

PARLIAMENT OF KENYA

THE SENATE

THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 9th April, 2025

Morning Sitting

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

[The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri) in the Chair]

PRAYER

DETERMINATION OF QUORUM
AT COMMENCEMENT OF SITTING

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

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Clerk, confirm whether we have quorum. Serjeant-at-Arms, ring the Quorum Bell for 10 minutes.

(The Quorum Bell was rung)

Let us get 10 more minutes.

(The Quorum Bell was rung)

Clerk, are we okay now?

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

Order, Senators. Let us now transact business. We are properly constituted this morning.

Clerk, read out the first Order.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

QUESTIONS

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Senators, today being a Wednesday, morning session, we have Cabinet Secretaries coming to respond to questions by Senators. This morning we were expecting three Cabinet Secretaries. However, I am told we only have two who are ready to engage the Senate. We have the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry whom I am told is in the precincts of Parliament ready to answer the Question by Sen. (Dr.) Murango, the Senator for Kirinyaga County. We were also expecting the Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury and Economic Planning to engage the Senate. However, I am now seized of a letter from him that he will not be able to attend because he had some engagements he had scheduled. We are also expecting the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport. I understand he is also ready to engage the Senate this morning.

That is the position. We will be engaging the two Cabinet Secretaries.

Clerk, is the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry ready?

[The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Barasa) was ushered into the Chamber]

There are Senators who want to make comments on my communication. Sen. Maanzo, proceed.

Sen. Maanzo: Sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just want to confirm whether the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Roads and Transport is available. I can also see that Sen. (Dr.) Murango is not here. Is there a possibility of interchanging the Cabinet Secretary, so that he comes when Sen. (Dr.) Murango is present? You cannot ask a Cabinet Secretary a question when the Senator is not available.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): No---

Sen. Maanzo: Or maybe he had sent somebody to ask the Question on his behalf--

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): You know Sen. (Dr.) Murango is very organised. He has assigned Sen. Wakili Sigei to ask the Question on his behalf.

Sen. Maanzo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Kindly confirm whether the Cabinet Secretary in charge of Roads and Transport is also available.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): You should be listening to the Chair when I am communicating. Had you been attentive, you would know that I addressed the matter about the three Cabinet Secretaries.

I said the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry is within the building ready to engage the Senate. The Cabinet Secretary for the National Treasury and Economic Planning is not available. The Cabinet Secretary in charge of Roads and Transport is available.

Sen. Sifuna, proceed.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think we had agreed on certain basic rules of the quorum when Cabinet Secretaries are asking for an adjournment of their appearance.

First, I did not hear you giving the reason why the Cabinet Secretary for National Treasury and Economic Planning is not coming in the letter that you have referenced. Did I hear you correctly saying that the letter came in this morning? Indeed, we had set certain rules that if a Cabinet Secretary is unable to come, he needs to communicate earlier and not on the day of the sitting. Secondly, they have to state proper reasons for their absence because this is also an important exercise. He cannot just say he is not available.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, kindly clarify for me those two issues.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Sifuna, I clearly explained the reason and I had eye contact with you when I was giving the communication.

The letter says-

“However, given other pre-arranged official engagements, I will not be in a position to attend the Senate Plenary as scheduled.”

That is the explanation that I have in this letter. Unfortunately, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry is here. I do not want to engage in that discussion when we have a visitor unless she gives us five minutes to settle that matter with the Senators.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Deputy Speaker, it is good that she hears what we have to say because she is a colleague in the Cabinet. This very fate might befall her one day.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): So that she can also know what will befall her in case she does not respond.

Sen. Sifuna: To also communicate to Cabinet. Many of us are football fans; we stayed up very late last night to watch a game, but still had the fortitude to wake up very early to come and---

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): What game was that and what were the results?

Sen. Sifuna: It was an Arsenal versus Real Madrid game. By some fluke, Arsenal scored three goals inexplicably.

(Loud consultations)

No, the Deputy Speaker has asked the question. I said by a fluke, Arsenal was able to score three goals. So, the point I was making is that we stayed up late---

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Now I can even give you three more minutes if you talk nice of Arsenal.

(Laughter)

Sen. Sifuna: I would rather just sit down; I really have nothing nice to say as a Chelsea fan myself.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the point I was making is the point of communication. It is critical for us as a House to set down a marker. That if there were prior engagements at the moment the Cabinet Secretary received the letter, it is only fair that he notifies the House that, that day clashes with prior arrangements.

Secondly, what you have read is not an explanation. If you tell somebody that there were prior arrangements; that is not an explanation or a reason. At least sometimes, we hear some people say that they had a meeting at State House, a Cabinet meeting at State House or they are engaged in security operations somewhere. That is a reason. What that letter states, in my very humble opinion, is contempt of this House.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Senators, the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry has only one Question. Let us engage her on it. Once she exits, then as we transit to the time that was allocated for the Cabinet Secretary National Treasury and Economic Planning; I will give you some minutes to ventilate on that matter.

Madam Cabinet Secretary, you are at the far corner, kindly, move a bit closer. Serjeant-at-Arms, kindly assist her.

Yes, that is a better position for engagement. Cabinet Secretary, welcome. I can see you have now come with another cap from the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry. The last time you were here and I was also the Chair, you were the Cabinet Secretary for Health. So, welcome back to the Senate. I think this new docket is so friendly to anybody who can engage on matters environment because they are actually what we do every day.

You have one Question from the Senator for Kirinyaga County, Sen. (Dr.) Murango. I request Sen. Wakili Sigei to stand in on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango.

Question No.037

TREE HARVESTING IN KAMURUANA HILL FOREST AND
ENVIRONMENTAL SAFETY CONCERNS

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am reading this Question on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) James Murango from Kirinyaga County pursuant to a letter of authorisation dated 9th of April 2025, authorising me to ask it on his behalf.

Madam Cabinet Secretary, welcome to the Senate. Hon. Senator for Kirinyaga County has the following Question No.037 for you-

(a) Could the Cabinet Secretary provide details on the ongoing tree harvesting in Kamuruana Hill Forest in Kirinyaga Central constituency, stating whether the harvesting is legal and whether public participation was undertaken prior to the harvesting.

(b) What measures is the Government implementing to assure the local community of environmental safety given the risks of deforestation in the context of climate change and its potential impact on the ecosystem?

(c) What steps has the Ministry has taken to prevent deforestation and promote reforestation efforts across the country.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Madam Cabinet Secretary, you can respond to the three questions.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, and hon. Members, for giving us the opportunity to address the questions and concerns that were given to us.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Kamuruana Hill Karaini, which is within Kangaita Forest Station, is located in Kirinyaga West Sub-county. It covers an area of 23.87 hectares composed of 14.7 hectares of *Pinus patula*, that is pine trees plantation and 9.17 hectares of bush and grasslands. It is detached from the main forest block of Kangaita Forest.

With regards to harvesting in Kamuruana Hill, Karaini Forest, I wish to clarify that there is no tree harvesting activities being undertaken on this Hill. This can be confirmed by the latest satellite imagery and photos annexed (A) and (B). If and when this is going to take place, the Kenya Forest Service (KFS) will be guided by the provision provided in the Kenya Forest Conservation and Management Act and any other relevant legislations, such as the Environmental Management and Co-ordination Act (EMCA) 1999, Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) and Public Procurement and Assessment Disposal Act (PPADA) with strict adherence to meaningful public participation.

With regards to the question about the measures the Government is implementing to assure local community of environmental safety, given the risk of deforestation in the context of climate change and its potential impact on the ecosystem, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry is implementing strategic measures to guarantee environmental safety to the local communities. The measures are outlined in Section 48 of the Forest Conservation and Management Act, 2016 and the National Environment Policy, 2013. For example, in fulfilment of the legal environmental requirements as stipulated in the EMCA 1999, under the Second Schedule, KFS undertook an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).

The Mount Kenya Forest Ecosystem Environmental and Social Impact Assessment for Forest Plantations is annexed one. During the process of development of the EIA report, sufficient public participation was conducted, such as public participation report for the Mount Kenya Forest Ecosystem in Embu annexed two.

The scope of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) was impact identification, mitigation measures and environmental management plan during harvesting. Safety measures referred to Chapter 6 of Annex three on Potential Environmental and Social Impacts and Mitigation Measures. The ESIA also provides guidance on seedling production, planting, management of plantations, process for disposal of mature plantations, harvesting and decommissioning. You can refer to Chapter 5.8 on project activities and also provide for public participation in those areas. The KFS was subsequently issued with an EIA licence to undertake the harvesting with accompanying conditions, Annex four as attached.

Harvesting operations of plantations in the country are guided by ESIA report on environmental and social safeguards. In order to address climate change and

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

resilience, KFS is carrying out its afforestation and re-afforestation operational plan, which aims to restore harvested plantations and develop and restore degraded forest areas within natural forest ecosystem. This is part of the KFS Forest Conservation 2024/2025 Annual Work Plan is annex five.

Specifically, on the Medium Term and Beta priorities, the Ministry has-

(1) Finalised the development of National Forest Policy, 2023 and the National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy 2023-2032, mobilised resources and mainstreaming tree growing in all sectors, awareness creation and publicity.

(2) Coordinated production of quality tree seeds towards achievement of 100 metric tonnes annually.

(3) Coordinated seedling production towards achievement of 1.5 billion annually.

(4) Coordinated growing of trees towards achievement of 1.5 billion annual targets.

(5) Recruited 2,664 forest rangers.

(6) Rehabilitated 61,256 hectares of degraded public natural forests.

(7) Established 10,763 hectares of public forest plantation.

(8) Fenced 1,190 kilometres of natural public forests.

(9) Rehabilitated 7,505.69 hectares of mangrove forest ecosystem.

(10) rehabilitated 3,054 hectares of bamboo forests.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, regarding the question about what steps the Ministry has taken to prevent deforestation and promote reforestation efforts across the country; in order to prevent deforestation across the country, the Ministry has-

(1) Through the KFS, recruited, trained and deployed 2,664 forest rangers, 474 foresters across all the forest stations for protection and surveillance to enhance survival of planted seeds (See annex 6).

(2) The recent recruitment of forest rangers, forest officers and cadets has been a game changer, achieving a significant reduction in illegal forest activities, which contribute to deforestation.

(3) The Ministry, again, deployed a multi-agency security team to enforce and eradicate illegal logging and charcoal production. These enhanced surveillance and patrols, KFS has intensified surveillance efforts, including aerial monitoring and ground patrols to deter illegal activities.

These measures have contributed to a reduction in illegal logging and charcoal production as communities become more aware of the importance of forest conservation-annexed seven.

(4) Legal enforcement on individuals apprehended for engaging in illegal logging and charcoal production face legal consequences, including fines and other penalties. This strict enforcement serves as a deterrent to others considering involvement in such activities.

(5) For the regulatory measures; the Ministry has drafted regulations to regulate charcoal production, propose legislation mandates, the registration and licensing of all commercial charcoal producers, requiring them to obtain permits before engaging in production.

These regulations prohibit charcoal production in ecologically sensitive areas and impose strict guidelines on packaging and labelling to enhance transparency and traceability within the charcoal market.

(6) To enhance community involvement in forest conservation; the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry will unveil a 24-hour toll-free number for reporting illegal forest activities, including logging and illegal charcoal burning. This initiative encourages citizens to actively participate in safeguarding forest resources by reporting suspicious activities.

(7) The Ministry has held a series of community sensitisation meetings in illegal logging and charcoal producing areas to promote forest conservation and management under the Participatory Forest Management Arrangements. (See Annex 8)

(8) The Ministry has also undertaken fencing of 1,190 kilometres of public forests in this financial year, 2024/2025.

(9) The Ministry has promoted controlled grazing through grazing plants across the forest stations.

(10) The Ministry, through KFS, has an elaborate fire management plan which entails establishment of smoke detection system, digital radio communication and supply of firefighting equipment.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, on reforestation efforts, the Ministry is spearheading the National Landscape and Ecosystem Restoration Strategy and is actively participating in the 15 billion tree growing national initiative in partnership with partners, stakeholders and county governments. The exercise restores degraded ecosystems while boosting climate resilience.

In the 15 billion tree growing initiative, every county has an obligation to grow a given number of trees over the next 10 years. To ensure production of quality tree seedlings, certified seeds are sourced from the authorized seed provider, the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) for quality assurance.

The Ministry, through KFS and other agencies such as KEFRI, is raising tree seedlings in tree nurseries and offering technical advice to community forest associations, timber manufacturers association, farmers and other stakeholders on good tree nursery practices to ensure quality seedlings production. Through KFS, active reforestation is being undertaken in gazetted forest areas. On the other hand, technical support is being provided to support tree planting in private farmlands and community forests. Reforestation within plantation areas is a continuous programme and conforms to the plantation forest management plans to replant the open areas created after harvesting. This is annexure 10.

Sensitizing the public on species-to-site matching ensures that the public plants the right tree species in their suitable ecological zones, thus enhancing survival and growth of the planted trees. The species-site matching is also outlined in the *Jaza-Miti* Application, an online tree planting reporting platform. This is annexure 11.

Provision of advice on optimal tree planting time based on metrological weather forecast is routinely conducted and strengthening governance in participatory forest management. The development of frameworks and guidelines on economic alternatives for communities, such as commercialization of non-forest products.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Supporting adoption of multi-purpose tree species to reduce pressure on public forests, such as provision of guidelines for growing of *melia volkensii*, also known as *Mukau* in the Asal region, which is annexe 12, for growing of *melia volkensii*.

The development of partnership in tree growing with various stakeholders in adopting forest through framework of collaboration agreements.

