is about this time around December, January, February we stop building roads and we focus on desalting our pan dams so that we have water that can go beyond the dry season. Those are my thoughts and I think and I plead with my fellow colleagues that if we focus that way we will be able to change the equation not now but in the long run. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon Cherotich your eye has gotten the Speaker's eyes but unfortunately Hon Cheboiwo has to talk first.

Hon. Cheboiwo: Okay thank you Mr. Speaker I am so impressed with this question, it has come at the right time and I want to congratulate Hon Sharon for asking it. Mr Speaker I don't want to debate because others have done but I want to humbly request you that you request the Majority Leader to give us the statement from the Governor today in the afternoon so that we may know the status of this issue because it is affecting our people.

Mr. Speaker I met three locational leaders on Monday including the farmers and we declared that school fees should not be an issue as at now, we can stop paying fees for the children and even stop a child from continuing school but let him or her repeat the school and sort the starving

issue of the families, I requested all of them that if they have issues with school fees we can talk to the schools but we agreed that one to sell his cow and buy maize and assist your neighbor and everyone to look after their neighbors.

Mr. Speaker it is no longer the time for taking children to school but it is time to counter the situation on the ground and because Hon. Sharon has brought this question which is actually affecting all of us, I want to thank and urge you Hon. Speaker and let you know that the situation is very bad and I know the answer to this question will come in two weeks' time when the rains will have come but the effects now are very critical and we need the answer today. Through the Majority Leader, the Governor can give us a way forward for this coming week and the other weeks ahead unless the first rains begins then we are under this situation. Mr. Speaker my humble request is that you give a critical direction today, thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Cynthia Jerotich.

Hon. Kiptui: Asante sana Mheshimiwa Spika, kuhusu hii swali ambalo limeletwa na Mhe. Sharon dada yangu, nilikuwa ninafikiria Mhe. Sharon ni mtoto wa Ceralac kama mwenyekiti wa Kamati yake

(Laughter)

Ninamshukuru sana kwa kuleta swali hili, Mhe. Spika ukiona swali hili linahusu mwanchii wa kawaida, tukiangalia wakati huu, njaa imekuwa kali sana na ningependa sana kama swali hili lingekuja kama mjadala kwa sababu kama wajumbe tungependa kuona kuwa Kaunti yetu ya Baringo ipitishe sheria itakayo ona kuwa hatuwezi kubali mtu afe kwa njaa.

Mhe. Spika sasa hivi tunajua ya kwamba Kamati ya Disaster Management haina pesa kwa hivyo tunaomba Kamati ya Bajeti iweke pesa kwa sababu hivi sasa ndio tunaingia nyakati za kutengeneza Bajeti, kama wajumbe tunataka kuokoa watu wetu wasife kwa njaa.

Jambo lingine ningependa kusema kwa viongozi wenzangu ni kwamba sisi sote tumechaguliwa kwa hii nyumba kuangalia wananchi, kuna wale waliteuliwa kama sisi ambao tumeteuliwa kuwakilisha maswala ya wakinamama na kuna waheshimiwa ambao wamechaguliwa moja kwa moja na wananchi na munajua kazi yenyu iliyo waleta kwa Bunge hili, kitu nitakacho omba ni kwamba, itakuwa aibu sana kupata mtu ana kufa kwa sababu ya njaa na sisi kama viongozi tuko hapa na tugesaidia watu wetu.

Mhe. Spika, jambo lingine ni kwamba kuna watoto wadongo wanaotakikana wawe kwa shule za chekechea, kuna watoto wengi sasa hawaendi shule kwa sababu ya njaa, walikuwa wamezoea kukula chakula angalau moja... ninawaomba kama waheshimiwa kuwa tupitishe sheria ambayo itatuchunga sisi sote na sheria amblo wananchi wote wa Baringo watategemea ili iwasaidie.

Mhe. Spika ningependa ya kuwa kama ingewezekana Kamati iundwe ambayo waheshimiwa watakuwa wakizunguka wakiangalia ni sehemu na eneo gani la Bunge ambalo limeumia sana kwa mambo ya njaa, Mhe. Spika ninashukuru sana kwa Mhe. Sharon aliye leta hili swali kwa sababu ameileta kwa wakati nzuri, tafathali tuizingatie, asante.

The Speaker (Hon. Kemboi): Hon. Cynthia I concur with you however I want to remind you that if you chose to speak Kiswahili kindly adhere to Kiswahili

(Laughter)

Those are the provisions of Standing Orders. Hon. Members I think we have weighed on the issue but out of the sentiments that have been raised by the members you will allow me to direct the Leader of Majority to get a response from the County Secretary or the County Government not a specific department, let the County Secretary provide a response to this questions.

In addition, let the County Secretary also tell us what interventions the County Government has done in the following areas;

1. School feeding program ... that is the one for pre-school
2. Distribution of water
3. Provision of relief food by the disaster response
4. How the distribution of the food has been done?
5. What do we have in our stores as a County to take us through this season

Majority Leader, considering that the situation is dire I want to direct that you provide the response by Tuesday 9:30am failure to which the County Secretary will have to appear before the committee of this House on the same day at 11:30am if he fails to provide a response.

ADJOURNMENT

Order Members! This House stands adjourned till 2:30pm this afternoon.

The House rose at 10:24AM