

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF KITUI

THE COUNTY ASSEMBLY

SECOND ASSEMBLY – (FOURTH SESSION)-2020

**COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SANITATION
REPORT ON THE
ALLEGED OUTBREAK OF CORONA VIRUS IN CHINESE
CONSTRUCTION SITES IN MUTOMO AND THWAKE DAM**

**Clerk's Chambers,
Kitui County Assembly Buildings,
P.O Box 694-90200
KITUI.**

FEBRUARY , 2020

Table of Contents

ABREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS	3
1.0 PREFACE	4
1.1 Legal Basis and Background information	4
1.2 Mandate of Sectoral Committee	5
1.3 Committee Membership	6
1.4 Committee Terms of Reference	6
1.5 Methodology	7
1.6 Challenges faced by the Committee	7
1.7 Committee proceedings	7
1.8 Acknowledgement	8
2.0 SUBMISSIONS BY THE CHIEF OFFICER	9
3.0 VISIT TO THE MUTOMO CONSTRUCTION SITE	11
4.0 VISIT TO THE THWAKE MULTIPURPOSE DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE	12
5.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS	13
6.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS	14
7.0 CONCLUSION	15
ANNEX ii - PICTORIALS FOR MEMBERS AT THE SITES	16

ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

AIDS- Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome

CGGC –China Gezhouba Group of Companies

COVID-19 Corona Virus Disease-19

CoV- Corona Virus

HIV- Human Immunodeficiency Virus

JKIA- Jomo Kenyatta International Airport

M.C.A- Member of County Assembly

SARS-Sever Acute Respiratory Syndrome

MOH- Medical Officer of Health

WHO- World Health Organization

1.0 PREFACE

Mr. Speaker,

It is my pleasure to present the Report by the Committee on Health and Sanitation on the purported outbreak of the deadly Corona virus in the Chinese construction sites in Mutomo and Thwake Multipurpose Dam.

1.1 Legal Basis and Background information

Mr. Speaker,

County health services, including County health facilities are devolved functions under the Fourth Schedule of Constitution.

Article 43(1) (a) of the Constitution further provides that every person has the right to the highest attainable standards of health, which includes the right to health care services.

Further, Article 41 of the Constitution provides that every person has the right to fair labour practices which includes the right to reasonable working conditions.

During the afternoon Siting of 18th February, 2020, when the Assembly resumed from the December recess, it was adversely mentioned in the House that there was purported outbreak of the deadly Corona virus in the Chinese construction site in Mutomo.

This followed the news in the Social media that one Chinese National had traveled back to Kenya after he had gone for a holiday in China during the month of December and upon arrival he isolated himself and quarantined in the Mutomo construction site while wearing a facial mask. Workers in this site suspected that this individual was infected with the deadly corona virus.

This information was fast spreading and thus the attention of the House drawn and consequently the Honorable Speaker directed the Committee on Health and Sanitation to act swiftly, get the real facts on this purported outbreak and report back to the House within the shortest time possible.

The committee acted swiftly and held a preliminary meeting in the Assembly on 19th February, 2020 to draw its program of activities which included visiting the office

of the Chief Officer to get his views and there after visit the two construction sites in Mutomo and Thwake Dam.

Facts and symptoms of Corona Virus (CoV)

Mr. Speaker,

According to the CNN report, corona viruses (CoV) are a large family of viruses that cause illness ranging from the common cold to more severe diseases such as Middle East Respiratory Syndrome (MERS-CoV) and Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome (SARS-CoV). A novel coronavirus (CoV) is a new strain that has not been previously identified in humans.

Corona viruses are zoonotic, meaning they are transmitted between animals and people. Detailed investigations found that SARS-CoV was transmitted from civet cats to humans and MERS-CoV from dromedary camels to humans. Several known coronaviruses are circulating in animals that have not yet infected humans.

Common signs of infection include respiratory symptoms, fever, cough, shortness of breath and breathing difficulties. In more severe cases, infection can cause pneumonia, severe acute respiratory syndrome, kidney failure and even death.

Standard recommendations to prevent infection spread include regular hand washing, covering mouth and nose when coughing and sneezing, thoroughly cooking meat and eggs. Avoid close contact with anyone showing symptoms of respiratory illness such as coughing and sneezing.

1.2 Mandate of Sectoral Committee

Mr. Speaker,

Sectoral Committees mandate, functions and roles are as stipulated in the County Assembly Standing Orders No. 190(5) and as contained in the second schedule of that outlines the subject areas for the sectoral committees. The limitation of the committee mandate is as outlined in Standing Order No. 192 (1).