Continuous public awareness creation on opportunities and incentives on tree growing such as the carbon credit schemes, value chains in commercial and agroforestry.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Thank you. Sen. Wakili, on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango, you now have an opportunity to ask two supplementary questions to the Cabinet Secretary.

Please proceed.

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Thank you once again, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, and Hon. Cabinet Secretary for the response that you have shared with the House in regards to the questions from Sen. Murango.

I have two supplementary questions. One is in regards to the need to have a clarification from the CS under Annex 1(a), because the Question is asking about harvesting. The answer is that there is no harvesting. I have looked at the Annex under (a) in the response from the Cabinet Secretary and there is a timestamp as to when that Google map of Kamuruana Hill Forest was pulled out. That is the 8th April, 2025. I do not know what time that was. However, my supplementary question emanates from Annex (b) whose two maps do not have a timestamp as to when they were printed out. Could she confirm whether the same is within the date of the 8th April, or it could have been something that was just taken for purposes of responding to this question?

My second supplementary is with regards to the answer to part (c) on what the Ministry has taken to prevent deforestation and promote reforestation efforts across the country. The answer appearing on page six has listed several action points that the Ministry has undertaken.

My supplementary question is from point (viii), where the Ministry has undertaken fencing of 1,190 kilometres of public forest in this financial year. I would like to know from her the efforts that the Ministry has put in place to ensure that such fences are protected and are able to last for a reasonable timeline.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am saying this because I come from Bomet County. There is a forest called Chepalungu Forest, which was fenced last year. I would like to report that within a period of four months, almost a quarter of the section of the forest had already either collapsed or could easily be accessible by the public, meaning it will not serve the purpose.

Secondly, the aspect of ensuring the promotion of controlled grazing through grazing plants has not been fully implemented. I am saying this also with regard to Chepalungu Forest, especially Siongiroi area which has been reduced into a toll station, where rangers have allowed farmers to take their cows for grazing into the forest with unregulated arrests and fines imposed on farmers.

Farmers within that particular forest, and I believe across the country, would also be subjected to illegal arrests where rangers have used the opportunity to obtain money

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

illegally from those who are involved in grazing of the animals within the forest because of this particular plan. Has the Cabinet Secretary put in place a mechanism to ensure that this particular arrangement is not misused? I have given you the example of Chepalungu Forest in my county where that practice is rampant.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, please proceed.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I wish to clarify that the pictures were taken yesterday.

Secondly, regarding the concerns on the fencing, we are working with the Community Forest Association and the key components that we are looking into is the maintenance of the fencing.

Additionally, as we have said, we have rangers to ensure that there is security and the forests are protected. Equally, we have the grazing plan. So, a comprehensive report can also be shared in the concerns of mitigation of the same.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Wakili, please proceed.

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Cabinet Secretary has not answered the second limb of the question. I would have expected her to make an indication as to whether she has no specific response on a mechanism put in place and give us a timeline. For example, if she desires to retreat and establish what such mechanisms are.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Is that is on the grazing?

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Yes, on the grazing plans. She acknowledged that they exist. She equally acknowledged that rangers also exist, but did not give an answer or even sought for a specific timeline within which she can do that.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we kindly request that you give us seven days to have a comprehensive report to share with you on what we are doing to address the concern.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): From the Chair, as you do that, also give this House the role of the Consortium of African Funds for the Environment (CAFÉ) in forest conservation and management. What is their role? It is in the Forest Management Act, 2016. The question with regards to Chepalungu Forest comes from the forest management and grazing rights to access the forest by the communities.

The grazing is not well coordinated. It is in law that the community should be able to access forest through the CAFÉ. So, in seven days, give us a comprehensive statement or response to that effect.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Wakili, are you comfortable now?

(Sen. Wakili spoke off record)

Yes, Chepalungu Forest is a case study, as well as the forest in Kirinyaga County. Hon. Senators, you have a chance to ask only one supplementary question. Sen. Paul Karungo Thang'wa, please proceed.

Sen. Thang'wa: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. My question is close to what Sen. Sigei on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango asked about the illegal logging. It is happening in Karura Forest, on Kiambu Road near the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI). It is also happening in Thogoto Forest.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when the KFS was asked about this illegal logging in January, 2025, they assured the public that the ongoing activities are part of the well-planned forest management. They also assured that they will plant trees between March and May. We are now in April, yet, there is no planting of trees in Thogoto and Karura forests. It is not happening. The illegal logging is continuing at an alarming rate. They are saying they are cutting trees for domestic fuel. If, indeed, you are logging for domestic fuel, you are supposed to give the wood, timber and the tree trunks to the neighbours. However, we see big trucks taking these logs away. So, can she clarify what is happening?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Let me get a few more questions because they might be related in one way or the other.

Prof. Tom Ojienda, the Senator for Kisumu County, please, proceed. Sorry he is not in the Chamber.

Sen. Onyonka Richard, please, proceed.

Sen. Onyonka: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I do not know whether the Cabinet Secretary and the team that she is with are aware that if you go to roughly seven counties of western Kenya, namely, Trans Nzoia, Kakamega, Siaya, Kisii and Homa Bay and Bomet County could also be included, there is a Chinese company that is cutting trees indiscriminately, packaging them into trucks and shipping them off to China.

I remember the President once came to Kisii County and said we do not want to be exporting raw materials. That if there is anything to be done, let it be processed on site, so that there is value addition, so that we can employ our people and be responsible. I do not know whether she is aware of this. If she is, what is the strategy and plan?

Nobody knows the company and the Chinese individuals who are cutting these trees are and who they represent. Nobody has ever told us the purpose of the cutting of those trees indiscriminately. Even in Meru County, historically, once trees are cut, they have to be replanted. There is no strategy for replanting of trees or any other fauna and flora which is being destroyed.

Finally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when these trees are being cut, they are causing an environmental hazard because they leave all the offcuts and the materials on site and move out, going to the other side. I would like the Minister to help, so that we can understand what is going on.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Let us get the last one, this round from Sen. Mungatana Danson.

Sen. Mungatana, MGH: Thank you, Waziri, for visiting us in Tana River County in your previous capacity.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question I have is about data. On 22nd December, 2022, an initiative was launched in the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, led by none other than His Excellency the President. This initiative was very good because we are supposed to be planting 15 billion trees between 2022 and 2032. That means every year, we are supposed to be doing 1.5 billion trees. So, this being 2025, we are supposed to have done 4.5 billion from 2022. I would like to know how many trees have been planted in the County of Tana River and generally, in Kenya?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you look at the Social Health Authority (SHA) in the Ministry of Health, where our Cabinet Secretary served before, there is a data platform. So, every single day in real time, any Kenyan can enter that data and know how many people have registered every single day. I would like to know how many trees have been planted. If this is not being done, how sure are we of the numbers that you are announcing here?

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, can we have a plan of data collection, so that we speak with seriousness on this matter? It is a generational issue, and we would like to know whether the Minister is keeping that data. What happened to that initiative?

I thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Senators, as you have realized, the last three questions were not related to what the Cabinet Secretary came to answer. However, she has heard your questions. From where she sits, it might not be possible to give the data or the information on all the questions. Perhaps there are some questions that she can answer right away. However, there are others which need accurate data of how many trees have been planted, so far, she cannot maybe use her phone to give you that data now.

So, as we ask these questions, let us be also alive that she might not be having answers to them right away. I am giving you some leeway at least to ask your questions because the Cabinet Secretary is representing the country in the Ministry.

At least, she can note some of the questions and give commitment. She did so well with the other issue on Chepalungu Forest in Bomet County. She gave a commitment of seven days to give the plans that they have on the grazing in the forest.

Hon. Members, as you ask do not expect answers now. I am not defending her, but remember, our Standing Order says you ask a question which is related to the primary Question. However, I am giving you that leeway at least to ask questions which are relevant in the forest management.

Hon. CS, please, answer those three questions first.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. As I said, we would like to share with you a detailed and comprehensive report regarding tree planting. That way, we can all be on the same page moving forward, where we are as a country in terms of achieving our 15 billion tree plantations. So, we assure you that we have the *Jaza Miti* application, which is data driven where we are monitoring.

Currently, we have 783 million trees planted, 652 have already been incorporated into this application and 131 have been manually collected. In the application, we are

monitoring the growth to ensure that these trees are thriving and viable. So, we will be able to share with you the comprehensive report per county.

We have had several discussions that every month, every county should have a report on how many trees they have been able to plant vis-a-vis what has been targeted. I can assure you that this comprehensive report will be shared within seven days.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no illegal logging. That I can assure you and tree planting is ongoing. This has been stopped. The concerns with the Chinese company were happening, but that has been stopped. We can even share the letters showing evidence that none of that is going on at the moment. I believe this comprehensive report will cover that to give you tangible evidence of the number of trees we have and even the Geo-mapping of where the trees are. We are even able to show the coverage all over the country as the years progress and where we will be.

Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, we kindly request to share a comprehensive report with tangible evidence and assure Members that we will be sharing monthly reports, so that they can be informed on what is going on in matters of tree planting within the country.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, did you touch on what is happening in Karura Forest?

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Mr, Deputy Speaker, Sir, there is no illegal logging in Karura Forest. We can even have a tour together and also meet with the communities around, discuss and engage with them so that you can be fully informed that none of that is going on there.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Thang'wa, you have been invited to that trip to Karura Forest to go and assess what is happening there.

Sen. Thang'wa: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is where I pass every day. I do not require an invitation. Regarding the issues of Karura and Thogoto forests, I even have videos that I can forward to the hon. Cabinet Secretary. I need a comprehensive report. I do not need to visit the forest because I pass there every day on my way to work.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): So, together with what she will be compiling for the other questions, she has mentioned that she will do a comprehensive report of the whole country, forest by forest, and acreage by acreage, so that now we tackle this matter wholesomely.

We want a comprehensive report of all the forested areas in Kenya, so that we do not ask about a forest in Kakamega or Nyandarua. So, if any Member intends to ask about a forest from the part of the country where they come from, I would request that we wait for that report.

Sen. Sifuna, if you feel that you have a different question, then I allow you to ask. So, the rest maybe we wait for that report.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, allow me to help my neighbour, the Senator for Kiambu County. The Senator for Kirinyaga County asked the Cabinet Secretary to give details of ongoing tree harvesting in Kamuruana Hill Forest.

The answer that the Cabinet Secretary gave was that there was no such activity going on. The Senator for Kirinyaga County as I know him, is not a mad man. I am sure there is somewhere from where this question originates. The problem we have with this

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Ministry is that you do not communicate and, in fact, it is the entire Government. This Government is unable to communicate.

The problem occurred at Karura Forest because instead of the Ministry telling the people of Nairobi and the country ahead of time that there will be harvesting of mature trees next week, so that everybody is on the same page; they waited until we were sent videos online whereby there was felling of trees. We had a statement from the KFS saying that it was them who were felling the trees. The problem is communication.

We wake up one day and we can see people clearing sections of Ngong Forest on the Southern bypass. Then when we ask, they say, oh, that is us. That is where the problem is. So, you need to tell us, as a Ministry, what is your policy on communication. When you want to do tree planting and harvesting, why can you not tell the country in advance?

The Senator for Kiambu County is not a madman. We have seen you felling trees in Karura Forest---

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): What is your supplementary question, Sen. Sifuna?

Sen. Mandago: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the question is---

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Just a minute, Sen. Mandago. Continue, Sen. Sifuna, what is your supplementary question?

Sen. Sifuna: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, why am I being heckled by people from Uasin Gishu County? We are talking about Karura Forest. I do not even think he knows where Karura Forest is. Can he allow us to engage the Cabinet Secretary?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Sifuna.

Sen. Sifuna: Why am I being heckled by people from Uasin Gishu? When it comes to forests in Elburgon or wherever it is, you can ask your question.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the reason my brother from Kiambu County and I are concerned is that Karura Forest is at the heart of the people of Nairobi and Kiambu counties. So, what is the communication policy? Do you wait until Twitter tells us that there is logging going on in Karura Forest before you give a statement? Why can you not tell us early? These trees do not mature overnight. I am sure the Forest Department knows how long it takes a tree to mature and when it will be due for harvesting.

Why can you not tell us in advance instead of waiting for Twitter to tell us that trees are being felled and then you come and say, "oh, that is us."

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): That question is not different from what was asked by Sen. Thang'wa.

Sen. Kinyua, you can proceed so that she can answer your question together with those of several other Members at a go.

Sen. Kinyua: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is this tree planting a public relations exercise or are we committed to it? In Laikipia County, for example, at a place called Kauka, the then Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Njeru, planted trees. However, as I speak now, there is no single tree at that place because the elephants went there and destroyed everything.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

This year, again, the governor was there, together with the Principal Secretary and they planted trees. Is it a public relations exercise to plant trees? Also, when we talk about planting trees, how many have we planted? It is not even how many trees we have planted. It is how many have survived?

Every time we talk about planting trees, but we do not know how many have survived. Every time, we are told trees are planted and there is a day set for planting trees. Is it planting trees, or is it the number of trees that have survived?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): What you are asking is, are we planting trees or growing trees? If you grow trees, you must tend the seedlings from the onset until maturity. So maybe your question is: Are we growing trees or planting? You can plant and grow. In the case of growing, your eyes must be there full time so that you can nurture them.

Sen. Fatuma Dullo, you may proceed.

Sen. Dullo: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir and *Waziri*. My question is on the Mathenge. I hope *Waziri* understands what Mathenge is. Previously, Mathenge was introduced more specifically to Northern Kenya to control desertification. However, this plant is causing a lot of havoc in many parts of Northern Kenya.

I have repeated this question even in the last Senate because the communities living in those areas are even unable to graze their animals because of the Mathenge.

