

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



ELEVENTH PARLIAMENT (SECOND SESSION)

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

REGARDING FIELD VISITS BY PARLIAMENTARY COMMITTEES

Honourable Members,

The Committee system is an important component of parliamentary business around the world. In modern times, the work done by Parliaments has been noted to be not only varied in nature, but also of substantial volume. Indeed, the time at the disposal of the House is usually limited, and only allows for close scrutiny and consideration of just a few matters. It has thus become the norm for Committees, as agents of the House, to take up a large scope of various matters not considered in plenary, review them and later inform or guide the direction to be taken by the House, usually by way of reports.

Honourable Members,

In the case of the United Kingdom, it has been observed that much of the work of the House of Commons and the House of Lords takes place in committees. These committees examine issues in detail, from government policies and proposed new laws, to wider topics like the economy. In our case, we have thirty (30) committees, including the recently established Committee on General Oversight. These Committees have been instrumental in the performance of the role of the National Assembly as provided for in the Constitution. Committees prosecute matters before them through consideration of reports, summoning of witnesses as well as field visits.

Honourable Members,

It has been the practice in the National Assembly that during field visits or investigations by the different Committees of the House, the area Member of Parliament of the region being visited is informed. This has been a matter of courtesy rather than the law. However, some Committees are still visiting Constituencies without the knowledge of the area

representative, even in matters directly affecting the Member's electorate. This, by all considerations, is discourteous and portrays the area Member in bad light to the electorate considering that he/she is expected to be in the know on all matters relating to his/her area of representation. Indeed, it is said that courtesy costs nothing, but buys everything, and that it is impossible to practice parliamentary politics without having patience, decency and courtesy.

Honourable Members,

This is therefore to reiterate my earlier guidance to all Committees that it would be prudent and considerate to notify Members of field visits or tours by a committee in their areas.

I thank you!

THE HON. JUSTIN B.N. MUTURI, EGH, MP
SPEAKER OF THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
October 16, 2014