

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MACHAKOS COUNTY ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

Tuesday, 23rd July, 2019

The House met at 2.23 p.m.

[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Museku) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Good afternoon Hon. Members. Do we have quorum? Can you ring the bell so that we can try and get some quorum, please? Thank you, Serjeant-at-Arms you may stop ringing the bell, we have quorum. Mr. Clerk, proceed.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR
VISIT TO HON. KISILA'S HOME

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members under this Order I would just like to remind Hon. Members, that after this afternoon plenary, we will be proceeding to condole with Hon. Kisila who lost his mother. So once we finish with the afternoon session, we proceed to Kisila's residence so that we can be able to condole with them. Mr. Clerk proceed

MOTION

REPORT OF STUDY TOUR TO SINGAPORE ON HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, under this Order, we have one motion to be moved by Hon. Daniel Mbevi, Chairperson, Transport, Roads and Public Works committee. Hon. Daniel Mbevi.

Hon. Mbevi:

Hon. Speaker, that aware THAT study tours helps institutions and specifically County Assembly Committees to compare their practices with best practices from their host; Aware THAT a delegation of members drawn from the Committee on Transport, Roads, Housing and Public Works attended a study tour on Housing and Urban Development in Singapore from 18th to 24th March, 2019; Hon. Speaker, acknowledging THAT public housing is one of the features that make Singapore a nation at the cutting-edge of urban development and sustainability and public housing is at the forefront of the city-making process in Singapore;

Hon. Speaker, further aware THAT the right to a decent housing by all Kenyans is a constitutional obligation and that Article 43(1)(b) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, identifies access to adequate housing and to reasonable standards of sanitation as an economic and social right;

Hon. Speaker, I wish to move the motion THAT, this honorable House discusses and approves the Report of the Transport, Roads, Housing and Public Works Committee on study tour to Singapore.

I beg Hon. Thomas Mutinda to second my motion.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Thomas Mutinda.

Hon. Mutinda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am on the floor to second the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Thomas. Hon. Mbevi, you may read the report.

Hon. Mbevi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I wish to read the report on study tour to Singapore.

Hon. Speaker, the right to a decent housing by all Kenyans is a constitutional obligation. Article 43 (1b) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010, identifies access to adequate housing and to reasonable standards of sanitation as an economic and social right. In its broad sense, decent housing connotes housing that is inclusive of functioning infrastructure, clean and portable water, sanitation and waste management, energy as well as proximity to facilities such as markets, health centers, schools and security posts. As such, housing has significant inter-linkages across sectors, that makes it a critical sector in the growth and development process.

It is worth noting that access to affordable housing is one of the Country's big four agendas as set out by H.E Uhuru Kenyatta, the President of the Republic of Kenya.

Hon. Speaker, the main objective of this study tour was to get an overview of the achievements and milestones made by the Government of Singapore in housing and Urban Development. This is in line with the forth Schedule of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 which mandates Counties with matters of housing.

Hon. Speaker, the Committee on Transport, Roads, Public Works and Housing is established pursuant to the Standing order 190 and the second schedule of the County Assembly standing orders which defines its mandate as follows; All matters related to County transport, including county roads, housing, street lighting, traffic and parking, public transport and ferries and harbors, excluding the regulation of international and national shipping and matters related thereto; county public works and services.

Hon. Speaker, further Standing Order 190 (5) gives Sectoral Committees the following mandate:

- a) investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned departments; study and review all county legislation referred to it;
- b) study, assess and analyze the relative success of the departments as measured by the results obtained as compared with their stated objectives;
- c) 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

Assembly;

- d) to vet and report on all appointments where the Constitution or any law requires the Assembly to approve, except those under Standing Order 184 (*Committee on Appointments*); and
- e) Make reports and recommendations to the Assembly as often as possible, including recommendation of proposed legislation.
- f) Study the programmes and policy objectives of the Department and effectiveness of their implementation.