Secondly, the communities have requested the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry to allow them to burn charcoal from those plants so that at least they can control the Mathenge from growing.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Dullo, the Senator for Nyeri County is wondering whether you are referring to him or who you are referring to. Is it Sen. Mathenge, the Senator for Nyeri County, or is it the Mathenge tree?

(Laughter)

Sen. Dullo: No, no. I am referring to the Mathenge plant; what is called *Prosopis* or something like that.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): It is called *prosopis juliflora*.

Sen. Dullo: Exactly. You are right.

(Applause)

It looks like you have done environmental science or whatever it is.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): That is my area; I can lecture you here.

Sen. Dullo: Oh, thank you. I have not done that. Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not Mathenge, a person, but it is Mathenge, the plant. What I wanted to know from the Cabinet Secretary, I am sure she is new in the Ministry, but the Director General for Forests and the Principal Secretaries are there. People living in Northern Kenya have a lot of challenges. Those trees are dangerous. They are even poisonous; they are killing our animals. I want to know whether the Ministry has plans to allow the communities living in those areas to burn charcoal from those plants or what plans do they have to control those plants?

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Last one from Sen. Seki.

Sen. Seki: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I also would like to seek a clarification from the Cabinet Secretary regarding the situation in Oloolua Forest, located in Ngong, Kajiado North Constituency. Some time ago, we had a big problem involving intruders encroaching on the forest. This encroachment disrupted grazing activities and prevented animals from accessing water from the nearby river.

I seek an update on the current status of this encroachment, particularly in the Oloolua Area. Could she tell us the plans the Ministry has to address this issue, ensure the forest's protection and hold the responsible individuals accountable?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Madam Cabinet Secretary, you can answer those four supplementary questions.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir and Hon. Members. Indeed, these are interesting questions, some of which would require us to sit down to provide you with a comprehensive report. We assure you that we will ensure we have tangible evidence so that we are all on the same page.

Regarding Karura Forest, there has been sufficient communication by the KFS and Friends of Karura through their social media platforms. Additionally, public notices are displayed at all Karura Forest gates to announce upcoming activities.

Concerning tree planting, we are not merely planting trees; as a Ministry, we are focused on growing them. Perhaps I forgot to mention that of the 783 million trees we have planted, we have observed an 85 per cent survival rate over three years. This means that 85 per cent of the trees are thriving. We are also monitoring how many trees are being cut down to ensure we do not have a negative net balance. This forms part of the communication and the report we will share, categorized by county to ensure everyone is well informed.

Regarding Laikipia, we take note of the destruction caused by elephants, which are indeed a menace. To address this, the KWS has installed electric fencing to mitigate tree damage and minimize human-wildlife conflict. The fencing has been implemented in that area.

Regarding *prosopis juliflora* or Mathenge, we have drafted a Cabinet Memorandum that will soon be tabled. This memorandum outlines a comprehensive approach to addressing this issue through an inter-ministerial committee. This concern affects 27 counties. That is why we needed to have a comprehensive approach to this. We will keep you updated on the progress in addressing it.

On the topic of charcoal, there is a draft Charcoal Regulations, 2025, which is currently undergoing public participation. This regulations aims to allow for sustainable charcoal production.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): There was Sen. Seki's question on Oloolua Forest.

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

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Who is out of order? Is it the Cabinet Secretary? Cabinet Secretary, answer the question by Sen. Seki.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Hon. Deputy Speaker and Hon. Members, the Oolua area is now protected, with no illegal activities or encroachment. We will be happy to tour the area with you to confirm its current status, which we are confident is well protected.

Sen. Kinyua: The Cabinet Secretary alluded that Kauka area is fenced off, which is not correct. In other areas like Mwateto in Laikipia, electric fencing has been installed to address similar issues. However, Kauka and Maina Village areas, all the way to Marmanet are still being affected by those elephants. I give her the benefit of the doubt, considering she is new in the Ministry. However, she should provide the correct information.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): She has invited you to join the visit. Maybe you will be able to comprehensively---

Sen. Kinyua: I cannot wait for the visit, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, Madam Cabinet Secretary.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. What we stated is that the area is protected, though it is not fully fenced. Rangers are stationed around the area. Additionally, we will share a comprehensive report that includes details on coverage, supported by pictorial evidence. This approach will ensure that the coverage requirements for our country are achieved.

Sen. Mandago: On a point of information, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Who do you want to inform? The Cabinet Secretary?

Sen. Mandago: I want to inform Sen. Kinyua that protection is not necessarily an electric fence.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): He has declined the information you have. Sen. Wamatinga Wahome, proceed.

Sen. Wamatinga: Thank you very much, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. Let me start by commending the Cabinet Secretary for the commendable work she has accomplished in the short time she has been in the Ministry. She is performing quite well.

That said, I recognize that the Cabinet Secretary might not yet have fully internalized all the operations. However, I wish to raise an issue that we have been discussing in this House and the country at large. It is also a global concern that we believe we, as a nation, can leverage.

Coming from a country situated between two water towers, our efforts to achieve comprehensive forest cover has been quite elaborate. Therefore, I would like the Cabinet Secretary to elaborate on a matter that revolves around the incentives we are striving to leverage, specifically the issue of carbon credits.

As you are aware, this House has passed laws aimed at operationalizing this initiative. Our vision has been to engage the youth and mainstream the younger

generation in afforestation efforts across the country. In doing so, we were promising them that carbon credits would be a take home for their participation.

Could the Cabinet Secretary explain her plan for implementing and operationalizing this initiative to ensure that this great benefit is not lost to our youth, whom we must mainstream in conserving our ecosystem?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Ososti, proceed.

Sen. Ososti: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Before I ask my question, allow me to thank the Cabinet Secretary for attending, although she has been in the Ministry for a short time. She appears to be a quick learner.

That said, I would like to inquire from the Cabinet Secretary about the Ministry's policy on sawmilling in the forests. In my county, specifically in Kibiri Forest, which is part of the larger Kakamega Forest, the local community actively participates in growing trees and taking care of the forest. However, when it comes to sawmilling and harvesting the trees, they do not involve the community. Contractors and sawmillers are brought in from other counties. This practice disregards the efforts of the local community who have invested time and resources into forest conservation, yet are sidelined during harvesting.

What is the policy on sawmilling and involvement of the local community? I have raised this matter in this House on two prior occasions, and each time, I have been assured action would be taken. However, the situation remains the same.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to know from the Cabinet Secretary the steps they are taking. This question does not need her to go and research because it is a matter that has come here twice. What steps are they taking to ensure that the community is fully involved, not just in the growing, but also harvesting of trees when they are ready?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Next is Sen. Mariam Sheikh Omar.

Sen. Mariam Omar: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity. When it comes to tree-planting, it involves both the national Government and county governments. What measures or reward mechanism does the Ministry have to encourage counties to plant more trees?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, Sen. Maanzo Daniel.

Sen. Maanzo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to ask the Cabinet Secretary about transportation of seedlings. After being grown by the Ministry, they have to be transported to different areas for planting. That has been a problem in Kilungu Forest near Mukaa area, where farmers who work with the State Department for Forestry want to take seedlings to primary schools for planting, especially during this rainy season. However, there have been constant questions on the issue of transportation. Do you help to transport seedlings to areas where they should be planted?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe Steve.

Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe Ltumbesi: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Hon. Cabinet Secretary, given the Government of Kenya ambitious policy to plant a billion trees in the next 10 years as part of the National Government Afforestation Policy, could you clarify how this policy aligns with management and regulations of logging and

activities in private forests specifically? How does the Government ensure that logging in private forests does not undermine the Government efforts?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Mandago, proceed.

Sen. Mandago: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have a question to the Cabinet Secretary, which we may not get an answer today because the issue is not closely related, but it endangers our forests. There is a plant called *cuscuta* that destroys the very trees that we plant.

If it is not checked, just like the *mathenge* plant that Sen. Dullo talked about, it will become a disaster. We have seen the destruction that it is causing. What is the Ministry doing? Is there a chemical that can be sprayed, or how can we get rid of that parasitic plant that is destroying our trees?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): That should have been the last question. Sen. Wakili Hillary, are you now appearing as the Senator for Bomet because you had spoken on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango?

Sen. Wakili Sigei: No, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Thank you so much. Madam Cabinet Secretary, kindly respond to those few interventions then we call it a day.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, and hon. Members. Regarding the issue of carbon credit, that is quite an elaborate report that would require extensive discussions. We have carbon regulations in place. Again, we request for seven days to prepare that report.

Concerning the issue of saw milling, trees are disposed through open tender as per the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act. We would like to inform you that everybody is allowed to tender. Communities are encouraged and are allocated 30 to 60 per cent of the same. Again, local licenses are considered at a ratio of 60:40.

Concerning the issue of transportation of seedlings, there is no budgetary provision for it, but Kenya Forest Service (KFS) also supports in tree-planting sessions. So, we encourage utilisation of the same staff that we have as a Ministry.

Moving to Sen. Mandago's question, the public has been sensitized through the Kenya Forestry Research Institute (KEFRI) and Kenya Agricultural and Livestock Research Organization (KALRO). There are discussions going on with the community. However, I believe that we will send a comprehensive report regarding the same as we had alluded to earlier.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Osotsi, you were very passionate when you asked your question regarding saw millers in your county, but you were not keen to listen to the answer that was provided. You said you want a straight answer and not for her to be allowed to come and respond again.

Sen. Osotsi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am very sorry. I was consulting with my party Member here.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): You know we are not addressing party issues. We are listening to the responses from the Cabinet Secretary. She came all the way to address our questions.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Madam Cabinet Secretary, just take one minute to repeat what you said. It should encourage saw millers to participate when tenders are floated. Kindly repeat what you said about saw millers in Vihiga County.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the sawmillers, trees are disposed through open tendering as per the Public Procurement and Asset Disposal Act. Everybody is allowed to tender and the communities are encouraged because they are allocated 30 to 60 per cent of the same. Local licenses are considered for the community at a ratio of 60:40.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Is that good enough? There is no time to exchange again. I advised you to meet all the sawmillers in your county and advise them on the process. Also provide an officer so that they can engage sawmillers in Vihiga County and its environs.

Sen. Osotsi, you have 30 seconds.

Sen. Osotsi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the answer given by madam Cabinet Secretary is about the tendering process. The information I have is that for all the people who have been given jobs, none of them is local. So, where is the 30 per cent she is referring to? I have evidence that I can provide on that.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, madam Cabinet Secretary.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for tendering, normally all those who are prequalified are the ones who receive licenses. The concern there is that perhaps they did not pass the prequalification stage. Maybe we will discuss that further with our team here to identify challenges they had when they were tendering.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Madam Cabinet Secretary, I advise that you task the county conservator to engage the community, so that they understand what happens. I believe there is a county forest officer or conservator stationed in the county. Please organise in a way that the conservator can address those issues in Vihiga and any other county that needs sensitisation.

Hon. Senators, we have come to the conclusion of that Question.

Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe: On a point of order.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Your issue was not addressed? Was it very technical?

Sen. (Dr.) Lelegwe: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I asked about the Government policy on logging on private forests. I did not hear the feedback from the Cabinet Secretary.

Thank you.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the regulations are underway. They are undergoing public participation to strengthen the private forests currently. There are also harvesting rules which provides a procedure for them to monitor the forests.

The KFS and the county are working together to ensure that there is compliance for the forests. So, maybe you wait. We will also share a report within seven days, giving you a comprehensive report on what we are doing for the private forests. At a bird's eye

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

view, the regulations are undergoing public participation. We have also rules and procedures in place. The KFS and county are also compliant to the very same rules.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, Sen. Wambua in less than one minute. What is your comment on logging?

Sen. Wambua: I thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for indulging me. Mine is just to provide some information to the Cabinet Secretary about this rampant logging that is taking place across the country. Last weekend, I was in Kitui, a ward called Tharaka. These are Kenya Power (KP) people restoring power lines.

The level of tree felling was enormous. In fact, if proper investigation is carried out, it may as well produce the results. Kenya Power is doing very serious damage to our forests. They are cutting down trees that have been there for hundreds of years, simply just to provide wayleave for power lines.

This morning, I have come from Nakuru. I witnessed the same felling of trees that clearly are not less than 50 to 60 years old. The Ministry has to do something about logging, both in public and even in private forests. Otherwise, we will convert this country into a desert.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Madam Cabinet Secretary, maybe you can comment on the indiscriminate felling of trees by KP. In Nairobi, almost all the estates, especially the upper estates, they have done a lot of injustice to the same drive that we have for planting 115 billion trees. So, we are doing 100,000 plus, then subtracting 200,000. We are retrogressing.

Is there a policy at the Cabinet level, where you can engage the Ministries of Energy and Environment? What other methods can we use to put our cables? They are still felling trees where there are coated cables. We do not understand what they are doing. Maybe you can make a comment as we wind up.

The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa): Hon. Speaker, the Ministry has indeed reached out to the Ministry of Energy and Petroleum and a technical working group has been established to address the issue. So, we have the Ministries of Energy and Environment on board to address the concerns to prevent felling of trees.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Maybe as you do also the other report, you can include what has been agreed, because for sure we cannot move on in that direction. So, maybe you can find out what has been agreed between the two ministries with the working group and how far they are on this matter, so that also we can assist Kenyans?

Hon. Senators, that is the end of our engagement with the Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry. Thank you for finding time to appear to the Senate. We will be waiting for that report as you have stipulated within seven days.

We are now free to move to other matters of nation building.

