

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 16th April, 2025

Morning Sitting

*The House met at the Senate Chamber,
Parliament Buildings, at 9.30 a.m.*

[The Speaker (Hon. Kingi) in the Chair]

PRAYER

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
AT COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

(The Clerk-at-the-Table consulted with the Speaker)

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Clerk, do we have quorum?
Serjeant-at-Arms, kindly ring the Quorum Bell for 10 minutes.

(The Quorum Bell was rung)

Order, hon. Senators. We now have quorum. Let us proceed with today's business.

Clerk, proceed to call the first Order.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

QUESTIONS

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Senators, we expected to have two Cabinet Secretaries this morning for purposes of responding to questions from hon. Senators; that is, the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy who had one Question to respond to and the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration, who had 12 Questions to respond to.

We will not have the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Interior and National Administration, for purposes of responding to these questions because he is committed this morning. He is scheduled to meet his counterpart from the Republic of Somalia to

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discuss matters security between the two countries. It is a meeting that had been scheduled prior to these Questions being scheduled for today.

This information was relayed to me yesterday after the Senate Business Committee (SBC) sat to deliberate on this matter. Those are details that we did not have when we sat as the SBC. Therefore, I found it to be a valid reason when the Cabinet Secretary indicated that he had scheduled a meeting prior to him being requested to come here.

The purpose of that meeting is to discuss cross-border security between the two countries. I think it is a valid reason, which we should be able to accept and allow the Cabinet Secretary to appear next time. Today, we will interact with the Cabinet Secretary in charge of ICT, Hon. Kabogo.

Proceed, Sen. (Dr.) Boni.

Sen. (Dr.) Khalwale: Mr. Speaker, Sir, thank you for that communique. However, it would be nice for you to indicate when we will get the answers because some of the Questions on the Order Paper marked to the Ministry of Interior and National Administration are urgent. Could you direct that he comes in the next sitting given that we are going on recess?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Well, that is the work of the SBC, Sen. (Dr.) Boni. As a Speaker, I do not have those powers to allot time for purposes of responding to these Questions. However, I hear you and I know the urgency of these Questions. You are a member of SBC. So, once we sit as SBC, we will consider your concerns and certainly give it the next available slot.

Clerk, can you confirm that the Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Kabogo, is in the House?

[The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo) was ushered into the Chamber]

I am informed that Hon. Kabogo is in the House. Therefore, we will proceed to take Question No.055 by the Senator for Turkana County, Sen. James Lomenen.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, welcome to the Senate. I believe that this is an environment that you are quite familiar with. Therefore, we hope to have a wonderful interaction with you.

Senator for Nairobi City, you are seeking some clarifications?

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was under the impression that we were also expecting the Cabinet Secretary for Education today. Maybe you can clarify what happened because communication from the secretariat had indicated as much and there were questions that were directed at the Cabinet Secretary.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Senator for Nairobi City, that is the problem of not attending your committee meetings. You are a member of SBC and this is a matter that was discussed at the SBC.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am not a Member of the SBC, please. I attend committee meetings. Do not soil my reputation. You know that I left the SBC after serving for two sessions.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Okay, if you left the SBC, then let me update you on what transpired.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Speaker, Sir, you have to withdraw that remark that I do not attend committee meetings.

(Laughter)

My reputation is on the line. If it was a slip of the tongue, just admit, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Senator for Nairobi City, do not go on overreact, please. I understand that you served in the SBC and it is only recently that you left that particular Committee. Therefore, you may not have the advantage of knowing what transpired yesterday at SBC.

Just to inform you that when SBC sat yesterday, it considered a letter that was written by the Cabinet Secretary for Education. It is true, what you have said, that the Cabinet Secretary for Education was expected to appear before the House this morning. However, in that particular letter, he indicated that he will be involved in the drama gala in Nakuru as the Cabinet Secretary for Education and, therefore, he will not be able to appear before the House.

You know, the drama festivals fall within the Ministry of Education and that is happening in Nakuru. As the Cabinet Secretary in charge of that docket, he is unable to be with us because he is the one who is midwifing and managing that particular event. Having deliberated the contents of the letter, the SBC found it fit to accept that reason as a valid reason, and that is why you do not see the Questions in today's Order Paper.

Senator for Nairobi City, I believe that is satisfactory. We acknowledge that you are no longer serving in the SBC. I want to state to the people of Nairobi and Kenya that you always attend your committee meetings. If that will help your politics, so be it.

Let us proceed.

Question No.055

ESTABLISHMENT OF NETWORK CONNECTIVITY IN
PARTS OF TURKANA COUNTY

Sen. Lomenen: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy the following Question-

(a) Could the Cabinet Secretary state the strategies in place for the establishment of network connectivity in Todonyang', Merikuka, Natete, Lopeimukat, Natiira and surrounding areas to facilitate real-time security response and support the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF), National Police Reservists (NPR) and local communities?

(b) Has the Ministry engaged with telecommunication providers such as Safaricom and Airtel to fast-track the deployment of communication masts and systems in these high-risk locations and if so, what are the timelines for completion?

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(c) What actions are being taken to ensure that security agencies, including KDF and NPR, have reliable and secure frequencies and communication channels to respond effectively to security threats in the region?

(d) What immediate interventions will the Ministry take to bridge the communication gap before the full deployment of network infrastructure?

I thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, you may proceed to respond.

The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Indeed, as you said, I am familiar with this area and I shall respond, with your permission.

Kindly allow me to mention that there is an annotated document, which was forwarded this morning. The only difference between the first answer and this one is where we have indicated the timelines. I asked my Ministry to put those things in perspective of time allocation.

With your permission, I may respond, Sir. The Ministry, through the Authority's interventions under the Universal Service Fund (USF), has successfully established a mobile cell tower in Todonyang', which is currently on air and providing mobile services to the surrounding community.

According to the Authority's coverage data, Natira Sub-Location enjoys over 80 per cent area coverage. To further address connectivity needs, the Authority will conduct Quality of Service Assessments (QoS), which will be done within June, 2025 in Merikuka, Natete, Lopeimukat and Natira. The outcomes of these assessments will inform structured engagements with mobile network operators aimed at enhancing service delivery in the identified areas.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, part (b) of the Question was on whether the Ministry engaged telecommunication providers such as Safaricom and Airtel to fast-track the deployment of communication masts and systems in these high-risk areas. In response; yes, indeed. In line with the regulatory mandate, the Authority requires licenced operators to extend services through universal service obligations embedded in their licensing conditions.

Additionally, the Authority has provided direct support through the Universal Service Fund (USF), facilitating the deployment of mobile network infrastructure in such areas notably under the cellular mobile USF project as follows-

Phase One extended mobile cellular services to 10 sub-locations, namely, Nakoret, Nakurio, Lokangai, Lokudule, Lopusiki, Naposomuru, Kapus, Naipa, Loikipetot, Arengan and Nadome, which is Silale.

Phase Two: Tondonyang is covered under Phase 11 that has extended cellular mobile services to 13 sub-locations namely, Loreng, Lortit, Puch, Nanam, Oropoi, Loremiet, Loitanit, Tondonyang, Kataboi, Lorengelup, Kayamanik, Loduat, Namorapuv and five sub-locations within this phase, namely; Kangitit, Ngilukia, Katilia, Loperot and Kalapata are still under the acquisition and are scheduled for implementation in the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Phase Three plans to cover 10 sub-locations, namely, Lobi, Lomiyan, Liwan, Kaitedet, Nadunga, Lokipoto, Loito, Mogila, Lotubai, Ekidor that are

still under site acquisition and are scheduled for implementation in the Financial Year 2026/2027.

Phase Four plans to cover 16 sub-locations namely; Lachor, Edome, Atala, Turkwel, Lochar, Ekeni, Katiko, Riakamor, Kokisele, Nachukwe, Lomekwe, Kitelomeit, Namor, Kirionok, Tarach, Kanaodong, Napiakar, Koyasaa and Kaichede. These ones are still under tendering and are scheduled for implementation in the Financial Year 2027/2028.

Part (c) of the Question was on the actions being to ensure that security agencies, including Kenya Defense Forces (KDF) and National Police Reservists (NPR) have reliable and secure frequencies and communications. In response to this, the Authority assigns dedicated and secure frequencies to security agencies upon formal request. These frequencies are allocated on an exclusive basis, thereby ensuring reliable, interference-free and secure communication channels for national security operations.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Part (d) of the Question was about the immediate interventions to bridge the communication gap before the full deployment of network infrastructure. In response, the Authority plans to undertake a field assessment within June, 2025 in the areas identified as established current communication gaps and requirements.

Based on this assessment, the Authority will engage with licenced operators to explore interim measures, including possible network optimisation and quality of service improvement initiatives to ensure short-term connectivity support as broader infrastructure deployment continues.

In conclusion, the Authority remains committed to supporting national security, public safety and digital inclusion through targeted regulatory interventions and strategic partnerships.

The measures highlighted above demonstrate the ongoing efforts by the Authority through the USF and collaboration with licenced operators to enhance network connectivity and ensure secure, reliable communications in high-risk and underserved areas such as Todonyang, Merikuka, Natete, Lopeimukat and Natiira.

Moving forward, the Authority welcomes continued engagement with the Ministry, the Senate and other stakeholders to address emerging challenges, accelerate infrastructure deployment and connectivity, ensuring that communication services are accessible and responsive to the needs of both citizens and the security agencies.

I submit, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Sen. Lomenen, you have a chance to ask two supplementary questions.

Sen. Lomenen: Mr. Speaker, Sir, after listening to the submission by the Cabinet Secretary, my supplementary question is: Could the Cabinet Secretary explain to this Senate why there has been a delay in establishing network in the border areas of Turkana County and even in the nation at large? For example, there is poor network in the border of Kibish and Ethiopia, Nadapal; the border between Southern Sudan and Kenya; Lokichogio, Lokirama and Urum, the border of Uganda and Kenya.

The delay in establishment of a network in those border areas has really made it cumbersome for security forces to act when a problem or incident occurs. It has become

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difficult for them to assist the citizens in that place. When will the Ministry establish a border network so as to assure the citizens that security services will be available any time?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, you may respond?

The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I appreciate the supplementary question. In response, the Ministry emphasises very much on connectivity of high-security areas and, indeed, the entire country. However, for areas where we do not have fibre optic, we work with satellite providers like Starlink and Air Traffic Control (ATC) Masts, so that we can use their facilities to give connectivity, especially on the mobile platform. You realise that we have a plan to run 100,000 kilometres of fibre optic. In those areas where there are security issues, we rely on our collaboration with the other providers like ATC, Safaricom and Starlink. Those that have capacity to do satellite provision of services.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I submit.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, just note down the questions, because I will allow about 10 Senators to ask questions. Thereafter, you will rise to respond to them at a go.

Proceed, Sen. Maanzo.

Sen. Maanzo: First, let me thank the Speaker for taking the Senate to Turkana, because this Question is very familiar. When we were there, many Committees visited the county.

I would like to welcome the Cabinet Secretary and ask him; now that security is very much connected to communication, and he is in charge of communication and to an extent development, what is he doing about that so that the potential of Turkana area of having big towns and big hotels can be realised?

Sen. Mungatana, MGH: Asante Bw. Spika. Waziri, pongezi kwa kupewa nafasi ya kuwa Waziri. Tunafurahia sana tukiona wale wenzetu tuliokuwa nao wakipewa hizi nafasi.

Swali ambalo ningependa kuuliza ni kwamba, tangu ulipo ingia kwa hiyo Wizara, umetoa mwelekeo wa namna ambavyo mtandao wa hizi simu za rununu na *telecommunication* zitafika katika Kenya nzima, haswa sehemu zetu za gatuzi ambazo ziko kando kando? Kwa mfano, katika sehemu yetu ya Tana River, utakuta kwamba simu za rununu zinafanya kazi katika miji mikubwa pekee yake. Ukiingia ndani, unapata shida ya mawasiliano.

Je, kuna mpangilio maalum katika Wizara ambapo pesa zimetengwa ya kusema kwamba mwaka huu, pesa fulani zitatumika katika *area* fulani huko Tana River, ili kuweka mtandao wa simu na mwaka ujao itakuwa gatuzi lingine? Kama huo mpango upo, tafadhali *table* huo mpango hapa ili tujue huo mpangilio na pesa ambazo Serikali imeweka kwa ajili yake. Tusiwe tu tunakuja hapa kuuliza maswali; tunafaa tuwe na mpangilio sawa sawa.

Asante, Bw. Spika.

Sen. Wambua: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As a journalist of long-standing in this country, I will try to be very clever because this is a very wide area. I will try to

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squeeze it into one question. If I fail, just pretend that it is one question, so that I can pass the message; it is an important one.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Just ask one question only.

Sen. Wambua: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Cabinet Secretary for ICT and Digital Economy is a Cabinet Secretary in the 21st Century Kenya, not some banana republic in the region or elsewhere. This is an era where everybody is talking about speeds of communication, not planning to establish networks. My concern, which is now my question is, at what point will we put to an end the planning phase and begin to deal with current issues of enhancing the speeds of our communications?

