Ukur Yatani tells off DP Gachagua over Sh93m Treasury balance

Macharia Mwangi | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Treasury Cabinet Secretary Ukur Yatani has told off leaders claiming that the current administration only found Sh93 million in the public coffers.

The CS said that the claims are misinformed and were made out of ignorance.

Government does not collect money and store it in one place, keep it for one month and later distribute it after a few months or after one year, clarified the Treasury CS.

He said standard procedure involved raising revenue on a daily basis and funding of government activities within the same setout timelines, including salaries and other expenditures.

Mr Yatani maintained that performance on revenue was largely based on projections which sometimes experience a shortfall, adding that the collected money determines allocation, including money channeled to counties.

The CS treasury was reacting to reports attributed to the countrys second in command Rigathi Gachagua who said their administration of Uhuru Kenyatta handed them a dilapidated economy with the National Treasury having no money to enable them move with speed to implement their campaign promises within 100 days in office.

We have inherited a dilapidated economy. We have found empty coffers. There is barely any money in this country and we are starting from scratch. I have asked the people of Kenya to be patient with us because we have a plan but it cannot be immediate because we have found a bad situation in terms of the economy, said Mr Gachagua on Sunday during an interview with NTV.

We dont know whether to sympathise with the situation because there is a lot of misconception. Government does not collect and store money, pointed out Mr Yatani.

Speaking during the induction course for senators at a Naivasha hotel, he admitted that performance on revenue was a challenge, further hampering the determination on what goes to the counties and other expenditures

He challenged the counties, saying a number of the devolved units over-relied on the equitable share, completely ignoring own source of revenue, said Mr Yatani.

The CS said most of the counties were struggling to finance their own budgets despite having the expertise and professionals to guide them through.

Sometimes county governments present huge budgets, ending up spending money that they dont have, thus accumulating huge amounts of pending bills, note the Treasury CS.

He revealed that some of the small and medium enterprises were struggling for having done business with the counties with a number of them yet to receive payments.

He told the senators the majority of the counties were struggling, having accumulated huge pending bills, calling on the elected leaders to impose a certain level of discipline.

You should come up with legislation that will curtail the issue of accrued pending bills since it has affected many businesses across the country, admitted Mr Yatani.

He said the Constitution provides that the National Government use the Equalisation Fund to only provide basic services including water, roads, health facilities and electricity to marginalised areas to the extent necessary of bringing the quality of those services to the level generally enjoyed by the rest of the nation.

In addition, he pointed out, the constitution provides that the National Government may use the Equalisation Fund only to the extent that the expenditure of those funds has been approved in an Appropriation Bill enacted by Parliament and either directly or indirectly through conditional grants to counties in which marginalised communities exist.

End of Ukur Yatani tells off DP Gachagua over Sh93m Treasury balance

Steve Otieno | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Investigators have named several Kenyans as suspects in a scheme where Covid-19 mitigation measures were subverted to defraud the United States government of a whopping Sh30 billion between mid-2020 and February this year.

According to details of an investigation seen by the Nation, members of the syndicate, using the illegally obtained funds, then went on a spending binge around the world.

The more than 47 suspects acquired prime beach-front homes in Kenya, US and Turkey, as well as pricey jewellery and high-end apartments in Nairobi and Dubai.

A large part of the loot was also splurged on top-of-the-range vehicles including Porsches, Teslas, Hyundai and the latest brands of Ford.

At the time they were busted, the suspects still had more than Sh14 billion stashed in their bank accounts, held through their own companies, shell outfits, relatives and other proxies.

Prime properties purchased

The spellbinding US investigation has pieced together how part of the Sh30 billion, which is believed to be proceeds of money laundering, fraudulent business operations and bribery, found its way into Kenya, where it was used to purchase prime properties in Nairobis South C and South B estates, as well as a beach holiday home in Diani, Kwale County.

According to US prosecutors, the arrests are part of a widened net cast to rid the US Federal Children Nutrition Programs (FCNP) of cons.

Read: Kenyan sisters who scammed American taxpayers out of millions

Court documents show that the suspects, taking advantage of official Covid-19 mitigation measures, created fake companies and food distribution sites that purportedly served meals to tens of thousands of underprivileged children in the state of Minnesota.

This was after the US government waived some standard requirements for participation in the FCNP, a move that allowed even profit-oriented restaurants to participate in the food distribution to children outside of educational programmes.

The waiver saw hundreds of shell companies spring up under the pretext of supplying and serving meals to children across Minnesota, for which these dubious firms received hundreds of millions of US dollars.

Shell companies

These shell companies were used to register food distribution sites, which would then receive payments from state-approved sponsors.

The investigations reveal how two sponsors, listed as Sponsor A and Feed Our Future, made tens of millions of US dollars by slashing their cuts from the funds wired from the federal government to their accounts.

They then went ahead to distribute the rest of the funds to the companies that owned the food-distribution sites.

Through a cavalcade of fake claims, bribery, kickbacks, falsified invoices and other forms of trickery, the syndicate is said to have made millions of dollars for supplying nothing.

Key suspects in the multibillion-shilling fraud include Abdiaziz Shafii Farah, Mohamed Jama Ismail, Mohamed Ibrahim, Abdimajid Mohamed Nur, Said Shaffi Farah, Abdiwahab Maalim Aftin, Mukhtar Mohammed Shariff, Hayat Mohamed Nur, Liban Yasin Alishire, Ahmed Yasi and Khadar Jigre Adan, who were based in Minnesota.

The suspects are believed to have opened at least 30 FCNP sites using shell companies that included ThinkTech Act or Mind Foundry (Mohamed Ibrahim), The Free Minded Institute, Empire Enterprises LLC (Abdiaziz Farah), MIB Holdings (Mohamed Ibrahim), Nur Consulting (Abdimajib Nur), Buhra Wholesalers (Abdiwahab Aftin), MZ Market LLC (Mohmed Ismail) and Afrique Hospitality Group (Mukhtar Shariff) as well as Empire Cuisine and Market (Abdiaziz Farah).

To cover their tracks, the suspects followed to the letter the protocols required to register food-serving and distribution sites in Minnesota.

After the successful registration of their shell companies, they colluded with the approved sponsors to falsify documents

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for services that were never rendered.

For their part, the sponsors reportedly okayed fake invoices, thus facilitating payments for the supply of air to the less privileged in the US.

Records show that on diverse dates between May 2021 and February this year, properties worth almost $169.9 million were acquired in Nairobi and Diani, by some of the listed suspects.

For instance, on May 4, 2021, Abdiaziz Farah and Abdimajid Nur made a wire transfer of approximately Sh24.28 million from Empire Entreprises to Capital View Properties Ltd, based in Nairobi.

Read: How members of Kenyan family stole Sh2bn from taxpayers in US

A week later, on May 11, the same individuals wired another Sh36.42 million from Empire Enterprises to the same firm Capital View Ltd.

Six days later, on May 17, 2021, Abdiwahab Aftin wired Sh24.28 million from Bushra Wholesalers to Capital View Properties in Nairobi to acquire real estate property.

This was barely a day after Sh12 million from Empire Cusine and Market was deposited by Said Farah to Bushra Wholesalers.

Millions wired

On June 1, 2021, Sh24.28 million from Empire Enterprises was wired to Capital View.

On September 22, 2021, Liban Alishire sent Sh6.9 million to Individual B.F at Banque Cantonale de Geneve towards Sh26.22 million from Hoodo Properties to Jaafar Jelle and Company for the purchase of a unit at the Karibu Palms Resort in Diani Beach, on the Kenyan coast.

On January 19, 2022, Sh10.3 million was wired by Liban Alishire from Hoodo Properties to Abdulrahman Saad for the purchase of a five-bedroom apartment in Nairobi.

Abdiaziz Shafii also told a co-conspirator that he had invested more than Sh728.4 million in Kenya over a three-year period.

Another defendant, Mohamed Ismail Jama, informed FBI agents that he owned three properties in Nairobi, where his wife and five children live.

He revealed that in 2018, his wife and children relocated to Nairobi, Kenya. It is at this time that he bought a residence in Nairobi, as well as a stake in an African textile company.

Read: Wash-wash paradise: Where fraudsters thrive, roam freely

Ismail further stated that he purchased another house in Nairobi around a year ago, using Sh18 million from his textile company and that he also owns a rental property in Nairobi.

Ismail informed FBI officers that his wife divided her time between Kenya and the US, but the agents insisted it was all a lie, as the US Customs and Border Protection records revealed Ismails wife had not returned to the US since moving to Kenya.

US authorities arrested Ismail on April 20, 2022, at Minneapolis-St Paul International Airport as he boarded an Amsterdam-bound flight with plans to travel to Nairobi.

According to the charge sheet, Ismail obtained a new passport illegally in March after his previous one was seized by federal investigators in January.

He was charged with one count of passport fraud; for allegedly making false claims in order to obtain a new passport by stating that his original one had been lost.

These transactions only show the links to Kenya but do not explain how millions of dollars were spent on other high-end properties across the world.

The trail shows Abdulaziz Farah spent millions of dollars to buy properties in different parts of Minnesota, as well as high-end vehicles. For instance, on April 15, he wired Sh69 million to purchase a single-family home in Savage, Minnesota.

On July 7, 2021, he paid approximately Sh126.2 million for two lake-front lots in Minnesota. He also purchased a 2021

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Porshe Macan worth Sh3.5 million on July 31.

On August 21, he bought another GMC Sierra pick-up truck worth Sh9.8 million, paid Sh18.2 million for the construction of a new lake-front house in Prior Lake, Minnesota, and paid another Sh40.6 million on October 12, 2021, for a townhouse in Burnsville, Minnesota.

On June 9, 2021, Mukhtar Shariff purchased a Sh30.3 million cheque from Afrique Hospitality Group to Individual I.M.

On May 27, 2021, Mohamed Ismail paid Sh16.9 million to purchase a townhouse at Edgewood Avenue, Savage, Minnesota.

And on September 1, 2021, Abimajid Nur bought jewellery worth Sh3.6 million from Farhia Jewelry in Dubai.

Records show by the time the law caught up with the members of the syndicate, at least Sh30 billion had been illegally obtained, most of which was spent on luxurious items.

Should the suspects be found guilty of the charges of money laundering, conspiracy to defraud, bribery, corruption and wire fraud conspiracy, they will forfeit all the illegally obtained properties and still serve prison time as provided for by the US constitution.

End of How Covid billions stolen from US was spent in Nairobi's South C, Diani beach front properties

Vincent Achuka | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Two Kenyan nurses who defrauded the US government of $100 million (Sh12 billion) through healthcare fraud would have steered clear of trouble had they not continued with a scheme hatched by the husband of one of them, who was apprehended six years ago.

Ms Winnie Waruru, 42, of Lowell, Massachusetts, last week pleaded guilty to charges of conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud, conspiracy to pay and receive kickbacks, two counts of making false statements and one count of making a false statement in a healthcare matter.

The charges of healthcare fraud, conspiracy to commit healthcare fraud, money laundering conspiracy and money laundering each provide for a sentence of up to 10 years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to $250,000 or twice the amount of money involved in the laundering, said the US Department of Justice after the nurse pleaded guilty.

The conspiracy to pay kickbacks, make false statements and make a false statement in a healthcare matter each provides for a sentence of up to five years in prison, three years of supervised release and a fine of up to $250,000, the department further said.

Read: Kenyan man wanted in US over million-dollar fraud

Her co-defendant, Ms Faith Newton, 52 who is also a Kenyan and a former boss of Ms Warurus, denied the charges and is set to undergo full trial, with a possibility of getting a 20-year prison sentence in case she is found guilty.

All would have been well had Newton not taken over a similar scheme masterminded by her husband, Mr Francis Nderitu Kimaru, which saw the US government lose $43 million (Sh4.1 billion) back in 2016.

Faith Newton on her own ran a parallel medical scheme which stole $100 million (Sh 12 billion) after the arrest of her husband.

Fake claims

Mr Kimaru, who was the owner of Compassionate Homecare Inc, which had branches in Worcester, West Springfield and Lawrence, was arrested on October 1, 2016, after investigators found out that the company had been filing fake claims under the US Medicaid programme.

Started in 1965, the programme, which currently covers 81 million people, was designed to provide health coverage to children from low-income families, elderly people aged above 65, pregnant women and people with disabilities.

The programme, which is funded by both the federal and state governments, is administered indirectly through licensed medical providers.