[The Cabinet Secretary for Environment, Climate Change and Forestry (Hon. (Dr.) Deborah Barasa) and her team were ushered out of the Chamber]

Next in line is the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport. I understand he is within the building. May he be ushered in.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

[The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir) was ushered into the Chamber]

Cabinet Secretary, welcome to the Senate once again. You have been our frequent customer. We have six questions for you this morning.

Hon. Members, be as brief as possible, especially on the supplementary questions because we have so many questions pending for the next few months. We want to make sure you utilize this one hour, 50 minutes, to dispense of these six questions.

Question No.004

HALTED OPERATIONS AT SOLOLO
AND TURBI AIRSTRIPS

Sen. Chute: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport the following Question No.004-

(1) Why were operations halted at Sololo and Turbi airstrips in Marsabit County? Could the Cabinet Secretary outline any steps being undertaken to ensure the airstrips resume operations?

(2) If there are any plans to relocate the airstrip. If so, could the Cabinet Secretary explain why and provide timelines for the same?

(3) Could the Cabinet Secretary also state whether a comprehensive safety and aeronautical engineering assessment has been done and conducted in all airstrips in Marsabit County? If so, disclose the findings, particularly in respect of the length of the runway at Marsabit township and outline measures taken to address any identified safety concerns.

(4) Are there plans to upgrade or expand Marsabit Town airstrip and any other airstrip in the County? If so, could the Cabinet Secretary disclose such plans and provide a timeline for the implementation?

Thank you very much, Hon. Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Cabinet Secretary, respond to the issues raised, simultaneously.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, and Members of the Senate. I am happy to be here this morning. Good morning? Thank you for the question by Sen. Chute, the Senator of Marsabit County.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me go straight to answer the first question without reciting it. This is with respect to Sololo and Turbi airstrips. Sololo Airstrip is a Code C aerodrome located in Sololo, Marsabit County. It features a gravel service runway measuring 1.2 kilometres or 1,200 metres in length and 20 metres in width, capable of accommodating aircrafts with passenger capacity of up to 13.

While the facility does not fall under the direct management of Kenya Airports Authority (KAA), the Authority has conducted an assessment of its current condition

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

with key findings outlined. The airstrip perimeter fence has been vandalised, leading to unrestricted access by both people and animals thereby compromising operational safety.

With respect to the runway, the pavement has experienced significant erosion and the presence of overgrown vegetation poses a hazard to aircraft operations. Additionally, gullies and shrubs have encroached the runway strip, further affecting its usability. There are overhead power lines by Kenya Power Company (KP) transmission lines across the main approach path of runway, creating a potential safety risk for aircrafts on final approach.

The airstrip has been repurposed as a dumping site by the surrounding community, which further deteriorates the integrity of the aerodrome infrastructure. There is also encroachment by human settlement in close proximity to the airstrip. The perimeter fence is situated approximately 30 metres from the runway centreline and the primary access route to several homes passes through the airstrip land, further compromising safety and security. Given these challenges, corrective measures are required to restore the airstrip operational safety and integrity.

With respect to Turbi Airstrip, it is also a Code C aerodrome located in Turbi, Marsabit County. It has a gravel runway measuring 1.07 kilometres in length and 20 metres width and can accommodate aircrafts with passengers up to 13 persons. Although the airstrip is also not under the management of KAA, the Authority has conducted an assessment of its current condition, highlighting several critical concerns. Like Sololo Airstrip, there is damage on the runway with deep gullies from erosions and service runoffs, making it partially unusable. There is encroachment due to settlement. Livestock, motorbikes, and pedestrians freely access the airstrip due to lack of fencing.

A six-metre building, a 12-metre power line, and a raised road of 50 metres from the threshold obstruct safe aircraft operation. Overgrown shrubs, boulders and unmaintained vegetation pose a safety hazard. With respect to infrastructure, there is a vandalised perimeter fence and overhead KP power lines across the main approach which increase risk.

The current condition of Sololo and Turbi airstrips have made them unsafe for use due to safety concerns, inadequate infrastructure and non-compliance with Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) regulations as I have outlined.

In response, the Ministry, through its implementing agency KAA, has initiated a technical assessment to determine the necessary scope of rehabilitation. Based on the findings, a phased rehabilitation plan will be developed through targeted budgetary allocation. The upgrade of these airstrips is not contained in the current financial year budget since the rehabilitation remains dependent on availability of funding. Let me say this, given the vastness of Marsabit and the mode of access to the county, I will personally pay attention to ensure we do make these two facilities usable by ensuring that we work on budgetary allocation.

Regarding whether there are plans to relocate the airstrips, and if so, we provide a timeline for the same, currently there are no approved plans for relocation of Sololo and Turbi airstrips. However, if assessments indicate that the current locations present long-term safety, operational or land-use challenges, relocation may be considered as an alternative.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Any such decision will be based also on provision of alternative land by the County Government of Marsabit, site reconnaissance, including aeronautical studies of the alternative proposed land, geotechnical and environmental impact studies. Consultation with stakeholders, including KAA, KCAA, Kenya Meteorological Department, the County Government, Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and security agencies are ongoing, and of course, budgetary provision within the Mid-Term Expenditure Framework. Timelines for any relocation, if deemed necessary, will be provided once the feasibility studies are completed.

On the third question, let me just respond to the question without reciting it. A comprehensive surveillance and safety assessment of airstrips in Marsabit was conducted by the KCAA from 28th October to 2nd November, 2024. The assessment aimed to evaluate the safety status of aerodromes to ensure compliance with civil aviation regulations and the authority manual of aerodrome standards.

The key finding is that Marsabit Airstrip runway measures 1.1 kilometres in length and 16 metres wide, with a bitumen serviced runway which is significantly worn out due to erosion and inadequate drainage. The runway is dilapidated with loose bubbles indicating a lack of proper maintenance programme. The runway width of 16 metres falls short of the required 23 metres for a Code 2 runway.

The airstrip is frequently used as a children's playground by the local community and Kiwanja Ndege Primary School. There is land encroachment by Kiwanja Ndege Primary School, the chief office and a dispensary built on the airstrip land. The windsock is completely damaged, leaving just the pole mask standing alone there.

Baricha Location chief's office has been constructed within the runway strip. There are no runway edge markers, end markers or taxiway markers. Due to the runway deteriorating condition, threshold 31 should be displaced by 350. Therefore, reducing the usable runway to a length of 730 metres.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to enhance safety and operational standard, we must reservice and widen the runway to meet regulatory standards, implementing routine maintenance programme to address service wear and drainage issues, restricting unauthorized access to prevent non-aeronautical activities by fencing, addressing land encroachment through proper demarcation and encroachment, replacing the windsock and installing proper runway markers and taxiway signage. These interventions are critical to ensuring safe aircraft operation and protecting the traveling public.

With respect to the final question as to whether there are plans to upgrade or expand Marsabit Town Airstrip, the upgrade is to accommodate commercial flights and has been planned in three phases as outlined.

While this facility is not under the management of KAA, equally the Authority has already completed phase one, which included the construction of new perimeter chain link fence with razor wire, installation of gatehouse, gate, septic tank and soak pit, construction of public washrooms, relocation of overhead KP lines. The project cost for this phase expended Kshs61.2 million.

The implementation period started in July 26th, 2022 and was completed one year later on 26th July, 2023. The project was completed and handed over to the client. Phase two will involve reconstruction of the runway, taxiway and apron pavements, overlaying

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

the runway with a 50-millimetre asphalt, which is about a two-inch asphalt, installation of runway markings, drainage improvement, including line drainage with side slabs or stone pitching, and installation of airfield lighting and communication equipment.

Phase Three will involve acquisition of additional land to extend the runway from 1.1 kilometres to 1.5 kilometres, expansion of runway, construction of passenger terminal, building offices, car park and wastewater reticulation system.

Additionally, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, feasibility studies are underway to assess the potential expansion of other strategic airstrips in Marsabit County, subject to budgetary allocation.

As I said, this is one of the biggest counties in Kenya and the mode of transport can only be achieved through facilitation of this kind of transport service. So, Hon. Chute, we shall pay attention and ensure we do address the needs for the people of this county to be able to travel.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in conclusion, I wish to inform the honourable House that the Ministry is committed to enhancing aviation infrastructure in Marsabit County to improve connectivity, security and economic growth. We can provide detailed timelines of implementation as soon as we finish the feasibility studies and budgetary approval. I confirm that we shall pay attention to that.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Sen. Mohammed Chute, do you have any supplementary question? Please have a seat, *Waziri*.

Sen. Chute: I do, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I would like the Cabinet Secretary to tell this House what he means when he talks about the airstrips not being under the management of KAA.

At the same time, he is contradicting himself, on the last page 5. He is talking about investment of up to Kshs61 million while the last paragraph talks about completion of the same project and handed over to KAA. If these airstrips are not managed by KAA, who is managing them? Why should it be handed over to KAA?

Secondly, in the last general election, 2022, myself and the current President, His Excellency William Ruto, wanted to go to Sololo. We had to go to Moyale and drive all the way from Moyale to Sololo. Now, it is almost three years later. He should tell this House that yes, we do not have funds now. However, when funds are available in next financial year, they will start and complete this project. Can he tell the people of Marsabit County besides not having money, they will start the project and state the completion period?

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. CS, please proceed.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the supplementary question from Hon. Chute.

Let me clarify that in Kenya today, we have a total of about 440 airstrips, falling under the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, the Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry, the Kenya Wildlife Service (KWS) and KAA. Those under our direct jurisdiction and management are 18. I guess because of the facility of KAA, we go into arrangements to support and maintain some of the airstrips like Sololo and Turbi.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

So, when we have an arrangement to run a maintenance and do a tender as KAA, we supervise the construction and the contractor will then hand over a certificate of completion. That is basically why I said it was handed over to the client. We are the client when we are in charge of the construction. However, those two airstrips belong to the Ministry of Interior and National Administration.

So, we will continue to cooperate with the Ministry of Interior and National Administration and KWS to deliver the various airstrips, to support and work together in terms of providing budgetary support. That suffices to basically clarify why I did indicate that “handed over back to the client”, the client being the contracting authority, KAA.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Hon. Senators, before I give you an opportunity to ask more supplementary questions, on Question No.046, Sen. Fatuma Dullo, has the related subject matter on the airport in Isiolo County. So, I would like to request you to also ask that Question, so that the CS can handle all the interventions together. Thereafter, we shall go back now to the other areas on loans.

Sen. Chute, do you have an intervention?

Sen. Chute: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I asked two supplementary questions. Question number one was on who the airstrips belong to. Second, he should give us the deadline on when to start and finish the project. He did not answer that question.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): CS, if you have that capacity to answer, proceed and give the time range?

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am sorry about that. I thought I was repeating myself because I had indicated that this is the vastest county in Kenya. Therefore, we will pay attention to make sure that budgetary provisions are provided. I will pay personal attention. If we do not provide these airstrips in a useable and maintainable mode, in a county as vast as Marsabit, it becomes a challenge.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will pay attention and push for budgetary support to ensure that whereas the Ministry of Interior did provide that budget, but we have been maintaining it. We shall work with the Ministry of Interior to ensure that we do provide a budget and maintain those airports.

Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Proceed, Sen. Dullo.

Question No.046

BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR MODERNISATION AND
REHABILITATION OF ISIOLO INTERNATIONAL AIRPORT

Sen. Dullo: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I beg to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport the following Question No. 46-

(a) How much money has the Government allocated and utilized, so far, in the project for the modernisation and rehabilitation of the Isiolo International Airport?

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

(b) Could the Cabinet Secretary provide a status update on the payment of compensation to owners of the parcels of land acquired for the project and indicate when outstanding balances will be paid?

(c) Are there plans to also extend the runway at the airport, and if so, could the Cabinet Secretary provide timelines for the same?

(d) Could the Cabinet Secretary also explain why the airport is not operational and outline steps being taken by the Government to address the situation?

The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri): Cabinet Secretary, please, proceed to respond.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. The response to the question from the Member for Isiolo County concerning the Isiolo Airport is as follows-

Part (a) is seeking the total amount of money that the Government has so far allocated and utilised in the project for the modernisation and rehabilitation of Isiolo Airport.

Isiolo Airport is an international airport given its location on the Lamu, Port South Sudan Ethiopia Transport (LAPSSET) Corridor. We need to open up that corridor for economic activities of this country because the current northern corridor is very congested.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I say this deliberately because Isiolo Airport is an international airport. I could see Aerodrome featuring a single asphalt runway that measures 1.4 kilometres in length and 30 metres in width, three numbered taxiways and an apron. The airport is on approximately 800 acres, that is, 330 acres of land. It is in both Isiolo and Meru counties.

Major construction work started in 2011 and was completed in 2017. The airport modernisation is part of the LAPSSET Corridor Development Project as well as Kenya's Vision 2030 programme.

Isiolo International Airport was strategically planned to enhance access to northern Kenya and connect the region with major cities and international destinations, thereby promoting tourism and business travel. The airport aims to stimulate economic growth and attract investment. Plans include expansion to further enhance its services and operational efficiency.

The construction of the airport was executed in three phases, with phase one being the development of the runway and taxiway in the financial year 2011/2013. Phase two was the construction of the passenger terminal building, office block and car park. It was completed in 2016. Development of the access road, apron, expansion and drainage works of phase three was completed in 2017.

The cost of phase one was Kshs844 million, phase two was Kshs963 million and phase three was Kshs849 million. The cost of the runway pavement was Kshs47.95 million. In item 5 on that table, there is runway pavement rehabilitation work. That started in financial year 2021/2022 at a cost Kshs55 million.

