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Bill proposes tighter legal framework for referenda

The Bill consolidates all referendum laws into a single statute and provides that a referendum will pass if 20 per cent of registered voters in half of the counties participate.

Kenyans seeking to amend the Constitution or decide major national and county issues through a referendum could soon be subjected to a detailed legal framework in the new proposal in a Bill before the Senate.

The Referendum Bill, 2026 seeks to consolidate laws governing the conduct of referenda and establish clear procedures on how such votes are initiated, conducted and challenged in court.

It is sponsored by the Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights.

The Bill consolidates all referendum laws into a single statute. It sets clear timelines, such as 90 days for signature verification and 45 days' notice before a vote. It creates a system that ensures legal certainty and limits protracted disputes.

The Bill went through the First Reading (introduced) in the House on Tuesday and is currently undergoing public participation.

The Committee on Justice, Legal Affairs and Human Rights has invited members of the public to submit memoranda on their views on the proposals in the Bill before debate in the House.

If enacted, the Bill will formally regulate constitutional referenda, county referenda and plebiscites on matters of public importance.

Clause 3 states that the law shall apply to a referendum to amend the Constitution under Articles 255, 256 and 257 of the Constitution, county referenda and a referendum on any other issue other than amendment of the Constitution.

The Bill further imports several provisions of the Elections Act into referendum processes.

Under Clause 4, laws governing voter registration, polling stations, ballot papers, campaigns and election offences would apply to referendums in the same



Senator Wakili Hillary Sigei, the chair of the Committee on Justice.

manner as if a referendum was a general election.

The Bill outlines strict timelines for constitutional amendment processes through both parliamentary and popular initiatives.

Clause 5 requires the President, once a constitutional amendment Bill requiring a referendum is received from Parliament, to notify the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) within 30 days. After such notification the Commission will have to conduct a referendum within 90 days.

For amendments through a popular initiative, Clause 6 requires promoters to submit signatures and identification

details of at least one million registered voters to the IEBC for verification.

The Commission will then have 90 days to verify the signatures, publish a verification report and determine whether the initiative meets constitutional thresholds.

County Assemblies will also play a central role in the process.

Clause 7 provides that each county assembly must either approve or reject a proposed constitutional amendment Bill within three months after receiving it from IEBC.

The Bill also requires Parliament to facilitate public participation before passing a proposed constitutional

amendment.

Under Clause 8, each House shall publicise the Bill and facilitate public discussion before passage.

One of the key provisions in the proposed law concerns how referendum questions are framed. Clause 10 directs the IEBC to frame referendum questions within 21 days after receiving notification from the President or Parliament.

The Commission would also be required to publish the questions in the Gazette, newspapers and electronic media and conduct civic education across the country.

The Bill states that referendum questions must be written in plain language

in both English and Swahili and use simple and direct wording without jargon or technical language.

Further, the questions must be neutral and allow voters to answer by marking either “yes” or “no” on the ballot paper.

Clause 11 requires the IEBC to publish referendum notices in the Gazette, electronic media and newspapers of national circulation within 14 days after publication of the referendum question.

The notice must indicate the nature of the referendum, polling date, campaign timelines and registration deadlines for referendum committees.

The Bill also introduces formal campaign structures.

Clause 12 allows persons supporting or opposing a referendum question to form national and constituency referendum committees.

Clause 14 subjects referendum financ-

ing to provisions of the Election Campaign Financing Act relating to expenditure, donations and dispute resolution.

On approval thresholds, Clause 15 provides that constitutional amendment referenda would only pass if at least 20 per cent of registered voters in at least half of the counties participate and the proposal is supported by a simple majority of those voting.

The IEBC would be required under Clause 16 to declare referendum results within three days after voting and certify the outcome to the President.

The proposed law also formally recognises county referenda.

Clause 17 allows counties to conduct referenda on local matters such as county laws, petitions and planning or investment decisions affecting residents.

Such a referendum may only proceed if supported by at least 25 per cent of

registered voters in the affected county.

Parliament would also gain powers to initiate referenda on non-constitutional matters.

Clause 18 states that a referendum may be conducted on any other matter other than amendment of the Constitution if supported by more than 50 per cent of members in each House of Parliament.

The Bill establishes strict timelines for resolution of referendum disputes.

Clause 20 provides that petitions challenging referendum results must be filed within 14 days after declaration of results and heard within 30 days.

The Bill also grants courts powers to nullify referenda. Clause 34 states that the High Court may dismiss a petition, uphold the result, declare published results incorrect or declare the referendum to be void.

Where a referendum is nullified, the IEBC would be required to conduct a fresh vote within 60 days.

The legislation further proposes stiff penalties for violations.

Clause 39 states that any person who contravenes provisions of the Act commits an offence and would be liable, upon conviction, to a fine not exceeding Sh1 million or imprisonment for up to three years or both.

According to the Memorandum of Objects and Reasons, the Bill seeks to provide for a transparent and fair process in order to obtain a clear expression of the will of the people.

The Senate has urged the public to participate in shaping the proposed law.

Written memoranda are to be submitted to the Clerk of the Senate through Parliament Buildings in Nairobi or via email by May 29 at 5pm.

Senators demand probe into Sh85B unremitted deductions

The Senate is pushing for a probe into the mismanagement of unremitted statutory deductions in counties, estimated to stand at over Sh85 billion.

The law requires that such monies be deducted by the employer and remitted to the rightful agencies, and those who fail to do so are in breach of the law.

In particular, the lawmakers accused county governments of deducting loan repayments from employees but failing to remit them to third parties, a situation that has led to many employees being blacklisted by credit reference bureaus.

“I do not see why action is not taken against those who fail to remit the funds after deducting them, since they are breaching the law,” said Senator Okiya Omtatah, adding that the Government has tended to handle them with kid gloves.

“That is why I think the issue has become a runaway problem. I suggest that some of these matters be taken up by law enforcement and the officers dealt with accordingly.”

He also blamed the National Treasury for the accrued unremitted statutory deductions, saying delays in releasing funds to counties had worsened the problem.

“There are some genuine cases where the monies come late and counties find that a lot of penalties have been incurred and the funds are not enough to cover the remittances. It is an issue of law enforcement that should also affect the National Treasury.”

The Senator was contributing to debate on a request for a Statement by Senator Edwin Sifuna on the growing crisis of unremitted statutory deductions by employers in both the public and private sectors. He particularly cited unremitted deductions to the National Social Secu-



Senator Catherine Mumma

rity Fund (NSSF), the Social Health Authority (SHA), pension schemes, SACCOs and banks, warning that workers continue to bear the consequences despite employers having already deducted the money from their payslips.

Senator Sifuna said many employers were deducting funds meant for statutory bodies and financial institutions but failing to remit them, thereby exposing employees to penalties, loss of savings and denial of essential services.

The Senator wants the Labour and Social Welfare Committee to detail the scale of the problem and the measures being taken by the Government to protect affected workers.

“Employees are finding themselves listed by credit reference bureaus, denied medical services and unable to access loans because deductions made from their salaries are not being remitted,” observed Senator Sifuna, even as he demanded accountability measures against employers found culpable, saying the practice amounted to economic exploitation of workers.

He asked the Committee to provide details on the number of affected employees, institutions involved and actions being taken against defaulting em-



Senator Edwin Sifuna

ployers in both levels of government and the private sector.

Senator Omtatah said where the National Treasury fails to release money to county governments in accordance with the law, the necessary sanctions should be imposed.

“Otherwise, we are punishing innocent people who are suffering. They cannot service their loans and other obligations, and county governments end up with huge bills in terms of fines. As a matter of law enforcement, I pray that this House takes action and ensures that the law is upheld with regard to statutory deductions.”

Senator Samson Cherarkey said failure to remit statutory deductions had become widespread across counties and State agencies, noting that workers only discover the problem when seeking healthcare services, processing retirement benefits or applying for loans.

“This is modern-day exploitation of employees because the deductions are reflected on payslips, yet the money is never remitted,” he said, even as he called for stricter penalties against employers who misuse workers’ deductions.

