

MACHAKOS COUNTY ASSEMBLY**OFFICIAL REPORT****Tuesday, 10th March, 2015**

The House met at 2:51 p.m.

*[The Temporary Speaker (Mr. Raphael Mutuku) in the Chair]***PRAYERS****Hon. Temporary Speaker:** Good afternoon Hon. members. Yes, Hon. Kavuu?**Hon. Gideon Kavuu:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, I am trying to question the member who has gone out because he is not properly dressed but he has gone out. Thank you Mr. Speaker.**Hon. Temporary Speaker:** Hon member, you cannot discuss a member who is not within the house; if a member is not within the house, he is not part of us. Proceed clerk.**MOTIONS****PROVISION OF FREE SANITARY TOWELS TO GIRLS SCHOOLS****Hon Amina Mutio:** Mr. Speaker, Sir, aware that menstruation is a natural monthly occurrence in healthy women anytime from the age of eight until the period of pre-menopause Mr. Speaker, Sir; aware that menstruation hygiene is fundamental to the dignity and wellbeing of women, both young and old and is an important part of the basic hygiene, sanitation and reproductive health to which every woman has a right to; further aware that many secondary school girls in our county come from poor families and are unable to afford sanitary towels on a monthly basis, concerns that many of these girls are still using clothes, tissue, cotton and rags to contain the menstrual flow exposing them to infections, Mr. Speaker, Sir, deeply concerned that some girls often choose to skip school for a period of a week every month due to stigma and other eventualities and opt to drop out of school, at times, some of them are forced or lured into promiscuity in order to get funds to purchase the sanitary towels, Mr. Speaker, Sir I wish to move the motion that this Hon. House discusses and approves that the county government partners with non-governmental organizations and sanitary towel manufacturing companies, to provide free sanitary towels to our girls in both primary and secondary day schools who are mostly from poor families.

Mr. Speaker, Sir I want to give a history of sanitary pads. Before disposable pads were invented, most women used rags, cotton or sheep wool, in their underwear to stem the flow of menstrual blood. Knitted pads, rabbit fur and even grass were also used by women to handle their

periods. The very first disposable pads were thought up by nurses, looking for a new method to stop excessive bleeding particularly in the battle field. The first pads were made from wood pulp bandages, by nurses in France. It was very absorbent and cheap enough to throw away. Afterwards, commercial manufacturing companies borrowed this idea and the disposable pads were available for purchase as early as 1888. In America, Johnson & Johnson developed their own version in 1896 called Leister sanitary towel for ladies. The problem was, women did not feel comfortable asking for this product so in the early 1920s, the name was changed to 'new pack' a name that did not describe the product.

Dropout rates of girls in rural areas is high. Research carried out in most African countries has shown that the increased school dropouts among girls in rural areas can be attributed to reproductive health issues. A recent research in Kenya indicated that more than 1.039 million school girls were missing classes at least four days in a month. It is estimated that, vulnerable girls skip classes for 39 days in a year during their menstrual cycle, a situation that puts them at a disadvantaged position with their male counterparts. To improve hygiene and rights, innocent girls who do not want to miss school have been forced to use inappropriate and unhygienic materials that do not offer sufficient protection, putting them at a risk of contracting infection and being the subject of ridicule.

Although the girls and women find resourceful ways to improvise these make-shift sanitary pads, some of the material they use offer limited absorbency, making it challenging for girls to participate in schools. Most of the girls are tempted to wash them in open water sources; there is a lot of bacteria in this water. Once washed, the soiled cloth cannot be hanged out in the sun to dry due to the taboos around menstruation blood. Therefore the cloth is dried indoors in very humid condition. As a result, the material does not often dry fully and the girls are forced to wear damp cloth which is breeding ground for disease. Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. I call upon Hon. Alice Nzioka to second the motion. Thank you.

Hon Alice Nzioka: Bw. Spika, nimesimama kuunga mkono mswada ambao mheshimiwa Amina ameleta, kwamba wasichana katika shule za msingi na shule za upili, wapatiwe taalo za sodo. Bw. Spika, kama vile unavyojua, katika maumbile ambayo tumeumbwa, huwa tunaenda na daraja tofauti. Kwa vijana, unakuta kijana kutoka miaka kumi na tatu kufika miaka ishirini anaanza kupindua sauti, anaanza kutoa kigugumizi.

