

Tuesday, 5th June, 2018 COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF SIAYA DEBATES

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

SIAYA COUNTY ASSEMBLY

THE HANSARD

Second County Assembly-Second session

Tuesday, 5th June, 2018

The House met at the County Assembly Chamber at 2.30p.m.

[The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Fredric Opanga) in the Chair]

PRAYER

NOTICE OF MOTION

TREE PLANTING

Hon. Oor: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I beg to move a Notice of the following Motion:

Aware that the trees have Ecological and Environmental value, trees contribute to the environment by providing oxygen, improving air quality, climate amelioration, conserving water, preserving soil, and supporting wildlife.

Further aware that Urbanization, pollution, and other related activities have contributed to environmental hazards, global warming, and depletion of the planet's resources, trees are the largest of all land plants, and act as a kind of environmental buffer for the ecosystem they dominate.

Noting that Siaya County as a whole has a lower percentage of 0.42 percent tree coverage compared to the Country's coverage which is at Seven percent,

Concerned that there has been a minimal effort to plant trees in Siaya County despite the fact that studies have indicated that as a County, we are really doing badly when it comes to forest cover rate.

Noting that there is need to provide for environmental management policy with a bias on tree planting which should be made mandatory.

This House resolves that the citizens be encouraged to plant trees and further that the County Executive to endeavor to budget for tree planting in the Financial Year 2018/2019 Budget Estimates.

MOTION
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Further aware that Urbanization, pollution, and other related activities have contributed to environmental hazards, global warming, and depletion of the planet's resources, trees are the largest of all land plants, and act as a kind of environmental buffer for the ecosystem they dominate.

Noting that Siaya County as a whole has a lower percentage of 0.42 percent tree coverage compared to the Country's coverage which is at Seven percent, Concerned that there has been a minimal effort to plant trees in Siaya County despite the fact that studies have indicated that as a County, we are really doing badly when it comes to forest cover rate.

Noting that there is need to provide for environmental management policy with a bias on tree planting which should be made mandatory. This House resolves that the citizens be encouraged to plant trees and further that the County Executive to endeavor to budget for tree planting in the Financial Year 2018/2019 Budget Estimates.

As I am continuing, on 12th May, 2018, we had a National tree planting exercise launch at the National level, and we would request the County Executive through the department of environment and natural resources to have the exercise devolved at the County level by donating tree seedlings and trees to all Primary Schools, also to the Youths and women Groups.

The importance of this exercise will enhance the livelihoods by enhancing new products that add to the diversity and the flexibility of the farming enterprise, such as honey, fruits, herbs and firewood. We all know that our County rely heavily on Agriculture and this initiative will help in improving the Climate conditions across the County with possibility of increasing rainfall distribution which is important in farming activities.

There will be improved environmental resilience of Siaya County that provides the required environmental services. It will resolve to improve access to timber products, furniture and industry. May I call upon Hon. Shirley to Second?

Hon. Oyuago: I second.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Juma: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to welcome all the Members to the House, and I want to thank the Majority Leader for bringing up the Motion of tree planting in our County. First of all, right now we are experiencing a lot of rain, not because of the trees we have in Siaya, it may be due to change of climate that has just occurred.

As we all know, we really need trees, so that any time that we need to do agriculture, we really need the rains, and we all know that trees attract rain. Thanks to the fresh air that you

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breathe even here in the Assembly, and I am also proud of whoever planted the trees around the Assembly area, because we know that for us to get this fresh air, we really need these trees, leave alone the beauty that they add around any facility or any building, or any beautification that we need in our County, we really need these trees.

Let me not forget to say that we really need these trees, that when you cut one, you plant two. I want to support this Motion because, when we see these beautiful chairs and tables that we sit on, is because of the beautiful trees that were planted, I don't know by who?

I want to say that we have idle youths in our County who sit around doing nothing, so that every time they see a politician, they say *gonya*, I don't know how to say *gonyain* English, just allow me to speak in that language, Mr. Speaker Sir.

When we engage our youths in planting trees, I believe that they will get something that will make them be meaningful in the Society. So I want to encourage all the Members to support this Motion because trees bring life, trees bring rain, and you know agriculture in the real sense is the backbone of every Economy, I support.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes, Hon. Willis.