Senator Catherine Mumma said the



Senator Eddy Oketch

House should collectively hold all counties accountable for the payment of all statutory deductions, saying that if the matter is not addressed as a special issue, the Senate will have failed in its responsibility to protect the very system that enables governance to function.

“Statutory deductions are not monies belonging to the county that are being held by governors. These are monies that belong to employees. You can imagine somebody retiring and then being unable to access their pension because there were no remittances,” she said.

“It is public servants, both in the counties and the national Government, who keep the systems running. If we do not hold governments and ourselves accountable to ensure that what belongs to workers is returned to them, then we will have failed.”

Senator Eddy Oketch said the piling debt had become a major stumbling block to budgeting in counties because the unpaid deductions also attract fines. Senator Danson Mungatana revealed that Tana River County owes its employees Sh546 million in unremitted pension deductions.

Two Governors before Senate over ECDE and Vocational Training



Governor Ochilo Ayacko



Senator Betty Montet



Senator John Kinyua



Governor Anne Waiguru

The state of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) in two counties was the focus of the Committee on Education's work last week.

On Tuesday and Thursday last week, the Committee hosted Governors from Migori and Kirinyaga counties to discuss the status of ECDE and Vocational Training Centres (VTCs) in the two counties. Both sessions were chaired by Senator Betty Montet.

The sessions form part of the Committee's ongoing nationwide assessment of ECDE and Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) implementation across all 47 counties. The Committee has so far engaged 31 counties and conducted 19 field visits in execution of its oversight mandate.

On Tuesday, Governor Ochilo Ayacko presented a detailed status report outlining progress, challenges and planned reforms within the County's ECDE and vocational training sector.

Migori County reported a total enrolment of 67,602 learners in public ECDE centres and 19,159 learners in private centres, reflecting strong uptake of early childhood education. However, the Committee raised concerns over whether existing infrastructure and staffing levels are sufficient to support quality learning

outcomes.

The County has employed 659 ECDE teachers on permanent and pensionable terms, alongside 339 teachers employed by parents through Boards of Management, earning stipends ranging between Sh4,000 and Sh8,000. Members of the Committee expressed concern over disparities in remuneration, with Senator James Murango noting the glaring disparities in teacher compensation, with many earning below SRC recommendations.

Governor Ayacko acknowledged the challenge, attributing it to budgetary constraints while highlighting incremental improvements.

"I wish to acknowledge that ECDE teacher salaries remain low, largely due to budgetary constraints," he said, adding that the County had made efforts to improve allowances, increasing them from Sh800 to Sh3,400.

He further revealed that the County is currently undertaking recruitment to fill 300 additional ECDE teacher positions, alongside efforts to progressively improve their terms of service.

Governor Anne Waiguru presented a comprehensive briefing outlining progress made, key challenges experienced and reforms being undertaken within Kirinyaga County's ECDE and vocational



Senator Kamau Murango and Senator Catherine Mumma.

training sector.

Kirinyaga County currently has 372 ECDE centres, comprising 202 public centres and 170 private centres, serving a total of 24,499 learners across the five sub-counties. Of the total enrolment, boys account for 50.8 per cent while girls make up 49.2 per cent, reflecting relatively balanced gender parity in ECDE access within the County.

The County reported that the teacher-pupil ratio currently stands at 1:30 in public ECDE centres and 1:20 in private institutions. Public ECDE centres have an enrolment of 14,361 learners supported by 482 teachers, while private centres serve 10,138 learners with 510 teachers.

The County Government also high-

lighted reforms undertaken in the management of ECDE teachers. Following the establishment of county governments, all 426 ECDE teachers previously employed by parents were absorbed on contract terms by the County Government. Further, during the 2022/23 financial year, 410 ECDE teachers were transitioned from casual employment to permanent and pensionable terms, with salaries increasing from approximately Sh11,000 to Sh22,000 for the lowest-paid teachers, while the highest-paid teachers saw their salaries rise from Sh15,000 to Sh49,570.

An additional 66 teachers have since been recruited to replace those exiting through natural attrition.

Senate and Treasury disagree over Sh79.8B Equalisation Fund arrears



Senator Boni Khalwale and Senator Mohamed Faki during the meeting.



Governor Fernades Barasa, the chair Finance Committee of the Council of Governors, speaks during the meeting.



Senator Tabitha Mutinda.

The Committee on Finance and Budget has disagreed with the National Treasury over the mounting arrears and slow implementation of the Equalisation Fund.

The discussion centred on a Sh79.8 billion accumulation in undisbursed funds intended for marginalised regions. While the Treasury maintains that the fund was only recently operationalised, Senators expressed concern that the delay in disbursements is a violation of the Constitution that threatens to derail projects before the fund's scheduled sunset in 2030.

Cabinet Secretary Mbadi defended the Treasury's position by citing a historical lack of legal instruments to administer the fund. He explained that although the fund was established in 2010, the current regulations were only enacted in November 2021 and operationalised in the 2022/23 financial year.

CS Mbadi emphasised that of the

Sh22.7 billion previously enacted through Appropriation Acts, the National Treasury has fully funded every shilling. He shifted responsibility for the current backlog to the Legislature, stating: "The authority to spend is granted by Parliament. Unless Parliament enacts an appropriation law, there's nothing much the National Treasury can do."

However, members of the Senator Ali Roba-led Committee challenged the Treasury's operationalisation argument, with Senator Boni Khalwale questioning the logic of waiting for further legislation when the Constitution is explicit.

"Article 204 is specific that after the Division of Revenue Bill is enacted, the Treasury is supposed to take 0.5 per cent of the total revenues and put it into the Equalisation Fund," Senator Khalwale said as he pressed the Cabinet Secretary to explain why this was not done, noting that even if the money remained in the account, the Constitution prohibits it

from leaving.

Senator Eddy Oketch added that allocation is a constitutional imperative and that "the entire entitlement up to now ought to be in the fund, awaiting this appropriation."

CS Mbadi countered that transferring money without an operationalised fund would be fiscally irresponsible, noting: "If I allocate money to no fund or a purported fund, I will be accused of putting money into an unknown entity."

Implementation reports provided during the meeting highlighted significant disparities in project completion. Under the First Marginalisation Policy, 249 out of 360 projects (69 per cent) are complete and in use. However, progress under the Second Policy has been slower, with only 33 per cent of the 1,512 approved projects reported as fully complete.

CS Mbadi lamented the historical neglect of the affected areas, stating: "It is

like these marginalised areas have been considered unimportant in the development of this country," while reiterating his commitment to intervene through the budgetary process.

As the fund approaches its 2030 expiration date, the Treasury has proposed a gradual settlement of the Sh62 billion in arrears. For the 2026/27 financial year, the Treasury has allocated Sh15.163 billion, which includes Sh5.561 billion specifically earmarked for settling arrears. CS Mbadi warned that delays in enactment would slow implementation and further increase arrears, urging the Senate to fast-track the Equalisation Fund Appropriation Bill, 2025.

Senator Tabitha Mutinda, the vice chair of the Committee, directed the Treasury to provide a formal response. "We must get an explanation from the Treasury on why the money has not been placed in the fund over those subsequent years," she said.

Lawmakers demand answers on protection of ADC land

Senator Okiya Omtatah has demanded a comprehensive Statement on the governance, utilisation and protection of public land held by the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC).

The Senator claimed irregular allocation and misuse of the vast parcels of land owned by the State corporation is a matter of national concern.

Senator Omtatah wants the Agriculture Committee to provide details on all parcels of land owned by ADC across the country, including their acreage, current use and legal status even as he expressed concern that some of the land was lying idle while other parcels had been illegally occupied, subdivided or irregularly leased out, denying Kenyans the intended public benefit.

He wants the Committee to clarify measures put in place by the government to safeguard ADC land from encroachment and illegal acquisition, warning that continued loss of public land posed a threat to food security and agricultural development.

“Public land held by ADC was meant to support agricultural production, research and national food security and should therefore be protected from misuse and irregular dealings,” Senator Omtatah told the House.