The providers enrol eligible members of the population who fit the criteria set by the various states and then bill the government for services offered after certification by a licensed physician.

Over the years, however, the programme, which offers a health safety net to low-class Americans at a cost of US$671 billion (Sh68 trillion), has become prone to fraudsters, who siphon billions of dollars through fraudulent claims.

One of these fraudsters was Mr Kimaru, who was 41 by the time he was arrested in 2016. The flamboyant Mr Kimaru had a fleet of luxury cars and homes spread all over Massachusetts.

It is not known when Kimaru arrived in the US, or how he met his wife Faith, but they were both registered nurses before they started their own medical facility.

Documents filed in a Massachusetts court in defence of Mr Kimaru however show that he is a Kenyan orphan who became a US citizen after years of hard work in the United States.

Read: How members of Kenyan family stole Sh2bn from taxpayers in US

Documents accessed by the Nations Investigation Desk show that Compassionate Homecare was registered as a Limited Liability Company on March 16, 2010.

The company, Registration Number 001024182, operated from Suite 202 on the second floor of the 51 Union Street building in Worcester, Massachusetts.

Both Ms Faith and Mr Kimaru are registered as the managers of the company, with Mr Kimaru as the bank signatory.

All was going well for the organisation until the Federal Bureau of Investigations (FBI) was called in after the State of

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Massachusetts noticed a sharp spike in the costs incurred by the Medicaid programme. That was in 2013, just three years after Compassionate Homecare was formed.

A nine-bedroom palatial mansion that was bought by Faith Newton.

According to an audit carried out before the FBI was called in, the State of Massachusetts had recorded an 82 per cent jump in programme costs, which saw it spend an unexplained Sh91 billion.

The state immediately stopped accepting applications from prospective medical providers, as investigations began on the listed providers.

More than 80 per cent of the spending growth since 2013 has been driven by 62 companies that started doing business with the state during that time, said the State of Massachusetts at the beginning of the probe.

Things went haywire for Compassionate Homecare when one of the doctors licensed by the State of Massachusetts complained that the company was seeking authorisation to provide services, through phony referral forms, for patients who did not need home health services.

Three-year probe

Investigators spent the next three years going through paperwork at the company and, in October 2016, were satisfied that they had a case - not just on Compassionate Homecare - but 11 other Medicaid providers as well.

The investigators discovered that Compassionate Homecare had made millions of dollars by recruiting patients who did not need any health-related services. The firm would, nevertheless, bill the State of Massachusetts for treatment offered to these patients.

The company routinely and knowingly billed the state for services that had not been authorised by a doctor and, in several instances, altered records to make it look like patients denied care by doctors had been approved, said investigators.

Additionally, the company billed the state for care it never provided to people who were already at inpatient facilities while, in some cases, forged doctors signatures after the physicians refused to authorise services, they said.

In his defence, Mr Kimaru, through lawyer James Boumil Jr, claimed investigators refused to detail the allegations against him, prompting Compassionate Homecare to sue the State of Massachusetts, terming the allegations utterly preposterous.

He said the company had billed out more than $90 million (Sh10 billion) since its inception, making the alleged $1 million claimed as fraudulent only seven per cent of its total earnings.

If youre running a company on the basis of massive fraud, who would expect that? asked the lawyer, adding that his client was a Kenyan orphan who became a US citizen after years of hard work in the US.

He loves his country, he loves his company, Mr Boumil said. He would be the last person in the world to commit a crime.

The Department of Justice would, however, hear none of that. Mr Kimaru was immediately placed under arrest on the orders of State of Massachusetts Attorney General Maura Healey, who said it was unfortunate that the company stole money that was meant to provide healthcare for the poor.

Read: How Kenyan in Sh2.5bn fraud was lured by FBI

Also arrested was the companys chief operating officer, Wilberto Rodriguez (31) and an administrator, Deborah Giordano, 57. The three were each individually charged with three counts of medical assistance fraud and larceny.

"Compassionate Homecare either knew that it was submitting false claims for payment to Mass Health or recklessly disregarded its obligation to familiarise itself with the legal requirements, standards and procedures of the Medicaid programme, the prosecution told the court.

Based on its unlawful billing, Compassionate Homecare received overpayments from Mass Health of at least $34 million (Sh4.1billion), said prosecutors.

Cornered, the three suspects, who had initially pleaded not guilty, offered to enter into a plea agreement with the US government in 2019. The plea agreement, which took another three years to be ratified due to complications created by

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Compassionate Homecare filing for bankruptcy in 2020, came into effect on March 29 this year.

In the agreement, Mr Kimaru and his company agreed to pay back to the American government $6.53 million (Sh787 million) in exchange for a two-year suspended sentence. He also agreed to pay $85,000 (Sh10.2 million) to his former 79 employees, who had been rendered jobless after the discovery of the fraud.

As recommended by Assistant Attorney General Kaushal V. Rana and Mr Kimaru's lawyer, S. James Boumil Jr, the judge suspended the jail sentence for two years, during which time Mr Kimaru will be on administrative probation, said the US Department of Justice, following the agreement between the prosecution and the key suspect, Mr Kimaru.

Home health aides provide critical services to vulnerable populations, and they, like all workers, must be paid their earned wages in full and in accordance with our laws, added the department in reference to Mr Kimarus workers.

On paper, it looked like a win for the US government. Authorities had managed to recover money stolen by one of the companies entrusted to provide medical assistance to the vulnerable in society.

However, unknown to them, Faith Newton, Kimarus wife and one of the directors of Compassionate Homecare but who was never arrested as there was no direct link to her involvement in the fraud orchestrated by the company, was also involved in a similar but larger scam of her own.

By the time they realised this, years later, Ms Newton had stolen three times the $34 million her husband had stolen and laundered it through a network of Kenyans in the US who used the money to buy luxury cars and houses, including a $3.2 million (Sh386 million) nine-bedroom house.

TOMORROW: How Kimarus wife grew a bigger criminal empire than her husbands after his arrest using the skills she learnt from him. Plus, the names of all her Kenyan accomplices and the properties they bought across America using money stolen from poor patients. And how this empire fell apart.

End of Kenyan nurse caught in Sh12 billion US fraud scheme took over criminal empire from husband

How MPs survived losing seats despite skipping parliamentary sittings

David Mwere | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Missing records in the 11th parliament helped save more than 260 members of the National Assembly at risk of losing their parliamentary seats despite missing more than the maximum number of sittings provided for in the Constitution to force them out.

Details from the Parliament records office show even as former Rongai MP Raymond Moi and his Emgwen colleague Mr Alex Kosgey skived 102 and 79 sittings of the House respectively in the 11th Parliament, over 260 of their colleagues missed more than 50 sittings during the session but still maintained their parliamentary seats.

This is contrary to Article 103 of the Constitution that details the circumstances under which a member loses their seats and mandates the Speaker of the House to declare the seat vacant if a member fails to attend eight sittings of the House in a session.

The office of an MP becomes vacant if during any session of Parliament, the member is absent from eight sittings of the relevant House without permission in writing from the Speaker and is unable to offer a satisfactory explanation for the absence, the Article reads.

A paper presented to the members of the National Assembly during their induction at a city hotel shows that the missing parliamentary records were caused as the House was transitioning from analogue to digital.

Also Read: Why MPs could soon earn more than Appellate Court judges

Previously, MPs were required to record their presence in the debating chamber by writing down their names at the entry to the chamber compared to the current practice where they are only required to enter their biometrics.

A probe was initiated to establish how this had happened only to discover that the records were lost during the transition from analogue record keeping to digital. The truant members could therefore not be punished on account that the information to fix them was missing, the paper said.

With the automation of the records, it will be easier in the 13th parliament and beyond to identify those who skip parliamentary sittings without a written permission from the Speaker, the paper added.

But even as this emerged, the MPs protested that the provision in the constitution places them at a disadvantage considering that equally, they have too much to do at the constituency level.

Ambiguity in law

The MPs were in agreement that Parliament should not even bother fixing the constitutional provision in the rules whether informing the Speaker on a members absence should extend to text or WhatsApp messaging.

Rarieda MP Otiende Amollo said that the ambiguity in law will help the members escape any attempt to have them recalled.

I want to warn you members that you let this matter be as unclear as possible. If you want to specify on the mode to notify the Speaker, you will make it so easy for someone to remove you from office. I want to warn you that if you do this, 90 percent of you will not make it, said Mr Amollo.

Mr Amollo was among a group of experts who wrote the constitution. Yesterday he reiterated that the law must continue to remain as unclear as possible.

Also Read: House rules make it difficult to sack leaders of majority, minority

Let me tell you, when we were making this law, we said eight sessions because we wanted members to attend sessions. What I didnt know was the fact that I would also be a member. I have come to realize that it is so easy to skip eight sessions. What helped some of us in the last parliament is the ambiguity in law, he said.

In the last parliament, two voters filed a petition in the National Assembly, seeking the removal of Mr Moi and Mr Kosgey for absconding parliamentary duty without permission from the Speaker.

The matter was referred to the Powers and Privileges Committee (PPC) for investigations with Mr Moi complaining that the petition was a political witch-hunt by his political opponents.

Then Sotik MP the late Dr Joyce Laboso, who was in the PPC chair at the time the petition was read on the floor of the House, asked members to ensure that they record their House attendance through the biometric registration facility available at the entrance of the debating chamber whenever they attend sittings.

How MPs survived losing seats despite skipping parliamentary sittings

David Mwere | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Previously, then Rarieda MP Nicholas Gumbo and Mr John Mbadi, then Suba South MP currently nominated, said that Article 103 of the constitution was untenable noting that an amendment was the only way out.

In fact, Mr Gumbo had drafted a constitutional amendment noting that it is a right of an MP to attend to duties back at the constituency only that it never saw the light of day.

End of How MPs survived losing seats despite skipping parliamentary sittings

Miguna to Matiangi: Im coming for you

Mercy Simiyu | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Miguna Miguna has put Interior Cabinet Secretary Fred Matiangi and his Principal Secretary Karanja Kibicho on notice as he prepares to return to Kenya.

Dr Miguna, a lawyer and politician, has been exiled from Kenya since 2018 in the wake of a row with former president Uhuru Kenyattas regime over his dual nationality.

He is expected back in Kenya in the coming weeks after he announced President William Rutos administration had handed him a new passport.

But the abrasive lawyer blames Dr Matiangi and Prof Kibicho for his deportation woes and has vowed to seek legal redress once hes back.

He has in the past accused Dr Mataingi of signing his deportation papers.

Also Read: Miguna votes, no question on his citizenship status

Besides the two Interior bosses, Dr Miguna, who is based in Canada, has also fingered Public Works Principal Secretary Gordon Kihalangwa in search of justice. He has in the past demanded damages and other costs from the three civil servants.

Dr Miguna got into trouble with former President Kenyatta following his participation in Raila Odingas mock swearing-in.

He was arrested and locked up for days before his deportation.

He has since fallen out with Mr Odinga and was a vocal supporter of President William Rutos candidature ahead of the August 9, 2022 polls.

End of Miguna to Matiangi: Im coming for you

Facebook lawsuit fails to kick off

Joseph Wangui | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The planned hearing of a case filed by a former Facebook content moderator against the American social media giant's parent company, Meta, over alleged exploitation and poor working conditions failed to take off at the High Court in Nairobi.

The Employment and Labour Relations judge was set to hear submissions from the parties in the lawsuit but Metas lawyer, Fred Ojiambo, said he was engaged in another case.

Mr Ojiambo said he was involved in a tribunal appointed by former President Uhuru Kenyatta to investigate the conduct of suspended Judge Juma Chitembwe over alleged misconduct.

The lawyer asked for adjournment of the hearing. Judge Dr Jacob Gakeri allowed the request and fixed the hearing for October 25.

The court was scheduled to hear arguments by Meta Platforms Inc. (FB.O), the owner of Facebook, that it cannot be tried in Kenya.

Also Read: Man sues Facebook over alleged poor working conditions in Kenya

Meta argues that it ought not to have been sued by the 12 petitioners, since they had been contracted by a third party, which had been outsourced for content moderation services on Facebook.

The international social media firm wants the judge to dismiss the lawsuit on grounds that the court does not have the powers to hear and determine the issues raised by the petitioners led by Daniel Motaung.

Through lawyer Ojiambo, Meta states that the suit is incompetent, bad in law and unsustainable as per the provisions of the constitution and does not apply to the international firm in the circumstances of the case before court.