Hon. Ochieng: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir; for having given me this chance. First I want to congratulate our able Majority Leader for having considered Siaya County, a County that should have 10% tree coverage as in the forest Act and law that are guiding us pertaining to the forestry in our Country.

We all know that trees are a source of life, wealth and health and as a matter of accounting we must encourage our government to make sure that the 10% tree cover is done within the County and apart from that, trees don't just give the oxygen but also a source of wealth creation and as a matter of fact we should be starting this in our homes by planting tree fruits.

These are just trees that provide fruits and at the same time it will be improving the nutritional value to our community; which means that as much as we will be eating the fruits, some will be sold and money will be earned. Siaya produces all the horticulture e.g. mangoes, oranges, avocados.

As a County if we can initiate such kinds of programmes then we will be creating jobs for our youth. This kind of activity if implemented by County government will be like a retirement benefit to our own parents who are back at home. They will be harvesting the fruits from the trees and this will be a good initiative that if implemented can go well.

First, as a County, apart from just allocating monies to be purchasing the seedlings, I think our natural resource department should do a study and advise us on the best trees that should be planted within the County.

Secondly, because there will be some trees planted in a shamba you can't do any agricultural work in that area and how to control pests and diseases because if at all they will budgeting monies to implement minus educating the citizens on how to take care of these trees will be a waste. A number of people have planted trees that haven't done well and that they need

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to be educated and encouraged to be planting more trees after the technocrats shall have advised the common person.

I support this Motion and how I wish we support this Motion and immediately this communication is taken to the Executive so that it be considered for FY- 2018/2019 and we are in the process of scrutinizing this budget and I think it's the right time to be considered. I support and thank you very much.

Hon. Oyugi: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir; first I would like to appreciate the Mover of the Motion on bringing such an important Motion to the House. The importance of trees cannot be understated, as we all know trees are very important especially for maintaining a proper environment and a healthy climate. For us to maintain our climate we need to plant trees.

Secondly, in order to attract rains we need to have trees and for prevention of soil erosion. As we know agriculture is very important and we need our soils to be maintained. Trees also act as homes to wildlife. We also have to think of our future generation; for us to gift them with a good environment and also agricultural land we need to have trees. Therefore I would encourage all our Hon. Members to support the Motion so that we surpass the target of 10% in Siaya County and with those few remarks I support the Motion.

Hon. E. Odawa: I must commend the majority leader for coming up with a very good Motion and actually every one of us here knows the benefit of trees and I don't want to go into details like in primary level. If we really want to see this Motion implemented, let's come up with some incentives that within Siaya County we can encourage people to have tree gardens and for every person who plants 2000 trees will be given some money and we will see the benefits.

About planting trees is an old song which has been sung from even the days of our second President Moi. Let's try to have some incentives for us to encourage our people and we will see an increase in the forest cover. Otherwise I support this Motion, thank you.

Hon. Wandera: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir; I wish to remind this House that I am the only Mister in this House. It reminds me of days of Sir Charles Njonjo; when everybody was Honorable but Njonjo was referred to as Sir Charles Njonjo. I am also referred to as Mr. Wandera apart from Hon. Wandera.

I support this Motion; one point which has not been touched is that trees also act as windbreakers. To protect our buildings and infrastructure; there is really need to plant more trees. I have vast experience because I have stayed in two regions in this Country compared to the regions bordering western province and the regions along the lakeshore.

I discovered that the regions within the lakeshore only plant trees during the long rainy seasons but during the short ones they don't plant because of little rain. When trees are vast there will be no need for irrigation because this will naturally attract rain and there will be enough provision for agriculture and other purposes.

If the programme takes off in 2018/19, it will empower the youth groups which have established tree nursery for seedlings. As we plant trees, the groups will also be empowered. It should also not be forgotten that trees are crops because they can also be sold out. I support this Motion.

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Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon. Jane!

Hon. Atieno: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker. I commend the Majority Leader for bringing up this Motion. Trees are very important in our lives. During the old days we used to use trees as medicine so in most cases we didn't have to go to hospital to get medicine. We have really abused our environment.

These days our children get sick and the old mamas like me can't even go into the bush and get those herbs to come and cure them. We should encourage planting of trees especially in our schools. The students will bring back those activities home and plant trees. During funerals these days, we use tents, we sweat in there but during the old days people were sitting under the trees, we had fresh air.

