

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Tuesday, 17th March, 2020

*The House met at the Senate Chamber,
Parliament Buildings, at 2.30 p.m.*

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

PRAYER

NOTICE OF MOTION

ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE IN REGARD TO COVID-19

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Proceed, the Senate Leader of Majority.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to give notice of the following Motion-

THAT, AWARE THAT, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), a new strain of Coronaviruses that was discovered in December 2019 is an infectious disease known to cause respiratory infections ranging from common cold, fever, tiredness, aches and pains to more severe health complications;

COGNIZANT THAT this epidemic has no known cure and has spread and killed many people over several countries and continents with the potential of affecting a large percentage of the world population, as the impact of the virus is still unfolding;

FURTHER COGNIZANT THAT the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic;

AWARE THAT the Government, upon confirmation of Coronavirus cases in the country, has taken various measures aimed at containing the spread of the disease, including suspension of learning in all educational institutions and the need to minimize attendance to various gatherings;

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT Parliament Buildings has high human traffic on any given working day, including Members of Parliament, staff, visitors, school children, visiting delegations and witnesses appearing before the House Committees given the need for Parliament to institutionalize measures to mitigate the crisis posed by the virus;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the mechanism set out in Standing Order No. 30 to convene a Special Sitting of the Senate;

NOW THEREFORE, notwithstanding the Resolution of the Senate made on 27th February, 2020, pursuant to Standing Order No. 29 approving the Senate Calendar and owing to the need to complement the efforts of the Government in containing the spread of the disease, the Senate resolves to-

- (a) adjourn its Plenary sittings today, 17th March, 2020, to reconvene on Tuesday, 14th April, 2020 at 2.30 p.m.; and,
- (b) alter its Calendar accordingly.

I thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Let us go to the next Order.

STATEMENTS

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): All the Statements are deferred.

DETAINING OF DECEASED PERSONS OVER
NONPAYMENT OF OUTSTANDING BILLS

ALLEGED MARGINALIZATION OF MUSLIMS FROM ACCESS TO
FINANCES BY GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS

SECURITY OF STUDENTS AT THE UNIVERSITY OF NAIROBI

WASTE MANAGEMENT IN BOMET COUNTY

IRREGULAR RECRUITMENT BY THE TSC

(Statements deferred)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Let us go to the next Order.

MOTION

ADJOURNMENT OF THE SENATE IN REGARD
TO COVID-19

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Proceed, the Senate Majority Leader.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the following Motion-

THAT, AWARE THAT, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), a new strain of Coronaviruses that was discovered in December 2019 is an infectious disease known to cause respiratory infections ranging from common cold, fever, tiredness, aches and pains to more severe health complications;

COGNIZANT THAT this epidemic has no known cure and has spread and killed many people over several countries and continents with the potential of affecting a large percentage of the world population, as the impact of the virus is still unfolding;

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ACKNOWLEDGING THAT Parliament Buildings has high human traffic on any given working day, including Members of Parliament, staff, visitors, school children, visiting delegations and witnesses appearing before the House Committees given the need for Parliament to institutionalize measures to mitigate the crisis posed by the virus;

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- (a) adjourn its Plenary sittings today, 17th March, 2020, to reconvene on Tuesday, 14th April, 2020 at 2.30 p.m.; and
- (b) alter its Calendar accordingly.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is an extraordinary Motion in extraordinary times, not just for this House or this country, but for the world. For those of us who are Christians, we believe that the world is in the hands of God. We believe that God takes care and knows the calendar of our lives. The same extends to many faiths, including the Islamic faith.

As we ponder through the COVID-19, a novel disease or type of strain of a virus in the family of other Coronaviruses, like it is stated in the Constitution, we have faith in God.

We believe that above science and human ability, God has ordered the steps of each one of us, the destiny of our lives, and he takes care of our human bodies.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we strongly believe that we are on this earth for a mission, purpose and a certain particular period of time to serve the purpose of God in the time that we live.

This disease has scared the world in the manner in which it has been reported. It was initially thought that it was only in China. There were a lot of myths about its cause, which are still there. People thought that it only affected the Chinese and no other human race. This disease was discovered in December, and it has spread so fast. This is a clear definition of globalization and interconnectedness of human race.

An interesting observation to make is that despite other parts of the world being more developed than others, and while some races see themselves as superior than others, the reality is that we are all human beings. We are all susceptible to many dangers that

are posed by different kinds of things, whether because of environmental changes or matters relating to health. So, it is inevitable for those of us who have been given the responsibility of leadership to take steps to preserve and protect fellow human beings.

Just to mention the question of interconnectedness of human beings, there is an application that shows how aeroplanes move. There is someone who took a picture of that application that shows how Coronavirus is moving; it is transported by human beings moving from one continent to the other.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as the Senate, we must rise to the occasion to become part of the solution. We must protect and curtail the movement of this virus from one person to another.

The Cabinet Secretary (CS) for Health banned public meetings pursuant to The Public Health Act. He said that we should discourage a gathering of 50 people or above. This House is a gathering of 68 Senators and the number could go up to 70 or 80, at any given time if we include staff who serve the House. So, we need to ponder how best we can respond to this virus.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Senate Business Committee (SBC) sat under your leadership and a decision was made that we take a break for one month, so that we put in place mechanisms to ensure that when we come back, we deal with this challenge. For example, how we will operate and relate as Senators.

Since this disease has hit this country, there has been a lot of panic, fear and questions. I thank His Excellency the President for taking a bold step to prevent visitors from countries that are severely affected from visiting the country.

I also thank him for closing schools; that was a bold decision. Some people would have said we wait. However, it was my considered opinion to close the gates of this country and schools from the start to plan how we will react. For example, train the teachers and managers of various institutions on how we will handle this issue. I am glad that a decision was taken. However, the discovery of that disease in this country is not without consequences. There will be severe economic impact.

There was an article on *The New York Times* on 16th March, 2019 which was titled “*Coronavirus deepens inequality; Inequality worsens with its spread*”. The author says that economic inequality may be acting as a multiplier agent on the spread of Coronavirus and its deadliness.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are a struggling economy and a developing country, which is working hard to deal with our economy. In the United States of America (USA), the President is promising to take care of the needy. When there was a lockdown in many of the cities in China, especially in Wuhan Province, there was a lot of effort to ensure that streets were sprayed and people disinfected. A lot of resources were spent to deal with it. So, if we do not prevent this issue, how best will we deal with economic inequalities in this country? We must think of what will happen to people who live on daily income in Kibra. They look for jobs in Industrial Area, and if they do not get a job that day, they will not have a meal. What will happen to people in Mathare, Mukuru kwa Njenga, Mukuru kwa Kayaba, Kawangware and Kangemi Slums?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if we do not contain this disease in Nairobi, the spread will be worse in other parts of the country. I hope that the County Government of Nairobi, the

national Government and all actors, including ourselves, will contribute to block this disease from spreading fast. This is because if it affects people in a crowded place, for example, a slum, we will have a big problem.

There has to be a contingency measure by the Government. Those people live on daily income and wages that they earn from working as laborers in construction sites or factories. So, we must think of how to deliver food where they live. If the people in Kibra will not get food, the people in Karen and Lang'ata will have to share food with them by choice or force. A contingency measure must be applied to ensure that everybody is taken care of without looking at whether they are rich or poor. This will be a challenge that we will deal with.

This is one area that, as Senators, we must give our views to the Executive and county governments on how best to achieve results. Most importantly, if you are a Senator and there are people who have been working for you either in the farm or in the house, this is the time to extend generosity. This is because even though we get salaries, there are many people who get nothing. If they are told to stay at home, they will not earn anything. So, if we are able to keep certain people in employment, even when they are not working in our farms, companies or private offices, we must continue to support them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the President spoke about hoarding, hiking prices of commodities and panic buying that ensues. Prof. Nichol Hervet of the University of Washington was quoted on this matter. He said: "Public health is not just about your own personal health; it is about the health of the public at large." Therefore, if one person cannot access hand sanitizers, water, soap or basic commodities, that person is not just posing a risk to himself, but to everyone including those who have stock of sanitizers and soap in their homes and retail stores.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are buying, hoarding these products and increasing their prices. A hand sanitizer of 400 ml that was selling at Kshs200 recently, is now selling at Kshs800, and in some places it is Kshs1,000. I request the business people to heed the advice of the President not to increase prices. It is an act of patriotism. Let us not wait for legal enforcement. This is a time for this country to come together. Everybody who has the ability to help his or her neighbour should do so.

This is the time to heed what Jesus said in the Bible about our neighbours. We must take care of the person who depends on us, for example, your neighbour whom you have a duty to care for. Lord Atkins, in quoting the Bible, said that, "your actions may lead to advance impact towards any person who is closer to you." So, we must extend a hand.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I saw a story on *CNN* of a buyer who bought goods out of panic - all the sanitizers in his community - and after coming back to his conscious, he decided that he would donate for free to as many people who need them as possible. This is the time of patriotism that we must stand together, to ensure that we assist those who need our support.

Our economy will have a severe impact. In Italy, they have made certain determinations that are intended to help the economy. To start with, the Government

must think quickly on how to grant tax breaks to especially small companies, so that they can continue operating, employ people and supporting the economy.

Banks must continue to give concessionary loans at low rates to small business. The forceful enforcement of repayment of loans could--- Possibly, we could have a discussion between the Central Bank and the commercial banks to suspend that, so that most businesses that are not in operation now, particularly those that are providing services, could be given a break, so that they can repay their loans later cumulatively.

We must think about how we will refund Value Added Tax (VAT) and assist small businesses, like it has been done in other parts of the world. All these efforts must be made to ensure that the economy continues to thrive even at this very difficult time, even as we think through how best we can come back to continue assisting members of the public.

This pandemic is not easy for all of us. We pray that it does not affect any of us who is seated here, and we pray that it is minimized. The Cabinet Secretary will have a press statement shortly and we never know what he will tell the country, but we hope that we can contain it to levels that we will make sure that our health facilities are able to provide health services. We also have the responsibility to take the liberate steps to ensure that we protect the old and those who have been sickly. Let us not sleep on the job.

What scares me most is the statistics that he shared from countries like Italy, where for the first one month, it was not more than 10 people who had been infected, and then it began to spiral. My friend who was in Milan, Italy, told a few of us that there was a leakage through a media house that there would be a complete lockdown in Milan and people would not move. Someone leaked that information and as a result, people began to run from Milan to other parts of the country. Once that happened, the catastrophe occurred in that country.

I hope that we will manage the movement of people, including our students as they go home from today. I hope that the transport system will be managed in such a way that those who are transporting our children will observe the hygiene standards and take them home, so that we do not have a situation where one infected person in a bus or *matatu* takes the disease around the country.

Whereas the Government must do something, from the initial information that is available, it will require a lot to be done by individual citizens in terms of personal protection, commitment, and protecting your neighbour and the country.

We have decided as a House, through this Motion, to break for 30 days. In these 30 days, what are we going be doing? We will continue with the work that we have as Committees, even if we will not meet physically. Research will continue on the reports that we are supposed to deal with. Our staff will continue working and we will continue through technology as we have always done. Senators know that we are always in constant conversation on *WhatsApp* and cellphones. We must continue engaging to find out how best we will contribute to certain solutions.

In this Motion, we also have made it very clear that the Senate will be on standby. Should we need you to come back even tomorrow, even if we adjourn today, your office

as the Speaker is open. Likewise, my office is ready and open. I will come up with a Motion recalling all the Senators.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want your Office, under Standing Order No.1, to decree that I will use electronic approval using the necessary platforms, whether it is an email or *WhatsApp* messages, to approve the 15 Members we require for you to gazette, and we will come back. We do not need to be stringent that we must see each other face to face to sign for our coming. We can use technology to proceed with the convening of this House. Once we come here, we will make the necessary decision for us to take our country forward.

We must also keep in mind that we cannot sleep on this matter because we are not coming back after a month so that we break. We must put measures in place that when we come back within the next one month, we will continue working in the circumstances. We all know that is not necessarily easy to imagine that within one month we will have solved this problem. We know very well that in the State of Washington in the United States of America (USA) a company has started trials for a vaccine on this issue. They have said that it will take up to 18 months to possibly get a proper vaccine that might solve this problem. This means that in the next 18 months to two years, or even up to the next general elections, we will could handle a situation where social contact will have to be dealt with.

So, we will come back in a month and ask ourselves how we will continue with public engagement with our voters? How will we continue our public meetings with our citizens? Gov. Oparanya yesterday announced in Kakamega that because funerals are part of public gatherings, and because of space in the mortuaries and handling of bodies and crowding of people, burials will be confined to family members and must be done immediately without waiting for a longer period of time. It might change completely, I saw the Prime Minister of the United Kingdom saying that it is unbelievable that in times of peace, human life and human contact is going to be changed completely.

We must go and think about this and come back after a month--- It might even be required that we have a law to determine what to do with a person who will want to deliberately spread such a virus, or after finding out that he might be having this virus, goes ahead to hide from the authorities and makes it difficult for us to establish who is the next person or people who might need our help. There are so many things that may require the law, policy or just giving ideas to the Executive at the national and county level to take this country forward.

This is the time for cooperating and not taunting each other. It is not a time for spreading fear. Someone said that a leader is a dealer in hope. Our responsibility now is not to tell people that we will die by tomorrow; we must spread hope.

Human race has been faced by similar challenges. There was a time when people were dealing with Smallpox or SARS. So, it is up to us, as leaders, find a solution and ways of cooperating. We must not fear, but be careful to ensure that we take this country forward.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, with those many remarks, I beg to move this Motion and request the Senate Minority Leader, Sen. James Orengo, to second.

Sorry, I request the Senate Deputy Minority Leader, Sen. Cleophas Malala, to second.

Sen. Malalah: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand here to vehemently and passionately support and second this Motion.

I support this Motion not only because we want to adjourn this House, but also because this is a time of need for this country. We need to reflect on our level of preparedness as a country.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to be more specific on our level of preparedness at the county level. As we adjourn this House, it is important that as Hon. Members of this House, who are mandated to represent counties, we retreat to our respective counties and ensure that we have high levels of preparedness at the county level.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday, I had an opportunity to make an impromptu visit to the Kakamega County General Teaching and Referral Hospital just to ascertain their level of preparedness. We have seen county governments trying to come up with isolation centers. I want to confirm that Kakamega County General Teaching and Referral Hospital has an isolation center. However, the big question is: As we are focusing on county referral hospitals or Level 4 Hospitals, what about Level 3 and Level 2 Hospitals?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the level of preparedness must trickle down to the primary healthcare facilities at the grassroots. I am afraid that the first line that we will interact with the cases of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) will be at grassroots level. Therefore, it is important that as we prepare to handle this menace, we also prepare at grassroots level.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, apart from the rooms that have been set aside to isolate patients of COVID-19 in Kakamega, we have not seen the national Government bringing enough equipment to facilitate the treatment of COVID-19. As per yesterday, we had only received 10 Personal Protection Equipment (PPEs), which are meant to be used in the whole of Kakamega County. It surprises me that in a whole county where we have more than 100

facilities, we only have 10 PPEs. Therefore, it is important that as the national Government tries to curb this menace, it should also do it at grassroots level.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we need to be told what type of medicine is used to treat COVID-19. Do we have the same medicine in Kenya? If we do not have, what are we doing to ensure that we have it? It is not enough to just isolate a patient.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I was told that the medicine that treats COVID-19 has a component of chloroquine. The last time chloroquine was manufactured in Kenya was in the year 2012. Therefore, these are the questions we should be asking the current establishment, as to whether we are genuinely ready to fight COVID-19.