Kwa wanawake ni tofauti; msichana akifikisha umri wa miaka kumi na tatu kuendelea, msichana anafikia kiwango cha kuvunja ungo. Imekuwa ni shida sana kwa wasichana wetu ambao tunao katika shule; kuna sehemu kama mahali ambapo ukiangalia kiwango cha kupata mapato, kiko chini sana, unakuta msichana katika shule, akifikia huo wakati wa kuvunja ungo nani maumbile sababu pengine itaenda kwa muda wa wiki kama moja, na unakuta mahali huyu msichana ametoka ni familia ambayo haiwezi kumwezesha kupata taalo za sodo.

Sasa inakuwa kwa msichana anawaza sana, kuwaza kuwazua, unakuta huyu motto sababu ya ile hali ambayo anayo, sasa itambidi atafute mahali ambapo anaweza kupata hizo taalo. Na kwa kufanya hivyo, bahati mbaya msichana anaweza kupatwa na magonjwa ya zinaa,

msichana anaweza kuwa mja mzito. Mimi ningeuliza sisi kama wabunge katika bunge la Machakos, tupitithe mswada kwamba, sisi kama Kaunti tushikane na wahisani, na waegezaji ambao wanaweza egeza katika kaunti yetu, tushikane pamoja mikono ili tuone shule za Upili na Msingi, tunawapa wasichana wetu taulo za sodo.

Sio jambo ambalo limeanza juzi. Katika bunge la Afrika Mashariki utakuta walipitisha mswada kwamba zile nchi ziko katika Afrika Mashariki na ya Kati waangalie na wapitithe mswada kwamba wapatie wasichana wetu katika shuleza Upili na Msingi wapate hizo taulo. Pia ukiangalia kaunti kama Meru, mwakilishi wa wanawake katika hiyo kaunti, Mheshimiwa Florence Kajuju, utakuta alishikana na wahisani kupatia wasichana katika shule zetu taulo za sodo na pia mahali kama Uganda, walipitisha kwenye bunge kusema kwamba wahisani, waegezaji ambao wanaegeza katika nchi ya Uganda washikane pamoja ili kusaidia wasichana wetu.

Nataka kusema mtu ana weza kufikiria ama mheshimiwa anaweza kufikiria ni kwa nini tumeleta huu mswada hapa. Sisi kama, tuseme mfano mimi, inaweza kusemekana kwa nini naunga huu mswada mkono na ilhali hizo taulo za sodo sitatumia, ama kwa mfano mtu atasema umri. Lakini sisi ambao tuko hapa kama waheshimiwa, utakuta uko na familia, uko na wasichana wawili ama watatu na unajua kabisa, hata kama hauhusiki, tuseme mheshimiwa ambaye ni mwanaume hapa anaweza kataa kuhusikasana.

Lakini kwa mama mzazi, anahusika sana na inakuwa shida sana kwa mama ambaye hana uwezo, hafanyi kazi, pia kwa msichana inakuwa ni shida. Kwa hivyo ningeuliza waheshimiwa wenzangu tushikane pamoja na tupitithe mswada kusema kwamba, kaunti yetu tushikane na wahisani. Hizi zingine ambazo tutaomba mswada ambao wanaweza shikana na sisi, kampuni ambazo zina tengeneza hizi taulo za sodo, tushikane pamoja ili tuone tumewasaidia wasichana wetu kuepuka mimba ambayo sio ya kawaida, kuepusha wasichana wetu na magonjwa.

Kwa hivyo tushikane pamoja na tupitithe huu mswada. Mimi nimesimama kuunga mkono na nawaomba tushikane mkono pamoja ili tuunge huu mswada mkono. Asante.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Asante Sana. The motion is now properly before the house. I invite contributions for those who are in support.