He wants full disclosure of all individuals, companies or entities currently leasing ADC land, the terms of the leases and the revenue generated from the arrangements, besides, the Committee should state whether there had been any investigations into alleged illegal allocation of ADC land and to outline action taken against individuals found culpable.

Senator Edwin Sifuna backed the Statement, saying public land continued to be lost through irregular allocations and weak oversight adding that Parliament has a duty to ensure that strategic national assets were protected from private interests and properly utilised for the benefit of citizens.

“We cannot allow public institutions to lose land through illegal occupation or questionable leasing arrangements while Kenyans struggle with food insecurity,” he said.



Senator Okiya Omtatah and Senator Joe Nyutu during a public event in Parliament Buildings.

Senators recognise youth for record-breaking tree planting feat

Senator William Kisang has recognised a young environmentalist from the Elgeyo Marakwet County after he planted more than 23,000 indigenous trees within 24 hours, surpassing the current Guinness World Record mark.

Mr Hillary Kiplagat Kibiwott, founder of the Green Earth Ambassadors Foundation, planted 23,326 indigenous tree seedlings between April 22 and April 23, surpassing the previous record of 23,060 trees.

Senator Kisang hailed Kibiwott for what he termed a “remarkable and historic environmental achievement” undertaken at Kessup Forest Station in Elgeyo Marakwet County.

“This extraordinary accomplishment is not only a personal triumph but also a moment of immense pride for our nation,” said Senator Kisang, adding that by exceeding the previous record, Mr Kibiwott has demonstrated unparalleled determination, resilience and commitment to environmental conservation and climate action.

Senator Kisang said the achievement significantly contributed to efforts to combat climate change, deforestation and environmental degradation while



Senator William Kisang



Mr Hillary Kiplagat Kibiwott

also supporting the government’s target of planting 15 billion trees by 2030.

Mr Kibiwott’s environmental journey was inspired by witnessing widespread destruction of forests and water catchment areas in his home county, prompting him to champion ecological restoration through community mobilisation.

“Planting over 23,000 indigenous seedlings within a single day is a testament to what dedication, discipline and vision can achieve,” said Senator Ki-

sang.

Senator Dan Maanzo praised the initiative and said environmental conservation efforts needed stronger support across the country warning against unchecked environmental degradation and cited cases of pollution affecting communities in different parts of the country.

“We continue seeing rivers in Nairobi and Kajiado being poisoned,” he said even as he called for stricter environmental protection measures.

Senator Kisang urged the government and environmental stakeholders to strengthen support for youth-led climate initiatives and expand reforestation programmes nationwide.

“There is a need to invest in youth-led climate action programmes, strengthen reforestation efforts and ensure the sustainability of such impactful projects,” he said.

Pressure over industrial pollution along Kitengela-Namanga road



Senator Seki Lenku ole Kanar

The Ministry of Environment, Climate Change and Forestry is on the spot over rising environmental pollution by industries operating along the Kitengela–Namanga road and senators are demanding answers on enforcement measures and protection of nearby communities.

Senator Seki ole Kanar sought a Statement from the Committee on Land,

Environment and Natural Resources on the growing pollution concerns linked to industrial activities along the busy corridor.

He warns that residents were increasingly being exposed to harmful waste and emissions.

Senator Seki demanded a comprehensive report on industries operating along the Kitengela–Namanga road and

the measures put in place by regulatory agencies to ensure compliance with environmental laws.

“The Committee should provide a list of industries operating along the Kitengela–Namanga road and indicate whether they have complied with environmental regulations and waste management standards,” Senator Seki said.

He wants details on the nature of pollutants being discharged into the environment and their effects on surrounding communities, livestock and water sources.

The Senator also questioned the effectiveness of oversight by the National Environment Management Authority (Nema), saying residents had repeatedly complained about air, water and noise pollution from factories located near residential areas.

“Residents continue to suffer from pollution caused by some of these industries yet little action appears to have been taken against violators,” said Senator Seki, demanding an explanation whether environmental impact assessments were conducted before establishment of the factories and whether periodic audits are being undertaken to monitor compliance.

The Senator further sought clarification on actions taken against industries found culpable of environmental degradation, including penalties imposed and restoration measures ordered by authorities.

Supporting the Statement, Senators called for stricter enforcement of environmental laws and accused some industries of disregarding public health concerns in pursuit of profit.

Senator Okiya Omtatah urged government agencies to take firm action against polluters saying regulatory failures had emboldened industries to operate with impunity.

“We cannot allow industries to poison communities and destroy the environment while enforcement agencies look the other way,” Senator Omtatah said.

While calling for stronger accountability mechanisms for industries found violating environmental standards, Senator Eddy Oketch said Parliament must ensure that public health is not sacrificed for economic gain.

“We must insist on accountability and strict compliance with environmental regulations because the cost of pollution is borne by innocent Kenyans,” Senator Oketch said.

Concern over delay in implementation of PWDs employment quota

The Ministry of Labour and Social Protection is on the spot over the delayed implementation of the constitutional five per cent employment quota for Persons with Disabilities (PwDs) in the public service.

On Tuesday, Senator Mbugua sought a Statement from the Committee on Labour and Social Welfare on the implementation status of the five per cent employment quota for PwDs in the public service.

This attracted debate from the House with Senator Mbugua saying many institutions were yet to meet the constitutional threshold.

Article 54(2) of the Constitution and the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2025 compel the State to progressively ensure that at least five per cent of members of public and appointive bodies are PwDs. But this is yet to be achieved.

Senator Mbugua demanded a detailed breakdown of the number of PwDs employed across ministries, State departments, parastatals and other public institutions, disaggregated by institution, job cadre, gender and county.

The Senator also sought explanations on the obstacles preventing attainment of the quota and the corrective measures being taken by the government to accelerate compliance.



Senator George Mbugua (left) and Senator Julius Murgor (right) share a light moment with some of the stakeholders who appeared before the Committee on Labour.

“The Committee should address the current percentages of PwDs employed across ministries, State departments, State corporations and other public institutions,” Senator Mbugua said.

He further asked whether public institutions are submitting periodic reports on disability inclusion and the extent of compliance with the reporting requirements.

The Senator also pressed the Ministry of Labour and Social Protection to disclose the policy reforms, enforcement mechanisms and capacity-building pro-

grammes it has put in place to close the gaps in disability inclusion.

Senator Mbugua additionally sought clear government targets for full realisation of the five per cent employment requirement across the public sector.

Senators backed stronger accountability mechanisms in public institutions arguing that government agencies must fully comply with laws meant to protect vulnerable workers and marginalised groups.

Senator Okiya Omtatah warned against lax enforcement of labour laws

and said authorities had handled with kid gloves violations that continue hurting ordinary workers.

“I suggest that some of these matters are taken up by law enforcement and these officers are dealt with accordingly,” said Senator Omtatah.

Senator Eddy Oketch called for a more comprehensive approach to labour-related concerns in counties, describing the situation affecting workers as a crisis in all counties.

Senate push for rollout of integrated county payroll system



Senator Mohamed Abbas



Senator Hamida Kibwana

The Senate has launched an inquiry into the implementation of the Integrated County Payroll System (ICPS) across all the 47 devolved units amid growing concerns over payroll irregularities, ghost workers and possible salary disruptions for county staff.

This follows a request for a Statement by Senator Hamida Kibwana who wants the House to investigate the preparedness of county governments and county assemblies to transition to the new integrated payroll framework.

The National Treasury has directed counties to process the April 2026 payroll through integrated systems, including the Integrated Human Resource Information System (IHRIS), the Kenya payroll system and the IFMIS payroll module. The system is intended to streamline salary processing, improve payroll accountability and address irregular staff records.

The aim is to ensure proper remittance of statutory deductions such as PAYE, NSSF, pensions and the Social Health

Authority (SHA).

However, Senator Kibwana raised concerns over the level of readiness by counties and warned that the transition could disrupt salary payments if not properly managed.

She tasked the Committee on Finance and Budget to establish whether counties are fully prepared to comply and to outline safeguards to prevent delays in salary disbursement and protect workers during the transition.