Mr Ojiambo argues that Meta Platforms Inc. and Meta Platforms Ireland limited, which are listed as respondents in the suit, are foreign corporations and neither resident nor trading in Kenya.

Hence, he says the Labour court in Nairobi has no jurisdiction over them.

The petition against the Meta Platforms Inc. and Meta Platforms Ireland limited should be struck out and wholly dismissed as this court lacks jurisdiction to entertain the petition against the two jointly and severally, reads the court papers in part.

Mr Motaung did not oppose the adjournment of the hearing. He filed the lawsuit in May this year seeking financial compensation on behalf of current and former contracted content moderators of Facebook. He claimed that their rights were been violated.

He sued the firm over alleged failure to cater for the mental wellbeing of the employees and poor working conditions.

He claimed that he was sacked after questioning the working conditions of the employees based in the Nairobi office.

The firm was sued alongside its local outsourcing agent Samasource Kenya EPZ Limited (Sama), a company registered in the United States.

Mr Motaung, a South Africa national, said the American social media giant firm acted negligently by failing to provide the moderators with adequate psychosocial support after exposing them to graphic contents.

Also Read: Facebook raises salaries of content moderators in Kenya after exposé

Sama and Meta acted negligently by failing to provide adequate precautions for the safety, health and wellbeing of the Facebook Content Moderators and exposing them to risk, danger and injury of which they were aware, he said in the court papers.

Meta also owns WhatsApp, Instagram and Messenger.

Demands

The sacked worker made a raft of 16 demands in the lawsuit, including damages of alleged violation of Constitutional rights and an order stopping Meta and Sama from interfering with content moderators rights to freedom of expression and right to join a workers trade union.

He also sought for orders directing Meta and Sama to cater for the cost of lifelong treatment for current and former content moderators engaged through Sama for any mental health problems that they may have developed as a result of being content moderators.

Facebook lawsuit fails to kick off

Joseph Wangui | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Content moderation at Facebook has been found to pose a risk to workers mental health. Because of their repeated exposure to gruesome content such as beheadings, torture and rape, a significant number of Facebook moderators contract post-traumatic stress disorder (PSTD), said the petitioner.

He explained: The mental condition may lead involve among other problems insomnia, flashbacks, panic attacks, difficulty concentrating and difficulty forming human relationships. A serious patient of PTSD may struggle to continue in work.

He also accused the company of deceptive recruitment process and misleading advertisements for the vacancy of a content moderator.

Between 2019 to date, Sama has issued various notices calling for applications for content moderators. It used the terms Call Centre Agents, Agent and Content Moderator to mean Facebook Content Moderator. The varying descriptions are deceptive and designed to trick unsuspecting applicants into unknowingly becoming Facebook content moderators, he claimed.

He said Sama had engaged approximately 240 Facebook Content Moderators in its Nairobi office. They are recruited from around the region in Kenya, South Africa, Ethiopia, Somalia, Uganda and elsewhere, the court papers indicated.

The former worker claimed that Meta and Sama had failed to take adequate steps to guarantee the mental health and wellbeing of the moderators and to invest in programmes and interventions to prevent, mitigate and treat the harm and effects of their work.

He complained that the moderators lacked hardship payments and they were not employed directly by Meta. They were employed by the outsourcing companies such as Sama.

In the suit, he listed ten organisations and State offices as interested parties.

They include the Kenya National Human Rights Commission (KNHRC), Central Organisation of Trade Unions (Cotu), the Attorney General, Ministry of Labour, Social Security and Services, Export Processing Zone Authority, and the Ministry of Health.

Others are Office of the Data Protection Commissioner, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, Kenya Revenue Authority and Katiba Institute.

End of Facebook lawsuit fails to kick off

Body of Embu missing senior ex-detective discovered in Isiolo morgue

Waweru Wairimu | Thursday, September 22, 2022

For three weeks, the family of retired senior police officer Stanley Njiru, who disappeared under unclear circumstances from his home in Majimbo, Embu County, hoped they would find him alive.

Mr Njiru, 60, had left for Embu town on September 2 to buy building materials but he disappeared, with some residents reporting that they had seen him board a matatu.

His family reported him missing at the Itabua Police Station. In a tragic turn of events that has left investigators scratching their heads, his decomposing body was discovered more than 100km away lying at the Isiolo Referral Hospital morgue.

Detectives say Mr Njiru checked into a lodge in Isiolo town on the evening of the day he disappeared, only for cleaners to find his body the following morning.

Read: Shock as prominent Embu businessman shot in night ambush

His legs were leaning on the ground and he had not removed his shoes, an investigator told the Nation, referring to a report made at the Isiolo Police Station about an unidentified body that had not been claimed until yesterday.

Detectives say Mr Njiru had left his phones, personal documents and a wallet loaded with Sh28,000 at home.

His wife of 30 years had told police that she did not know of any disputes her husband might have had with anyone, although family members suspected he might have been abducted by criminals.

It is not clear how Mr Njiru found his way to Isiolo, by which means, the purpose of his travel and if he was with anyone.

Identified the body

Family members visited the Isiolo Referral Hospital morgue on Wednesday and identified the body, which will be moved to Embu because the hospital lacks postmortem services.

The events that preceded Mr Njirus disappearance suggest that he was distressed.

Also read: Push for pardoned convicts to be removed from DCI criminal records

Before he retired in March this year, police sources say, he was transferred to Embu from Mombasa because he was on medication for depression.

A relative at the police headquarters at Vigilance House helped him process his Sh3.5 million retirement package.

Mr Njiru, the Nation understands, wanted to use the money to build a house in Majimbo but his wife wanted him to buy land elsewhere and build a home there.

"She insisted on buying land within Embu town, which cost them about Sh2.5 million. The remaining money would cater for the construction, an Embu-based detective revealed.

Before he went missing, Mr Njiru had reportedly spent a huge chunk of the remaining money and was worried that construction could be delayed.

He had also been notified that the land where he was building the house had a public sewer line where no construction was allowed, meaning he could have been defrauded.

All these could have stressed him up and made him contemplate harming himself, the officer said.

Plans were underway to move the body to Embu, where an autopsy would be conducted to establish the cause of death, Isiolo County Criminal Investigations boss Betty Chepngeno told the Nation.

"The family has already identified the body, which will be moved to Embu, where our officers will take over the investigations, she said.

End of Body of Embu missing senior ex-detective discovered in Isiolo morgue

Governor Sakaja faces Sh99 billion pending bills

Peter Mburu | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Nairobi Governor Johnson Sakaja faces a huge task in his bid to implement his rosy manifesto for city residents, as he will first have to tackle a mountain of pending bills that hit Sh99 billion in June.

The county has been unable to pay contractors and suppliers as it went through a series of changes in leadership, with mismanagement at City Hall nearly causing the county to choke under debts.

Between July 2021 and June 2022, the county accumulated an extra Sh14 billion in pending bills, on top of the Sh85.7 billion as of the end of June 2021, the Controller of Budget (COB) has disclosed. This means that, on average, over the past financial year the county accumulated Sh1.2 billion in pending bills monthly.

At the beginning of FY 2021/22, the County failed to prepare a satisfactory payment plan for settling the pending bills in the current financial year, COB Margaret Nyakango has said.

During the period under review, the County Treasury did not provide a report on the settlement of pending bills as of June 30, 2022.

In her report on counties budget implementation in the 2021/22 financial year, Ms Nyakango reported that by June 2022, pending bills in Nairobi County constituted 65 per cent of total bills by all the 47 counties.

As of June 30, 2022, counties reported accumulated pending bills amounting to Sh153.02 billion, [comprising] Sh151.68 billion by the County Executive and Sh1.34 billion by the County Assemblies.

Entire stock of pending bills

Outstanding pending bills by Nairobi City County accounted for 64.7 per cent of the entire stock of pending bills at Sh99.06 billion, the report stated.

The pending bills of counties this year are also a huge increase from the Sh96 billion reported by June last year and imply that the counties accumulated an average of Sh4.7 billion monthly, cumulatively.

Of the bills, Sh151 billion is owed by county executives, most of which have had their governors lose seats or retire after serving the constitutional two terms, and will form a new headache for incoming governors as they balance them with rosy promises to county residents.

Other counties recorded to have huge pending bills are Mombasa at Sh5.87 billion and Kiambu at Sh5.23 billion.

To address the identified challenges, the Controller of Budget advises county governments to settle pending bills as a first charge in the FY 2022/23 budget in line with Regulation 41 (2) of the Public Finance Management (County Governments) 2015, the COB stated.

The report also observed an alarming situation where of the pending bills, a total of Sh22 billion relate to recurrent activities, meaning some counties are going without paying workers their salaries and settling other expenditures classified under recurrent budget.

In Mombasa, for instance, of the Sh5 billion in pending bills, Sh3.9 billion owed by the county executive relates to recurrent activities and Sh1.2 billion to development.

Counties with the least pending bills are Lamu (Sh4.3 million), Mandera (Sh5 million) and Elgeyo Marakwet (Sh14.3 million).

End of Governor Sakaja faces Sh99 billion pending bills

Senator Roba-backed candidate wins Mandera Speaker's race unopposed

Nation Team | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Former Mandera East MP Omar Mohamed Maalim was elected unopposed as the county assembly Speaker by consensus.

Mr Maalim (UDM) lost in the parliamentary seat to Orange Democratic Movement (ODM) candidate Hussein Weytan.

For over a month now, the Senator Ali Roba-led UDM has been holding meetings in an attempt to reward its candidates who lost in the August 9 elections.

During the campaigns, Mr Roba promised Mr Mohamed Aftin the Speakers position and prevailed upon him to shelve his parliamentary ambition for Mr Maalim.

The goalpost changed again for Mr Aftin after Mr Maalim lost the seat, and it remains unclear what position the politician will be given in the Mandera County government.

Mr Maalim, who defended his seat under UDM, received 9,451 votes against winner Hussein Weitans (ODM) 11,645.

Negotiated democracy was applied though Mr Roba had dismissed it during political campaigns.

Politicians will always go for what will favour them and ignore what members of the public will want, said Mr Hassan Sheikh, a resident of Mandera.

UDM has always been against negotiated democracy but we see them apply what they campaigned against.

Immediately after overseeing the swearing-in of members of the county assembly (MCAs), assembly Clerk Ahmed Surrow announced that only one candidate for Speaker had returned his nomination papers.

Wajir Speaker Abdille Yusuf addressing the press after his election.

Upon closure of the nomination period, Mr Ibrahim Barre and Mr Ali Alio Mohamed did not return their papers and therefore are not participating in the election of the Speaker, Mr Surrow said.

Only Mr Maalim was the only one who returned his nomination forms.

I hereby confirm that a list showing the qualified candidate was publicised and the same was [provided] to all members, he said.

Standing Order 12, he said, states that if there is only one candidate duly nominated for election as Speaker at the expiry of nomination period, that person will be declared winner without any ballot or vote being required.

With the above communication from the clerk, there was no voting but a declaration that Mr Maalim was duly elected Speaker.

Mr Roba congratulated Mr Maalim on his election.

Meru speaker Ayub Bundi. The former Abothuguchi Central MCA served as majority leader and minority leader in the first and second assembly respectively.

In Wajir, Mr Abdille Yusuf won the Speaker position after garnering 42 votes, defeating his opponent Idris Abdi Abdillahi, who had only three votes.

Mr Yusuf thanked MCAs for trusting and electing him as their new Speaker.

Wajir Governor Ahmed Abdullahi also congratulated Mr Yusuf for the win.

In the Mt Kenya region, two candidates who were prevailed upon by President William Ruto not to contest parliamentary seats are among people who clinched Speaker positions.

Mr Johnson Mukuha and Mr James Gichuhi were eyeing the Kangema and Tetu parliamentary seats, respectively, but were trounced in United Democratic Alliance (UDA) nominations.

Mr Mukuha and Mr Gichuhi were elected overwhelmingly by MCAs to clinch the Muranga and Nyeri Speakers seats, respectively.

Mr Mukuha, an architect, was defeated in the primaries by Mr Peter Kihungi, who went ahead to clinch the seat.

Mr Gichuhi, a lawyer, was beaten by Mr Geoffrey Wandeto during party nominations. When he announced he would run as an independent, Dr Ruto invited him to his residence in Karen, Nairobi, on April 21 and he was prevailed upon not to seek re-election.

