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REPUBLIC OF KENYA


THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT – FIFTH SESSION – 2026

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

REPORT ON-

CONSIDERATION OF PUBLIC PETITION NO. 9 OF 2025 REGARDING
RECOGNITION OF THE CHUKA PEOPLE AS A TRIBE IN KENYA

 THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PAPERS LAID	
DATE:	01 APR 2026 DAY: <i>Wednesday</i>
TABLED BY:	<i>Hon. Muchangi Karumba Chair, Public Petitions</i>
CLERK-AS-TABLED:	<i>Mado Miniam</i>

Directorate of Audit Appropriations &
General-Purpose Committees
Clerk's Chambers
Main Parliament Buildings
NAIROBI



MARCH, 2026

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CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

On behalf of the Public Petitions Committee and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 227, it is my pleasant privilege and honour to present to this House the Report of the Committee on the Public Petition No. 01 of 2025 regarding recognition of the Pare Community as a tribe in Kenya. The petition was presented to the House pursuant to Standing Order No. 225 (2) (a) by the Member for Taveta on behalf of the Pare Community of Kenya in Taita Taveta County.

The petitioners prayed that the National Assembly, through the Public Petitions Committee, inquire into the matter with a view to securing urgent recognition of the Pare Community of Kenya as a tribe of the Republic of Kenya.

The Committee observed that, On the threshold to be recognized as a tribe, it was observed that there was no threshold but criteria is language, number of people, customs, beliefs and practices.

The Committee further noted that distinct data on Pare community is hardly available due to the fact that the community has been enumerated as communities under stateless.

In response to the prayer that the Committee inquire into the matter with a view to securing urgent recognition of the Chuka Community of Kenya as a tribe of the Republic of Kenya, the Committee notes the desire of the Chuka Community to be distinctively recognized as a tribe in Kenya and recommends that the Ministry of Interior and National Administrations through its internally developed framework to evaluate petitions for ethnic community recognition initiates and finalizes evaluation of the recognition of the Chuka as a tribe in Kenya within six months of tabling of this report.

The Committee appreciates the Offices of the Speaker and Clerk of the National Assembly for providing guidance and necessary technical support. The Chairperson expresses gratitude to the Committee Members for their devotion and commitment to duty during the consideration of the Petition.

On behalf of the Committee and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 199, I now wish to lay the Report on the Table of the House.

HON. MUCHANGI KAREMBA, CBS, M.P.

CHAIRPERSON, PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

PART ONE

1. PREFACE

1.1 Establishment and Mandate of the Committee

The Public Petitions Committee was established under the provisions of Standing Order 208A with the following terms of reference:

- a) considering all public petitions tabled in the House;
 - b) making such recommendations as may be appropriate with respect to the prayers sought in the petitions;
 - c) recommending whether the findings arising from consideration of a petition should be debated; and
 - d) advising the House and reporting on all public petitions committed to it.
-

1.2 Committee Membership

The Public Petitions Committee was constituted in October 2022 and comprises the following Members:

Chairperson

Hon. Muchangi Karemba, CBS, M.P.
Runyenjes Constituency
United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Vice Chairperson

Hon. Janet Jepkemboi Sitienei, M.P.
Turbo Constituency
United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Patrick Makau King'ola, M.P.
Mavoko Constituency

**Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya
(WDM-K)**

Hon. Edith Vethi Nyenze, M.P.
Kitui West Constituency

**Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya (WDM-
K)**

Hon. Ntwiga Patrick Munene, M.P.
Chuka Igambang'ombe Constituency

United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Maisori Marwa Kitayama, M.P.
Kuria East Constituency

United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Joshua Chepyegon Kandie, M.P.
Baringo Central Constituency

United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Beatrice Kadeveresia Elachi, M.P.
Dagoretti North Constituency

Orange Democratic Movement (ODM)

Hon. Bernard Muriuki Nebart, M.P.
Mbeere South Constituency

Independent

Hon. Biego Paul Kibichy, M.P.
Chesumei

United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Peter Irungu Kihungi, M.P.
Kangema Constituency

Maendeleo Chap Chap Party (MCCP)

Hon. John Bwire Okano, M.P.
Taveta Constituency

**Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya (WDM-
K)**

Hon. Peter Mbogho Shake, M.P.
Mwatate Constituency

Jubilee Party (JP)