“The Committee should clarify whether implementation of the directive is likely to delay payment of salaries to county employees and the measures taken to ensure that staff are not disadvantaged,” she said.

The statement further seeks accountability on data integrity with Senator Kibwana demanding disclosure of the number of irregular, duplicate or unverified staff records uncovered through the payroll integration process.

Senator Godfrey Osotsi supported the establishment of a centralised payroll

system saying it will seal loopholes that have enabled widespread misuse of public funds.

“Audit reports show that many counties fail to pay statutory deductions, have poor payroll management, weak data systems and even ghost workers,” he said.

He added: “While some argue that this interferes with devolution, the reality is that counties have failed in these areas. A centralised system would help address these challenges.”

Senator Mariam Omar linked the new system to the elimination of ghost workers in county governments. “If this issue of the payroll system is taken care of, there will be no issue of ghost workers. Most of the workers who are working in the counties are ghost workers,” she said.

Senator Mohamed Abbas painted a grim picture of the current state of county payrolls, revealing that some devolved units still rely on manual systems that foster opacity and corruption.

“Counties that are still using manual payrolls create opaque payments and encourage corruption. Some employees remain on payroll for years without confirmation, which is illegal,” he said. He further warned that failure to remit statutory deductions has left many retirees stranded, unable to access pensions and other benefits.

“It is very unfortunate for somebody who has worked for 10 years not to expect any pension,” he said, urging the Senate to enforce compliance across all counties.

Senator Kibwana urged the National Treasury, the Controller of Budget and county governments to provide necessary support to counties facing implementation challenges.

“The Committee should outline measures taken to support counties facing technical, administrative or capacity challenges in implementing the system,” she said.

Senators want consumers shielded from arbitrary price hikes



Senator Mariam Omar and Senator David Wakoli

Senators have asked the Government to enforce standardised pricing mechanisms in the oil sector to shield consumers from arbitrary price hikes.

During debate in the House, the lawmakers called for stricter adherence to public participation requirements before major pricing decisions are made even as they urged authorities to identify traders engaging in profiteering, collusion or anti-competitive conduct.

In particular, Senator Mariam Omar said counties in northern Kenya are among the hardest hit with traders exploiting logistical challenges to inflate prices.

“The most affected counties by this exploitation are those furthest from Nairobi, especially in northern Kenya. Traders take advantage of situations like fuel increments and even rainy seasons to increase prices,” she said.

She was contributing to debate on the

reports of alleged exploitation of consumers following the recent increase in fuel and petroleum prices.

The matter was brought to the House by Senator Samson Cherarkey who expressed concerns over reports that traders and transport operators have taken advantage of the April 2026 fuel price adjustments to inflate the cost of goods and services.

The Senate wants the Committee on Trade, Industrialisation to investigate the matter and report back to the House.

“Credible evidence suggests that certain traders and transport operators impose disproportionate price hikes not fully justified by operational costs, thereby placing an undue financial burden on consumers,” said Senator Cherarkey in his request.

He argues that the situation raises serious concerns under existing consumer protection and competition laws which safeguard Kenyans against unfair trade



Senator Samson Cherarkey

practices and exploitative pricing.

The Senator tasked the committee to establish whether regulatory agencies assessed fare increases by transport operators and confirmed their alignment with lawful cost-based pricing principles, further calling for a probe into unregulated price hikes of essential goods and services.

The Senator urged the Committee to identify traders engaging in profiteering, collusion or anti-competitive conduct. “The Committee should outline penalties or corrective measures imposed against operators or traders found culpable of excessive or unjustified pricing,” he said, adding that long-term policy interventions are needed to cushion vulnerable households from future fuel price shocks.

Senator Dan Maanzo called for stricter adherence to public participation requirements before major pricing decisions are made even as he faulted reg-

ulators for failing to adequately consult stakeholders.

“For a regulatory authority to decide on issues of such great impact to Kenyans, there must be public participation. This has been done poorly,” he said, warning that rising fuel costs have far-reaching implications on commerce and livelihoods.

The senator noted that unchecked increases could stifle business activity and worsen the cost of living.

“Like in Mandera, everyone is left to decide how to charge transport for goods or people. That has serious implications on the pockets of Kenyans,” he said.

Senator Okenyuri called for investigations into possible artificial shortages and hoarding which she said may be driving unjustified price spikes.

“We have people who take advantage of consumers and hike prices. The end result is inflation,” she said.

MOTIONS

Senators approve Mashinani sittings in Kilifi County

The Senate has approved a Motion giving the green light for sittings to be held in Kilifi County in September, in a move aimed at taking Parliament closer to the people and strengthening oversight of county governments.

The Motion, adopted unanimously on Tuesday, marks the latest chapter in the Senate’s “Mashinani” programme, which has seen the Senate sit in Uasin Gishu, Kitui, Turkana and Busia counties in previous years.

The sittings are anchored on Article 126(1) of the Constitution and are intended to strengthen the relationship between the Senate, county governments and the public.

Majority Whip David Wakoli said the adoption of the Motion was in line with the earlier resolution of the Senate on March 8, 2023, to institutionalise annual county sittings during every session of the Senate, except in election years.

The sittings seek to promote the role and work of the Senate and enhance

public awareness regarding the business of the Senate and Parliament in general, while also creating opportunities for public participation and engagement with county assemblies.

The programme traces its roots to the Senate’s first historic sitting outside Nairobi in Uasin Gishu County in 2018, followed by subsequent sittings in Kitui County in 2019, Turkana County in 2023 and Busia County in 2025.

Lawmakers hailed the initiative as a practical expression of devolution and accountability.

Senator Veronica Maina said taking Senate proceedings to counties allows people who cannot travel to Nairobi to witness parliamentary work firsthand.

“It is important that the work we do as Senators becomes relevant to the people. There are many Kenyans who are not able to come to Nairobi, where the seat of Parliament is, to follow live proceedings,” she said.

She said the Senate, as the guardian



The House in session during Senate Mashinani in Busia County.

of devolution, must remain grounded among citizens and closely monitor development projects being undertaken by county governments.

“The best way the Senate can connect with the citizens of Kenya is to constantly go down to where the people are, at the grassroots level,” she said, adding that some counties claim to have implemented projects that may not withstand scrutiny by Senators on the ground.

Senator Maina further proposed that the Senate consider increasing such county sittings if resources allow.

“In fact, if it were possible, we would even do it twice a year. The only hin-

drance is that budget constraints would not allow us to sit in different counties within the course of the year,” she said.

She described Kilifi County as one of the best counties in the republic, citing its vast blue economy potential and tourism appeal.

She urged the Senate to use the sittings to deepen lawmakers’ understanding of maritime affairs, including territorial waters and exclusive economic zones.

“Some Senators have not experienced massive waters, the blue economy, the great seas and the oceans,” she said, suggesting that lawmakers be taken on a study tour using boats or dhows during the sittings.

State unveils market overhaul plan to protect traders and stabilise prices



Cabinet Secretary Lee Kinyanjui

The Government has unveiled an ambitious plan to modernise markets, protect traders from losses and connect small businesses to regional and international buyers in a bid to strengthen the country's trading economy.

Cabinet Secretary for Investments, Trade and Industry Lee Kinyanjui says the Ministry is working closely with county governments to transform markets into organised commercial hubs capable of supporting traders, farmers and Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises

(MSMEs).

CS Kinyanjui was responding to questions raised by Senator Tom Ojienda on the Government's support for sustainable market management and protection of traders' livelihoods.

The CS told senators that the Ministry had rolled out technical support, business advisory services and market intelligence programmes to help counties improve management of trading spaces and sustain economic activity.

"The most important part in the citation of a market is information on where

people want to trade, what they want to trade, at what price and what is going on where," CS Kinyanjui said.

"All these provide useful information that county governments can use, including understanding matters to do with packaging, food processing and consumer trends."

The Ministry, he said, was also using institutions such as the Kenya Industrial Research and Development Institute to conduct feasibility studies, enterprise training and technology assessments aimed at helping counties develop viable markets and industries.

