

REPUBLIC OF KENYA

KITUI COUNTY ASSEMBLY

THIRD ASSEMBLY- THIRD SESSION

OFFICIAL REPORT

(THE HANSARD)

Wednesday, 29th November 2023

The House met in the County Assembly Chambers at 9:15 a.m.

[Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki)] in the Chair]

PRAYERS

(The Temporary Speaker consulted with the Clerks-at-the table)

(Temporary Speaker directed the Clerk to confirm if the House had quorum)

(After a head count, the Clerk confirmed lack of quorum and the quorum bell was rang for five minutes)

(Quorum was not achieved after the bell and the Temporary Speaker directed the bell to be rang again for another five minutes)

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Next order

MOTION(S)

1.MOTION OF ADOPTION OF THE REPORT BY THE COMMITTEE ON HEALTH AND SANITATION ON THE COMMITTEE'S TRAINING ON PUBLIC HEALTH SECTOR AND GOVERNANCE, (BEST PRACTICES IN HEALTHCARE MANAGEMENT AND POLICY FORMULATION), CARRIED OUT IN ISTANBUL, BETWEEN 16TH - 20TH OCTOBER, 2023

(Hon.Benard Munyasya-Chairperson, Committee on Health and Sanitation)

Hon.Benard Munyasya: Mr. Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following motion; Motion of Adoption of the Report by the Committee on Health and Sanitation on the Committee's training on public health sector and governance, (Best Practices in healthcare management and policy formulation), carried out in Istanbul, Turkey

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between 16th - 20th October, 2023. THAT, Pursuant to provisions of Standing order no.179(6) and 190(5), this Assembly hereby adopts the report by the Committee on Health and Sanitation on the Committee's training on public health sector and governance, (Best Practices in healthcare management and policy formulation), carried out in Istanbul, Turkey between 16th - 20th October, 2023.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Chairperson, you are supposed to go through the entire report. May be you can try to summarise so that we move together as Members.

Hon. Benard Munyasya: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I am guided. I will summarise Sir. I believe members have the report. I request them to move to page six. The training was conducted from the 16th to the 20th of October 2023, at the Holiday Inn Hotel in Istanbul, Turkey. The Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI) had the honour of facilitating this intensive five-day program, designed to enhance the capacity of our committee members in the dynamic field of Healthcare Management and Policy Formulation.

The objectives of the training were meticulously crafted to ensure a thorough understanding of the emerging best practices in healthcare management and policy formulation. Through a series of interactive sessions and case studies, our members were equipped with the latest insights, strategies, and tools necessary for effective healthcare management and policy formulation.

The training was quite necessary as it not only broadened our members' perspectives on current healthcare challenges but also provided them with practical skills and knowledge crucial for addressing the evolving needs of our healthcare system. The engagement with ESAMI was highly insightful, and the members express their gratitude for the invaluable expertise shared by the facilitator, Dr. Moses N'gong'a. The interactive nature of the sessions, coupled with the insightful discussions and real-world examples, has proven instrumental in broadening our understanding of effective healthcare management and policy formulation.

Mr. Speaker, the training was attended by a delegation of Six (6) Members of County Assembly being members of the committee on Health and Sanitation as follows;

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|----|----------------------------|-------------|
| 1. | Hon. Bernard M. Munyasya | Chairperson |
| 2. | Hon. Daniel Kimanzi Muange | Member |
| 3. | Hon. Malinga Munyao | Member |
| 4. | Hon. Joseph Kasungi Kavula | Member |
| 5. | Hon. Munira Mohammed | Member |
| 6. | Hon. Grace S. Mulandi | Member |

Mr. Speaker, allow me to move to the acknowledgement which is 1.2. On behalf of the members of the Health and Sanitation Committee, I wish to convey our sincere appreciation to the Honourable Speaker for the invaluable opportunity afforded to us to participate in the recent training on emerging best practices in Healthcare Management and Policy Formulation. Thank you for your continued guidance and trust. Your unwavering support to this committee has empowered us to address critical challenges within our healthcare system.

The committee also thanks the office of the Clerk of the Assembly for seamlessly overseeing the logistics and necessary preparations needed to facilitate this training.

In accordance with our commitment to transparency and accountability, we have prepared a detailed report highlighting the key takeaways, recommendations, and action points derived from the training. We believe that the knowledge gained will significantly contribute to our efforts in advancing healthcare policies and practices that will benefit our electorates.

