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THE HANSARD

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Wednesday, 22nd February 2023

The House met at 9.30 a.m.

[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Gladys Boss) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

Hon. Deputy Speaker: There being no quorum yet, I order that the Quorum Bell be rung for another 10 minutes.

(The Quorum Bell was rung)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, we now have quorum. We may proceed.

PETITIONS

MITIGATING WATER SCARCITY IN KENYA

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, Article 119 of the Constitution accords any person the right to petition Parliament to consider any matter within its authority. Further, Standing Order No.225 (2)(b) requires the Speaker to report to the House any Petition other than those presented by a Member.

In this regard, Hon. Members, I wish to report to the House that my office has received a Petition from one Eng. Victor Okuna of Post Office Box 828, Migori, calling for the national Government to adopt innovative ways of addressing water problems.

The petitioner notes that many Kenyans do not have access to clean and safe water in adequate quantities contrary to Article 43 (d) of the Constitution and consequently denying people their rights as stated in the same Constitution. He alleges that the current water problem experienced in the country is occasioned by lack of proper policies geared towards mitigating the crisis.

Hon. Members, the petitioner, therefore, proposes that the country adopts what he considers to be a long-term solution to water shortage in the country.

The petitioner claims that his proposal will create one of the avenues for mitigating the myriad challenges of climate change, create youth employment and ensure sustainable supply of water in the rural parts of the country.

The petitioner further proposes that boreholes be drilled, equipped and solarised in every ward across the country every year except in the 85 wards in Nairobi County and major towns, which have water and sewerage systems. The petitioner thus prays that this House considers amending the Water Act, 2016 to provide for a Ward-Based Water Supply System.

Hon. Members, having established that the matter raised in the Petition is well within the authority of this House, and further that the matters raised in the Petition are not pending before any court of law, constitutional or legal body, I hereby commit the Petition to the Public Petitions Committee for consideration pursuant to Standing Order 208A.

The Committee is required to consider the Petition and report its findings to this House and to the petitioner in accordance with Standing Order 227 (2).

Hon. Members, I thank you.

We shall allow two or three Members to comment on this particular Petition. Those who want to participate, kindly press the intervention button.

Member for Funyula, Hon. Wilberforce Oundo.

Hon (Dr) Ojiambo Oundo (Funyula, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. The Petition is timely. It is obvious that Kenya is a water scarce country and many people go without water. Many people travel endless hours and endless kilometres looking for water. Many Kenyans believed and trusted that with devolution, some of these mundane and basic issues were going to be resolved. Unfortunately, 10 years after devolution, we still have nagging water problems in many parts of this country. The country has pumped billions upon billions of shillings to the devolved units but there are no tangible results.

I sympathise and emphasis with the petitioner and the many women who bear the burden of looking for water in the country all over the places to provide it for domestic use and for their animals. I support the Petition and hope that once it is processed, we will have a basis upon which to amend the Water Act to ensure that water is supplied to every single homestead as it was the goal of the Government at independence.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I support the Petition.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. I now call upon the Hon. Member for Mandera North, Hon. Bashir Abdullahi.

Hon. Major (Rtd.) Abdullahi Sheikh (Mandera North, UDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. At the outset, I support this Petition. It is a good Petition. Water is life. As I stand in this House, I know that drought is ravaging most parts of the country, and more so in the pastoral counties. The situation is actually dire. This Petition is timely because without water, nothing can move on.

Yesterday, I watched a news clip on *Citizen TV*, of a foreigner who was crying because she was touring some parts of Wajir and she could feel that the situation in that area was actually worse than that in Syria and Lebanon in terms of how drought is biting. It was just too painful to watch a foreigner crying and asking how this can happen. To add to that, this is a matter in respect of which, at some point in time, this House will probably be asked to rise to the occasion and discuss as a matter of national emergency.

I appreciate the fact that the Water Act is outdated. This Petition will make sure that the Act is amended so that water issues are articulated at the ward level. The issue of drought is horrendous. It is too bad in most parts of the country, and more so in the pastoral areas. I hopeful that the Supplementary Budget has provisions for drought emergencies. We call upon the Ministries concerned to ensure that those funds are immediately sent to the counties that are in dire need.

I support this Petition as it is time to act. I call upon Hon. Members to rise to the occasion and support people who are facing the worst crisis in terms of drought.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you Hon. Members for keeping it short so that more Members can participate. I now call upon the Member for Kitui South, Hon. Racheal Nyamai.

Hon. (Dr) Racheal Nyamai (Kitui South, JP): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I support this Petition, which seeks to have the Water Act amended so that it focuses on the counties. There is a severe drought in the country, and more so in the areas where some of us come from – the lower Eastern part of the country that comprise Kitui, Machakos and Makueni counties. People walk long distances searching for water because of the severe drought. So, I would like to encourage the Public Petitions Committee to give a hand on this Petition and support it so that the engineer who has brought it to this House can have an opportunity to have a good a report which will enable the Water Act to be amended to focus on the wards.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, you look elegant in that seat. I cannot sit before I acknowledge that fact. Thank you for wearing that fabulous African dress. You look so good as you preside over this House. Thank you also for supporting the Kenya Women Parliamentarian Association's (KEWOPA) theme of supporting our local designers and *fundis* so that they can put food on their tables.

Thank you very much, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Nyamai. I now call upon the Member for Turkana Central, Hon. Joseph Emathe.

Hon. Joseph Emathe (Turkana Central, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity. Let me say at the outset that I support this Petition. It is timely having been brought when we are experiencing drought all over Kenya.

Although water is a devolved function, I would propose that in the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) deliverables, water be also listed at the board level so that we may be given 2 per cent of the national revenues to also see how we can contribute towards addressing this problem. Functions go with resources. That is number one.

Secondly, it is pleasing to listen to the good stories from Israel—that Israel is one of the countries deemed or praised to have best access to water in the world. As at now, Israel is refilling the Sea of Galilee. It is desalinating the Mediterranean Sea's water to refill the Galilee Sea. It is said the refilling is giving upward levels of half a metre of water per year into Galilee. Israel is able to export water to neighbouring countries like Jericho and Bethlehem. Learning from Israel should be advantageous to us. In counties like Turkana, we have aquifers. It is said that one of the biggest aquifers in Lotikipi in Turkana West can serve Kenya for more than 70 years without recharge. It looks like we have a lake in those areas. We have so many other aquifers in Turkana. They are more than five. If we harness them, we can have adequate water for the whole of Kenya. It can even be exported to other countries.

I support the Petition, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I now call upon the Nominated Member, Hon. John Mbadi.

Hon. John Mbadi (Nominated, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I also support the Petition.

The issue of water is very critical. It is so frustrating to those of us who come from constituencies where water scarcity is real and we do not have much spring water – especially for women who have to cut short their sleep very early in the morning. At 3.00 a.m., you find women going to fetch water. That is why when the NG-CDF Board insisted at one point that I should not use the NG-CDF money to drill water, citing devolution, I said that I am doing it in schools. They asked why I was giving water to the community. I said, "If you do not give water to the community and provide it to schools alone, people will destroy the water projects." I have been using the NG-CDF that way in the period I have been an elected Member. I initiated so many water projects, courtesy of the NG-CDF.

My last comment is that I do not understand why this Petition would even come here in the first place. We vote money to the counties but the functions that are devolved are not being funded. Then, again, we are required to set aside resources to fund the same functions. I urge the counties to further devolve the funds that we give them. They gain nothing by centralising the funds at the county level. They should decentralise the funds further, to the ward-level, to ensure that the services needed at the local levels are implemented.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Let us hear the Hon. Member for Kilifi North, Hon. Owen Baya.

Hon. Owen Baya (Kilifi North, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. First, I thank the petitioner for bringing this Petition. It is aptly and on time. One of the issues we have about

the water sector is that while the Constitution devolves water, the laws and statutes that exist have not fully devolved the water function. Many functions have remained with the national Government. For example, the bulk water supply companies are still run by the national Government. This gives the counties an excuse to not ensure that water reaches where it is supposed to reach. I urge the committee that will take up this Petition to look at the statutes that regulate bulk water supply operations. We have the Ministry of Water, Sanitation and Irrigation in this country at the national Government level. The Ministry is fully funded with lots of money yet the water function is devolved to the counties and the counties do not have the requisite money to provide water. We need to look at whether we really meant what we said in the Constitution – that, money should follow functions. The function of providing water is in the counties. There are very many counties suffering from water deficit and people are suffering. The budgets for water in the counties is very minimal. It cannot sustain provision of water in the counties. Why I like most about this Petition is the aspect of reviewing the statutes to ensure that water is devolved. If water services, as a function, is supposed to be devolved, let the funds be also devolved. Let the counties have the money to ensure that water is provided. In the Coast region, we have the Coast Water Works Development Agency (CWWDA) managed by the national Government. The big pipelines are managed by CWWDA, which is okay because they are trans-county or inter-county. Again, how much money do the counties have to ensure that they get water from the bulk supplier and supply it to households?

Another important aspect is the cost of water. Today water is sold very expensively to people who do not have water at home. Even for those who have metered water, we have heard that water reticulation and the cost of water supply will now go up. If there is something that this country needs to do is to reduce the cost of water. The water companies in counties need to review their policies. We also need to look at the very many small parastatals that manage water. Examples are the Water Resources Management Authority (WARMA) and the Water Services Regulatory Board (WASREB). That is so that the cost can go down. If you drill a borehole today, as I have seen in Kilifi County, you have to get a permit and pay big fees. If you do not do so, WARMA will come and remove your equipment from it and seal the borehole. I always ask myself this question: What is the role of WARMA? Is it to ensure that there is water in this country or to look for money through borehole drilling? We need to collapse all the parastatals that manage the water sector and have only one agency to run water. We should then devolve the water function properly to the county level so that people in this country do not suffer from water deficiency.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Baya. Lastly, I call upon the Hon. Member for Nyamira County, Hon. Jerusha Momanyi.

Hon. Jerusha Momanyi (Nyamira County, JP): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, for according me this opportunity to talk on this Petition. This Petition is timely. If you look at what has been going on in Kenya, right from December to this day, you will realise that women do not sleep. Some people think that women get their sleep at 3.00 a.m. but they do not sleep at all. Right from 6.00 a.m., they go and line up for water at some water springs. Whenever women think of water, they are never in peace. This Petition is timely. I urge this House to debate it and accept it simply because we know that water is life. Water bills have gone very high in this country. We urge the Government to look into water bills. When we talk of water being life, it means most people are going to die because they will not access water because it is expensive.

Secondly, I appreciate you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I have never seen you in a veil like you are today.

(Applause)

This is because you love the women of this country and you are acting as an example. This time round, as you sit there as the Deputy Speaker, we want you and us, as women in Parliament, to be examples. That will make sure that the women who make those veils and the clothes we are wearing are heard and appreciated, and their markets are uplifted through giving them morale in the way they make their dresses.

Thank you, we appreciate.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Members for those kind words. We continue to support all those local *fundis*.

This Petition has received a lot of interest from Members. We cannot have everyone speaking on it but I encourage Members to attend the Public Petitions Committee meetings to give their views there. Hopefully, a Member will adopt the Petition and table a Bill to amend the Water Act.

Hon. Fabian Muli (Kangundo, GDDP): On a point of order, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Fabian, I see you. I will give you a chance to raise your point of order in a minute. We will now leave this Petition to the Public Petitions Committee, chaired by Hon. Nimrod Mbai. What is your point of order?

Hon. Fabian Muli (Kangundo, GDDP): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I have a special submission on this Petition. I will not feel well if I do not submit it at this stage.

As regards this Petition on matters of water, we have issues of drilling of boreholes and construction of dams. It is high time we solved this nonsense of drilling boreholes and constructing dams. We need to cut the entire water budget and give it to Kenya Army to bring water from the Indian Ocean and Lake Victoria and pump it to the whole country. That is my submission and I would have felt bad if I had not put it on record at this time.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Next Order.

PAPERS

Hon. Baya, on behalf of the Leader of the Majority Party, proceed.