We cannot be talking about planning to roll out network connectivity in the 21st Century. Could the Cabinet Secretary table a comprehensive list of the regions in this country that are not even covered by 2G, the next time he appears in this House, so that we know where we are?

I thank you.

Sen. Kathuri: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The question raised by our colleague, the Senator for Turkana County is very important in this era. Just the other day, there were killings in Lokitaung area. One of the reasons maybe that happened is because of poor communication such that bandits came from Ethiopia and invaded a village that had no communication network. It is the responsibility of the Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy and the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) to ensure that our service providers have connected networks across the country. That is why we have this USF. When I was a Member in the National Assembly, as the Chairperson of the Special Funds Committee, I oversighted this Fund. What we established is that a lot of money is just lying idle in this Authority.

I remember at that time, the Head of State then, President Uhuru Kenyatta, once made a remark that the money should be given to the police because it was just lying idle. That was in 2020 or 2021.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there is no reason some areas have no communication network. There is an agreement between the service providers such as Safaricom, Airtel and the rest to do coverage within a specific time. The question raised by my friend, Sen. Lomenen, is important. There are many other pockets of areas, some high-potential areas, which are not remote rural areas - areas in Nairobi - which have no network connectivity. For example, there is no connectivity in my house in Meru, where I live. It is very shameful in this era that we have such pockets in this country without connectivity.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is this. What does the Universal Service Fund (USF) do and how is it distributed across the country? I know it is in billions. My friend Waziri Kabogo, your people should give you facts and figures because you joined the Ministry the other day. How do they distribute that money? Sometimes they do computer rooms for schools where they come from. They also go and do others where they are known.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like you to give a ruling that they should provide details. Where has that money been going for the past five years? We would like to know the counties and the specific areas of this country. Fortunately, I did not know about this Fund.

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The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Senator for Meru, you have asked your question.

Sen. Kathuri: I wanted it to sink to the management of the USF.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): The Cabinet Secretary has understood you. Just give an opportunity for him to respond.

Sen. Kathuri: Most obliged, Mr. Speaker, Sir. If I get another opportunity, I will hammer this issue because I know that Fund does not go to the right places, including Marsabit, since many areas have no connectivity. The USF is not being used prudently and it is in billions. Every time you make a call even for one minute, some money goes to the Fund. For any call that you make or receive, there are some cents that go to the Fund. Where does that money go to?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Thank you. Next is the Senator for Nairobi City.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are talking about far-flung areas and insecurity-prone, areas, but I can confirm that my mother-in-law does not have network at her home in Matungu. Sometimes it becomes embarrassing and very difficult for her to video call her eight-year old granddaughter. So, it is a nationwide problem.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, there is a time we were told that Telkom Kenya was going to be in charge of rolling out the national fiber optic network. Why are you relying on private entities like Safaricom and Airtel to roll out the national fiber optic network when you told us that Telkom Kenya had been charged with that and they have the capacity to roll out that infrastructure?

I thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Proceed, Sen. (Dr.) Boni.

Sen. (Dr.) Khalwale: Mr. Speaker, Sir, allow me to congratulate my brother, Cabinet Secretary Hon. William Kabogo, for coming back to public space. We have a long history together.

Cabinet Secretary, I want to further congratulate you for assuring us that you are doing everything possible to improve network connectivity. Cabinet Secretary, given that after connection, the services come at a fee to the consumers, what are you doing in view of the obscene profits declared by Safaricom and Airtel? What are you doing to cut the cost of *mwananchi* using those services?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Sen. Dullo, you may proceed.

Sen. Dullo: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also wish to take this opportunity to congratulate the Cabinet Secretary. Cabinet Secretary, my question is more specifically on Northern Kenya where there is insecurity. The Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) has done some good job especially in my county after pushing them for the past 13 years. They have put up several boosters in certain areas. There are many areas in Northern Kenya where people are still climbing trees to communicate. An attack can happen, but people are unable to reach for any assistance. Do you have any plans to make sure that those areas have connectivity?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Proceed, Sen. Wafula.

Sen. Wafula: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask our good Cabinet Secretary this question. The far-flung zones of the great County of Bungoma similarly enjoy networks from the neighbourhood. What are you doing to ensure that Bungoma, Mt.

Elgon, Sirisia and parts of Bumula that border my friend Sifuna's in-laws, enjoy coverage like other Kenyans?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Sen. Omtatah, proceed.

Sen. Okiya Omtatah: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question to the Cabinet Secretary is with regards to connectivity. What attempts are there to use satellite technology instead of relying on terrestrial technologies to ensure universal connectivity for Kenyans irrespective of where they are?

We have seen this sometimes and it is very heavy. During elections, sometimes we are told that some areas are not covered by network. What efforts is the Government of Kenya doing to engage in satellite technologies that can enable us to have universal coverage?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Next is Sen. Wamatinga.

Sen. Wamatinga: Thank you so much, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to ask a question to my friend Cabinet Secretary, Hon. William Kabogo.

Noting that the Government has committed to provide Jitume Hubs across the country, Tetu Sub-County in Nyeri received the 51st one that was launched sometimes back. The young people working or living around that area are using it. However, due to lack of fiber optic connectivity, the speed is very low. What plans does the Cabinet Secretary have to ensure that all Jitume Hubs enjoy high speed, so that the young people do not spend a lot of money on slow speeds to upload their work?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Proceed, Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe.

Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe Ltumbesi: Mr. Speaker, Sir, my question is related to what Sen. Dullo asked. Specifically, could the Cabinet Secretary clearly clarify the Government policy and any specific plans regarding expansion and strengthening of mobile network coverage in areas affected by insecurity, particularly Northern Kenya and Kerio Valley counties, where cattle rustling and related insecurity threats remain prevalent?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Sen. Abass, you may proceed.

Sen. Abass: Mr. Speaker, Sir, network coverage is an important thing. Today, every payment for Government services goes to e-Citizen. Most Kenyans especially in areas like Turkana, which is one of the largest counties, do not have network. Now we are being told to pay school fees through e-Citizen. What are the plans by the Ministry to improve the connectivity, so that people from Northern Kenya can also enjoys services through e-Citizen?

Every year, Safaricom makes huge profits. Like it has been said, the CAK receives a lot of money, which is just idle. The Government is also getting money from taxes. However, there is no network in half of this country, which includes counties such as Wajir, Mandera and Turkana. There is a lot of insecurity and people are being killed every day. Chiefs are being kidnapped and police officers are being killed, just because they cannot be rescued due to lack of network. What is the Ministry doing to improve the network coverage and why is it that Safaricom has a monopoly in providing network coverage in this country?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Next is Sen. Murgor.

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Sen. Murgor: Thank you for giving me this opportunity to ask my question. Congratulations Cabinet Secretary, for being appointed to this position. My question concerns the coverage along West Pokot and the border between West Pokot and Uganda. Ugandan coverage is so powerful that it covers about 10 kilometers into Kenya. So, it begins to 'chew' your money immediately you make a call. By the end of the call, you run out. Why is it that the Kenyan side is weak and Ugandan side is powerful?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, you may now proceed to respond to those questions.

The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo): Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As I attempt to answer clearly and give details, I also want to undertake that we shall supply comprehensive answers to these questions within the next three days, so that every Member's question is properly answered. However, I shall attempt to answer.

On the first question, why the delay in establishing networks in borders of Ethiopia, South Sudan, Uganda, hinder security forces? When do we intend to establish networks? We are not planning, we are actually laying fibre. As I said earlier, we target to do 100,000 kilometres of fibre. This is happening between Information Communications Technology Authority (ICTA), and Kenya Power. Why Kenya Power? It is because as I came in, I found that it was established, that doing it through Kenya Power over the last mile would be easier and faster.

We are actually on top of it. On the issue of those areas that have digital divide, which have no coverage, we are working with satellite providers, like we just licenced Starlink, which is widely used even in urban areas. We hope to continue to collaborate with them for places where we have not been able to reach our fibre optic.

Mr. Speaker, on the question from Hon. Maanzo, security is connected to communications. What I am doing to support development of these towns, especially in Turkana, it is through this fibre optic that we would want to connect the entire republic with high-speed and reasonably-priced internet. We shall give a detailed action that is going on to connect the republic.

To my friend, the Sen. Mungatana, how telecommunications will reach areas like Tana River, we are already laying cables to those areas. We shall give the hon. Member details of where we will have reached by the end of this month and what we plan to do in the next three months.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the activity is very well funded by several projects and donor partners like the World Bank and others. There is also use of the Universal Service Fund (USF) for purposes that it was set to be used. A few Members have said that a lot of money lies idle. We should be able to give the same details of what has been spent in the last five years and what is happening now with the USF.

It is my commitment that money shall be used in accordance with the law, but also to make sure that Kenya is completely connected. I think it was Hon. Wambua who raised the issue of space of communication, at what point will be end of planning stage and enhance action. As I said, it is now that we are connecting. We are not planning. We are connecting Kenya now. We have very little funding from GoK, but as I said earlier,

we have development partners who have interest in seeing that we stay on top of this business.

As you know, Kenya is probably the most advanced country in terms of connectivity in Africa. We do not want to be the first ones in Africa or number one in Africa, but play at the global space. We are doing it in phases. State to stage, which is yearly, what we have done every year. We have already done three phases and we shall provide the details.

Hon. Kathuri, it is a responsibility of the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) to ensure connectivity in the whole country. Money is lying idle with the Authority. We should provide how money has been spent. I have given that commitment, that we shall give the entire details. That is why we are deploying fibre and last mile connectivity project. A commitment of Kshs10 billion has been put to ICTA and Kenya Power, the details of which we shall provide. The breakdown for the last five years, as per the request, will be given to Parliament in the next three days. The money cannot be misused. It is guarded by the licensee who are the responsible agency. That is a commitment given to me by the Director General, who is part of the support team I have here. I shall take him to task to be able to give that information to the House.

From Senator of Nairobi City, Hon. Sifuna, it is ICTA which is doing it, not Telkom. I know there was a last connectivity to hubs and Government institutions, especially the centres of excellence in constituencies, but Telkom itself has got huge problems where they may not be able to do that last mile. We are now doing it with other providers and the Government is committed to making sure that all 53,000 connections to Government are done probably before the end of next year through fibre.

It is also necessary to state that we are working with most companies like the American Towers, to be able to provide part of the 25,000 public Wi-Fi. The most important thing to note is that when I came in, most of the public Wi-Fi, were not working. The reason for this is that the part of sustainability was not considered during inception, but we are now trying to release these public Wi-Fis to young men and women who will man them and probably have a small fee of five shillings or thereabouts, so that they can keep them lit because internet is available. It is just a matter of making sure that they are working.

The question on what are we doing in the view of obscene profits and the need to cut costs of connectivity, we have undertaken to lower calling rates and data packages. That negotiation is happening between CAK and the providers, but as I said earlier, we prefer to connect fibre optic, which is Government internet to most of these places, so that it is reasonably priced or almost free for the public to use high speed internet. This, they say, is currently ongoing and in phase four.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in many places in northern Kenya, people climb trees to access communication signals according to Sen. Dullo. We are currently, again, not planning, but laying cables. Where we cannot do because of certain reasons such as security is where we intend to use masts that are already there and use satellite internet provision through Starlink and those that have recently been licensed by the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK).

Mr. Speaker, Sir, there was a question on Bungoma, on what we are doing to ensure there is connectivity. The plan for the rest of Kenya is to lay fibre. We have issues on efficiency of the Information, Communication and Technology Authority of Kenya (ICTA) and Kenya Power. I have them in my office almost every other week trying to push on this issue of Last Mile Connectivity. We hope that we should be able to pull up our socks to deliver on this very noble and important mandate.

Sen. Wamatinga asked about connecting Jitume Hubs. Yes, we are on top of it. We are connecting all Jitume Hubs and one in every constituency. More so, those are centers of excellence. We also plan to do 1,450 digital hubs, one in every Ward. That is happening in collaboration also with Members of Parliament, who amended the law to allow them to use the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) to construct and for us to provide the link. This will be done with Government Wi-Fi, which will not be paid for by the Jitume Hubs. We are on top of it.

Regarding Government policy on expanding mobile connectivity in northern Kenya, we are working with security agencies and mobile network operators to deploy. Our plan to improve connectivity in Wajir and Mandera is that we have concentrated in this region and such areas. As I said earlier, we shall provide details of what has been done so far and what we intend to do before the end of this financial year.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think it was the last question on network coverage in West Pokot and Uganda, and why Uganda seems to be stronger. It may happen that Uganda may be stronger, but we have places where you pick either Kenyan or Uganda signal. We plan to make sure we have good connectivity in the entire republic, and not limited only to border towns.

As I have said, some of the supplementary questions may not have been properly addressed. We shall seek your indulgence to get us a copy of the HANSARD through the Clerk, so that we answer these questions substantively to the satisfaction of the House.

I submit.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Proceed, Sen. Thang'wa.