The first people we should protect are the health workers. Yesterday, during my visit to the Kakamega County General Teaching and Referral Hospital, I realized that the health workers at the casualty section did not have protective gear. These people are at risk. The community health volunteers at the grassroots level do not have protective gear. It is the responsibility of the national Government and the county governments, because health is a devolved function, to ensure that the health workers have enough protective gear.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when it comes the issue of dissemination of relevant information to our people, I was having a chat with one of the doctors and nurses in Kakamega and realized that they do not have information regarding this disease. They have not been trained on how they will handle such cases.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, yesterday, we had a *boda boda* operator in Kakamega who got into the hospital and said that he had been coughing for a while and had fever. When he tried to cough, all the doctors ran away because they did not know how to treat such a case. Therefore, it is very important for us to have a central place where information will be disseminated and we shall derive authority as pertains to what we are supposed to do to curb this disease.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have seen different governors issuing different decrees. The Governor of Kakamega County said that all mortuaries are closed in Kakamega. However, our neighbours are still operating their mortuaries. That simply means that if somebody dies in Kakamega, he will be taken to Vihiga County, where mortuaries are still operating.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Governor of Mombasa County said that all discos and nightclubs should be closed in Mombasa County, but his counterpart in Kilifi, just across Shimo la Tewa in Mtwapa, said that discos will continue operating. This means that Mombasa residents will be going to Kilifi in the evening. Therefore, this issue calls for a centralized point where we shall be getting information. I want to encourage the governors to start coming up with decrees that conform to the fight against COVID-19. Let us not contradict each other. Let us get information from the central committee formed by the President.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I want to ask our governors not to take advantage of this situation and start spending money anyhow in the name of curbing COVID-19. We have seen governors who have started saying that they want to procure tanks within two days. Let them be put on notice that, as Senators, we are watching them, and they will still be accountable. Any procurement that is done right now must follow the procurement rules that are set out in the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have seen business entities wanting to take advantage of this situation by increasing the cost of essentials, non-pharmaceuticals, sanitizers and even water and soap. It is my humble submission that the national Government should have a price controlling mechanism to standardize especially the essentials that are needed to fight COVID-19.

We have got some gadgets which cannot be found in the market right now like the gun thermometers. We are unable to purchase the gun thermometers. The masks are not in the pharmacies. It is the responsibility of the Government to ensure that they procure and supply the relevant equipment that is supposed to fight this disease.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, when I got into Parliament today, I was received by a police officer who was using the gun thermometer. I do not know if he has any medical background to ascertain whether somebody is sick or not. If we need to be serious, let us have people who are qualified and can interpret issues of health. We have the facilities here in Parliament and in other privileged institutions in the country.

Everywhere you go, on the corridors, you will meet an officer giving you a sanitizer. Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr. has been walking with two sanitisers since morning. I appreciate the fact that we are privileged, but what about that common *mwananchi* in the village? Do they know the essence of a sanitiser? Do they have the privilege of accessing sanitisers? It is, therefore, my humble submission that county governments ensure that villagers access sanitizers and any equipment that will protect them from this virus.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we need to suspend some of the existing rules that we have, especially the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) rules. The NTSA is very clear that when you board a *boda boda*, you must wear a helmet. In Kakamega County, we have a crisis because people cannot share helmets. If you share it with somebody who has Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), you will automatically be infected with the virus.

Therefore, it is important for us to look deep into these issues. However, this should not create any panic. I believe that we pray to a living God and if we direct all our problems as a country on the Cross of Calvary, I believe that even this Coronavirus (COVID-19) will die before it gets to Kenya.

An Hon. Senator: Amen!

Sen. Malalah: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am told that we already have three cases which have been confirmed. However, I want to believe that, that is the end of Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19). It will end at those three patients. I wish them a quick recovery and assure them that as country, we stand and pray for them.

I passionately support this Motion to adjourn, so that we retreat to our constituencies and be with our people. I supported the idea of burying people immediately they die. However, we should not allow this situation to deteriorate our cultural fabric. In Western Kenya, we believe that when somebody dies, we must mourn him or her. Let us put enough measures to allow people to continue living the way they have been living. Let life not stop.

I support this Motion that we should go on recess, but when we come back, let us adjust our Calendar. I am aware that when we come back, we are supposed to go on recess. I suggest that when we come back, we amend the Senate Calendar, so that we save the time that we will have lost during this abrupt recess.

I beg to second. Thank you and may God bless you.

(Question proposed)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. (Dr.) Langat, proceed.

Sen. (Dr.) Langat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to strongly support this Motion for Adjournment of the Senate.

I support it because most social institutions, including education institutions; secondary schools and universities, have closed. To show solidarity with the same---

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order! I am giving five minutes to those who will speak, so that we do not stay together for too long.

(Laughter)

Sen. (Dr.) Langat, you must leave here as quickly as possible.

Sen. (Dr.) Langat: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. In solidarity, as leaders, it is important that we adjourn, so that people can see the seriousness of our participation in controlling this pandemic.

Secondly, this House consists of Members who widely travel all over the world. I remember two weeks ago, I went to Germany and there were a lot fears. When we arrived back in the country, even our colleagues felt insecure. A few minutes ago when I came in here, Sen. Murkomen almost ran out of the House. To make us feel secure, I believe it is important that we reinforce this adjournment as a social House.

As leaders, we will be in the village sometimes to give statements on local radio stations and reassure our people. We will also let them know of the measures that the Government has put in place to ensure that the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) is put under control. There are many rumours and I am sure that if they continue some people may think that there is no COVID-19 in this country. Some are alleging that it is a strategy for us to win sympathy and some funds from outside the country. I believe that adjourning this House will also assure them that COVID-19 is serious.

The Government should also come out strongly and teach the public through radio stations, television stations, and other medium of communication. I saw a presentation by some two virologists on *Citizen Television* and there was a lot of controversy. The Government should seriously protect citizens from wrong information. Some people are now saying that the masks that are all over the market cannot even prevent COVID-19 infection. Some say that they are fake and the public is under the mercy of the Government to support them.

I strongly support this Motion for Adjournment so that we go to the villages and help our people get knowledge on the same.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Proceed, Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.

Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support the Motion. First, it is obvious that we are in a crisis. Secondly, it is obvious that we have not taken enough measures.

Yesterday, the Cabinet (CS), Amb. Macharia, was surprised that our *matatus* do not have hand sanitizers and are not clean. The COVID-19 makes us equal. We are going to realize that we are the same as those people who use *matatus*, and are not safe. For those of us who live in big mansions, the people who work for us come from slums or other places.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, Sen. Sakaja and I proposed a framework for disaster management. It is obvious from the reactions that I have seen that we do not have emergency protocols and disaster management plans. I have not seen the name of any Member of Parliament in the national Committee. We are not sure whether we have enough money to handle this issue if it happens.

It was pleasant to see one of the footballers, I cannot even remember who, offer his hotel. It is obvious that if the virus extends to what it has done in Italy, we do not have enough hospitals and hospital beds. Should we convert some hotels and spaces into hospitals and hospital beds? The Government should tell us where the sanitizers have gone instead of asking us why they are not there. Is it not possible for the national

Committee to covert the money that was supposed to be used for travel by Parliament executives and buy sanitizers?

Sen. Murkomen sent us a clip of a Kamba lady calling COVID-19 “kolon.” She was wondering where “kolon” was. They do not have masks and have not even seen a medical officer.

When I was coming to work this morning, I saw thousands of Kenyans walking to work. All of us will retreat to our homes. It is possible that all of you have gone to supermarkets and exhausted the shelves by buying whatever you can buy, including tissue paper. Just think about the people from Mathare. If we shut down for a day, they cannot eat.

When you tell them not to shake hands and to sanitize them--- If you go to Kibera where they have the “*mama kadogo*” economy, the money that one gets every day is used to buy *chapati* or something else to eat. It will be nice for the national Committee to give assurance in our slums.

I would be happy to see the Beyond Zero campaign trucks all over the place. This is because they will need the equipment if something happens there. There will be no time and space in Mbagathi Hospital to take everybody when they fall ill. I would have loved to hear that even Members of Parliament (MPs) have been tested.

A doctor sent me a picture of some equipment that costs about 19 Rand. It is a self-test equipment that should be available in Kenya, because the tests that are being done in Kenya are taking too long for someone who is normal but carrying the virus. We have many carriers and that is why I am concerned. I would like to hear from the Committee that we can get the equipment, so that people can be tested all over the country.

Sen. Malalah said that people should continue going to funerals with large gatherings where they sing ‘*mwana wa mberi vayaye.*’ Please think about the concern---

(A hon. Senator spoke off record)

It is not a funeral but a traditional song.

For those who have quoted the Bible, allow me to quote 2nd Chronicles 7:13-14.

“I shut up the heavens so that there is no rain. If I command the locust swarms to eat up all your crops, or if I send an epidemic to you, then the people will humble themselves and pray, and search for me, and turn from their wicked ways. I will hear them from heaven and forgive their sins and heal their land.”

This country needs to pray for all the corruption, trouble, division and marginalization that we have been preaching. People in this country must pray and turn from their wicked ways.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. (Dr.) Ali, you have the Floor.

Sen. (Dr.) Ali: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I also wish to support the Motion for Adjournment. The Committee on Health had a Statement about Covid-19, but because of your order, we could not read it. There was also a Statement from the Ministry of Health concerning the same. All said, I hope that the CS will do his part, and we will do our part.

People like quoting religious things. All religions are more or less the same. For the Muslims, we also have verses on infectious diseases. When infectious diseases come up, you should quarantine yourself; it is allowed.

When you go to the churches and the mosques, you get worried. In the mosques, people pray on mats. We know how the disease spreads. It is not just because of sneezing. When somebody sneezes and you put your hands on the mat, you can get infected.

Therefore, I urge the Muslim community that we should not do the way they do in Kuwait. People should sit one metre apart. We should also make sure that those mats are cleaned and sanitized properly after every prayer, so that people do not get infected by going to mosques.

The other issue is about the health workers, the police officers, and the ambulance drivers. These are people who provide emergency services. Even the chiefs in rural areas are among the first responders because when there is a problem, they are also informed. These people should be properly taught on what is expected of them, so that our communities are enlighten.

I also saw the clip that Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr talked about, and it is shocking. Many people in the rural areas and the slums feel that this is not serious. The national Government took over the health functions in Nairobi City County. They should send health workers to Kibera, Kawangware, Majengo, Mukuru kwa Njenga, Kariobangi and all the other slums, and tell people what is expected of them.

At least we are talking of handshakes. We know that handshakes can cause the spread of the virus. What about exchanging money or utensils and borrowing things from one another? Things are not that easy in some areas. The only thing that can save us is proper education.

The other issue is the use of masks and gloves. Masks are supposed to be used by those who are infected. This is what people have to know. You can even infect yourself by carrying a mask if you are not sick. Somebody next to you could sneeze on that mask or touch somewhere--- As people walk around, they sneeze on their hands and touch vehicles, walls, and seats; they touch everything. If you touch those places, you could infect yourself. Therefore, masks will not help. What is important is that you need to be careful where you touch and what you do.

People have vehicles and houses. Somebody could come by a *matatu* from Kibera, as has been said. You may avoid hugging such a person, but they are all over your house touching everything. If you touch the same places, you get infected.

We have to think more than just ourselves. Let us think of the people and what we can do in the slums, where there are hundreds of thousands of people aggregated in small areas and *kiosks*. How will we stop some of these things?

The Government and the national Committee have to think of how to do public education. The most important thing is to do public education, so that we know what is happening.

You will always see people in places like banks having surgical gloves. You can infect yourself with that because I may bring you money when I am infected. Later on, you could touch your nose or face without even thinking about it. We saw what a Cabinet

Executive of the US was doing. She was reading a statement while fingering her nose. Such are things that you cannot help.

Sen. Wetangula calls me “*Italiano*”, meaning ‘the Italian.’ If you touch here and there, a lot of things can happen.

(Sen. (Dr.) Ali’s microphone went off)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): You have run out of time, and people are not touching themselves.

Let us have the Senate Minority Leader.

The Senate Minority Leader (Sen. Orendo): Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to support this Motion.

There have been many pandemics in history. In fact, this pandemic may be confirming the saying that history repeats itself. You may be aware that sometime in the 14th Century, there was a pandemic known as the Black Death or the Bubonic Plague. What was unique about that pandemic in the 14th Century is that it started where the other one started and peaked where this one is likely to peak, that is, in Europe.

At that time, when it peaked in the middle of the 14th Century, more than 75 million to 200 million people died in Europe. If you look at the figures of the reported cases now, the numbers that are being reported for European countries are very large. In fact, if you compare to African countries, one may suggest that ours is insignificant.

The pandemic as it was then, and as it is now, knows no borders. In fact, some of the most powerful and the richest countries are recording the highest cases. There are cases reported in all the countries that belong to the five permanent members of the United Nations Security Council; the United Kingdom, United States of America (USA), China, Russia and France. Moreover, some of the richest countries that belong to the United Nations Security Council like Japan have also recorded cases. As somebody has said before, it does not discriminate the poor or the rich. We have some of the celebrities and leaders in the world who have tested positive.

Talking about this from a historical dimension, I can say that the third world countries and Africa were not intensively hit like some of the first world countries. However, that does not mean that we should not take cognizance of the fact that the spread is universal and has a degree of intensity that we cannot deal with effectively. I hope that with time and as we learn, this pandemic will be dealt with effectively.

I want to repeat what was said earlier by one or two of my colleagues. In China, some of the doctors and nurses who first dealt with this pandemic in the City of Wuhan tested positive and some of them died eventually. In the United States and some places in Europe, health workers, nurses and first responders have met with the tragedy of either suffering from the virus or eventually dying.

Therefore, I would plead like the other Members who have done before, as a matter of emphasis, that the Government needs to do a lot in preparing the people who will take care of us; the health workers. As I speak now, I do not think there is sufficient training and equipment going to health workers, either in Nairobi or in the counties.

The world is reacting positively. For example, a great Chinese investor has given donations of equipment to all the African countries. They should first of all go to the health workers. When you board a plane and are taken through the security protocol, you are told that before you mind your child, you tie your safety belt first before you can tie the one of you minor sitting next to you. Equally, something should be done to the health workers, to make sure that they are prepared and have the right equipment. The same thing happened with many doctors who sacrificed in dealing with a plague or pandemic like Ebola. Some of them paid with their lives.

I believe that there is no sufficient testing taking place in Kenya. In South Korea, cases are up because testing is almost universal in every workplace and churches. I did not know that there are many churches in South Korea, but this pandemic has brought out the fact that there are actually many of them. Some of the churches have been responsible for the spread of the pandemic in South Korea.

So far, the Government is doing its best in giving the public information and regular updates. However, when you go down to the counties, the same kind of initiative is not being reflected, except one or two who have made statements that are commendable.

At a personal level, we have to be very careful. You have seen in certain instances where heads of government and heads of states have to practice social distance; separated from their families and live in isolation. It is the right decision to make.