Standing Order No. 190(5) outlines the functions of the Sectoral Committee which are:

- i) To make reports and recommendations to the County Assembly as often as possible, including recommendation of proposed legislation.

- ii) To investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned departments;
- iii) To investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned departments as they may deem necessary, and as may be referred to them by the County Assembly;
- iv) To study and review all county legislation referred to it.
- v) To study, assess and analyze the relative success of the departments as measured by the results obtained as compared with their stated objectives.

1.3 Committee Membership

Mr. Speaker Sir,

As currently constituted, the Committee on Health and Sanitation comprises of the following members:

1) Hon. Anthony Ndoo Mwanzia	Chairperson
2) Hon. Nicholas N. Mwalali	Vice chairperson
3) Hon. Geoffrey Muli Mwalimu	Member
4) Hon. Elizabeth Ndunge Peter	Member
5) Hon. Regina Mueni Ishmail Musyoki	Member
6) Hon. Grace Mwikali Sammy	Member
7) Hon. Philip M. Nguli	Member
8) Hon. Eliud Muteti Nding'uri	Member
9) Hon. Josphine Kavivi Mutie	Member
10) Hon. Charles Muthui Maema	Member
11) Hon. Mary Kanini Philip	Member

1.4 Committee Terms of Reference

Mr. Speaker,

The terms and references of the Committee included

1. To ascertain the truth about the alleged outbreak of the deadly Corona virus in the Chinese construction sites in Mutomo and Thwake.
2. To assess the County Ministry's preparedness in the event of an outbreak of the Corona virus.

3. To ascertain the mitigation measures being taken to reduce the panic among members of public on the purported outbreak of the corona virus in the construction sites.
4. To find out the efforts employed by the County Ministry on Health and Sanitation to educate the public on facts on Corona virus and the precautionary measures against the infection.
5. Compile a report with observations/findings and recommendations for tabling and consideration by the assembly.

1.5 Methodology

Mr. Speaker,

In executing her mandate, the Committee adopted the following methodology:

1. Holding round table meetings
2. Site visits and observations
3. Request for information;

1.6 Challenges faced by the Committee

In executing of her mandate the Committee was faced with the following challenges:

1. Insufficient time.
2. Poor roads leading to the construction sites especially the Thwake Dam.
3. Lack of disease protective gears during the site visits.
4. Communication barrier between the committee and the Chinese Nationals.

Despite these the committee was able to carry out her assignment and came up with this report.

1.7 Committee proceedings

Mr. Speaker,

The Committee held her preliminary meeting in the Assembly Committee room 2 on 19th February, 2020 and thereafter visited the office of the Chief Officer, County Ministry for Health and Sanitation to get his views on the steps taken by his ministry since the information on the purported Corona virus got to the public domain.

The committee also required the Chief Officer to outline clearly the county ministry's preparedness in relation to Staff, infrastructural and financial capacity in case of a corona virus outbreak as alleged in the social media platforms.

The Committee visited the Mutomo construction site owned by the Chinese company – SYNOHYDRO and thereafter traveled to the Thwake multipurpose construction site owned by the CGGC.

Upon successfully completing the planned visits, the Committee retreated to Mwingi Summer Springs Hotel on 22/02/2020 to compile a report with the observations and the recommendations for tabling and considerations by the House.

1.8 Acknowledgement

Mr. Speaker,

On behalf of the Committee on Health and Sanitation I extend my gratitude to the Speaker of Kitui County Assembly, Members of the Committee, Office of the Clerk and the staff attached to the Committee for their continuous support, assistance, and commitment in executing their duties.

Special mention goes to the Chief Officer for the County Ministry on Health and Sanitation for his time and brief to the Committee during the visit, I wish to thank the Sub county MOH Mutomo Sub County for his cooperation and information while at the Mutomo construction site. In a special thanks goes to Mr. Dominic Kyenza the senior community liaison officer in Thwake dam site, Mr. Octavio the senior resident engineer, Chen Bizhen the deputy project manager of CGGC and the entire team from the main contractor and the medical staff for special brief while visiting the site.

It is therefore my pleasant duty, on behalf of the Committee to present this Report and recommend it for consideration and adoption by the House.

SIGNATURE: DATE:

**HON. ANTONY NDOOH- M.C.A.,
CHAIRPERSON,**

REPORT COMPILED BY ONESMUS MBWANG’A – CLERK ASSISTANT

2.0 SUBMISSIONS BY THE CHIEF OFFICER

Mr. Speaker,

The committee visited the Office of the Chief Officer for the County Ministry on Health and Sanitation and was briefed as follows:

That the Corona Virus Disease (COVID-19) outbreak was reported in China in December 2019 and was declared a global public health emergency by the World Health Organization (WHO) in January 2020.