The Nyeri Speakers seat was left vacant after Mr John Kaguchia, a lawyer, clinched the Mukurwe-ini parliamentary seat

Senator Roba-backed candidate wins Mandera Speaker's race unopposed

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under UDA in the August 9 elections.

Embu County Assembly Speaker Josiah Thiriku who was re-lected despite a Court order in force.Mr Thiriku said he was not served with the order stopping him from defending his seat.

Mr Gichuhi was elected Speaker after garnering 40 votes against Mr Patrick Mutahis two. A third candidate, Evans Irungu, did not receive any votes. The assembly has 30 elected MCAs and 12 nominated ones.

Mr Mukuha garnered 40 votes in the 47-member assembly.

In Mandera County, Derkale MCA Mohamed Ibrahim Edin UDM) clinched the deputy Speaker position.

In Kirinyaga, MCAs elected Mr Julius Murimi their new Speaker immediately after they took the oath of office in a colourful ceremony held at the assembly in Kerugoya town.

Sole rival

Assembly Clerk Kamau Ahidi declared Mr Murimi the winner after he polled 31 votes. His sole rival, Mr Joe Wagura, scored zero votes.

Mr Murimi took over the office from Anthony Gathumbi, who did not defend the seat.

Mutithi ward representative Njamumo Jinaro was elected deputy Speaker.

In Meru, former Abothuguchi Central MCA Ayub Bundi was elected Speaker.

Mr Bundi was declared winner in round two of voting after garnering 35 votes against Mr Rodgers Mpurus 34.

The new Speaker served two terms as MCA and was majority leader and minority leader in the first and second assemblies, respectively.

He won after a tight race that involved five candidates, including Marius Maranya, Anthony Mwenda and Mugambi Laichena.

Mr Bundi, a close ally of outgoing Agriculture CS Peter Munya, had previously set his eyes on becoming Mr Munyas running mate in the Meru gubernatorial bid.

Speaking after taking the oath of office, Mr Bundi said his experience as MCA and majority and minority leader would enable him to steer the assembly forward.

I will work with the governor and other elected leaders to ensure we realise the dreams of the people of Meru. We should put an end to petty rivalry that slowed down the previous administration, Mr Bundi said.

The Speaker is also an ally of Governor Kawira Mwangaza.

BY MANASE OTSIALO, MWANGI MUIRURI, JAMES MURIMI, GEORGE MUNENE, DAVID MUCHUI and EDWIN KIPSANG

End of Senator Roba-backed candidate wins Mandera Speaker's race unopposed

County assembly seeking Sh100m to complete stalled new building

Tom Matoke | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The Nandi County Assembly is seeking Sh100 million to complete its new building, which has stalled for almost 10 years.

Construction of the modern state-of-art facility worth Sh600 million started in 2014. It comprises public offices for members of the county assembly (MCAs) and administrative ones.

MCA Walter Teno, the Finance Committee chairperson, disclosed that cash-flow challenges had delayed the project but vowed to push for money to be included in the budget for it.

The structure is 90 percent complete, but still needs more funds to install auspicious furniture and electronic equipment, thus we are looking forward to the executive to cooperate in funding the project, he stated.

Current Nandi County Assembly premises.

Newly elected assembly Speaker Philemon Melly affirmed that under his leadership, he will consider the welfare of MCAs so that they can effectively carry out their mandate.

As the Speaker, I will work with the ward representatives to ensure the appropriate use of taxpayers money, including checking on the implementation of the countys stalled projects, he said.

Former assembly Speakers Edwin Cheluget and Joshua Kiptoo committed to work with the new Speaker and MCAs to facilitate the transition process before the assembly resumes sessions.

We shall work with Speaker Melly so that he will pick from where I left in the implementation of the projects and other county assembly initiatives, including having an official residential house for the Speaker, Mr Kiptoo said.

End of County assembly seeking Sh100m to complete stalled new building

Drought helps reconcile Gabbra and Borana communities in Marsabit

Jacob Walter | Thursday, September 22, 2022

For over a decade now, Marsabit County has witnessed a series of mind-bending hostilities and ethnic killings between the antagonistic Borana and Gabbra communities.

However, with fatigue from perennial disasters and crises, the cynical and antisocial residents blamed for the hostilities seem to be pulling back.

Despite the negative effects of the ongoing drought, it is also seen as spreading kindness, hope and even charity in the county.

Speaking in Elle Borr, Moyale constituency, during celebrations to mark the International Day of Peace, members of the erstwhile antagonistic Borana and Gabbra communities affirmed that disasters and crises can bring even the greatest enemies together.

Uran Assistant County Commissioner Ayub Warui was awed that the two communities that had been at loggerheads for the five years he has been in the region finally agreed to silence the guns.

Since I came to this county in 2017, I have always witnessed nothing but constant clashes and killing among the Gabbra and Borana communities, Mr Warui said.

But today we have a new dawn where the two communities have expressed the burning desire to put their differences aside and live cohesively.

He cited the ravaging drought as one of the factors that prompted the communities to bury their differences.

Because nearly all water pans and boreholes had dried up and grazing lands depleted, herders from the two sides had no other option but to agree to share the remaining scarce resources.

Borana and Gabbra community elders mark International Day of Peace on September 21, 2022 at Elle Borr Village in Sololo sub-county.

The drought has deprived Marsabit residents of over one million livestock and driven over 225,000 residents to the cusp of starvation.

Mr Warui was impressed when he witnessed Gabbra herders grazing their livestock past Uran, which is mainly inhabited by the Borana community while Borana herders also grazed their animals in perceived Gabbra zones.

This new development after several unfruitful peacebuilding programmes over the years, he said, indicated the beginning of a major transformation in the relationship between the two communities.

Residents have also vowed never to be used as pawns again by the political class, which exploits their vulnerability to help them stay politically relevant.

Mr Warui was optimistic that ongoing peacebuilding processes across the country would finally yield longstanding peace among warring communities.

Similar sentiments were expressed by Turbi Assistant County Commissioner Stephen Kiloi, who urged herders never to allow themselves to slide back to the bloody days.

During such calamities and crises, he said, herders from both sides suffer alike.

As 80 percent of the Marsabit population are pastoralists, the scramble over natural resources such as water and pasture is considered a key trigger of ethnic tension among them.

But since the September 2 peace pact between the Gabbra and Borana in Turbi town, new twists in events have been reported.

Marsabit human rights activist and writer Abraham Dalle also attributed the prolonged drought of over five seasons to recent robust conversations that have yielded positive results in peacebuilding.

Borana and Gabbra community elders alongside during International Day of Peace on September 21, 2022 at Elle Borr Village in Marsabit County.

He also said the dusk-to-dawn curfew and security operations in Marsabit since March had sparked conversations between Gabbra and Borana.

Residents used the crises to evaluate the magnitude of losses and suffering they had brought upon themselves.

He wanted such peace dialogues to be replicated in other communities and between local politicians and peace

Drought helps reconcile Gabbra and Borana communities in Marsabit

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stakeholders.

Were not yet out of the woods in terms of establishing longstanding peace as it is still fragile, Mr Dalle said.

This is just the beginning, but were hopeful going by the events that these discussions will yield long-term peaceful coexistence among the antagonistic communities."

Before the peace pact, most of the areas once deserted due to ethnic tension are now roaring back to life.

Elle Borr resident Guyo Ali narrated how the small village with over 300 households was completely deserted for nearly two years.

But since the beginning of the peace dialogues, residents have returned to their homes and are trying to rebuild their lives.

Gabbra family

Sololo peace chairperson Diba Galgallo said he can now visit or even spend a night at the home of a Gabbra family, unlike in previous years when they could never see eye to eye.

Turbi resident Chukulis Kuyowa, for her part, thanked God for the calm they now enjoy after massive losses caused by ethnic conflicts.

She called for goodwill from all partners to ensure longstanding peace returned to the entire county.

The peace dialogue in Elle Borr village brought together the Borana and Gabbra from Turbi, Sololo, and Uran divisions and was funded by the German government through Welt Hunger Hilfe and implemented by the Pastoralist Community Initiative and Development Assistance (Pacida).

Pacida programme manager Samuel Lentoror said it was ironic that the two communities were coming together during hard times.

Its awestriking to see these two communities agreeing to bury their differences, especially during these hard times, and to share the scarce resources when indeed it is the scramble for the same resources that had caused them to be constantly at loggerheads, Mr Lentoror said.

The two communities previously clashed because of the scarce resources, but they finally decided to share the few available resources even under the worst circumstances when droughts hit hard.

He said the ultimate change of mind could be a result of the need for survival as the two communities realised they could no longer keep fighting.

Peacebuilding process

Welt Hunger Hilfe project head Philip Ewoton clarified the peacebuilding process was a three-year programme aimed at building resilience among the pastoralists.

The success of the programme, he said, only lay in finding peace among the warring communities in Marsabit and on the Ethiopia-Kenya borders.

According to the Delaware Disaster Research Centre, after conducting over 700 field studies on floods, droughts and earthquakes, it was established that the vast majority of people sit calm and help each other amid calamities and disasters.

A British social psychologist also noted that people are much more likely to see prosocial behaviour across multiple types of disasters and extreme events.

Social connection may be particularly important under stress because stress naturally leads to a sense of vulnerability and loss of control.

Another study by Benjamin Converse and colleagues at the University of Virginia found that feeling out of control leads to greater generosity and helpfulness.

Other research also established that wars and stress lead to bonding.

Robert Sapolsky established from his research that acute stress prepares the body for resistance (physiological readiness, increased immune response, and heightened awareness).

Therefore, many scientists have agreed that acute stress, as unpleasant as it may be, could also be an opportunity to

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experience the most beautiful aspects of life: social connection and love.

Acute stress may help remind people of a fundamental truth: common humanity.

Understanding peoples shared vulnerability can also inspire kindness, connection and a desire to stand together and support each other.

End of Drought helps reconcile Gabbra and Borana communities in Marsabit

Boreholes come to the aid of drought-ravaged villagers

Sammy Lutta | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Unreliable rainfall in Turkana County due to climate change is pushing conventional water sources like rivers and surface dams to the brink of exhaustion.

The situation has exacerbated the effects of drought, with more than 600,000 residents still relying on relief food, according to authorities.

However, residents of Turkwel and Katilu wards, which are also prone to drought, are adapting to climate change by embracing irrigation with water from boreholes.

Mr James Ekidor, from Katilu village, has carved out a niche for himself through irrigation and no longer relies on relief food.

His farm is an oasis of shiny leafy vegetables on a six-acre portion that is served by a functioning and well-equipped borehole that guarantees him a reliable supply of water.

Year-round water

Mr Ekidor grows highly nutritious vegetables like cowpeas, okra, African nightshade (managu), tomatoes, butternut fruits, watermelon and sukuma wiki (collard greens) by relying on a borehole that he says provides year-round water.

"The livestock that I used to keep were wiped out by drought due to lack of water and pasture. When the borehole was constructed in the area by PanAfricare, the water was not only enough for domestic use but also to support passionate farmers like me," he said.

He noted that he doesn't only ensure that his family has enough food to completely stop relying on relief food, but he is also able to sell the surplus in nearby Katilu at prices dictated by villagers.

Farmers at Keekunyuk village in Katilu Ward, Turkana county delighted as they witness the piping installation on their farm on September 13, 2022.

Ms Ann Ekiru and her neighbour Susan Nakadi in Kanaodon village, Katilu ward, says the boreholes have enabled them to establish kitchen gardens, which they bank on improving the families' nutritional needs as they plant a variety of vegetables.

"The money that I would have spent on buying vegetables for my family is saved. The area is almost semi-arid and it does not rain most of the time, so the prices of vegetables are high," Ms Nakadi said.

Relieved from relief food reliance

Mr Emase Lokuda, the Napak farm chairman, said he embraced groundnuts farming after PanAfricare rehabilitated both the farm and the borehole.

"The rehabilitation of the farm came at the most opportune time as we could have been among many locals in the county pleading for relief food. But fortunately we are now pleading for a better market for our farm produce," Mr Lokuda said.

Mr Jones Lopeyok, PanAfricare's agriculture field officer, said they resorted to drilling boreholes in areas with agricultural potential in Katilu and Turkwel wards to support farming activities.

"Through Improved Approach to Community-based Nutrition (IMPACT), the organisation that is funded by the Bayer Fund has sunk nine boreholes to serve farmers far away from the permanent Turkwel River, Mr Lopeyok said.