There is a proposed construction cargo processing facility at a cost of Kshs24.3 million, which started in 2021 and was completed. The erection of flood street lights and installation works, which started in 2017 and was finished in 2018, at a cost of Kshs27.78

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

million. There is extra mechanical service construction of a pump house, an elevated water tank and a borehole, which also has been completed for Kshs55 million. There is relocation of a school, KK Nkengecia Phase One and there is also a Phase Two with both costing Kshs97 million, that is Kshs76.4 million and Kshs20.4 million, respectively.

With the project total and both having been completed, with the project cost at Kshs2.974 billion, approximately 3 billion, you can see the significance of the big investment. We need to get down to answer the next question. Why is the airport not operational after that level of expenditure?

One the question of the compensation to residents who are displaced as a result of the project and how we are planning to finalize the compensation, on 2nd November, 2004, the Isiolo County Government agreed to set aside a portion of trustland for the expansion and promised alternative land for those affected in nearby areas.

A similar discussion took place in the defunct County Council of Meru North. The authority consulted with stakeholders, including district commissioners at that time, culminating in a supportive workshop that took place on 14th January, 2005.

The benefits of the airport project were highlighted, leading to further collaborative planning between the councils. After completing a joint fiscal planning exercise, the park development plans were submitted and approved by the Ministry of Lands and Housing in April 2006.

The authority received a letter of allotment for approximately 253 hectares on 23rd May, 2006. Meanwhile, in or around November 2004, the then Isiolo County Council conducted an identification exercise of persons affected by the expansion of the airstrip. A full council adoption of the same was obtained and the affected persons were to be relocated by the County Council of Isiolo.

As of today, due to multiple conflicts and claims, the authority has not been able to compensate the project affected persons because the genuine affected persons by the airport expansion have not been identified. In the process of vetting genuine persons and determining just compensation for the land used for expansion of the airport solely lies with the National Land Commission (NLC). In addition, there are multiple court land matters about Isiolo International Airport, which we have annexed.

Certainly, given the time frame and the historical time frame, we just need to complete that. Therefore, we need to get the NLC together with the county government and, of course, ourselves to close that issue, as the concern has been brought out by Sen. Dullo.

As regarding plans to extend the runway at the airport, and if so, whether we can provide a timeline, we have listed our projects that have been planned to make Isiolo International Airport fully functional, to support both passenger and cargo traffic, and then support that investment that has been put on the ground.

These projects are all dependent with the allocation of funding. Isiolo being where it is in the LAPSET Corridor, we will work very closely with the National Treasury to ensure that with the projected budget estimate that I have enumerated of Kshs4.8 billion, that covers what we need to do. That include rehabilitation of the existing runway through the mid-term programme, an evaluation of the existing runway which was done.

A recommendation of fully reconstructing the runway made due to the failures that have been observed since inception is done.

There is a bit of clay and cotton soil there. We need to redo it. It will cost us Kshs1.5 billion for the runway extension of 3.5 kilometres to land the bigger flights. Extending the runway will cost us Kshs1.5 billion.

We need to put in a fire station at an additional Kshs300 million. We need also to complete the airport perimeter fence. We need to do airfield ground at an estimated cost of Ksh250 million and an aircraft traffic control tower.

The expansion noted above may cost an additional Kshs300 million. Furthermore, improving drainage around the airport to address waterlogging caused by the soil type will cost us Kshs300 million. Additional funding will also be needed for land acquisition to facilitate VIP car parks, hangars and road expansion. The total budget, as I had stated, is Kshs4.8 billion.

To reiterate, given Isiolo's strategic location within the LAPSSET Corridor, we are committed to securing the investment already in place by ensuring the airport's completion. Regarding the question of why the airport is not operational and the steps being taken to address this, the facility currently accommodates unscheduled flights, mainly involving caravans and helicopters. However, it faces significant runway defects due to flooding caused by terrain challenges and expansive black cotton soil. These issues have led to low pavement classification values, limiting the type of aircraft that can operate safely.

In November, 2020, the KAA engaged the Material Testing and Research Division under the Ministry of Transport to assess the runway pavement and recommend corrective action. The KAA is awaiting additional funding from the National Treasury to address these issues with proposals that include reconstructing the runway.

[The Deputy Speaker (Sen. Kathuri) left the Chair]

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

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, as previously mentioned, the defects pose serious risks, including safety hazards, operational limitations and increased maintenance costs. Addressing these issues is a priority, as timely repairs are crucial to enhance safety, expand operational capacity, reduce long-term costs and attract more users, ensuring the facility's long term viability. Members are reminded of the significance of Isiolo's geo positioning within the LAPSSET Corridor. Therefore, it is a matter of national interest, as much as it is of interest to the Senator for Isiolo County.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Dullo, you can ask your supplementary question.

Sen. Dullo: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, and Cabinet Secretary, Hon. Chirchir, for your response. Unfortunately, I received the response just half an hour before his arrival. I might not have the ability to interrogate it thoroughly. However, since I am familiar with the situation on the ground, I can raise further questions on the matter.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Regarding the airport, which began construction in 2011, you have reiterated its importance to both the Government and the people in the region. Considering the Kenya Kwanza bottom-up approach, this airport should have significantly benefited the local community. Additionally, it would help ease congestion at Jomo Kenyatta International Airport (JKIA), particularly for those transporting miraa and conducting business in the northern parts of the country.

Waziri, you mentioned that Kshs2.9 billion has already been spent on this project, which is a huge amount, while the remaining balance required is Kshs4.8 billion. This project, which began in 2011, now appears to be a white elephant. I believe the Government cannot lack the Kshs4.8 billion needed to uplift, upgrade and develop that part of the country.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, given that the supplementary budget is currently under discussion and considering the importance you have placed on this airport, could you provide a timeline for when you will commit to finalizing this project? Its completion is important for employment and economic empowerment for our people.

My second question concerns compensation. As you mentioned, the NLC has been taking us in circles. I have raised this issue on the Floor of this House multiple times, even during the last Senate, yet the same stories persist. I have personally followed up with the KAA, which has all the names of the individuals awaiting compensation. The NLC also has this list. Yet the affected communities continue to face frustration after their land was taken in 2011.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I hope *Waziri* is listening to me. This frustration from NLC has driven some people to seek legal recourse. Can he provide a commitment on when this matter will be resolved? The NLC has all the necessary information, including the list of beneficiaries. They cannot claim otherwise. In fact, there was no land set aside by the County Council at the time. I have followed this matter closely. Actually, during the last Parliament, the County Government of Isiolo submitted additional lists of beneficiaries to the NLC, bringing more confusion.

This is a very sensitive issue. Can the Cabinet Secretary clarify when the outstanding compensation will be concluded and the matter resolved? Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, we will take two more supplementary questions to allow the Cabinet Secretary to address three questions at a time.

Sen. Kathuri Murungi, proceed.

Sen. Kathuri: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I would like to weigh in the remarks made by my sister, the Senator for Isiolo County.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, the initial concept of establishing the airport in Isiolo was indeed a promising idea, as you have emphasized. However, if you visit the airport, one cannot help, but realize that Kenya is significantly wasting resources on it. I do not know whether you have been there or not. However, the CEO of the KAA and your team, including the former Cabinet Secretary and Principal Secretaries have visited several times. The airport is huge, comparable to Eldoret Airport. It might even be better than Eldoret Airport.

Sen. Mandago: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

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

Sen. Mandago: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Isiolo Airport is not classified as an airport. Eldoret is an international airport receiving no less than five cargo planes. I expect you to be asking the Cabinet Secretary when he will be expanding the runway, so that we can export agricultural produce from that place. Please, do not compare my airport with an airstrip meant for livestock.

(Loud consultations)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Order, Senators. I was going to address that.

Deputy Speaker, Sen. Mandago was on a point of order. You should have taken your seat while he was talking. However, that has been overtaken by events. Sen. Mandago, I did not clearly hear your point of order. What was your point of order?

Sen. Mandago: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, under Standing Order No.105---

(Sen. Cherarkey consulted loudly)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Order, Sen. Cherarkey! Can we hear the Senator in silence?

The Senator for Meru should provide evidence that Isiolo International Airport that is not operational is better than Eldoret International Airport.

An hon. Senator: Did he say that?

Sen. Mandago: He is on record. He said it.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, this business of people demeaning projects in other counties is not good. I was just passing information to the Deputy Speaker that he should ask the Cabinet Secretary when Eldoret International Airport will be extended because it is more visible, achievable and economically viable.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Proceed, hon. Deputy Speaker.

Sen. Kathuri: For sure, I do not know why my friend here is offended by my statement. I was building my case to show that Isiolo International Airport is huge with even better facilities than what is in Eldoret International Airport because I have been there.

(Sen. Cherarkey spoke off record)

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I would like to be informed by my colleague, Sen. Cherarkey, here. He had requested to give me more information which I will accept before I proceed to execute my issues.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Cherarkey, proceed.

Sen. Cherarkey: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, having been to Isiolo International Airport, it has better facilities than Eldoret International Airport. The reception of Eldoret International Airport looks like a toilet or a ramshackle and they do not have direct flights

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

to some destinations. In fact, there are no direct flights from some destinations to Eldoret International Airport. The area Senator should be pushing for upgrade of Eldoret International Airport instead of undermining Isiolo International Airport.

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

Sen. Mandago: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, my point of order is on Standing Order No.105. Is it right for Sen. Cherarkey to say that the Eldoret International Airport reception looks like a toilet, when Nandi County is suffering from serious problems? They are not even at the level of having an airport. They are still struggling with all-weather roads. The other day we were being treated with demolitions in Nandi. It is a very disorderly county that they have no capacity to comment---

Sen. Faki: On a point of order, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I think it is a misnomer for some of these so-called international airports to be referred to as such. If an airport does not allow flights to land at night, how can it be an international airport? Those are airports that close at 5.00 p.m. That should not be an international airport.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Which airport are you referring to?

Sen. Faki: Eldoret International Airport. Recently we voted for Eldoret to be a city. How can a city not have an airport that works 24 hours?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): This is the last point of order. Sen. Veronica, what is your point of order?

Sen. Veronica Maina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I am getting lost with the proceedings in the House right now. The Cabinet Secretary is in the House today to answer the question raised by the Senator for Isiolo and I believe he knows what a standard international airport should be.

Hon. Senators are arguing whether it is an international airport or not. The marking scheme on the standards of those airports is in the House. Why do you not ask him to define for us what an international airport should contain and whether Isiolo and Eldoret are international airports?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sen. Paul Thang'wa, what is your point of order?

Sen. Veronica Maina: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I have not finished.

(An hon. Senator spoke off record)

You cannot define when I am done. It is only the Chair who can define when I am done.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I am trying to help the House. Let the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport define for the House what an international airport should contain and whether Eldoret and Isiolo are international airports.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Senator. Sen. Paul Thang'wa, what is your point of order:

Sen. Thang'wa: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I do not understand the fires, but we are all in agreement that Isiolo and Eldoret international airports are not working. That means nothing is working. That means the Government is not working.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

(Loud consultations)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Order, hon. Senators!

Sen. Thang'wa: We all agree that the Government is not working and we should not continue with this debate. Nothing is working. This is an indication of what we have been saying. They should agree that the Government is not working then together we come up with plans of how we will take care of Isiolo and Eldoret international airports. Nothing is working.

(Loud consultations)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Order, hon. Senators! We need to make progress. Could we allow Sen. Kathuri to complete his submissions?

Sen. Kathuri: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, please protect me.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Order, hon. Senators! Let us hear the Senator in silence.

Sen. Kathuri: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, actually we are discussing an issue touching on livelihoods of the whole region called Upper Eastern and Central Kenya. When we are discussing issues of serious national importance, the Senator for Uasin Gishu can also do business in Isiolo. So, when we are addressing matters of national importance, he should not just take these issues as regional or county matters.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary what I was saying is that the investment in Isiolo International Airport is non-functional and that is shameful to this Republic. More than five years ago, I visited the CEO of KAA and he gave me the same report, that we need Kshs4.8 billion from the exchequer. That money can be obtained through Public-Private Partnership (PPP) to actualise that airport. A sum of Kshs4.8 billion is very little if you want to rescue Isiolo International Airport.

We do not need to do everything the same day. If it is expansion of the runway, it is Kshs1.5 billion. Why do you not start with that as you look for more funds to do air traffic control and fire station, for example? Why do you not start with Kshs1.5 billion for extension of the runway, so that we have that airport functioning?

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, we have a similar question about *miraa* accidents along Meru-Nairobi Highway. Those are as a result of the non-functioning airport in Isiolo. *Miraa* farmers bring them to Nairobi so that they can be ferried to Somalia and other countries. Since there is no airport, that is why you see them driving very fast because *miraa* is highly perishable. If the airport in Isiolo was functioning, there would be no accidents along the highway. If we corrected even just one issue, including the vegetables that we produce---

Sen. Dullo, you know that from Nanyuki to the junction to Isiolo, there are a lot of flowers and vegetables that need to be ferried through Isiolo International Airport. There is now an abattoir in Isiolo. That meat needs to be transported to Saudi Arabia through Isiolo International Airport. Therefore, that is an important facility that should be completed.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

That is all we require from the Kenya Kwanza Government. If they give us that one, we can talk about other business. That is a mandatory project that we need from the Kenya Kwanza Government.

Sen. Dullo: On a point of order.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): I am not taking any more points of order. Sen. Wambua, please ask your supplementary question.

Sen. Wambua: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I thank you. Clearly, I do not belong to that league where we are discussing about international airports. My supplementary stems from Marsabit where we are discussing airstrips.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, my question to the Cabinet Secretary is on three airstrips in Kitui. We once used to have Kitui and Mutomo airstrips and there has been a proposal for Tseikuru Airstrip. None of them are functional.