If you look at what has happened in Iran, UK's House of Commons, and in the US, Parliaments are not immune. In fact, the highest number of cases reported in Parliaments as I speak now is Iran, and it may catch up with us. Therefore, I think the 30 days will give us time to take stock of what is happening in the country.

Among ourselves, we have to practice social distance to make sure that when we reconvene, each one of us will have gone through testing and so on. However, as the Senate Majority Leader said, we hope that the Government, as it deals with the pandemic, will make interventions to make sure that the economy is not brought down.

Some interventions must be made to make the lives of citizens not as difficult as it is being experienced in some areas. I hope interventions will be made because it is not just not a health disaster or emergency, but the economy and learning will be affected. All spheres of life have been affected.

However, we should not spread fear and life should continue. We should continue to work hard and make sure that during this period we do not crush. We have stopped gatherings, funerals, churches, and even the Building Bridges Initiative rallies (BBI). However, reggae has not stopped. You know where the reggae music is found; it has not stopped. But *harambees* have definitely stopped.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I think we should be ready at any moment, as has been recognised in the Motion.

Parliament should be recalled any time, especially during a time when there is an emergency. In the context of our Constitution, Parliament has a role throughout even if it is war time.

One of the things that arose while making this Constitution is that Parliament is never dissolved. We have one Parliament leading to another. There should never be a

gap. At any given time, there is always a Parliament in place just, like at any given time there will always be a head of state or president; whether acting or not. The makers of this Constitution, in their wisdom, ensured that Parliament will never be dissolved. It is just a question of one Parliament handing over to another.

I think the context of this Motion has set it out clearly that there is a mechanism to recall Parliament when there is need. That need should not only come when there is a disaster. To show leadership, we can also be called when facts unravel to give guidance to the Executive and the nation as a whole.

Sometimes a lot of tragedies and problems we go through are caused by the executives, either the national or the ones in the counties. So, Parliament should be at the door every time even if we are on recess.

With those remarks, because I know many people want to contribute to this, I support.

Sen. Farhiya: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me an opportunity to contribute to this Motion.

I support the Adjournment Motion but I have a different view. I thought we should have handled this slightly better. Yesterday some Senators said the same thing; that we could be coming every Tuesday to address new issues as they arise but not have a complete shutdown. Given that this is a health issue and that health is devolved, this House has much more responsibility in terms of how this moves forward. As the Senate Majority Leader has rightly said, we might even need to have a legislation in terms of other different issues as they arise.

I believe that in any disaster, sometimes there are opportunities as well. This is because of the rate at which environmental pollution is going on in this world. The pandemic has led to factories slowing down and flights being cancelled. That will have a positive impact on the environment. Human being have become so greedy that we do not care how much we pollute our rivers, the skies and everywhere to the detriment of our lives and the future of this earth. As much as I am not in support of this Motion, at least this pandemic has brought some relief to the environment.

As you are aware, this pandemic has had a very huge impact on the world economy. I wanted to bring a Statement to that effect but now that we will adjourn, I will not have that opportunity. Therefore, I will use this opportunity to address it.

The International Financial Institution (IFI) has warned that the global economic growth will drop to 1 per cent as compared to 2.6 per cent in a similar period. As a result, countries that are developing or emerging economies will be challenged in terms of repayment of their debts because you can only generate revenue when you are productive. In terms of the lockdown we are currently experiencing partially or maybe total lockdown that we anticipate in case this pandemic continues to escalate, the ability of our Government to service external debt will be impacted.

It would have been good if the National Treasury or the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) would have written requesting a grace period during this time as well as holding of interest. This is because as the interest continues to accumulate, by the time we get through this pandemic, we will become bankrupt. Maybe poverty will kill much more people than the pandemic itself.

A lot of issues have arisen because of the COVID-19. It would have been better if we ensured that at least we keep abreast of issues as they emerge. We should congregate here every Tuesday and debate on the issues, so that we give solutions instead of all of us shutting down and becoming part of the panic. We do not want people to panic. This is a serious threat. I am not belittling it but I think the panic could reduce if we are there to speak to issues.

Look at the airlines---

(Sen. Farhiya's microphone went off)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Your time is up.

Sen. Wetangula: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. You should have told Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr. that “*Mwana wa mberi*” is not a funeral song. The funeral song is called “*Luwere*”. “*Mwana wa mberi*” is for birthdays and weddings.

Regarding the Motion on Adjournment, I also think differently. We have three arms of Government. The Judiciary has not closed down but scaled down. The Executive has not closed down because the Cabinet is meeting and giving direction and hope to the country.

(Applause)

I think we are making a wrong decision. This House should not close. We should probably scale down our sittings but continuously monitor the situation and hold the Executive to account by Members raising issues on this Floor. We should inform the country on what measures we are taking, what we have done, and the resources we have committed. That is what we should do to help this country. It is a coward act for this House and the other one to be closed. We should not do that. We are actually absconding our duty.

This House should summon Cabinet Secretaries (CSs) where we find it necessary to do so, to find out what is happening. We risk having a situation whereby the Government will only concentrate on COVID-19 in Nairobi and forget that the pandemic could be in Mandera, Moyale, Bungoma, Siaya and elsewhere.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it appears that majority of the Members will want to vote for adjournment but in my view it is wrong. We should not have done this. We should have remained here.

As we do so, the national Government should know that the people who will be affected by the closedown of the country are not MPs or the Judiciary but the ordinary man and woman in Korogocho who walks to a *mjengo* every day then goes back with Kshs200 to buy food to put on the table.

The Government should consider immediately giving food rations to *wananchi*, particularly those who live in slums because they do not have farms and rely on their natural toiling and moiling at construction sites or standing all over the places looking for something to do. Somebody with 11 children works hard to earn Kshs200 to go back with a packet of *unga*. Can we give them food rations?

As others have said, we do not seem to have sufficient capacity to test and verify who is sick and who is not.

As a result, social media hooligans have joined in with fake news and all manner of stories. I am happy that about three people were arrested in Kitui for spreading fake news about who is infected and who is not. More importantly, this country has had very serious economic problems yet we want to shut down.

I would like the Speaker to give us direction on what we are going to do. This is the budget season and some of the issues that we deal with in budgeting are constitutionally time bound with set timelines. If we go on recess, do we have the capacity to expand the constitutional timelines? I opine that we do not have the time.

The *Ad Hoc* Committee on MES was given a third extension last week. Does the clock stop ticking with this adjournment or shall we come back to move another Motion to extend the timelines of the Committee? Is the County Public Accounts and Investments Committee (CPAIC) that plays an important role in overseeing counties going to close down or will they continue doing their work so that they keep abreast with the audits of the counties?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I urge Members not to accept this Motion. We can amend it to say that instead of sitting on Tuesday, Wednesdays and Thursday, we shall sit, for example, every Wednesday to give Members time and a platform to raise pertinent issues affecting the country at this difficult time. That way, we will be helping the President, the Government and the people that we represent. If we go home and lock ourselves, it is not going to help us.

I urge the Senate Majority Leader to think twice. He spoke well about adjournment but I urge him to see the other side of the coin. For me, it is not necessary.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Kindly proceed, Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have an amendment to this Motion. Kindly allow me to move it.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move the following amendment to the Motion—

That the Motion be amended by deleting Paragraph (a) and substituting therefore with the following new paragraph—

Adjourn its Plenary sitting today, 17th March, 2020, for two weeks so as to reconvene on Tuesday, 31st March, 2020, and, thereafter, hold one sitting in each week.

In my view, this is the compromise which is important. I believe that we need two weeks to put in place systems that would protect MPs and the scaled down staff that we might need to perform our functions. If we go away for two weeks and there are certain things that we need to procure as an institution, that will be sufficient time to do so. It is also sufficient time to pass information to our staff in our county offices as well as our offices in Nairobi, so that they also scale down their activities.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, it is sad that the information we receive as an institution is from social media, grapevine and rumours. We are responsible to the people who elected us. It is tragic for senior Senators like Sen. Orengo, Sen. Murkomen, Sen. Wetangula and others to share rumours with their constituents. It is important for the information that emanates from the Senators to officially come from the Government.

I propose that we meet once a week with the responsible people in Government to tell us the status of the spread and the measures being taken to deal with it. We will also give them feedback as to the status of the safety of our constituents. It is important to ensure that we meet once a week so that we receive official information from the Government.

It is sad that the Government is addressing us through the press that in its usual distortion shares with us such information. I am not comfortable citing to my people information in the daily newspapers. I will be happy to receive official communication from the Government which I can share with my constituents and advise them appropriately. This does not mean that the pandemic is not real.

We are leaders. So, we must deal with the pandemic by leading from the front. We must protect and defend ourselves. The two weeks' adjournment will enable our officers and responsible person to procure protection mechanism for us. We must lead our people and give them comfort.

Having said that, I beg to move this amendment and hope that it will gain traction and support.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I did not know at what stage I should do this. So I waited for Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko to complete.

As the Mover of this Motion, I wish Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko had consulted me before coming with an amendment. Had he done so, I would have told him that this is not just a decision of the Senate Business Committee (SBC). The decision to adjourn was a decision of the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) and it was recommended to both Houses.

The decision by the PSC is not binding on us. We are not a conveyor belt to accept everything that comes from the PSC. However, there is a story behind it. The PSC has worked on scaling down staff. There is also information that many people had travelled out of the country and there was a lot of disorganization in their coming in and self-quarantine. In fact, there are some Members of this House who were on the same flight with the fourth victim of the COVID-19. Whereas the 14 days might suffice for the two weeks that has been said, as per our Calendar, we would have gone for recess in two weeks' time.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would like to persuade Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko to let go of the one month. When we come back on 14th April, we will make a determination on whether we will sit daily or we will reschedule our sitting to twice weekly for two or three months, depending on the scale of the situation in the country. Even if we were to stay here for two weeks, we would still go on recess in two weeks' time as per the Senate Calendar.

We had a long discussion in the SBC on this matter. So, I request Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko to let go of this matter.

Sen. Wetangula: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. Is the Senate Majority Leader in order to interrupt Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko who was moving an Amendment Motion, giving him information, opposing him or debating the amendment before it is accepted and put on the Floor? What Standing Order is he using to make that

interjection? Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko was never asked whether he needed information and he never granted it.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Senate Majority Leader, Proceed.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I just wanted to know whether it was in order for Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko to move the Motion without consulting me. Had he consulted me, I would have done two, three or four things. I stood on a point of order.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. Orengo, you have the Floor.

The Senate Minority Leader (Sen. Orengo): Mr. Speaker, Sir, at least, I was consulted by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko. It is good to agree on this, because this is one of those Motions that we need consensus at the end of the day and we are not a conveyor belt.

The problem is that a lot of the commissions, be it the Judicial Service Commission (JSC), the Commission on Administrative Justice (CAJ) and the Judiciary as a whole, have made pronouncements where there is total lockdown. Right now, even a senior counsel like Sen. Wetangula cannot access the courts. The magistrates stand at the door to see who can be admitted depending on what business you have.

The other thing is, we are not just parliamentarians. Without the staff we cannot operate. The Parliamentary Service Commission has decided to scale down the activities of our staff. We may feel confident, but a lot of staff members do not have the same kind of confidence that the constant engagement we have is safe enough, particularly when a lot of people here have travelled. This is a matter that we need consensus on.

I would have wanted us to continue without going on any kind of recess. In fact, I said that Parliament should always be in place. However, this is an extraordinary circumstance, that the Parliamentary Service Commission---

We cannot direct the Parliamentary Service Commission although we are not their conveyor belt. They have already made a pronouncement that they have scaled down activities. So, in the entire system, people have been told to stay away and so on. I do not know whether if we come back our clerks will be here. If their employer is the Parliamentary Service Commission, most likely they are not going to be there.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr, Proceed.

Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the process of his contribution, although Sen. Murkomen says he was giving information to Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko, he made a very telling statement that I am not sure whether he can make it or whether it was part of the information.

(Sen. Murkomen spoke off record)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order Sen. Murkomen!

Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.: Mr. Speaker, Sir, he is interrupting because I was wondering about the fourth victim and our colleagues. That is why I said that part of the 30 days should be used as an avenue for we Members of this House to check our statuses because we do not know. That information sent even more panic to Members of this House we are sitting with. I am a little conflicted.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): There is a point of order from Sen. Halake.

Sen. Halake: Mr. Speaker, Sir, am I in order to request that I be given a chance? I have been trained in mass casualty incidence command and management and it might be a bit of value. I request that before I conclude on the point of order, I be given a chance.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Given a chance to do what? I did not get what you said.

Sen. Halake: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wanted to weigh in on something that might help us with the opus with regards on whether to go now or later.

Sen. Wambua: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker, Sir. From the contributions from colleagues, I am wondering whether we should not allow the Senator for Migori to finish moving the amendment then we debate the amendment.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Okay, Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko, conclude. Have you heard what the Senate Leader of Majority said?

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Mr. Speaker, Sir, the Senate Majority Leader ambushed me with information that he did not share with this House. You have to---

(Sen. Murkomen spoke off record)

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order!

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Mr. Speaker, Sir, protect me from the Senate Majority Leader.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): You are protected.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I believe I have every right to move and Members have every right to vote for this amendment. If you do not scare Members, the Motion will be defeated. Members cannot retreat and hide from the people they lead. Members must transparently and honestly share information with the people they lead. If you have some information and you are not sharing with Members, the more reason Members become suspicious.

This Motion is very important in that we are not ordinary people. We are not a gathering like some Members are saying here. We are the third arm of Government and many people who take their time to vote for us, listen to us and are pushing for information from us. The two weeks I am proposing is intended to allow Parliament to look at the practicality of allowing us after the two weeks to be meeting once a week, so that we receive official information. I believe two weeks is sufficient time.

In fact, instead of the Government, through the CSs, addressing the press conference, they should address Parliament live and communicate to Kenyans through Parliament, so that we help the Government to share out information. We should not try and glean facts from what is stated in the press but we should get it firsthand from the Government.

We should also get information from governors, know what they are doing and difficulties they are experiencing and give the CS feedback to deal with those issues. We cannot hide or take a lazy decision of trying to disappear. I believe catering and other services can be shut down. We could have a few members of staff and the Serjeant-at-Arms because we do not need many of them. The others might go where they want and feel safe.

I believe the Parliamentary Service Commission has no right to shut Parliament down. It is not their mandate. If they try, they can be impeached. It is not proper for us to get information that we can be shut down by the Parliamentary Service Commission. We should make a decision that is sensible. I believe this is a compromise rather than defeating the request for adjournment.

We are supporting the Senate Majority Leader to help us achieve a compromise but also allow us to be leaders and not cowards or people who hide under our beds and receive information from *Twitter* or social media. Having said that, allow me to move the Motion and request Sen. Mwaruma to second the Motion.

I thank you.

Sen. Mwaruma: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for allowing me this opportunity to support the Motion of adjournment, but with the amendment that we adjourn today, 17th March, 2020, for two weeks, so as to reconvene on Tuesday, 31st March, 2020, and thereafter hold one sitting each week.