Prolonged drought has affected rain-fed farms, resulting in reduced agricultural activities."

Nutritious vegetables

By investing in boreholes, he said, they are facilitating locals to grow nutritious vegetables to increase household access and the availability and consumption of diversified and nutrient-rich food especially for mothers and young children.

"Irrigation makes farming a great venture because farmers can farm all year round. With proper management of irrigation infrastructure, they will be able to achieve high water use efficiency," he added.

Boreholes, which have also been drilled and equipped in other villages such as Keekunyuk, Lolupe and Nakoyo that have huge agricultural potential, are shown to help farmers earn more cash and they are the right step to self-reliance.

More irrigation infrastructure is being set up on the Kaapus and Tiya farms. This includes boreholes, fences, water storage tanks and piping systems meant to effectively utilise groundwater to reduce farmers' dependence on unreliable rainfall.

Boreholes come to the aid of drought-ravaged villagers

Sammy Lutta | Thursday, September 22, 2022

End of Boreholes come to the aid of drought-ravaged villagers

Governor Cheboi to complete multimillion-shilling stadium project

Florah Koech | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Baringo Governor Benjamin Cheboi has said he will prioritise the completion of the stalled multimillion-shilling Kabarnet stadium in Kabarnet.

The flagship project started eight years ago and was to be completed in 2018, but it became a white elephant.

Touring the stadium on Monday, he lamented that the perimeter wall was falling and gullies had developed in the open field that used to host football games and athletics.

"We are worried that a project that was started during my tenure in 2014 is yet to be completed several years on, Mr Cheboi said.

Despite the few challenges, I also blame the previous government who took after me for failing to continue with it just because of mere politics. I promise locals that very soon its construction works will commence.

Disputes misappropriation claims

He disputed claims that money meant for the stadium was misappropriated during his tenure, explaining that the project was allocated only Sh40 million, which went into construction of a perimeter wall, levelling the field and installing a main gate.

I also want to dispute claims that the stadium is lacking a title deed yet all public institutions in this region have no documentation but construction works are going on, he said.

We have schools, hospitals that have been built on land allocated for such projects, so the issue is not a problem but allocating more funding to the stadium.

Former governor Stanley Kiptis claimed recently that when he took over in 2017, he found several audit queries about the stalled stadium that neither his administration nor the Ethics and Anti- Corruption Commission (EACC) could understand.

Audit queries

To try to complete the project, he said, he wrote to the national government seeking permission to continue construction while the audit queries dating back to 2015 were investigated.

The stalled stadium is a serious matter and as a sportsman, I am also a worried man because it has several audit queries, Mr Kiptis said at the time.

I have gone to an extent of writing to the Sports ministry to also allocate funds to support us to complete the project like the other stadiums in other regions.

Title deed setback

He also cited the lack of a title deed as a major setback for the project.

It is estimated that the work has consumed more than Sh50 million since it started, but there is nothing to show for the money except poor workmanship.

The project also attracted the eye of former Auditor-General Edward Ouko in the 2017/ 2018 financial year. Reports indicated that the contractor was awarded a Sh17.5 million contract to rehabilitate the stadium in December 2017, work that was supposed to be completed on February 28, 2018, but it is incomplete.

The auditor-general reported that a bill of quantities was provided for two goal posts for Sh186,000 but none was seen at the site.

The storm water flows from town through the stadium and as a result, gullies have formed, the report said.

Some gabions have also been washed away and two sections of the perimeter wall on the lower side have been destroyed by the storm water. This is a clear indication that the drainage system was not properly done although certified and paid for.

The report also revealed that ownership documents for the stadium land were not produced for audit and therefore ownership of the land could not be confirmed.

No effort

No efforts appear to have been made to complete the project and there is a likelihood of the expenditure of Sh16.7 million already incurred going to waste since the project appears abandoned, said the report.

Governor Cheboi to complete multimillion-shilling stadium project

Florah Koech | Thursday, September 22, 2022

In the 2014/2015 fiscal year, the auditor also raised queries on the tender for building a boundary wall at the stadium that was awarded to M/S Triumph for Sh10.7 million.

Records show that Sh23 million was used to build a pavilion, and washing and changing rooms and another Sh800,000 was spent on a new gate, but none of these is seen on site apart from a dilapidated latrine.

The contractor planted grass in the pitch and built a perimeter wall, which has developed cracks and is almost collapsing.

End of Governor Cheboi to complete multimillion-shilling stadium project

56 wines and spirits outlets closed in Isiolo

Waweru Wairimu | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The security team in Isiolo has closed down more than 50 wines and spirits outlets following last Sundays incident where seven people died and three were hospitalised after taking adulterated liquor in Oldonyiro.

The liquor was allegedly bought in Lodukoe on the Isiolo-Samburu border before it was distributed to Oldonyiro and Longopito in Kipsing.

A multi-agency team of police, Kenya Revenue Authority and Kenya Bureau of Standards officers has been cracking down on outlets selling counterfeit liquor to weed out unscrupulous operators and remove substandard and unsafe alcoholic drinks.

Isiolo sub-county Police Commander Collins Sainna said one person who consumed a bottle of the liquor in Oldonyiro on Wednesday lost his sight and was rushed to Isiolo Referral Hospital, where three other victims were admitted.

The man had bought a carton of the liquor in Oldonyiro and intended to sell it. He started complaining that he could not see after taking a bottle, Mr Sainna said.

Two suspects have been arrested in connection with the sale of the liquor and nine of the 24 cartons sold in the area were seized by the team.

Mr Sainna said the team was looking for the remaining liquor before it was consumed.

We appeal to business people who might have bought the drinks to surrender them to police because consuming them is disastrous and the public to share information on where it is being manufactured, he noted.

Original brands

The drinks labelled Trace and Smart Vodka are counterfeits of original brands sold under those names and the bottles have counterfeit stickers, police said.

To evade arrest, it was established, dealers sell the liquor in remote areas where unsuspecting patrons cannot detect whether it is original or counterfeit. The liquor is sold at slightly higher than half the price.

Police sources told the Nation that traders found with the drinks claimed to have bought them from authorised dealers in Isiolo town, in apparent attempts to conceal information on the location of the distilling plant.

We suspect the drinks are being manufactured and packaged in neighbouring Meru County before being distributed to off-town areas in Isiolo, said an officer, who did not want to be named.

Addressing journalists at his office in Isiolo town, Mr Sainna said closing the wines and spirits was not to hurt businesses but to ensure they are compliant.

We are not opposed to anyones business and we want them to work within the confines of the law and purchase products from certified manufacturers for public safety, he stressed.

He appealed to Isiolo MCAs to fast-track an alcohol control bill, saying it would help in enforcement, regulating the sale of alcoholic drinks and taming illicit brews.

Lack of an existing law is the main challenge in enforcement and having it in place would help regulate mushrooming liquor outlets, he said.

He said the crackdown will be sustained in line with an earlier executive order issued by former President Uhuru Kenyatta.

End of 56 wines and spirits outlets closed in Isiolo

Hope for traders as Kenya Railways installs containers at disputed Karatina site

Stephen Munyiri | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The Kenya Railways Corporation has started installing hundreds of container stalls on land from which about 2,000 traders were evicted in Karatina, Nyeri County, two years ago.

This is happening even as the affected traders said they had changed their mind about going back to the former site.

Deputy President Rigathi Gachagua had pledged during campaigns to resettle the traders if Dr Wlliam Ruto was elected President.

Last week, Mathira MP Eric Mwangi Wamumbi convened a consultative meeting with the traders, who unanimously declined the resettlement plan. They instead asked Nyeri Governor Mutahi Kahiga to build for them a permanent and modern market at the new site where they relocated.

They expressed fears that if they vacate the three-acre site, unscrupulous individuals could grab it.

Speaker after speaker claimed they were apprehensive about their future at the railway land. There were some acrimonious moments when some individuals attempted to support returning to the railway land but were shouted down.

National Government

The traders asked Mr Wamumbi to work with the county and the national government and build a new market for them.

The traders were evicted from the railway land and their structures demolished, drawing the wrath of Mr Gachagua, who claimed when he addressed the traders at the site that some unidentified powers had instigated the demolitions in a bid to undermine him politically.

The issue also became a campaign tool when former Nyeri senator Ephraim Maina also came to the defence of the traders and urged them to stay put.

In the run-up to the August elections, Mr Gachagua condemned the demolitions, warning that payback time was coming for those who tormented ordinary Kenyans by denying them their livelihoods.

He promised the evictees that the hustlers government' would resettle them at the same site once they took power.

Throughout last week, Kenya Railways employees were busy offloading containers that will be placed at various points along the railway line in Karatina.

A worker, who did not want to be named because he was not authorised to talk to the media on behalf of the railway company, said the containers will be partitioned into small compartments and rented out to traders at subsidised rates.

After Dr Ruto and Mr Gachagua were declared winners of the presidential election last month, a group of about 100 people shouting freedom is here invaded the railway land and tried to demarcate it by erecting beacons.

But Karatina police, led by the local police boss Benjamin Rotich, thwarted their efforts.

End of Hope for traders as Kenya Railways installs containers at disputed Karatina site

Win for creatives as Sakaja seeks to ease photography rules in Nairobi

Kevin Cheruiyot | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Nairobi residents in the film and creative industry can now breathe a sigh of relief following a directive from Nairobi County Governor Johnson Sakaja to have laws that prohibit photography, videography, film and the creative industry in the city be amended.

The governor gave the directive when he received a courtesy call from the Kenya National Chamber of Commerce and Industry on Thursday.

When we say we want to be pro-business, it is not just passive to stop harassment of traders but we want to be proactive to facilitate and promote. There are many archaic laws including those that hamper creativity and innovation and we are going to weed those out, Governor Sakaja said.

He also announced a Nairobi Festival that will be held every December after Jamhuri Day to display and celebrate the vibe of the city.

In December, we will set aside some streets to display culture, food, creativity, have the nganya awards for the best-done matatus, have rugby, football and basketball tournaments and many other activities, he said.

The move is expected to boost the graffiti business in Nairobi that has been in place for years as matatus applying different routes seek decoration to attract customers.

Ease of doing business

Governor Sakaja welcomed the partnership with the chamber of commerce to improve the ease of doing business in Nairobi.

During the meeting, the governor said that businesspeople should spend more time doing their business, and not chasing compliance issues with the authorities.

KNCCI Nairobi Chapter Chairman Julius Opiyo said that many international firms want to invest in Nairobi including one for assembling electric motorcycles.

The governor was accompanied by his deputy Dr James Njoroge Muchiri.

End of Win for creatives as Sakaja seeks to ease photography rules in Nairobi

History made as MCA takes oath in sign language

George Munene | Thursday, September 22, 2022

It was a historic moment as the first nominated MCA who could only speak in sign language took the oath of office in the Kirinyaga County Assembly.

At one point, the assembly went silent as Harrison Kariuki Bundi was sworn in through the guidance of his aide, Abednego Kiptoo Ng'eno.

The entire House was treated to a light moment as the smartly dressed Mr Bundi marched to the floor of the House and waited patiently to be given instructions by Mr Ng'eno on how to go about the process.

For about a minute everything remained quiet as Mr Bundi, the first deaf person to represent people with disabilities in the assembly in the devolution era, took the oath.

On standby was Mr Ng'eno, who was allowed to undertake the task of guiding Mr Bundi on the floor of the House by assembly Clerk Kamau Aidi.

Mr Bundi is among 11 MCAs nominated by the United Democratic Alliance (UDA) to the assembly.

He believed in himself and was determined to capture the Karumandi ward seat in the August 9 polls but lost in the UDA nominations in April.

But with the determination of an eagle he continued lobbying to be nominated to the assembly and succeeded.

Sworn in

Speaking to reporters through his interpreter after being sworn in, Mr Bundi said he had achieved his dream of becoming MCA.

"I'm excited today for becoming one of the MCAs. I'm confident that I will serve people with disabilities effectively in the entire region," he said.

Born in Gichugu constituency, Mr Bundi wants to fight for the rights of all disadvantaged people by ensuring that they are given a chance to serve in private and public institutions.

He pledged to push for bills that will provide better services to people with disabilities without discrimination.

He lamented that youths were suffering due to lack of jobs and promised to help address the problem.

He thanked President William Ruto's UDA for being mindful of people with disabilities and nominating him to the assembly and giving him a chance to serve the community.

Before his new role, Mr Bundi worked for the Nandi County government, which he thanked for giving him an opportunity to earn a living.