Consequently, Kenya has put measures to control the spread of the disease to Kenya by screening all individuals at entry and exit points (ports) and also screen Chinese nationals in all working sites in Kenya.

The Kitui County Surveillance Team through the Office of the County Director of Health, did a rapid assessment of Chinese nationals working in construction sites in the county.

Kitui County has an ongoing major road construction from Kibwezi to Migwani with several sites which keep on changing as work progresses. As at 30th January 2020, the project had 45 Chinese nationals on duty and they had not travelled to China during December 2019 and January 2020. ALL the 45 Chinese citizens showed good health, normal temperatures and no history of any symptoms similar to COVID-19.

CASE DEFINITIONS FOR CORONA VIRUS (COVID-19)

Mr. Speaker,

Corona virus has the following case definitions:

Patients with severe acute respiratory infection (fever, cough, and requiring admission to Hospital), and with no other etiology that fully explains the clinical presentation and at least one of the following:

- A history of travel to or residence in China in the 14 days prior to symptom onset,
- Or other locations where cases have been reported,
- Patient is a health care worker who has been working in an environment where severe acute respiratory infections of unknown etiology are being cared for,
- Patients with any acute respiratory illness and had close contact with a confirmed or probable case of 2019-nCoV in the 14 days prior to illness onset,
- visiting or working in a live animal market in China in the 14 days prior to symptom onset,

- Worked or attended a health care facility in the 14 days prior to onset of symptoms where patients with hospital-associated 2019-nCov infections have been reported.

COUNTY MINISTRY PREPAREDNESS INCASE OF AN OUTBREAK

Mr. Speaker,

The Committee sought from the Chief Officer the ministry's preparedness in relation to an outbreak of the Corona virus who submitted as follows:

On Staff capacity

The Committee was informed that the County has a small number of staff trained on disease surveillance such as Ebola and SARS however this number is so small that in case of an outbreak it will not be sufficient. The County Ministry on Health and Sanitation is working in conjunction with the National Commission on disease surveillance to ensure all the precautionary measures are in place.

On financial capacity

The committee learnt that the Ministry did not have sufficient funds to respond to any disease outbreaks. The committee further learnt that the emergency fund which should be used during such times was currently under the office of the governor hence making it difficult for the ministry to access it during such times as a result of the beurocratic processes.

On infrastructural capacity

The county lacks infrastructural capacity to handle highly infectious illnesses as there are no isolation rooms for use in case of an outbreak. In case of any infectious illnesses, the county prefers to refer the cases to Kenyatta national hospital.

On drugs and equipment

No drug so far has been discovered and recommended by WHO for treatment of COVID-19. However drugs currently used for treating HIV/AIDS are being used to suppress the effects of the Corona virus. The county has procured sufficient screening gadgets and protective gears while others have been supplied by the National Disease Surveillance Team.

On education to the public about Corona virus and precautionary measures against infection

The Committee was informed that the County Ministry on Health and Sanitation is sponsoring dissemination of information to members of public to reduce the panic among the members of public and educate them on the precautionary measures to ensure zero infections. This will be done through print and non-print media.

3.0 VISIT TO THE MUTOMO CONSTRUCTION SITE

Mr. Speaker,

The Committee visited the Mutomo construction site owned by the Chinese construction Company- SYNOHYDRO on 21st February, 2020. The Committee was received by the Sub county MOH Dr. Kibati, and the Mutomo sub county disease surveillance team together with the national team led by Mr. Mutinda. The sub county security team was as well in the site.

The Committee learnt that on 17th February, 2020 a worker at the road construction site at Mutomo had traveled back to Kenya from China where he had gone for vacation during the month of December. Upon arrival he isolated himself and put under quarantine for 14 days.

This was a procedural requirement from China that all Chinese Nationals shall undergo upon arriving at their counties of destination. It is during this time that workers in this site suspected that this person might be suffering from the corona virus. A joint team of doctors and public health officers from the National Government and the County Government was dispatched on 18th February 2020 to the camp to investigate the case who reported as follows:

- The worker had travelled to China on 10th January 2020 for vacation. While in China, he stayed at his home in Hebei province, which is about 300KM from Beijing City.
- While at home, he did not come into contact with any person presenting with flu-like illness, neither did he leave Hebei Province.
- He travelled back to Kenya on 17th February 2020 through Dubai; having boarded Emirates airline (EK307) from Beijing to Dubai and Connected to Nairobi via Emirate airlines (EK 719)