We have abused our environment and it is high time we started working on that. A home with trees is more beautiful than a home with no trees. We are now using bricks to fence, why can't we use trees?

With trees, the children can't go hungry because there are fruits growing on trees. With trees we will have more guests like tourists because with trees we will have more birds. So I support the Motion, I think it is very important we plant more trees around our environment. Thank you.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon. Adala!

Hon. Adala: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker. The Motion before us is very important. Hon. Members have been able to articulate the importance of trees. It reminds me when I was in class Six, when we had debates like a teacher is better than a doctor.

Having said that, I think the points have been exhausted and the mood of this House is such that we holistically support this Motion and if we want to move ahead as a County we must avoid this culture of talking, we should adopt instead culture of working. The more we talk the more rains will go before us planting these trees. I request that you invite the mover to reply.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon. Adala, this is a House of making laws and every Hon. Member has a right to contribute. We are not chasing the rains, we are making laws that will protect those rains. I believe Hon. Members are free to contribute and I will give Four Members a chance to contribute.

Hon. Ousa: Thank you very much, Mr. Temporary Speaker, for having given me this chance to contribute to this Motion. The only thing that I want to put is that before I came into this world, there must have been better trees than we have right now.

My reasoning is what has happened for us to complain that there are no trees and there is land? We are all aware that agriculture is fully devolved and we must have good policies that will protect planting of trees. The trees are constantly destroyed. Before I came to this Assembly, I went to Baringo and I realized that in Baringo there is a special tree planted for burning charcoal. When we are discussing the idea of planting of trees, let us also introduce the trees that will be used in burning charcoal. We cannot lie to ourselves that all the trees that we are now going to plant will not be destroyed. The species that are in Baringo, I suggest that we introduce such trees in Siaya.

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Another point that I wanted to bring is, when we are planning to plant trees we will use water and in Siaya there are places where rains come once in a season. We have land owned by the County Government which is near to the lakes, let's make use of the land because water that will be used to plant trees is in the lake. Thank you.

Hon. E. Odawa: Thank you so much, Mr. Temporary Speaker. First and foremost I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the mover of this Motion, our very able Majority Leader. We have to realize that ---is not about the importance of trees because everyone knows the importance of trees.

The issue here is improvement of forestry cover. Hon. Members, you will realize that from the time power saws came to our land that is when the rains started beating us. I would like to suggest to the mover of the Motion that if you would have included means and ways for us to find mandatory licenses for owners of power saws which basically should be prohibited. They must pay some money to the County Government. The County Government should also have a database of all the power saw owners in Siaya County and we limit the number of power saws.

Another observation, the mover would have suggested that the County Government should have a policy whereby we encourage our children in all our schools that they plant Five trees in every rainy season of which Siaya County has only Two. The County Government should have enough stock of seedlings so that we have Ten trees per student per year.

It is important for the County Government to devolve tree nurseries of their own and invest in skills manpower. During the holidays people were sitting under trees. There was fresh air. We have really abused our environment and it is high time we started working on that. The beauty of trees in our homes; a home where there are no trees even if you build beautiful houses it doesn't look that beautiful but with trees it will look good. Now we are using bricks for fencing why can't we use trees?

With trees the children didn't go hungry because there were always fruits. They would go looking after cows but they didn't have to go hungry because there were a lot of fruits. We need to encourage planting more trees in our environment to improve the fresh air and the water we use.

The birds are also disappearing because we don't have trees. With trees we will have more tourists coming for bird watching because with the trees there will be birds to watch. I support the Motion. Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes, Hon. Adala.

Hon. Adala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Motion before us is quite an important one and the points have been well espoused by the Mover of the Motion, Hon. Odero and I am aligned to all the contributions that have been made to the extent that Members of this House have been able to articulate so much the importance of trees.

It reminds me when I was in class Six when we would have debate of "a teacher is better than a doctor". We would explain that a teacher is better because a teacher is paid a little salary but has got so many kids while a doctor is paid a lot but has got only one kid. A teacher is better than a doctor because he takes care of so many children.

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Having said that, it is simple logistic that the points have been exhausted and the mood of this House is such that we holistically support this Motion. If we want to move ahead as a County we must avoid this culture of talking. We should adopt more the culture of working. The more we talk the more rains will go before us planting these trees.