Hon Alex Kamitu: Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. I stand here very strongly to support this noble idea by Hon Amina. In regard to support of the Hon who has just left the chair, it is on a very sincere note that most of our schools and especially now that we are talking about our girls in primary and secondary schools, there are families who cannot afford these sanitary towels. I remember I also saw these things in the television whereby in Pokot, girls were even making some sanitary towels from special fibers of the trees. So it is a very noble idea that has been brought into this house. I strongly support because there are many families and with my age I have experienced a lot of this information, because we have very poor families whose daughters cannot afford these sanitary towels. So I sincerely stand and support that noble idea.

There is a lot of Christianity and parenthood by Hon. Amina, because she is a parent and she knows the need for sanitary towels to a primary and secondary school. So I strongly stand and support this motion. Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon Penina Kaluki.

Hon. Penina Kaluki: Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir and the house at large. I stand in support of this motion owing to the fact that these are our young girls who happen to be our sisters and our daughters. Due to the time they lose when undergoing this kind of process which is natural in terms of development of the girls, I do not see why we should subject them to such kind of treatment, rather suffering, that they should not attend their classes hence they end up performing poorly and since there has been so much emphasis on girl child education, we don't want to lose it through our girls not going to school because they don't have access to this sanitary towels and Mr. Speaker, Sir due to the type of materials our girls use, most of them infect them. They are unhygienic, they cause so much discomfort and the girls cannot concentrate well when they are in their classes so Mr. Speaker, Sir, I wish to support the motion in that the county should chip in, in providing these sanitary towels to our young girls so that we can empower them through education and like Nelson Mandela once said, education is the only weapon we can use to change the world; we want our girls to be educated and since educating girls is educating a community, we do not want them to lose classes due to just a natural process of development which they are undergoing. It is not their fault, so they should not be subjected to such suffering. Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir.

Applause

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you. Hon Kyalo Kyuli.

Hon Kyalo Kyuli: Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise to support this motion that Hon members, it is a noble thing to offer at least a girl or two, a chance to stay in school, the period they are given by the government to stay in school. Mr. Speaker, I happen to have been doing some donation of the same and Hon Members you will find that it is not only the girls, even their mothers. Because I have been doing this now for quite a while, surely Mr. Speaker, it is not a laughing matter but believe you me, if members can join me one day because I do it monthly, I choose a school to support those girls and you will find that when I send the messages that I will be visiting the schools to donate such, you will find that girls come with their mothers and they tell me openly 'mheshimiwa, these things we cannot afford them.'

So therefore you find if the mothers cannot afford, how about buying the same for their girls? So you find it is an issue that if you look at our schools and performance in Machakos county, you saw Mr. Speaker, Sir the results that came out last week, although girls schools did good, you find that Mr. Speaker, this seriously affects the girl child education. So Hon. Members, there is also a way that we factories in this county that people are doing businesses within our county and they usually have a part of their endeavors Mr. Speaker, that there is a corporate responsibility Mr. Speaker. If this Assembly can choose a committee and we approach those

companies, those factories that are within us, I am sure within their capacity, they will be able to support us.

I happen to have one man who comes from Uganda, he has been supporting me with such pads Mr. Speaker, so in a large scale and in a bigger picture Mr. Speaker therefore, I propose that as an assembly, we organize ourselves, we have a smaller committee and it will approach most of these factories that are operating within here and even the supermarkets we have within here and other businessmen and women of this county.

Therefore Mr. Speaker, we will have loads and loads of pads in this place and we will be saying today we are distributing in such and such an area, and we will be helping our girls. Therefore, this is a noble idea, I sincerely and strongly support this motion that Mr. Speaker, without much ado that we should move in this direction. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you. Hon Peter Nzioki.

Hon Peter Nzioki: Thank you Mr. Speaker. and members present. Mr. Speaker, I happened to go to school when there were no sanitary towels and the fact is, girls were suffering a lot and very many girls used to abandon school because of the shame they used to encounter during their period. Mr. Speaker, this is a very noble motion that we should all support and give faith that we should partner and our government should partner with other companies, manufacturers, to provide sanitary towels to our girls.

Mr. Speaker, even some girls used to go and after they abscond classes, they never came back to school and they got married, and their lives were just that way and it was a big shame Mr. Speaker; even the married women, those days you could see some women soiling their clothes because they didn't have those facilities. Mr. Speaker, it would be of great help if we can assist our girls so that they can learn and get education like the boys. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you. Hon Joseph Itumo.