In fact, I will respond to Sen. Cheruiyot because he is asking me whether hon. Kalonzo did not build the airstrip. He did not, but he helped to build airstrips in other regions in this country. I hope that the people in office today then will help to build airstrips where---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, we only have one hour left with several questions to go through. These kinds of interruption will only lead us to drop some of the questions or even drop the supplementary questions that you want to ask the Cabinets Secretary. So, let us please maintain decorum.

Sen. Wambua: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, for protecting me.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Please no long stories. Just ask your question.

Sen. Wambua: I will take exception to that, but I will comply because I have listened to other Senators giving a lot of stories. I have no stories to give.

I would want to know the fate of those airstrips because Kitui Airstrip has now been degenerated to a level being a grazing field for neighbours. Nothing is working there.

I thank God that at least as we speak today, the Principal Secretary in charge of airports and all airplanes in this country is one Terry Mbaika who is seated here and he comes from that region. So, that Sen. Cheruiyot does not say that the people of Ukambani do not belong to Government. I wonder what he means when he says we do not belong to Government.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): I thank you, hon. Temporary Speaker, Sir and hon. Members for those supplementary questions.

Let me start with the Sen. Dullo's concern that we certainly will need to sit down together offline with the NLC to address some of those pertinent issues of land compensation and the funding thereof to be able to resolve it, once for all. You remember I said they are real historical issues and sometimes it does not look like anybody is paying attention.

So, out of this Chamber, we will pay attention. I invite Sen. Dullo and maybe NLC Chairman, Mr. Otachi, so that we can resolve those outstanding issues. Address the financial requirements and compensation for the project affected persons and compensate them accordingly.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Regarding the Member's concern for this or that airport, I indicated in my substantive answer that the Isiolo airport sits on a development corridor LAPSSET, which is the second development corridor for this country to move out of the congested northern corridor. That which puts Kenya in an anchor state through the port of Mombasa service in Uganda, servicing DRC Congo and the countries in the northern corridor.

We are developing the northern corridor, not to be a regional corridor or a regional airport for that matter, but to open up a new development corridor and decongested current corridor. More importantly, it is to leverage on Kenya's geo-position to service Ethiopia and South Sudan. We all know what is currently happening between Djibouti, South Sudan and Ethiopia.

This is not a regional airport *per se*, but an international one that sits on the LAPSSET corridor and that seeks to support Lamu. We have already developed Lamu on a deep water port that seeks to open up a whole corridor to service Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and part of northern Uganda. It is important, hon. Members, to distinguish the context of Kenya as an anchor state, primarily or secondarily benefiting the people of eastern and central Kenya because of the location of this airport.

Since this was a regional, not just a national project, Isiolo will be built because we need to leverage on our geo-positioning. When I say regional, you understand. For example, this month we have just postponed summit meeting by the three head of States. This draws significant advantage to Kenya because when I said Kenya is an anchor state, it is basically leveraging and taking a competitive advantage of our geo-positioning.

It is, therefore, not just about Isiolo, but Kenya. When I say Isiolo will be built, it is about Kenya leveraging on that corridor and ensuring we take that advantage. If we do not, there is currently the talk between the other three countries on forming another regional block. Kenya has to seize its position and be able to take advantage of that corridor and Isiolo, Lamu and the components on the LAPSSET Corridor will be developed.

I confirm that and we should work together as leadership to ensure that we seize this opportunity and develop LAPSSET as a second development corridor for this country. We should that anchor position to basically open a corridor to service Southern Sudan, Ethiopia, and a bit of northern Uganda. This is a regional project, not just a national project. We will work together to ensuring the whole of the LAPSSET corridor. The components, including Isiolo International Airport, is fully developed.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the secondary benefits which could be primary in terms of perishable goods such as *miraa*, not having to come to Nairobi, but flown out of the international airport of Isiolo.

I think that basically covers what Sen. Kathuri raised concerning Isiolo being an asset that has not been fully developed. It is true it has not been fully developed, just like Lamu port and the whole corridor, because it is a huge regional project.

If it was just for the purpose of building an airport in Isiolo, I do not think we would be putting in a disposition of about Kshs10 billion to fully develop it. The context is that we are opening a new corridor and we will develop Isiolo.

With respect to Sen. Wambua's question, we will really work very closely with all Members to ensure all our airstrips are functioning. We are working with the county

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

governments. None of the airstrips make profit, but they facilitate trade, movement of people and so on and so forth. As I said, we are in the process of opening up the country.

We have a framework with the county governments that we do the runway and the aprons while they do the terminal building. We will need to see sustainability of these airports so that when budget is not provided, they do not become a grazing field or something like that.

The challenge of most of them or all of them is not really having a bottom line in terms of revenues to sustain the expenditure or the costs that are incurred year in, year out; month in, month out.

Let me then say we will work very closely to ensure sustainability of our airstrips, so that they are all functional. We will endeavour to provide the budget. The situation obtaining in Marsabit is about the same situation obtaining in Kitui, in my home County of Bomet and all the other counties. However, we will work to ensure that we make them functional to support the ease of movement of people and goods.

Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. Thank you, hon. Members.

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

Sen. Miraj: Asante, Bw. Spika wa Muda. Kabla niulize swali langu niruhusu nitoe pongezi kwa Serikali hususan, Wizara ya Uchukuzi na Barabara kwa kuruhusu ndege za kimataifa za Uturuki na Qatar, kuweza kutua moja kwa moja kwa kiwanja cha kimataifa cha ndege cha Moi. Tarehe 26/8/2024 nilisimama na kupeana ombi ya kuruhusiwa kwa ndege hizo za kimataifa kutua katika kiwanja kile. Ni pongezi.

Swali langu kwa Bw. Waziri ni kwamba kuna mikakati gani ya kuboresha kwa viwango vya kiwanja kile ili kiweze kuwa na muonekano kimiundo msingi kwa sababu wale wageni tunaowatarajia katika kiwanja kile sasa watakuwa ni wa kitalii. Wamezunguka katika mataifa mengine ya nje na wameona mionekano mizuri. Je, kuna mikakati gani ya kuweza kuona kwamba uwanja huu wa ndege wa Moi umeboreshwa na kupata muonekano mpya unaoenda sambamba na viwanja vingine vya kimataifa?

Waswahili husema, kicheko chataka meno. Je tumejipanga sawia kuona kuwa tutakapokuwa tunawapokea, wataona hali tofauti na ile waliyoiacha hapo awali?

Asante, Bw. Spika wa Muda.

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

Sen. Madzayo: Asante, Bw. Spika wa Muda. Kiwanja hiki cha ndege cha Isiolo kina wale mahandisi na maafisa husika ambao waliweza kutayarisha ripoti juu yake. Tukiangalia, kwanza, hawa wataalam waliweza kutayarisha ripoti yao na kusema kwamba hiki kiwanja kitakuwa tayari ikiwa kitatumia shilingi 1.5 bilioni.

Bw. Waziri, ningependa kujua majina ya hawa mahandisi ambao waliweza kutengeneza kiwanja hiki cha ndege na wakaangalia na kusema watatumia shilingi 1.5 bilioni. Mahandisi waliyofanya kazi hii wawekwe wazi hapa pamoja na wahusika wowote waliokuwa na uwezo wa kutengeza kiwanja hicho.

Swala langu la pili ni ikiwa hivi sasa imeonekana ya kwamba chini ya hii ardhi haiwezi kuchukua mzigo kama vile ndege ama vitu vizito, imepatika kuwa ardhi imelegea kichini, kisayansi ama kihandisi, iko *very weak on the top*, kule chini ndiko kumeharibika kabisa. Wale mahandisi ndiyo walifanya kandarasi hii na kufanya mapendekezo yao. Ni hatua gani, Serikali imechukua kuona ya kwamba wale mahandisi

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

wameadhibiwa? Swala la tatu ni Bw. Waziri atueleze wao mahandisi walisomea wapi uhandisi wao?

(Loud consultations)

Sen. Madzayo: La mwisho, Bw. Spika wa Muda---

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Haji): Sen. Madzayo, ushauriza swali lako.

Sen. Madzayo: Swali langu la mwisho ambalo ningetaka kumuuliza Bw. Waziri-

--

(Loud consultations)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Haji): Swali ni moja.

Sen. Madzayo: Ndio Swali ni moja lakini, pole, ningetaka kuongezea.

Ni hatua gani ambayo inaweza kuchukuliwa kuona ya kwamba athiri kama hii haitatokea na hawa mainjina wanatakikana kumsaida Mhe. Rais ili aonekane akisema kitu kitafanyika, kifanyike.

Hawa ndio wafisadi kwa sababu wanataka kurudi tena watengeneze pesa, ilhali, pesa ambayo ilikuwa *allocated* kwa *airport* hiyo ni zile ambazo walizitumia na sasa wamezweka mara mbili, kutoka shilingi 1.5 bilioni. Sasa wanasema ya kwamba wanaweza kumaliza kiwanja hicho ikiwa watatumia shilingi bilioni nne. Kwa hivyo, ni hatua gani ambayo Waziri amechukua kuona ya kwamba hawa wahandisi waliofanya hii kazi wamechukuliwa hatua?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Haji): Asante Seneta. Tushafahamu swali lako.

Sen. Mandago, uwanja ni wako. Sijui kama utafuata mtindo na uulize swali kwa Kiswahili?

Sen. Mandago: Asante, Bw. Spika wa Muda. Swali langu kwa Bw. Waziri ni Serikali ina mipango gani ili kupanua *runaway* ya Eldoret International Airport na pia kukarabati *airstrip* ya Baringo County ambayo inatumika sana kwa mambo ya masuala ya usalama kule Kerio Valley? Ningependa kujua kwa sababu hii imekuwa kwa mipango ya Serikali kwa muda mrefu kuwa uwanja wa ndege wa kimataifa wa Eldoret utapanuliwa ili uchukuzi wa bidhaa za kilimo uboreshwe.

Bw. Spika wa Muda, unavyoelewa, Kaunti ambazo zinazunguka Mji wa Eldoret ni kaunti ambazo uchumi wao unategemea kilimo sana. Kwa hivo, tungependa Waziri atueleze kama kuna mipango ya Serikali ya mwaka wa matumizi ya fedha wa 2025/2026, kupanua huo uwanja wa *Eldoret Airport* ili sisi kama wakulima tuiitumie?

Vile vile, *airstrip* ya Baringo ambayo inahusika sana na mambo ya usalama na inasaidia sana wakati tunakuwa na majeruhi Kerio Valley kwa sababu ya mambo ya usalama, maofisa wetu wa usalama na pia raia wanasaidika kupata huduma ya kwanza na ya haraka kwa mambo ya matibabu.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Haji): Hon. Senators, due to time constraints, I will take only two more supplementary questions from the dashboard, so that we can move on to the other questions, which are on the Order Paper.

Sen. Maanzo, please proceed.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Sen. Maanzo: That you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. The Cabinet Secretary has said that the airstrips belong to the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, and not the KAA. I, therefore, would like to ask him what the Ministry will do, so that that they have full control of the airstrips, bearing in mind that the airstrips are for evacuation purposes and emergency landing. Could he in that particular answer tell us the status of Makindu Airstrip, which is also on the flight line from Mombasa to Nairobi?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Haji): Thank you, Senator. Those are two questions. You are only allowed one supplementary question.

Joe Nyutu, please proceed.

Sen. Joe Nyutu: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. My supplementary question is related to the answer that the Cabinet Secretary gave on Sen. Chute's Question with regard to Sololo Airstrip.

He says that there is airspace obstruction by Kenya Power transmission lines. There is unauthorized use, where the airstrip is being used as a dumping site. What is the Ministry doing about this? What was it doing when Kenya Power erected poles and power lines across the airstrip? How is the Ministry working with the county government to see to it that the airstrip is not turned into a dumping ground? There is need for a multi-agency approach. What is the Ministry doing to work with other arms of Government?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Senator. We understand you. Cabinet Secretary, you may proceed to respond.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Asante sana, Bw. Spika wa Muda. Siwezi kusema kwamba nitaweza kuzungumza Kiswahili kama cha Sen. Miraj. Hata hivyo, nilielewa swali lake sambamba kwamba, tuko na mipango na mikakati gani kuinua hali ya uwanja wa ndege wa Moi Mombasa ili the two airlines that is Qatar and Turkish airlines, which we have allowed frequencies to land in Mombasa, to accommodate the kind of tourists and guests who will be landing in this airport.

Certainly, we will have to upgrade Mombasa International Airport. We are working on the runway. The underground streams, which have been causing problems, is being worked on. We are doing some pavement works. We have a private lounge, which is privately run and we are upgrading the dignitaries lounge. We will have to pay attention to ensure that we give the kind of customer service that is commensurate with the kind of guests coming to Mombasa. Therefore, I think it was more of a congratulatory message with respect to the two new airlines that will be landing in Mombasa directly.

As we do so, we are very cautious in managing frequencies with our counterpart airlines, so that we get commensurate frequencies in other cities for our airline, Kenya Airways.

I thank you, Sen. Miraj, for your congratulations. We will upgrade Mombasa and ensure that it meets the standards for the kind of tourist destination and the number of passengers who we will be handling from those two destinations.

Concerning Sen. Madzayo's question, that is a substantive question and not a supplementary question because he wanted the names of the engineers and which university they went to. Certainly, I want to bring a substantive answer to that question. If

my former colleague and workmate in the historical life we have come from allows me, we can work on a substantive response to that question.