On behalf of the esteemed members of the Committee on Health and Sanitation and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order no. 179(6) and 190(5), It is now therefore my honour and privilege to present this

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comprehensive report on the committee's recent training on Public Health Sector and Governance (Best Practices in Healthcare Management and Policy Formulation).

Mr. Speaker, I would request members to go through the report which is very comprehensive and allow me to move to Chapter 4.0 on the Committee's recommendations. The message emerging from the training is that much more needs to be done by us if we are to help improve our health care system. In this spirit, the committee makes the following recommendations;

- i. The County Government should conduct an internal human resource audit so as to weed out ghost workers and ensure we have the requisite qualified staff in the right positions. This audit will enable the County Government identify the existing human resource gaps and what we need to improve on. The human resource audit will also establish the right number of staff needed for each facility to function effectively and create a balance without having some facilities having too many employees while others lack enough.
- ii. The existing public primary healthcare facilities should be made functional for use by the people rather than putting up more structures. This can be done by equipping the existing facilities with the requisite machines, employment of skilled staff and stocking the facilities with adequate pharmaceuticals and non-pharmaceuticals.
- iii. We should embrace public-private partnerships so as to encourage investment in our healthcare infrastructure which in turn improves our healthcare systems. Through public-private partnerships, our healthcare facilities can benefit from additional funding, specialized training for our healthcare workers and access to innovative healthcare solutions.
- iv. The County Government should invest in ICT in all our health facilities. Information health management systems should be installed in all facilities so as to streamline treatment processes. All health facilities should be fitted with CCTV cameras so as to manage situations in the hospitals and further enhance security of the people and the medical supplies.
- v. The County Government should undertake continuous trainings for their health workers so as to enhance their capacity and expose them to the emerging trends and technologies in healthcare.
- vi. The County ministry of Health and Sanitation should undertake sensitization campaigns to educate the public on the emerging health issues such as the rise of non-communicable diseases so as to empower them with information necessary for managing the situations.
- vii. We need to ensure that we elect leaders who emulate all the principles of good governance so as to safeguard our public resources and ensure that they are used properly for the development of our healthcare system.
- viii. Public participation and stakeholder engagement should be comprehensively undertaken before key decisions are made in healthcare development. This will ensure that the government prioritizes development projects as per the needs of the public rather than investing heavily in non-priority areas.

In conclusion Mr. Speaker, the committee's comprehensive training on Public Health Sector and Governance has shed light on pressing healthcare challenges. These include inadequate funding, legislative gaps, the rise of non-communicable diseases, and conflicts between national and county authorities. Additionally, the brain drain phenomenon and the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic demand urgent attention.

Moving forward, fostering public-private partnerships, formulating effective policies, and prioritizing public awareness campaigns will be pivotal in transforming our healthcare landscape. By implementing these strategies, we can build a resilient system that serves our communities effectively.

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Remember, the journey toward better healthcare is ongoing, and our collective efforts will shape a healthier future for all. Mr. Speaker I beg to move the motion and request Hon. Kimanzi Muange-MCA Tseikuru Ward to second. Thank you.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well. Hon. Kimanzi Muange.

Hon. Daniel Muange: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I second the motion and mean while I would have wished to second in Kiswahili but I am still waiting for Hon. Ndagara to tell me what seconding is in Kiswahili because when I asked he told me, “*naunga mkono*” but I think that means supporting. It is a homework for all of us what it is, “to second” in Kiswahili. I second the motion.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Thank you.

(Question Proposed)

I will give chance to a few of you who want to contribute to the motion before I put the question. I give you a maximum of three minutes to contribute. Thank you.

Hon. Ndagara:

Hon. Godfrey Ndagara : Mr. Speaker, Sir, I take this opportunity to congratulate the committee team that went all the way to Istanbul, Turkey. To some extent I have gone through the report and I really want to support the motion, in that we know that health is a very critical sector more especially in our county. Knowing that our county is quite vast and has a very big population that has not been catered for in terms of health issues.

We also want to thank the Executive because of the measures they are putting in place to make sure that the health of our people is really given a priority.

In the report, I think I have seen the recommendations that are made, that there are so many dispensaries that are already built in various areas of the county. I am sure there are also some areas that need attention. Therefore, the recommendation they have put that it is good for the county government to make sure that health centres that are already there are fully equipped with nurses, medical equipment and other facilities so that they are working even before we get to build other dispensaries.

Therefore, I think that one is very important because we are talking... maybe that report is relevant even now. We are in tough situations now because of the El nino rains and we know this is the time the department of health need to give a lot of attention to the health of the public because there are so many diseases that come this season due to rain.