Hon. Owen Baya (Kilifi North, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I also want to appreciate your *Kitenge* dress. Probably, you need to set aside a day for men to wear their *Kitenge* shirts so that they can also support the male fashion designers.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I beg to lay the following Papers on the Table:

1. Reports of the Auditor-General and Financial Statements in respect of the following institutions for the year ended 30th June, 2019 and the certificates therein:
 - (a) Maasai Technical Training Institute;
 - (b) Kapcherop Technical and Vocational College; and,
 - (c) Nyandarua Institute of Science and Technology.
2. Reports of the Auditor-General and Financial Statements in respect of the following institutions for the year ended 30th June, 2020 and the certificates therein:
 - (a) Maasai Technical Training Institute;
 - (b) Kipsoen Technical and Vocational College;
 - (c) Kajiado West Technical and Vocational College;
 - (d) Kapcherop Technical and Vocational College;
 - (e) Narok West Technical Training Institute;
 - (f) Kenya Institute of Supplies Examination Board;
 - (g) Kenya Trade Network Agency (KENTRADE);

- (h) Maasai Mara Technical and Vocational College;
 - (i) Kiptaragon Technical and Vocational College; and,
 - (j) Mabera Technical and Vocational College.
3. Reports of the Auditor-General and Financial Statements in respect of the following institutions for the year ended 30th June, 2021 and the certificates therein:
- (a) Nyakach Technical and Vocational College;
 - (b) Sang'alo Institute of Science and Technology;
 - (c) Eldama Ravine Technical and Vocational College;
 - (d) Kimasian Technical and Vocational College;
 - (e) Bomet University College;
 - (f) Shamberere Technical Training Institute;
 - (g) Rift Valley Technical Training Institute;
 - (h) Konoin Technical Training Institute;
 - (i) Coast Development Authority;
 - (j) Kenya Coast National Polytechnic;
 - (k) Kisii National Polytechnic;
 - (l) Kibwezi West Technical and Vocational College;
 - (m) Baringo Technical College;
 - (n) Chamasiri Technical and Vocational College;
 - (o) Kendege Technical and Vocational College;
 - (p) Ebukanga Technical and Vocational College;
 - (q) Omuga Technical and Vocational College;
 - (r) Rangwe Technical and Vocational College;
 - (s) Tana and Athi Rivers Development Authority (TARDA);
 - (t) Water Sector Trust Fund;
 - (u) Sunset Hotel Limited;
 - (v) Roads Maintenance Levy Fund-Kenya Wildlife Service; and,
 - (w) Meru University of Science and Technology.
4. Reports of the Auditor-General and Financial Statements in respect of the following institutions for the year ended 30th June 2022 and the certificates therein:
- (a) Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission;
 - (b) Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission–Staff House Mortgage and Car Loan Scheme;
 - (c) Kisumu Urban Project (Cash Expenditure Fund)– KE 1035.01.G;
 - (d) National Humanitarian Fund;
 - (e) Revenue Statements on Ministry of Defence;
 - (f) Lake Victoria Environmental Management Project Phase III (LVEMP) Project Preparatory Advance No.V1570–KE; and,
 - (g) Audit Report on European and Developing Countries Clinical Trials Partnership (EDCTP) for period 2018/2019 to 2021/2022.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Next Order.

STATEMENT

APPOINTMENT OF UNIVERSITY CHANCELLORS

Hon. Owen Baya (Kilifi North, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 44 (2) (c), I rise to request for a Statement from the Chairperson of the Departmental Committee on Education regarding the appointment of university chancellors as provided for in the Universities Act, 2012.

Section 38 (1) of the Universities Act states that every university shall have a chancellor. Further, Section 38 (1) (a) provides that the President, in accordance with the procedures set out in the Second Schedule, shall appoint the chancellors of universities whose functions include being the titular head of the university and conferring degrees and granting diplomas, certificates and other awards in the name of the university.

Section 38 (5) (a) of the Universities Act states that the functions of the chancellor under sub-section (3) may, in the absence or incapacity of the chancellor, be performed by the Chairperson of the Council for a period not exceeding three months.

Pwani University, among 28 other universities in the country, has not had a chancellor for a period of four years since 2018 as a result of the failure by the previous administration to appoint chancellors in the country hence incapacitating the functions and prosperity of the universities. During that period, Pwani University has held four graduations presided over by the Chair of the Council, which is against the statute that caps exercise of such power by the Chair of the Council to a period not exceeding three months.

(Hon. Johana Ng'eno consulted loudly)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Allow Hon. Baya to seek his Statement, Hon. Johana Ng'eno. You have just arrived.

Hon. Owen Baya (Kilifi North, UDA): Low tones, please.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the other universities which have not had chancellors in place include:

1. South Eastern Kenya University;
2. Laikipia University;
3. Kirinyaga University;
4. Chuka University;
5. Cooperative University of Kenya;
6. Kaimosi Friends University;
7. Taita Taveta University;
8. Maseno University;
9. Dedan Kimathi University of Technology;
10. Technical University of Mombasa;
11. Tharaka University;
12. Jaramogi University of Science and Technology;
13. Karatina University;
14. Tom Mboya University;
15. Rongo University;
16. Kabianga University;
17. Kibabii University;
18. Moi University;
19. Garissa University;
20. Technical University of Kenya;
21. Murang'a University of Technology;
22. Kisii University;
23. Maasai Mara University;
24. Multi Media University;

25. Masinde Muliro University of Science and Technology;
26. University of Embu;
27. Alupe University;
28. University of Eldoret, where the second term of the chancellor expires on 14th July, 2023; and,
29. Meru University of Science and Technology, where the second term of the chancellor is in July, 2023.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, it is against this background that I seek a Statement from the Chairperson of the Departmental Committee on Education on the following:

1. Could the Chairperson explain measures that the Government has put in place to fast-track the appointment of university chancellors for the affected universities within the shortest time possible to ensure that the legality of the degrees being conferred are not challenged in courts of law?
2. Could the Chairperson provide a timeline within which the chancellors of the said universities, particularly Pwani University, will be appointed as set out in the Second Schedule of the Universities Act, 2012?

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I seek the statement as the Member for Kilifi North.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Kilifi North. What is your point of order? You just have to press the intervention button. You do not have to speak out aloud.

Hon. Emmanuel Wangwe (Navakholo, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. First and foremost, allow me to join my colleagues in appreciating you as an African lady. You are well dressed and that cannot go unnoticed.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, my point of order is about the Statement that has just been sought. Whereas I acknowledge the Member as having stated that he is the Member for Kilifi North, would I be in order to ask him, in his capacity as the Deputy Leader of the Majority Party, if it is in order for him to request for a Statement yet in law he and the Leader of the Majority Party are the only people allowed to bring any communication from the national Government to this House? He is questioning the same Government he speaks for in this House.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I will let Hon. Owen Baya respond to that one.

Hon. Owen Baya (Kilifi North, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, my being the Deputy Leader of the Majority Party does not take away my right to represent the people of Kilifi North in this House. I am asking the Departmental Committee on Education to look into this issue because it does not just affect Kilifi North. My role of oversight in this House has not been taken away by virtue of being a member of the leadership. I rest my case.

I thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I think that is well answered. I will now commit this particular Statement request to the Departmental Committee on Education, chaired by Hon. Julius Melly. Next Order.

MOTION

DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ON STANDARDIZATION AND PRODUCTION OF SCHOOL UNIFORMS

Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba (Githunguri, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, I rise to move a Motion seeking to introduce standardisation of uniforms in schools in Kenya but before I do so, I want to congratulate you for taking the front row in promoting local designers in Kenya. You are wonderfully dressed.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, allow me to begin by stating that school uniform is an identifying standardized outfit or style of dress worn specifically by students in educational institutions in Kenya. It is basically a school's dress code. Generally, uniforms enhance uniformity among students irrespective of their financial status, race, colour or fashion preference. Uniform also improves the learning environment by instilling discipline. Uniform also gives students a sense of belonging to a particular school.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Wamuchomba, just read the Motion as it is in the Order Paper then you can say what you have to say about it and call upon your seconder to second it.

Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba (Githunguri, UDA): I am well guided, Hon. Deputy Speaker but I moved this Motion last week.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Last week you gave notice of the Motion. Today you should move it as it is published on the Order Paper.

Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba (Githunguri, UDA): I stand guided.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion:

THAT, aware that school uniform is a variety of standardized clothing worn by students in educational institutions, creates homogeneity among students irrespective of their socio-economic status or fashion preference; further aware that school uniforms keep students focused on education, not clothes, reducing peer pressure and bullying, enhancing school pride, unity and community spirit as they go a long way in contributing to students' sense of belonging to their school's population; appreciating that in Kenyan education system, schools across the country, whether private or public schools, require that students wear school uniform in order to be allowed to attend classes; concerned that the cost of uniforms has continued to escalate becoming prohibitively expensive for the poorest within the community with some schools demanding that parents pay uniform money to specific school accounts, a move that locks out many children whose parents cannot afford the expensive uniforms as listed by schools, now therefore, this House resolves that the Government, through the Ministry of Education, develops a policy on standardization and production of school uniforms in the country.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, aware that we have a problem, allow me to begin by stating that school uniform is an identifying standardised outfit or style of dress worn specifically in an educational institution. It is basically a school dress code. Generally, school uniforms enhance uniformity among learners irrespective of their financial status, race, colour or fashion preference. Uniforms also improve the learning environment, thereby instilling discipline and safety. Uniforms also give students a sense of belonging to a particular school and create an identity for the school in the community. Uniforms are believed to have benefits such as improving academic performance, instilling discipline, improving attendance and retention and, most importantly, covering the gap between the rich and the poor. Many schools around the world today have implemented uniform dress codes in the school system to prevent their students from wearing inappropriate clothing items to school. School uniforms are common in primary and secondary schools in various countries.

It is worth noting that the Kenya government, in its quest to ensure universal access to education, has removed significant obstacles to school attendance by providing free primary and secondary school education through capitation. However, the cost of education still remains very high because households are supposed to provide non-discretionary items such

as school uniforms. There is no explicit or significant support for the provision of uniforms to students in schools. Stakeholders in the education sector continue to lobby for more accessible education through the reduction of the cost of school uniforms and the elimination of other costs. While several countries in sub-Saharan Africa have eliminated school fees, other significant costs, including the cost of providing school uniforms for children, still remain in Kenya.

The cost of school uniforms in Kenya remains a dominant obstacle to education opportunities for poor and vulnerable students in primary and secondary school. It is important to note that school uniforms in Kenya remain non-standardized and are sold in a highly fragmented market. This has led to an even higher cost of learning. It is important to note that Kenya adopted a policy on universal access to education. The policy seeks to ensure that all children are enrolled in primary school and complete their secondary school education with a 100 per cent transition rate. Despite this effort, the high cost of living and poverty still remain and prevent many students from joining secondary schools – a situation that is continuing to worsen because of the exorbitant cost of school uniforms in Kenya.

Standardisation of school uniforms will ensure that all parents can afford uniforms and students from vulnerable families and low economic status will not feel out of place. They will not feel underdressed and insecure. This will reduce competition and students' self-esteem and morale will be boosted, which will eventually increase their focus on studying and improve enrolment levels in both primary and secondary schools.

Standardisation of school uniforms will also help the Government achieve its goal of education for all and the Medium-Term Development Goals. It will also possibly enable the Government to fully implement its policy on 100 per cent transition to secondary school.

Let me conclude by reiterating that while Kenya has been relatively successful in addressing barriers to education including standardisation of school fees, many challenges in the education sector still remain. One of the challenges is school uniforms. The lack of standardisation of uniforms adds extra expenses to families' already tight budgets as parents are required to purchase uniforms at increased prices and at specific outfitters and shops.

It is for this reason, and pursuant to Standing Order 33(2), that I rise to seek leave of this House in order to discuss this definite matter of urgent national importance. I ask my colleague, Hon. Onesmus Ngogoyo from Kajiado North Constituency, to second this Motion.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: You may proceed. Give him the microphone.

Hon. Onesmus Ngogoyo (Kajiado North, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I rise to second the Motion by the Member for Githunguri, Hon. Wamuchomba. I want to bring to the attention of this House that it has become more expensive to buy school uniforms than to support a day school-going secondary school child.

In the recent Form One enrolment, one of the scenarios in my constituency is where you find a child spending about Ksh14,000 to buy a school uniform yet school fees for a day school-going child is about Ksh9,000. For this reason, I urge the House to approve this Motion. Our vulnerable children have a big problem accessing school uniforms. This goes a long way in affecting their future. Most importantly, many parents are unable to support their children.

In terms of basic economics, economies of scale dictate that when you produce in bulk, you reduce the cost. The more you produce in bulk, and in this case, the more children are enrolled in schools, the more expensive school uniforms have become. We want to support local designers. In fact, it is notable that women parliamentarians look very beautiful in their local outfits this week. I do not know what was happening before but this week, they look beautiful. We should change the Standing Orders to have them dress like you and the others that are very well-dressed every day. I told Hon. Wamuchomba who brought this Motion that I am even more comfortable sitting around her.

With those remarks, I second the Motion and ask the House to standardise school uniforms to enable children in Lodwar, Kajiado and Nyamira to access opportunities equally.

Thank you very much, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you very much. I wish to also recognise the Chairperson of the Kenya Women Parliamentary Association (KEWOPA), Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba, together with the Secretary-General of the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) Party, Sen. Veronica Maina, who started the initiative to support hustler *fundis* in Kenya by encouraging us to wear locally made dresses. That is a wonderful initiative and we shall keep it up.

(An Hon. Member spoke off-record)

I will give you an opportunity in a minute.

(Question proposed)

I will now call upon a few Members to contribute to this Motion, if there are any. Hon. Member for Kilgoris, Julius ole Sunkuli.