There is a lot of merit in adjournment. As many speakers have said, we need to go home because many people travelled outside the world but the disease does not manifest itself immediately. We need to give ourselves sometime to go home and see who has been affected or infected and who is not.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in the Constitution, Parliament has a prerogative to determine its own Calendar. This is one of the opportune times that Parliament can manage its Calendar.

Many people, including Sen. Farhiya, Sen. Wetangula and my brother here the Senator for Migori County have spoken. They have said that we do not need to run away from our responsibility. We need to audit the goings-on on the management of the Covid-19. One month could be too long for us to get feedback of how the Covid-19 is being managed.

There are a lot of funds from the World Bank and so on. We need to know how they are being devolved to the devolved units. Sen. Malalah said that most of the Level 2 and 3 hospitals do not even have the reagents for testing the casualties. If the money comes, it is through Parliament that we can push, so that it goes to the devolved units. We need to be here and manage that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in terms of awareness creation, I propose that Parliament appropriates for example, Kshs1 billion to go to the counties. That is about Kshs20 million for every county, so that there is a lot of awareness creation. When I look at how we are managing ourselves around here, I can see many people touching their noses and eyes and that is how the disease is spread. If the Senators themselves are not aware of how the disease is spread, what about the people at the grassroots?

I support that we go for two weeks then subsequently we sit once every week. It could be on Tuesdays, Wednesdays or Thursdays. We should come here at least every week to review even the laws. Sen. Malalah posited that we need to look at, for example, the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) Act that requires every person using *boda boda* to use helmets. The NTSA insists that people should use helmets. However, if you put on a helmet, you will spread it further. How can we have a compromise between

the requirements of the NTSA and how to curb spread of the Covid-19? We might need to change the laws and policies that are in place.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I support, let the Motion pass but with the amendments.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Hon. Senators, I will now propose the question.

(Question of the amendment proposed)

Those who want to contribute should take note that the Motion has been amended because it is not the original one.

Proceed, Sen. Murkomen.

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand to oppose that amendment. It is not because we just want to be here. First of all, the amendment is not properly drafted because it presupposes that when we come back, we will be meeting once a week *sine die*. It is not possible for us to be meeting once in a week for the rest of this session or our term. If the intention was to meet once in a week, he should tell us for how many weeks that we will come back.

Secondly, it must also specify which day of the week. If we are the ones who determine our Calendar and we want to meet once in a week, we need to specify the day. As I said, it should specify how many weeks thereafter.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, if Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko wants to bring a proper amendment, then he should ask someone to do a further amendment to that one, which will determine that we will come here once in a week and for how many weeks. Secondly, on which day of the week. That should be clear so that when we vote on it, it is something that is definite in nature.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): There is now a lot of confusion in terms of those who had logged in earlier. For those who want to contribute on the amendment, just carry up your hand. Since, I know all of you, I will allow you to speak.

Proceed, Sen. Olekina.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I rise to support this Motion. I do not believe that it is necessary for us to call for a complete Government shutdown because of this imported disease. We have been told that a fourth Kenyan has been found positive and he flew from London. All those who have been found to be positive got in touch with the person who flew in. So this is an imported disease.

I worry about Kenyans in the streets. I also worry about prisoners particularly who are locked in prisons because the people manning them are in contact with the rest of the world. If we were to panic, we are already bringing a lot of psychological issues. A lot of people sometimes end up dying not because of a disease but because of Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD).

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the amendment brought about by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko is for us to realize that first, we have got an economy which is different from the rest of the world. It will be completely hypocritical for us who are blessed to think. Once our life is disrupted, our salary will not stop. The people on the ground like the construction workers and those in prison who do not have anyone to defend them should be cushioned.

We are talking about what the Government should do. We have those who are out there who cannot come here and pass legislation to ensure that the Government suspends part of the rule of law to ensure that services get to the people.

Article 58 of the Constitution states when to call for a state of emergency. When the drafters of the Constitution were thinking about the state of emergency and when to call it, they were confused with the state of a democracy, where they gave the President very limited powers. When you look at other jurisdictions like the United States (US), the President, through an executive order, gave the person in charge of health powers to suspend the application of the rule of law.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support this amendment by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko. It is important for us to be here so that we come up with measures. We need to ensure that emergency services are provided to ensure that all parts of this country get the services that we are currently enjoying. We should be talking about kits to test the people.

We do not have any kits for testing to ensure--- Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr. spoke about that. It is important for us to be here. Even if we were to come here once a week, we need to ensure that our perpetual motion is not affected.

I thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Proceed, Sen. (Eng.) Maina.

Sen. (Eng.) Maina: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I stand to support the amendment. If I were asked, I would have gone with Sen. Wetangula's opinion. The country is in a crisis. When the country is in a crisis, the leaders should be on the forefront.

(Applause)

This is like war. It is up to this House to give hope to Kenyans and make prompt decisions outside the normal. The Government may need funds urgently and it is us to ensure that.

Secondly, we have people in the country who are not capitalists but suckers of blood. Banks should suspend all the hefty interests that they are charging on Kenyans who create employment.

The other day, insurance agencies said that they will not insure anybody that has Covid-19. I find this unpatriotic and irresponsible. It is upon Parliament to bring laws that can change those attitudes. Therefore, I support Sen. Halake's amendment. This House should not go for recess. We should be on standby and come back once a week. We do not need all the staff in Parliament. We only need those who perform core duties.

We call upon the national and county governments to account. We will keep on giving hope to our people. Therefore, I support the amendments.

Sen. Omogeni: Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir. I support the amendments that have been put forth by Sen. Halake because there is a serious housekeeping issue that requires your direction.

The Senate Majority Leader has alluded that some of our colleagues travelled out of this country and travelled back on the same flight with the fourth victim. As we propose to have sittings once a week, we need discipline from the House.

The Senator for Texas, Ted Cruz, who was in a meeting of a Brazilian who tested positive went into self-quarantine the moment the news broke. If there are colleagues in this House who were out of the country in jurisdictions that are affected by the disease, the prudent thing to do is for them to go into self-quarantine.

We need to show Kenyans that this disease is serious and that we, as leaders, are giving it the seriousness it deserves. It is not proper for Members who are supposed to show the discipline that is required to control the disease, not to abide by the directives that have been given by our own Government.

Mr. Speaker Sir, if there is any of our colleague who may have been out of the country in the countries that have been affected by the disease, they should make self-disclosure and go into self-isolation. That is what we expect responsible leaders to do.

This disease sends a lot of fear throughout the country. However, if you borrow best practices, the Senate of the USA has not adjourned, yet there are many Americans who, as I speak, have been afflicted by this disease.

In France, the President has passed a law to allow the Government spend 45 billion euros to cushion the people who are affected by this disease. It is our responsibility to put in place mechanisms through summonses that we may send to CSs in responsible Ministries to cushion the people that we represent.

Mr. Speaker Sir, if we adjourn this House, there will be nobody to speak for the common *mwanañchi*. You may find situations where banks may resort to auctioning people's homes if they are not able to pay their mortgages.

For example, on 11th September, 2001, there was a terrorist attack in USA. Two days after that, there was a scare that an anthrax powder had been sent to both the US Congress and the Senate. When two representatives of the Congress and the Senate went to see President George Bush, he gave them a leeway to discuss whether their Houses wanted to go for recess or not. The Congress went on recess but the Senate stayed forth and said that they will be the generals who will lead the Americans in resisting the threats and fear of terrorism. So, if Members of the other House have passed a Motion to adjourn, we are not bound to follow what they have done.

I propose that we go by the proposals that have been put forth by the Sen. Abshiro Halake but put in place mechanisms that will protect hon. Senators who are ready to continue acting as the people's representatives.

I support.

Sen. Dullo: Mr. Speaker Sir, I wish to oppose the amendment to this Motion. When we say we slow down, it does not mean that we completely close.

This morning, I went to two Departments of national Government. They both had meetings to see how to scale down and continue the work. The Leadership met this morning and we discussed this matter. That is the reason you have a representative in those Committees, both at the Parliamentary Service Commission and the SBC. There is a reason why that is the case.

Mr. Speaker Sir, instead of arguing about whether we are closing or not, we should ask ourselves whether we are represented in the Committee that is looking at the Coronavirus at the national level because health is devolved. The National Assembly is not involved and neither is the Senate. We should feel left out as an institution. If we had

our own representative in that Committee, we would know what is happening. Kenyans will lose jobs and get depressed. What will we do to them? Those are the questions we need to ask ourselves.

Most of the counties have prepared isolation centres. Unfortunately, one of the county that has not prepared an isolation centre is Isiolo County yet the Chairman of Council of Governors (COGs) is in the national steering Committee for Coronavirus. That clearly shows how we are unprepared. That is why the Senate should know how much money will be diverted to emergency. I am sure Kenyans will be taken for a ride. Those are the issues we need to deal with.

I appeal to my colleagues that we can go on recess but that does not mean that we should close down operations. We need to be on the ground to know what is happening to our constituents. As my colleagues have said, the dispensaries at the county level have not prepared.

Yesterday, I was in a village where Kenyans were saying that; “*sisi hatujui Coronavirus na tunasalimiana*”. They are even hugging each other. These are the people who need to be counseled. So, this is not a matter of closing or not. We should come up with a better strategy.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the first point is for you to give a ruling that the Chairperson of the Committee on Health of this House should be included in the national steering Committee.

The Senate Minority Leader (Sen. Orenge): Mr. Speaker Sir, I am not opposed to the amendment. It is a compromise; it is not shooting down the Motion. There was a suggestion that the Motion should also be fine-tuned so that after two weeks, it complies with the requirements of the Standing Orders. I am told that there is an amendment coming.

Mr. Speaker Sir, when people come to Parliament, the security officers are using a forehead thermometer to determine our temperature as an indication that we are positive, negative or in the danger zone. I want to ask Members of Parliament to stand there for even 20 minutes as people come in. You will find that the temperatures of about three people out of 10 are in the danger zone. I took time and stood there. So, it is a matter of concern.

If we come back after adjourning for two weeks, I would encourage Parliament to have testing kits, and they are very cheap. A kit from South Africa costs 19 Rand. In fact, in parliaments where people are continuing to meet, including the Senate of the United States of America and the House of Commons, Members are constantly being tested. This is because it will only take one person to test positive and nearly half of us will be in danger.

All I am asking, now that there is general agreement, is that in order to make sure that we operate in a healthy environment, I think that the secret is in constant testing. Without tests we are cheating ourselves. There was an American commander who was talking about someone being patriotic and he said that you are not patriotic for dying for your nation. You are patriotic for making the other person to die for his nation.

(Laughter)

For those who want us to be patriotic, your first starting point is to stay alive; you are not being patriotic by putting yourself in danger. That is why in the United States people are self-quarantining, yet here nobody has offered; not that they are positive. None of the six Senators who have gone into self-quarantine has tested positive, but they said that they have been in circumstances that they think that they should self-quarantine. Of course, even the Prime Minister of Canada has decided to stay away from his wife. I do not know how many people here will be ready to stay away from their wives and families.

(Laughter)

I believe that we can do it, but in order to make sure that we are all safe, I plead that there should be constant testing. Already we are taking measures. If we liked each other very much, we should not be sitting apart from each other the way we are doing now, except for Sen. Kinyua from Laikipia. There is something drawing you towards your---

(Laughter)

Mr. Speaker, Sir, let me not take too much time. I support the Motion in those kind of circumstances.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. Outa, I am told that you have another amendment.

Sen. Outa: Yes, Mr. Speaker, Sir.

I beg to move a further amendment to the amendment by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko; to add the following words after the words, “one Sitting in each week”: “on Tuesdays, for two weeks until Tuesday, 14th April, 2020.”

I am moving this amendment because we have a responsibility as the Senate. Health is devolved and, therefore, it is squarely our responsibility, as leaders, to oversee Government’s operations.

We cannot continue to depend on the media or rumours. We must stand with our counties as leaders. As the Senator of Kisumu, I must stand and give accurate answers to the people who elected me. This is the time they need me more. They do not need any third party or rumour mongers when faced with threat of (COVID-19).

When we come back in two weeks’ time, Parliament will be ready for us and to protect us. We will be able to keep this Government on its toes to give the correct information. There are a lot of rumours, and many people do not even understand much about (COVID-19) in the villages.

Today when I was calling home with regard to the burial arrangements of my uncle who passed on last week, people are still depending---

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Conclude and get a seconder.

Sen. Outa: Let me conclude, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I have a lot of stories about festivities and funerals that we need to change.

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

Sen. Sakaja: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I rise to second the further amendment to the amendment to this Motion because without it, many of us would not have agreed with the Motion as worded.

Indeed, it is a time of need in our country, and I want to thank the President and the Executive for the actions that they have been taking. We are seeing good leadership through the Cabinet Secretary, hon. Mutahi Kagwe and his team. They said that we need to maintain only essential services.

In considering this amendment and even the Motion later, I ask myself the following three questions:

- (1) Is the Senate an essential service to Kenyans?
- (2) What do Kenyans need at this time?
- (3) What are other parliaments doing around the world?

It is a global pandemic that has hit so many parts of the world.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is a time for vigilance; it is not a time for anarchy. In fact, what is spreading more than the Coronavirus Disease is fear and rumours. Those two are spreading further and faster than the Coronavirus Disease.

On the first question, yes, indeed the Senate is an essential service. I have heard Members say that let us take a break of one month and reassess. In this one month and in the next three weeks, Kenyans will need us more. At the time of crisis is when leadership is needed; not to take a break and look like we are absconding duty or hiding from the people.

Other countries have faced this challenge. Right now, in the United States of America (USA) they have very many cases. But just yesterday, in the US Senate, where there are six Members who have self-quarantined, they are debating what they call the Coronavirus Relief Bill. They are doing their legislative work and seeing what best to do at a time of crisis. They are not going home or hiding under their beds. However, they have put in place measures. There are no visits to the Congress or tourists being allowed to go to Parliament.

In the United Kingdom (UK) there is a death toll of 55. The Health Secretary herself has been diagnosed and there are more than 43 people who are sick. However, they have ruled out adjourning Parliament completely. They have just scaled down visits to the House of Commons and House of Lords, and put in place measures.

It is the time to put our heads together, of course not physically, to see what measures can be taken at this time of crisis; not to go home. If I go home today, the people who are congregating in Marigiti and Nyamakima will say that the Senator is safe, and they have been left alone. Who will speak for the people of Nairobi? Who will question the national Government? Who will question county governments on this issue?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I finish, yesterday in India, the Prime Minister Narendra Modi had a parliamentary group meeting with the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) Members of Parliament (MPs). He told them: "In fact, at this time, please, give us ideas. Go to your constituencies over the weekend and talk to the people, but legislate. Our work right now of legislating, representing and oversight is more important than any at the time of calm and at the time of peace."

The same is happening in South Africa. In fact, they have 62 cases. However, they have decided to meet once a week in terms of the parliament. The National Congress of Parliaments will be meeting on Wednesdays and they will also be meeting once a week for urgent business. This is the time to appropriate. This the time for us to look at Article 109 of the Constitution which talks about support to county governments. Support to county governments at a time of a health crisis is extremely important. How will we do that if the Senate is not sitting?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I urge Members to support this amendment. If we do not, Kenya will be the third Parliament in the world - with only four cases - to suspend or adjourn the sittings, after Canada, where the Prime Minister's wife has been diagnosed with Coronavirus (COVID-19) and Iran. Even China has been meeting in one way or another. Let us not run away. This is the time to show leadership, show support and do oversight. Sen. Dullo said that we need to know how much has been given to the counties. We cannot know that when are at home.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we must say as a Senate that we want a weekly meeting with the Cabinet Secretary (CS) to update Kenyans on the measures being taken. We should meet with the CS when we meet here, once a week because when they do a press conference they are not questioned. Those press conferences are not oversight. He is giving good information but I have 4.7 million Nairobians who want to ask questions. There are millions of Kenyans represented here who want to ask questions.