Sen. Thang'wa: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to ask my question. I am happy to see the Cabinet secretary, Hon. Kabogo, who hails from my county, Kiambu. It is good to tell the House that we used to work together between 2013 and 2017 when he was my Governor, and at that time, I was a Member of the County Assembly (MCA). So, congratulations once again, CS Kabogo.

From everyone who is asking, we can tell that the whole country is suffering when it comes to network coverage. Allow me, as a member of the Senate Caucus on Futures, that is foresight, to ask, after we get the whole network, then what next? Is the Ministry of ICT and Digital Economy working with the Ministry of Education and the Kenya Institute of Curriculum Development (KICD) to integrate Artificial Intelligence (AI) and emerging technologies into the curriculum of basic and tertiary education? This is because we are in the times of AI and very soon we are going to lose jobs. They say, as per the national AI strategy that the Cabinet Secretary launched a few weeks ago, we are going to lose 40 per cent of our jobs. So that we protect and enjoy the opportunities that will come with AI, is the Ministry for ICT and Digital Economy working with the Ministry of Education?

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Sen. Onyonka: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also would like to be in that category of Hon. Kabogo's friends who wish to say congratulations. Indeed, the way you are speaking encourages me because it sounds as if you have got the bits and pieces.

We have a new and latest development called ChatGPT, which is a new technology that is being introduced. Is your Ministry or the Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) in the process of creating platforms where young men, women, and even our colleges and universities, can be introduced to this new technology, so that we can catch up with our tomorrow?

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, you may now proceed to respond.

The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank Members for congratulating me. Indeed, Hon. Karungo Thang'wa was with me when I was governor in that county.

The question of the whole country suffering on the network coverage is true, although we pride in having 121 per cent mobile coverage in the country and approximately 62 per cent of coverage on fiber, which we would want to take to 90 per cent in the coming financial year.

On the issue of AI, you realize we launched our AI strategy, which was between our Ministry in collaboration with the European Union (EU). We are now working on a policy, which we hope to have in place before the end of this financial year. We are now integrating AI into the curriculum and working closely with the Ministry of Education to be able to bring AI into this space of ICT. As you know, this is a field that is really changing.

To join that with the question from Sen. Onyonka, ChatGPT is in very wide use right now in the world, and Kenya has not been left behind. We urge Kenyans to be able to participate in this space. The question was whether we are going to encourage Kenyans to come up with a way of making AI learning possible in the country. That is what we are doing. We also intend to bring into law on good use of this space because it can be used for good and bad. That is work in progress.

The Communications Authority of Kenya (CAK) is working on the areas that Sen. Onyonka has asked. We will give a comprehensive reply to most of the questions asked by Members.

I submit.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Senators, that brings to the end our interaction session with the Hon. Cabinet Secretary. Hon. Cabinet Secretary, you are released, and you may leave at your own pleasure.

[The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communication and the Digital Economy (Hon. William Kabogo) was ushered out of the Chamber]

Hon. Senators, Now, it is now 10.41 a.m. We will proceed without the other limb of this morning's Order Paper.

Clerk, you may proceed to call the next Order.

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MOTION**NOTING OF REPORT OF THE 14TH ASSEMBLY
OF FP-IGGLR HELD IN ZAMBIA**

Sen. Wamatinga: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I would like to give a notice of a Motion on the 14th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly of Related Meetings to the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference of the Great Lakes region held in---

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Sen. Wamatinga, you are not giving notice. You are supposed to move that Motion.

Sen. Wamatinga: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I am well guided.

I rise to move the following Motion-

THAT, the Senate notes the Report of the 14th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly and Related Meetings of the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference of the Great Lakes region, held in Livingstone, Zambia from 15th to 19th April, 2024 laid on the table of the Senate on Thursday, 30th May, 2024.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Kenya and indeed the Senate has been in the forefront in the meetings that have been held in various countries, this being one of them. The Great Lakes region comprises of several members who have come together to deliberate on matters affecting their integrity, peace, and co-existence of member countries.

Kenya being one of them, the Senate has played a vital role in ensuring that these meetings continue to engage the member country, so that they address issues of conflict resolution, the co-existence of the member states, but most importantly, to ensure that we deliberate on the way forward for the 13 member states.

These meetings provide an opportunity for the member states to exchange ideas. It is important to note that there have been conflicts in DRC Congo, South Sudan and other regions. Therefore, these meetings have become a good platform for the members to engage on the way forward. Most importantly, they seek solutions for the challenges that affect the African region, and more specifically, the Great Lakes region.

Co-existence and peace in the countries is paramount not only for the member states, but it is important to note that we do a lot of trade amongst ourselves. Therefore, good partnerships and relationships between the member states is good for us. However, it has been noted with a lot of concern that there are challenges facing some of the younger democracies and nations.

This organization or platform is basically financed by member states' contribution based on the country's GDP. In the last couple of years, some member states have continued to accrue on non-contribution because of their internal affairs. It is important that we keep on engaging members, so that the FP-IGGLR becomes an organization that is self-driven. We must also ensure that the organisation is well sustained. We have a big population in this region hence this organisation should be beneficial to the region.

We know that the conflict in the western part of the DRC Congo, the conflict between the Rwandese M23 and some other conflict group has also raised important issues that need to be resolved. A few weeks ago, a meeting was called by the President

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of the Republic of Kenya for the member states to try and address some of these issues. The solutions to African conflicts lies in our hands. This can only be achieved by us deliberating on issues that affect the member states.

It is important to note that over-reliance on the donor countries has been dwindling over time. The geopolitics of the world is changing, thus most regions are looking into their internal affairs. Therefore, it is important that FP-IGGLR becomes self-financing. This can only happen if we are able to persuade the member states to make their contribution.

Kenya is one of the largest contributors to this organization hence we need to be up to date with our own contribution. With our own commitment, we will ensure that the younger democracies like South Sudan, which do not have the physical space to make their contribution, come and work with us. We need all the 13 members for us to strengthen the organization and achieve the goals of this organization.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have been engaging on a number of things. One of them is gender parity. We have also been working on peaceful coexistence. We also want to move towards a streamlined transaction by ensuring that the tariffs and mobility of the people and labour is not limited to some countries.

I have participated in a number of these meetings. I can confidently say that this organisation has potential, thus we should all ensure that it succeeds. This is a homegrown solution and approach that seeks to solve problems within our region by ensuring that we become the major contributors.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I note the importance of parliamentary diplomacy, and there have been regular meetings between the member states. We have had discussions in many plenary meetings that have been taking place. However, we have had major challenges because some of the members are not able to attend or send delegations to the meetings because of a shortage of resources. This is something that we need to address. This can only be done if we are deliberate in looking for partners beyond our region and boundaries. This will ensure that we mitigate the shortcomings from some members, especially in their budgetary allocation. Therefore, as we look forward to the next event in the coming days, this issue requires attention.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we also beseech you, in your position of influence, to consider engaging with those responsible for budgetary allocations. This would help ensure that Kenya is up to date with her contributions to this organisation. Being the bigger sister in this matter is quite important.

It is worth noting that this is one of the initiatives capable of delivering significant success to the African region and nations. Most importantly, we are addressing issues such as conflict resolution, child labour, gender parity and the empowerment of our citizens. Additionally, we are promoting labour mobility, enabling us to reap the benefits of a larger economy and economies of scale, owing to the big population across the member countries.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Who is your seconder?

Sen. Wamatinga: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I ask Sen. Cherarkey to second.

Sen. Cherarkey: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I would like to comment as I was in the Lounge when the Mover of the Motion, Commissioner Wahome Wamatinga, was moving the Motion.

As I rise to second the Motion on the Forum of Parliaments of the International Conference of the Great Lakes region that took place last year - 15th to 19th April, 2024 - I agree that he has highlighted several challenges that we face as a region. As someone once said, African problems require African solutions. In this Great Lakes region, he has brought attention to various challenges, including the situation in DRC Congo involving the M23 and the reaction from Rwanda. Furthermore, we are addressing the crisis in South Sudan. His Excellency President William Ruto appointed the former Prime Minister to mediate between Salva Kiir Mayardit and the First Vice-President, Riek Machar.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, South Sudan is an interesting country with a unique arrangement, featuring almost six or perhaps five, vice-presidents. I hope that Kenya can, in the future, adopt a similar system where regions are represented by vice-presidents. This arrangement is driven by South Sudan's power-sharing and peace agreements.

The killing of a general has triggered a crisis in South Sudan. Kenya suffers collateral damage due to instability in the region. Kenya hosts one of the largest refugee camps, Kakuma, in this area. Therefore, when instability arises in South Sudan, it directly impacts Kenya with an influx of refugees. Not only South Sudan, but nowadays we also see fighting in the main Sudan between the Rapid Support Forces (RSF) and Sudan Armed Forces (SAF). We continue to face significant challenges in that region. Therefore, peace and security in the Great Lakes region remain essential for development and investment.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we must reevaluate this region. For example, in DRC Congo, there is ongoing fighting between rebel forces and the government. We witnessed the meeting that took place in Qatar between President Tshisekedi and President Kagame. However, it appears that the process is progressing rather slowly. Stability in this region, particularly in the Great Lakes region, is crucial because it is unique. We have a truly unique climate in the Great Lakes region. The rainforest stretches from the Central African Republic all the way to DRC Congo, showcasing the region's ecological richness.

Additionally, we need to reconsider the issue of minerals in this region. There have been allegations that the fighting in Sudan is linked to unsubstantiated claims about minerals. There is also the issue of oil. This Great Lakes region possesses unique characteristics that need to be redefined.

As noted in the recommendations of this report, we need to take part in appropriating the necessary resources. As a Parliament, we are involved in many of these organizations, including the secretariat of the Great Lakes region. Additionally, we are members of the African Union (AU) and the East African Community (EAC) that includes countries like DRC, Rwanda, Burundi, Kenya, Tanzania and others are part of this ongoing conversation.

Earlier this year, we visited the East African Secretariat in Arusha. They are doing a commendable job. You must also take into account the transport network. Countries like Rwanda, Burundi and others rely heavily on this network, particularly the Northern

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Corridor, which facilitates the supply of goods and services across the region. However, the secretariat lacks sufficient resources to effectively drive its initiatives. As a Parliament, we have a unique role to play in supporting this effort.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when issues of insecurity and instability arise in this region, the voice of the Parliament is rarely heard. I fully agree with the recommendation that Parliament has a role in appropriating the necessary resources to support the work of the secretariat. Additionally, Parliament must reevaluate its approach to addressing emerging issues like climate change. Apart from the traditional issues of peace and security, we must also remain alert to the changes taking place in this region.

I believe that in the last session, before the African Climate Summit took place here at the Kenya International Convention Centre (KICC), this House passed several regulations aimed at implementing climate intervention mechanisms. I hope that our friends from the Great Lakes region, the majority of whom come from the East Africa region, will reconsider these aspects, so that we can actively engage.

Looking at the conversation we are having regarding inter-parliamentary challenges, I am uncertain about the role and place of parliament from the Great Lakes region when it comes to addressing issues of peace and security. For example, during negotiations between Rwanda and the DRC, between the DRC and M23 rebel group, during the conflicts involving the RSF in Sudan, as well as between Salva Kiir and Riek Machar, the First Vice President of South Sudan, where is the role of parliament in these processes?

Furthermore, what is the role of the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) in addressing these issues? Kenya is hosting one of the largest refugee populations in the region. Therefore, it is important to have this conversation. This will allow us to examine the role of the United Nations (UN) in human rights and its efforts to address refugee-related issues.

Mr. Speaker, I recall a question raised when the Cabinet Secretary for Interior and National Administration addressed the issue of reintegration of refugees from Kakuma. The local communities have expressed discomfort with the reintegration process. This issue arises against a backdrop where individuals are being deported from a country like the United States of America (USA) often due to a lack of citizenship status. This situation is likely to lead to future crises. Therefore, we need to reevaluate the aspect and role of refugees in relation to peace and security as highlighted by this committee.

As we know, this commitment sometimes faces challenges when it comes to African initiatives aimed at solving security issues in the Great Lakes region. It is also supporting efforts to promote peace and stability in member states experiencing conflict and instability. The source of insecurity and instability in the Great Lakes region often lies within the governments themselves. At times, leadership becomes a source of insecurity in the very regions we are discussing. Therefore, the question is: How do we promote peace and stability in this region? We must agree that the only way this region can become stable is through adherence to constitutional principles of the rule of law and democracy.

The reason we experience fighting in many parts of the Great Lakes region is because of access to power and resources. The Senate of the Republic of Kenya should

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call upon colleagues in the Great Lakes region parliaments to ensure that appropriation of resources in the region follows the principles of equality, equity, the rule of law, democracy and respect to constitutionalism, so that we promote peace and security.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when you go to Sudan, South Sudan, Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) among other countries that are facing instability, the reason they are fighting is because of power, resources and negative ethnicity that we are discussing about.