"Whenever an entrepreneur or any business person wants to set up any business, we offer specific training. If it is a pastoralist county, we can work along that. If it is a fish-dominated economy, we can also align our training to support the predominant economic activity."

The CS said the Government's ongoing market construction programme across the country was aimed at restoring dignity to traders while reducing post-harvest losses.

"It should be recalled that a good number of our jua kali business people work by the roadside. They have to face the sun until late in the evening," he said.

"For markets that the Government is currently building, our main target is to give dignity and honour to traders while at the same time reducing post-harvest

losses."

The CS also highlighted progress in the establishment of County Aggregation and Industrial Parks (CAIPs), describing them as a game changer in value addition and agricultural marketing.

"We have about 17 counties that have signed to CAIPs," he said and added: "I want to confirm that some of them have developed very well and are almost at the tail end. About five are due to be commissioned."

CS Kinyanjui said the aggregation centres would provide facilities for grading, storage, packaging and marketing of commodities such as avocados and macadamia, while linking farmers directly to buyers and financial institutions.

"The idea behind the CAIPs is to make aggregation possible so that if it is an avocado or macadamia-growing area, we can have a place where they can be taken for grading, packed and stored," he said.

He also disclosed that the Government is strengthening the role of the Kenya National Trading Corporation in stabilising prices of essential commodities and cushioning Kenyans from rising living costs. The Cabinet had approved a framework to position the KNTC as the anchor of state initiatives to create a price stabiliser for essential products.

Government rules out revival of Changanwe refinery despite Kenya's oil plans

The Government has defended its decision not to revive the defunct Changanwe oil refinery, arguing that Kenya's expected crude oil production from Turkana will still fall far below levels required to sustain a commercially viable refinery.

Energy and Petroleum Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi told the Senate on Wednesday that economic realities had informed the State's decision to abandon refinery operations in Changanwe and instead support plans for a regional refinery in Tanga.

"A refinery business is a matter of commercial logic. Therefore, it must make commercial sense for one to undertake it," Mr Wandayi told Senators.

"Due to the economics, the refinery in Changanwe was found not to make business sense. That is why, as a matter of fact, operations at the facility were discontinued," he added.

The CS was responding to concerns raised by Senators over the future of Kenya's refining capacity amid plans to begin commercial oil production in South Lokichar before the end of the year.



Cabinet Secretary Opiyo Wandayi

CS Wandayi revealed that the Government had already undertaken groundbreaking activities in Lokichar and was confident the country would start commercially producing crude oil by the

close of 2026.

"For the first time, Kenya is going to commercially produce oil before the end of this year. We have gone through all the necessary processes. In the past two

weeks or so, I was in Lokichar to undertake groundbreaking for operations in that region."

However, the CS said the anticipated output from the Turkana oil fields would still be too low to sustain a local refinery. "At the beginning, we shall be producing about 20,000 barrels per day, which will progress to 50,000 barrels per day," he said.

The CS told the Senate that petroleum experts estimate that a refinery requires between 300,000 and 500,000 barrels per day to operate.

"Petroleum economists tell us that you need 300,000 to 500,000 barrels per day to run a refinery," he said.

The Cabinet Secretary said those economic considerations had informed the push for a larger regional refinery project in Tanga, which he said would serve several East African countries.

"That informs the reason, justification and the basis for the plan to establish a refinery in Tanga that will serve not only Kenya, but also serve the other neighbouring countries such as Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan," he said.

Senators support delisting miraa compounds from narcotics law



Senator Munyi Mundigi



Senator Kathuri Murungi

Senators have rallied behind a Bill seeking to remove miraa compounds from the list of psychotropic substances under the Kenyan law.

During debate on the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances (Control) (Amendment) Bill, 2024, the lawmakers argued that the move would protect thousands of farmers and unlock value-added opportunities for the crop.

The Bill, sponsored by Senator Kathuri Murungi, seeks to delist cathinone and cathine — substances naturally found in miraa — from classification as psychotropic substances under the Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Control Act.

Senator Murungi defended miraa as a legitimate cash crop that sustains hundreds of thousands of livelihoods, especially in Meru and Embu regions. “Miraa is an important cash crop in Kenya. It is estimated to grow in an area covering 22,000 hectares of land and benefits more than 500,000 people, either directly or indirectly,” he told the House.

The senator said the crop previously contributed Sh7.2 billion to Kenya’s Gross Domestic Product before restric-

tions in some foreign markets affected exports.

He argued that the continued classification of cathinone and cathine as narcotics contradicted government policy that recognises miraa as a scheduled crop under the Crops Act, 2013.

“The Government is planning to give miraa farmers a budget while another arm of Government is trying to control and say that miraa is a drug. We have that contradiction,” he said.

Senator Murungi cited a 2006 report by the World Health Organisation Expert Committee on Drug Dependence, which concluded that the threat posed by miraa did not warrant international control.

He further argued that the classification had frustrated efforts to commercialise miraa products, including miraa wine, juice and tea bags, because manufacturers could not secure certification from the Kenya Bureau of Standards.

“There is a lot of research going on at the Meru University of Science and Technology and other institutions. There is miraa wine, miraa juice and miraa tea bags. However, these institutions have been unable to market these products

because they are not getting licensed,” he said.

Senator Samson Cherarkey described miraa farming as a major economic activity whose protection should be treated the same way the government protects maize, coffee, rice and sugarcane farmers.

“We must defend miraa farmers just as we defend rice farmers in Mwea, maize farmers in Uasin Gishu and Nandi, sugarcane farmers in western Kenya and coffee farmers in Murang’a and Kiambu,” he said.

Senator Cherarkey said nearly 1.5 million livelihoods depend on miraa and noted that Kenya produces approximately 32,000 tonnes annually valued at about Sh12 billion.

“This amendment is important. Psychotropic substances interfere with the central nervous system and miraa was wrongly classified. History now gives us a chance to correct this and stand with miraa farmers,” he said.

Senator Munyi Mundigi backed the Bill arguing that every region in Kenya depends on different agricultural products arguing that miraa farmers should

not be discriminated against.

He compared miraa farming to maize, sugarcane, coffee and fish farming across various counties.

Senators repeatedly framed the Bill as a struggle between public health regulation and economic survival for farmers in the miraa-growing regions.

Senator Murungi urged colleagues to support what he termed a long-overdue correction of a legal contradiction.

“It is only fair and just to the farmers and the manufacturers of miraa products to have the components of miraa, cathine and cathinone, removed from the ambit of the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control Act,” he said.

He argued that banning miraa would devastate farmers in Meru and Embu just as restrictions on macadamia or coffee would hurt growers in Central Kenya. “If growing of macadamia was banned in Murang’a, Kirinyaga, Kiambu, Meru and Embu, where would farmers go? This is the same thing with miraa,” he said.

Methane pollution threatens Kenya's future - Experts



Clerk of the Senate Jeremiah Nyegenye speaks during the dialogue on Methane emissions in Kenya at Parliament Buildings.



Some of the guests who attended the meeting on dialogue on methane emissions in Kenya at Parliament Buildings.

Parliament has been urged to take a leading role in climate management and environmental conservation as experts warn that rising methane emissions continue to pose a serious threat to Kenya's economy, agriculture and public health.

Development partners and climate stakeholders made the appeal during a Media Breakfast Dialogue on Methane Emissions in Kenya, where speakers stressed that lawmakers have a critical responsibility in ensuring the implementation of policies and legislation aimed at reducing pollution and mitigating climate change.

Speaking during the forum, Dr Sheila Aggarwal, Director of the Industry and Economic Division at the United Nations Environment Programme, said methane pollution has already had devastating effects on the country, particularly on agricultural production and human health. She called on Parliament to provide strong leadership by implementing measures that would safeguard the environment and shield the country from the devastating effects of climate change.

Dr Aggarwal noted that climate action should not only be viewed as an envi-

ronmental obligation but also as an economic opportunity capable of improving livelihoods and driving sustainable development.

"Reduction of methane emissions can lead to economic redemption in the country and globally," noted Dr Aggarwal, even as she observed that failure to address methane emissions could worsen food insecurity, increase health complications and expose millions of Kenyans to climate-related disasters such as droughts and floods.