Regarding the question by Sen. Mandago from Uasin Gishu, we are planning to improve the Eldoret Airport from a 3.5-kilometre runway to four kilometres to uplift bigger flights for the kind of agricultural produce that we get in and out of Eldoret. Plans for this are there. However, there is a small dispute that needs to be resolved to allow us to extend the kilometres from 3.5 to four kilometres. A lot of work has been done. If Sen. Mandago, former Governor of Uasin Gishu County, can work with us to resolve that small dispute in the former Aerotech land, which is having a small challenge, we will be able to extend the Eldoret Airport from a 3.5 kilometre to four-kilometre runway.

The issue of Baringo Airstrip has been echoed by Sen. Maanzo, my colleague and old-time friend. We need to resolve the fact that most of the airstrips are under the Ministry of Interior and National Coordination. So, this particular one, which is key for security and addressing the concerns of the region.

I will work closely with my colleague from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, as we are working on other airstrips, to see how we can improve the Baringo Airstrip. This is to ensure that the airstrip remains in a condition where it can be utilized at any time as emergencies require a fully operational facility. I will also collaborate with my colleague from the Ministry of Interior and National Administration to explore ways to improve and operate the Baringo Airstrip.

I believe I have addressed Sen. Madzayo's question regarding the need to work closely with the Ministry of Interior and National Administration to establish a framework for maintaining airstrips under their jurisdiction. Additionally, as I mentioned earlier, airstrips like Sololo and the airport in Marsabit are examples of how we can work together to ensure their functionality.

Sen. Nyutu, allow me to go and undertake further research on how a Government agency can intervene to lay lines within the airstrip and address the reported security concerns. This aligns with Kenya Civil Aviation Authority (KCAA) requirements, ensuring it remains a safe landing site free from secondary installations like power lines or misuse as a dumping site.

Hon. Senators, the functionality and serviceability of airports relate directly to revenue generation. When airports fail to generate revenue due to a lack of allocated budgets and infrequent flights, they risk deteriorating.

As I stated earlier, we are committed to developing a solid plan to ensure airstrips are maintained. This will ensure that they do not become idle sites prone to misuse such as installations of power lines or waste dumping. This is why we prioritize securing airstrips through fencing, even before implementing infrastructure.

Hon. Temporary Speaker and Members, I will pay close attention to the concerns raised and focus on ensuring that airstrips across the country remain functional and ready for use.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Cabinet Secretary. Hon. Senators, we will now proceed with today's Questions. Cabinet Secretary, you have

committed to providing a substantive response to Sen. Madzayo's question. I hope that you will be able to do so within two weeks.

Hon. Senators, the next question will be posed by Sen. Wakili Sigei on behalf of Sen. James Murango. We will address the four remaining questions, allow the Cabinet Secretary to respond and then proceed with supplementary questions.

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I rise to ask the Hon. Cabinet Secretary a question on behalf of Sen. Murango, who has entrusted me with this mandate pursuant to a letter dated 9th April, 2025. Before I proceed, I wish to welcome the Hon. Cabinet Secretary to the Senate. I will now proceed to ask Question No.017 on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango from Kirinyaga County.

Question No.017

ROAD ACCIDENTS INVOLVING VEHICLES TRANSPORTING
MIRAA ALONG THE MWEA-EMBU ROAD

(a) How many road accidents reported between January and December 2024 involved vehicles transporting miraa along the Mwea-Embu highway. Could the Cabinet Secretary state the number of lives lost as a result of those accidents?

(b) Could the Cabinet Secretary explain the absence of speed-limit signs along the said highway, which continues to impede the effective prosecution of speeding drivers?

(c) Could the Cabinet Secretary explain what the Government is doing to permanently address speeding and reckless driving along the Mwea-Embu highway, and state whether there are plans to supply speed guns to the Kirinyaga County Traffic Police Department, which currently has none?

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): The next question is by Sen. (Prof.) Tom Ojienda, SC.

Question No.023

ANNUAL BUDGETARY ALLOCATION FOR CONSTRUCTION
AND UPGRADE OF ROADS IN KISUMU COUNTY

Sen. (Prof.) Tom Odhiambo Ojienda, SC: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I rise to ask Question No.23 on the Order Paper. The Question is in three parts. I am alive to the fact that we have a competent Cabinet Secretary who will address all these questions. I have also seen the responses, some of which we will need brief highlighting.

(1) Could the Cabinet Secretary indicate the annual budgetary allocation for projects by the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) for the construction and upgrade of roads in Kisumu County from the 2020/2021 financial year to date?

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

(2) Could the Cabinet Secretary provide a list of all planned road projects by KURA and KeRRA in Kisumu County and indicate the budgetary estimate for each?

(3) What measures has the Ministry put in place to ensure the timely completion of all currently incomplete road projects by KURA and KeRRA in Kisumu County, and could the Cabinet Secretary provide respective timelines for the same?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): The next Question is by the Senator for Makeni, Sen Daniel Maanzo.

Question No.040

PROGRESS REPORT ON CONSTRUCTION OF NAMANGA-KAJIADO-
LOITOKTOK-EMALI-UKIA-ITANGINI-TAWA-
MASII-MWALA-KITHIMANI ROAD

Sen. Maanzo: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport the following Question No.040-

(1) Could the Cabinet Secretary provide a progress report on the construction of the Namanga-Kajiado-Loitoktok-Emali-Ukia-Itangini-Tawa-Masii-Mwala-Kithimani Road and explain the delay in completing the project?

(2) What measures has the Government put in place to ensure that construction works on this road meet the required standards and could the Cabinet Secretary explain the deteriorating condition of the tarmacked stretch from Emali Town to Ndundune Market Centre, which is already riddled with numerous potholes?

(3) What measures has the Government put in place to fast-track the project and could the Cabinet Secretary indicate when the project will be completed?

(4) Could the Cabinet Secretary also provide a status update on the payment of compensation to owners of the parcels of land acquired for the project and indicate when outstanding balances will be paid?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Senator. The last Question is by the Senator for Isiolo, Sen. Fatuma Dullo.

Question No.045

INCOMPLETE KURA AND KERRA CONSTRUCTION
AND UPGRADE PROJECTS IN ISIOLO COUNTY

Sen. Dullo: Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport the following Question No.045-

(1) Could the Cabinet Secretary provide a list of all incomplete projects for the construction and upgrade of roads undertaken by the Kenya Urban Roads Authority (KURA) and the Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) in Isiolo County, and provide reasons for any delays or stalling of the projects?

(2) How much has the Government set aside for these projects in the 2024/2025 financial year?

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

(3) What measures has the Government put in place to ensure the timely completion of these road projects, and could the Cabinet Secretary provide timelines for their completion?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Cabinet Secretary, you may respond. Since you have provided the responses in a written form, please be brief in your responses to the questions.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, and hon. Members. Let me start with the questions in the order that they came.

With respect to the question raised by Sen. Wakili Sigei on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango, let me straightaway respond. This is a question concerning the number of accidents between January and December, 2024, involving vehicles transporting *miraa* along Mwea-Embu Highway and the number of lives lost.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I have presented a table to summarise this, so as not to be wordy, as you mentioned. We have had accidents with the first one at Wang'uru traffic that happened sometime on 18th December, 2024 with the victims tabulated in the table. It was along Defathas-Mwea- Embu Road. We have the situational position provided.

The next one that also happened within Wang'uru traffic that involved a Toyota Probox KBL 806. It is tabulated involving some victims, including Mr. Gachoki a cyclist and Mr. Njeru a pylon passenger who was also deceased. There is a case going on in the Magistrates court in Mwea, Court No. 2.

The third one involves a vehicle KDN 233, a Toyota Hilux pickup with driver Mr. Kevin Munene on 27th January, 2025 along Mwea-Embu road at Mururi. The victims there are Geoffery Kinyua Nyaga who was a rider that unfortunately succumbed. The case is in court. Two cases were reported in 2024 with five victims, four deceased and one injured while one case was reported in 2025 where one was deceased.

On the second question the Member has asked on speed limits and signage on the said highways, which impede cases because drivers cite their lack. In the absence of speed limits on roads, there are significant challenges for law enforcement and public safety.

To address that, the Ministry has taken a multifaceted approach that includes technology, public education and legislative action to create a safer driving environment for all road users, including *miraa* transporting drivers.

One of the major challenges regarding speed limit signs in all counties is vandalism. As a result, drivers often claim that there was no signage making it difficult to secure conviction in court for over speeding offences.

In collaboration with road agencies, I undertake that we will improve signage maintenance, including anti-vandalism measures. This will be by prioritizing regular inspection and maintenance of speed limit signs, installing tamper proof, vandal resistant signage, use of CCTV surveillance or community policing, which I think is more effective, to monitor and prevent vandalism.

In addition, we will use intelligent speed adaptation systems in vehicles for data recording and so on. We will also do continuous public awareness of community

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

engagement using national Government structures to educate locals on the importance of speed signs.

We shall also enhance road safety and encourage community involvement by forming local community groups to safeguard road signs. We will have an alternative speed monitoring solution, which includes implementing road markings and paintings, which are not prone to vandalism as a backup.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Cabinet Secretary, if I may guide you, just skim through the responses because of time.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): On the final question on the issue of what we are doing to permanently address the speeding challenge, currently, Kirinyaga County has only one speed gun stationed at the Sagana Traffic Base. This device is shared amongst many traffic bases, Makutano in Sagana, Makutano in Mwea, Sagana- Kagio- Kutus road and Kerugoya.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, to enhance road safety and curb speeding, the relevant agencies are actively implementing measures to ensure that we provide more of these devices, so that we can curb this challenge of over-speeding, by ensuring that we proactively provide some of those speed guns.

I submit.

On the second question, Question No. 023, from Sen. (Prof.) Tom Ojienda.

(Sen. Korir consulted loudly)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Sorry, Cabinet Secretary, Sen. Korir, do you have a point of order?

(Sen. Korir spoke off the record)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): No, it is out of order. You cannot have a point of order against the Cabinet Secretary's response.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirichir): Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the budgetary allocation by KURA and KeRRA on some of the roads in Kisumu County, highlighted by Sen. (Prof.) Tom Ojienda are as follows.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, let me state that the budgetary allocation for the roads under KURA for the requested financial year. I have indicated the numbers highlighting the 10.6 kilometres roads in Maseno, the 123.1 kilometres roads in Kisumu, a total of 133 kilometres, with a total budgetary allocation of Kshs258 million in financial year 2024/2025.

I have shown the historical allocation in the financial years 2020/2021, 2021/2022, 2022/2023, and 2023/2024. KURA has two roads being upgraded to bitumen standards in Kisumu, namely Maseno-Kombewa-Kalandini Road, which is 37.5 kilometres and Koru Town Junction-C35 Road and access to Koru Bible College, which is 11 kilometres.

The budgetary allocation for each of the projects is shown. Koru Town Junction, C35, has a current budgetary allocation of Kshs97.23 million. Maseno-Kombewa-

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Kalandini, D245, and Maseno Town Roads has a current budget of Kshs54 million in the current financial year.

We have also indicated the historical budgetary allocation for those two roads. The Ministry, through KeRRA, has planned performance-based maintenance of roads, which are currently in procurement process under various contracts and also progress of works completed as provided in the table attached. That table is annexed.

On the third question, measures taken by the Ministry on the projects under KeRRA are to provide sufficient budgetary allocation and further engagement with the National Treasury to allocate more resources to ensure timely completion, engage with contractors to facilitate faster progress. For instance, sub-contracting of works to mitigate capacity constraint on the Maseno-Kombewa-Kalandini Road, sanctioning of contractors for slow progress on Koru Town Junction-C35 Road-Koru Bible College.

Further, the Ministry shall prioritise several critical roads for upgrading to bitumen standard in this county and some affirmative action we are currently looking at.

I have also given the table that shows ongoing projects under KURA in Kisumu Urban Town; a total of about 9.6 kilometres impacting on various roads from Tom Mboya Loop to Ken Obura-World Vision-Kenya Re-A8 Junction, totaling about Kshs425 million and currently work in progress at 36 per cent.

I will say what we are doing to hasten the progress on some of these roads with what you have done with the securitization. Therefore, payment of pending bills that will help us to expedite the work.

I would like to proceed to Question No.040 by the Senator of Makueni County, Sen. Dan Maanzo, which is the concern on the construction of Namanga-Kajiado-Loitoktok-Emali-Ukia, all the way to Kithimani Road, the delay in completion of the project. The measures the Government is putting in place to ensure construction works on the road meet the standards and move quickly.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, the Ministry, through Kenya National Highways Authority (KeNHA), is currently not carrying out any construction on the listed roads links due to unavailability of funds. However, maintenance works of existing roads and design, progress are being carried out as tabulated.

For example, Namanga-Kajiado section, we have a performance-based contract for maintenance of this section of the road that is divided into two. That is Isinya-Basil, 47.5 kilometres with a budgetary allocation of Kshs137 million. The second section is Basil-Namanga with a budgetary allocation of Kshs353.3 million.

On Loitoktok-Emali, we also have a performance-based contract for maintenance of this road, which is also divided into two sections. The section from Emali-Isineti Road is 57 kilometres with a budgetary allocation of Kshs174 million. The second section Isineti-Loitoktok is 56 kilometres, with a budgetary allocation of Kshs197.9 million. It is a three-year maintenance contract which is about to lapse.

On Emali-Ukia, a routine maintenance contract is under procurement and works are expected to commence in May.

For Mwala-Kathiani, another maintenance contract for maintenance is under procurement and it will be awarded in May. For Ukia-Ithangini is currently maintaining, KeNHA is maintaining this section between Wamunyu and Nduluki Junction, through a

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

routine maintenance contract. The Masii-Mwala section has been under maintenance through a periodic maintenance contract covering Kyumvi-Machakos-Wamunyu Road and Makutano-Mwala Road.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, with respect to the designs of Kajiado-Loitoktok, design was completed a while ago and will be updated once funds for construction are available. We do not have funds for that road, Sen. Dan Maanzo. We can look at that and see how to prioritize.