"In Nandi, I was able to sharpen my leadership skills and my task in this assembly will be an easier one," he said.

With his wife Daisy Kariuki, who is also deaf, the MCA thanked his family for their support.

Ms Kariuki congratulated her husband over his nomination and promised to continue giving him the support he needs to serve residents.

Family members described Mr Bundi as a hardworking and shrewd man.

They said Mr Bundi grew up as a vibrant child and no one could detect that he was physically challenged.

"We learnt that he had a hearing problem when we took him to the clinic when he was a little boy aged three," said his father James Bundi.

They then took him to Kerugoya School for the Deaf to learn how to communicate effectively and get an education like other children.

Family members believed that their son had the ability to lead and serve Kirinyaga residents.

End of History made as MCA takes oath in sign language

Rabai MP to petition state to compensate coconut farmers

Maureen Ongala | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Rabai MP Kenga Mupe plans to petition the government to compensate coconut farmers in Kilifi for the losses incurred during the drought of the past four years.

Rabai sub-county is one of the coconut zones and the biggest producer in the county, with over 40 per cent of yields coming from the region.

Locals have depended on the cash crop for their livelihoods for years.

But coconut trees have dried and become unproductive because of the drought.

Speaking at Shika Adabu in Rabai/Kisuritini ward, Mr Mupe said the drought had cost residents their livelihoods and they are struggling to survive.

We all know there has been a severe drought ... The community have relied on coconut farming, but many coconut trees have dried, and people have lost their source of income, he said.

I will table a motion in Parliament to have the government compensate coconut farmers so they can have a source of livelihood to support their families and develop the county.

Reviving coconut farming in Rabai, he said, would improve the social and economic status of the community.

As leaders in the national and county governments, we are focused on ensuring there is development in our areas to improve the livelihood of our people, he said.

He said he would work with the county government and other partners to empower coconut farmers so that they can produce quality products.

The Rabai community had asked the new county government to revive coconut farming to help fight poverty.

Residents noted that the collapse of coconut farming had affected over 100,000 people.

Mr Nzaka Mwotovu, a coconut farmer in Rabai, said families are poor and must find other means of livelihood that turn out to be sustainable.

Families cannot educate their children because they have no stable source of income to raise school fees and buy food, he said.

He said there were no leaders committed to reviving coconut farming in the region and pushing the agenda on behalf of farmers.

Efforts by the community to create a committee to spearhead the issue of coconut production were in vain because there is no policy in place about the crop.

We have not had leaders who have stood to fight for the coconut plant for the benefit of the people of Rabai to have them manage the plant, and we are at a crossroads, he added.

Economic constraints also prevented farmers from reviving the crop, he said.

There is no leader who has bothered to compensate our farmers like what happens in upcountry whenever their cash crops are affected, Mr Mwotovu said.

Coconut farmers in Kaloleni and Watamu in Kilifi North sub-county are also affected, and farmers are now irrigating their coconut orchards.

Mr Christopher Kitsao, from Mbarakachembe village in Watamu, said farmers fetch water to irrigate the remaining crops to avoid further losses.

"We already incurred losses, but some of us did not want to stop coconut farming due to drought, and we decided to irrigate those that survived," he said.

A 2010 coconut survey by the Coast Development Authority established that there were 9.9 million coconut trees in the Coast region, with Kilifi and Kwale recording over two million.

Sixty per cent of the coconut trees are old and no longer productive.

The report noted that coconut farming in the region was a sleeping giant and that Kenya was losing over Sh50 billion annually for failing to exploit the crops potential.

Rabai MP to petition state to compensate coconut farmers

Maureen Ongala | Thursday, September 22, 2022

End of Rabai MP to petition state to compensate coconut farmers

Kilifi County to dispel myths surrounding contraceptive use

Maureen Ongala | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Kilifi County is targeting men to dispel myths surrounding the use of contraceptives in the community so as to increase family planning uptake and reduce the dependency rate.

The rate of family planning uptake in women is 49 percent, up from 32 percent in 2014.

In 2013, male involvement in family planning was 33 percent but it is now 84 percent.

The county government plans sensitisation campaigns at the grassroots to enlighten men about the importance of family planning, said Kenneth Miriti, county coordinator for reproductive health.

According to Mr Miriti, men are the main obstacle in efforts to encourage family planning because of many myths about contraceptives.

Men had instilled fear in their partners willing to adopt family planning, he said, and sometimes women would leave their clinical cards at health centres to hide them from their husbands.

These myths have led men to be rigid on the issue of family planning, and they do not want their women to use contraceptives, he said.

Mr Miriti said a report from the Kenya Bureau of Statistics showed that 80 percent of families in Kilifi depend on 20 percent of people with a stable income.

He urged partners to have small families that they can take care of.

We are not asking couples not to give birth, but we are telling them to weigh their income and have children they can manage and take care of them to become productive in the future, he added.

In 2014, Kilifi was among six counties with low family planning uptake.

Mr Miriti said an increase in family planning uptake has helped address teenage pregnancies.

Kilifi has moved from 39 percent of teenage pregnancies in 2018 to 13 percent this year, and also the Mwenye syndrome where men demanded that women must seek permission from them before [using family planning methods], he said.

The countys Health department, he said, has robust plans to help residents get the contraceptives they need.

The programmes are supported by non-state actors such as the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Population Services Kenya.

To increase uptake, contraceptives were made available free at hospitals and other public health centres in villages. Health workers were also trained to offer quality family planning services.

Mr Miriti said Kilifi was among the first counties to allocate money in its annual budget for family planning.

In 2017, the Health department set aside Sh5 million and the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation donated Sh10 million.

The allocation increased in 2018 to Sh7 million, while Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation maintained their donation of Sh10 million.

In the 2019/2020 financial year, the department allocated Sh14 million for family planning and to prevent teenage pregnancies.

End of Kilifi County to dispel myths surrounding contraceptive use

Uncertainty as Governor Lelelit delays swearing-in of Samburu MCAs

Geoffrey Ondieki | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The date for the swearing-in of members of the Samburu County Assembly (MCAs) is yet to be known, as Governor Jonathan Lelelit has not gazetted the first sitting.

The House is fully constituted after the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC) gazetted 11 nominated MCAs to represent special-interest groups.

Reliable sources told the Nation that the race for assembly Speaker is at the heart of the delay.

"There is still intense lobbying and the race is tight. That is why the government is yet to call for the first sitting," said the source.

The contest for the influential position has narrowed down to a bruising battle between the Azimio la Umoja One Kenya and President William Rutos Kenya Kwanza alliance.

The race pits the incumbent Solomon Lempere against Fred Lengees, who is fronted by the Kenya Kwanza team in Samburu.

The aspirants for the coveted position are courting MCAs-elect. They are banking on the 15 elected MCAs and 11 nominated ones to secure the position.

Assembly Clerk Patrick Leshore is yet to declare the Speaker's position vacant following Governor Lelelit's failure to call for the first sitting through a gazette notice.

Mr Lempere took over the mantle from Steve Lelegwe (now senator) in 2017. During his tenure, he led the assembly to pass important legislation.

The assembly dissolved on June 9, having passed 23 bills over the five years. Mr Lempere rated the House highly, saying MCAs performance was unmatched as they "passed crucial bills that will change people's lives".

Governor Lelelit faces an uphill task in governing the county as the rival Azimio coalition clinched a majority of seats in the assembly. He won under the United Democratic Alliance (UDA), succeeding Moses Lenolkulal, who retired after serving two terms allowed under the Constitution.

Azimio captured 15 seats and six nominated, against Kenya Kwanzas 11 and five nominated. MCAs allied to Azimio are 13 from Jubilee, one from Kanu and another from the Party of National Unity (PNU).

On the Kenya Kwanza side, President Rutos UDA has 10 slots, while Musalia Mudavadi's Amani National Congress (ANC) clinched one.

This means that Governor Lelelit could have a rough time working with Azimio-allied MCAs in passing important business such as the county budget, supplementary budget, county policies and motions.

Azimio-affiliated MCAs are James Leleruk (Suguta ward, Kanu); Joseph Loloju (Maralal, Jubilee); Jeremiah Leitoro (Elbarta, Jubilee), Lealmusia Ali (Ndoto, PNU); Lemoosa Lekuram (Nyiro, Jubilee); Paul Leshimpiro (Angata, Jubilee); James Lenanguram (Baawa, Jubilee); Francis Lemantile (Wamba, Jubilee); and Christopher Lentukunye (Wamba North, Jubilee).

Those nominated to the House under Azimio coalition are Silapia Lenamantiyo, Esther Lenolkulal, Eunice Lekirenyei, Agnes Wambua, Osman Dube and Stacy Nareyo.

Kenya Kwanza-affiliated MCAs who would back Governor Lelelit's agenda are David Lekuchula (Lodokejek, UDA); Felix Lenamparasio (Loosuk, UDA); Patrick Leerie (Poro, ANC); Lawrence Lorunyei (Nachola, UDA), Kelvin Lpesina (Waso, UDA); and Jackson Lelenkeju (Wamba East, UDA).

Those nominated under Kenya Kwanza are Rebecca Lolosoli, Charity Lenyakopiro, Asha Mohammed Ngigi Kagiri and Jane Loregae.

End of Uncertainty as Governor Lelelit delays swearing-in of Samburu MCAs

Narok governor pledges Sh300m for ward development

Robert Kiplagat | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Narok Governor Patrick Ntutu has pledged to commit Sh300 million annually in development funds for the countys 30 wards.

Mr Ntutu, who addressed 48 county assembly members (MCAs) during a dinner after their swearing-in, said he will fulfil the promise he made during his campaigns.

Governor Ntutu disclosed that each of the wards will receive Sh100 million to fund priority projects.

"As I promised during my campaigns, the hallmark of our development will start at the ward level. To realise this, we are putting Sh100 million in each of the wards every year," he said.

Mr Ntutu also reiterated that the disbursements will only come after thorough public participation to ensure that voters get value for the money.

He assured MCAs, new Speaker Davis Dikir and his deputy Dapash Salaon (Melili MCA) that he will collaborate with them in providing services to residents.

"We will not entertain power struggles between the two arms of government. We will work with all MCAs regardless of the party affiliations for the sake of our people," Mr Ntutu pledged.

But he clarified that the assembly will be free to exercise its oversight role, saying County Executive Committee Members can be summoned by relevant assembly committees when the need arises.

He added: "As the executive, we shall be transparent, open and consultative. We will ensure that you hold us to account as a way of promoting good governance."

MCAs who spoke during the event lauded the much-anticipated ward development funds.

"With all the funds having been managed by the executive, we have been viewed as having no development value and after every five years the electorate sends us back home," Mr Salaon said.

The ward fund, he added, will help MCAs demonstrate to voters that besides their legislative roles, they also bring development.

Speaker Dikir, for his part, assured voters the assembly will perform its role.

"All I have to tell the governor and the people of Narok is that we shall not let you down. We will play our role effectively as the assembly," he said.

End of Narok governor pledges Sh300m for ward development

Group distances itself from Kedong Ranch invasion

Macharia Mwangi | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The beneficiaries of a 4,000-acre farm at the Kedong Ranch in Naivasha have distanced themselves from a group that recently invaded the private property claiming ownership.

Speaking on behalf of the Kitet Sosion Community, secretary Mike Roka called the invaders criminals who lack locus standi in the land matters affecting them.

He linked the invasion to political incitement, saying those who destroyed a chain link fence at the property were not members of Kitet Sosion but came from a neighbouring county.

We are not part of the recent agitation for a share of the Kedong Ranch, which is a private entity. Those talking of historical injustices are selfish individuals who are out to advance their personal interests, Mr Roka said.

The intruders destroyed at least 20 metres of a perimeter fence last week before being repulsed by the police.

Mr Roka said his group was given the 4,000 acres after fighting in court for more than 20 years with managers of the ranch. The matter was settled out of court.

We are okay with the 4,000 acres given to us by the management of the Kedong Ranch. Those agitating for additional acreage have never been our members, he said.

He spoke as Naivasha Deputy County Commissioner Kisilu Mutua cited an intelligence report that indicated the intruders were planning to invade the community land allocated to Mr Rokas group.

We are aware that the intruders have changed tact and are planning to invade the 4,000 acres belonging to the Kedong Ranch beneficiaries, but we have enhanced security around the vast farm, he said.

Mr Mutua warned invaders about resorting to unlawful means to claim ownership of the privately owned land.