Under Article 96 of the Constitution, the Senate has the responsibility to protect the interests of the counties. Negative ethnicity is engrained in our counties. That is what happens in other countries that we hear about. If we want to promote peace and stability, Parliament should stand with the people to push for the rule of law, democracy, and equity and equality in terms of sharing resources across the Great Lakes region.

Thirdly, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I hope peace and security can be achieved. We need to enact legislation to impact on climate change. This is a good recommendation which I support. If I am not wrong, Kenya should be one of the countries that are pushing for climate change laws.

Kenya is a leader in the Great Lakes region because we hosted the Africa Climate Summit which has never been hosted in this region. We have enacted laws related with climate challenges and issues that we face as a country. The East African Community (EAC), which is part of the Great Lakes region, should integrate climate laws that we passed as the Parliament of the Republic of Kenya.

I am not sure, but I think there is a national park between Tanzania and Zambia. I am told that during Mwalimu Julius Kambarage Nyerere regime, he set aside that park. There was a decree by him. I cannot remember the name, but no one has stepped there to exploit minerals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I do not know whether in future we will get such presidents where people will be called upon to protect national resources.

(Sen. Olekina spoke off record)

I am winding up; I do not know where the Senator for Narok wants to go. Our business here is to legislate and represent our people.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, natural resources are very important. Therefore, we must relook at that issue. I am making a pregnant point. I remember during the previous session, we never had peace in this House because Sen. Olekina used to complain about Mau Forest. I am making an important point on protecting natural resources.

I remember he even took Jeff Koinange of *Citizen Television* there to plant trees. Perhaps he should brief the House about the progress of those trees in Mau Forest. We need to protect natural resources in the region, including Maasai Mara. I am told it will be transferred to Narok County. I do not know whether Kajiado County will also benefit. The resources and the wildlife must be protected for future. We should also protect corridors of wild animal movements across the region.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, so that I allow my colleagues to also contribute, I commend the Mover of the Motion, Sen. Wahome Wamatinga, a Commissioner of the PSC. This

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Motion is important. As a Parliament, we must provide direction in terms of legislation and ensure adherence to the rule of law, democracy, political stability, peace and security. There can never be development without peace. We need to have peace and security, especially in this region.

I usually see opponents of the Government pushing for narratives that undermine peace and stability of this nation. Some of them even use our children to advance their own political selfish agenda.

Article 53 of the Constitution is very clear. You should not exploit our children to push for your own narrative. Even if you want to oppose the Government, you should call for political rallies where adults attend and state your position. Do not use our children.

We saw the story of Butere Girls' High Schools drama titled *Echoes of War*. People were perpetuating instability by trying to use our children to disrespect the leadership, the Government and parents. People are using children who will not only disrespect the Government, the President or leaders. They will go ahead and start disrespecting their parents at home and that will become a problem.

It is unfortunate that some of these leaders have been in elective positions. They are using children to their disadvantage. I wish many people listened to the speech by a youth leader who the other day spoke with wisdom in Siaya during the burial of George Oduor, the aide to his brother. I know he did a good job. If you get such an aide, you can imagine how far you can go.

The champions of instability are also chief tribal mobilisers. They use their communities to mobilise. Negative ethnicity and tribal animosity is what is generating all this. I urge leaders who want power in this country to give us alternative plans as the people in the Government, instead of sideshows and creating tribal animosity like the Governor of Trans Nzoia. We should stop doing that and ensure that we preach peace.

I urge the Ministry of Education to call out teachers who use our children to advance selfish political agendas. We cannot allow this country to be run down by such individuals.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, courtesy of your office, all *Wazees* in the country have received Kshs2,000 even before salaries of public servants are sent. Which Government has ever done that? As I speak, the Affordable Housing Programme is on course. The Cabinet Secretary for Information, Communications and Digital Economy was here. We need to connect the Great Lakes region. We are on the right trajectory of development. They say that if a lizard wants to wear a trouser, it should decide which side of the tail it should go.

With those many remarks, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to second this Motion.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Hon. Senators, I will proceed to propose the question.

(Question proposed)

The Floor is open for debate. Proceed, Sen. Mungatana.

Sen. Mungatana, MGH: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to also air my views on this meeting that took place in Livingstone, Zambia. The theme of the meeting of Members of Parliament (MPs) from the 12 countries of the Great Lakes region was about climate change and climate adaptation.

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When some people hear the names of the 12 countries, they wonder how we are related to countries like Zambia. If you look at the list of member states, we have Angola, Burundi, the DRC, Zambia, Uganda and so on and so forth.

I had the fortune of serving as Commissioner in the Common Markets for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA) Competition Commission for six years. I know when I go to Zambia, I feel so comfortable because they speak like us, their English intonation is like ours, they dress like us and I even found Pokomo names there. If you go down to Malawi, you will find a place called Salima and it is a city equivalent of Kenya's Malindi. You find very good English and Swahili speakers there and you feel totally at home.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, all of us from the Great Lakes region are all the same. I am very happy that Kenya was able to take a lead role in the discussions on climate change. Today if there is excess rain up here, outside our borders, the effects will come plummeting all the way to Kenya. They will go all the way down to the Great Lakes region, all the way down to Zambia and Mozambique, because the climate that we are dealing with here in Africa and in the world does not know boundaries.

The physical boundaries that we have created are not boundaries for the climate change. It is real that temperatures have been rising, rainfall patterns have changed and the amount of precipitation being received has continued to rise within the Great Lakes region. It is good that Members of parliaments from this region met in Livingstone, Zambia, and discussed what we as nation or team could do about climate change.

I know many times when the Great Lakes region converges, people tend to discuss peace and security, but the problems our people are facing because of climate change are real. In fact, it is a very good idea that we who are in positions of authority to represent our people continue to meet within the Great Lakes region to ask ourselves what we will be doing with these rising temperatures, changing rainfall patterns, rise in precipitation and the increase in the waters within the Great Lakes region. What are we going to do? What common joint strategies can we adopt so that our people are protected within these regions?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am very happy because I have read this report. One of the fundamental resolutions that was made in this meeting is that the parliaments of the Great Lakes region must come up with legislation that will help with climate change adaptation. This legislation ought to be uniform in the region. Why I say this? This is because you will find, for example, Kenya has passed various legislation in the area of climate change, adaptation and mitigation measures. However, some of our member states have not legislated on climate change.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it was my hope and I will still keep recommending this, that a model law be enacted for purposes of legislating on climate change and adaptation within the Great Lakes region. Our various parliaments, when we go back home, will have adapted a model law that can be brought and adapted into the Kenyan, Sudan and Tanzanian circumstances. We must have a law within this Great Lakes region, so that we are able to say this is what we planned to do as your leaders and your representatives in the House.

The other thing that this conference resolved was that parliaments must play their role of oversight in the region. When disaster comes, a lot of materials and relief is

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sourced and brought around, so that we can help our people. However, most of the times our parliaments, including the Kenyan parliament, are left out of the process of procurement. We are left out. In fact, we do not play part in any process. We do not do this at the risk of a lot of our resources being wasted. It is not just in Kenya, but in the entire Great Lakes region.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am glad those who attended, picked up this issue. The issue of oversight on resources is critical. This is because when we pass the budgets in our various parliaments, especially the equitable share here in the Senate, it is given to governors. We do not have an opportunity to oversight these funds that we put for emergency.

We are just told 1,000 bags of maize or 20,000 cooking oil jars were bought and stuff like that was done. The emergency procurement laws were not put in place because it was an emergency. When they do emergency procurement, this is where people have been creating climate change millionaires. These people tend to pick certain preferred individuals. Procurement is done in such a way that the role of parliament is reduced. The role of county assembly is reduced. The executive then gets a free hand. They say, people are dying. So, we need emergency procurement.

That is where you will hear that a bag of maize is costing five times the normal cost. So, this resolution that we must find a way to oversight within the Great Lakes region and within Kenya is a critical thing. We must find a way to oversight the resources that are allocated for climate change mitigation and adaptation.

I wished that the conference would have gone as far as setting up a committee to look at potential model laws that we could develop within the Great Lakes region. I say so because you will find the oversight laws in Tanzania and South Sudan are different from the oversight of Angola or Zambia. All these members have the same intention, but do not have a uniformed approach towards oversight of resources that are being placed at the disposal of our various executives to deal with climate mitigation measures. This needs to be done like yesterday.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, moving to peace and security of this region, all the time we sit as conference of parliaments within this Great Lakes region, we cannot avoid discussions on those issues. The best we can do is to practice what we call parliamentary diplomacy. My prayer is that the Great Lakes region Members of Parliament will promote more interaction and understanding within this region. Some of the members of the executive who are holding positions of power can realise that actually in Kenya you can be a president today after your two terms, you are out and about and nobody disturbs you and you will not be harmed by anyone. So, if Members of Parliament, members of the Executive can increase visitations and normalize these political things, then a lot of the worries and instabilities that are being caused may come to an end.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity as we debate this Report on the Great Lakes region to appeal from this House of the Senate that it is our wish to see that the South Sudan political crisis right now is resolved in an amicable way. As the Senate of Kenya, it is very uncomfortable when we hear our Vice-President has been held under restriction. It is our prayer that the political processes within not only the East African Region, but even of the Great Lakes region, can participate in bringing out stability in the region. I would say the same for the DRC.

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Mr. Speaker, Sir, I watched a very sad prayer session on video of children from the DRC. Young children were speaking that Bakongo Swahili *bana ba kongo* and their kind of Swahili. Kenyans like to find a lot of jokes in it because of the kind of intonations. This one was a very sad one because the young people were calling upon God and the Holy Spirit to intervene in the hearts of these leaders that they may not die. I was really moved.

I thought sometimes people involved directly in the conflict; soldiers, political players and those who support these people forget that there are other victims to these conflicts, including the children. That was an extremely apt presentation of what children go through.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also want to use the floor of this Senate to appeal to all the players in this DRC conflict to find a way to see it through the eyes of those children that they need peace like yesterday. It will be a very sad occasion if the Great Lakes region, particularly the East African community, fail to find an amicable solution to the problems that are affecting the DRC.

Finally, as I sit down, we must continue to make all efforts to assist climate resilience plans to support what is being done in terms of climate mitigation because these things are real. I was looking at the news that were running the other day and we saw that Kirinyaga County sinking with a lot of flooding because there has been high precipitation in that area.

Our people down the Tana River are very worried right now that if the areas of the mountains have too much rain, they start packing their things to move from the lower grounds. Nobody compensates them or plans for our populations on how they will move and where they will eat. As we are talking now, the river is flooding. The national and county governments do not seem to have answers for our people.

When we talk about even planning for climate mitigation, where are the national and county governments? We can now see that Kirinyaga County was flooding because of the rainfall. This water is all coming down all the way to the Tana River County. What are the plans? You do not see the Governor or the Minister in charge of agriculture in our county speaking about this. We do not see any plans; we are just there waiting. As it always happens, we are sleeping in the night, but then all of a sudden, we start seeing things floating within our rooms and then we realize the river has broken its banks.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I pray that even our local administration will do what has been agreed in this international forum. This international forum has said we must always prepare adequately because of climate change. I pray that our local administration, our county government, will wake up to its responsibilities. Let us not wait for the river to destroy lives and property for you to move them out. Let us start dealing with the problems early enough. This is part of what the Senate was learning during this trip that was led to Zambia at the international forum of the Great Lakes region by our team that went there.

With those many remarks, I thank you and support this Report.

The Speaker (Hon. Kingi): Proceed, Sen. Olekina.

[The Speaker (Hon. Kingi) left the Chair]

[The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji) in the Chair]

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Allow me to make some brief comments and support this Report. I support it because I understand the importance of the Great Lakes region in Africa and the fresh lakes which exist in these region, which help boost our biodiversity. All my colleagues who have spoken on this issue have emphasized on the need for us to take seriously matters on climate change, particularly climate change adaptation.

It is imperative - and I am very happy - that one of the recommendations made by this Report is to be able to legislate for the future. We just came back from the Maasai Mara game Reserve where we had hosted a caucus on future generations. It is imperative that all of us remember that we own nothing in this world. The Senate Majority Leader does not own the beautiful Lamborghini that he drives. He only uses it on this world when he is moving from one place to another.

The one million Dollar house that Sen. More Fire owns, he does not own. He is really just a tenant. He will leave it on this earth for the next generation to be able to occupy it. This is very common in America where I lived, where banks are the ones that own properties. You might think you own your home. Before you realize that you are dead, someone else has taken it. This is something that I think should go to the core of this nation. That we own nothing. I do not even own the suit I am wearing. It is just something to cover me as I move from one place to another. We own nothing.

All these parliamentarians are coming together to discuss the importance of preserving the environment in this Great Lake Region and the economy. The importance of ensuring that we have a stable society and all these problems that we have had.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the genocide in Rwanda where over 800,000 people died and then all the instability that ensued in the Congo region, affects these Great Lakes region. It is about time that we discussed issues we follow through.

I am one of the biggest critics of seminars because they normally end up being just talk shops. People talk about what they will do. However, issues that affect future generations are something that I give my utmost attention. It is imperative that these recommendations that this Report has been able to come up with are followed to the letter.