Mr Anderson from the Centre for International Forestry Research and the International Centre for Research in Agroforestry emphasised that decisions made by policymakers today would significantly shape the future of climate action.

He warned that Kenya remains highly vulnerable to the effects of climate change and called for a united approach among government institutions, Parliament, development partners and the private sector to ensure effective implementation of emission reduction measures.

According to Dr Anderson, pollution continues to claim thousands of lives annually. Statistics from 2019 showed that approximately 5,000 deaths were re-

corded in Kenya as a result of pollution, while globally the figure stood at about 1.1 million.

He cautioned that unless urgent interventions are undertaken, the number of pollution-related deaths in Kenya could rise sharply to 25,000 by the year 2050.

The climate expert therefore appealed to Members of Parliament to support policies and programmes aimed at reducing pollution and promoting sustainable environmental management practices across the country.

Mr Michael Lwoyelo, Managing Director of Regen Organics, said the growing challenge of organic waste disposal has become a major climate issue requiring urgent intervention.

He explained that poor management of organic waste has significantly contributed to greenhouse gas emissions, worsening climate change and increasing the occurrence of floods, disease outbreaks and other environmental disasters.

Mr Lwoyelo stressed the need for collaboration between Parliament, government agencies, private sector players and environmental stakeholders in order to ensure compliance with environmental regulations and sustainability measures.

He further urged lawmakers to carefully assess environmental implications before approving development projects and to support initiatives aimed at promoting adherence to environmental standards.

Their submissions were echoed by Dr Claudia Arndt of the International Livestock Research Institute, who emphasised the urgent need to implement practical interventions to conserve the environment and reduce methane emissions, which she said have a far greater warming effect than carbon dioxide despite remaining in the atmosphere for a shorter period. This, she noted, makes methane one of the most dangerous greenhouse gases contributing to global warming.

She appealed to all stakeholders to embrace measures aimed at reducing methane emissions and called upon the media to play a frontline role in educating the public on the importance of environmental conservation. Dr Arndt further challenged Parliament to work closely with climate stakeholders in addressing the numerous environmental and health challenges arising from pollution and climate change.

Senator Faki calls for action on methane emissions



Senator Faki addresses participants during the meeting on dialogue on methane emissions in Kenya at Parliament Buildings

Parliament has been challenged to convert growing discussions on methane emissions into concrete policy action, with legislators and media practitioners urged to play a more active role in advancing Kenya's climate commitments.

Speaking at the close of the Parliament Media Breakfast Dialogue on Methane Emissions, Senator Mohamed Faki said the country's climate ambitions would only be realised through stronger coordination among key institutions and a deliberate focus on implementation.

The Senator said the dialogue had underscored methane mitigation as one of the most urgent, yet often overlooked, aspects of Kenya's climate response, noting that its impact extends beyond environmental protection to economic stability, governance and the livelihoods of ordinary citizens.

Methane is considered one of the most dangerous greenhouse gases driving climate change because it traps significantly more heat in the atmosphere than carbon dioxide over a shorter period. Scientists say methane is responsible for

nearly a third of global warming experienced today, contributing to rising temperatures, prolonged droughts, floods, food insecurity and extreme weather patterns that continue to affect vulnerable communities across the world, including Kenya. Major sources of methane emissions include agriculture, waste disposal sites, fossil fuel production and livestock farming.

"Today's discussions have reaffirmed that methane, though less visible in public discourse, remains central to our climate agenda and to the wellbeing of our citizens," said Faki during an event held at Parliament Buildings.

He noted that tackling methane emissions would require a united approach involving Parliament, the Executive, County Governments, the Private Sector, Development Partners and the Media.

"Progress will not come through isolated interventions, but through how effectively these institutions align their efforts towards a shared national objective," he said.

Senator Faki, who chairs the Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources, challenged Parliament to strengthen its legislative and oversight mandate to ensure climate pledges translate into measurable outcomes at both

national and county levels.

He also placed the media at the heart of the climate conversation, saying journalists must move beyond reporting events to becoming strategic partners in public awareness and accountability.

"By making methane visible through accurate, accessible and sustained reporting, the media helps bridge the gap between policy decisions and citizens' everyday experiences," he said, adding that the outcomes from the dialogue would feed into Kenya's preparations for an upcoming regional Parliamentary engagement on methane, expected to deepen continental cooperation on climate action.

The breakfast meeting brought together Members of Parliament drawn from both Houses ahead of the forthcoming regional seminar on methane to be hosted by the Parliament of Kenya in Nairobi from May 15 to 16, with a field visit scheduled for May 17.

The continental forum is expected to convene legislators from across Africa to explore how Parliaments can strengthen climate governance, reduce methane emissions and advance sustainable development across the continent.

This Week in History - On Tuesday, May 14, 2019

Senators protest enactment and assent of Health Bill, 2018



Leader of Majority Kipchumba Murkomen

Leader of Majority Kipchumba Murkomen rose on a point of order on an issue he said was in the public domain. Some members of the National Assembly questioned the mandate of the Senate and purported that the House has no mandate to invite certain Cabinet Secretaries (CSs). "Some CSs have taken that as the gospel truth. I have heard that some of the MPs are masquerading to be legal advisors determining the standard and mandate of this House," he said in his point of order. "Let it be known to the public, CSs, and everybody in this nation that they cannot define the mandate of the Senate because it is already defined in the Constitution. Whereas our colleagues in the National Assembly were discussing the laws that this House can make, it is true that we are in a mediation process with them in more than five Bills. This is an acknowledgment of the fact that they respect the jurisdiction and mandate of this House." He added: "There is no single CS who can ignore any invitation by this House, including the summons of the Senate. I am glad that there are some CSs who understand their responsibility and take it seriously. However, those who feel that their ego is too big for this House should quit their positions so that the President can appoint other people to serve in those positions who respect the institutions of Parliament, including the Senate." He said the Senate will not bow to any pressure, concern or madness from any CS. "We will summon CSs to come to the Committees of this House and to enlighten this House on various issues. The only limited jurisdiction that we have been given is in so far as Bills that concern counties."



Senator Moses Wetangula said:

"Under Schedule 4 of the Constitution, health is 95 per cent devolved. The national Government has only policy and referral hospitals, which are only five in number. To imagine that the National Assembly can pass a Bill relating to health and take it to the President for assent is a very serious assault on the Constitution in general and this House in particular. I believe that somebody somewhere is not advising the President according to the Constitution and this House must voice this very strongly. If you want to follow the precedence of your predecessor; Hon. Speaker Ekwee Ethuro, when confronted with such a situation, led this entire House to the Supreme Court for an advisory opinion and the Supreme Court ruled in our favor. I want to urge that you also do not allow the books of history to be distorted against you to the extent that you are the Speaker who presided over the Senate when it was degenerating to its weakest level in the legislation of this country. We must act in unison, collectively with resolve and, above all, with the strength that this House enjoys from the Constitution. That Bill as assented to, does not enjoy the force of law envisaged under the Constitution and is not capable of obedience.



Senator Fred Outa said:

"The Majority Leader has tried to advise the Cabinet Secretary (CS) and people who do not want to obey summons by this House. This is also extended to the Council of Governors (CoGs) who have made a declaration on the roadside that governors should not appear before the Senate. The Chairperson of the CoGs is an experienced person who has been a Member of Parliament (MP) and a Minister. Therefore, he understands the Standing Orders and the Constitution. He cannot tell the governors not to appear before the County Public Accounts and Investments Committee. We want the governors to know that this House is given a mandate to oversight them. For example, we know how money is mismanaged in some of those counties. That is why we are giving them a warning that any governor who will fail to appear before this House, the rules and the Constitution are clear that this House stands equivalent to the High Court. We demand that if they fail to appear, they be locked in chains and brought before this House."