- At JKIA, he underwent the screening at point of entry where there were no suggestive symptoms. He took a taxi from JKIA to the construction camp at Mutomo
- At Mutomo construction camp, he was placed under quarantine as a routine practice for all officers returning to the construction site from China.
- On 18th February 2020, being the third day under quarantine, he had not shown any signs/symptoms suggestive of COVID-19. The last temperature recording was 35.9oC, no fever, no cough and no difficulty in breathing however the following recommendations were made:
 - The suspected case be put under quarantine for the next eleven days (from 18th February 2020)
 - Any other worker reporting from China will be put under quarantine for at least 14days
 - The sub-county/county health office to be notified in advance by the SYNOHYDRO Company of any such workers returning from China to the site.
 - The county/sub-county surveillance team will track the quarantined persons for 14 days.
 - The suspected case to use a mask at all time while under quarantine since the suspected case did not meet the case definition for COVID-19, no samples were taken for laboratory analysis.

Another group of 5 Chinese citizens arrived at Mutomo Camp on 19th February, 2020. All of them had been screened at the point of entry at JKIA. They took a hired van to Mutomo. They were all put under quarantine as per the above recommendation by health officials. None have them have displayed any symptoms of the COVID-19

4.0 VISIT TO THE THWAKE MULTIPURPOSE DAM CONSTRUCTION SITE

Mr. Speaker,

The committee visited the Thwake multipurpose dam construction site on 21st February, 2020 and was received by the senior resident engineer Mr. Octavio, Mr. Dominic Kyenza the senior community liaison officer, staff of the main contractor and medical staff attached to this site. The Committee was informed that in this construction site, there were 90 Chinese nationals. One Chinese National who had

travelled to Kenya from China on 14th January 2020 was put on quarantine as a precaution and as a requirement from the Country of origin.

However, this individual did not show symptoms of COVID-19. The other Chinese workers did not also show symptoms of the disease and had normal temperatures. The committee further observed that the contractor had put very serious measures to ensure that all precautionary measures are adhered to avoid any possible infections.

The Committee learnt that both the Kenyan Governments and that of China were very concerned about the progress of this mega project and did not want its construction to be interfered with by the corona virus outbreak.

Movement of persons in and out of this site was highly controlled. The site management was very clear that no Chinese nationals were allowed to travel back to the site during this period the corona virus was on the rise a good example being the project manager who was barred from returning to Kenya.

5.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

Mr. Speaker,

1. So far there is no single case of corona virus which has been diagnosed in Kitui County however proper education is required to reduce the current high level of panic among the members of public.
2. The County Ministry on Health and sanitation is not prepared in relation to staff, infrastructural, financial capacity and drugs and equipment for any disease outbreak a case which leaves the lives of the people very vulnerable in case of a disease outbreak.
3. There is very little information if any to the public on the corona virus case definition and the precautionary measures against corona virus infection.
4. There is little information sharing between the entry points of this country (ports) and the end destinations e.g. counties for any noncitizens traveling from places where corona virus infections are rampant.

6.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Speaker,

Having been able to gather all the necessary information and after meeting with various stakeholders on the purported corona virus outbreak the Committee makes the following recommendations;

1. The County Ministry on Health and Sanitation should organize forums to disseminate information to reduce the current high levels of panic in the public, this should be done through local FM stations and where possible use loud speakers to assure people that there is no known corona virus case in Kitui County. This should be done in collaboration with the County Assembly.
2. The County Ministry on Health and sanitation should move swiftly to put mechanisms in place in relation to disease outbreak preparedness by building staff capacity, putting up suitable infrastructures, setting emergency funds aside, and procure sufficient pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals.
3. The County Ministry on Health and sanitation should foster to disseminate information on corona virus case definition, and precautionary measures to avoid any possible infection.
4. Persons travelling into our County should be subjected to thorough scrutiny and screening before they are allowed to mingle with the public to avoid any infections the County should ensure this is done through collaboration with the National Government.
5. The County Assembly should consider allocating more funds to the County Ministry on Health and Sanitation for addressing emergency issues related to outbreaks such as Ebola hemorrhagic fever and the newly talked about Corona virus.

7.0 CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker,

A healthy population is a wealthy population, any leadership which aspires to achieve success in its endeavors must ensure that this basic right is assured as envisaged in Article 43(1) (a) of the Constitution which provides that, every person has the right to the highest attainable standards of health, which includes the right to reproductive health care. The committee on Health and Sanitation will not relent on her quest to ensure all persons living in Kitui County attain high quality and affordable health care services and are free from disease outbreaks.

ANNEX ii - PICTORIALS FOR MEMBERS AT THE SITES