Hon Joseph Itumo: Mr. Speaker, Sir, I strongly support this motion of today that emanates from Hon Amina Mutio. You realize that Mr. Speaker, in those days when times were very hard, our girls and our mothers suffered a lot because you remember you could not see even a tattered blanket around or a tattered mattress because those are the things the girls could use and there was no comfort in such. Mr. Speaker, the high time has come...Protect me Mr. Speaker, I continue with all due respect.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Can we have the point of order. Hon. Joseph Itumo, have your seat.

Hon Magdalene Ndawa: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Is it in order for the hon. member to use the term mattress as you know very well, despite the fact that he is supporting the motion you cannot really hold that with a mattress Mr. Speaker. Let him use a better term even if he has to use a towel, a kanga, but not a mattress Mr. Speaker, honestly.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Point of order sustained. Can you use a better term, Hon Joseph Itumo.

Hon Itumo: Yes, thank you Mr. Speaker for letting me come back. I was shocked but let me use a better term, I say a soft blanket. Mr. Speaker, it is very unfortunate, this is a matter that should be taken seriously on the floor of this house. It is very bad for our girls to be in such a pathetic situation Mr. Speaker. We want comfort for our girls and even to the mothers because Mr. Speaker you realize that a girl will not feel comfortable when she is soiling herself and that will hinder the system of her studies Mr. Speaker. I support this motion because it is a good motion; I therefore call all the Hon. Members to support this motion in unison so that it may go through and we may see comfort with our girls and our mothers Mr. Speaker.

Mr. Speaker, I do not even leave at that point; it should be extended that our young boys be provided with underpants or pants because you realize that Mr. Speaker...Mr. Speaker, this point of order, let me continue.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon Joseph Itumo you are protected. Proceed.

Hon Itumo: Thank you Mr. Speaker, for giving me protection. Mr. Speaker, I do not deviate from this motion, but you find that it is like the boy child has been neglected and you go and find over 40 per cent of these young boys live with no underpants Mr. Speaker. So we can combine this one and as the girls are getting their sanitary towels, they come with underpants we provide to our young boys Mr. Speaker. Thank you Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Hon Itumo, for the purpose of records, can you clarify what you mean by girls soiling themselves.

Hon Itumo: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker you realize that when that time comes, you find a young girls who has attained the age of teenage and she has no sanitary towels, she continue soiling herself Mr. Speaker and that is a shame; you will find that even some male teachers who are aggressive take advantage of such. Thank you Mr. Speaker and I call upon all the members to come and support this important motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Can we have Hon. Muthuka.

Hon. Stephen Muthuka: Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir and the rest of the House. Mr. Speaker, this is a timely motion, as you know that currently we are riding on a good name of our county; we can take advantage of the same to approach these NGOs and also manufacturing companies. As you know every company normally has corporate social responsibility, and most of them normally lack good relationship with the institutions that they should support.

Mr. Speaker, cleanliness is next Godliness, so I wish to support this motion because contrary to what one of our colleagues has alluded about underpants for the boys, there is no cycle in boys and actually staying without underpants is not an issue; we can also stay to get fresh air for personal reasons, but we are talking about a natural occurrence that normally appears every month.

The mover of the motion has tried to explain the reasons behind why we should support such a motion because, Mr. Speaker, if at all we take the direction that the Hon. Member who is about to leave the chamber has taken, it will get to a point where we will also need to provide the uniform and also we go to an extent that there are so many people out there who cannot afford clothing. So let us restrict ourselves to the motion and totally support because once we do this, we will be now taking care of the girl child and at the end of the day, the children's self-esteem will be guarded.

As you know, during that time, even our mothers have a lot of emotional changes due to the changes in the body, so if we protect them, because sometimes it reveals like a shame to them because imagine you are seated here and then the cycle starts and there is no protection, of course if you are in a group of boys, they will tend to laugh at you and most of the children because that is the teenage time whereby they are trying to grow emotionally and even mentally, if they are affected at that point in time, you find that even their performance will be affected.