I request you invite the Mover to reply.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Hon. Adala, this is a House of rules and every Hon. Member has a right to contribute. We are not chasing the rains, we are making laws that will protect those rains. I believe Hon. Members are free to contribute. I will give four Members a chance then we close the Motion.

Yes Hon. Simeon Ousa.

Hon. Ousa: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, for giving me the chance to contribute to this Motion. I think all the importance of trees has been mentioned but I have different reasoning on the importance of planting trees.

Before we came into the existence of this world there must have been more trees better than the way they are now but what has happened that we are complaining that the land is now bare. There are no trees at all. Why are there no trees?

As we are aware that agriculture is now fully devolved to the County Government. If you want this to be successful there must be good policies that will protect the planting of trees. These trees are constantly being destroyed.

Sometimes back before I came to this Assembly I went to Baringo and realized there is a special tree that is planted there for burning charcoal. I put it to this House that by the time we are discussing the idea of improving planting of trees somebody came up with the idea that there should be research done so that we know the type of trees that should be planted on specific areas.

When that is done let us also introduce trees that will be used in burning charcoal because we can't cheat ourselves that all the trees that we are now going to plant will not be destroyed as the ones that we found had been destroyed. I suggest that we also introduce such types of trees to be planted in Siaya so that instead of us burning charcoal of trees that are very important to us then we have alternative trees for providing charcoal.

When we are planning to plant trees we use water and in Siaya we have got some places that have got only one season of rainfall but we have some lands next to the lakes that belongs to the County Government at first it belonged to the local authority. We should actually make use of these lands because the water that will be used in planting trees is just there.

As it has been said by Hon. Adala the points that we are now bringing forth are just the same. Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes Engineer Eric Odawa.

Hon. Odawa: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the Mover of this Motion our very able Majority Leader Hon. Odera Oor. The question here is not the importance of trees because that one can't be understated we know the importance of trees and going by the contribution of the Hon. Members everyone

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recognizes the importance of trees. During the holidays people were sitting under trees. There was fresh air. We have really abused our environment and it is high time we start working on that. The beauty of trees in our homes, a home where there are no trees even if you build beautiful houses it doesn't look that beautiful but with trees it will look good. Now we are using bricks for fencing why can't we use trees?

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The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes, Hon. Adala.

Hon. Adala: Thank you, Mr. Speaker, Sir. The Motion before us is quite an important one and the points have been well espoused by the Mover of the Motion Hon. Odero and I am aligned to all the contributions that have been made to the extent that Members of this House have been able to articulate so much the importance of trees.

It reminds me when I was in class 6 when we would have debate of "a teacher is better than a doctor". We would explain that a teacher is better because a teacher is paid a little salary but has got so many kids while a doctor is paid a lot but has got only one kid. A teacher is better than a doctor because he takes care of so many children.

Having said that, it is simple logistic that the points have been exhausted and the mood of this House is such that we holistically support this Motion. If we want to move ahead as a County we must avoid this culture of talking. We should adopt more the culture of working. The more we talk the more rains will go before us planting these trees.

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As we are aware that agriculture is now fully devolved to the County Government. If you want this to be successful there must be good policies that will protect the planting of trees. These trees are constantly being destroyed.

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When that is done let us also introduce trees that will be used in burning charcoal because we can't cheat ourselves that all the trees that we are now going to plant will not be destroyed as the ones that we found had been destroyed. I suggest that we also introduce such types of trees to be planted in Siaya so that instead of us burning charcoal of trees that are very important to us then we have alternative trees for providing charcoal.

When we are planning to plant trees we use water and in Siaya we have got some places that have got only one season of rainfall but we have some lands next to the lakes that belongs to the County Government at first it belonged to the local authority. We should actually make use of these lands because the water that will be used in planting trees is just there.

As it has been said by Hon. Adala the points that we are now bringing forth are just the same. Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes, Engineer Eric Odawa.

Hon. Odawa: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker, Sir, I would like to take this opportunity to appreciate the Mover of this Motion, our very able Majority Leader, Hon. Odera Oor. The question here is not the importance of trees because that one can't be understated. We know the importance of trees and going by the contribution of the Hon. Members, everyone recognizes the importance of trees. The issue here is the improvement of forest cover. Members, you realize that from the time when power saw came into our land that's when rain started beating us. 1. I would like to suggest to the Mover of the Motion that if you would have included means and ways to find mandatory licenses for power saw owners so that they pay some money to the County Government.