Hon. Sloya Clement Logova, M.P.
Sabatia Constituency

United Democratic Alliance (UDA)

Hon. Suzanne Ndunge Kiamba, M.P.
Makueni Constituency

**Wiper Democratic Movement-Kenya
(WDM-K)**

1.3 Committee Secretariat

The Public Petitions Committee is facilitated by the following members of the secretariat:

Lead Clerk

Mr. Victor Weke

Principal Clerk Assistant II

Ms. Miriam Modo

First Clerk Assistant

Ms. Kafuyai Wamae

Third Clerk Assistant

Ms. Nancy Akinyi

Research Officer III

Ms. Roselyne Njuki

Principal Serjeant-at-Arms

Mr. Pascal Valerian

Hansard Officer III

Ms. Felistus Muiya

Public Communication Officer

Mr. Benard Toroitich
Third Clerk Assistant

Mr. Clinton Sindiga
Legal Counsel II

Mr. Arkan Mumin
Research Officer III

Mr. Paul Shana
Serjeant-at-Arms

Mr. Collins Mahamba
Audio Officer III

Mr. Calvin Karungo
Media Relations Officer III

PART TWO

1 BACKGROUND OF THE PETITION

1.1 Introduction

1. Public Petition No. 9 of 2025 regarding recognition of the Chuka Community as a tribe in the Republic of Kenya was presented to the House on 10th April 2025 by the Member for Chuka Igamba Ng'ombe on behalf of the Chuka Community of Kenya in Tharaka Nithi County.
2. The Constitution of Kenya in its preamble affirms the national pride in the ethnic, cultural and religious diversity as the bedrock of unity of a Sovereign nation;
3. Article 44 of the Constitution recognizes that “every person has the right to use the language, and to participate in the cultural life, of the person's choice” and, a person belonging to a cultural or linguistic community has the right, with other members of that community to enjoy the person's culture and use the person's language;
4. The Chuka community has a population of more than one hundred and seventeen thousand (117,000) people who are primarily located in Tharaka Nithi County and owing to the historical, cultural, social and economic aspects of the Chuka community, there is need to formally recognize them as a distinct tribe in the Republic of Kenya;
5. The Chuka community traces their origins to the coastal region of Kenya, from where they migrated inland and eventually settled in the southeastern slopes of Mount Kenya and have a cultural and historical claim to the land known as *Magundu Ma Chuka*, which is now part of Mount Kenya National Park and Forest Reserve;
6. Although the Chuka community has maintained governance structures, economic activities and cultural practices that distinguish them from their neighbors, the Chuka community has not been recognized as a tribe;
7. The members of the Chuka community have their own unique language that has unique phonetic characteristics, that are substantially distinct from those of its neighboring tribes; including the naming system and circumcision rites that makes it distinct from the neighboring tribes unique and historical governance and leadership system comprising Councils of elders such as *Kiama gia Nkome* and *Kiama kia Mugongo* which have been and still are crucial in providing community leadership and direction and in resolving conflicts involving the Chuka community;

8. The Chuka community plays a fundamental role in Kenya's socio-economic growth and the enhancement of Kenya's economy primarily through agriculture and trade;
9. Efforts to have this matter addressed by relevant authorities have been futile; and that the matter presented in this petition is not pending before any Court of law, or any constitutional or legal body.

1.2 Prayer

10. The Petitioners prayed that the Committee inquire into the matter with a view to securing urgent recognition of the Chuka Community of Kenya as a tribe of the Republic of Kenya.
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PART THREE

3 STAKEHOLDERS' SUBMISSIONS ON THE PETITION

3.1 The Petitioner

On Tuesday 29th April 2025, the Member for Chuka Igamba Ng'ombe, Hon, Patrick Munene, MP, accompanied by members of the Chuka Community, appeared before the Committee and submitted as follows—