Therefore, I want to support what the committee has recommended. As I finish I want to also ask the committee to look into the preparedness of the county government right now because I know...

(Silence prevailed)

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): May be you can continue.

(Silence)

Serjeant-at-arms kindly pass that mobile microphone.

Hon. Godfrey Ndagara: Thank you so much Mr. Speaker, Sir and sorry for the hiccup. As I conclude I was saying that I really support the report but at the same time urge the committee to get to know the preparedness of the department of health during this rain season because I know at the end of the day, there are so many diseases that are going to come up and our people are going to pass through a lot of problems.

I support the motion.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well. Hon. Cornelius had switched on his microphone. Make sure I get your attention if you want to say something because I can't see any microphone.

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Hon. Cornelius Muthami : Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. First of all, before I give my input on the said motion, I will first want to urge the staff and technicians who are in charge of our equipment in this Assembly to upgrade the existing equipment because first when we came in even before the start of this session, the screens were off and this is not the first time we are encountering this hitch. The concerned...

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): You can use your microphone.

Hon. Cornelius Muthami: Yes, I will Mr. Speaker, Sir. The concerned staff and technicians should ensure that we have seamless debates without hitches of the equipment and where possible we have back-ups so that we don't get stuck in this kind of thing.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, I support the motion. I want to thank the Chair and his committee for a very detailed report that they got from their trip in Turkey. Importantly having gone through the report is that our county has a lot to learn in staffing of our health facilities.

We have dispensaries and health centres that lack staff for various fields including nutritionists and other medical staff. We also need to learn from the report and import to our county the need to have or to involve technology in our health facilities and health matters so that we move with the rest of the world in giving quality healthcare to our people. Some of these are things we can handle with our main budget that we have and enhance the service delivery in health matters to our people.

We also need to upgrade and up our game in the health matters in the area of procurement in our health facilities and in particular get digital and automated stock keeping of our medical supplies. We have areas where health facilities are lacking essential drugs especially the anti-venom. A large area of our county is invaded by snakes and it is important because of the vastness of our county and the state of our roads that we keep some of those essential drugs within the reach of our populace. If you go through the report, the infrastructural state of our health centres and dispensaries is very wanting. We need to borrow a leaf from the report by this committee which has given a very detailed information on the need to keep our infrastructure of our health facilities in good condition.

Mr. Speaker, Sir, as I thank the committee, I also urge that we borrow a leaf from the experience and rich information that this committee has given us. Thank you. I support.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well. Yes Hon. Mwamisi. Is it Hon. Mwamisi? Hon. Hussein Mwandia.

Hon. Hussein Mwandia: Thank you Mr. Speaker, I am Hussein, Mwamisi is MCA for Mutha, I am from Ikutha Ward.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well but you are from Kitui South?

Hon. Hussein Mwandia: Yeah, I am from Kitui South but Mr. Speaker, coming from there doesn't mean we are marginalized. It's unfortunate that you are forgetting my place of origin. Mr. Speaker, I rise to support the report and I also take this opportunity to thank the Committee led by the able chair, Hon. Bernard Mwangangi.

Mr. Speaker, my worry is that, these reports are good but I would also like to know when will the recommendations be implemented since we know that the County Executive is the implementing arm. I would also like to know how we can corroborate with the executive for these recommendations to be implemented.

Mr. Speaker, we might be carrying wine or drinking... what is the saying Mr. Speaker? Carrying wine while drinking water...

(The Temporally Speaker interjected)

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): If you don't remember the saying you can just leave it.

Hon. Hussein Mwandia: I am not an English man Mr. Speaker but I am trying to remember.

Hon. Titus Kasinga (Spoke off-record)

Hon. Hussein Mwandia: Yeah, we might be preaching water but drinking wine not even carrying, drinking. Mr. Speaker, if you go Kitui Level IV hospital, you will find a lot of amputees. I believe it's only in Kitui County which has a lot of amputees because whenever an accident happens...

(The Temporally Speaker interjected again)

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Hon. Hussein Mwandia, you have said which Level IV?

Hon. Hussein Mwandia: The Kitui Referral Hospital, it is not a level V because if it were a level V, it would be handling level five cases. However, all level five cases are referred to Machakos or Kenyatta national hospital. So, practically it is a level four hospital and that's why I was saying that we are preaching water and yet drinking wine.