Look at the one that I just talked about: enact legislation that will introduce measures to safeguard natural resources for future generations and create a more sustainable and resilient future for all. That in itself requires us to carry both pre and post scrutiny of all of our legislations for us to see if we legislating for now to ensure that future generations are protected.

One of the legislation that I hope we can relook at is the legislation that deals with the environment. A long time ago, Nairobi was known as the green city. However, it is now the concrete jungle because we are building and do not really care about the environment. It is about time that we start fixing the environment in the urban centres in all our 47 counties. We should plant trees.

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When I was growing up in Narok, we had a forest in Narok Town called Olekonyo Forest. Today, it is literally a piece of land which is eroded. Narok County has to do reforestation in that area for us to have a cleaner environment. We talk about planting trees, but do we plant trees to adapt to climate change or do we plant trees for people to start knocking doors and saying that they want carbon credit on them.

Today, one of the very sexy and interesting businesses has to do with carbon credit. When you go to places in rural areas, you will find people talking about carbon credit, yet they do not even know what carbon credit is. Carbon credit is a measure that is being put by the West and mostly companies abroad. They use it to say that they are compensating by making sure that other countries fix their environment, thus slowly by slowly, erase their carbon footprint. However, that is not true. We just have to be current and alive to the fact that this generation will determine how the future generation will be able to survive.

The second recommendation says-

“Renew their commitment to the African initiative to solve security challenges in the Great Lake region and support effort aimed at promoting peace and stability in member states beset with conflict and instability.”

We have to demystify conflict and instability. What brings conflict and instability in our countries is very simple. It is the interest of the West. It is the interest of the East. So, should we start looking within ourselves to realign our own existing resources to be able to better our lives for the future generation?

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, every so often, I am reminded of the new leader of Burkina Faso. Today, I came across a clip where he has made education free from primary school all the way to university. It is reminiscent of the time when the former President Mwai Kibaki introduced free primary education. A lot of critics are asking: how will he fund it? How will he afford it?

It comes back to the issues discussed in this report. Issues to do with our natural resources like the gold that we have in this country. Our gold is traded then some unscrupulous businessmen take all the credit and the community ends up with not getting royalties.

One of the most controversial natural resources that we have is Mrima Hills in Kwale County. People do not talk about it because the West have a big interest in it to better the life of their people. What if we say that it is about time we stand on our own two feet and take care of our security? Why do we have all these instabilities in the Congo region? It is because there are a lot of natural resources. That is why the West, the East and everyone else is going there.

I recently read that the new President of Namibia has decided to hit back at Donald Trump's sanctions. She actually gave all those investors who are mining in that country 48 hours to leave the country. You will actually be shocked if you see the amount of resources coming from that country.

Think of what will happen if we all learn from other leaders like those of Burkina Faso and Namibia. We will ensure that there is security in the Great Lake region. We will also ensure that our water bodies are fully protected and that the laws that we develop in this House are climate adaptable.

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I will be introducing an amendment to Cap.326, which has to do with seeds and crops, in order for us to have our own original seeds. We should have our own products in this country that can adapt to climate change.

I know that we do not have time and a few of my colleagues want to contribute. My sister may also want to move another report. It is imperative that when these reports come, we should not just discuss them, table them, then they go and collect us. We should think of how we can follow through. The way to follow through is to self-implement. We, who are here, should localise whatever is written in this Report. We should take it to our counties. We should protect the water bodies and lead by example in cases of reforestation.

My colleagues from Nandi County challenged me when he said that I planted trees in the Mau Forest a few years ago. I want to welcome you to go to the Mau Forest today. You will see that 26 million seeds that we planted are all trees. I have contributed to that. These are the things that we do, but a few people do not comprehend. They are wondering how one can spend that money?

I will end by repeating what I said. My friend from Nandi County should know that he does not own the U\$100,000 car that he drives. That car is just something that helps him navigate life. He will then leave it to the next person. It will probably be sold. It is about Kshs14 million.

(An hon. Senator spoke off record)

You do not even own the motorbike that you drive that costs Kshs3 million because you will leave that motorbike on this earth. Therefore, it is important that we legislate for the future. We must make sure that every piece of legislation that we come up with, or that we bring here, is for the future and not for the current generation.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Olekina, would you like to be informed by Sen. Cherarkey?

Sen. Olekina: Yes, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Why not?

Sen. Cherarkey: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you know these are live proceedings. I do not drive an automobile of Kshs14 million. I drive a car worth Kshs3.5 million. I have not reached the level of driving a car worth Kshs14 million. I thought I should inform him.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I thank him for that information. However, the truth of the matter is that it does not matter whether it is the car that Sen. Tabitha drives, that is US\$220,000, or the car that you drive, which is US\$30,000. The truth is that you do not own it. It is just a piece of equipment that is supposed to help you navigate life on this earth. When you die today, you will leave it. It will either be sold or someone else will drive it temporarily.

I want to end by saying that I support this Report. It is quite detailed. I to invite my colleagues to go through it. They should look at the recommendations and the observations which have been made. It behooves you and I to leave this world a better place than we found it. We should legislate for the future. We all ought to go into all the pieces of legislation which are here to see whether we can amend them for them to be fit

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for future generations. We can also see if we can actually repeal them if they no longer serve any purpose.

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, there being no other Senators wishing to contribute, I call upon the Mover to reply.

Senate Majority Leader, Sen. Cheruiyot, proceed.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Cheruiyot): Mr. Temporary Speaker, I was not the Mover, but as the Senate Majority Leader, one must always be prepared in season and out of season, as the Bible reminds us. Therefore, I will reply on behalf of Sen. Wamatinga who moved the Motion on the Report of the 14th Ordinary Session of the Plenary Assembly and the related meetings of the Forum of Parliaments for the International Conference of the Great Lakes region.

This is a very important report and it is crucial that such reports are adopted and debated. As Sen. Ledama has rightly pointed out, it is important for colleagues to internalize these reports in order to better understand Africa. Africa is a very complex equation. Unfortunately, due to challenges such as limited ease of travel and regional conflicts, many Africans, including Sen. Ledama, are more familiar with the corners of certain metropolises around the globe than they are with Africa itself.

Sen. Olekina: On a point of information, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Cheruiyot): I am no exception to that, Sen. Ledama, so you do not need to protest. If today---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Cheruiyot, would you like to be informed by Sen. Olekina?

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Cheruiyot): I do not mind being informed and I will challenge him further. Therefore, you better be careful as you inform me.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, let me inform the Senate Majority Leader that I am among the few people who have driven across Africa. I drove from South Africa all the way to Nairobi, passing through Botswana, Zambia, Tanzania and, finally Kenya.

Secondly, I have also driven across South Africa as well. I enjoy traveling and have walked across the United States of America (USA). One day, I plan to walk across Africa.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Cheruiyot): Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sen. Ledama has indeed helped to affirm my point that he knows America better than his own Africa. He only mentioned four countries out of 54, which makes my case stronger.

Forget about the countries, this man, and I say this as someone who knows him well because he is my friend, can describe street by street in some of the larger cities in America if you are with him there. However, outside Nairobi, I doubt there is any other African country where he knows the name of a street, including neighborhoods in Dar es Salaam. Perhaps Kigali, but for other reasons.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, on a more serious note, there is something else that Sen. Ledama needs to check. He mentioned something that caught my attention about Captain Ibrahim Traoré. I used to fall for his hype, much like many people who are captivated by trends on TikTok. I remember seeing a journalist talk about how he was

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cheered during the inauguration of Ghana's new president. I felt excited just like many people, until after doing further research into the situation in Burkina Faso.

I challenge Sen. Ledama to do the same, perhaps to countercheck the things he reads online against the reality on the ground as Kenyans often say. I was shocked to learn the hype and the narratives circulating about what is being done.

First, I am not a fan of coups. I firmly believe in democracy and strongly hold that Africa would progress far better with fewer coups and more transitions through the ballot rather than by the power of the bullet. For that reason, I am not a big fan of that gentleman.

More importantly, the reason why the military led by him took over Burkina Faso, was their claim that the country faced significant security challenges. They argued that terrorists were ravaging the nation, killing people and causing all the challenges.

Sen. Ledama, you need to verify this because, from my research, it appears that since they took power, the situation has not improved. As we know, wars are incredibly costly. Just look at what is happening to the gentleman in Ukraine, how he is being embarrassed and the criticisms he faces. Wars are extremely expensive. If you do not have a sustainable way to fund them, it is better not to start them.

The unfortunate situation in that country highlights the need for us to better understand our continent. While they are not part of the Great Lakes region, this example underscores the challenges we face across Africa. Since Captain Ibrahim Traoré came to power by the bullet, the country has reportedly lost 40 per cent more territory to the terrorists who were already ravaging the population.

It is easy to come across information online, on platforms like TikTok, where people claim certain things are happening. However, it is crucial to conduct further research. This is the unfortunate reality with Africa. That is part of what this report highlights. That parliamentarians in African nations often have limited knowledge about their continent.

Additionally, as Sen. Ledama rightly pointed out, the challenges of travel within this continent remain a significant issue. You may recall that in 2023, President William Ruto flagged off the first consignment of goods under the African Continental Free Trade Area (ACFTA) arrangement just outside here, next to Parliament at KICC. These goods were intended for sale in other African countries. However, it took three months for the goods to travel from Nairobi to Accra, Ghana, due to significant challenges such as logistical issues, conflicts at border points, poor road networks and inadequate infrastructure.

These are some of the serious challenges that this continent continues to face. Unless we, as leaders serving in parliament, recognize that almost all governments and institutions on the continent have their budgets drawn in their parliaments, we will miss the opportunity to make conscious decisions that enhance our countries' competitiveness.

We must think beyond simply passing the Division of Revenue Act (DORA) and claiming we have fulfilled our duty as the Senate of the Republic of Kenya. It is essential to consider how we can open up markets for farmers.

That is why we must appreciate President Trump's tariffs as a wake-up call for us to take action. We do not need to struggle to access markets if we focus on enabling trade

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among Africans. Half of the goods we export often return to the continent at a significantly higher cost. For instance, Lipton tea, which leaves Kericho at US\$2, arrives back in Accra processed at facilities in France or the Netherlands, priced at US\$4 or even US\$6. This happens within the same continent, but through intermediaries based in other continents that are better organized.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, until we begin to follow through on the recommendations of such reports, we continue to make a mockery of the citizens we lead and the time spent in these conferences. These discussions often revolve around the challenges we face and the steps we must take to improve our continent. Yet, the solutions lie within ourselves.

If Africa were to trade more among itself, we would gain greater respect. We would eliminate the need to borrow the kind of money we currently borrow to run our economies. This is money that we are losing out. Africa is a continent of the future.

I want to appreciate the legislators who met last weekend. Unfortunately, I could not participate due to prior arrangements. I do not know why Sen. Ledama informed me just hours before the event. Nevertheless, I will not miss the next one. I kindly plead to be invited in advance as these discussions are crucial for the future. Our role in them, particularly on significant matters such as climate change, which is addressed in this document, is critical.

It is only when we begin to engage in meaningful conversations among ourselves, at least at the leadership level, that we can address some very basic questions. Why are we unable to ratify even the simplest of proposals within the East African Community? Why does it still cost me nearly Kshs100 to call a fellow East African in Tanzania, yet the telecommunications companies owning these networks are shareholders in each other? For instance, Vodacom on one side owns 40 per cent of Safaricom on this side. Why are we making it so difficult for people to communicating? The least you can do is checking in on a friend?

It is really unfortunate that after these conferences, perhaps, this Parliament is a well-well of resources and well thought-out reports such as this that have accumulated from 1963 with very good ideas. In fact, we do not need to travel anymore. We just need to go the Parliament Library, which unfortunately 90 per cent of legislators in this House do not even know where it is. We should go there and check reports that have been brought to this House from such conferences for years gone by since the First to the Thirteenth Parliament that we are sitting in today.

Of such initiatives are laws that we enact or legislate on issues of good governance, democracy and climate change. All these issues have been talked about but the challenge is; do we follow through with implementation, or are we just satisfied that, for example, after we pass this report today---

You can see parts of the recommendations even in this particular Report. I am happy that many colleagues have spoken on this particular topic. We are being challenged to legislate on this or push for policy change. At least, this one is a live topic because climate change is a conversation that Kenya has taken leadership in on the global stage and even continentally.

We gathered here during the Africa Climate Summit. I do not know when this year's will be. If there is no other country ready to host, I hope the President will still host like we did in 2023 and 2024. Until we learn to manage our environment and address the issues that continue to arise due to climate change, we are--- I like the phrase that the speech writer of the Secretary General of the UN uses. It is a mad-dash towards the end of the world that everybody is involved in. We might think that we are developing the world when we are actually rushing ourselves and making the end of the world closer with violation of the climate and other things that we are doing.