11. The recognition of the *Chuka* community as a distinct tribe in Kenya has long been a historical concern. The *Chuka* people have historically been grouped together with other communities such as the *Meru* and *Tharaka*, despite being a distinct ethnic group residing in Tharaka Nithi County.
12. Literature and educational materials in the *Chuka* language are severely lacking. Most publications in local languages are available only in *Kikuyu* or *Meru*, and the National Cohesion and Integration Commission (NCIC) does not recognize *Chuka* as a separate tribe in its official records. As a result, even Chuka children are taught in other languages, contributing to an identity crisis.
13. Efforts to recognize the *Chuka* identity began many years ago, particularly through the initiative to translate the Holy Bible into the Chuka language.
14. Currently, *Chuka* is not recognized as a community or a distinct tribe. Most Chuka children grow up learning and speaking other languages, and many are unable to express themselves in their mother tongue. This has led to a significant cultural and linguistic identity crisis. There is minimal literature or documentation available on Chuka language or ethnicity.
15. Scholarly work on the *Chuka* includes a thesis by Prof. Mwaniki Henry titled "*A Precolonial History of the Chuka of Mount Kenya c.1400–1908*". Additionally, American author Jeffrey A. Fadiman wrote a book titled "*When We Began There Were Witch Men: An Oral History from Mount Kenya.*" However, it is alleged that out of 103 individuals interviewed for the book, 100 were from the Meru community and three were white men, with no Chuka representation.
16. In "*The Vanishing Tribes of Kenya*" by Major G. St. J. Orde-Browne, the *Chuka* were described as a community quickly being assimilated into larger neighbouring tribes such as the

Kikuyu and Meru. The author warned that without careful and sympathetic intervention, the Chuka would lose their language and cultural identity.

17. The *Chuka* Religious Community has also faced challenges in communication, especially in Protestant churches, where the Kikuyu Bible is still widely used. Recognizing this gap, Bible Translation and Literacy (BTL)—a Christian organization founded in 1981—established the need for a Chuka Bible in 2010. Given the linguistic differences, religious communication has been difficult. The Chuka community, in partnership with BTL, has since developed the Chuka language, and the New Testament is soon to be launched in *Chuka*.
18. The *Chuka* language is unique, with seven distinct vowels that differ from those of neighbouring communities. The language of the communities to which Chuka has previously been classified appears foreign even to the *Chuka* people. This linguistic and cultural disconnect has further complicated identity, especially during cultural rites such as marriage, where the *Chuka* are not officially recognized as a distinct tribe.
19. The Petitioners emphasized the urgent need for the *Chuka* language to be officially registered and for the *Chuka* to be recognized as a distinct tribe. This would support the development of educational materials, cultural preservation, and formal recognition in national identity.

3.2 Kenya National Bureau of Statistics

On Wednesday, 18th June 2025, the Director General Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS), Dr. Macdonald Obudho appeared before the Committee and submitted as follows—

20. Ethnicity and tribal data collected through censuses and surveys serve several important purposes, especially in diverse nations like Kenya. These purposes include resource allocation; representation and inclusion; cultural and historical documentation, policy development; and conflict resolution and social integration.
21. Over the years, various ethnic communities living in the country have sought to be recognized as distinct tribes or sub-tribes of Kenya. This has mainly been driven by the desire to obtain statistical information, assert rights, and advance community interests. Recent examples include the *Makonde*, *Kenyans of Asian Heritage*, and the *Shona and Pemba communities*, who were given formal recognition in the last decade.
22. These communities were granted recognition after formally submitting petitions requesting the Government to recognize them as ethnic communities of Kenya.

Since independence, KNBS has collected data on ethnicity and tribes to enhance understanding of the diverse nature of the people of Kenya and advance equitable development across all spheres of life.

23. Collection, analysis and dissemination of data on ethnicity and tribes is supported by various legal provisions, including:
- (i) Preamble to the Constitution of Kenya, which affirms the national pride in ethnic, cultural and religious diversity being the bedrock of unity as a sovereign nation; and
 - (ii) Articles 11 and 44 of the Constitution, which enshrine the duty of the Government to promote and protect the diverse cultural heritage of Kenya.
24. To ease the production of statistics on ethnicity and tribes, KNBS assigns codes to the various ethnic/tribal communities at the beginning of any statistical project that collects data on ethnicity.
25. These codes are purely for statistical purposes and do not imply legal authority on the part of KNBS to confer official recognition of ethnic and tribal communities living in Kenya.
26. During the 1969, 1979, 1989, 2009 and 2019 Kenya Population and Housing Census (KPHC) the number of ethnic/tribal communities enumerated varied between 37 and 42. This was mainly due to inclusion of more ethnic/tribal communities and the relegation of some to sub-communities.
27. In 1999, data on ethnicity was not collected during the census.