Hon. Julius Sunkuli (Kilgoris, JP): Thank you very much, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you and the rest of the ladies, but I think you stand out among them as the most well-dressed today.

On the issue of uniforms, when I first joined school in 1969, I came from a more enlightened family because my uncle was a teacher. On my first day in school, I reported to school in a long khaki shirt. We did not require trousers at that time. That was the upper-class way of dressing because some of my classmates arrived in class dressed in only a *maasai shuka* and nothing else. The differences were manifested in what students were wearing. A few weeks later, we were given uniforms. Luckily, we went to a Catholic school and the missionaries provided us with uniforms. On the day we wore uniforms, we all looked alike. There was no difference between a child from a rich family, a child from an enlightened family and a child from a poor family. Uniforms have a way of making students equal.

Sometimes I hear people say that we do not need uniforms but they have become part of our learning culture. We must always have uniforms in school. Uniforms distinguish you from students from other schools and give you a sense of pride as far as your personality is concerned. A child from Kilgoris Boys High School looks different from a child from Kisii High School and each of them will have a sense of pride in their uniform.

The only problem in recent days is the way we handle this uniform issue. Many headteachers are using this school uniform as a business for themselves. As a result, they have made connections with producers and vendors of the uniforms. When a student reports to school, he or she is required to go to a particular shop in order to buy uniform. This kind of business has escalated the prices of uniforms. This is because if a school has only one source of uniform, then that means there is no competition and consequently the prices of uniforms will be very high. Other schools have made it a requirement that they should dress in designer uniforms and only have a certain quality. A principal of a school will look at a child's uniform and tell them that it is not pure cotton. In my view, this is where we need to correct ourselves as Kenyans. The question of standardising uniform must be on the colour and the shape of the uniform rather than the texture. We should accept whatever the students can afford as long as it is approximately close in style and colour to what has been recommended by the school.

In the United States of America (USA), only a few schools are required to wear uniforms but even then, the dress that you wear is standardised. Therefore, there is a dress code and you do not just appear in school with anything. However, because of poverty in Kenya, we cannot expect that uniforms become the most expensive part of our education. We would like

to urge the schools to also feel the pain that everybody else is feeling. Instead of requiring that the student wears a particular uniform, we should all look at it again and ask if this is really what a uniform should be. We should also find out if we are making it very expensive.

However, there are those who chose to go to expensive schools and that is part of our democracy. If you choose to go to Hillcrest, then that means you can afford the uniform they are going to prescribe to you. I think if a school like Alliance High School which calls itself *Bush* because of the uniform would like to maintain a high standard of uniform, then it should be allowed to have it. However, as a general rule, our public schools should have uniforms that the students can afford. I think that is the bottom line. As Members of Parliament, we want to help the students to pay school fees and other things. There are many cheques that have been issued to support them in terms of bursaries but when they get there, they are told there is Ksh9,000 or Ksh12,000 which is pending for uniform. We cannot afford to have that kind of scenario where the student is still out because of uniform although the fees has been paid.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, this is the time when Members should start the process of ensuring that our students are not exploited by principals. Further, although the uniform is something that we must support as it is a part of our learning process and pride of a school, it must be made affordable.

I support.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: The Member for Dagoretti North, Hon. Beatrice Elachi. She is not here. Okay, Hon. Suzanne Kiamba, Member for Makueni.

Hon. Suzanne Kiamba (Makueni, WDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity. While I appreciate the Motion on the Floor on the issue of uniform, I have a few questions that I wish the Mover could clarify. First, we already have uniforms in schools now, what new thing are we bringing on board? Are we suggesting that just like we had the buses, we should have all yellow or all green uniforms? If that is the case, I think we could miss the objective of the uniforms. This is because the main objective of uniforms is identification and being able to know which institution has what kind of uniform. This is basically meant for discipline and all other factors that have been explained by the Mover of this Motion.

Secondly, what are we really standardising? Is it the price, style or design? I think we need to be very clear on what in particular we are going to standardise. In the case of the buses, we were standardising the colour because the sizes were different. However, when it comes to uniforms, what are we going to standardise? This is because currently in Kenya, we do not have a school which has no uniform. I think the bone of contention especially in the rural areas is the high prices that some schools are charging on uniforms.

So, Madam Speaker Sir, I really need to understand...

(Laughter)

Sorry, Madam Speaker. I really need to understand the objective of this particular Motion. Otherwise, in my view, it might be a very retrogressive agenda for this country. I cannot imagine a Kenya where every student I see is in green. It is even boring. I need to see green, yellow and other colours. It is also discouraging to the manufacturers. Different colours give beauty. In my view, this Motion needs to be revised. We need to understand its depth and width because without that, it may be very difficult to know what it is that we want changed in Kenya. We should also understand the objective that we are going to achieve by having that.

Personally, I would think the revision would look at the pricing especially in rural areas. Many headteachers are charging a lot of fees and they want very high-class uniform in rural areas where people are used to cheap materials. If that is the intention of this Motion, then I think I would support. However, looking at it as a whole, if what we want is the uniform that I

am seeing with some of the schools that are present here, I think it is proper to have a unique one for every school and area.

I thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I wish to recognise the presence of two schools in the Speaker's Gallery: Wanjohi Mixed Secondary School from Kipipiri Constituency, Nyandarua County and Kanyakine High School from Imenti South Constituency, Meru County.

(Applause)

Hon. Members, you will note and Hon. Wamuchomba will be happy to see that both schools have the same uniform.

I also wish to recognise the following two schools seated in the Public Gallery: Kinderworld Academy from Lang'ata Constituency, Nairobi County and Potterhouse International School from Westlands Constituency, Nairobi County.

(Applause)

I think it will be wrong for me to take all the compliments about my dress code without recognising the *fundis* who did the work: Mrs. Paulina Otieno of Nairobi County and Mrs. Onyango Apollo who has a small kiosk in Eldoret town. *Asante*.

(Applause)

Hon. George Murugara, Member for Tharaka.

Hon. George Murugara (Tharaka, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. You are very right to recognise and appreciate the tailors who have done this wonderful work. I also pay tribute to you as the Deputy Speaker and the Leader of the House and the other ladies who are here. These include Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba, Hon. Haika Mizighi, the First Chairperson - Hon. Martha Wangari, Hon. Beatrice Kemei and the Deputy Majority Whip - Hon. Naomi Waqo.

I also pay tribute to the other ladies who are here, including Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba, Hon. Haika Mizighi, the first Chairperson, Hon. Wangari; Hon. Kemei and the Deputy Whip of the Majority Party. I saw Hon. Caroline Ng'elechei on the other side, the two ladies from Kisii and Nyamira and the other great ladies who are waving here which is wonderful. You are all very well dressed. We, the men, will have to take a cue from you, so that African designers can design for us a dress that will be acceptable in this House, so that we stop wearing these suits which have been worn since 1963 and there before. We continue wearing them whether it is hot or cold.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, allow me to support the Motion by Hon. Wamuchomba as regards school uniforms. As we debate this, we have schools that are here. So, we are able to see exactly what uniforms do. Their importance cannot be overemphasised. It is important that we maintain what was started those days, when formal education was introduced into the country. They used to wear shirts only and vests in form of uniform. Where we have rural schools which are in poor places and have poor parents, school uniforms maybe tattered all the time. They give a sense of belonging to all students. You become proud. You associate yourself with your school. Whenever it is, even if it is a competition, you do the best because you know your school's reputation is at stake. Even when you are out there, in terms of discipline, you have to ensure you are well disciplined. If you misbehave, your school will be put into disrepute.

We know very well that in rural areas, especially constituencies, we have all manner of uniforms that are worn by students. We know very well that school uniforms do not distinguish pupils whether they are from a rich or poor background. There are schools that are considered to be elite and poor in my constituency. However, when they are together and each school has its uniform, no distinction whatsoever can be made between one school and the other. What matters then is the results of every competition, including academic or sports competition. As we debate this Motion, I urge the House to pass it, so that the Government can go to the drawing board and get us working with uniforms that are standardised, especially in terms of prices. We discussed about Competency-Based Curriculum (CBC) yesterday. We have Grade Seven in place. One complaint we are receiving from the schools is the exorbitant price of uniforms. This must be looked into.

The second issue is that every headteacher in every school wants to make a quick buck by selling school uniforms. Some of that uniform is of very low quality and not well tailored. As a result, parents end up paying lots of money because of exorbitant prices, so that they can buy uniform which, to a great extent, is substandard. The Ministry of Education must come up with set standards. This does not mean we have one colour. We are possibly going to have different colours but the same material and format of tailoring, and everything else that is to be done. That way, the price of uniform is likely to be standard and affordable to parents, including those from rural homes and poor places where money is scarce. This idea of telling parents to pay certain sums of money into specific bank accounts and then they go to school to get uniform is what is leading to a rip-off of our parents. If we go back to the days of yore, we may have specific tailors in specific markets and towns who deal in school uniforms. There is possibility of competition which is extremely healthy, especially in terms of sale of goods. Tailors will compete not only on quantity and quality but also in pricing. I believe part of the policy we are calling for is the abolition of schools becoming vendors of school uniform. Let that be left to school outfitters who deal with school uniforms to benefit our children.

As I sit, it is good to point out that when we talk about standardisation and we look back into our constituencies and see the schools we have, and the sort of parents who take those children to school, it is very important. We know that the agenda of this House is to reduce the education burden of our parents. Let them pay less school fees and buy inexpensive but high-quality uniforms, shoes and socks, so that our children can go to school in a dignified manner. They learn in an atmosphere where no child feels to be less than the other. No child should feel inferior because he or she wears bad uniform. As we do this, we are saying education will have a meaning and will benefit our children and ourselves as Kenyans.

Therefore, Hon. Deputy Speaker, I beg to support.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member for Garissa Township, Hon. (Major) Dekow Barrow. Will that be your maiden speech?

Hon. Dekow Mohamed (Garissa Township, UDA): Yes.

Hon. Members: Karibu Bunge.

Hon. Dekow Mohamed (Garissa Township, UDA): Ahsante sana.

(Laughter)

Is the microphone on?

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Yes

Hon. Dekow Mohamed (Garissa Township, UDA): Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Go on.

Hon. Dekow Mohamed (Garissa Township, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, my name is Major Dekow Mohamed Barrow, Member of Parliament for Garissa Township. I have the title, Major, because I was in the Military. I am the second Major in this House.

(Applause)

Unfortunately, I was warned by Hon. Major (Rtd) Bashir that I can only use this title out of this House because he has patented it. As I rise as a new Member of Parliament and the first time I am standing on the Floor of the House, I also got a title from the colleagues here. Some of them gave me a title of being the lowest ranking Member of the House.

(Laughter)

I mean ranking Member of the House. I have noticed that many titles here come with some certain privileges. So, I accept to be the lowest ranking Member of the House. So, I hope that I will be considered with that title in the Standing Orders, so that I can enjoy certain privileges maybe after the Minority Whip or something else.

I represent a constituency which is cosmopolitan in nature. While I was campaigning, I had the opportunity to meet 43 communities in Kenya who reside, do businesses, and look for their livelihoods within my constituency which is partly urban and rural. Thirty or 40 per cent of my constituency is rural and the other 70 per cent is urban. Having said that, I want to first of all thank the people of Garissa Township for giving me this honour to stand in this House to represent them as their Member of Parliament.

Let me thank my predecessor, Hon. Duale, who is the Cabinet Secretary for Defence, for his immense contribution in terms of development and leadership in Garissa Township Constituency. Many of my colleagues ask me if I will fit in his shoes. As you all know very well when Hon. Duale was a Member of Parliament, he was a staunch leader and great debater in this House. At the constituency level, he established a good foundation for me to build on as the next Member of Parliament. I thank everyone who contributed to my win. He also supported me and invested a lot both emotionally and used his resources to ensure I got elected to this House.

As a constituency, we face many challenges which during my term as a Member of Parliament, I will give priority. A major challenge which has affected us is drought although a huge section of my constituency is urban. We depend on livestock business as an economic enabler. The ravaging drought has not only affected my constituency but also 24 pastoralist communities or counties. This has brought many challenges and one we have noticed is climate change refugees. These are people in my constituency or neighbouring constituencies who have lost their livelihoods and have been forced to move to Garissa with nothing. They are being taken care of by donor agencies and the Government of Kenya. This means they have settled on land which eventually will bring conflict among the communities living in my constituency.

Another problem we are facing as a result of drought is parents have lost their livelihoods, and so they cannot fend for their families or take their children to school. This means as a Member of Parliament, I have to take care of the 100 per cent transition to secondary schools and university using the NG-CDF fund I have been allocated. This is a big challenge for me.

As a Member of Parliament, I also need to address issues of education in my constituency. We have an exodus of teachers but fortunately yesterday in this House, we were debating the issue of junior secondary schools and we almost have 100 per cent transition. The biggest problem we have is allocation of teachers by the Teachers Service Commission (TSC). Out of the 30,000 teachers recruited this year, we managed to only get 15. We already had a shortfall in my constituency and we need affirmative action in this area.