Therefore, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I urge every Member of that delegation that included Sen. Ali Roba and Sen. Hezena, together with our colleagues from the National Assembly, that is Hon. Rindikiri and Hon. Kakai Bisau, Members that are known to me personally, to go beyond the call of duty of travel and ensure that the beautiful recommendations they gave us are implemented. They should ensure that we pass all the legislative proposals that they made in a section of the recommendations.

They have stated that we need to pass, by use of our legislative and oversight function, to ensure that we ratify and domesticate some of the instruments that have been proposed over the years. We should apply our mandate to step up national efforts on climate change adaptation and honour domestic and international commitments under the guidelines of the Paris Agreement.

I do not know who will represent us this year because this is a yearly gathering. They need to bring to the attention of the Conference that there are more far-reaching resolutions that were passed at the Africa Climate Summit than those of the Paris Agreement. They were passed here in Nairobi. Therefore, as the Kenyan Delegation, we need to take the lead and speak on these issues, so that we just do not quote what has been discussed.

You cannot discuss with the violator and expect justice. To expect that the western world, which is a leading violator of climate issues, has gotten us to this place by refusing to respect us. Africa's contribution to carbon emissions and other challenges is very minimal, yet we bear the greatest burden out of the pollution and all the issues that arise. That is why I believe in the recommendations of the Africa Climate Summit perhaps more deeply than these ones that are discussed in the presence and homes of the violators themselves.

There is also a recommendation on investments in climate adaptation measures that proactively address climate-related health impact and food insecurity, including early warning systems for climate-related disease outbreaks and enhancing emergency response. This is about resources and ensuring that as a country, we set aside resources to address this.

I have not heard from Sen. M. Kajwang' lately. I know that he was leading a caucus of legislators. I am not sure whether they are from both Houses of Parliament, or this House alone. They thought about this particular topic and how we can make our contribution as the Parliament of Kenya alongside others. I hope he will complete the work and lead the country into achieving that particular issue.

They have put in an applause for the first Africa Climate Summit that was spearheaded by our President here in Nairobi and the strong contribution of the African

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delegation during that particular session. I hope we can follow through. I know it is part of the last issues that were discussed in Addis in February during the Annual African Union (AU) Summit. They agreed that if no other African country is willing and ready to host, Kenya has its borders open as we have always had on many other issues.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you cannot discuss issues of climate in the absence of peace. Therefore, the call for downing of arms in many member states of the Great Lakes region that are affected by conflicts. I know there are initiatives, including in the DRC and many other parts of the continent that face challenges. I hope that members of the Great Lakes region will help to bring a speedy conclusion of the challenges that the Republic of South Sudan and the Republic of Sudan are facing today. You understand the challenges that exist there.

There have been great conversations about the presence of Rapid Support Forces (RSF) in the country and invitation of the other people. These are people we must have as a country. We have been a great contributor to the stability of this region. Almost every country that has faced conflict began their peace efforts here in Nairobi and we have always hosted them. I do not know why people want to trivialize the existence of part of the factions that are warring in certain parts of the continent.

Before parties agree, you need both of them around. To have both parties, they have to report. These are people who are fighting. You do not expect them to agree to come to Nairobi the same day. So, if one of the parties show up, what we should call for is for the aggressors or people who in conflict with them to equally show up here or any other part of the continent, so that we conclude on that particular issue.

Sen. Mungatana spoke about the cry and pleas of the people of the DRC, which is something that has been with us for a long time. It is a sad story because DRC ought to be the largest economy on the Continent of Africa because of the resources they have and the land size which is also fertile and all that. However, due to conflicts for a long time, you understand how their economy is.

It has been very difficult to bring together the parties and get them to agree. I hope that the process that is ongoing, which is spearheaded by the Great Lakes Initiative, will yield fruits, so that those people get to live peacefully and enjoy life and their country.

Unfortunately, any part of the continent that is affected by conflict affects the rest of the continent. It is until there is sufficient peace on the continent that we will be able to carry out trade that we talked about earlier and move around the continent with freedom.

People will not have to travel to other destinations across the globe to enjoy and find beauty. Africa has sufficient beauty. It is also blessed with all the resources and sites that one may want to behold. You can never conclude on it. However, because of challenges and conflicts that we are talking about, many people prefer to travel elsewhere.

I do hope that as our friends continue to meet, that the Great Lakes can make significant contribution in bringing lasting peace in all these countries that are ravaged by conflicts across the continent, beginning with here, among the membership of the Great Lakes. I thank you.

With those many remarks, I beg to reply.

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Mr. Temporary Speaker, further, in accordance with Standing Order No. 66(3), I to request that the putting of the question be deferred until a later date.

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Senator. The putting of the question shall be deferred.

(Putting of the question on the Motion deferred)

Next Order.

MOTION

NOTING OF REPORT OF PROCEEDINGS OF PARLIAMENTARIANS DIALOGUE AT AFRICA CLIMATE SUMMIT

THAT, the Senate NOTES THE Report of the proceedings of the Parliamentarians' Dialogue at the African Climate Summit, 2023 held in the National Assembly Chamber, Parliament Buildings, Nairobi, on 3rd to 6th September, 2023 laid on the Table of the Senate on Wednesday, 2nd October, 2024.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Kajwang' is not around, so we shall defer that Order.

(Motion deferred)

Next Order.

MOTION

NOTING REPORT OF THE SENATE DELEGATION TO THE HLPF 2024 ON SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Hamida.

Sen. Kibwana: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker. I beg to move-

THAT, the Senate notes that the Report of the Senate Delegation to the High-Level Political Forum (HLPF) 2024 on Sustainable Development, held in New York, United States of America, USA, from 8th to 17th July 2024, laid on the Table of the Senate on 20th February 2024.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, this HLPF of Sustainable Development took place on 8th July, 2024. That was on Wednesday, and it ended on 17th July, 2024 under the auspice of the Economic and Social Council, that is, ECOSOC.

This forum, included a three-day ministerial engagement from Monday, 15th July, to Wednesday, 17th July as per ECOSOC High-Level Forum. The theme of this

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HLPF was reinforcing the 2030 agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crises, the effective delivery of sustainable resilience and innovative solutions.

If you will allow me to just kindly refer to my few notes, because this happened last year, July. It is quite some time. I remember it was a High-Level Political Forum in the main United Nations Platform on Sustainable Development regarding the sustainable development.

It has a central role in the follow-up and review the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) at the global level. That forum provided for the full effective participation of all member states of the United States, specialised agencies of the United States, as well as civil societies through the major groups and stakeholders coordination mechanism. The 2024 HLPF was the first forum under the auspice of ECOSOC and after the 2023 SDGs Summit, which was convened at the General Assembly in September, 2023.

The 2024 HLPF was supported and implemented with a political and other outcomes of the SDG Summit for advancing the 2030 Agenda and the SDGs. This forum attracted over 90 government high-level officials and 125 Speakers. In line with the integrated nature of SDGs goals, it also conducted in depth the reviews of the following goals; that is, poverty, zero hunger goal, climate action and peace, justice and strong institutions.

The other one was partnerships of the goals. The 36 countries presented their voluntary national reviews. It is called the VNR, which was shared in progress of the 2030 Agenda. In addition, it featured about 236 side events and 13 VNR labs. The 13 special events and 14 exhibitions held on margins of the forum offered the opportunities of the deeper engagement and collaboration. In line with the theme. The SDGs looked at the way forward of effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions.

The forum was tasked to review the five SDGs. Number one was eradicating poverty in all its forms everywhere, SDG 1. Number two was to end hunger, achieve food security and improve nutrition and promote sustainable agricultural, SDG 2. Number three was to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impacts. That is SDG 13.

Number four was to promote peaceful and inclusive societies and sustainable development and to provide access to justice for all and build effective, accountable and inclusive institutions at all levels. That is SDG 16. The last one was the strengthening of implementation and revitalize the Global Partnership for Sustainable Development. That is SDG 17.

The UN Under-Secretary General for Economic and Social Affairs, Mr. Lee Juna, informed the forum that the final stretch towards SDG 2030, only 17 per cent of SDGs targets are on track. Also, to be achieved on this one, he reiterated the call of bold action for peace and finance, highlighting the upcoming Summit of the Future, the Fourth International Conference on Financing for Development and the Second World Summit for Social Development as crucial milestones in advancing the SDGs.

The Inter-Parliamentary Union (IPU) was also held at the same time. This was on the sidelines of the HLPF. This was held on the 16th of July at the forum under the Governance Deficits and Climate Disasters.

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The case for parliamentary action actually engaged parliamentarians in assessing two SDGs under the review of HLPF, SDG 16, on peace, justice and strong institutions, and SDG 13 on climate change.

The parliamentary forum, reiterated that while the SDGs were important, an inter-independent SDG 16 was key because it enabled all other SDGs to succeed. Members of Parliaments were urged to be robust and work towards the more inclusive, transparent, accountable institutions and political environment, focused on achieving greater good for all through consensus and cooperation.

Our Parliament was represented at the HLPF 2024 by yours truly. I was accompanied by Mr. Innocent Mbaya, Senior Clerk Assistant and Secretary to the Delegation. The Kenya Delegation was actively involved in the deliberations and greatly enriched the resolutions.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, on behalf of the delegation, I thank the Speaker of the Senate, Hon. Amason Kingi, and the Clerk of the Senate for having given me this opportunity to ensure that Kenya was well represented during the High Level Conference Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals and the IPU Parliamentary Meeting held on the sidelines of this forum.

It is my pleasure and humble duty to move this Motion on the Report, highlighting the deliberations and outcomes of the HLPF 2024 and the Parliamentary Forum on the High Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Achievement.

I beg to move and request Sen. Cherarkey to second.

Sen. Cherarkey: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. From the onset, I commend the delegation led by Sen. Hamida Kibwana. She is a guru in most of these issues of the United Nations, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and discussions that happen. The Report is very important.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, In early 2000, we refocused our energies on the Millennium Development Goals (MDGs) and Vision 2030, which was internalized. Now we are moving to the 17 Sustainable 17 Development Goals. This voluntary review by nations is very critical. The United Nations Declaration on Human Rights and the formation of Economic and Social Council is very important in terms of development across the globe.

In this resolution, most of these things need political direction, guidance and leadership. We were just discussing the issue of the Great Lakes. We realized that peace, security and stability is very critical for sustainable development. You cannot have development without peace, security, and stability in our region, especially the Horn of Africa and across the world. Dialogue is very important especially in conflict resolutions. There is also focus on dynamic action-oriented agenda and considering new and emerging sustainable development challenges. Voluntary national reviews from member states on Vision 2030 and Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) is very critical moving into the future. There must be improved cooperation and coordination between the United Nations and across the states of the world.

Now, the United States of America (USA) is imposing tariffs on China and other countries, including Africa, while we are told Kenya is among the lowest tariffs that were being imposed. The threat to Sustainable Development Goals is protectionism by nations

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across the world. The fact that the United States has imposed tariffs is because they want protectionism.

We are also practicing protectionism even in counties where Article 96 has given us power. When I want to drive to Garissa, I find cess points. So, for example, if you are buying machine-cut stones in Thika, and you want to build a house in Garissa Town, you will have to pay cess points from here in Thika, Kiambu County, all the way to Garissa or Nandi. So, there is an aspect of double taxation that undermines and threatens the business environment. That protectionism that we see at the local level of counties is what countries are practicing which is why the USA is now imposing tariffs.

The New York Stock Exchange and many others have been faced by the threat of these issues of trust. I want to agree with President Donald Trump, who I think is God-sent. He is the only leader who says he recognizes only two genders. You are either male or female. This issue of transgender and related issues are even forbidden by Islamic, Jewish, Hindus and Christianity. In fact, we had reached a point that most African countries and our societies who depend on donors were being asked to be LGBTQ compliant. That was a threat to the values, religion and social order.

I agree with President Donald Trump's suspension of USAID because it was an avenue for corruption. Are you aware in Runda, Karen and these high-up market estates across the country, the rent has gone down? This is because most of these people used only to live in Nairobi, come to Wilson Airport and fly to Kakuma and back to Nairobi in the evening.

Most of the high-end restaurants are shutting down because they were the only ones who could buy champagne and other expensive wines because of Dollars. Money was being used for administrative purposes as opposed to assisting somebody in northern Kenya, North Rift or Nyanza.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, when we had the Gen Z protests, there was an allegation that some of these funds that come from donors, including USAID, were being used to fund instability not only in Kenya but across Africa. We need to remain focused. I agree with the United States that USAID should have been suspended. I know many people say it used to support the health programmes across the country. Those are sustainable developments. The threat that come is that nations are becoming protectionist.

What should we do, as Africans? We need to ensure as you heard the Majority Leader say- that there is interconnectivity. Do you know it is faster and easier to travel to London as opposed to travel, for example, to Accra, Ghana or Nigeria? This is because the connectivity between Africa, Europe, Middle East and America is far much better than even traveling within Africa.

The first sustainable goal is that there should be no poverty. There is no dignity in poverty. Yesterday, we were discussing the provision of sanitary towels in our country and about period poverty. To say there is no poverty, we need to ensure every Kenyan can access three square meals a day, take their children to school, access medical care and affordable and quality education. That is the only way we can end poverty.