	1969	1979	1989	1999	2009	2019
No. of main ethnic communities	42	38	40	N/A	37	42
No. of sub-ethnic Communities	0	0	0	N/A	71	75

Table

1. Trend in the Number of Ethnic/Tribal Communities Enumerated during past KPHCs (*Source Kenya Population and Housing Census, 1969-2019*)

28. The process used by KNBS to assign statistical codes to ethnic communities is guided by the following:

- (i) Gazette notices issued by the Government recognizing ethnic communities as an integral part of the tribes of Kenya; and

- (ii) Recommendations made to KNBS by the National Gender and Equality Commission (NGEC) recommending the collection, analysis and dissemination of data on ethnic communities whose interests need to be protected and promoted. These ethnic communities include those that are regarded as minorities and marginalized.
29. Distinct data on Chuka communities is scarce because the community has been enumerated under the larger Meru ethnic community.
30. The Chuka Community are mainly found in Tharaka-Nithi County. *Chukas* are one of the nine sub-groups of the larger Meru ethnic community. The other sub- groups of the Meru ethnic community are *Igoji, Imenti, Tigania, Mitine, Igembe, Mwimbi, Muthambi* and *Tharaka*.
31. The Tharaka ethnic community is currently being enumerated distinctly from the rest of the sub-groups of the Meru ethnic community. The Table below shows the population of Meru and Tharaka communities enumerated in Tharaka-Nithi County during the 2009 and 2019 KPHC. The population of the Meru ethnic community includes members of the Chuka sub-ethnic community.

	2009	2019
Meru	199,731	205,279
Tharaka	145,424	163,273

Table 2. *Population of Meru and Tharaka ethnic Communities enumerated in Tharaka-Nithi County in 2009 and 2019*

32. Once the petition is endorsed by the National Assembly and gazetted as so, KNBS will go ahead to distinctly enumerate the two communities in the 2029 KPHC.
33. The Bureau requested the leaders to encourage their community members to always identify themselves with the correct name of their preferred ethnic community whenever they participate in censuses and surveys undertaken by KNBS. This will enable the Bureau to collect, analyse and disseminate more accurate and comprehensive statistical information on these communities.
34. Regarding the criteria used to recognize tribes and sub-tribes, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) relied on the precedence established during the ethnic enumeration in the 1969 Kenya Population and Housing Census. In subsequent years, recognition of tribes and sub-tribes was granted based on petitions submitted to relevant government agencies.

3.3 Ministry of Interior and National Administration

35. The Principal Secretary for the State Department for Immigration and Citizen Affairs appeared before the committee and responded to the petition as follows—

Background

36. The Chuka are an Ethnic Community primarily residing in Tharaka-Nithi County on the south-eastern slopes of Mount Kenya. They are considered one of the sub-groups of the Meru, speaking *Gichuka*, a dialect of the *Kimeru* language. Other Meru sub-groups include the *Tharaka*, *Muthambi*, and *Mwimbi* in Tharaka-Nithi County, and the *Igembe*, *Tigania*, and *Imenti* in Meru County. The *Gichuka* dialect shares close lexical similarity with the language of their *Embu* neighbours.

37. The *Chuka* are primarily agriculturalists cultivating cash crops such as coffee and tea, alongside subsistence crops like maize, beans, and bananas. Dairy production is also increasingly significant in the region. The *Chuka* and the more numerous *Tharaka* consider each other closely related, often referring to each other as *Ciongoi* or *Ciombandi* to denote their kinship. However, some cultural practices differ; for instance, the *Chuka's* circumcision practices align more closely with those of the *Embu* than the *Tharaka*.

Identity and recognition

38. The State Department for Immigration and Citizen Services, under the Ministry through the Directorate of National Registration Bureau (NRB), oversees the recognition of ethnic communities in Kenya and assigns them unique ethnic identification codes. This enables individuals to declare their specific ethnicity when registering for national identity documents. Recognition enhances a community's access to political representation, facilitating advocacy for their needs at both national and county levels.