The Emali-Ukia road was designed to completion as part of the East Africa Economic Corridor, including the following roads, Kathiani, Kambaa, Mwala, Makutano, all the way down to that loop road that has passed and includes Matiliku-Kilili-Kwa Philip-Wote-Ukia Junction, all the way to Makutano Junction and Wamunyu.

The design has been completed and construction shall commence. We are working on the budgetary allocation. The ongoing maintenance works are being implemented in accordance with the standard specification for roads and bridges, special specification and further construction of the newly designed section will also comply with relevant standards.

The construction timelines for the future contracts whose designs have been completed will be set once funds become available. Currently, there is no ongoing construction requiring acquisition of land. However, for the future, construction projects whose design have been carried out, compensation for land to be acquired will be done once funds become available.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, on Question No.45 by Sen. Dullo on the matter of incomplete projects for construction and upgrade of roads undertaken by the KURA and the KeRRA in Isiolo County, let me respond as follows. I will make a general statement on the delayed project with respect to roads, not just in Isiolo, but the country at large.

The Ministry of Roads and Transport through the KURA has one ongoing project for upgrading to bitumen standard in Isiolo Town funded under GoK development fund. I have given the details for this particular upgrading of the 10-kilometres Isiolo Town Road, which is funded by GoK. We have a funding allocation of Kshs838 million and the contract is ongoing.

The amount certified today is Kshs255.07 million and the percentage of work done is 34.49 per cent. The amount due to the contract to date has advanced payment is Kshs83.8 million and there is a pending bill payment of one Kshs121 million. The challenges include delayed disbursement of funds to the contractors, road encroachment within the construction corridor and heavy rains amongst others.

I want to address the challenge of delayed roads due to pending bills and say that when we got approval to securitize the Kshs7 additional road maintenance levy that we got Parliament's approval sometime in July last year.

We have securitized Kshs7 and that is basically selling the Kshs7 to an investor who gives us money today or who has given us money today and they then take the right of the Kshs7 and collect the over discounted over a period of time. Today we have so far received Kshs63 billion. We have allocated those funds to pay contractors 40 per cent of all outstanding invoices on certificates for work done. We have worked on a return-to-

work formula through a settlement agreement, which forces contractors on receipt of the 40 per cent to return to work as they wait for the 60 per cent payment.

I want to assure this House that the delay or the suspension of works that we have witnessed in the last few years will be something of the past. We are getting contractors back to work and we will see them working on our roads in all the counties in the country.

Let me not say in the coming weeks because most of the contractors who have received payments are already resuming work. Therefore, for ongoing projects where the impediment has been delayed payments, that is, for now, a story of the past. I want to thank the House for allowing us to securitise the Kshs7 and get the contractors back to work.

This also addresses the contracting GDP to construction where, with contractors pulling out of construction sites, there has not been much activity on our roads. Therefore, payment for cement, petroleum products from our petrol station, payment for steel and employment of our youth has been contracting tools because of that contracting GDP from construction of roads.

With that facilitation and support, we are getting back all the contractors because almost 50 per cent. As I speak here today, have been paid and the remaining 50 per cent are being paid this week. Hopefully, we will complete payment by next week and get all the contractors back to work. Therefore, there should be no road, which, on account of delayed payment, should be suspended.

We have negotiated a settlement agreement to ensure that, upon receipt of the 40 per cent, work begins while we complete the listing of the securitization facility that brings in a total of Kshs175 billion to fully settle pending bills.

Moving forward, we will work closely with all stakeholders to ensure that budgets are allocated to address the milestones contractors are expected to achieve within a budgetary year. This will prevent situations where contractors banks and infrastructure projects, such as roads, which are crucial for both political stability and economic growth, are suspended due to non-payments.

Hon. Temporary Speaker and Members, the table outlining the figures for the various roads under consideration and their respective budget allocations has been presented.

With that, I beg to stop.

I thank you.

(Applause)

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Cabinet Secretary. Hon. Senators, considering the time, I will invoke Standing Order No.34(2)(a) to extend the sitting by an additional 15 minutes to allow for supplementary questions.

We will begin with the Members who originally asked the question. Sen. Sigei, please be brief and limit yourself to one supplementary question, to ensure that other Members also have the opportunity to participate.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

Sen. Wakili Sigei: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I kindly request your permission to ask more than one supplementary questions. On one hand, I am asking on behalf of Sen. (Dr.) Murango, as per the mandate assigned to me. On the other, I have my own supplementary question as is my entitlement under Standing Orders. However, I will be brief.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, the response you provided to question two regarding alternative speed monitoring solutions seems to be futuristic in its approach. Could you clarify the timelines for implementing measures such as the painting of speed limits as a backup system where signs have been removed?

My second supplementary question is on the piloting of speed cameras by the National Transport and Security Authority (NTSA). How long is this piloting process expected to take or when is the facilitation of the complete rollout anticipated to be concluded?

Lastly, I would like the hon. Cabinet Secretary to address the growing concern over the increasing number of accidents reported across the country. One such incident is the tragic accident in Kaplong near Bomet, where 15 lives were lost. You visited the site over the weekend and made a commitment to provide a comprehensive report on this particular accident.

Could you elaborate on the steps the Ministry is taking to reduce such accidents?

There are challenges such as the role of traffic officers, unnecessary roadblocks and the narrowness of certain roads. You made a commitment that you will give a comprehensive report. I will be glad to hear that.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Sen. Sigei. Sen. (Prof.) Ojienda, SC, proceed.

Sen. (Prof.) Tom Odhiambo Ojienda, SC: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. I would like to thank and congratulate the Cabinet Secretary for providing responses that are on point. However, I would like to ask a supplementary question.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, could you confirm the timelines for the completion of the Muhoroni Junction-Mamboleo Road? Additionally, are there any plans to upgrade the Awasi-Katito Road, which is only 19 kilometres to bitumen status?

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): The next question is by Sen. Daniel Maanzo.

Sen. Maanzo: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir. My question is regarding the roads under network A. The road network should be complete and effectively interlink all counties as well as connect to international roads.

The Emali-Ukia-Itangini Tower section remains the only part that is not tarmacked, although it is currently undergoing routine maintenance. When will you tarmac Emali-Ukia-Itangini Road? All that area will be networked if roads are tarmacked and vehicles will move easily.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Senator. Proceed, Sen Dullo.

Sen. Dullo: Thank you, *Waziri*, for your response. I have an issue with Kipsing-Oldonyiro Bridge because I have been on that road and the contractor has abandoned the

site. Saying that 60 per cent has been done is not true. If I am not wrong, it is only 20 per cent that has been done. Literally the contractor has done nothing.

Secondly, on page four, the last table there shows that the budget provision was Kshs27 million, but the amount paid to date is nil. However, they are talking about no pending payments. I do not know what that means. If the project is complete, then the total amounts for the two projects should have been paid.

The other issue I wanted to raise is this. Most of the roads done by the national Government are also claimed by county governments. You may need to put billboards or signs to show a project being undertaken by the national Government. That will make a lot of difference even for accountability purposes. You better instruct your engineers and director generals to instruct contractors to put signage whenever they undertake a project.

Finally, right now we have rains, which are sweeping away all buildings because drainages are not working yet the works are not complete. In future, when you do the works, they should ensure that when it rains, people's houses are not affected.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Cabinet Secretary, please respond to those supplementary questions first.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, let me thank you again.

On the first supplementary question by Sen. Wakili Sigei on the concern of being futuristic with respect to solutions that we plan to employ to address the issue of rampant accidents on our roads and how quickly the rollout of the camera solutions will be, these solutions will be implemented in a multi-faceted way.

You will appreciate that some of our blackspots do not just have ribbons and bumps to warn road users to slow down. These are quick wins that we can implement immediately. We have given direction after the challenge that we have faced on rampant road accidents, more importantly at blackspot areas, that there is absolutely no reason why ribbons, bumps and proper road signage are not placed. Blackspots are known and there is no reason for not doing so. We will implement that very quickly.

With respect to cameras rollout, you may or may not be aware that we are currently working on implementation of a number of cameras in our cities. It is not about the testing, but about the budget. So, we will move quickly to ensure deterrence.

When road users know that cameras are there and that they are being watched, they will tend to do what is right. We will ensure that we provide budgets rather than just having one camera on that road. We need to have four, five or six mobile cameras for purposes of deterrence. Road users do not quite know where the camera is because it is mobile. We should certainly bring up the level of discipline and be able to curtail the rampant accidents on our roads

We employed the Alcoblow for drunken driving and there were allegations. Investigations are still going on of drunk drivers causing accidents such as the one that happened along Kaplong Road. We have finalized the regulations on the Alcoblow. When we previously employed it and before it was outlawed in Milimani Court in 2014, the Traffic Act did not recognize alcoblow as a tool that could be employed because it was not covered as an offence under the Traffic Act. Parliament has since amended the Act.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

We have developed regulations that are currently in the Attorney-General's office. We hope to get gazette this week and thereafter introduce alcoblow to ensure that we do not have drunken drivers endangering the lives of road users, for that matter.

The Traffic Act is under NTSA while the implementing agency or the enforcement agency is under Ministry of Interior and National Administration. Those are some of the things we are working on to polish up so that we can address this challenge of loss of innocent lives and carnage on our roads.

The other supplementary question was on Awasi-Katitu Road. Let me not make a commitment on the Floor of the House because a number of these require budgetary scrutiny. We need to work very closely together. Professor, we can sit down and look at level of accommodation on the basis of prioritization of roads in the county.

More importantly, we currently have commitments on our ongoing projects totaling to about Kshs2.1 trillion. With the budgetary allocation of about Kshs50 million every year, that would take us about 20 to 30 years. I do not want to say 40 years because Kshs2 trillion divided by 50 is 40. We need to tread very carefully and do proper prioritization and affirmative action to ensure that we are building Kenya in an equitable way.

Sen. (Prof.) Ojienda, allow me to basically look at this specific road with respect to the programmes going on in the county and the level of priority from the leadership of the county.

Sen. Maanzo, asked about Emali-Ukia Road and whether we need to urgently prioritise and tarmac it being the only section in the whole of the corridor. These are very specific requests with respect to supporting this transnational corridor. Therefore, allow me to basically sit down with Sen. Maanzo and look at that.

Kipsing-Oldonyiro bridge has a budget funded under RDLF. Hon, Members, we are fairly in a good place today given the fact that you allowed us to securitize the Kshs7 billion. Any road project which on account of non-payment is being stranded or suspended for that matter, we are getting back the contractors to work.

We did not raise money for particular roads for particular regions, but for all the pending roads in Kenya. We are paying for all of them and getting the contractors back to work through a supplemental settlement agreement that stipulates how we will get back to work and pay them subsequently. That includes bargaining and negotiating for write-down of 35 per cent of the interest that they had levied on the principal.

So, we are in a good place. We will need to chart the way forward together to ensure that budgetary allocation is adequate. If it is not adequate, then it is commensurate to the work that we hope to complete. We hope the work certificates will be issued during the period, so that we do not slow down and ensure that we get our road sector working again.

Like I said, we already have Kshs63 billion. We need Kshs175 billion. It is not only in Government books because we are doing off-balance sheet. We basically sold Kshs7 billion to a special purpose vehicle partner who has looked at the historical performance of the road maintenance levy. They are paying us Kshs175 billion and spending time to collect the money without recourse to the National Treasury. This and next week, we should be able to pay all the contractors the initial 40 per cent on account

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*

of what they have signed for in the settlement agreement, go back to work together on all those roads which are stranded. We want to ensure that going forward, we do proper budgetary allocation to support work certificates for the completed work for the particular year.

Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, and Members, once again, thank you for the support you have given us in the roads sector, particularly on working together to ensure that we settle pending bills and get all our contractors on any road in Kenya back to work.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Give Sen. Dullo the microphone.

Sen. Dullo: Sorry, *Waziri*, I still have concerns on the signage and the two roads where the budget is there, but what has been spent is not reflected in the table. I do not know whether you looked at it. Maybe you can check later and give me a response.

The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir): I think where there is a budgetary allocation, but payment has not happened--- Let me check the details.

That could just be an exchequer release. It is cash flow. Therefore, it should not be a major issue. Let me undertake to address that with specificity because when there was a budget and work is in progress, there should be no reason. It could just be a cash flow issue with respect to exchequer releases, if it is coming from there. However, if it is from the Road Maintenance Levy Fund (RMLF), there should be no reason for not making payments. Where there is a certified certificate for work done, we should be able to pay immediately.

I thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Thank you, Cabinet Secretary.

Hon. Senators, we have only two minutes remaining. I am not sure if we will make any substantive supplementary questions and get replies from the Cabinet Secretary. So, please allow me to give leave to the Cabinet Secretary, so that we proceed to the next order.

Hon. Cabinet Secretary, thank you very much for your attendance today and the responses. We wish you all the best in your duties. You may now take leave.

[The Cabinet Secretary for Roads and Transport (Hon. Davis Chirchir) was ushered out of the Chamber]

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Sen. Abdul Haji): Hon. Senators, it is now 1.14 p.m. Having concluded the business for which I extended the hours of sitting pursuant to Standing Order No.34(2A), the Senate stands adjourned until later today, Wednesday, 9th April, 2025, at 2.30 p.m.

The Senate rose at 1.14 p.m.

Disclaimer: *The electronic version of the Senate Hansard Report is for information purposes only. A certified version of this Report can be obtained from the Director, Hansard and Audio Services, Senate.*