Hon. Speaker, the following members attended the study tour to Singapore

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| 1. Hon. Francis Ngunga | - Leader of the Delegation |
| 2. Hon. Alex Kamitu | -Member |
| 3. Hon. Annastaciah Mutuku | “ |
| 4. Hon. Eric Musembi | “ |
| 5. Hon. Antony Mulu | “ |
| 6. Hon. Judas Ndawa | “ |
| 7. Ms. Norah Muteti | Clerk Assistant |

Housing and Urban Development in Singapore

Hon. Speaker, today Singapore is one of the densest cities in the world. Over some 60 years, the city has accomplished an extraordinary rise in the level of living conditions and the economic growth has been massive. Public housing is one of the features that make Singapore a nation at the cutting-edge of urban development and sustainability. The majority of the residential housing developments in Singapore are publicly governed and developed. About 82% of Singapore's population of all income levels lives in the public housing stock. Secondly, public housing is at the forefront of the city-making process in Singapore.

Hon. Speaker, Public housing in Singapore is managed by the Housing and Development Board (HDB) under temporary leaseholds for 99 years only. The mission of HDB is to provide affordable housing based on the current and future needs of Singapore's population, to create vibrant and sustainable towns and to ensure vibrant, active and cohesive communities. Much more than a homebuilder, HDB plays a significant role in the urban development process in by creating livable communities. HDB flats are located in master-planned towns which contain a wide array of amenities and services (schools, polyclinics, sport facilities, public market, shops, etc.). HDB towns are planned on the principle of self-sufficiency, ensuring that all essential proximity services are available locally.

Hon. Speaker, Urban Redevelopment Authority is the national urban planning authority of Singapore, and a statutory board under the Ministry of National Development of the Singapore Government. The authority has the following roles in housing and urban development:-

- a) Land use planning -URA's main responsibility is land-use planning. URA planners devise both long-term strategic land use plans and medium-term plans which are reviewed every five to ten years. These plans designate the land use and urban density for the entirety of Singapore.
- b) Development control- This is the responsibility of URA to evaluate and grant planning approval for development projects from the public and private sectors.

- c) Urban design - URA is responsible for the urban design of the city.
- d) Land sales- URA also sells land by tender on behalf of the Singapore government to meet demand from private developers.
- e) Car park management- The URA plays an important role in managing all public car parks outside of Housing Development Board estates. It provides information and services to the public in regard to coupon parking, season parking and heavy vehicle parking. URA also sets the bylaws to parking infringement and fines.

Milestones Made by Singapore in Housing and Urban Development

Hon. Speaker, it is worth noting that Singapore has made the following notable achievements in housing and urban development:-

1. Public housing in Singapore has acted as a generator for domestic demand of building materials, professional and sub-professional services and other contractual works. In so doing, HDB as the public provider at moderate and affordable costs for the populace has made the statutory board a sizeable agency of employment.
2. Environmental sustainability – Urban Planning has been a useful instrument in countering urban slums and the environmental negative impacts which comes with build- up of slums
3. Good Affordable Housing- Based on the government’s commitment to achieve adequate shelter for all who lack, the policy on good housing includes interventions along two broad dimensions: 1) physical, in terms of occupancy and minimum physical requirements for housing units to improve living condition within the overall urban development of the country and 2) financial, to enable housing access and affordability.
4. Security of Tenure through Homeownership- the Parliament of Singapore has enacted a policy which is aimed at preventing discrimination in housing, promoting security of tenure and promoting access to finance for affordable housing, this policy is instrumental in facilitating the participation of lower income households in homeownership in Singapore. The core instruments include a transparent flat allocation system and the homeownership scheme aimed at making homeownership more affordable by increasing popular access to mortgage finance.

Lessons Learnt

Hon. Speaker, from the study tour and interactive sessions with the stakeholders of Urban Redevelopment Authority (URA) and Housing and Development Board (HDB) the Committee learnt the following;

1. Singapore has put in place policies and legislations which mandates URA to demolish and redevelop old houses.
2. All the government residential houses have efficient water harvesting systems which is recycled to water flowers and grass in the Compounds of the houses.
3. All the non- Biodegradable waste in Singapore is burned into ash which is recycled by mixing with bitumen and used in construction of roads.
4. All the housing facilities in Singapore are accessible to any persons living with disability.

Hon. Speaker, in comparison with our Country and Specifically our County on matters of housing, it is worth noting that some of the Challenges facing this sector include;

1. Access to land
2. cost of construction
3. Lack of appropriate technology and ability to pay
4. Bureaucracy in the approval processes
5. Sector funding
6. Access to critical utilities like electricity, water, sewerage, transport, security and ICT services.
7. Lack of guiding Policies on matters of housing.