39. It also supports equitable resource allocation, including land, education, and development projects. In Tharaka-Nithi County, the *Tharaka* are recognized as a distinct ethnic group with a unique code, separate from the *Meru*. The *Chuka* are however not currently recognised as a community. During national identification registration, the *Chuka* typically identify as Meru rather than *Tharaka*.

Determination of ethnic uniqueness

40. The Ministry of Interior and National Administration, employs an internally developed framework to evaluate petitions for ethnic community recognition. Key aspects of the framework are highlighted as follows for consideration by the Committee in assessing the petition—

- (i) **Documentation of historical origins:** The *Chuka* leadership, should compile a report tracing the *Chuka's* origins, showing their divergence from the broader Meru community. This report should detail the geographical comprehensive historical point of dispersal for Meru sub-groups and map all *Chuka* settlement areas. This documentation will support fact-finding visits by Parliament, the State Department for Immigration and Citizen Services, and other stakeholders.
- (ii) **Stakeholder documentation:** To foster an inclusive approach, the *Chuka* Community should engage and document the perspectives of key stakeholders, including the State Department for Immigration and Citizen Services. The petition must include a comprehensive list of petitioners from the *Chuka* community, signed to confirm their support. Additional documentation could include views from the Meru, Tharaka, and *Chuka* Councils of Elders (e.g., *Nchuri Ncheke*, *Kiama gia Nkome* and *Kiama kia Mugongo*), as well as endorsements from notable academic, religious, political, and cultural leaders within the *Chuka* community. A resolution from the Tharaka-Nithi County Assembly supporting recognition would further strengthen the petition.
- (iii) **Cultural heritage documentation:** The *Chuka* should submit a detailed report highlighting their distinct cultural identity, including the *Gichuka* language, clan-based governance structures, internal organization, and traditional practices such as agricultural systems. This submission should underscore differences from the Meru to challenge their historical classification as a sub-tribe and include contributions from cultural institutions, such as *Chuka* University, to validate their unique identity.
- (iv) **Fact-finding visits:** The Committee should conduct fact-finding visits to Tharaka-Nithi County to verify the *Chuka's* cultural and historical claims. These visits will also assess socio-economic issues, such as claims to land known as *Magundu ma Chuka*, and confirm challenges faced by *Chuka* individuals compelled to register as Meru for administrative purposes.

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- (v) **Community sensitization:** The *Chuka* leadership should initiate a robust sensitization campaign to revive ethnic identity and communal pride, particularly among *Chuka* individuals who identify as *Meru* for administrative reasons. Workshops, media campaigns, and community events should promote the *Gichuka* language and cultural heritage, fostering unity and raising awareness of their distinct identity.

Possible way forward

41. **Petition review and guidance:** The Public Petitions Committee should evaluate the *Chuka* Community's petition and advise the petitioners, to address any gaps identified in accordance with the Ministry's framework for ethnic recognition.
42. **Engagement with State Department:** To ensure comprehensive documentation, the petitioners should initiate structured dialogue with the State Department for Immigration and Citizen Services. The State Department should submit a detailed report to the Public Petitions Committee, recommending recognition of the *Chuka* as a distinct ethnic group.
43. **Parliamentary resolution:** Upon verification of the submitted documentation and fact-finding outcomes, the Committee should recommend that Parliament pass a resolution directing the Ministry of Interior to formally recognize the *Chuka* as a distinct ethnic group and assign them a unique ethnic code, ensuring their inclusion in national census and administrative records.
44. **Legislative framework development:** Parliament should consider enacting legislation to establish a clear framework for recognising smaller communities who may be subsumed under larger ethnic groups.

PART FOUR

4. COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

Upon hearing from the Petitioner, Kenya National Bureau of Statistics, and the Ministry of Interior and National Administration, the Committee observed that—

- 1) The *Chuka* people were yet to be recognised as a distinct community or tribe as they were classified as one of the nine sub-groups of the larger *Meru* ethnic community for administrative reasons, together with *Igoji*, *Imenti*, *Tigania*, *Mitine*, *Igembe*, *Mwimbi*, *Muthambi* and *Tharaka*. Despite this classification, the *Tharaka* ethnic community was currently being enumerated separately from the rest of the Meru ethnic community's subgroups.
- 2) Distinct data on *Chuka* were hardly available, as Chuka had been enumerated under the larger Meru ethnic community. The lack of distinct ethnic or tribal data on the *Chuka* undermines their desire for recognisable statistical information to enable them to claim rights and advance community interests, including economic and social integration.
- 3) The Tharaka ethnic community is currently being enumerated separately from the rest of the Meru ethnic community's subgroups. The Table below shows the population of Meru and Tharaka communities enumerated in Tharaka-Nithi County during the 2009 and 2019 KPHC. The population of the Meru ethnic community includes members of the Chuka sub-ethnic community.