Mr. Speaker, the County Executive should be very ashamed of not taking care of its people. We do make very good recommendations but I believe they are just kept in our shelves. It is the high time we act, stand our ground and we compel the Country Executive to act on our resolutions.

Mr. Speaker, this should be noted because I remember last two months we were at Parkside hotel fund raising for a man who jointly with another man had an accident and they legs were amputated. It is very unfortunate to have someone involved in an accident, then when you go Kitui level four, the one you refer to level five. You are told to buy the bandages or other materials for treatments.

Later, after incurring all those expenses, his/her leg is amputated! It a shame to our County, it is a shame for the Assembly because we are the people exercising oversight role. So, Mr. Speaker, as I support the report I have those worries. Thank you.

Temporary Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well, we hear you. You can take your seat. Yes Hon. Ngwele.

Hon. Joseph Ngwele: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to support the motion on adoption of the Committee report. I want particularly to single out one recommendation that the chair made. The encouragement of public - private partnership in the health sector. Mr. Speaker, Sir, this is very important recommendation that can save our County a lot of needs. Because As you are aware Mr. Speaker, our health sector present is taking up a very huge percentage of our budget. According to my last check I think the health sector was taking about 35% of our annual budget and still our health sector is very far from meeting the needs of our population.

Mr. Speaker, a few years ago I participated in a household survey in preparation for what was then called the Kitui County Health Insurance Cover (KCHIC). And at that time, it was indicated that about 78% of the households in Kitui County depends on publicly provided health care (Government hospitals) for their health needs.

Mr. Speaker, if you take a population of 1.135M at that time, which is nearly 900,000 people depended on less that 300 health facilities in this County, which is a very huge load. As we speak now there are about 60 health facilities that were constructed by the defunct local authorities all over the County but were not operationalized; simply because the County Government cannot afford.

Some of those facilities are constructed nearly to completion and two of those facilities are in Ngomeni Ward. One at a place called Ndatani and the other one at a place called Kavani. The report we got from the County Ministry of health is that they cannot operationalize those health facilities because the County Government doesn't have additional money to put there.

Mr. Speaker, if those recommendations by the Committee are to be carried forward, some of those facilities could be handed over to the private sector health service providers or even the non-governmental organizations like the Catholic Diocese, Anglican church and there is another one in Mwingi Central called Faith ministries. They can be given some of these facilities to run and provide health services to our people at a subsidized cost because there is still a huge gap in our County in terms of meeting the health needs of our people. And our budget is strained to maximum.

So, Mr. Speaker, I would recommend that the Committee does further work and look at how exactly they can make that recommendation into a reality. Look at what possibilities they have for bringing more private sector and more non-profit sector players into health sector. Even if it requires identifying areas that are underserved, then the County Government construct a health facility there and hands over to either private sector prayers or non-profit organization. It can really go a long way in terms of proving health service to our people.

Mr. Speaker, I also came across a data that indicated that about 60% of the health facilities in Kitui County are located in only three Sub-Counties namely; Kitui Central Sub-County, Kitui West Sub-County and Mwingi West Sub-County. Meaning that five Sub-Counties share the rest of the 40% of the health facilities.

Mr. Speaker, that is an indication that their huge areas of this County that are not sufficiently served with health facilities and we can single out the huge Mwingi North, Mwingi Central, Kitui South and large parts of Kitui East are hugely under-served. These are the areas that the County government needs to invest a lot more including by what I am suggesting the County government can construct health facilities there and then make attractive terms for private sector to come and run the health facilities.

So, Mr. Speaker, I think there is a lot of more work that committee needs to do including, also looking at the very huge changes that are being proposed in the health sector by on-going reforms for National Social Insurance. Looking at what implications do those changes have to our County. Are we sufficiently prepared as a County to assist our people access to national health insurance? With those few remarks Mr. Speaker, I beg to support.

Temporally Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Very well. Hon. Kasinga

Hon. Titus Kasinga: Thank you Hon. Speaker Sir. I rise to support the motion on the adoption of the report by the Committee on Health and Sanitation emanating from the training that they underwent in Istanbul, Turkey from 16th to 20th 2023.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the recommendations made therein by the Committee are indeed good. The purpose of the benchmarking trainings that delegations from this Assembly makes is to help us to help the County to improve on service delivery and we write reports from such trainings hoping that the County is going to benefit. I am sure the County Government is not short of vert important recommendations from reports proposing many things that are good. The executive also makes benchmarking trips for the purposes of improving services but I think we are coming into a situation where we need to begin to actualise what we do out there during benchmarking. We also need to audit ourselves because there should be value for money when we are out there. Once we come back, it is important for this House whenever adopting reports to be able to see through and make actionable recommendations to the executive and make a follow up know what has been acted on. We should have something to point out and say this is what the people of Kitui benefited from.