Let us agree to have the CS, Health come to Parliament once a week. Let us think. We have creative minds like Sen. Orengo and Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr. Let us look at Article 109. How do we give some temporary but serious support to counties in the health function? We cannot do that if we are at home.

I support the amendment. If it does not go through, I oppose the Motion of Adjournment.

I thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Hon. Senators, I now propose the question of the amendment to the amendment as proposed by Sen. Outa which is that; the following words be added after the words "One sitting in each week on Tuesdays for two weeks until Tuesday, 14th April, 2020". I now want to call upon the Senate Leader of Majority who had moved the first Motion to make things easier for us by what he is going to say.

(Question of the further amendment to the amendment proposed)

The Senate Majority Leader (Sen. Murkomen): Mr. Speaker, Sir, we have consulted with Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko and Sen. Outa. That is how we ended up having Sen. Outa to come up with that amendment which is more definite. It has the days which is Tuesday for only two weeks. So, we are going two weeks full, and once a day for another two weeks until 14th April, 2020. When we come back on 14th of April, 2020, we will now make another Calendar which will be more definite.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, because of that, I would like to request the House that we then complete to avoid debating the further amendment and the other amendment. Since there

seems to be a consensus, we dispose of the further amendment and the amendment, then people can contribute to the main Motion as amended then we progress. Otherwise, if people go round the further amendment, we go to the amendment and then we go to the Motion, we will spend the whole afternoon here.

Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.: Mr. Speaker, Sir, can I propose a further compromise? Sen. Sakaja and another colleague have raised a concern. I had mentioned this, that it is futile to go away for 14 days and we come back and continue talking. I am surprised that the Chairperson of the Committee on Health is not here. In 14 days, this Senate must guide the country in terms of how we will go about this issue one by one, by coming up with something similar to an emergency protocol. We can pass a resolution which can be followed. However, how is the testing of Senators going to happen?

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I would suggest a further compromise where we have a meeting with the CS, who will ask us whether we have procured kits so that Senators who continue working throughout can be tested. This is because it is futile for Sen. Sakaja to go to Marigiti and he is not sure whether he is sick or not.

I thank you.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Hon. Senators, I want us to vote on the amendment to the amendment. I now put the question which is that the amendment to the amendment as proposed by Sen. Outa which is that, the following words be added after the words, "One sitting in each week, on Tuesdays for two weeks until Tuesday, 14th April, 2020."

*(Question of the further amendment to the amendment
put and agreed to)*

We now go---

What is your point of order Sen. Orengo?

Sen. Orengo: Mr. Speaker, Sir, in order not to repeat debate, I was going to suggest that you put the question on Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko's Motion as amended and then we can go to debate that Motion as amended.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, just to be clear, we want to put the question of Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko's Motion as amended. After it has been amended, then we move to the Motion as amended.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Order Members! We are now voting on the amendment by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko as amended. I now put the question, which is that, the Motion be amended by deleting paragraphs (a) and substituting therefore, the following new paragraphs: (a), adjourn its Plenary sitting today, 17th March, 2020 for two weeks so as to reconvene on Tuesday, 31st March, 2020, and to thereafter, hold one sitting each week on Tuesdays, for two weeks until Tuesday, 14th April, 2020.

(Question of the amendment put and agreed to)

Order Members! I now propose the question which is that the Motion be amended by deleting paragraphs (a) and substituting therefore the following new paragraphs: (a) adjourn its plenary sittings today, 17th March, 2020, for two weeks so as to reconvene on

Tuesday, 31st March, 2020 and thereafter, hold one sitting in each week on Tuesdays for two weeks until Tuesday 14th April, 2020.

(Question of the Motion as amended proposed)

Now the debate continues.

Sen. Halake, kindly proceed.

What is your point of order, Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.?

Sen. Mutula: As a Whip, I was wondering out loud because people are streaming out slowly and I do not want to lose Members.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wanted you to make a determination; I am pleading that you give us direction that this is not a matter concerning counties so that I do not have a problem when Members leave. This is something that I think the Speaker must direct us on.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): It is not a matter concerning counties.

Sen. Halake: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. As I stand to support the Motion, I would like to bring the attention of this House to certain features of a mass casualty incident management which is impending before us right now.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I know a few of us have talked about this being a time of war which we, as Senators must be there to fight. However, sometimes, the best war is fought when you get out of the way of a spectacular failure by being there.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we are not experts in managing viruses or Coronavirus disease (COVID-19) for that matter. I hope, even as we come to work that we are not going to be in the way of the response to this nation. I know we have spoken about needing information and not wanting information to come to us from different sources or third parties and that we want the CS to come to us.

I am appealing to this House, I have been trained in mass casualty, incident command and management. Sometimes, we as politicians might come in the way of the response by demanding so much, wanting information to be given to us which then takes away the first responders, the CS or whoever it is that is responding to the pandemic or is trying to get the resources to them. This person ends up being diverted from responding to the public because he is dealing with us, as a House.

I hope as we demand information for our constituents, we are also going to balance this with ensuring the people that need to respond to the country and Coronavirus (COVID-19) and get resources for it, are given enough time to do that.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, in fact, one of the reasons why Sen. Murkomen's initial proposal may have lacked a bit is because it did not tell us the response plan by this House. While away, what will we be doing? Will we be looking at procurement of testing kits or be part of a multi-agency team that will be looking at how the response of the country will be managed and then come back to this House with our part of what we need or will we be managing some of these things that we are going to be saying that we are going to do? Are we going to look at the transportation, procurement and so on?

The plan of action that this House will do is going to be keen and key as we respond to this protocol. I hope this House does not look inward at our own needs and

hierarchy to defeat something that needs a lot of focus from the Executive, ourselves and the immediate responders.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I have a concern that we should not be comparing best practice. Yes, Coronavirus (COVID-19) appears across the board but the response initiative - what we have as a resource in this country - is not the same at all. Therefore, our response cannot be a replica of the response of the United States of America (USA) or Italy. As a House, we must look at our own situation critically with our resources, needs and levels of awareness in mind and then make sure that we respond and support the process as opposed to becoming an impediment to it.

As I sit here, we have different ways in which we could go. People have talked about telemedicine. I know every county is coming up with something but there is a lot of duplication. Is there a situation where perhaps, telemedicine and other innovative approaches can be used? This House can encourage that and ensure that there is information sharing especially with regard to community information where this Senate can come in handy.

In terms of us being treated or tested; are the rest of Kenyans being tested? If we become selfish, what about the people out there that are not being tested? Last week there were only 1,000 test kits. I know the kits that cost 19 Rands are not really the World Health Organization (WHO) certified kits. I can tell you that for a fact, because from here, I will be joining the response team of the Kenya Red Cross (KRC) to help with whatever I know about mass casualty incidents. I can tell you for a fact, there were only 1,000 WHO certified African Union Centre for Disease Control (AUCDC) given ones. Of those 1,000, do we want to use them ourselves or reserve them for the very needy cases, while we manage the other cases as need arises?

Please, let us not become---

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Your time is up. Proceed, Sen. Olekina.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. I was listening to Sen. Halake and she was speaking to what this Government ought to be listening to. Let me equate the speed to one legislator in USA who moved and pushed the surgeon director in the USA, to ensure that every American got free testing.

To be honest, this is not a disease that you can just easily say with that forehead thermometer that Sen. Sakaja has Coronavirus (COVID-19).

(Sen. Sakaja spoke off record)

No, let me qualify my statement. When we walk into this Parliament, the Serjeant-at-arms points the forehead thermometer to our head and if the temperature reads 37.8, we are taken into self-quarantine and some might even assume that Sen. Olekina has Coronavirus (COVID-19).

Mr. Speaker, Sir, we should not panic about this issue but we should be careful. In terms of testing, I would like the current CS whom I really respect because for once, meritocracy is at work.

Sen. Mutula Kilonzo Jnr.: It has worked.

Sen. Olekina: Mr. Speaker, Sir, it has fully worked in this country with the appointment of former Sen. Mutahi Kagwe. It is because when he speaks about what his Ministry is doing, as a Kenyan, you feel confident.

I would like to encourage the CS for the Ministry of Health to try and push so that every Kenyan can get free testing. We have always complained that the Ministry of Health is given a budget equivalent to five counties. It is about time now we saw the money in the Ministry of Health being used to support those poor Kenyans who cannot even access a 19 Rand kit or the actual test kit that Sen. Halake is talking about.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am worried about the economy of this country because we must have a perpetual motion machine. We buy and spend money. Those who need the money use that money to pay salaries. What happens when we have a complete Government shut down? What will happen to those people who are working who cannot be paid by the Government as we are paid?

It is important that we consider. That is why earlier on, I asked whether we really need a complete Government shut down or be proactive so that everything we make is perpetual and can help this country?

I am concerned about the social effects like stigmatization. The CS said that it is mandatory to self-quarantine; the Public Health Act is in effect on quarantine. What does it really mean? I am told that our colleagues from the other House who travelled abroad have been sent home to self-quarantine. What happens when Hon. Keynan now goes home? Will he sit down in the same house with his children or set a small room out there? What about the psychological effect? There are serious things that this Government should be telling us on how they are preparing Kenyans.

On the issue of our social gathering, I heard the Chairperson of the Council of Governors talk about suspending all mortuary operations. Psychologically and socially, this means that Kenyans are affected because there are those who value their last rights. This is a serious issue that we need to deal with seriously.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, this Motion is timely because it gives us an opportunity to go and think, look at what the Government is doing and consider whether it is for the benefit of our people. When I go to Narok County tomorrow, the first thing I will do is to look for volunteers who are trained health practitioners. We will then go to markets with soap - because we cannot afford sanitisers - and sensitise people so that it does not affect our motion machine. If a Maasai cannot go and sell a cow, where do you expect him to get food? If another Kenyan cannot go to the market to sell some linen, where do you expect them to get food?

This is an issue that all of us here should be serious about. The national Government must now think seriously. That is why earlier on, I was sharing with my colleagues that when we amend the Constitution, we must give the President enough powers. This House has not been given a role to play when it comes to declaring the state of emergency. We cannot just be rubber-stamping things yet we are supposed to be representing counties which make up the huge population of this country.

As I support this Motion, I think it is important for us to think critically about even prisoners because they are held in one area.

I heard the President giving a directive that schools to be closed. What about those officers who work in prisons? Should they also be confined in the prisons so that they do not get in touch with the outside world? If that is not taken into consideration, we may end up sentencing poor Kenyans who committed crimes. We might end up killing them.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I support this Motion, I hope that Parliament, through the Parliamentary Service Commission, will think about what to do to ensure that this country progresses.

I like what the Americans did. When the US President signed the executive order, it suspended the operation of certain laws and gave the Minister in charge of health more powers to circumvent the rule of law and ensure that certain things are done to help that country. That is what we should talking about in this Parliament. We should make sure that we help our people.

I support.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): That is okay. I will allow the next Member time to speak but before that, this is what I want to say because I know that it is going to be approved. The Parliamentary Service Commission will use this period to put in place all mechanisms, including purchasing testing kits for Parliament, so that all Members can be tested and we have confidence. All that is being done now is just checking whether your temperature is high or not. By the time we come back, I hope the Parliamentary Service Commission will have put in place mechanisms to make sure that all MPs are safe

Proceed, Sen. (Prof.) Kamar.

Sen. (Prof.) Kamar: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to join my colleagues in supporting this Motion in the amended form and that is necessary. I agree with my colleagues that we cannot just shut down Parliament when there is a crisis. This is because there is the need for people to hear from Parliament.

Maybe we are the right House to have that kind of amendment because the other House is more at risk than us. Having a crowd of 347 Members is not easy. At least the 67 Members can be here after two weeks. We should take the risk of being around to speak to issues as we assist the country to move through this difficult situation.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the issue of the COVID-19 has really hit the world. We are also being affected, not just in the medical field, but also the social area. Yesterday, I had the opportunity to attend the Uasin Gishu County Response Team meeting. When I went for that meeting, I discovered more things that they had never talked about earlier.

Earlier in the morning, I had gone to give my condolences to a family in the neighbourhood that had tents all over preparing for a burial today. We discovered that the public is not conscious about what is going on. When we had a press release after our meeting, it was nice to hear the County Commissioner make a ruling that funerals and marriages will be limited to smallest populations possible.

They should just include the next of kin and be done as fast as possible, so that the contact between people is reduced. I think we really need to speak to the public to obey these kind of rules. If they do not obey, then we will have a major crisis arising from the spread. Currently we do not even know who has spread what.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, the other thing that needs our attention as legislators is the issue of fake news. Before the CS announced the fourth victim at 3 O'clock today, we had heard from social media that there was somebody from Mukuru kwa Njenga slums that had been rushed to hospital. It was also alleged that there was somebody from Kambi Samaki---

Sen. Wambua: On a point of order, Mr. Speaker Sir. I really do not want to interrupt my teacher, Sen. (Prof.) Kamar. However, because what she has said is on record and will go to the HANSARD, I just want to correct that what has been put on hold is not marriages but weddings. Sen. (Prof.) Kamar mentioned that the County Commissioner has put on hold burials and marriages. I think what has been put on hold is weddings.

Sen. (Prof.) Kamar: Mr. Speaker, Sir, to put it on record, nothing was put on hold. What was announced was that we need to limit the number of people attending funerals and marriages. This is important because if you have a huge population, it becomes another high risk area.

The announcement was to ensure that we have a limited number of people attending such functions which are very common. Funerals are common these days. Therefore, it is important to reduce the numbers and make the funeral as fast as possible. That is what we talked about.

Additionally, as we talk of responding, our response must also consider those people who depend on a day's job for one meal for their families. We have people in the slums who work and earn for a day to sustain their families. It is important that we consider them because that is also part of the response. We cannot lock them down because we will lose them through hunger.

The national response team should map out areas where people must work to get their daily meals. Those are the people who should be given food rations. They should be considered, just the way we consider food rations for areas that are affected by drought, floods or other natural calamities. This is one area that also needs to be looked at.

Mr. Speaker Sir, if we are going to have the meetings after two weeks, it is also important that we have the Committee on Health and any other relevant committee, because committees are limited. We will not have a risky crowd when we have committees of nine or 15.

It is important that the Committee on Health continues to meet. This is because as we have rightfully said, we need to get reports from the Ministry of Health, but who is going to receive that? We must have the Committee on Health in session throughout this period, so that they communicate to the relevant Ministries and the public so that everybody feels comfortable.

With those remarks, I support.

The Speaker (Hon. Lusaka): Sen. Madzayo, you have the Floor.

Sen. Madzayo: Asante, Bw. Spika, kwa kunipa nafasi hii. Ninakubaliana na Hoja inayosema kwamba badala ya kuwa na siku 30, Bunge la Seneti liahirishe vikao vyake kwa siku 15 na hatimaye tuwe tukija hapa siku moja kwa wiki.