	2009	2019
Meru	199,731	205,279
Tharaka	145,424	163,273

- 4) Regarding the criteria used to recognize tribes and sub-tribes, the Kenya National Bureau of Statistics (KNBS) relied on the precedence established during the ethnic enumeration in the 1969 Kenya Population and Housing Census. In subsequent years, recognition of tribes and sub-tribes was granted based on petitions submitted to relevant government agencies.

PART FIVE

5. COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1) Pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order 227, the Committee responds to the Petition as follows—

On the prayer that the Committee inquire into the matter with a view to securing urgent recognition of the Chuka Community of Kenya as a tribe of the Republic of Kenya, **the Committee notes the desire of the Chuka Community of Kenya to be distinctively recognized as a tribe in Kenya and recommends that, within six (6) months upon tabling of this report, the Ministry of Interior and National Administration through its internally developed framework, initiates and finalizes evaluation seeking recognition of the Chuka Community of Kenya as a tribe.**

Signed: _____



Date: _____

01/04/2026

HON. MUCHANGI KAREMBA, CBS, M.P.

CHAIRPERSON, PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

ANNEXURES

Annex 1: The Adoption List

Annex 2: Public Petition No. 9 of 2025 regarding recognition of the Chuka Community as tribe in Kenya

Annex 3: Minutes of proceedings


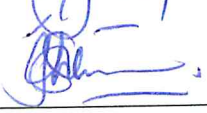
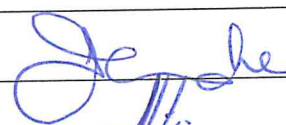
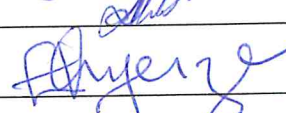
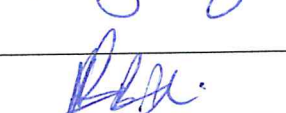
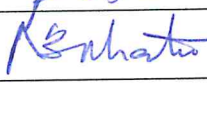
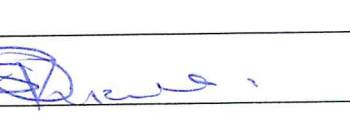

PUBLIC PETITIONS COMMITTEE

ADOPTION LIST

- (i) **Consideration and adoption of the Report on Public Petition No. 09 of 2025 by Hon. Patrick Munene, CBS,MP., regarding the recognition of the Chuka Community as a tribe in the Republic of Kenya.**

We, the undersigned, hereby affix our signatures to this Report to affirm our approval:

DATE: _____

	HON. MEMBER	SIGNATURE
1.	Hon. Muchangi Karemba, CBS, M.P. (Chairperson)	
2.	Hon. Janet Jepkemboi Sitienei, CBS, M.P. (Vice Chairperson)	
3.	Hon. Patrick Makau King'ola, M.P.	
4.	Hon. Beatrice Kadeveresia Elachi, CBS, M.P.	
5.	Hon. Joshua Chepyegon Kandie, M.P.	
6.	Hon. Maisori Marwa Kitayama, M.P.	
7.	Hon. Edith Vethi Nyenze, M.P.	
8.	Hon. Patrick Ntwiga Munene, M.P.	
9.	Hon. Paul Biego Kibichy, M.P.	
10.	Hon. (Eng.) Bernard Muriuki Nebart, M.P.	
11.	Hon. Peter Mbogho Shake, M.P.	
12.	Hon. Suzanne Ndunge Kiamba, M.P.	
13.	Hon. John Bwire Okano, M.P.	
14.	Hon. Sloya Clement Logova, M.P.	
15.	Hon. Peter Irungu Kihungi, M.P.	