Another situation we are facing is with regard to civil documents like passports and identity (ID) cards. In my constituency when young people want to get IDs, they undergo a

very tedious vetting process unlike the rest of the country. We need the Government to relook into this issue of the vetting process which is too tedious and discouraging. On the issue of passports, we had a passport control office in Garissa. Unfortunately, it was moved as a result of politics immediately the former Member of Garissa Township was removed as the Leader of the Majority Party. So, my constituents have to travel to Nairobi to get this important travel document.

I want to bring to your attention that a big number of my constituents go for *Hajj* in Mecca every year to perform a religious duty. They number between 3,000 and 4,000. Also, we have young people seeking employment opportunities in Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) in Somalia and the neighbouring region. They come to seek for this travel document in Nairobi. This is too expensive and it takes too long to access this document. We need this office returned back to Garissa to serve the people of not only Garissa Township Constituency but also the counties of Garissa, Wajir, Mandera, Isiolo and Tana River.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, once again I thank you for giving me an opportunity. *Inshallah* or God willing, I will be participating in debates. The issue on the table today is about standardisation of uniforms. In my own opinion, I do not understand the essence of this Motion. We already have uniforms in schools, so we need to be clear on what we want to standardise. What we should discourage is principals or teachers asking for money to buy school uniforms on behalf of our children. This should be the responsibility of parents. So, I do...

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Your time is up Hon. Member. Members make it brief so that others can have an opportunity. I call upon the Member for Taita Taveta, Hon. Lydia Mizighi.

Hon. Haika Mizighi (Taita Taveta, UDA): Thank you Hon. Deputy Speaker for this opportunity. From the outset I want to support and congratulate Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba for this well thought Motion. I want to say education is an equaliser and there are several things which go with it.

School children come from different backgrounds and it is only uniforms that make them look or feel equal. I support standardisation of school uniforms because they are good for identification. I remember I was in a day school and at times another school would misbehave yet we had a similar uniform. So, we would read in the newspaper that some students from a certain school were misbehaving somewhere or had indiscipline cases. Since their uniform resembled ours, they could not differentiate which school it was.

Therefore, I support this Motion but uniforms should not appear the same. Let us allow a variety of colours but standardisation should come at a point where we should not allow students to go to school in home clothes. When it comes to school uniform, I agree and support it should be allowed because it instils discipline in schools. This is because students look the same in uniform and it is easy for them to conduct themselves in a disciplined manner. This is unlike everybody coming with a design that they want; and therefore, the feeling in school is not in harmony. Some will feel they are better than others; some will feel they have dressed more expensively than the others and therefore, demoralising those who cannot afford the said uniform.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, this is a very good idea only that it needs to be supported. There are some schools that have taken advantage of this issue of uniform. You will find a situation where parents have bought uniforms where they can afford but when they get to school, they are told that is not the one that they want. They are in business. They therefore, make parents return the other uniform that they had already bought and probably, cheaper and made to buy the expensive uniforms being sold in schools. It has become more of a business, and thus a discouragement to parents.

I have witnessed this where I have supported students going to school; and have severally, been told that the uniform we bought in a certain shop was not the right one. When

we went to school, we were told we could not get admitted. For some reason, you find the uniforms sold in schools is just but a business which makes it very expensive for parents.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity; and as I wind up, Hon. Deputy Speaker, you look very smart in your African attire. Congratulations and let us support our local tailors.

God bless you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member for Taita Taveta. I now call upon Hon. Wanjiku Muhia, Member for Kipipiri Constituency, Nyandarua County; and I think your students are here.

Hon. Wanjiku Muhia (Kipipiri, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

I want to welcome students from Wanjohi Mixed Secondary School, their teachers and parents who have visited the National Assembly and Senate to see the proceedings.

I congratulate Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba for bringing up this timely, Motion. As I walked into the Chamber, I tried to identify my students but could not. It is only after seeing two Mukorinos is when I noticed that mine are seated on the front benches. I welcome them.

Having said that, this is a good Motion. Going forward in the current times, we need to standardise many things.

Sometimes, the school uniforms with this current economic hardship are expensive than the school fees which beats logic. School uniform can cost Ksh30,000, Ksh40,000 or even Ksh50,000 especially, in boarding schools while the school fees maybe around Ksh20,000. We, therefore, need a policy that can standardise this. However, we must not forget where we are coming from. As Hon. Haika has indicated, it is good for every school to be allowed the freedom of choosing its own uniform and choice of colour so that they be different in their kind. Even as we do infrastructure currently, you find that school A likes colour green while that of their iron sheets are green, red, blue or whichever.

Identity, therefore, is important because students can be identified by different colours. We should, therefore, not lose it by saying that all children should wear the same uniform. Basically, this is a very good example where their own Member of Parliament cannot identify them in the midst of students from Meru County.

Having said that, we must remember that we are living in hardship and economic crisis. The idea of telling students to all go to point A and buy the shoes and sweaters there when the same items are available in *mitumba* is not right. If a shoe is black, a parent can go to Gikomba or the nearest market and buy a black shoe as long as it has laces as it is required, and the child continues learning.

In my view, the policy is good but we need to identify to make it simple, easy and achievable.

With those few remarks, I support this Motion.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Muhia. I now call upon the Member for Bureti Constituency, Hon. Kibet Komingoi. He seems not to be here. I now call upon Hon. Johana Ng'eno, Member for Emurua Dikirr.

Hon. Johana Kipyegon (Emurua Dikirr, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for allowing me this opportunity to weigh in on this particular Motion.

We must understand that education has to be accessible and cheap. It has to be something that each and every child in the society achieves or access it. There is a saying that education is an equalizer. Wherever you come from, whether from the poorest community, poorest family, remotest area and wherever, once you access education, it makes you equal to those other people.

I believe that the major introduction of this Motion, and I wish it goes a long way in becoming an Amendment to a Bill so that it becomes a law....

When we talk about accessing the free primary education, it has to be completely free, accessible, reachable and of quality.

Among the many issues that we have in our schools that cause our pupils or students drop out of school; and I have taken time to do my assessment, is because of the payments which schools may be demanding from parents. That is one of the biggest cause of school dropouts.

As Members of this House, legislators and representatives of people, we must take time to ensure we make education affordable, reachable and reduce the number of dropouts which is avoidable. There are situations which cause students to drop out of schools which are unavoidable in terms of cost. We should take time as a House to ensure that we make it affordable and accessible to everybody. The introduction of 100 per cent transition has gone a long way but the major impediment is the payments which we are asking these people to make.

Another issue is the introduction of the Junior Secondary School (JSS). It is another opportunity because we are reducing the number of years in secondary schools and bringing them to primary. The reason was cost. This was meant to ensure parents will not incur the cost of students travelling to and fro distant schools or even buy uniform and all those kind of stuff. All these are geared towards reducing the cost of education.

The idea of uniforms which Mhe. Wamuchomba has brought as a Motion is vital. We not only need to look at how we should standardise uniforms... I have also heard Members speak about the fact that uniforms make one look different from the rest and so on and so forth. We need to make our students feel that they are all equal so that some do not feel they are more inferior or superior than the rest. The reason we introduced one uniformed bus colour was so that we make all the schools uniform so that we can identify that this bus belongs to a school. We also need to standardise school uniform with the only different thing being the badge. Let every school come up with a badge, just like all the school buses on the road are yellow. But the name of the school is what differentiates one from the other. What is wrong with that? No school is feeling inferior even if their bus is long and the other one is short. Everybody knows that this is a school bus. Let us standardise the uniforms and make them the same colour. If it is shorts; if it is long trousers, just make them standard and let us move away from schools where Form I students used to put on shorts. That is primitive. Let us make our children feel beautiful and handsome with good trousers and good shirts.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I support fully. Let us have the same uniform. Sweaters should be one colour; shirts should be one colour and trousers should be one colour. What is wrong with uniformity? Somebody is saying that we need to have so many colours so that people can look beautiful. They will still look beautiful. We are in ties and ties are part of uniform. We should be in suits, although they are not of the same colour. But look at the orderlies in the House. We are all in one uniform. So, why are we having our orderlies in the same attire. I support this Motion that says we need to have standardised set of uniforms.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, uniforms help us to identify students. I remember when I was a student, I would wear my uniform until I get home. One of the reasons was to show people that I am in school. Secondly, we also had to show the badge that was on our uniforms. I was in Maseno School and you know at that time it was the only national school. We felt proud and happy. Uniforms are supposed to identify our children so that even if you find a student at the bus stage stranded because of lack of bus fare, you will know that this is a student or pupil. You can then help them by paying for their transport home. Sometimes, some bad people would like to do bad things to students but, if they are not in uniform, they may fall victim. If they are in uniform, of course, the society will protect them.

Lastly, I would like to weigh in on the issue of the payments that we normally do in schools. Remember, I have had a lot of running battles, especially with Ministry of Education and, of course, the Teachers' Service Commission (TSC). My major concern is the payments

which we are making to those day secondary schools, and the introduction of junior secondary schools. We have seen that most of the principals are asking students to go to school with a lot of money. The reason for the free day secondary education is to make our children access education. There are so many parents who cannot pay for boarding schools or for the schools that are very far. That is the reason why we introduced the day secondary schools close to the primary schools, so that those parents who cannot afford to pay fees can send their children to those schools. Unfortunately, many schools are now introducing so many other activities, which include uniforms. I am requesting Members to ensure that we introduce the capitation so that we budget it in the provision of that amount that is being sent to every school. We should include uniform as part of that capitation. We should also include the school feeding programme because in my constituency, we are paying millions of monies that goes towards food, even for the students who come from around that school. Those are people who can go back home for lunch or those who can pack their lunch, even if they are coming from far. Schools have introduced it as a compulsory payment so that when you do not pay for food, you are sent home for three weeks. Why would you send students home for three weeks because of failure to pay for food? I think the principals should introduce what we call meal-cards. Most importantly we should, as a House, introduce a payment of the school feeding programmes so that the parents who cannot afford to pay fees can access that programme through the budgeting of the House. This should be applied to uniforms and this idea of remedial classes. I recently opted to ask principals of schools not to demand for fees for remedial classes; or send a student home because of failure to pay for remedial classes. Remedial classes should be optional. If a student can pay, allow them to stay in school. If they are not able to pay, let them not come for the extra classes, but come for the classes that the Government has paid for. You cannot send a student home because of failure to pay for remedial classes.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Omboko Milemba): Very well. Members, let me acknowledge the presence of St. Anne's Gituba Girls Secondary School from Gichugu Constituency, Kirinyaga County, who are in the Speaker's Gallery as we debate this Motion on school uniforms.

Next to speak on this is Hon. Kimani, Member for Molo Constituency.

Hon. Kuria Kimani (Molo, UDA): Ahsante sana Naibu Spika wa Muda kwa kunipa nafasi hii. Kwa mara ya kwanza, nitajaribu kuzungumza kwa lugha ya Kiswahili. Natumai kwamba sitafeli.

Ningeanza kwa kumpa kongole Mbunge wa Githunguri, Mhe. Gathoni Wamuchomba, kwa sababu ya kuwafikiria wanafunzi wetu katika shule zetu. Wakati tunasema ya kwamba masomo ni ya bure, ni wazi tunasema uongo. Wakati tunasema ya kwamba masomo ya zile shule za kila siku ni bure, ama kwamba hakuna karo inalipwa huko, tunajua huo ni uongo. Tunaposema ya kwamba inawezekana kupeleka watoto katika shule za mabweni kwa wale wazazi wa hali ya chini, jibu ni kwamba huo pia ni uongo.

Wakati nilikuwa kule mashinani Molo siku ya Jumapili, nilipatana na mama mmoja ambaye anauza sokoni. Mtoto wake alikuwa ameitwa shule ya upili ya Karoti Girls' High School kule Kirinyaga. Yule mama alikuwa na risiti ya kuonyesha ya kwamba ameweza kulipa karo ya Ksh20,000 lakini, juu ya hiyo, alihitajika kulipa pesa zingine Ksh20,150 ya zile bidhaa ambazo zinahitajika pale shuleni ambazo alishurutishwa asinunue mahali pengine ila kule shuleni. Huyu mama ametia bidii. Kwa yule mama ambaye anauza nyanya sokoni kuweza kuweka Ksh20,000 ili aweze kumpeleka mtoto shuleni, ni juhudi kubwa sana. Aliponiambia kwamba amelipa karo, nikamuuliza kama alitafuta *bursary*. Aliniambia kwamba *bursary* haitaweza kulipa hayo mahitaji mengine. Ilibidi nitafute hela zangu kibinafsi ili niweze kumlipia, ili mtoto wake aweze kusoma. Ninafurahia ya kwamba huyo msichana ameanza maisha yake ya kidato cha kwanza katika shule ya Karoti kule Kirinyaga.