Kwanza namshukuru Waziri wa Afya, Mhe. Mutahi Kagwe, kwa ujasiri wake wa kueleza Wakenya kinachoendelea. Tunajivunia kwa sababu tulikuwa tunaketi naye hapa muhula uliokwisha. Ameonyesha ujasiri na ukakamavu katika Wizara ya Afya.

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

[The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar) in the Chair]

Bw. Spika wa Muda, kitu cha kwanza Serikali inafaa kufanya ni kuangalia vifaa vya kazi.

Pole Bi. Spika wa Muda kwa sababu nimekurejelea kama Bw. Spika wa Muda. Sijui kama watu wanaelewa Kiswahili kwa sababu sikusikia *point of order*. Hata hivyo, nashukuru kwa sababu nimejirekebisha. Najua kuwa Sen. Wambua anatoka Kitui---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): I can see a point of order from Sen. Kinyua. I hope you did not invite it.

Sen. Madzayo: Nimeshasema kwamba nimekosea.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): There is a point of Order from Sen. Kinyua.

Sen. Kinyua: Ni Jambo la nidhamu. Nimemsikia Sen. Madzayo akisema ya kwamba Waziri ambaye amepewa jukumu la kuangalia mambo ya afya ni mtu jasiri na ako ueledi katika kazi yake. Lakini, Mswahili husema: "Usikate kanzu kabla ya mtoto kuzaliwa."

Yeye amekuwa Waziri kwa muda wa wiki mbili. Tungempa mwezi mmoja au miwili ndio aweze kutuambia kwa mapana na marefu. Lakini kutangaza tu kuwa kuna visa vya Virusi vya Korona sio ujasiri. Ujasiri ni kusema kwamba tumewatibu watu watano kati ya watu 20. Kwa hivyo sioni kwamba ni dhahiri wakati huu kusema ya kwamba Waziri ni jasiri.

Sen. Madzayo: Asante, Bi. Spika wa Muda. Sijui kama hilo ni Jambo la nidhamu ama ni maelezo.

Sisi sote ni binadamu na vile vile tunaweza kupatikana na Virusi vya Korona au COVID-19. Hakuna aliye mjasiri mbele ya ugonjwa. Kwa hivyo, ni muhimu pia sisi kuenda mashinani kukutana na wananchi tunaowakilisha katika Seneti, ili waweze kutueleza masaibu wanayoyapata.

*(Sen. Murkomen consulted with
Sen. Olekina while standing)*

Bi. Spika wa Muda, wakati ninaongea Maseneta wawili wako mbele yangu. Je, hii ni haki?

Vifaa ambavyo viko katika hospitali ni nadhifu. Aidha havifai, haviwezi kuzuia ugonjwa ama havitoshi. Juzi tuliona kwamba katika hospitali ya Mbagathi na sehemu mbali mbali Kenya bado madaktari na wasaidizi wao wanaofanya kazi na mikono mikavu. Katika nchi zingine tunaona kuwa kuna vifaa vya kujilinda kutokana na Virusi vya Korona.

Jambo la kwanza ambalo Serikali inafaa kuzingatia ni kwamba vifaa hivyo vinapatikana haraka iwezekanavyo, ili wanaowatibu wagonjwa wa Virusi vya Korona wanajikinga ili wasiambukizwe virusi hivyo vya Korona.

Je, Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) inafanya nini? Kwa mfano, *sanitizers* ni ghali sana kwa mwananchi. Juzi nilinunua kwa bei ya Kshs2,000. Gharama hiyo inaweza kununua chakula cha siku kadhaa kwa mwananchi wa kawaida. Serikali inapaswa kuthibiti bei ya dawa hii ya kusafisha mikono ili virusi viweze kumalizika.

Mwisho, namuunga mkono Sen. Olekina kwa kusema kwamba ndugu zetu wanaofanya kazi kule viwandani na kazi zingine za mapato madogo. Serikali inafaa kuchukua hatua ya kupanga mikakati ili watu kama hao wapewe nafasi ya kuvuta pumzi ili wasilipe kodi ya nyumba wanamoishi. Hii itahakikisha kwamba wanabaki nyumbani na kuepuka hili janga la Virusi vya Korona.

Asante Bi. Spika wa Muda, kwa kunipa wakati huu.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Asante Sana.

Sen. (Eng.) Mahamud.

Sen. (Eng.) Mahamud: Thank you Madam Temporary Speaker, for giving me the chance to contribute in support of on this Motion for Adjournment.

We are in a very serious period as this COVID-19 pandemic is a disaster in the world. It has been reported all over the world; Europe, America and other continents.

I think it is time that Kenyans took this pandemic seriously because when you look at the social media, there are people who are still in denial. For example, there was a lady on social media this morning, and quite a number of Kenyans are saying that this is not true and the Government is taking us for a ride.

The Government has a lot of work to engage in civic education of our people. Our people must be told that this thing is with us and must be taken seriously. I remember when the first cases of HIV/AIDS infections happened in this country in the 80s, people were brushing it aside. The same thing is happening now and Kenyans must be told that this is a matter that is very serious.

I would like to thank the Government for the steps it has taken so far in terms of bringing this to the limelight and coming out publicly at the highest level to tell Kenyans that we have a serious matter in our hands and it must be taken seriously. In the last few days, people were doubting, but the fact that schools have closed now I think it is a good move. This is because children are always in large numbers and flu spreads fast among children.

Actions have been taken by county governments also. This morning, I have seen a lot from many counties, including my County of Mandera, which has issued a lot of directives, circulars and procedures, and even set aside isolation areas in the event that there are people who are affected.

This matter should be up-scaled and we should not take it lightly. The fact that we are adjourning today, we as Parliament and leaders of this nation and place where many of us congregate, we must take care of our health. Parliamentarians and Parliament staff must take care of their health. That is the reason that is prompting us to close; we are not running away. This Parliament has over 416 Members of Parliament and an equal number of staffers if not more. That is why we need to be careful.

If you look at the dining hall during lunch time, it is so crowded that if there is anybody who is infected, then everybody is in danger. Therefore, going on recess is one way of protecting ourselves, and not running away from our responsibilities. My worry is that we are talking about 14 or 30 days. I do not know what will happen in those 14 and 30 days. This is a pandemic that has just started. We are asking people to self-quarantine for 14 days, but we do not know what will happen thereafter.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Order, Senator! There is a point of intervention from Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: It is a point of information, if he would permit.

Sen. (Eng.) Mahamud: You can go ahead.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Thank you very much.

In those 14 days, we expect the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) to put in place practical measures to protect this House from the spread of Coronavirus Disease. We expect kits to be found, scaling down of staff and other relevant measures.

For the subsequent two weeks, we as Senators will share information with our constituents. We want to be formally updated by the Government. We also want to bring formal issues from our counties so that the Government can deal with them.

Thank you Madam Temporary Speaker.

Sen. (Eng.) Mahamud: Thank you very much Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko for the information. I still think even when schools close, they always give some time limit. My worry regarding this time being given is that what will happen next? I hope in that period we will be able upscale our preparedness and also deal with the issue of vaccines so that this matter is dealt with properly.

This morning I was reading in the newspapers that the isolation wards are not very secure. People who are isolated are actually mingling with the other patients very freely and the staff are also mingling freely with others. I think we must take this seriously. Kenyans are facing a very serious matter and usually we take it very lightly.

The Governor of Mombasa County said he closed all the bars. What about the clubs and bars in Nairobi and all those places where people idle? I think they must be shut down so that we do not have all these people congregating and just idling around and saying that COVID-19 is not there.

Madam Temporary Speaker, as we take this step today as Parliament, let us also demand that the National Committee which is giving press briefs every time; that Parliament must also be briefed accordingly because we are also doing that work; and so that we can take our duty seriously.

With those many remarks I support. I think in the next 14 days things will be better so that we can come back to our schedule.

Earlier on when we were debating whether we would adjourn for 14 or 30 days, I was wondering because - with a light touch when we came back on 11th February we hardly passed any Motion here because we had no quorum. Members let us take our job seriously. Several times we were not able to have a division in this House in the last three weeks because every time we have no quorum.

Let us ensure that by the time we resume from the break we know at least we have done some serious work.

I beg to support.

Sen. (Prof.) Ongeru: Thank you Madam Temporary Speaker, for allowing me to weigh in on this subject. We have a pandemic. In 1990 we had a national disaster in the name of HIV/AIDs. I was then the Minister for Health. We had to persuade the President to allow the National Assembly to have a special sitting in the Continental Hotel in Mombasa for it to be declared a national disaster for obvious reasons.

At that time the drugs available for the management of HIV/AIDs were under patent rights and therefore, were extremely expensive and out of reach for our populations. When that national disaster was declared we were able to trigger the World Health Organization (WHO) arrangement and agreement Article 6 that allowed this nation to bring in generic drugs. That was the message that we passed out to Kenyans that for every 100 Kenyans, 14 might be HIV positive. In other words 86 per cent were negative. The message was, “why do you not go for testing? I think we must borrow that leaf.

Immediately after that we had the anthrax scourge. I happened to have been around that time again, and I led the country towards this message.

What must we do regarding Coronavirus? We have two levels of government. The National Government has done extremely well. They have become transparent and have been able to tell us where the problem is and how they are tackling it. We have the second tier of government; the county governments. I am not quite sure that they are in sync or follow strictly what the national Government is doing. I get the feeling that more emphasis is being laid on isolation kits and other places where those who are positive can be treated. There is no harm in doing so. However, my worry would be how to prevent the majority who are out there from getting COVID-19. That is where our efforts should be.

As we go for recess for two weeks I would suggest that one of the most fundamental decisions that must be made both by the Parliamentary Service Commission (PSC) - and I wish they also had the Health Committees from both Houses sitting concurrently so that they could define the final strategies that should be put in force in congested areas in urban and city centres; what we can do with the rural populations and how we can package messages so that they are in full knowledge of what must happen and the meaning of self-quarantine. That is applicable in some of the developed nations because they say that one goes to his family and they get you a separate bedroom. How many of our people have separate bedrooms in this country? None! We must be able to look for a method of dealing with it.

I would have expected that we would have also called in some of our premier research institutes such as the Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) that are involved in virology or the infectious disease studies in our various universities to put their minds together rather than having one occasional person appearing in the television with messages on this disease. We should find a way of packaging a very powerful message of saving this nation.

Madam Temporary Speaker, some of us should be available to give information on how these matters can be handled so that we do not make a mistake. If we make a

mistake, it will move from a pandemic to a national disaster then we may not be in a position to handle it.

Earlier on, I heard one of the colleague Senators talking about resource mobilization and the loans that have been taken. How are these loans being utilized? Are they going only for ---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): I will give you half a minute because you have expertise in that field.

Sen. (Prof.) Ongeru: Thank you, very much. I would have expected that we should be able to tell the Government how to utilize these resources that are coming and what methods must be used for prevention. I have seen the sanitizers. Yes, it is good to have them but they are expensive. The last time I bought one it cost Kshs700 and today I hear it costs Kshs3000. They are out of reach for many people. My message to the ordinary citizenry is that simple soap with running water is enough to be able to control COVID-19. It is a mild infection; it gets very acute. It can become very difficult to treat and can cause complications and loss of life. We need to tackle it head on.

Thank you, Madam Temporary, Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Thank you, Senator. Proceed, Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve). I am having a problem. I see Sen. (Eng.) Hargura's intervention without his presence. Sen. (Eng.) Hargura's card is asking to speak; at the same time it is intervening for a point of order. So, some of you may be holding that card. We will move very fast. Let us try to be fair to each other because all of us want to contribute. Let us be as fast as possible.

Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to support this Motion with amendments. It humbles me to say that when we were sworn in - I remember when I stood there - I said before Kenyans that I was going to serve with determination despite whatever comes.

It is at this time that our leadership is under test. Are we going to stand by what we swore? I support this Amendment. As Senators, we are on duty 24 hours and Kenyans are looking up to us. We are in a situation of hopelessness. Kenyans want to see hope in the eyes of their leaders. Therefore, we as leaders must face this situation with courage.

(Loud Consultation)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Order, hon. Members! Kindly do not talk across the table.

Sen. (Dr.) Musuruve: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker for protecting me.

Kenyans are watching to see what their leaders are doing. We took oath to serve the people of Kenya. When there is a calamity such as this and the citizens are worried, they look up to us for hope. The COVID-19 will have adverse effects even on the economy of this country. Many things are going to happen but I hope that we can stand with Kenyans at this time.

Hand sanitizers are not easy to come by on the shelves of malls and supermarkets. Last week, I hoped from one supermarket to another looking for hand sanitizers but I was not able to get. Someone told me that they could get me a hand sanitizer from Kenya

Medical Research Institute (KEMRI) at a cost of Ksh2,400 but she never delivered. When I asked her why she had not delivered the hand sanitizer, she said that they were out of stock and that I needed to add her Kshs800. I ended up paying Kshs3,200 for a hand sanitizer that is yet to be delivered to me.

Madam Temporary Speaker, we have the duty to provide leadership at this time, whereas, governors have their position on this issue. The Executive also has its position on this matter. What is the position of the Senate on this matter? We should come up with a policy that will help the country.

Kenyans are looking upon to us to come up with legislation that is going to help the common man. Many Kenyans are not on permanent employment, so they wonder how they are going to fend for their families. Our duty is to defend the common man who has to work every day on menial jobs to earn a living. The Senate has to defend the common man.

On the issue of communication and dissemination of information, Persons with Disabilities (PWDs) do not have information on the ways of protecting themselves against COVID-19. The Government should put in place mechanisms to ensure that no one is left behind with regard to relaying information to the common man.

The Government Spokesman said that they are going to start a sensitization programme at Mbagathi on Wednesday but all the people that were present were able bodied. Where were the PWDs? The Government needs to do something.

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Kindly proceed, Sen. Kinyua.

Sen. Kinyua: Madam Temporary Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. From the onset, I would like to state that I support this Adjournment Motion.

Health is a devolved function so this issue falls squarely under our mandate. I have read from news outlets that the number of people who have been infected by the COVID-19 is more than 160,000 globally out of which 76,000 people have recovered. If 76,000 people have recovered, why can we not find out what the people who have recovered did to recover.

Four people in Kenya have tested positive for COVID-19. We should find out from the 76,000 people who have recovered globally, what treatment they received to help our people. Those of us who are not infected should follow the Government's instruction on sanitization. Hand sanitizers are not available but we are advised to use running water and soap as an alternative. We are advised to avoid crowded places such as weddings, burials and other social ceremonies. Many social gatherings have been banned to contain the virus but what will happen to the people who live in big slums such as Riki Slum in Nanyuki?

Madam Temporary Speaker, face masks can be provided for free to the people in the slums. I guess the face masks are not so expensive. As I am a Member of the Committee on Health, I request that our Committee sits twice weekly to get briefs from the National Emergency Response Team and for us to visit our counties to access preparedness.

I thank you.

Sen. Wambua: Madam Temporary Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity. I join my colleagues in supporting the Adjournment Motion by the Senate Majority Leader as amended.