I want to agree with those who have spoken before me that our health care is not doing good owing to the budget constraints. I don't think there will be any time that we will not face budget constraints but as Hon. Ngwele has put it, we should be able to explore means of partnering with other health actors who can help us improve on service delivery. Of course, it is happening but I think we need to move away from that. I have listened to Hon.

Ngwele very well and he has proposed that we need to look at the health facilities which the County Government has not been able to operationalise and invite other players to help us so that we don't have to spent public funds on facilities that will lie idle for ten years then after that we begin to allocate more money to renovate such stalled buildings instead of utilising these funds in doing other projects that are beneficial to our people. This is a new conversation that we need to start and I think the Committee on health can take a lead on this. I am member of that Committee and we can engage the executive on behalf of the House and see whether this is possible.

The other day I was in my Ward, Mumoni and there is a dispensary that was constructed many years ago as a result of public demand through public participation. In the last regime, some allocation was made to improve on that facility which is closer to another institution which has children with special needs. We have been told that you cannot operationalise another facility that is within a range of 7 or 8 kilometres. I was put to task and told that these children cannot be taken 7 or 8 kilometres to the other institution and thus we need to operationalise this one. It is a challenge for us as leaders when we face this kind of demands and questions from our voters yet we have to explain some of these policies to them. I think as we have said before, we need to move away from the issue of policy and do what is practical. I also think that dissemination of information is very important. We seem to be carrying a lot of burden as elected leaders in terms of explaining to our people things which can be done and those which can't be done. I think there is a better way of doing things and I hope it will be done.

Hon. Speaker, when Hon. Mwandia was contributing, he referred to Kitui Level (V) hospital as Level IV and I heard a small conversation between him and Hon. Ndumbu and the exchange turned bitter. The issue was about services being offered there but I think we are having this challenge across the County. At Mwingi Level IV, you would expect patients from as far as Kamayage, Irira, Katse, Kiromboko, Tseikuru among other places to visit the facility with issues like broken legs and are able to get services that fixing the injury without any difficulty. Whereas here at Level V, the service like that of a fixing a broken leg will be done in about 3 or 4 days for free, that is not possible at Mwingi Level IV hospital. You have to have to purchase the required equipment which is very expensive and it will take time to be delivered. I am talking from experience because I have a patient who has stayed in that hospital for almost 3 weeks because we have been trying to reach out to NHIF for assistance but they recommended that the fixing be done in Nairobi which is also very expensive. When you look at such experience with an explanation from the hospital that KEMSA does not provide the metallic objects for fixing broken legs for level IV hospitals but to Level Vs only. We need to ensure that services improve in these level IV hospitals like Ikutha and Mwingi so that they can offer such services. We also need to employ qualified doctors because it is also said that we don't have qualified personnel to fix such objects which may end up having challenges leading to amputation.

Hon. Speaker we have a challenge with our health care in our county but we can improve if we start working together. Inviting other players including NGOs is not a weakness. We need to see a revival of mission led hospitals so that we can reduce the budgetary burden on the government. It is better to have one or two institutions where residents of Kitui can get the service that they so much require rather than being referred to Machakos or Kenyatta National Hospital.

Otherwise, I want to congratulate my chair and the team that was lucky to go to Turkey for the good job that they did. Thank you, Mr. Speaker Sir.

Temporally Speaker (Hon. Paul Maluki): Thank you. I will now put the question.

(Question put and agreed to)

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Hon. Members I thank you all for your contributions and indeed they are real and something needs to be done so that we give value for money for those trips. Of course, what matters most is the implementation stage. It is the high time the Assembly plays its role in terms of oversight. I agree with what Hon. Ngwele said, yes, we have had statements from Hon. Members in this House requesting for operationalization of different dispensaries. A lot need to be done by the Committee so that the budget that we approve for the ministry of health and sanitation can be implemented to the latter. Again, the private partnership is a great idea. In my Ward we have 3 which were done by the County council before 3devolution. Thank you, Committee, for the job well done.

Hon. Members we can now remain upstanding so that we can adjourn the House.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Members the House now stands adjourned until today at 2:30 p.m.

The House rose at 10:30 a.m.

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