So therefore Mr. Speaker, I would request that if you put the question, I don't see any Hon. Member who will go contrary because everybody is in unison that we support the motion and then we request, because we have been moving a lot of motions and having county assembly resolutions which are not followed, we need a timeline for the implementation because we may pass the motion here and that maybe the end of the business. So let us actualize whatever is happening in this Assembly. Thank you Mr. Speaker, I wish to support and I wish to request you to put the question. Thank you.

Hon. Magdalene Ndawa: Thank you Mr. Speaker. Mr. Speaker, let me start by thanking Hon Amina Mutio for coming up with this motion because this is the future of the women or the ladies of Machakos.

Hon Amina, to me, has shown she is a woman of substance and she cares so much for our young girls in schools. Mr. Speaker, I would like to say this motion came into this house a bit late but it is better late than never. I would like to support this motion and I would like the whole Hon. House, we have fathers and mothers who are Hon. Members, they have daughters in their families; we know what our people are going through. Some of us have gone ahead and started using their own pocket money to make sure that these kids stay in school.

Mr. Speaker, because I am a woman I am a lady, I am not past this. I know what these girls go through, especially those who are not able. Those whose parents are not able even to feed them. If this motion goes through and this house adapts it, I would love if the Hon. Members

would support this and push it to make sure that the county government of Machakos implements it.

Finally, I would like to finish by saying, those who do not know how to weep with their whole heart, don't know how to love either. It is something that I have seen with the Hon. Member who has brought this motion into this house; she feels what these girls are going through and that is why she made a step forward. Let us support and make sure it is implemented Mr. Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you, a well thought out contribution. Can we have Hon. Mary Ndinda?

Hon. Mary Ndinda: Thank you Mr. Speaker, Sir. I stand to support this motion and also congratulate the mover of the motion. I will not repeat what the others have said although I just came in a little bit late, but I also want to talk on the issue of infection on the girls. Most of the girls who are in the rural areas, just the way Hon. Itumo said, use rags and old clothes.

These clothes sometimes are not clean and for the girls who are in the urban places like Machakos town end up using tissue papers and at the end of the day, they get infections. So we have very many girls who right now are suffering quietly, they are scratching themselves, they have discharges, they can't tell their parents because of using those things.

So I really support this motion that we should work together in conjunction with the companies which are making the sanitary towels and also keep aside a kitty where we can buy, as the Assembly, or have a budget where we can buy sanitary towels and provide them in schools both in primary and secondary schools. So I support this motion 100 per cent. Thank you.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you. Hon Thomas Kasoa.

Minority Leader (Hon. Thomas Kasoa): Thank you Mr. Speaker. I stand to support this motion and Mr. Speaker, if I can tell you, a month ago, there was a story which was run in our local media of a village in West Pokot where pupils of primary schools were putting tethers; it was a very shameful story, Mr. Speaker, and this also comes even from our county; we know there are students who come from poverty stricken families and it is important that we partner with the companies which produce this so that our students and pupils from primary school can benefit. So I support this motion and concur with the Member of the County Assembly for Ndalani, that whatever we pass here as motions should be implemented. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

(Applause)

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Thank you Hon. Members. I can see we are in consensus and that we are all supporting this motion. If I can give the mover of the motion just one minute, if you have anything you can say before the house before I put the question.

Hon. Amina: Kwa msemaji wa bunge maalum Bw. Spika, ningependa kushukuru wabunge wenzangu kwa kuchangia na kuunga mkono huu mjadala na ningependa pia kamati tekelezi iweze kuchukua hili jukumu kama la dharura. Kwa vile unavyojua, hedhi huwa ni kila tarehe, kila siku. Kuna msichana saa hizi pahali yuko labda anashida. Kwa hivyo kamati tekelezi ningeiomba ichukue jambo hili kwa dharura. Shukran msemaji wa bunge maalum. Asante.

Hon. Temporary Speaker: Asante sana. So we are all in consensus and I direct that if you adopt this motion, Minority Leader can you communicate to the chairman, I cannot see the Chairman of Implementation, that this is followed and implemented as soon as possible so that we can save our girls from the shame that they are undergoing. So Hon. Members I can proceed to put the question.

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Temporary Speaker: There being no other business, the house adjourns until tomorrow at 10 a.m. Thank you.

The House rose at 3:32 pm