I thank the Government of President William Ruto for ensuring that we have sustainable cities and communities as sustainable goal number 11. President William Ruto's government is complying with the 17 sustainable development goals.

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One of these goals is creating sustainable communities and cities and no poverty. Access to housing as one of the basic needs is one of the indicators of poverty. So 60 years down the line, we are still discussing about the basics which are food, shelter and housing.

The Government is trying ensure there is a dignified living place for most of the Kenyans. We all recall that President Kibaki's era, we had to use slum upgrading programme here in Kibra through the national housing programme.

We must be compliant with 17 goals. We also need to ensure food security which is Sustainable Goal No.2 of 17. Zero anchor. It is for that reason that, we, Kenyans, are pushing for school feeding programme. Most of our children miss school because of hunger. Hence the reason as to why we need to refocus our energies on the feeding programmes within the ECD centers.

There is a school feeding programme in Nairobi City County though the Office of the Auditor-General questioned it due to lack of transparency and accountability. In the Financial Year 2022/2023, Trans Nzoia County spent Kshs63 million on school feeding programme but only 185,451 packets of milk or 200 milliliter of milk was supplied to the schools. So, counties are planning for school feeding me but they do not follow it up.

In the Financial Year 2023/2024, Trans Nzoia County had a school feeding programme worth Kshs64 million but less than one per cent was delivered by the time the audit was done. We have the same thing happening here in Nairobi City County with 'Dishi na County'. So, we must have sustainable food security for us to have zero hunger in this country. That is Sustainable Goal No.2.

Where I come from, in the North Rift, we are in the planting season. I want to thank the Government because when President William Ruto took over Government, we used to buy fertilizer at Kshs7,000 per bag. However, courtesy of his subsidy programme, we are now buying it at Kshs2,500. The fertilizer is being supplied. In Nandi County, the fertilizer is available at Lessos, Mosoriot, Selia and Kobujoi National Cereals and Produce Board. My farmers are picking subsidized fertilizer from those stations. That will help us ensure food security in this country. There is a lot of noise in the country because there is enough food. That is what is happening. They have energy to shout at the Government because we have enough food in the country. I saw the Governor of Murang'a County issuing---

(Sen. Orwoba consulted loudly)

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you need to protect me from the indignant behavior of Sen. Orwoba. She should be patient when her seniors are speaking.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): You are protected.

Sen. Orwoba---

Sen. Cherarkey: Yesterday, she moved her Bill for one-and-a-half hours and some of us did not have a problem.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): That is true.

Sen. Cherarkey: I am seconding this. So, I am trying to give the House the information. I will finish in the next two to three minutes.

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The money that Governor Irungu Kang'ata uses in Murang'a County is what Sen. Joe Nyutu has pushed for on the Floor of this House. I saw the Governor giving out seeds and subsidized fertilizer. That is how he is complying with Sustainable Goals No.2 on zero hunger of ensuring food security.

There is a lot of noise against the Government of President William Ruto because people are full. There is a lot of food in the country. You remember the former ambassador of the United States who said people were too full until they vomited on their shoes. That is what is happening with the opponents of President William Ruto's Government. If there was no food in this country, there would be no noise. However, the President has implemented the issue of zero hunger and food security in this country. I encourage us to plant crops and diversify.

Finally, I want to mention this for the Members to have an understanding. A number of organizations made their presentations. This is sustainable development goals that we picked up from President Mwai Kibaki. The position of Kenya in the Summit in New York was very clear that we need to fight hunger in this country. I have told you that most of our children do not attend school because of lack of food. We, therefore, need to improve on the school feeding programme. However, we have a problem with the school feeding programme because even the national school feeding programme has problems. They normally allocate Kshs4 billion. The National Assembly should audit the National Council for Nomadic Education in Kenya (NACONEK) programme that is run by Ministry of Education. This is because it smells, works and warps corruption. They cannot give us the number of primary schools in Garissa County that are under the school feeding programme by the Ministry of Education.

That is why we are challenging the National Assembly to do their work. Instead of encroaching on devolved functions like building markets and wanting to take the Road Maintenance Levy Fund amounting to Kshs11 billion, they should oversight things like NACONEK and ensure that there is provision of sanitary pads. Yesterday, we saw that over Kshs1 billion has been issued in the last two financial years. The National Assembly should do their job.

The Supreme Court has actually ruled that National Government-Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) is unconstitutional. I agree with the former Prime Minister Raila Odinga that the work of Parliament: the Senate and National Assembly, is to oversight, represent, legislate and make budget. The National Assembly does not have business running NG-CDF or any other funds. You cannot have your cake and eat it. How do you run a programme, then oversight it?

That is what we need to insist on. That was the position of the Kenyan Government when they appeared. It was presented by a lady called Monica Asuna, who is the Director of Planning, National Treasury in Kenya.

I saw the National Assembly complaining about NG-CDF. They always think that we are joking when we complain about late disbursement to counties. I thought they are powerful. Why would they want to hold hostage the Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Economic Planning; Hon. Mbadi. over NG-CDF? As we talk today, the last disbursement to the counties was in February. Up to now, more than Kshs84 billion has not been disbursed to counties. We are serving one Wanjiku. Therefore, money should go

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to counties and NG-CDF. You cannot tell us that the NG-CDF should have money yet counties do not have money.

So, the issue of sustainable development goals is very important. Let us push for it to ensure zero hunger and zero poverty in this country for us to protect our lives. It will also help in good health and well-being. The Government is running the Universal Health Coverage under Social Health Authority Fund. Kenyans should register with the Social Health Authority (SHA) for us to stop harambees for medical expenses in our villages every weekend. The Senators are here but they are busy on their phones. They are not watching TikTok but are sending money for medical expenses in their villages.

I can tell you that 90 per cent of the harambees we attend over the weekend are for medical expenses. Some of those harambees are held to clear debts or defray funeral expenses. I want to challenge the governors to provide medicine in our hospitals even as President William Ruto pushes the issue of SHA. If we do that, we will move as a country.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, with those many remarks, I beg to second. I hope Sen. M. Kajwang' will talk about climate action when his time comes up.

I thank you.

(Question proposed)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, I will now give you an opportunity to make contributions to the Motion.

Sen. M. Kajwang': Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. My apologies, I thought you were putting the question.

Allow me to also support this Report of the Senate Delegation to the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development. There is a lot of duplication of conferences, workshops and fora on similar subjects across the continent. Just last week, I was in Kampala in Uganda for the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development. Again, we were looking at the fulfilment of the Sustainable Development Goals from an African perspective alongside the fulfilment of Agenda 2063 of the Africa Union Commission.

The theme of the High-Level Political Forum on which this Report is based was, *"Reinforcing the 2030 Agenda and eradicating poverty in times of multiple crisis, the effective delivery of sustainable, resilient and innovative solutions."*

The theme of the African Regional Forum on Sustainable Development last week was: *"Driving job creation and economic growth through sustainable, inclusive science and evidence-based solutions for the 2030 Agenda and Agenda 2063 of the Africa Union."*

Whereas they might sound like a duplication, I want to believe that they complement each other. The more we talk about the issues facing Africa and the challenges facing the globe, the more we arrive at solutions.

Multilateralism is the glue that holds this globe together, particularly when we are facing political and economic crisis. In as much as it might appear as if there are too many talkshops on the same subject, I would still encourage that global players and partners need to continue talking together.

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The Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) or Agenda 2030 have been a rallying point for economic, social and political advancement in the globe. As you recall, we had the Millennium Development Goals, which then morphed into the Sustainable Development Goals or the 2030 Agenda. In Africa, we also have the Agenda 2063. What is silent in all these lofty agendas is Vision 2030.

This country came up with a clear, lucid strategy which envisaged that in the next four years, Kenya would be a mid-level, not low-mid-level income, but a true middle-income economy. Today, no one talks about Vision 2030. If you listen to the political players who are supposed to be providing leadership, the conversation has turned to Agenda 2027, which is about re-election. The focus has changed from thinking about the next generation and empowering them through building a resilient economic, social and political infrastructure.

The subjects of this high-level forum, which report is on the table, focused on a number of SDG. It looked at SDG 1, SDG 2, SDG 13, 16, and 17. Today, SDG 1 is still extremely relevant to Kenya; eradication of poverty in all its forms everywhere. This was the challenge of the post-independence leadership.

Remember, Jomo Kenyatta framed it quite well that our enemies were poverty, illiteracy and disease. More than 50 years down the line, poverty still remains an enemy and a matter of great concern. Vision 2030 had clear roadmaps on how to ensure that we reduce the number of people living in absolute poverty.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, how I wish the political class could come back and have a compelling vision. The power of vision sometimes is illustrated in the American example. When the Americans decided they were going to the moon, it sounded grand. However, President John F. Kennedy and the subsequent presidents that came on board were able to rally and mobilise the national psyche. They were able to align research, innovation, technology, investments, everything towards achieving that national pride and goal.

Kenya needs to go back to the drawing board, look at Vision 2030, which is obviously off track, and come back with a compelling vision. I usually say that the Mwai Kibaki's Government left us with some things that we could learn from. We had a National Economic and Social Council. It was highly powered. We even had people who had run successful economies in Singapore and outside Africa. Why can we not bring back a National Economic and Social Council anchored in law? This Council should be given the necessary independence and facilitation to think through the challenges that this country is facing. It should come up with a compelling vision that is aligned to the 2030 goals and the 2063 Africa Union goals?

The late President Hon. Mwai Kibaki, had a dedicated ministry for national planning. Today, we have got a Cabinet Secretary in charge of the the National Treasury and Economic Planning. From my observation, since this position was created, most of the cabinet secretaries have focused on the issues of the National Treasury; the issues of disbursements, fiscal policy and ensuring that there is money moving from taxpayers to relevant sectors of the economy. There has been very little attention to economic planning.

Economic planning and managing the National Treasury sometimes require two sets of skills and expertise. Perhaps, it is time for the President, when considering a cabinet reorganization, to establish an independent national economic planning department or ministry. This department would be separate from the National Treasury, focusing on overseeing the granary to ensure that all inputs are accounted for and all outputs are traceable.

Another subject discussed at this Forum was the goal to end hunger, achieve food security, improve nutrition and promote sustainable agriculture. Three weeks ago, the Cabinet Secretary for Agriculture and Livestock Development appeared before this House, and we posed a question to him about the country's current agricultural policy. He confessed that he is still working on it.

How can a country, where 33 per cent of the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) comes from the agricultural sector—leave alone the other linkages that contribute to employment across the economy—operate without a clear agricultural policy? For nearly eight years, the Agriculture and Food Authority operated without a proper board and a director general. It was only last year that this was finally formalized. The sector-specific regulations have not been brought to this House.

I am happy that this House processed the amendments to the Statutory Instruments Act that provides timelines and stiff penalties to cabinet secretaries or regulatory-making entities that delay in making regulations. Agriculture is too important to be left on autopilot.

The agricultural policy in this country, save for a few sectors like tea, which has been relatively well-managed due to minimal Government interference, largely relies on God. In essence, we are at the mercy of God. While we often speak of improved productivity, the reality is that it all comes down to rainfall.

Not too long ago, I saw some top leaders going to church and thanking God for answering their prayers. They claimed that they were responsible for the rains that fell on the nation and increased food production. We cannot run a country in this kind of contemporary economy in a global setup by going through those kind of superstitious and backward beliefs that they are the ones who prayed for rain. It is as if prayer for rain is a preserve of just a few people.

Successful economies have invested in things that go beyond the act of God. They invest in improved seed and fertiliser. There is no reason why this country continues to import blended fertiliser, when not too long ago, Toyota was supposed to set up a plant in Uasin Gishu for blending fertiliser.

Let us ask ourselves, what is so special about fertiliser that stops us from getting phosphates from Morocco or getting raw materials from other parts of the globe and blending it so that we have something that is fit for climatic conditions? Just a week ago, we learned that even donations given to us in good faith are being blended, repackaged and sold at a profit yet, we turn around and call this our agricultural policy.

As long as we are approaching agriculture from a perspective of tokenism and prayer, then it will continue to run on autopilot. The sectors that, perhaps, are growing are those where the Government has no hands. For example, the horticulture producers, where we have got the large scale producers in places like Narok---

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Sen. Kinyua: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Kinyua, what is your point of order?

Sen. Kinyua: I want my good friend, Sen. Kajwang', to clarify whether he believes in prayers because he is doubting everything. I am wondering why he does not believe in prayers. It is not in the Standing Orders. I just need clarity because I know he is a good Christian and a good friend of mine.

Sen. M. Kajwang': Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I am a Christian and a believer. However, there is an intersection between faith and science and the church acknowledges that. The Catholic Church, the Anglican Church, the Islamic faith and all other faiths believe in that intersection between science and faith.

So, I will not accept a situation where the leadership wants to tell us that they are the ones responsible for the rains through their prayer. Rain is an act of God. It is through the benevolence of God that we get rain and not because of human action. As I conclude, I know there are so many things that were captured here.