Jambo hili lilinifanya nianze kufikiria: Hizi Ksh20,000 ambazo alikuwa anaitishwa ni za nini? Ukienda sokoni, shati ya shule ni Ksh350. Shati hilo hilo ukienda kulinunua kule shule ni Ksh800. Wanaongeza Ksh450, mara tatu ya zile pesa ambazo hiyo shati inagharimu huku nje. Vile vile, ile suruali ukinunua huku nje ni Ksh700, ilhali shule nyingi wanaziuza kwa Ksh1,500. Ukinunua sweta dukani ni Ksh750, lakini shule inauza Ksh1,500, mara mbili ya hiyo sweta ukinunua huko nje. Tai ya kawaida ukinunua sokoni ni Ksh150, ila ukienda kununua kule shule ni Ksh300. Tena wanasema ununue ile *track suit*. Ukiinunua dukani ni Ksh1,300, na ukienda kuinunua kule shule, wanauza kati ya Ksh2,000 na Ksh3,000.

Godoro la kulalia, ukilinunua kwa duka ni Ksh1,800, ilhali mashule yetu yanaitisha wazazi pesa za kununua lile godoro, ambalo linakuwa hata ni dogo kuliko lile la Kshs1,800, na wanaitisha Ksh2,800. Nyingine ambayo linaitwa sweta ya kuruka, ambayo ya mtumba unaweza kupata na Ksh200, lakini kule shuleni wanaitisha Ksh2,500. Blanketi ukiinunua kwa soko ni Ksh500, lakini ukienda kuinunua shuleni, wanaitisha katikati ya Ksh700 na Ksh1,000. Vile vile, ile shuka ya kutandika kitandani, kwenye maduka ni Ksh600, ilhali shuleni ni Ksh1,000. Mto wa kulalia ukiununua kwa soko ni Ksh150, lakini shuleni wanaitisha kati ya Ksh300 na Ksh500. Na hakuna tofauti ya ule mto ambao uko kwenye soko na unaoitishwa na walimu wetu katika mashule.

Ndoo ya kubebea maji au ya kusafisha nguo kwa soko ni Ksh150, ilhali shuleni ni kati ya Ksh300 na Ksh500. Zile soksi ukinunua dukani ni katikati ya Ksh50 na Ksh100. Waalimu wanaitisha katikati ya Ksh200 na Ksh500. Juu ya hayo, wanakuambia baada ya kulipa hizo pesa zote, kuwa lazima ulipe katikati ya Ksh500 na Ksh1,000 ili kuweka alama katika zile sare za shule.

Kwa hivyo, ikiwa tunataka mtoto wa Mkenya yeyote aweze kwenda shuleni aweze kusoma na kufaulu katika Maisha, itabidi kuhakikisha ya kwamba tumeongeza pesa za ufadhili katika shule zetu. Lazima tupeane suluhu ya sare za shule na haya mambo mengine yote ambayo yanahitajika katika shule zetu. Njia rahisi kabisa ya kufanya hivyo ni kuhakikisha ya kwamba sare zote za shule za umma katika nchi yetu ya Kenya ziwe sawa. Shati iwe ni ya rangi nyeupe. Kama ni suruali, iwe rangi nyeusi au kijivu. Kuwe na kiwango kimoja kote nchini. Tukifanya hivyo, tutakuwa tumesaidia kupunguza gharama ya shule na, zaidi ya hayo, tutakuwa tumehakikisha ya kwamba yule fundi ambaye ako pale Mukinyai, Kapsinandet, Chandra, Arimi, na Kapsita, anaweza kushona hizo sare za shule na kusomesha watoto wake na kuweka chakula katika meza.

Tumekuwa tukitengeneza sheria ambazo ni za kuhakikisha ya kwamba wale mabwenyeye tu ndio wanaweza kunufaika kutokana na hizo sheria. Kwa mfano, hata ukiangalia shule zetu ambazo ziko mahali kwingine, unapoambiwa hii ndio barua ya kuingia shule, unaambiwa zile sare za shule lazima ununue kwa maduka fulani. Siyo ya kwamba hayo maduka mengine hayana hizo sare; sio ya kwamba bei yao ni nzuri kuliko maduka mengine; lakini unashurutishwa hivyo kwa sababu kuna lile agano ambalo mwalimu amefanya na hilo duka maalum. Na unapata hayo maduka hayana kitu kubwa. Ni vile tu hao ni mabwanyenye, na wameweza kujikimu kimaisha. Ndio unapata wale ambao wako na hela katika nchi hii wanaendelea kupata zaidi. Wale amabo hawana, wanaendelea kukosa zaidi.

Kwa hivyo, kuna wale ambao waliongea hapa awali wakasema basi kama sare zote za shule zitakuwa sawa, pengine hakutakuwa na maridadi. Na mimi nakumbuka ya kwamba yule ambaye alikuwa Daktari Matiang'i alikuwa na makosa mengi sana. Alifanya mambo mengi mabaya. Lakini kama kuna jambo moja alifanya nzuri, ni kusema ya kwamba basi zote za shule katika Kenya ziwe na rangi moja.

Unamkumbuka yule ambaye alikuwa Waziri wetu wa Uchukuzi – na apumzike kwa amani Marehemu Mheshimiwa Michuki - alisema kwamba wale ambao ni madereva na makanga wa magari yetu wavae sare moja - wengine zile za rangi ya maroon na wale wengine wavae rangi ya blue kwa madereva. Ukienda kwenye eneo lolote la uchukuzi katika nchi yetu,

utaweza kujua huyu ni dereva na huyu ni makanga. Na pia, kwa kununua zile sare, unaweza kuzinunua mahali popote katika nchi yetu.

Ni nini ambalo tunalipendekeza hapa? Katika shule zetu za kufunza elimu ya matibabu ambayo tunaiita *Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC)* kwa lugha ya kimombo, hilo limewezekana. Hiyo ni kwa sababu yule msichana au mvulana ambaye anasomea *KMTC* ya Molo, Kitui, Kisumu, Mombasa, Lamu na kila mahali, wako na sare moja. Kama basi inawezekana hivyo kwa mashule yetu ya matibabu, mbona basi isiwezekane kwa mashuleni yetu ya upili na ya msingi katika Jamhuri yetu ya Kenya? Inawezekana! Lakini hapa tukubali ya kwamba halitakuwa jambo rahisi kwa sababu, tukienda kupitisha hili, litakataliwa kwa njia kubwa sana.

Tukiongea kule, lazima pia nizungumzie mambo ya vitabu ambavyo vinapelekwa katika shule zetu. Tunasema ya kwamba tunanunua vitabu vyote katika shule haswa za upili, lakini wanaitisha lazima wanunue Bibilia, *dikshionari*, kamusi na vitabu vinginevyo. Hivyo vitabu pekee yake ni Ksh5,000. Kama tunaweza kununua hivi vitabu vingine vyote, hadi shule zingine ziko na vitabu zaidi, mbona basi tusinunue pia hizi tuweze kuwapa wanafunzi wetu, ili huyu mtoto wa masikini katika nchi yetu ya Kenya awe na nafasi sawa ya kusoma na kufaulu katika maisha kama wa yule wa tajiri?

Nakushukuru Mhe. Spika wa Muda.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr.) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Members, I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our guests seated in the Hon. Speaker's Gallery, students from Pioneer Girls' School, Gatanga Constituency, Murang'a County. You are welcome to follow the proceedings in the National Assembly. At this moment, as you can see, we are focussing on school uniforms. You are welcome to the National Assembly.

Let us have Hon. Omboko Milemba.

Hon. Omboko Milemba (Emuhaya, ANC): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. Let me thank Hon. Wamuchomba for bringing this Motion. I also took my time and talked to her and, indeed, it has come at the appropriate time given that there is a gap in existence in our schooling system and, more so, to do with school uniform and, specifically, the cost. That is what brings us to bear all this, but then it gives us a chance to look at the issue of school uniform broadly in our schools so that we can make some amends that can make schooling accessible.

To begin this properly is to go to the laws that are governing education, and I would quickly go to Article 53 of the Constitution, which describes education in Kenya as a right to all children. Therefore, all children, as per Article 53, are supposed to have free and compulsory education in Kenya. That then aligns education as a function of the Government. That is why at one time, when education was to be devolved, we who were in the education sector at that time then completely refused that it should be devolved. That is because it is supposed to be a right of the children; meaning then, that this must be funded basically by the Government. Yesterday, we were talking about the Junior Secondary School Education, and which we were confronted with the same thing: Who should pay for the cost of education in this country, given that it is a right to all the children in Kenya?

Then I would quickly go to the Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) number 4, which defines education as a lifelong right for all the children and prefers that the first thing we should achieve in education is access. Are children able to access education? That is what we go for first. Once they have accessed, then we look at the other components or matters of quality and so on. Anything that hinders a child from reaching school is a barrier and must be removed. That barrier must be removed by those who have been assigned the task of providing education in Kenya; and that is the Government of Kenya. Therefore, currently as we speak, school uniform is part of the barriers to access to education. That is why this Parliament is speaking about it. We must remove all the barriers that are limiting students to access school, especially the poor students from the villages and poor families.

What is the history of school uniform? School uniform can be traced back to England where poor students were taken by the Church to a school called the Christian Boarding School, and they were given some sort of uniform which was close to what the clergy was wearing. I think that is where the history of school uniforms sprung from. It went to America and later arrived in Kenya with colonisation.

Have we done any studies on school uniform? Yes. The African Journal took the specific study on school uniform. The case study was in Lang'ata, and they produced about fourteen good reasons why school uniform should be in place.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, who are the leaders in Kenya who have pronounced themselves on school uniforms? You should quickly trace the late Hon. Mutula Kilonzo, the then Minister of Education, who appeared in the Press and talked about school skirts. The cartoonists of that time cartooned him in standard skirts that students were expected to wear. Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba should listen to this. He thought there must be a certain length of the school skirts and the uniforms. The other leader who pronounced himself on this matter is the late Former President, Hon. Mwai Kibaki. He ordered that all schools must wear a certain uniform. This is our history of school uniforms. We need to look at the word standardisation so that it should not be mistaken for colour or the quality of uniforms to be worn in schools. Standardisation has a lot to do with the price of school uniforms, because this is a barrier to education and it must, therefore, be dealt with. If we can standardise the price of school uniforms, then we will be sorting out this gap that has been created.

Again, we must look at how the Kenyan economy operates. Our economy is supposed to be free and liberal. Therefore, as we standardise, we cannot afford to give this to only a group of people. We should possibly allow a free market for uniforms so that their price is controlled by forces of demand and supply. That way, it will be easy to level the price. The other alternative would be for the Government to provide school uniforms. It is the Government's business to make sure that all the students are in school. This is possible so that within the capitation we send to schools – I heard one Member speak on this – there will be a certain amount of money specifically meant for uniforms. The uniforms will be of particular type in terms of quality and price. With this, no student in Kenya will be chased out of school because of school uniforms.

This issue is also embarrassing my teachers. Members are addressing teachers as though they are the ones who determine uniforms in schools. School uniforms are determined by the boards of management and parent-teachers associations, in the presence of teachers. What has happened – and it is not amusing – is that the education system has been completely abandoned to teachers. Nobody wants to take responsibility. We only want to point out the wrongs that are happening in our schools; for instance, that there is no food. No Government agency is taking accountability of the lack of food or lack of teachers for junior secondary in our schools. How can a government that is supposed to provide free and compulsory education send one teacher to teach a whole class of junior secondary school, while disregarding the curriculum-based establishment and say that everything is good? When the teachers go ahead to hire BoM and PTA teachers and money is charged, we say the teachers are the problem. We must deal with the matter of school uniforms alongside other challenges in the schools and decide whether, as a Government, we want to invest in education or in roads, railways and other infrastructure that compete for resources with schools. My take would be for us to develop the future, we must invest in our children. So, let us provide school uniforms as part of the requirements for schools.

During President Moi's time, there was cost sharing. Hon. Members, where we are now, we do not have free and compulsory education in Kenya. What we have is cost sharing. If we have cost sharing and we cannot speak on it, it means we are not taking our responsibility seriously. It is high time we declare that education is cost shared and we know what part the parent plays and what part the Government plays. However, what we require in law is for

school uniforms to be provided for by the Government. Let us remove all barriers that may hinder access to education

Hon. Temporary Speaker, that is my submission.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Very well, Hon. Omboko. Hon. Members, I would like to give an opportunity to Hon. Chege Njuguna, who will be making his Maiden Speech as he contributes to this important Motion.