Senator Mutula Kilonzo Junior said::

"The Senate is under attack. There is an attack from the CoGs where they say they will not come to the Senate. There is an attack from the Executive where they call the Senate Majority Leader for a photo opportunity, and yourself, Mr. Speaker, sir, where they are signing Bills that concern counties. The National Assembly is throwing bricks and bats at us every time we amend a law as if we are not supposed to amend it. Senator Wetangula is right. We must stand up for something or something. Otherwise, there is no business of being in this Senate. I hope that we can precipitate a small crisis. The Mining Bill came to the Senate as a result of a serious protest by this House. It was such a serious protest. Is there a way you can find out when some of these things are taken to the House on the Hill so that we can deal with them? We should know how the Health Bill went through the First Reading, Second Reading, public participation, Third Reading and on to State House where you accompanied it and all of you were ambushed

Senate tightens Climate Fund oversight amid implementation concerns



Senator Jackson Mandago speaks during the retreat as Senator Crystal Asige listens.



Senator Mariam Omar at the retreat.



Senator Issa Juma Boy speaks at the retreat in Naivasha.

The Senate has intensified its oversight of the climate financing programmes amid concerns over uneven implementation of county projects funded under the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) initiative.

Senators say there is need for stronger accountability and coordinated oversight to ensure climate financing delivers tangible benefits to communities across the country.

Speaking during the Multi-Committee Oversight and Strategic Alignment Workshop on Financing Locally Led Climate Action, Senator Mohamed Faki said the Senate remains committed to ensuring climate financing translates into measurable, equitable and sustainable outcomes for wananchi at the grassroots level.

“FLLoCA programme remains one of Kenya’s key initiatives for localising climate action by helping counties build resilience against climate risks while strengthening institutional capacity at both county and national levels,” said Senator Faki, the chair of the Committee on Lands, Environment and Natural Resources.

The workshop was held in Naivasha under the theme: “Aligning Accountability: The Power of Coordinated Oversight for Lasting Impact.”

The workshop brought together Senators, representatives from the National Treasury, members of the Parliamentary Caucus on Climate Action, development partners and other stakeholders to strengthen accountability and coordination in climate financing programmes.

The meeting was convened to address persistent implementation challenges, including delays in disbursement of funds, compliance concerns, weak reporting mechanisms and gaps in accountability as Senators also raised concerns over the lack of consolidated county-by-county performance data on FLLoCA projects, which has complicated coordinated oversight efforts.

In May 2025, Parliamentarians resolved to conduct an inquiry into the implementation status of county projects financed through FLLoCA conditional allocations after noting varying levels of progress among counties.

The inquiry is reviewing budgetary allocations and expenditure since the 2022/2023 Financial Year, project outputs and outcomes, lessons learned and implementation challenges with the aim of improving programme delivery.

As part of its oversight mandate, the Senate has already engaged county governments including Bungoma, Kitui,

Turkana, Trans Nzoia, Kericho, Nyan-darua, Nandi, Kwale, Kilifi and Migori to seek clarification on key implementation issues.

Senators have also raised concern over the state of accountability in the implementation of the Financing Locally Led Climate Action (FLLoCA) programme after the National Treasury disclosed that only 20 counties attained unqualified audit reports, while 25 received qualified opinions due to financial and procedural shortcomings.

Nairobi and Mombasa received adverse audit opinions, making them ineligible for continued FLLoCA funding until the audit concerns are addressed.

National Treasury officials clarified that the two cities had initially not been prioritised under FLLoCA because they were already benefiting from other World Bank-supported urban programmes, in addition to delays in putting in place the legislative and institutional frameworks required under FLLoCA.

Senators warned that the continued suspension of funding could negatively affect critical climate-related interventions, with Nairobi already facing mounting challenges in garbage collection, waste management and the restoration of the Nairobi River, raising fears

of a worsening environmental and public health crisis in the two counties.

The workshop also sought to strengthen parliamentary oversight through a coordinated, evidence-based and multi-committee approach anchored under Article 96 of the Constitution, which mandates the Senate to oversee national revenue allocated to county governments.

Senator Okiya Omtatah called for a shift from what he described as an “NGO-style” approach in the disbursement of FLLoCA to a more business-oriented model that prioritises accountability and returns on investment.

He argued that since the programme is financed through government borrowing, the funds should be treated as public investments capable of generating long-term value for communities rather than merely supporting expenditure-driven projects.

“We must move away from the NGO mentality where money is simply spent without measurable returns. This is borrowed public money, and Kenyans will repay it. FLLoCA funds should therefore be invested in projects that create value, strengthen communities and deliver a clear return on investment,” said Senator Omtatah.

Seneta Khalwale ataka majibu kuhusu ardhi ya Otiende



Seneta Mohamed Chute

Seneta Boni Khalwale ameibua wasiwasi kuhusu mgogoro wa ardhi katika Mji wa Kakamega unaohusisha mtaa wa Otiende na ardhi ya umma inayotumiwa na shule ya Fesbeth Academy.

Kupitia ombi la Kauli kwa Kamati ya Ardhi, Mazingira na Maliasili, Khalwale ametaka uchunguzi wa kina kufanywa kuhusu umilisi wa ardhi hiyo, ukubwa wake pamoja na hatimiliki zinazohusiana na maeneo hayo mawili.

Seneta huyo ametaka Kamati hiyo kubaini iwapo ardhi inayotumiwa na Fesbeth Academy iliamishwa, ilikodishwa au kutolewa kwa njia halali kwa taasisi hiyo au kwa mwekezaji yeyote binafsi, pamoja na kufafanua taratibu zote za kisheria na kiutawala zilizofuatwa.

Aidha, ametaka maelezo kuhusu iwa-

po kulikuwa na idhini kutoka kwa Serikali ya Kaunti ya Kakamega, Bunge la Kaunti pamoja na Tume ya Taifa ya Ardhi kabla ya mabadiliko yoyote ya matumizi ya ardhi hiyo kufanyika.

Seneta Khalwale pia amehoji iwapo wananchi walishirikishwa katika maamuzi hayo, akitaka ripoti za ushirikishwaji wa umma, sajili za waliohudhuria pamoja na kumbukumbu za mikutano iliyofanyika.

Vilevile, ametaka kubainishwa msingi uliotumika kugawa takribani ekari mbili kutoka eneo la Otiende ambalo sasa linaelezwa kuwa linawekewa uzio kwa matumizi ya Fesbeth Academy.

Seneta huyo pia ametaka kufahamu aina ya maslahi yanayoshikiliwa na wamiliki wa Fesbeth Academy katika ardhi hiyo na iwapo maslahi hayo yanamilikiwa binafsi, kwa pamoja au kupitia taasisi



Seneta Boni Khalwale

nyingine zinazohusishwa na shule hiyo.

“Ni muhimu ukweli wote uwekwe wazi ili kulinda ardhi ya umma na kuhakikisha sheria zimefuatwa,” alisisitiza Seneta Khalwale.

Huku hayo yakijiri, Seneta Mohamed Chute ameomba hatua za haraka kuchukuliwa kurekebisha barabara zilizo haribiwa na mvua kubwa katika Kaunti ya Marsabit.

Kupitia ombi lake kwa Kamati ya Barabara, Uchukuzi na Makazi, Seneta Chute amesema mvua zinazoendelea zimesababisha uharibifu mkubwa wa miundombinu ya barabara na kufanya baadhi ya maeneo kutofikika kirahisi.

Ametaja barabara zilizoathirika zaidi kuwa ni Odda–Danaba, Nyayo ndani ya Marsabit Mjini, Uran, barabara ya kuelekea Loyangalani pamoja na Songa–Marsabit.

Seneta huyo amesema hali hiyo imeathiri shughuli za kiuchumi, huduma za afya, operesheni za kiusalama na utoaji wa misaada ya kibinadamu kwa wakazi wa maeneo hayo.

Seneta Chute ameitaka Serikali ya Ki-taifa, KeRRA, KURA pamoja na Serikali ya Kaunti ya Marsabit kueleza hatua za dharura zinazochukuliwa kurejesha upatikanaji wa barabara hizo na kuhakikisha usafiri unaendelea wakati huu wa mvua.