The amendment has made the Motion a lot more palatable. Leadership should never create impression that they are running away from a situation because it would be wrong to pass such a message to Kenyans. As the Senate Majority Leader was moving this Motion, he made it very clear that leaders should be traders in hope. We should speak hope to our people by the things we say and do.

Shutting down operations of the Senate and retreating to our counties is not necessarily speaking hope to our people. When people sensed that there could be a lockdown in Milan, more than 10,000 people left the City and carried the virus with them to many other parts of Italy.

Health is a devolved function. The National Assembly can decide to go on recess if they must. I had a chat with some Members of the National Assembly whose only wish was for the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) to be credited to their accounts so that they can go and give out bursaries and initiate other development. However, the Senate needs to be here to speak hope to our people in circumstances that are not very good for all of us.

So far, the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Health has done a good job compared to his counterpart in Agriculture, who when faced with similar circumstances, has said things that have left Kenyans wondering whether we have leadership or not.

Madam Temporary Speaker, it has been said that there is money which has been given by the World Bank, around Kshs8 billion. It will be very important for this House to be on top of the disbursement and the utilization of these funds.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Order Member! Have you inserted your card at the wrong point?

Sen. Wambua, Proceed.

Sen. Wambua: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker. I think that one minute will be added to my time. There is money that has been given to the national Government to deal with this calamity. This House must ensure that this money goes to proper use.

There is an issue that has been bothering me on behalf of the people of Mombasa - the Senator for Mombasa and Kilifi is here - as a House, we need to apply our minds on the matter of the Likoni Ferry; the congestion at the holding bay as Kenyans cross the channel. If - God forbid - we got one person infected by this virus and we put them at this holding bay where people breathe into each other's mouth, we will have a calamity of a magnitude that we cannot deal with.

I support the Adjournment Motion with amendments. This House must continue to be on top of this situation as it continues to unfold.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Thank you Senator. Sen. (Dr.) Milgo, you have the Floor.

Sen. (Dr.) Milgo: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker, for giving me a chance to speak to this Motion. I support this Motion with amendments because of the fact that this is a critical period in our country and as the leadership, we cannot afford to go and bury our heads in the sand.

Madam Temporary Speaker, COVID-19 is sweeping across the whole world and has already killed over 7,000 people. The most important issue is control. As I support this Motion, the two weeks are enough for us so that we can come back, monitor and direct what should be done in various counties in order to curb this spread.

The two weeks is also a way of quarantining ourselves. The two weeks are Biblical because issues of quarantining are very important.

In the Holy book of Isaiah, Chapter 26: 20-21:

“Go home, my people, and lock your doors! Hide yourselves for a little while until the LORD’s anger has passed.”

Madam Temporary Speaker, by the time we come back in two weeks, some solution will have been found as appertains to how to manage the virus. Somebody has brought caution on the issue of the CS, Ministry of Health whose work is very pleasant, but he should not sit down imagining that being praised right now means he has done very well.

The health workers that are in the first line in the various health units, particularly areas where you are supposed to take the sick or quarantine those declared positive for the virus, should be having the right gadgets. If it becomes unfortunate that we lose one health worker, it is going to be a challenge to every one of us and the whole country because all other health workers will be cautious in approaching the sick people.

The issue of absence of gloves and masks in health facilities should be treated with urgency by the Cabinet Secretary and his Committee. They should ascertain that this particular items are provided right across the counties.

This disease is spreading fast because of the fact that at the close of the 14 days, when somebody has not shown symptoms during the asymptomatic period, that is the time when the virus is spreading. In addition to this, as we look at the way of quarantining, we should think of the people who stay in slums. I see many people coming to town, which means that they are living in a populous setting. They are very many and issues of food should be looked into. The issues of sanitizers whose price is rising from Kshs120 to Kshs3,000 is not acceptable.

In addition, something should be done in this country to put in place punitive measures against people bringing inflation.

Madam Temporary Speaker, as we face this challenge which is going to bring resource not only in our country but from the whole world, we should have a national committee that will think of post Coronavirus disease, which apart from looking at the taxes, they can look at how to stay away from loans and reduce taxable amount in banks. We will see how we can raise our economy from its knees.

Finally, is the issue of misinformation through the media. We are having a lot of issues. As I was coming to the Senate today, I was told that four cases have been found in Nakuru, which is misinformation.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): You have a minute.

Sen. (Dr.) Milgo: Madam Temporary Speaker, that is misinformation which should be checked. In addition to that, care should be taken to avoid issues where somebody will come out and say that there is cure. I remember the case of Loliondo

where several people were going to search for a cure which never was. I have also heard that in Liberia, there are many herbalists.

Recently we heard that in Uganda, they are claiming that there is a vaccine. That will make our people panic. Some unscrupulous people may take this chance to make money.

I support this Motion.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Thank you, Senator. Sen. Faki, proceed.

Sen. Faki: Asante, Bi. Spika wa Muda kwa kunipa fursa hii kuchangia Hoja ya kuairishwa kwa Seneti kama ilivyokarabatiwa na Seneta Ochilo-Ayacko.

Kwanza, ningependa kuipongeza Serikali kwa kuwa wazi kwamba janga la Corona limefika katika nchi yetu ya Kenya, na kwamba, tayari tunawaathiriwa wanne ambao wameweza kutambuliwa na kuwekwa katika quarantine.

Pili, kule Kaunti ya Mombasa siku ya Jumamosi, tulikuwa na mkutano uliosimamiwa na Gavana wa Kaunti ya Mombasa na vilevile Kaunti Kamishna wa Mombasa ili kuweka mikakati ya kupambana na janga hili la Corona. Jambo la kufurahisha ni kuwa, tayari Kaunti ya Mombasa tumejitayarisha na tuna vyumba maalumu ambavyo vimetengwa katika hospitali kuu ya Coast General. Vile vile, kuna hospitali mbili mpya zimejengwa lakini bado hazijawekwa vifaa vinavyoweza kutumika kama mahali ambapo wale wagonjwa wa Corona wanaweza kuwekwa ili waweze kutotangamana na wagonjwa wengine.

Bi. Spika wa Muda, maandalizi yetu yako sawa isipokuwa tuna tatizo la feri. Kwa sababu kama unavyojua, kivukio cha Feri ya Likoni kinahudumia wakaazi laki tatu kwa siku. Kwanzia saa kumi na mbili ama saa kumi na moja alfajiri hadi saa tano usiku wanaotumia kivuko kile ni zaidi ya watu laki tatu. Vile vile, magari zaidi ya elfu tatu yanatumika katika kivuko kile.

Bi. Spika, wa Muda, jambo la kusikitisha ni kwamba, katika feri ile, mbali na kuwa kuna msongomano, hatujakuwa na mikakati yoyote ya kuhakikisha ya kwamba, wananchi walioko pale wako salama. Ijapokuwa mkutano wa juzi ulipitisha kuekwe maji ya kuosha mikono na sabuni na vile vile vifaa vya sanitizer. Jambo hilo halijatekelezwa kwa sababu ya ukosefu wa hela.

Bi. Spika wa Muda, huduma za feri bado ziko katika mikono ya Serikali ya kitaifa. Bunge la Seneti linafaa kupeleka malalamiko kwa Serikali ili kuhakikisha kwamba feri zinaangaliwa. Hii ni kwa sababu huduma za feri ni kiunganishi baina ya Kenya na nchi jirani ya Tanzania.

Jana Waziri wa Afya wa Jamhuri ya Tanzania alitangaza kwamba ugonjwa huo pia umefika nchini Tanzania. Kwa hivyo, ipo hatari kubwa ya wagonjwa kupitia mpaka wa Lunga Lunga na mipaka mingine kupitia kivuko cha feri. Katika feri, watu huwa wako *bumper to bumper* kama wanavyosema wataalamu. Hakuna nafasi.

Kuna feri ambazo huvukisha raia wakati watu ni wengi, haswa jioni. Kwa hivyo, kuna hatari kubwa ya wananchi kuambukizwa ugonjwa huo. Itabidi Serikali iangazie jambo hilo kwa haraka. Hakuna haja ya kupanga mikakati mingine wakati hatujashughulikia sehemu nyingine ambazo ni hatari zaidi.

Bi. Spika wa Muda, ijapokuwa kuna janga la Covid-19, tusifunge macho kwa masuala mengine. Kwa mfano, juzi kwenye barabara ya Mombasa kuelekea Malindi, watu 16 walipoteza maisha yao kutokana na ajali barabarani. Tunaomba the National Transport and Safety Authority (NTSA) iangalie swala hilo. Hatuwezi kuwa tunajitahidi tusipoteze maisha kwa sababu ya Covid-19, ilhali watu wengine wanapoteza maisha katika barabara.

Asante.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Proceed, Sen. Cherargei.

Sen. Cherargei: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker, for this opportunity. I join the rest of my colleagues in saying that extraordinary times need extraordinary measures especially at such a time. The country has taken bold steps on some of these issues. As a country, we need to put contingency plan to ensure that we arrest the spread of COVID-19, so that Kenyans are not infected or affected in one way or another.

The Government must come up with a contingency plan, especially by way of support programme for Kenyans. Remember our economy is hand to mouth but we are telling people to stay at home.

For the first time, we have a CS for Health by the name Hon. Mutahi Kagwe who fits the bill. Today in the afternoon, he said that water should not be disconnected because of the bills. The Government must come up with a raft of measures in Nairobi, where we have people who live in slums. There is need to suspend rent and other bills such as electricity, so that Kenyans do not have to worry about the monthly bills. These are people who need to go to work daily to pay bills and subsist.

Madam Temporary Speaker, the Government must also agree with companies and other agencies. It must give tax exemptions so that manufacturers are encouraged to lower the cost of basic commodities like soap, bread and other foodstuffs. Kenyans do not have to go out of their way.

I agree that we need to go on a two weeks' recess and come back, but we need direction from you to guide the Committee on Health. In as much as the CS, Hon. Mutahi Kagwe is giving timely updates, we need to get accountability on not only the Kshs6.2 billion that the Government will get from the World Bank, but also a raft of measures put in place. That is important for us as a country.

Napoleon said that leaders are dealers of hope. As leaders, we should not take the back seat. We should be at the frontline, so that the country does not panic, in order to give hope to Kenyans. Kenyans should be encouraged to stay at home.

Madam Temporary Speaker, as a country and Parliament, we also need to be operational. Remember the Executive is now on top gear. There are many legislative and policy interventions by the Executive. Even the county governments may need to put interventions in place.

If all of us go for recess for one month, for example, it means legislative and policy interventions that need to be put in place cannot take place. It also means that we cannot account for these people. Therefore, I urge Parliament not to take blanket decisions on recess without putting into focus legislative issues and policy interventions. Kenyans and the future generation will judge us harshly if we abdicate them at this time when they need us to be at the forefront.

Madam Temporary Speaker, on Saturday, we will hold a national prayer day. Kenya is a God fearing nation and he will continue to protect us.

Sen. Mwaruma: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to weigh in into this issue. First of all, I support the Motion of Adjournment.

This is a problematic disease that manifests itself in terms of colds, coughs and fever just like common flu. So, it is a disease that worries many people because it cannot be distinguished from common flu. However, people should be calm. I would like to give a message of hope that Covid 19 is not a death sentence. Out of all the people who have contracted this disease across the world, only 10 per cent have lost their lives while 90 per cent of the patients have been managed.

I am happy that we are going to counties to see how general management of COVID-19 is undertaken. So, the Motion is timely. We will monitor our counties' and national Government's level of preparedness and in terms of managing COVID-19.

Madam Temporary Speaker, several discussants have said that the World Bank has given us Kshs6.2 billion to help us manage COVID-19. When supporting the amendments to Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko's Motion, I said that these funds need to be devolved. There should be openness in the way they will be managed. This disease will spread to our counties and the people we represent are in the counties. So, we need to know how much will be devolved and how it will be used.

We have no oversight fund, so, if we go to the counties, it might be problematic to move around or find out how the disease is managed and the counties' level of preparedness.

We have money for Committees to work at the counties. So, it is possible that through the able leadership of the House, we shall get a few shillings to facilitate the movement of our Senators who go to the counties.

Madam Temporary Speaker, checking of people who are coming from other counties has not been done well. When I go home from Nairobi, I pass through Kajiado, Tanzania, Tarakea and back to Taita Taveta through Taveta. When a person travels by road, they are not checked. So, the Ministry of Health and all the people who are managing the disease should check people who are coming to the country by road.

We have been told that this disease can be managed with soap and water. Therefore, as Sen. Cherargei has said, the Ministry of Water and all agencies that deal with water should not cut down water supply to markets or houses because we need a lot of it.

I have seen in counties, a situation where the Ministry of Trade has been denied water by the department of water because it has not paid for water in markets. I think that we should now have a paradigm shift and ensure water supply to markets and households, and look at the bills later on.

I think that the Cabinet Secretary, hon. Mutahi Kagwe, has spoken to that and it is something that we should explore, so that we can help our people.

Thank you.

Sen. Sakaja: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker. Today, technology has let me down because I was here very early, but my card was not reflecting.

There is a reason Article 1 of the Constitution says that sovereign power belongs to the people. There are two ways to express it; either directly or through their elected representatives. That is the reason the Congress of the United States has not adjourned. Similarly, the House of Commons and the House of Lords have not adjourned because, in exceptional circumstances, maybe even in a state of emergency, that then people can suspend that sovereignty and leave it to other arms of Government, like the military or the executive.

Even though I agree with the amendment by Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko on principle, I am against this adjournment of the Senate, for scientific and legal reasons. The legal reasons are that the people today need us more than before. The action that is being taken at a time of crisis needs oversight. We need to ask questions and in many different aspects. Questions must be asked.

There is no value in Sen. Mwaruma going to walk around hospitals in Taita-Taveta. Kenyans need him more here to oversight what interventions are being done on the national response. It is not that there are 67 people here every day; just look at how many we are here right now. Many times, we are fewer.

I have given an example of the Congress that has just passed what we call The Corona Relief Bill. What legislative intervention are we giving Kenyans at this point? There is a Coronavirus Disease response legislation being debated in the House of Lords as it has come from the House of Commons. What are we doing apart from going home?

Madam Temporary Speaker, in those 14 days, I am glad that you are a scholar and an academician, scientifically, at the outset of a pandemic or a disease like this, the first two weeks are not the time to quarantine because the cases will definitely go up. You must wait for a threshold. If you look at any management of epidemics such as this, there is a threshold of a number of cases that then can lead to slowing down, scaling down or shutting down.

As much as I support the Government's initiative, the Government has intervened and said that we do not do what is not essential. However, as I asked earlier: Is representation of the people and oversight at a time of crisis an essential service? It is extremely essential. Here, we enjoy the comfort of having sanitizers, running water to wash our hands, sit at a social distance and address these issues. We are safer than the people we represent. In these 14 days, what are we going to do?

In fact, if Nairobi scientifically or in terms of pandemic is seen as ground zero, where there have been cases, sending 67 people to the counties is going against the whole thinking of the quarantining. This is because in case anyone of us has the virus, we will infect people in the counties. So, we will actually be spreading it. That is what happened in Milan; people moved away and ended up spreading it.

Lockdown is done when a mathematical level of infections occurs and there are many illustrations that we have seen internationally. For now, that sovereignty of Kenyans needs to be exercised. We need to ask questions such as: Is there an economic stimulus that we are thinking about because there are people who will be affected right now? If the Committee on Finance and Budget was working, it would halt some taxes on certain essential commodities. That is the work we should be doing right now.