Hon. Njuguna Chege (Kandara, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker for giving me this opportunity to make my Maiden Speech in this Assembly. I am compelled to start by thanking all those who made it possible for me to be here today. The great Winston Churchill said that: “For without victory, there is no survival.” Indeed, I am here after having survived the muddy trenches of the politics of our time. It was blood, toil, tears and sweat. I was not the only man in the battlefield, although several people held my hand. I am deeply humbled by the great trust and confidence that Kandara residents showed in me by electing me as their Member of Parliament. I am indebted to my constituents and profoundly grateful for this great honour.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, one of the great sons of Murang’a, the late Kenneth Matiba – may he rest in peace – affirmed that the people should be left to decide. Indeed, Kandara residents decisively voted me in amidst stiff opposition. I pledge to perform my legislative duties as pertains to the Constitution, and I shall not let them down. Leadership should be people-driven, and Kandara residents shall be the wind beneath which my duties shall be anchored on.

I want to take this moment to thank my party, the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), my Party Leader, His Excellency the President, William Ruto and all the UDA Members who vigorously campaigned for me leading to my eventual victory. I am forever grateful. To my campaign team that withstood the tough campaign season to the very end leading to this moment, I am also very immensely grateful to them. I will not forget my family and friends who were there for me throughout. To the Almighty God who has made everything beautiful in His time, I convey my immense gratitude. My fellow Hon. Members, I am humbled to know that I shall be standing on the shoulders of giants at a time when Kenyans are dealing with a lot of challenges. I pray that we have what it takes to pass Bills that benefit hustlers in the spirit of bottom-up economic policy.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, this Parliament takes the reigns during a critical time when Kenyans are grappling with increased cost of living. The surge in prices of basic commodities has been made worse by the ongoing conflict between Russia and Ukraine, which has resulted in disruption of the global supply chain. The ongoing drought in its wake has brought decreased food production which has threatened our food security. We must, therefore, be alive to these challenges that face our nation. Before us, we have the task of exercising our duties in a way that uplifts the lives of all Kenyans.

The President, in line with the UDA Manifesto, has already introduced the subsidy on fertiliser to bring down the cost of farming. The Regulations on the Hustler Fund to help the Micro, Small and Medium-sized enterprises (MSMEs) to access cheap credit has enabled the money to be disbursed. The affordable housing project will also benefit many Kenyans. I am ready to join hands with the President and this august House to fulfil the President’s agenda for Kenyans. To my constituency and the people of Kandara who have trusted me, I tell them that they have a leader in me. I have already liaised with stakeholders to ensure that I better the livelihood of my people. Once more, I thank them for giving me this chance to offer them selfless leadership that is all about changing lives. I look forward to the days ahead with a lot of hope.

May God bless you, this august House, and may God bless Kenya. Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Racheal Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Kandara. The Hon. Beatrice Kemei, Member for Kericho.

Hon. Beatrice Kemei (Kericho County, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I appreciate the Mover of this Motion, the Hon. Member who is my sister. I also want to say that this is a Motion that is affecting us, as Members of Parliament. It is affecting parents, teachers and everybody. I am saying this because uniforms are very important.

First, I am reminded of the days we were in school. Anybody who did not come with uniform was not part of the school. For identification, uniform is key. It is important that when we talk of standardising, it is in the sense that it will bring equality. It is an equaliser. We have schools in rural and urban areas. We have day and boarding schools. We have public and private schools. When we standardise, it brings equality. It is not tied to performance. When you look at national schools, they ideally and naturally perform better because of entry behaviour. They perform better than sub-county or extra-county schools. Whenever they go for drama or any other extra curriculum activity, extra-county and sub-county schools feel inferior. So, those uniforms will bring equality.

In any case, when uniform is standardised, it will also affect pricing. What does this mean? When uniform is not standardised, you will realise that prices are different. Schools give different prices depending on the quality, colour and where the uniform is bought. If it is standardised and students allowed to buy from anywhere, it will assist and help parents who are unable to pay.

The National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) and the National Government Affirmative Action Fund (NGAAF) give bursaries. These enable students to learn in schools. However, there is no money for uniform. If it is standardised, it means parents will afford, at least, for the students to be in school. More so, I have said it is important in the sense that schools will not be purchasing from one point. I imagine a student coming all the way from Kericho, where I come from, to purchase uniform in Nairobi. That is very expensive. Some do not even know where the shops are. If it is standardised, they can buy from anywhere.

Uniforms demonstrate equality. This will go hand in hand with students feeling that they can perform the same way wherever they are. During our days, the only colours we knew were a grey skirt and a sky-blue shirt or blouse for the girls. Only the sweaters were different. They were green and may be brown or red. It was the same for boys. For that, there was a kind of equality. However, you will see different colours and designs now. With standardisation, girls will not wear very tight skirts that influence negatively in one way or another. The boys, on the other hand, have also tried to make their trousers tubed or very tight. This brings some negativity. When it is standardised, at least, they will have the right sizes, lengths and colours. I am supporting this Motion. As we do this, we will also have to remember that some students may not even afford those uniforms and they may not go to school. If the prices go down, I am sure education will be an equaliser. With that, I support. May that policy come very fast. The students and parents will be on the safe side. At some point, we will also have to look at the full-dress code. Some schools have girls in long hair, others have very short hair, and others no hair at all. I do not know what we can do so that others do not feel intimidated and inferior. If I may also add, uniform is important. As we look at uniform, let us also remember the design and even the weather. Some places are very cold. If they are cold, students will have jumpers and their warm uniforms. Some places like the northern part of the country may not need this. As we standardise, let us also look into that.

With that, I support the Motion and say that unity is key for students to concentrate on their studies. It will also teach them some professionalism. They will look very smart and know from an early age that this is how to go about it. It will also ensure safety of students wherever

they are outside there. When they have uniform, students will be safer. The importance of standardisation also is that it eases peer pressure. Some students will feel low or inferior, while others might feel better because they come from this or that school. For all those reasons, including economic reasons, standardising uniform is very important. Not forgetting the sense of belongingness where students will feel they belong to that category, a school and a country.

Thank you so much, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Racheal Nyamai): Thank you very much. Hon. Basil, Member for Yatta.

(Hon. Robert Ngui spoke off-record)

Our technical team, please try to trace the Member for Yatta. You can move to the next microphone.

Hon. Robert Ngui (Yatta, WDM): Thank you for giving me the chance. Thank you, the Sponsor of the Motion, Hon. Wamuchomba, if I am right. This is a good Motion, although we need to be specific on what we are standardising. For me, we need to standardise the cost of uniforms. If you look at uniform currently, there are schools that are charging more than the actual cost of uniform. This is adding burden and barring many students from accessing education. In addition, we should not standardise colour. If you standardise colour, it will mean more burden to the parents when we will be phasing out the old uniforms. So, let us focus on the price. Currently, many students are at home because the actual cost of uniforms has denied them a chance to go to school. Another important element that I want to put across is that, if the Government can pay for free education in terms of providing for other aspects of education and supporting the Kenya Defence Forces (KDF) with free uniform, why can it not do the same for poor students? Perhaps, it will be important if we have a policy that will task the Government to provide free uniforms for students across the country.

Another important element that it will be nice to focus on standardisation in the near future is looking at the design of uniforms. I remember back in my school days. I could see a big variance between what students from poor backgrounds wore with what students from rich backgrounds or the urbanites wore. That set some form of discrimination on appearance. The essence of having a standardised uniform is to bring homogeneity in education. If this cannot be realised, we can go the United States of America way, where students, particularly in public schools, do not necessarily wear uniforms. So, that is something that we need to put straight in the Motion and, with a few revisions, we can have it as a Bill.

Lastly, to the Mover of the Motion, I will be happy to make my input in the drafting of the Bill to ensure that it resonates with the realities and priorities of different areas that we represent across the country. I will be happy to get that moment to contribute further.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr.) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you. Hon Abdul Haro, Member for Mandera South.

Hon. Abdul Haro (Mandera South, UDM): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. The Poet, Mark Twain, said this on standardisation:

“I don't see any use in having a uniform and arbitrary way of spelling words. We might as well make all clothes alike and cook all dishes alike. Sameness is tiresome; variety is pleasing.”

As you have heard from the contributions of Hon. Members, this Motion is quite confusing. The confusion is centered on whether the standardisation is about having similar uniform for all schools in the country, or the cost of uniform. If the idea is to have the burden on parents lessened in terms of cost, then we can propose to do two things as a country. We either abolish uniforms all together and parents will not have any cost on uniform or, just like other Members

have suggested, we put the cost of uniform in the capitation so that parents do not pay for uniform in school. As we are now, every school has a uniform. If we want it to remain that way, it will be a good thing. The only thing that we need to deal with are the school principals and school heads who exploit parents by sending them to their own manufacturers or their schools supply uniforms, which makes the cost of uniforms very expensive for parents.

In trying to standardise the uniforms, if we talk about, for example, making the uniform texture standard, we have a beautiful country with a lot of variables in almost all contexts. If you want to standardise uniform materials for a school in Limuru which is in a cold context and for a school in Mandera – where I come from – which is in a very hot context, you may end up disadvantaging one school. The material might not be useful in either a cold environment in Limuru, or a hot environment in Mandera. So, we do not need to be a country of standardisation. We have standardised our curriculum and exams. We now want to standardise our uniform so that every school puts on one uniform of a similar colour.

When we talk about standardising production, are we talking about identifying one manufacturer who will be making uniforms for all the schools in the country? That is not the right way to go, and that is why I am not supporting this Motion. Standardisation will only make our educators to be enforcement officers. We have more other problems to deal with. Yesterday, we debated about the junior secondary school with all the challenges it is facing. Definitely, standardisation is not one of the priority challenges we have in education in this country.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much. The Hon. Member for Murang'a County, Hon. Betty Maina.

Hon. Betty Maina (Murang'a County, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I rise to support Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba on this Motion. I support that we standardise the colour, quality and the cost of uniforms. The only difference we can have is on the logo as a way of identifying schools. Among the very many benefits of identification, one is creating cohesion among the students. When students identify themselves with the same colour and quality of uniform, some feel as if they come from superior schools, whereas others feel as if they come from inferior schools.

On the cost of uniforms, one of the most tedious exercise for a parent is to take a student to school. However, we make the exercise more complicated by allowing business to go on in schools, where parents are referred to particular uniform shops with a particular cost with no room for negotiations or bargaining. In such instances, parents in day schools are left with buying school uniforms more expensively than paying school fees. We need to standardise the cost of school uniforms to reduce expenses that are not important. We encourage business in schools. Tenders are given to particular people by people who have interest.

Another important thing we need to consider standardising is quality. There are some students who come from less advantaged families and who put on low quality uniform. When they are in school, they compare themselves with other students. We need to come up with a formula where the Government will make sure that every new year, it provides new school uniforms. Sometimes, when you go to a school, you will meet some students with good quality uniforms and others with torn clothes. Students with torn clothes feel rejected in school, and they suffer psychologically and emotionally. They feel that they are lesser students. We, therefore, need to have a way of making sure that everybody in school feels the same.

I support *Mheshimiwa* Gathoni Wamuchomba on this. Dress code promotes equality, equity and cohesion.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Dr. Rachael Nyamai): Thank you, Member for Murang'a. Hon. Victor Koech, Member for Chepalungu.

Hon. Victor Koech (Chepalungu, CCM): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to the Motion by Hon. Wamuchomba on the standardisation of school uniforms. We are all aware about the programme that the former Government was striving to run, of having 100 per cent transition to junior secondary schools and 100 per cent transition to Form I. This can only be realised if we all agree here today that standardisation of school uniforms is necessary because uniform is becoming a barrier to the realisation of the same.

There is a student who scored 404 marks, having been sponsored by a donor, but he is yet to report to a national school simply because his parents cannot raise the required amount of money for school uniform. This will only come to an end if we standardise school uniforms as said by the Mover of the Motion, Hon. Wamuchomba.

There is nothing wrong with all schools wearing the same uniform. Look at the police service in the entire country and the Kenya Medical Training College (KMTC) students. They wear the same uniform and no one is complaining about them. The men all look handsome and the ladies look beautiful. The KMTC students' uniform is the same across all campuses. There is absolutely nothing wrong if we tell all junior secondary school (JSS) students to wear the same uniform. If anything, it will bring uniformity and equality. Look at a scenario of a high school that is known to perform well. Such a school earns respect from society while a high school that is known to perform dismally will attract an opposite view. To bring this to an end, we need to standardise and have the same school uniform colour across the country so that our learners can be the same.

Pricing is becoming a menace in the country. There is a school within my constituency asking for around Ksh40,000 for school uniform. The fee in this particular school is Ksh26,000 per term. Which one should be more expensive? Is it the school uniform or the school fees? This is the reason we support the Motion by Hon. Wamuchomba so that our children can access the said equaliser; education. Parents should be allowed to buy school uniforms wherever they want. They should not be forced to buy school uniforms from a specific vendor known by the school. This only means that parents are milked by school principals who are greedy enough to make money from parents. When the Bill is introduced, we will be more than willing to make our contributions and ensure that all concerns from our constituents are put into consideration. I support this Motion.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Rahim Dawood, Member for North Imenti.