2. The County Government should also have a data base of those power saw owners in Siaya County and limit the number of power saws within Siaya such that we reduce the possibility of bringing down trees because apart from planting trees if we plant many trees and bring them in the same measure or at a higher volume then we will be taking one step forward and two steps backwards.

The thing, I would like to request the Mover if he would have had a suggestion in his Motion that the County Government should have a policy whereby we encourage all our children in our schools to plant trees and the County Government should provide them with five trees in every rainy season knowing that Siaya County has two rainy season.

That means that the County Government should have a stock of trees whereby we have an average of ten trees per student per year. So we have two tree planting days every year and each and every student to be given five trees maybe two to plant in school and three to plant at home.

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It is also very important for the County Government to devolve tree nurseries of their own and invest in skills manpower who can come and help us come up with improved breeds of trees particularly fruit trees and introduce new trees for example the Macadamia which is now becoming a high value crop, Oranges and Mangoes now being embraced as a cheap way of doing forest cover and having quality fruits which will also assist in our nutritional value.

I also believe that it is important for us as a County to come up with an environmental policy where we invite specialist to come and help us design and come up with policy which will assist us in protecting the environment. I support!

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Yes, Hon. Opanga!

Hon. Opanga: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker Sir. I also want to appreciate the Mover of the Motion for Moving this Motion on Forest coverage. I just want to stress because I know that the importance of trees are so numerous and some Members have just mentioned them but I think they have forgotten one which is very important, which I just want to highlight then stress on what other Members said.

For example Hon. Vincent Odawa, Hon. Odawa you are moving out and I wanted to stress on what you said! I wanted you to hear anyway thank you, just go.

(Laughter)

The major thing that the Hon. Members have not mentioned is that even as we are here we must eat and one of the things that we must use to cook our food is trees. I know people think planting trees is like planting maize out there and trees are not respected as much as fodder crops but I want to say and tell the County Government as much as the Mover brought this Motion it is very much important for the Mover to mention the way it should be done.

The trees cannot be planted without fencing because what I know from experience and when I say from experience, is because before I had something in my pocket I tried planting trees in a free land and it was eaten by animals. So I just want to as that as much as we are discussing this we have to stress to the County Government that as much as they encourage us to plant trees they should also put budget allocation for the fencing purposes, and again what the Hon. Odawa said is very important.

Let us put some funds that could be given to those who are going to plant trees so that we encourage the people in the County to plant trees, because if that is not done I know people will not plant trees and will continue cutting down the existing ones. I support! Thank you.

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): I now call the Mover to reply.

Hon. Oor: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Speaker Sir. First of all, let me take this opportunity to thank all the contributors of to this Motion. I will give you the names of a few trees just as some Members have said but if you want more details you will get in the document.

1. The first one that is now moving very first to South Africa, Eucalyptus.
2. Gravellier, which you can plant with other crops.
3. Misisi, which also after ten years you can get over ten thousand from each.
4. Avocado.

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5. Siala, which all of you know as the name is known everywhere, and others.

In case you need to learn more I will give you the document to read on your own.

The way forward on how we can plant the tree and how we can put each Ward to plant trees; we propose that each Ward plant one million. Therefore, if we have 30 Wards then that means a target of 30 million trees plantation. On the side of power saw, and we will ask the County Director to see how they can control cutting of the tree without permit. We will also request the Director to come up with policies on how tree cutting should be done and if you look into the document you will see how the whole process of tree planting should be done.

So am requesting all Members just as you have supported this report to put more interest so that we can improve the economy of this County. With those few remarks, thank you.

(Question put and agreed to)

MOTION

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. Opanga): Hon. Members, can we be upstanding for adjournment and before we leave there is a report you have been given from Water, that will be a report for tomorrow so go through it today and tonight so that when we come tomorrow it will be part of tomorrow's business both morning and afternoon. Hon. Members, there being no other business this House stands adjourned until today June, 6th 2018 at 9.30 a.m. in the chamber.

The House rose at 3.24 p.m.