Madam Temporary Speaker, at this point, we should be talking about the proposal that was given on cashless transactions by the Government. How are we going to sit down with Cabinet Secretary, Mr. Ukur Yatani and the Central Bank to agree on how to effect these cashless transactions for the next one month? That is the work of the Senate. That is what we need to be talking about.

Regarding cushioning the poor in the informal settlements, Nairobians cannot have the luxury of having social distancing in markets and bus stations. If you go to Kencom right now, you will see what I am talking about. Here, we should be talking about how we will address these issues.

The Committee on Roads and Transportation should be talking to Kenya Ferry Services, commuters and the operators of *matatus* on what they are doing; we should not go on a break. This is not the time to go on a break.

Madam Temporary Speaker, we must give Kenyans confidence and tell them the truth. Statistically, the cases will go up. We have only just got four cases. In fact, when we come back from these two weeks, there will be more cases of COVID-19. That is the time we should be going and not now. We should be going then, when we have already set down measures, accountability mechanisms and a reporting mechanism by the Ministry. After we have looked at these economic issues and social issues, then we can say, now we can break for two weeks because the cases have reached 100 or 50.

On Saturday we are going to be praying for this country that the cases do not go up. Statistically, you cannot reinvent this thing. It is bound to happen. The 23 people who came from the plane and were quarantined, have fortunately tested negative. However, we must face reality. The reason why Kenyans are saying that Sen. Mutahi Kagwe is doing a good job, is because he is being honest; he is communicating. Panic - like what we are doing today - is when you act without sufficient information. How then will we get information on behalf of Kenyans while we are on recess?

Madam Temporary Speaker, I know that possibly, I will be the only one on record to oppose this Motion because everyone is supporting and will vote for it, but I still think this is not the right move to make. It is a move made out of panic. Let us have Kenyans who are not delivering essential services to work from home. We cannot legislate from home. We cannot come up with intervention measures for this country from home. We cannot talk about how to cushion the poor people in different parts of this country from home. Kenyans need us now.

A General does not run away at the time of war. A Captain is not the first to leave when the boat is sinking. That is the time he helps everybody else get out of the boat when the boat is about to sink. We can talk about the measures taken in the House of Commons and the Congress that is restricting visitors and close the catering unit in the Senate. For instance, I have given the officers in my office shifts so that they do not come to work. Right now, I have skeleton staff, the very essential that I need; maybe a driver and my personal assistant. That is enough.

We are here on behalf of Kenyans. For example, if you are not here Sen. Olekina, who will the people of Narok ask questions? If you go to Narok without information, are you adding to the solution or the problem?

I oppose. Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar: Thank you Sen. Sakaja. Sen. Wario, kindly proceed.

Sen. Wario: Asante Bi. Spika wa Muda kwa kunipa nafasi. Ninasimama kuunga mkono Hoja hii na hasa mabadiliko yaliyopachikwa na Seneta wa Migori.

Bi. Spika, kwa kweli, tangu ugonjwa wa (COVID-19) utangazwe kote duniani, hapa Kenya watu wamepata wasiwasi mwingi sana. Kuna uvumi mwingi unaendelea hapa na pale. Mimi naonelea kwamba ni bora Seneti isiirishe vikao vyake kwa sababu wananchi wa Kenya wako na imani sana na Bunge la Seneti. Wanapona Bunge la Seneti liinahirisha vikao vyake, hofu yao itaongezeka maradufu.

Kwa wakati huu ambao tunaenda nyumbani, hata wale ambao wako katika kaunti ambazo sisi tunarudi wanajuwa hii ugonjwa bado haijafika huko Taita Taveta, Tana River na sehemu za chini. Lakini habari wanayopata ni kwamba, huko Nairobi ndiyo watu wamepatikana wakiwa na huo ugonjwa, hasa wale waliosafiri kurudi upande huu.

Bi Spika wa Muda, huko Kaunti ya Tana River, siku hizi watu huulizana, ni watu wangapi wametoka Kaunti ya Jiji la Nairobi. Sisi tukienda tuongezeke huko, watasema tumetoka sehemu ya magonjwa. Kwa vile Hoja imetolewa na pia mabadiliko kuwekwa, sina budi kuunga mkono.

Hoja inasema tuende mapumziko kwa majuma mawili. Tutakaporudi, tutakaa siku moja moja kwa majuma mengine mawili yatakayofuatia ili tuzungumze yatakayojiri.

Kwa kweli, kama leo hatungeairisha kikao chetu, tungekuwa tunafuatilia wenzetu ambao tayari wameambukizwa, na kama idadi hii itaongezeka au kupungua kwa wale walio hospitalini. Kwa walio hospitalini, tunawaomba Mungu, wapate afueni ya haraka na watoke hospitalini. Wakati huu ambao tutaenda nyumbani, tutaenda kuangalia mikakati iliyowekwa katika kaunti ambayo itasaidia kupunguza maambukizi zaidi kwa wakati huu.

Ninaunga mkono.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Asante, Seneta.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko, finally.

Sen. Ochillo-Ayacko: Thank you, Madam Temporary Speaker, for the opportunity to speak to this Motion.

The religious say that, do all you can to protect yourself but seek the protection of God and all will be well. I am glad that as Senators, we are doing as best as we can to ensure this institution outlives us. We are recessing for two weeks so that measures can be put in place to ensure we continue functioning. We are not running away or hiding.

We are ensuring that the institution is safe and that humanely possible, measures are put in place to ensure our continuity is guaranteed. I think that is a sensible thing to do and a reasonable step to take. Otherwise, we would be a reckless institution.

However, to extend it to a month would amount to abdication. We are asking first responders, doctors, security and airport personnel to be on duty 24/7. They are exposed daily in constant touch with people who have this disease. If we are asking them to be on duty, we must equally be on duty to give them support and also get feedback from them and ensure their support is guaranteed and that all systems are putting in place mechanisms to ensure they work and continue to work.

Madam Temporary Speaker, there are two things about the Coronavirus (COVID-19) that we must think of. Many people here are talking about physical death. You cannot run away from physical death. In fact, it is possible that within the two weeks, we will lose one or two of our loved ones or even ourselves. That is what is logically possible and we cannot prevent it.

Let us not think that even these measures that we are putting in place will guarantee that we do not die. In fact, you wonder what kind of life we would have if we did not die. We must die and venture into more adventurous life in heaven. I am told it is so beautiful there. You can only get there if you die. So, we will die. Let us do the best we can to make peace with our Maker so that when we get to the other life, we are not rejected or condemned to purgatory but welcomed to heaven.

The other issue about Coronavirus (COVID-19) is the economic death. There are Kenyans out there who live from one pay check to the other, one wage to the other or one shift to the other. These Kenyans are dying and nobody is speaking about them.

They do not know what they will eat tomorrow if we were to shut down the economy. Those are the Kenyans that we must think about. They may not physically die of COVID-19. I do not even think COVID-19 will kill all Kenyans. However, if these Kenyans, including the *mama mboga*, the *omena* sellers, the *boda boda* community, and the fishing community in Migori County do not eat, they are going to die if the economy is shut down.

As we pretend that we are able to stop physical death, what are we doing about the economic death of our people? Our people will die economically after surviving COVID-19. So, it is important for us to meet once a week to think of our people. We should think of what we will put in place to ensure that beyond physical death, as they still traverse the earth, they survive economically and contribute to the growth of this economy in a positive way.

Madam Temporary Speaker, I am happy that we have finally reached a compromise to look after our own safety. We have also given an opportunity when time arises to think of our people beyond the physical death that we cannot prevent. Some will die, some will suffer in hospitals, but all of us will face economic death because of the shutdown.

The *matatu* and hospitality industries have been hard hit. There are labourers who work in hotels that have been shut down in Mombasa and Nairobi. What will their children eat and all the children are at home? You can imagine ---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Your time is up.

Hon. Senators, pursuant to Standing Order No. 59 (2) (b), I have received communication from the Senate Majority Leader, who is the Mover who was supposed to respond. He has handed the same responsibility to the Senator for Narok, Sen. Olekina.

Sen. Olekina: Madam Temporary Speaker, on behalf of the Senate Majority Leader, I would like to thank all the Senators who spoke very passionately on this matter and who have supported the Motion for Adjournment. This is important--- I can see one of our colleagues sneezing. I hope that they did not travel yesterday.

All the Senators spoke passionately about wanting to see a careful approach of dealing with this pandemic. The Senators spoke about the need for the Government to invest heavily in test kits. This is very important.

One of the things that concerns me is that as MPs in this country, we traverse the whole world trying to learn more on how best we can improve on our legislation framework. By doing so, we do not go there and isolate ourselves. We meet with other legislators and people. By doing so, we put ourselves at risk. The two-week period will give an opportunity to our employer, the Parliamentary Service Commission, to come up with serious mitigating measures that will ensure that we and the people that we represent are safe.

There are key issues that have been spoken about that I want to reiterate. One of them is to do with the issue of the economic stimulus. Sen. Sakaja asked various pertinent questions about what the national Government is doing. Are we talking about coming up with a stimulus package?

Other Senators spoke about money that will be given to this country by the World Bank. It is about Kshs6 billion. I would like to call upon the national Government, through the Ministry of Health, to consider giving a stimulus package to all the 47 counties. I am happy with the work that the CS, hon. Mutahi Kagwe is doing. If each of the 47 counties get Kshs1 billion to help the economy grow, we will help the *mama mboga* and the people who work in the construction sector. We will also ensure that everybody gets tested.

It is very sad that all of us are here.

Recently when we came back from Mombasa, and having interacted with other Senators who travelled, and now that I hear that they were on the same flight with some people who were confirmed to be positive, yet we do not have testing kits---

Therefore, testing kits are important. The best thing that this Government can do, besides setting aside or proclamation of National Prayer Day on 21st March 2020, is to invest more money on free testing kits; good testing kits. People should not start selling fake testing kits.

Madam Temporary Speaker, it is important that during this time, the National Treasury and Central Bank of Kenya come up with measures that will ensure that the perpetual motion machine where we spend, pay money and that money is used to pay taxes for doctors and police--- That motion should continue because if we panic, it will affect the way we grow as an economy.

One thing is very clear; this virus is spreading rapidly. Even though the Senators are taking two weeks off, nothing stops them from meeting with the Cabinet Secretary (CS) privately to hold a press conference. I am sure Sen. Sakaja will be able to do that. I will be concerned if he does not. This is why when we talk about the land use policy, we try to educate people on the dangers of many people living together.

In fact, when you go to some places in this Capital City, for example, Mukuru Kwa Njenga, you will be shocked. If one person is to be infected with that virus, this country will not be able to manage the number of people who will be infected.

Therefore, as we go on recess, it will give us an opportunity. Even for us, as Senators, to spend a lot of time with our constituents. When we go out there and hold

public *barazas*, if some of us are infected, we shall infect an entire constituency and not be able to control it. This virus is spreading rapidly, but instead of being scared and panicking, it is important to give us an opportunity to sit down and evaluate ourselves.

Sen. Orenge said that when you enter a plane you are told that in case of an emergency, you first of all ensure that you put on your life-jacket before helping another person. If there is anything to do with the oxygen, you put on the oxygen masks before helping even your child. These two weeks will give us an opportunity to go back and come back on 31st of March, and continue holding sittings once a week to ensure that we are safe, as well as the rest of the country.

I want to talk about the issue of psychological effect. Earlier on, most Senators spoke about the Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD)---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Just to draw your attention Senator, you have five minutes. I just wanted you to be okay with that.

Sen. Olekina: Thank you Madam Temporary Speaker. I am very cognizant of the time, but I thank you.

Just in conclusion, I want to encourage the Ministry of Health to come up with training on how the medical personnel in the hospitals can deal with the issues of psychological trauma, like PTSD. Currently, we do not know the number of people being diagnosed. However, if anybody is suspected of having been infected with the COVID-19, how do they deal with the issue of self-quarantining, which the CS has said is the law? If you do not self-quarantine, then you face the risk of going to jail.

As I finalise, it is important for us, as we go back to our constituencies and counties, to educate our people. Some of our people have no clue of what is happening in Nairobi. They hear of COVID-19 and ask what it is.

This will give us an opportunity, regardless of whether we have an oversight kitty, to go there. Take some time and set our political differences aside, sit down with governors, share our ideas, go down to the markets, educate the people and make sure that the Ministry of Health can produce and distribute enough sanitizers.

If there are no sanitizers, we should do what this company has done today. I want to recognize this company - I think it is called Pwani Oil Industries - because they have reduced the price of soap and cooking oil. That shows they care about the people.

We can also go there and spend the little money we have; buy sanitizers and put some soap and washing basins outside markets because our people have got to continue earning a living. In doing so, we will be showing them that the most important thing is for them to stay healthy, clean and improve their hygiene.

I beg to reply.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Hon. Senators, as was determined earlier, this matter does not concern counties. So, we will approve the Motion by acclamation.

*(Question of the Motion as amended
put and agreed to)*

Resolved accordingly: -

THAT, AWARE THAT, Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19), a new strain of Coronaviruses that was discovered in December 2019 is an infectious disease known to cause respiratory infections ranging from common cold, fever, tiredness, aches and pains to more severe health complications;

COGNIZANT THAT this epidemic has no known cure and has spread and killed many people over several countries and continents with the potential of affecting a large percentage of the world population, as the impact of the virus is still unfolding;

FURTHER COGNIZANT THAT the World Health Organization (WHO) has declared the Coronavirus Disease (COVID-19) as a pandemic;

AWARE THAT the Government, upon confirmation of Coronavirus cases in the country, has taken various measures aimed at containing the spread of the disease, including suspension of learning in all educational institutions and the need to minimize attendance to various gatherings;

ACKNOWLEDGING THAT Parliament Buildings has high human traffic on any given working day, including Members of Parliament, staff, visitors, school children, visiting delegations and witnesses appearing before the House Committees given the need for Parliament to institutionalize measures to mitigate the crisis posed by the virus;

FURTHER RECOGNIZING the mechanism set out in Standing Order No. 30 to convene a Special Sitting of the Senate;

NOW THEREFORE, notwithstanding the Resolution of the Senate made on 27th February, 2020, pursuant to Standing Order No. 29 approving the Senate Calendar and owing to the need to complement the efforts of the Government in containing the spread of the disease, the Senate resolves to-

- (c) adjourn its Plenary sittings today, 17th March, 2020, for two weeks so as to reconvene on Tuesday, 31st March, 2020 and, thereafter, hold one sitting in each week on Tuesdays for two weeks until Tuesday, 14th April, 2020, and;
- (d) alter its Calendar accordingly.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Hon. Senators, I have a Communication to make.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

SUSPENSION OF COMMITTEE SITTINGS

Following the resolution of the Senate that has just been concluded, I now direct that the sittings of the Committees also shall be suspended for a period of two weeks after which further directions will be given by the Speaker.

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I thank you.

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. (Prof.) Kamar): Hon. Senators, having concluded the business of the day, it is now time to adjourn the House. The Senate therefore, stands adjourned until 31st March, 2020 at 2.30p.m.

The Senate rose at 6.30p.m.