Recommendations

Hon. Speaker, the Committee makes the following recommendations:-

1. There is need for the Department of Housing and Urban Development to come up with a legislation governing matters of housing in our County. This proposed legislation should be forwarded to the Committee sixty days from the date this report is adopted.
2. The Department of Housing and Urban Development should start plans of building new housing structures on the land where some Government houses are in devastating conditions and ought to have been demolished.
3. Considerations should be made when constructions are being made to accommodate persons living with disability. This is as enshrined in Article 54(c) of the Constitution of Kenya, 2010 which stipulates that “ a person with any disability is entitled to reasonable access to all places, public transport and information”. The Department of Housing and Urban Development should ensure compliance.

The County government should categorize housing design, sizes and costing to various zones and ensure that approvals are monitored accordingly. This also facilitates proper targeting of supply of housing units with the demand and needs of the population.

Hon. Speaker, I wish take this opportunity to thank the Management of the County Assembly for facilitating this delegation to attend this study tour. Further I thank the members who attended the study tour and cooperated in compilation of this report. Thank You, Hon. Speaker.

(Applause)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Daniel Mbevi for that report.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Members, you may debate on the report. Hon. Steve.

Hon. Mwanthi: Thank you, Hon. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, I want to applaud the Committee for the work that they did and the research that they have just read. Mr. Speaker, you find that the observations made by that Committee are called for and it is good even at our

County level we start working on such like things. You realize when you go to those countries, they have their roads named and plots named thus ease of revenue collection by the government and that should be the way also for us here in Machakos.

Mr. Speaker, it is the other day when I got the formula that Nairobi County is using through World Bank and they are still proposing that we need to have all the houses and roads named so that it may ease traversing of counties and revenue collection to our governments. Mr. Speaker, I do support. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Steve. Hon. Kisini.

Hon. Kisini: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I want to commend the committee which has brought this report, for such a good report which is comparing that outside country and our country and our county. We have seen a lot when we are trying to compare and contrast whereby in Singapore, first of all they are talking of sixty years and I also think since we got independence in Kenya, we are also as old as that.

Secondly, in technology they seem to have advanced so much. There is no waste in that country according to what the report had said. The water they get, they use it to water the flowers, to water the grass around. The country makes sure there are affordable loans whereby the mandate given to the construction authority monitors and in Singapore we have seen that they are also taking care of the physically challenged. They can access any buildings the way the report had said so when planning, they consider even that group.

We have also seen from the report that the government is almost providing guidance and everything and even the low class workers can afford houses or live a decent life and in good houses whereby when we compare to our county and country, for somebody to afford a house and get a decent house even from the government quarters, it is not easy.

We are requesting our county to learn from this report, to also make a delegation to Singapore and maybe they learn and see what they do so that we can provide some affordable houses to our county. We have so much land, an example is Athi River township ward; we have those house which were built as early as 1940s and 1950s. Those are the houses which are still used by some council staff or by some county staff. Our people are also living there and if you go to those houses, some of them have cracks. They are not habitable for human living. It is my appeal that, Mr. Speaker, if 60 years we were at par, what went wrong? It is good we wake up, we correct the mistakes and give affordable houses to our residents and to our staff. We plan our towns well and that we also secure our land which is also not well managed as the report has said.

The land at Singapore is well managed by the government when you compare and contrast with here, where land is not very well planned and taken care. So Mr. Speaker, I want to request that we learn from this report, I think we have Agenda Four which needs to want to take care of now to come up with affordable houses. We can tell them to go and learn what Singapore has done so that we really transform this country into an affordable living country which has affordable houses. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Robert Kisini. Hon. Thomas Mutinda.

Hon. Mutinda: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I am on the floor to support the report and Mr. Speaker, it is important to note that this process of housing is so crucial because when you

remember some years ago during independence, Kenya was at par with Singapore and other countries but they are now way ahead and I think in our country and in our county, we have to put planning as key so that we plan our places and towns well and we put zoning so that we have controlled development where there is need of houses, four floors or three floors, we control so that we have a structure which now we can see that we have beautiful cities and towns all the way.