In the morning, I listened to my colleague, Sen. Mungatana, talk about the need for a model climate change law because part of the issues that were discussed at this high-level forum was urgent action to combat climate change and its impact.

I am glad to report that through the African Parliamentary Network on Climate Change where I sit in the Bureau, we have come up with a model climate change law, which we have circulated to all the parliaments across Africa.

Kenya was a leader. Kenya came up with the first Climate Change Act in 2016, but from 2016 to date, a lot of things have changed. Things like carbon trading and carbon markets have become mainstream. The Paris Agreement has received further interpretation and further enhancements.

We have new concepts, like the new collective quantified goal on climate financing. We have new concerns, like reforming the climate financing architecture. I will soon be presenting to the House and to the relevant committee the proposed climate change law so that we can compare it with Kenya's climate change law and see on the areas to enhance.

One of the things that we have proposed in the model climate change law is climate budget tagging. In Uganda, when Parliament processes the budget, they have to produce at least two certificates. One certificate is that the budget is gender responsive and the second certificate is that the budget is climate responsive.

I would be happy if Kenya adopted that practice that every budget must be looked at to ensure that issues of climate and gender are mainstreamed alongside the other considerations that are in the Constitution.

The first Africa Climate Summit was organized and hosted in Kenya. The next one will probably be hosted in Addis Ababa, the Africa Union Headquarters. We need to go there with clarity on what we want to achieve.

The biggest elephant in the room is that the people who have made riches out of activities that have polluted and aggravated the climate crisis are unwilling to part with money; a little share of the black proceeds that they have gotten, so that other countries can adapt and other countries can mitigate. That is why when we went to Baku in

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Azerbaijan for the last conference of parties, whereas African countries and developing countries had insisted that to deal with the climate crisis we needed US\$1.3 trillion, the rich nations that have grown rich on the back of polluting and very hazardous activities were unwilling to yield. Out of the US\$1.3 trillion, it is only US\$300 billion that was put on the table. So far there are no clear regulations and guidelines on how that US\$300 billion will be utilized.

I hope that that will be the focus of all climate change activists as they proceed to Brazil for the next Conference of Parties to ensure there are means of implementation to allow developing countries like those in Africa - and even those that are not developing like Kenya which is a middle-income economy - to be able to adapt and mitigate. Kenya has done very well when it comes to energy. If you look at our energy mix, it is largely renewable but what we are producing is not enough.

I support this Motion. I want to encourage that we ensure that we have adequate resources to allow these Members to attend this high-level forum because it helps to sharpen them and to bring them up to date on contemporary global issues.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Sen. Kajwang'. As much as I agree with you that rain is the act of God, but even in the Bible and in the Islamic faith, we have seen several stories whereby prophets have prayed for rain. I am sure, there is the story of Elijah in the Bible, who predicted a drought and then went ahead and prayed to God for rain so as to end the drought. So, let us preach the right thing.

Proceed, Sen. Gloria.

Sen. Orwoba: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Before I support this Report, I want to encourage my colleague there that in God we trust. All science interventions are good, some can even be applicable in some areas, but in God, we trust ultimately.

I rise to support this Report on the High-Level Political Forum on Sustainable Development Goals. Briefly, I want to draw the attention of the House to point five, which is the objectives of this Forum and particularly on A and D.

On A, it says that the objectives of this high-level political forum were initially outlined in the General Assembly in the Resolution of 66288 and subsequently in the format and organizational aspects of the High-Level Political Forum Sustainable Development as part of the Resolution of 67290.

On A, it says that the objective here is to provide political leadership, guidance and recommendations for sustainable development goals. I was thinking on how to support this Report and I realized that we have all the facts with us here.

As legislators, we are guided to legislate for the people in terms of what they need down in the grassroots, but also in terms of sustainable development goals. I was reflecting on some of the Bills that have been presented on the Floor of this "Upper House". I want to congratulate my colleagues who have been showcasing that they are interested in legislating for Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs).

Goal No.1 is on zero poverty. Most of the pieces of legislation that we have here touch on how to bridge that gap between the rich and the poor. Yesterday, I finally

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moved my Bill on period poverty through the Second Reading. That is one of the pieces of legislation that we have on the Floor of the House.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you know the SDGs are 17. Goal No.4 is on quality education. One of the indicators for this SDG Goal No.4 is that you have attendance rates at the primary schools and the colleges. Some of the pieces of legislation that I have seen here, including the Bill on child protection by Sen. Miraj seek to address Goal No.4.

As I support this Report, I also want to talk about Goal No.5, which is to achieve gender equality. I am a Kenyan woman who has benefited from the affirmative programme to represent women in this House. We have recently had several conversations in the public about femicide, Gender-Based Violence (GBV) and other issues combating the women of Kenya.

Some of the conversations have been very saddening. The latest one that was highlighted was that some or all our girls are involved victims of femicide because they are looking for money. I have seen that the Cabinet Secretary nominee for Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage has been approved by the Committee in the National Assembly.

I would like to encourage the legislators in line with this high-level political forum report to sit down with the Cabinet Secretary nominee for Gender, Culture, the Arts and Heritage - because they have approved her as a committee - and perhaps sensitize her on the SDG No.5, which is to achieve gender equality with regard to certain matters as femicide. There is need for sensitivity and it is important for us, as legislators and leaders of this country, to understand a simple fact such as, we cannot blame a victim and purport to be pushing the ideology of the SDGs that are being highlighted here.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you can see that I am trying to really hurry through my points because of the time limitation. Sustainable Goal No.8 is decent work and the economic growth in this country. In terms of this Sustainable Development Goal (SDG), the Kenya Kwanza Government has really tried to provide a programme under the Labour Export Programme.

We have the Government to Government (GtG), where, our Cabinet Secretary for Labour and Social Protection goes out to negotiate with other governments to try and ring fence certain jobs of dignity such as manual labourer, plant operator and drivers, so that our jobless youth and Kenyans can go abroad and offer their skill set to those particular economies while they earn money.

Under this SDG No.8, I want to say that it is very unfortunate that we, as a Government, have intentionally tried to push this SDG by going out and ring fencing all these jobs that we have out there, whether in Saudi Arabia, Dubai, Germany and Canada. It is so unfortunate to see the holders of these offices, including those in the Ministry of Labour and Social protection butchering a well-intended programme.

We have had a series of so many highlights of the fraudulent activities of agents colluding with some of the officers, including some in high offices at the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, to con innocent Kenyans who are trying to go out and seek a dignified living by working on these jobs that the Government has purportedly gone out to look for.

I have been nominated by this Government to represent women. As a nominee, I also have to be able to call out some of the things that are happening within Government. At this moment, as I support this Report, it is a shame for the Cabinet Secretary for Labour and Social Protection to oversight all these activities where Kenyans are really suffering.

Kenyans have been conned thousands of shillings as they try to go out to seek work and offer their skill sets in these very harsh conditions. We know that Saudi Arabia is not the best place to work, but Kenyans who have no other opportunity available locally offer their skill set there yet, we as Government, under the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection, are not safeguarding our Kenyans.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I want to congratulate the sponsor of the Labour Migration Bill. When that Bill comes to the Floor of the House, because I know it is on Second Reading, I hope that we all pass it. Then, we will be able to curb all these fraudulent activities, some of them are brewing all the way to the Office of the Cabinet Secretary. We have rogue agents sitting in boardrooms of the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection conning Kenyans. I have had the unfortunate experience of actually gathering Kenyans from Bobasi Constituency, telling them that the Government has provided a really good programme to ensure that they get jobs out there, only to deliver them into the hands of conmen who are in the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection.

On a day like today when I am supporting this Report and because it is an ongoing issue, I want to take this opportunity again to ask my Party Leader to stop whatever he is doing and look into this issue of labour migration. What is happening is that, we are not only sending Kenyans to conmen, but we are also harbouring thieves and conmen in the name of Cabinet Secretaries and Government officers. It is unfortunate. Sometimes, I feel very embarrassed to stand and speak like this about a Government that I support and that has nominated me. However, I draw the line on that point.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, you know I do not get the opportunity to be in any delegation that goes anywhere. My work is to wait for their reports to be brought to the House and then I read them. Only then do I get to ask if this is what they went to do in Maputo, for example.

I do not tire because I believe God has put me here for a reason. So, for all the delegations that go out there, I continue to urge you to send me the reports. While you go out there and represent us, I will be here supporting the reports and pushing the agenda because I believe that is why God has put me here.

I want to conclude by saying, this delegation did a very good job and I want to support this report on the High-Level Political Forum on SDGs. I continue to urge my fellow legislators to legislate with the guidelines of the SDGs in mind so that we can be able to represent our people and push for development down to the grassroots.

Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): There being no Senators wishing to contribute, I call upon the mover to reply.

Sen. Hamida: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Due to time, I want to thank my dear colleagues, Sen. Gloria, Sen. Cherarkey and Sen. Kajwang', for their rich input.

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I have really noted the rich input and advisory from Sen. Gloria on economic growth; that is SDG No.8, which also touches on youth employment, equal pay, labour rights and also tourism and job creation.

I have also noted quite a few remarks from Sen. Cherarkey and Sen. Kajwang' who was also in the same kind of summit in Uganda, organised by the United Nations for a few days. It was quite a forum and he says, compared to what this forum was holding, it is more or less the same. All these SDGs have to be achieved. Due to time, I have noted all the input and I thank them all.

I request that we defer the putting of the question to a later date pursuant to Standing Order No. 66(3).

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): The putting of the question has been deferred.

(Putting of the question on the Motion deferred)

Next Order.

Sen. Mwaruma is not here. That Order is deferred.

MOTION

ESTABLISHMENT OF NATIONAL TEACHING AND REFERRAL HOSPITALS IN KENYA

THAT, AWARE THAT Article 43 (1) (a) of the Constitution of Kenya provides that every person has the right to the highest attainable standard of health, including reproductive health care;

NOTING THAT in Kenya, we have five National Teaching and Referral hospitals with Kenyatta University Research and Teaching Hospital in Kiambu County and Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret, Uasin Gishu County being the only ones outside Nairobi County;

CONCERNED THAT the bed capacity, medical equipment and human capital in these National Teaching and Referral hospitals are not sufficient to absorb all the patients seeking specialized treatment;

FURTHER CONCERNED THAT many Kenyans with critical health conditions travel long distances in order to access specialized services in Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital in Eldoret or Nairobi where the other four National Teaching and Referral hospitals are located, leading to high cost of travel, augmented disease and in some cases deaths along the way;

NOW THEREFORE the Senate urges-

1. The Ministry of Health to:

i. Establish National Teaching and Referral hospitals in the Coast, Eastern, North Eastern, Nyanza and Western regions; and

ii. Fully equip the National Teaching and Referral Hospitals with modern medical equipment, medical supplies and personnel; and

2. The County Governments to allocate more funds to their respective health dockets to adequately facilitate their County Level 5 and Level 6 hospitals in order to enhance provision of critical health services to reduce the demand for such services from the National Teaching and Referral Hospitals.

(Motion deferred)

Next Order.

Order No.12 is deferred.

CONSOLIDATION OF BURSARY FUNDS FOR
EQUITABLE ACCESS TO EDUCATION

THAT AWARE THAT, Pursuant to Article 53 of the Constitution, every child in Kenya is entitled to free and compulsory basic education, and the Basic Education Act provides that, basic education should be guided by principles such as equitable access to all youth and equal access to education or institutions;

FURTHER AWARE THAT, many students in secondary schools and higher education institutions come from financially disadvantaged backgrounds, making it difficult for them to afford school fees and access education opportunities;

NOTING THAT, over the years, various interventions have been made, including the issuance of bursaries through the National Government-Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF), National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF), the Ministry of Education and county governments through various county bursary funds;

CONCERNED THAT, despite these efforts, schools fees remain unaffordable for many parents and the allocation of bursaries has been plagued by nepotism, favoritism, and political manipulation, lack of transparency and accountability;

FURTHER CONCERNED THAT public learning institutions are primarily funded by the Government through the Ministry of Education, and in the financial year 2024/25, approximately Kshs. 656 billion was allocated to the education sector, making it difficult to ascertain the specific funds granted to each student and that the lack of transparency in the disbursement of bursaries from various agencies makes it difficult to determine the total amount allocated in a financial year, thus hindering efforts to ensure equitable access to education for financially disadvantaged students;

NOW THEREFORE, the Senate urges the Ministry of Education, to-

(1) audit the funds allocated to bursaries by both the National Government and county governments;

(2) consolidate the funds distributed by various government entities and agencies, with the aim of directing these funds directly to schools as supplementary capitation to facilitate the achievement of free secondary education; and

(3) calculate the cost of education per learner and make this information public for primary, secondary, and tertiary institutions, including a detailed breakdown of the annual financial requirements for each student across the country.

(Motion deferred)

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, there being no other business on the Order Paper, the Senate stands adjourned until later today, Wednesday, 16th April 2025, at 2.30 p.m.

The Senate rose at 1.00 p.m.