Hon. Rahim Dawood (North Imenti, Independent): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I support the standardisation and production of school uniforms. Uniforms are a very emotive issue in the sense that many schools have different uniforms. We need to have one standard uniform in one colour. You will see students in checked uniforms, like the school in the Public Gallery, and others in different colours like purple, brown and white. We need to have one standard uniform for every school in the country, whether private or public.

The uniform should not be expensive. It would be best, if it is possible, for the Government to provide uniforms to students. We have industries in this country like the Export Processing Zones (EPZs) and Rivertex East Africa Limited that can produce uniforms. We can revive Mount Kenya Textile (Mountex) in Nanyuki and other factories to produce uniforms on a large scale. If the Government will not provide them, then schools can be advised to buy them. It would be cheaper that way. I do not understand why a student joining Grade 7 is required to change to a different uniform in the same school. Many students have not reported to Grade 7 because they cannot afford school uniforms. Many times, students including those in the lower grades are sent home for lack of uniform. I do not understand the correlation between uniforms and studies. What matters is what one is taught and not what one wears.

Students who do not have uniforms should never be chased away from school because no one will benefit from that.

We need a good policy on a common uniform and to see where to source it from. Parents should not pay exorbitantly for uniforms. Parents are required to pay Kshs20,000 for JSS uniforms. Paying for school meals is a challenge for many parents. Students are forced to go home for only Ksh300 or Ksh500 hence missing classes. How are the parents going to pay Ksh20,000 for uniforms if meals are a challenge? Hon. Gathoni should propose how the Government can reduce school uniform prizes. That way, parents will pay a standardised amount which will probably be included in school fees. There are schools which have different forms of uniforms like jackets which cost a lot of money. We need to do away with those kinds of jackets and other clothing which are not necessary. At the end of the day, it is studies that matter and not uniform. I support.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Thuddeus Nzambia, Member for Kilome.

Hon. Thuddeus Nzambia (Kilome, WDM): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for this opportunity. Hon. Wamuchomba, the Motion is very good, but we have to be a bit specific on issues to do with uniforms in terms of quality and quantity. In the morning, I had a student who was reporting to secondary school and the amount she was supposed to pay for her uniform was more than her school fees. Let the Government come up with a policy that factors in school uniforms in the free secondary education programme. For the last five, six and seven years, the Government was able to provide free textbooks. It was done from a central point such that booksellers and those who own bookshops were robbed off their livelihood because it was like single sourcing.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, there is nothing sinister in this Motion. If we pass it, the Government might probably single source one person to supply uniforms to students in the country. As we discuss this Motion, I suggest that the Government provides free uniforms and ensures that at the sub-county level in our constituencies identifies tailors from the grassroots who can be provided with materials to make uniforms for our students. In that way, nobody will think of single sourcing uniforms for our students.

We should also consider capping the prices of uniforms. There are some schools which sell uniforms at exorbitant prices and disadvantage students and parents. I can quote one example from my constituency where you are supposed to collect uniforms from the school and it is mandatory. The cost is over Ksh15,000 yet you can access the same quality uniform from the local market at Ksh5,000. We need to review and get details about standardisation of uniforms for our students.

Uniforms being free of charge is very possible. We are currently talking of free primary and secondary education yet parents are parting with a lot of money to buy other accessories like writing materials, uniforms and all that. We should review what it means for something to be “free”. When you talk of “free”, the Government should provide everything.

Since Hon. Wamuchomba is the Mover of the Motion, I will sit down with her and hold discussions as we try to draft a Bill that can be adopted to help the people of this republic.

Though it is not part of this Motion, as Members of Parliament, we should push for the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) to be released so that it can assist our parents in paying school fees.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Martha Wangari): Thank you very much, Member for Kilome. Hon. Members, help me to appreciate students from Ndaragwa Girls from Ndaragwa Constituency in Nyandarua County seated in the Speaker’s Gallery. You are most welcome to the National Assembly.

The next opportunity goes to Hon. John Waweru, Member for Dagoretti South.

Hon. John Kiarie (Dagoretti South, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for this opportunity.

It would be sacrilegious of me to start by not congratulating Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba, the very hard-working Member of Parliament from Githunguri. Githunguri might not be too near to Dagoretti, but we are hearing about the work that is happening there and we are challenged and inspired. Hon. Gathoni, you are doing good for women leadership in this country. Beyond that, the people of Githunguri need to appreciate that you are a good representative in the House. This is not your first Motion, Hon. Gathoni, and I congratulate you for such a thoughtful Motion that you have presented before this House.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, you and I were in class at the same time in university and among the many things that we learned was the history of education. When we studied the history of education, we appreciated the need for school uniforms and how it came to be that students wear them. One of the reasons was, of course, standardisation. The other one was identification. More importantly, however, is the effect of the war effort on standardising industries.

Back then, early in the last century, young students were being prepared for the available market. Back then, they were going through the industrialisation revolution. At that time, they were talking about the coming of a production line that would standardise operations in a factory. It is now a century later and we are still debating about uniforms. Uniforms bring pride in belonging. They also institute discipline among the wearers. We have got to a point where uniforms have become a tool for magnifying the class divide, not only in schools, but also in a republic like Kenya where the divide between public and private schools is too big.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, you have just recognised some students sitting in the Speaker's Gallery. I see them wearing school uniforms. One day on an afternoon in 1987, I was much younger than the students who are sitting in the Gallery today and I had been picked as one of the four students who would represent Kileleshwa Primary School in a programme called Junior Quiz. They would take the brightest students who would represent our division and take a quiz on television. Back then, we were in Westlands Division and not Dagoretti.

On the day that I was supposed to go to the studio, the teacher recognised that I could not go to the studio in the school shorts I was wearing because I had two big "eyes" on my behind. The shorts that I was wearing were tired, torn, worn out and out of service because my parents could not afford to buy me another pair of pants. It was embarrassing. I remember that we had to go to the house of a student who lived nearby, his name was Eddy Wanje. Wherever he is in the country, I have to thank him because he gave me some pants so that I could appear on television. The first time in my life that I appeared on television, I was in borrowed pants.

The point I am making is that uniforms can actually be a tool for exaggerating the class divide amongst our students. You can imagine what I felt as a nine-year-old when I was told that I could not be admitted into the studio in the pants that I was wearing, knowing that it was not my fault, but that my parents could not afford a new pair of shorts. You can imagine the embarrassment of having to go to a friend's house to change before I got into the vehicle that would take us to the then Voice of Kenya (VoK) studios, now the Kenya Broadcasting Corporation (KBC) studios.

The standardisation and production of uniforms is a timely debate. If we could get to a level where the Ministry of Education rationalises school uniforms, every one of the 290 constituencies in Kenya can put up a factory which will be constituency-run. It would be parents who are taking students to school who would run the factory.

There are organisations like churches and non-governmental institutions which we only use one day in a week. We spend millions of shillings building monumental brick and mortar structures that are not used from Monday to Friday. What if we standardised our uniforms and

the churches that are empty from Monday to Friday could accommodate parents who are trained to stitch uniforms and garments and are trained in the science of fashion and fabric design to stitch our school uniforms, so that we can bring down the cost of school uniforms in our constituencies? Even more importantly, if an entire constituency was to make its own uniforms, you can imagine the savings we would make on the economies of scale.

If we set up a factory in Riruta in Dagoretti South Constituency, it will be assured of a market of all the students in Early Childhood Development (ECD), primary schools, junior secondary, high schools and even tertiary institutions in the constituency. That would be a thriving industry for our school uniform makers. More importantly, it would lead to a search for new knowledge. Our universities would start on research to find out the kind of fabrics that work well for different regions and the type of fabrics that are good for making school uniforms.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I am trying to say that after the standardisation and production of uniforms, the next thing that Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba needs to think about is the localisation of the making of school uniforms. I would like to end it here by saying that the Motion that has been brought by Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba is of such national importance that she cannot leave it at this point. Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba should think about how she is going to craft this into a Bill and present to the House promptly. I want to tell her not mind the critics that are coming from here and there as they are builds that you can put on your Motion that will come up as a Bill. We can make it an Act and institute a law on standardising and putting good production and localising of school uniforms.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I would not want to add more to that other than say that this is an amazing Motion and I support it wholeheartedly. I look forward to the Bill. Just as I had indicated, the only build that I would like to put on my part is that there is pride in belonging when we wear school uniform. When we come to the Bill, we must separate standardisation of quality, price and school uniforms to different schools. I am very proud of my school uniform from Kileleshwa Primary and extremely proud of my uniform number one from Dagoretti High School. I would want it standardised, but not changed.

Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr.) Rachael Nyamai): Very well spoken, Hon. John Kiarie. Thank you for taking the House through memory lane.

Hon. Members, help me appreciate students from Kiota School, Dagoretti North Constituency, Nairobi County, seated in the Speaker's Gallery. You are welcome to the National Assembly so that you may observe proceedings of the House.

Hon. Members, the next opportunity goes to Hon. Irene Njoki aka *mrembo*, the Member for Bahati Constituency.

Hon. Irene Njoki (Bahati, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. Let me start by first appreciating my colleague, Hon. Wamuchomba, for coming up with this Motion which is so timely to us today. As a mother and a Member of Parliament, I understand the reason you came up with this Motion. I know standardising uniforms will save cost to our parents. Yesterday, I was at home in my constituency and I could see the agony that our parents are going through. Grade 6 students have not fully transitioned because of lack of uniforms. The issue of uniform is like a trading tool and our students have not joined school because of lack of uniforms and desks. In my view, when we standardise these uniforms, we will for sure save cost to our parents. I support this Motion that standardising uniforms will surely lead to a smooth transition to schools.

If I may go back to junior secondary schools, I have always wondered why we have to request parents to buy uniforms for students transitioning to Grade 7 yet they had uniforms. Our parents are struggling. Why can we not have the same uniform that these students used to wear so that they can continue with their studies? Standardising these uniforms will take care

of this gap so that our parents do not have to go back to their pockets to buy more uniforms. We know that uniforms give our students a sign of equality, pride as well as distinguish them. We want to say that standardising these uniforms will remove the barrier of making one school appear more superior than the others. We have seen during drama competitions and prize giving days that some schools and students feel more superior than the others. Standardising these uniforms will ensure that we remove that barrier.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, through the Ministry of Education or Hon. Wamuchomba as she is the one coming up with this Motion, I want to implore our Government to support our parents. If we have free education, we can also give our children free uniforms. This will go a long way in helping our parents. As a Member of Parliament, when you try to support some students with a bursary of Ksh4,000, the bill still comes to Ksh13,000 because of the cost of the uniform. So, which one is better? I wish the Government could issue the uniforms instead of the parent buying them for Ksh13,000. We are all here as the people's representatives. I support and request the Government to assist our parents to, at least, get school uniforms for free.

I want to also point to Hon. Wamuchomba that we need to deal with the issue of indiscipline especially when the students go for galas or national functions. We need to know how we are going to identify them so as to deal with indiscipline cases. Some of my colleagues have suggested logos, but we can do different ties so that we are able to identify them so as to curb indiscipline. We also need to be careful because the students can attend functions and due to peer pressure, they can do funny things and we might not be able to identify the school that did that.

We should promote Small and Micro Enterprises (SMEs). I want to request and suggest that we standardise these uniforms locally. Hon. John Kiarie has indicated that we can set up industries locally, but I want to say that we need to promote our SMEs. We know we have the Hustler Fund and it will be good for us to promote our tailors. As you can see, today I am very smart and I do not need to be told that. I can see that I am very smart and it is because I have promoted my local SME. We can even do the same through the Hustler Fund thus promoting our businesses. We do not want to kill the giants, but we want to promote our own local people and we can do this by providing them with finances to make uniforms.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I want to support this Motion and encourage my sister, Hon. Wamuchomba, to keep it up. You have touched the lives of many and you will be touching our constituents directly.

Thank you for this opportunity and I support this Motion.

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr.) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Bahati.

Hon. Members, I will now give this opportunity to Hon. Beatrice Elachi, Member for Dagoretti North.

Hon. Beatrice Elachi (Dagoretti North, ODM): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker. From the outset, I just want to thank my Chair, Hon. Wamuchomba and our students who have visited us from Kiota School. I welcome you to Parliament. More importantly, they have come in at a time when we are talking about them and their school uniforms. I want to appreciate that they walked in dressed well. We thank the school and teachers.

I will go back to the Motion. I just want to say something to Hon. Wamuchomba. You have come in at a time when I will give you a sad story. I paid school fees for a girl who is supposed to join a school in Kaaga. The parent told me that the child could not go to school because they did not have enough money to pay for that school uniform. Many others from the constituency have already paid school fees, but they do not have money for the uniforms. I want to appreciate that the United Kingdom (UK) that is more advanced than us was talking

about school uniforms for their children that have become very expensive in September 2022. They passed a legislation in Parliament that says that parents can walk into any school uniforms shop and buy them. When we go back to the days we went to school, our parents walked into any Kenya School Uniform shop and they could afford school uniforms then. The international schools are better off than our public schools today. When they walk into a Kenya School Uniform shop, their school uniforms are more affordable than those for public schools. A parent is first of all told the only place he can get the school uniform, especially when students have joined school. He is told where the tailor is and that is where he has to go. I am saying this from experience. Last year, just before the elections, I found a girl who was supposed to join Precious Blood and picked her. What is sad is that I had to go and look for the uniform. Today, Hon. Wamuchomba gives us an opportunity to look at this issue of school uniforms and ask ourselves as citizens of this country, without bringing in the malice of business or profit, where we went wrong. This happened when we decided education can be a profitable industry. It has become so profitable not only just with textbooks, but also... We have now to question ourselves again. With the current economy, many parents cannot afford school uniforms.