He said a deed of settlement signed by elected trustees and representatives of the Kitet Sosion Community was registered by the High Court, the Ministry of Lands and Kedong Ranch Limited.

The deed of settlement acknowledged and registered with the High Court a donation of 4,000 acres to squatters residing in Kedong Ranch Limited, he said.

Squatters have begun settling on the allocated land and are building a modern school, he added.

End of Group distances itself from Kedong Ranch invasion

From errand boy to Kitui assembly Speaker: Kelvin Katisya

Kitavi Mutua | Thursday, September 22, 2022

A young lawyer who for many years volunteered as an errand boy for Wiper Party leader Kalonzo Musyoka, has been elected overwhelmingly as the Speaker of Kitui County Assembly, beating Moi era Cabinet minister George Ndotto.

In a contest seen as a coup against the status quo, 30-year-old Kelvin Kinengo Katisya emerged the winner in the second round of voting where he floored Mr Ndotto-a veteran politician who had served as Speaker since 2013.

Mr Katisya, the youngest among nine candidates garnered 51 votes against Mr Ndottos 6 votes to clinch the seat.

In the first round of voting, the lawyer had emerged tops with 25 votes, with all the other contestants getting less than ten votes.

Wiper party MCAs ganged up with those from small parties and independents to reject a push by their leader Mr Musyoka and party MPs who were rooting for Mr Ndotto to secure a third consecutive term as Speaker, to elect a Speaker 50 years younger than him.

Also read: Former MP bodyguard wins Tana River Speaker race

When Mr Katisya was born in 1992 while Mr Ndotto is now aged 80 years. When Mr Katisya was born, Mr Ndoto had been a Cabinet minister in President Daniel arap Moi regime for five years and was seeking re-election as MP for Kitui central.

In the last parliamentary session, Mr Ndotto was said to be the oldest among the 47 Speakers of County Assemblies in the country.

In a previous interview with the Nation, Mr Katisya disclosed that he was a volunteer for Mr Musyokas party for five years since 2014 before being employed by former Makueni Governor Kivutha Kibwana as a liaison officer and advisor.

Greater heights

The lawyer who was among the advocates hired to represent Azimio la Umoja in the petition challenging the election of President William Ruto, said he was motivated by the fact that more than three-quarters of the newly elected Kitui MCAs are in the youth bracket.

Looking at the outcome of the 2022 election, 31 out of 39 elected MCAs are aged below 35 years. They are in the youth bracket which represents the biggest part of Kitui population, he said.

He said he will work hard in a bid to steer Kitui to greater heights.

County Assembly Clerk Elijah Mutambuki declared Mr Katisya the winner and swore him into office. He will be deputised by Chris Nzilu, the MCA for Changwithya west.

His election elicited celebrations among the youth who felt one of their own was now heading a key arm of the county government.

Other candiadtes who ran against Mr Katisya were former staffer with US Embassy in Nairobi Paul Kitungu, Dubai based businessman Augustus Kyalo Muli, lawyer Benjamin Mwikya Musyoki, former Tseikuru MCA Boniface Kilaa among others.

End of From errand boy to Kitui assembly Speaker: Kelvin Katisya

Speaker intrigues blamed for Nairobi County Assembly sitting delay

Collins Omulo | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The race for the Nairobi County Assembly speaker seat is at the heart of the continued delay by Governor Johnson Sakaja to call for the assemblys first sitting.

The contest for the powerful position has narrowed down to a do-or-die battle between the Raila Odinga-led Azimio la Umoja One Kenya and President William Rutos Kenya Kwanza Alliance.

The race pits Azimios Ken Ngondi against Kenya Kwanzas Benson Mutura, who is the immediate former speaker.

Complicating the race, however, is the fact that Kenya Kwanza, the outfit Mr Sakaja belongs to, is the minority in the assembly.

Consequently, the governor is facing the headache of running a county government with an assembly that is controlled by the opposition.

It is this catch-22 situation that has seen the swearing-in of MCAs thrown into confusion in the capital as all other assemblies proceed with the process.

Read: Over 10 governors walk on eggshells over control of assemblies

The Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission has gazetted the names of nominated MCAs, marking the full constitution of assemblies.

The gazettement of nominated MCAs on September 9 set in motion a 30-day countdown for governors to call for inaugural sittings.

As of yesterday, 45 governors had gazetted the days for the first sittings except for Mombasa Governor Abdulswamad Nassir and Mr Sakaja.

Intense lobbying

Intense lobbying and behind-the-scenes manoeuvres have been going on as the governor races against time to get numbers that could tilt the speakers contest in Kenya Kwanzas favour.

Yesterday, Mr Sakaja was holed up in a meeting with the MCAs trying to fight fires as pressure mounted on him to call for the first sitting.

The county assembly has 85 elected ward representatives and 39 nominated, bringing the total number to 124. However, an election in Utawala Ward is yet to be held.

Azimio comprising ODM, Jubilee and Wiper leads with 67 MCAs while Kenya Kwanza (UDA and CCK) has 53 MCAs.

Read: Sakaja meets Kenya Kwanza city MCAs, pledges to serve all

The remaining three are independents. In terms of individual parties, UDA and ODM both have 35 MCAs Jubilee (six), Wiper (four) and CCK with one.

In the nomination list, ODM and UDA both bagged 17 slots while Jubilee had three and Wiper two.

Nairobi Senator Edwin Sifuna accused Mr Sakaja of making several attempts to corrupt Azimio MCAs in his quest to get a puppet speaker.

He added that he is concerned about service delivery in the city because of the delay.

Unfortunately, our governor is still stuck in election mode and is still playing politics. For sure, this has to do with the election of the speaker. He has made many attempts to corrupt members. I want him to know service to Nairobians is more important than politics, said the ODM Secretary-General.

Read: William Ruto dominates the battle for county assembly seats

We need to get moving. As SG, I also want to assure him it doesnt matter how long it takes, he will not succeed in corrupting any Azimio MCAs to support the puppet speaker he is proposing, he added.

An Azimio MCA, who asked for anonymity, said Kenya Kwanza is on a mission to wreck Azimios strength in the assembly by targeting MCAs allied to Jubilee and their ODM counterparts from the Luhya community.

In our strategy meeting for the speakers election last week, eight MCAs from the community walked out of the meeting saying they had been called for a community meeting, said the MCA.

Speaker intrigues blamed for Nairobi County Assembly sitting delay

Collins Omulo | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Former minority deputy whip and Kilimani MCA Moses Ogeto accused Mr Sakaja of playing dirty politics with the swearing-in of MCAs, saying the continued delay is denying Nairobi residents representation, legislation and oversight.

He should stop being selfish yet his swearing-in was not delayed. If he wants to bring back Sonkoism then he should be prepared to ride the rough terrain, he added.

Baba Dogo MCA and immediate former deputy speaker Geoffrey Majiwa also read malice in the delayed gazettement of the first sitting.

End of Speaker intrigues blamed for Nairobi County Assembly sitting delay

President Rutos deck of cards

Charles Onyango-Obbo | Thursday, September 22, 2022

As William Ruto begins his presidency, the cards he has been dealt and the environment in which he has ascended to power could determine how much he succeeds.

Looking at the state of Kenya and Africa and the world of his two predecessors offers a good reading of his possible fortunes.

Mwai Kibaki, in 2002, came to office in a Kenya that was a near-basket case, potholed and in despair.

It had seen a decade of massive democracy mobilisation and civic activism. His and Narcs victory gave rise to the highest level of national optimism.

Surveys suggested that Kenyans were some of the most optimistic people.

The basket case and despair were a blessing. Years of decay meant there was a lot of upward room to move things even with minimum reforms.

Something as basic as appointing a handful of competent bureaucrats and a few averagely honest ministers offered large payoffs.

Kibaki also came to power at the dawn of the African Renaissance, the globalisation of Africa and a world eager to receive Kenya back into the fold.

There were lots of good tailwinds. Somalia was in great turmoil, Meles Zenawi was bringing Ethiopia to order and the war in South Sudan was raging.

Tanzania was creeping out of its socialist phase and Rwanda was only beginning to come to terms with the 1994 Genocide against the Tutsi and to get the economy up.

Burundi was in civil war, as was DR Congo, and the East African Community (EAC) was a three-member affair.

In 2013, Dr Ruto and his predecessor Uhuru Kenyatta had to wrestle with ICC demons.

The 2007/2008 post-election violence (PEV) had shattered the Kenyan self-assurance that had bounced back.

But the economy was rocking. The digital explosion had happened and Kenya was a veritable Silicon Savannah. The EAC had expanded to five members.

The Kenyan economy was again on the trot, having dramatically recovered in the last Kibaki years despite (or, perhaps, partly because of) the PEV dip.

But Kenya was now in its first war in Somalia. Terrorism had become a bigger problem. South Sudan had quickly relapsed into war barely two years after independence.

Uganda was almost thriving. Rwandas star had begun to shine. Burundi was settling down.

Africa Rising was still a believable story. The US had elected its first black president in Barack Obama, a man with Kenyan roots.

Kibaki had left a reasonably healthy economy amidst a significant infrastructure investment spree.

Bout of nationalism

The ICC case had aroused an independence-era-like bout of nationalism, a mix of virulent nativism and pan-African gung-hoism.

The Afro-optimism and its accompanying Africa Rising buzz fizzled quickly. So, to today.

In Ethiopia, the death of Meles in 2012 opened a small window to liberalisation but that went up in smoke with the Tigray war from November 2020.

While still troubled by Al-Shabaab, Somalia is in the best shape it has been in over 20 years.

The EAC has expanded to seven. Rwanda and Uganda are doing reasonably well. In Tanzania, the business-friendly East African accommodationist President Samia Suluhu Hassan has replaced the mercurial Dr John Magufuli, who died abruptly, suspected of Covid, in March last year.

Kenya has climbed to the ninth-largest African economy, though it blew up the bank to get there, and the hind wheels have come off the vehicle.

Although it remains East Africas largest economy, it is no longer the only star on the regional stage.

President Rutos deck of cards

Charles Onyango-Obbo | Thursday, September 22, 2022

It has been weakened by internal nativist politics and corruption and has to reckon with militantly alienated youth living in growing economic inequality.

Drought and famine have beset parts of the country for more than two years. Environmental perils are plentifulwith droughts in one part of the country countered by some of the worst floods in others.

Covid-19 had also left a trail of destruction and the country has not fully recovered.

A hard-fought campaign, a close election and another dispute in the Supreme Court left a bitter taste in the mouth of former Prime Minister Raila Odingas Azimio la Umoja coalition, who lost the verdict.

It has all combined to make President Rutos hustler and bottom-up campaign perhaps the most populist and class-focused since Independence.

Hopes of an immediate fall in fuel, unga (maize flour) and electricity prices were dashed as the complex realities of running an economy in a post-Covid pressure cooker hit home.

In diplomatic terms, Ruto had an easy early goal. Queen Elizabeth IIs burial allowed him to schmooze with the mighty of the world in London without pressure to perform in the international spotlight.

He put his foot in international waters, with little risk, in the perfect emotional moment.

Surprisingly, Ruto is in a less favourable position than the Kibaki of 2002 and 2013 Uhuru.

He has little headroom, far greater expectations, fewer resources to work with, albeit with more tools, and a more favourable geopolitical environment.

Mr Onyango-Obbo is a journalist, writer and curator of the Wall of Great Africans. @cobbo3

End of President Rutos deck of cards

KISTEPILE NYATHI | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Less than a day after South African President Cyril Ramaphosa cut short a crucial investment-promotion visit to the United States, to deal with an escalating electricity crisis on the home front, three long-delayed independent renewable power producer contracts have been signed.

In an announcement and contract signing ceremony in Centurion near Johannesburg on Thursday, Minerals and Energy minister Gwede Mantashe claimed that S.Africas energy crisis was part and parcel of a global problem.

Mantashe said that, while European and other countries had been urging S.Africa, a relatively high carbon dioxide output country, to cut back on coal usage, with the power producer Eskom using coal for about 95 percent of its electricity output, European governments had recently increased their orders of South African coal four-fold.

Mantashe cited what he termed a coal mafia for some supply problems in running South Africas ageing fleet of coal-fired power plants.

But his own officials contradicted Mantashe in framing S Africas electricity supply issues as part of a global energy problem, pointing out that an unacceptably high level of the countrys installed capacity was out of operation at any one time due to breakdowns.