When you see Machakos and there is this Konza city, the Nairobi city, very soon will be a conglomerate of cities where we may run from Masii or Wamunyu all the way to Limuru you find it is almost one city. So there is need for proper and decent planning. In the current planning, the roads are given very few meters but now with the modern planning, we should give big spaces.

When you go to big cities, you find from one street to the other is a big land to use for roads, transport and all that, so it is important we plan and also have short approval processes for our plans. Sometimes you find it is hard for investors to come and invest in our places because the process for authorization and approvals is too long. We should compile it to be all under one roof so that investors can come and have cheap housing because if we encourage competition as a government, then it is easy to have cheaper houses and our people will be able to get cheap accommodation.

Mr. Speaker, I support and say it is the high time we as government ensure that we take care of everything and even the physically challenged. Our houses should take care of those walkways where they should use. In most of our buildings, you find we have steps and a wheelchair cannot move and it is worrying that in future, such people who even ourselves are candidates to becoming physically disabled because anyone can be there. So we should take care because we are candidates of that situation and we see to it that everyone is able to reach every floor of any building. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. May I call upon the mover to respond please?

Hon. Mbevi: Thank you, Mr. Speaker. I would like to thank the Hon. Members who have contributed to this motion and say that it is good that we support one another because it is all because of our electorates. I would wish to say it is important that this team went to Singapore for this learning and from the tour, I am happy that the committee learned that we need to provide some services to our people, that is the developers, before they start developing.

It is important that the County Government supplies services to some areas where we think it is important we do some development for easy investment because if an investor finds a place which is already connected with services, it is accessible, there is electricity connection, water is supplied, it would work very well and easily and it will encourage a lot of investors to come. An example is like the EPZ we have in Athi River. It has really helped investors to invest.

The issue of proper planning is important because when you visit most of the government houses, they are old fashioned and the land is already misused. It is important that we could do some demolitions which are fair and come up with storey buildings because of the limitations of land. It is important to have some proper Boards that run these land issues because that will ensure investors are not conned. There is regulation, so you find investing in our county will be very easy and they will not have that fear of losing their investments in future. Thank you Hon. Speaker and Members for supporting the motion. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Mbevi.

(Question put and agreed to)

Again Hon. Members, I want to pick up on one or two highlights on the discussion of this afternoon. Hon. Mutinda has pointed out that the GDP of Singapore (and Kenya) in 1963 were at par, which means if you look at the growth of GDP for both countries and the per capita income, Singapore has left Kenya with a mile and yet at one point, we started together.

It is also worth noting that I also went to Singapore on a study tour and I think the report was tabled before this House and we realized that the Kenya Bus Services, the system which was implemented in Kenya in the 70s, Singapore came and benchmarked with Kenya Bus Services and how we are operating it. Today, Singapore still has the same service operating, where people sit in the stage and wait for a bus and you read the number of the bus and you know which bus to get into. Those who were in Nairobi those days know that Kenya Bus Services used to operate like that. Route numbers on buses and there were no problems; you could just go to Kencom and you are sure your bus is going to come along. There were no *matatus* in Nairobi city centre back in the early 80s and 90s.

They have talked about housing, Hon. Mwanthi, and controlled development and especially housing. You remember where we came from; from housing estates like Umoja, Buruburu. Housing where you could know Hon. Mueni stays in Umoja J106, so if you want to get Hon. Mueni, you would know exactly which estate to go and where to get that person because all houses in all estates were well controlled and they were even numbered.

Today if you go to the same Umoja, you will not know which number is which because now uncontrolled development came in and people started putting up structures the way they feel like. Buruburu now is not the Buruburu we knew then, and if you go to Singapore, you find the housing schemes are the way we had them before. So we only need to get back to our senses and go back to ensuring that we do controlled development and we put up structures which we are going to be able to support the development we are having in our country.

Kenya is almost ten times bigger than Singapore and if our GDPs were the same in 1963 with Singapore being that small, then Kenya's GDP should have grown exponentially by now if at all we are to compare the resources available to both countries in terms of land, minerals and everything. So I think it is a good study tour and I applaud the team.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members this House now stands adjourned to 24th July, 2019 at 10.00 a.m.

The House rose at 3.16 p.m.