Look at our Economic Processing Zones (EPZs). We have 20 per cent share of tax-free place. That 20 per cent can be used to make uniforms and then they are sent to schools. Then, they are sold cheaply to parents, so that they can afford them. We can also promote our tailors. Let them go to some of the EPZs and be trained, so that when you look at that school uniform, you appreciate that, indeed, it has been done neatly and you will be proud. We do not want to put our children into a quagmire. When they look at their uniforms, they wonder how they were made. Uniforms are very important because they bring equality to a child in school. That is why I support what the Member for Bahati has just said. Each school can retain its uniform for purposes of respect, values and discipline. Each school has its discipline. At that time, you will point out and know the school that has discipline or one that needs help. Their uniforms can remain the way they are, but with dignity. Every child can walk into that school with uniform. There is nothing as proud as when you carry a child who has just joined Form One, and look at her makeover from the uniform and the clothes she walked in. As she wears the uniform, she feels ownership of the school and becomes proud of it and will work hard to keep its name.

As I finalise, Hon. Temporary Speaker, I want to thank Hon. Wamuchomba. We should not look at the school uniforms as a business again. Let us not come and curtail it for the sake of others to gain. Let us do it for the prosperity of our children and for the parents to afford them and ensure that each child in Kenya can walk into a school and be proud of it.

Lastly, let junior high schools have a new uniform. We have already told them they are joining there. They can walk in with even a trouser and a nice shirt because the parents cannot afford new uniform. I pray that we make sure they walk in and understand that they are walking into a junior high school. They will be proud to remain in that school knowing they have moved to another level.

With those few remarks, I support the Motion. I hope we will stand together and have a Bill that will clear the menace of school uniforms being very costly.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Dagoretti North. Hon. Members, I would like to assure you that I have been observing Hon. Gathoni Wamuchomba. She is taking notes to improve the possible Bill that she will bring to the House.

Hon. Members, the next opportunity goes to Hon. Richard Yegon, Member for Bomet East.

Hon. Richard Yegon (Bomet East, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this very important Motion. As my colleagues have said earlier on, this is a very important issue which we, as Members of

Parliament, want to support and make sure that all the students in our schools have a dress code which can easily be distinct or differentiated from the other schools. This has been long overdue. School uniforms are expensive because most of the schools, especially those in my area, give out school uniforms in schools. If the Government chips in and does capitation on the school uniform, it will go a long way in helping most vulnerable parents or those who are not in a position to buy school uniforms. Parents are directed to go to certain shops to buy most of these school uniforms where maybe there might be some collusion with some teachers who seek kickbacks by sending parents to particular shops.

If parents are given an opportunity to go and buy school uniforms in whichever shop they feel like, so long as it is of the same material and colour as required by the school, it will go a long way in helping our parents from being exploited. Again, standardisation is very important in the sense that it helps in the identification of our children. When they are going home, they can easily be identified and separated. I take a case whereby police officers are sent to conduct a raid in a certain village or any given area and students can easily be identified from other people instead of being taken into the wrong hands. School uniforms help in identifying our children.

Last but not least, I will go out of this Motion and bring something which is going on now. The leader of opposition, Hon. Raila Odinga, is holding a rally here in the city and the whole House is like empty. We have to put in place some measures to cap political rallies on a particular date or timelines. We do not need to come from our elections and then we start campaigning. This honourable House needs a mechanism whereby we say that we do not have to do politics until a particular time when go back to campaigns. We cannot subject our people... Look at the businessmen in this great city, they are subjected to losses because they are afraid of eventualities of chaos. So, we need to look into this.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I support this Motion.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Very well. Member for Bomet East, I thought you were going to say when people are demonstrating, they should also wear uniforms so they can be identified. Anyway, Members, the next opportunity goes to Hon. Joseph Denar, Nominated Member.

Hon. Joseph Hamisi (Nominated, ANC): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I want to make my comments on the issue of uniforms because this is something I recommend. First, on the issue of standardisation, we should create standards for every school just like the school buses are standardised. Sometimes back, you would not know whether it was a school bus or not. The yellow colour has standardised them.

Second, on the issue of equality, where I come from, there is so much poverty and most of the times, we are having projects to enable all the children to have uniform. So, I support this. On the economies of scale, the more we buy, the more prices reduce and the more prices reduced, the more affordable. I support and acknowledge Hon. Wamuchomba for this. Those are my comments.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr.) Rachael Nyamai): Very well-spoken Nominated Member. Members, the next opportunity goes to Hon. Bishop Kosgei, Nominated Member.

Hon. (Dr) Jackson Kosgei (Nominated, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. From the outset, I want to congratulate the Member of Parliament, Gathoni Wamuchomba for introducing this Motion which is not only important, but timely. We cannot over emphasise the purpose of having uniforms for our children and this has been dealt with since morning. I think this Motion is so important because it is speaking to two important areas concerning accessibility to education in this country.

First, it is speaking on affordability. That we must guarantee every child in this country that they will afford school uniform. Second, parents should buy uniforms for their children at

their convenience. Therefore, as we speak on this Motion, we should separate issues like colour. I think this is so diverse and many people have spoken with nostalgia about the colour of their school uniforms. This is about identity and the two most important issues are affordability and convenience. Through you, Hon. Temporary, once this Motion matures to a Bill, I guarantee my support.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you so much Hon. Bishop. Members, the next opportunity goes to Hon. Nicholas Ng'ikor the Member for Turkana East.

Hon. Nicholas Ng'ikor (Turkana East, JP): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me a chance to add my voice to this Motion. I rise to oppose it based on several reasons. Our education sector has a lot of things for Members of Parliament to discuss and find solutions so as to enable schools to develop. Like now, instead of talking about uniform texture, colour and others, we should be talking about infrastructure, shortage of teachers in schools, school fees and cost of uniforms.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, a few minutes ago, you announced the presence in the Speaker's Gallery of students from two schools in Dagoretti. We looked up to identify them because they were wearing their uniform. If the uniform was the same, how could we have known which school you are talking about? Maybe you would have told the House there are two schools in the Speaker's Gallery. School uniform is meant for identity. When we say we should have one uniform for all our schools, what are we talking about? A Member compared school uniform to police uniform. The police are identified under one name the National Police Service (NPS). However, we have many schools and so, how do we compare the two uniforms? If we have a general uniform for our schools, how can we compare it with the police uniform? Unless we want to say that all our schools should have one name, maybe one for primary schools and another for secondary schools and this is not possible.

I oppose and instead of talking about texture and colour, let us talk about the cost of school uniform. So, parents can buy at a low cost. As we talk about uniforms, they are not given to parents, but are bought. Business communities control the prices of the commodities they sell. So, as we talk about prices, do we have some land somewhere to plant cotton so that we can have our own for school uniforms? No! The textile companies determine the price of textiles they sell to the business community. Then, they sell uniforms at their own prices and I do not think we can control this.

There is the issue of some schools who are proud of their uniforms. In my Turkana County, there is a national school called Turkana Girls which has been given the name 'green angels' because of their uniform. Even their buses were green before the yellow colour came. So, they are proud of the name they got from the colour of their uniform. When we talk of one colour, we will lose the glory of that school being known as the green angels. In my constituency also, there is a school called Moi AIC Kang'itit Girls, which is known by the name 'white angels' because of their uniform. When we have the same uniform, we are going to lose this glory in some of our schools.

The other issue is that of colour. Kenya is big. It is like saying everybody in Kenya should wear the same attire. I do not believe a tribe like the Maasai can agree because they have their own preferred colour. The issue of colour is unique to everybody. Personally, there are clothes with certain colours which I cannot put on because I have my preferred colours. It is therefore, good to leave our schools to choose the colours they want, but determine the price of uniforms. When we talk about the uniforms, it is not the colour or texture. I can buy any material of the requested colour and take my children to school.

Let us talk about infrastructure in schools so that regardless of the type of uniform one has, he or she can study and go to university. Let us talk about transport, teachers, learning in schools and other things that can help our schools other than uniforms.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I oppose.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): The next opportunity, Members, goes to Hon. Alfah Miruka Member for Bomachoge Chache.

Hon. Alfah Miruka (Bomachoge Chache, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

I want to start by congratulating my colleague, Hon. Wamuchomba, for this fantastic Motion. I want to support the Motion conditionally, that it is not going to affect the school code and colour. We are living in a country with many tribes, and we value our culture. Let us not get to a time where every Kenyan should wear same dressing code. We should leave every individual to make their own choices that implies to our schools. We have several schools. Let us talk about quality, familiarity and other aspects, but when we come back to the code of the school, let us leave it for the school to determine the colour and code of their choice because we come from different cultural set ups, and we promote culture in this country.

I want to agree that this House is now focusing on education. Yesterday, we discussed the CBC and today, we are discussing uniforms. How I wish we know the value of education in our country, that we put more emphasis on education more than anything else because education is the backbone of every country.

School uniform is one element in the building up of a student's mind because it factors a lot. It is like having a school bus. The former regime changed school buses colour to yellow which was a good idea, but it had a sinister motive. Police uniforms had an element of cost where some specific suppliers from one corner wanted to enjoy business monopoly. For school uniforms, let us look at how to improve the standards of our schools in terms of performance. We need to introduce policies that will make our schools globally competitive in terms of the quality of education that we offer and equally, the dressing code.

I do not support that we have one colour for all the schools. We cannot, for example, have a school in my constituency, Bomachoge Chache Constituency, have the same colour of uniform with schools in North Eastern. I am a Christian and most people in North Eastern are Muslims while others are pagans because they do not know God. We should give people the freedom of choice in this nation.

I am of the opinion that Hon. Wamuchomba's Motion should capture how the Government will provide free uniforms for our children. The Government should provide free education for both primary and secondary like what was introduced by Hon. Kibaki's Government. However, because there is no school fees, school principals capitalise on it and solicit funds from parents through the purchase of school uniforms. I wish this Motion can include an element of how the Government can modify our structures in terms of financing to provide free school uniforms and free textbooks to our schools. That should be the reason we are trying to increase taxation.

If the Government is increasing taxation in this country, then we should see the effect of taxation on Kenyans. People are struggling out here. Increase tax, but provide free education, free uniforms and good road network. That way, we will never complain. Hon. Wamuchomba, I hope you will capture that. We see how the Ministry of Education will come up with a strategy to provide free uniforms to both secondary and the primary schools in this nation. In that way, we will have lessened the burden of our parents back at home.

We should understand the country we are in. The gap between the rich and the poor is very big. You find in a constituency, we have several children at the moment who have not reported to Form One or junior secondary school because of lack of school fees. If we can focus

on how we can solve this problem of not joining school due to lack of school fees, we will make our people move ahead.

Actually, we should think of having a bursary fund from the Government to sponsor needy students in every corner of this country. You find a very bright student is not able to pay school fees. This is a good Motion coming at the right time. Make some slight adjustments to cater for the needs of the common mwanachi who should take their children to a free primary education setup. Other parents are able to educate their children. Most of the people who earn an income take their students or pupils to very good schools, but most of our parents, who are the majority, cannot afford school fees and school uniforms. It is high time the Government captures this as an element to provide free education, free school uniforms, free textbooks, and provide more teachers and improve the structures. That way, our education system will move ahead.

Otherwise, I support this Motion on one condition that it should not affect the code and should not change the colour of the school uniforms. We remain with the same freedom we have of choosing the colour and the code of school uniforms, but the quality of education should be improved. Again, the industry of producing school uniforms is so huge that we should also focus on how we can produce them. I love what Hon. KJ said that we should be moving towards an era where every constituency will have a factory to produce school uniforms, but not the same colour. Let the Government try to bring service back to every common mwananchi. If producing school uniforms in every constituency is actualised, and it is free, this country will be far ahead. We will serve as an example in Africa.

I support the Motion to an extent that you adjust to make it better to cater for the interests of the common Mwanachi.

I support.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Gonzi Rai! He has left? Members, this Motion will have a balance of 16 minutes. So, it will be debated in the next Sitting as scheduled by the House Business Committee. Thank you very much for the Members who have supported the Motion and also those who did not support it.

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Members, the time being 1.00 p.m., this House stands adjourned until today Wednesday, 22nd February 2023, at 2.30 p.m. Thank you very much Members.

The House rose at 1.00 p.m.

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