Aidha, ametaka tathmini ya haraka kufanywa kubaini kiwango cha uharibifu uliosababishwa na mvua pamoja na fedha zilizotengwa kwa ukarabati wa dharura.

“Serikali inapaswa kuchukua hatua za haraka kuokoa wananchi kutokana na changamoto zinazotokana na uharibifu wa barabara,” alisema Seneta Chute.

Kamati yaahirisha mchakato wa Kanuni za Ushirikiano wa serikali

Kamati ya Seneti kuhusu Sheria Andamizi inayoongozwa na Seneta Mwenda Gataya imeahirisha majadiliano kuhusu rasimu ya Kanuni za Ushirikiano kati ya Serikali za mwaka 2026 baada ya kuibua wasiwasi kuhusu baadhi ya vipengele vilivyomo kwenye Kanuni hizo.

Kamati hiyo ilikutana na Mkuu wa Mawaziri ambaye pia Waziri wa Mashauri ya Kigeni Musalia Mudavadi, ili kuchunguza rasimu hiyo pamoja na kupokea ufafanuzi kutoka kwa Wizara husika kuhusu namna Kanuni hizo zita-kavyotekelezwa.

Wakati wa kikao hicho, Maseneta walihoji baadhi ya vipengele vya rasimu hiyo na kuitaka Wizara kufanya mapitio zaidi pamoja na mashauriano ya kina kabla ya kurejea tena mbele ya kamati hiyo kwa majadiliano zaidi.



Seneta Mwenda Gataya, Mwenyekiti wa Kamati ya Sheria Andamizi.

Wanakamati walieleza kuwa rasimu hiyo bado inahitaji kuboreshwa ili kuhakikisha inazingatia matarajio ya Seneti pamoja na kushughulikia ipasavyo masuala yote ya kisheria na kiutawala yaliyoibuliwa na Maseneta.

Mwenyekiti Seneta Gataya, alisema Kamati haiwezi kuendelea kujadi-



Maseneta wanachama wa Kamati ya Sheria Andamizi, kuanzia kushoto, Seneta Mohamed Faki, Seneta Consolata Wakwabubi, Seneta Joyce Korir, Seneta Julius Murgor na Seneta Betty Montet

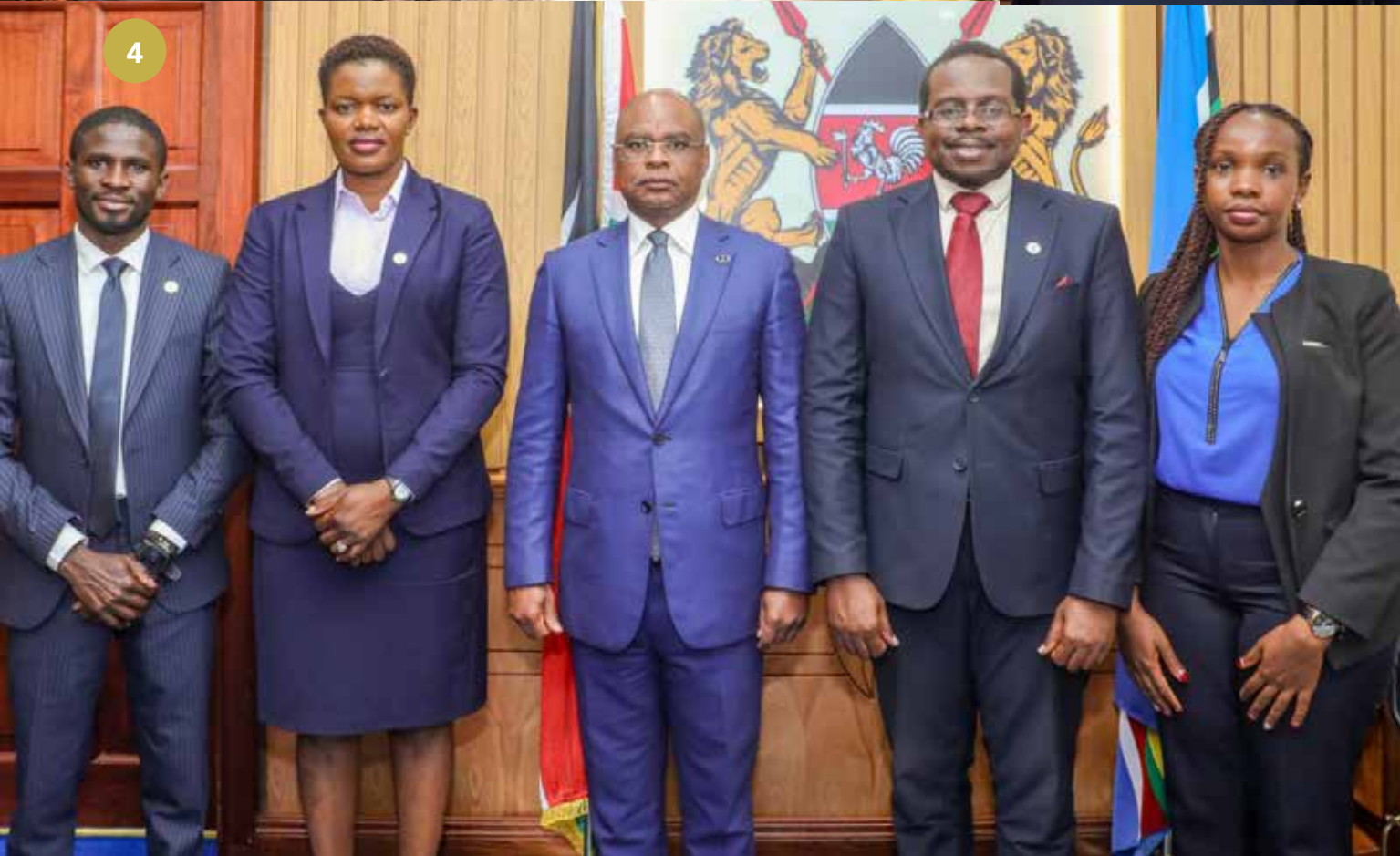
li kanuni hizo katika hali yake ya sasa, akisisitiza umuhimu wa kuipitia upya rasimu hiyo kabla ya hatua nyingine kuchukuliwa.

“Kamati imeamua kuwa Wizara irejeele rasimu hiyo na kushughulikia hoja zote zilizoibuliwa na wajumbe kabla ya kurejea kwa majadiliano zaidi,” alisema

Seneta Gataya.

Miongoni mwa wanachama wa Kamati hiyo waliohudhuria kikao hicho ni pamoja na Maseneta Joyce Korir, Mohammed Faki, Julius Murgor, Daniel Maanzo.

Betty Montet na Consolata Wakwabubi.



1. Speaker Amason Kingi leads Senators in commiserating with the family of Senator Richard Onyonka (in black T shirt) following the deaths of his mother. From left, Senator Joyce Korir, Senator Esther Okenyuri and Senator Catherine Mumma.
2. Speaker Kingi signs the Condolences at the residence of Senator Onyonka following the death of his mother.
3. Speaker Kingi and welcomes Mr Charles Kanjama, the Law Society of Kenya President to his office in Parliament Buildings. Mr Kanjama had led to the LSK Council for a courtesy call to the Speaker's office.
4. Speaker Kingi poses for a group photo with the LSK Council, led by President Charles Kanjama.



1. Senator Lelegwe Ltembesi and other guests follow proceedings during the Parliament Media Breakfast Dialogue on Methane emissions at Parliament Buildings.
2. Senator Beatrice Ogola speaks during the Parliament Media Breakfast Dialogue on Methane emissions.
3. Majority Whip David Wakoli and the Clerk of the Senate Jeremiah Nyegenye during the breakfast meeting.
4. Senators who attended the Multi-Committee Oversight and Strategic Alignment Workshop on Financing Locally Led Climate Action in Naivasha, Naku-ru County.
5. Leaders of Youth groups in Muranga County follow Senate proceedings from the Speaker's Gallery. They were in the Senate at the invitation of Senator Joe Nyutu.
6. Students from Masai Mara University follow Senate proceedings during their academic tour of Parliament Buildings.



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