Eskom supplies about 95 percent of South Africa's electricity and over 40 percent of Africa's.

Also read:South African finance minister to walk budget tightrope

South Africa's installed capacity was 51.6GW as of 2020, of which coal-fired stations accounted for about 38GW.

But as his officials pointed out, and which Mantashe conceded, more than 20GW was effectively idle, as Mantashe put it, due to unplanned breakdowns.

Mantashe has been at odds with Ramaphosa and public enterprises minister Pravin Gordhan, among others in Ramaphosas cabinet, insisting on the necessity of slow-build and hyper-expensive large-scale coal and nuclear power plants, versus quick-build renewable options such as wind, concentrated solar and PV solar, with battery arrays to extend supply periods.

Despite signing todays deal with three offshore wind suppliers, which will contribute only a small fraction of the daily shortfall on the national grid at any one time and will take around 18 months to become available, Mantashe insisted that Eskom could still fulfil S.Africas power needs, if run properly.

The deals signed on Thursday, the first of 25 which will contribute to fulling a looming 40GW shortfall, projected for the late 2020s, had been long-delayed and were due to have been signed in April, but postponed by Mantashes department, which many analysts have pointed to in the current intense load-shedding crisis as the primary cause for a lack of power that is crippling the economy.

The 25 wind and solar power projects, worth about US$2.85 billion of investment, will add nearly 2.6GW to the national grid, were announced almost a year ago as an emergency response taken then to the mounting electricity shortage in S Africa.

Operate optimally

Mantashes comment on Eskom needing to operate optimally was a veiled attack on Gordhan, who has fully backed the executive team at the trouble national power producer, which is much indebted and was heavily captured in the era of former president Jacob Zuma.

Gordhan has also contradicted Mantashe on the need for quick-build renewables to fill the energy gap.

While Ramaphosas emergency return to the country, despite having important foreign investor meetings lined up while abroad to see US President Joe Biden and attend Queen Elizabeths funeral, cannot be directly linked to todays power supply signing event, there is no doubt that Ramaphosa, with Gordhan and others in his cabinet backing him, have intensified pressure on Mantashe.

The minerals and energy minister whose agreement is needed for new power producers to build and operate private-sector plants, is a former coal mining trade unionist, who against the global trend insists that using legacy coal or unaffordable nuclear power energy sources are the only means to fix S Africas dire electricity problem.

Mantashe has repeatedly criticised renewables as being inadequate to provide base-load supply to the national grid.

KISTEPILE NYATHI | Thursday, September 22, 2022

But the current crisis has forced him to allow private sector quick-build power producers, planning mainly PV solar and some concentrated solar systems, with build periods of 18 months to two years, plus more wind farms.

Eskom is also seeking to relieve the pressure created by a demand which peaks daily at around 32GW and supply which can not currently exceed 26GW, out of an installed Eskom capacity of over 48GW.

Some of the shortfall created by over 16GW routinely being unavailable due to unplanned outages at mainly old coal-fired plants, where necessary maintenance was for decades ignored or inadequate, has been filled by existing renewables.

Also read:Ramaphosa sabotage claim for electricity outages disputed

The minerals and energy minister also announced that the current bid window for prospective private sector renewable energy suppliers would be extended and that, if any would-be suppliers missed the extension, there would immediately be another window to follow.

Both the private sector power producers involved in todays event and the energy minister said that supply issues caused by the Covid pandemics impact, global inflationary trends and the rising cost of base energy resources had impacted on the signing of the deal.

Eskom is also driving programmes to obtain excess electricity produced by co-generational plants used by major industrial and mining concerns.

With respect to independent power producers, initial programmes will focus on generators capable of supplying more than one Megawatt to the grid, with the threshold to be lowered in time to enable smaller producers to participate.

The combined impact of the programmes is predicted by Eskom to exceed 1GW, and will make an important contribution towards reducing the load-shedding burden on consumers, said the embattled utility.

Independent generators will provide energy daily to compete with the Eskom generators in the internal market, supplying the national grid with electricity based on the offer price and availability provided.

A Bilateral Power Import Programme, to secure imports of power from neighbouring countries, has received interest from several countries wishing to sell surplus power to South Africa.

Eskom is already importing electricity from some neighbours via the Southern African Power Pool, an average 200MW being used to augment Eskoms generation capacity when the national grid is constrained.

End of South Africa signs three renewable independent power producer deals, 22 more coming

Emmanuel Macron meets Paul Kagame and Felix Tshisekedi over DRC war

AFP | Thursday, September 22, 2022

French President Emmanuel Macron has met with the leaders of Rwanda and the Democratic Republic of Congo, seeing progress in easing tensions that have flared in recent months.

On the sidelines of the United Nations General Assembly, Macron on Wednesday invited Rwandan President Paul Kagame to lunch with his DR Congo counterpart Felix Tshisekedi, who a day earlier had accused Kigali of backing rebel attacks in his country.

The three leaders together "noted their concerns about the resurgence of violence in the east of the DRC," the French presidency said in a statement.

France said that Kagame and Tshisekedi agreed on the need for the pullout of M23 rebels from the strategic town of Bunagana on the Ugandan border.

The three leaders want to "intensify lasting cooperation to fight impunity and put an end to activities of armed groups in the Great Lakes region," including the Democratic Forces for the Liberation of Rwanda, or FDLR, the statement said.

Kagame's government has demanded a crackdown on the FDLR, a Rwandan Hutu group that Kigali views as a threat due to links to the 1994 genocide.

But the M23, a separate, mostly Tutsi group in the violence-wracked east of DR Congo, has been the focus of recent tensions.

In his address to the General Assembly on Tuesday, Tshisekedi alleged that Rwanda has provided "massive support" to M23, which he blamed for the shooting down of a UN peacekeeping helicopter in March, in which eight people died.

"Rwanda's involvement and responsibility is no longer debatable," he said.

Kagame called for calm in his own address on Wednesday.

"There is an urgent need to find a political need to find and address the root cause of instability in eastern DRC," Kagame said.

"The blame game does not solve the problems. These challenges are not insurmountable and solutions can be found," he said.

"This would ultimately be much less costly in terms of both money and human lives."

Kagame's government has long rejected allegations of backing the M23, but US Secretary of State Antony Blinken, on an August visit to Kinshasa, said there were "credible" reports of Rwandan support.

End of Emmanuel Macron meets Paul Kagame and Felix Tshisekedi over DRC war

Covid immunisation gaps: Over 500,000 children are at risk in Africa

The Conversation | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The Covid pandemic exposed the fault lines in health systems and national routine immunisation programmes around the world.

A recent World Health Organisation (WHO) report showed that the pandemic fuelled the largest sustained decline in childhood vaccine coverage rates.

These declines threaten to undo the exceptional efforts made in preventing and controlling the devastating burden of vaccine preventable diseases globally.

Routine immunisation has prevented two to three million deaths yearly. Of the lives saved, 800,000 were in the Africa region.

Routine immunisation has led to a drastic reduction in diseases like neonatal tetanus and measles. And bacterial meningitis (type A) and polio have virtually been eliminated across the continent.

The repercussions of the pandemic on routine immunisation programmes in the African region are yet to be fully realised. What we do know so far is that the pandemic has resulted in substantial disruptions to national routine immunisation programmes.

Also read: How Covid billions stolen from US was spent in Nairobi's South C, Diani beach front properties

As a result, the continent is seeing an increased number of outbreaks of vaccine preventable diseases.

African countries had nearly eliminated the deadly form of meningitis type A. But a four-month-long meningitis outbreak was reported in the Democratic Republic of Congo in 2021. It accounted for 2,665 cases, claiming 205 lives.

This resurgence has been linked with the suspension of meningitis vaccination campaigns at the height of the Covid pandemic. In February 2022, Malawi reported its first wild case of poliovirus type 1 in 30 years.

A second case followed in Mozambique three months later. The outbreaks sparked mass polio vaccination campaigns across southern Africa.

Unicef and the WHO have warned of the heightened risk for measles outbreaks, given widening immunisation gaps.

Currently, Zimbabwe is contending with a devastating measles outbreak. Within five months, there have been 6,551 confirmed measles cases and 704 related deaths.

These emerging outbreaks are a matter of great concern. They call for urgent and sustained public health interventions.

Unless these are put in place, the compounding effects of the pandemic could derail regional progress towards the global immunisation targets that secure the health and wellbeing of infants and children.

The resurgence of deadly vaccine preventable diseases underscores the importance of maintaining high vaccination coverage rates. Children everywhere must have access to all the recommended lifesaving vaccines they need.

The disruptions observed during the Covid pandemic also highlight the importance of establishing resilient health systems. Systems must be able to withstand acute and prolonged shocks while delivering essential health services like immunisation programmes.

Immunisation before Covid

It is important to contextualise the performance of routine immunisation programmes within the African region. Even before the pandemic, the African region was already contending with a precarious situation.

For one, an estimated 30.7 million children under five continue to suffer from vaccine preventable diseases.

These include rotavirus diarrhoea, pneumonia, pertussis and measles. Of these children, more than 520,000 die each year because of poor access to essential immunisation services.

The continents health systems have to manage on average 150 cases of disease outbreaks and other public health emergencies every year.

These range from armed conflicts to climate-related disasters (including flooding, drought, and famine) and disease outbreaks. National routine immunisation programmes have had to function in this context.

Widened immunisation gaps

On the continent the pandemic has substantially disrupted national routine immunisation programmes.

Covid immunisation gaps: Over 500,000 children are at risk in Africa

The Conversation | Thursday, September 22, 2022

In many countries health systems were forced to divert limited resources to combat the pandemic. This often left immunisation services vulnerable.

DTP vaccine coverage in many African countries was below the WHOs 90% threshold. Data Source: WHO, https://immunizationdata.who.int/index.html

At the height of the pandemic, several countries reported having to suspend vaccination services. There were disruptions to vaccine supply chains which led to stockouts.

The number of people taking up immunisation services declined due to restrictions on public gathering. Many people also feared being exposed to the virus at health facilities.

Also read:

A good measure of the Covid-related disruptions to immunisation programmes is the coverage of the three doses of the diphtheria-tetanus-pertussis (DTP3) vaccine.

The WHO uses the coverage of DTP3 to monitor access to immunisation services and measure the performance of broader health systems.

The WHO report shows that the Covid-19 pandemic contributed to a general decline in DTP3 coverage globally irrespective of economic power or income level.

In Africa, national immunisation programmes in several countries maintained optimal performance, achieving DTP3 coverage rates above 90 percent. These included Algeria, Botswana, Burkina Faso, Burundi, Ghana, Kenya, Malawi, Mauritius, Namibia, Sierra Leone, Uganda and Zambia.

Of concern, however, are the 29 countries that recorded coverage of less than 90 percent, creating substantial immunisation gaps.

The increased misinformation and disinformation during the pandemic also led to some decline in public trust and confidence in immunisation services. This has significantly affected vaccine demand.

Way forward

The pandemic provides useful lessons on the importance of continuously strengthening health systems and crisis-proofing national routine immunisation programmes.

Covid-19 has been a catalyst for renewed political interest in immunisation programmes. But this must be followed up with regional solidarity to re-prioritise routine immunisation in the national and regional public health agendas.

National governments will have the responsibility to secure and sustain donor funding while increasing domestic financial commitments that will fill the funding gaps for national immunisation programmes. This is in line with the declarations they have endorsed.

But most importantly, theres a need to intensify demand for vaccines and immunisation programmes. This is critical to build back public confidence and trust in vaccines and immunisation services in a post-Covid world.

End of Covid immunisation gaps: Over 500,000 children are at risk in Africa

Mozambique, Tanzania pen deals to fight terrorism

AFP | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Leaders of Mozambique and Tanzania said on Wednesday they had signed defence and security deals aimed at fighting terrorism and crime along their shared border.

No details were released about the agreements, which were signed during a visit to Maputo by Tanzania's President Samia Suluhu Hassan.

A deadly insurgency erupted in northern Mozambique, near the Tanzanian border, five years ago.

It has killed thousands and displaced hundreds of thousands.

But life now was "gradually returning to normal" after thousands of foreign troops from several African countries were deployed more than a year ago to quell the unrest, said Mozambican President Filipe Nyusi.

"The enemy is now operating in small groups trying to descend into the southern districts," Nyusi said during their talks.

President Hassan said as the two neighbours share a "very long" boundary, "we need a good security system in which we can protect our border".

"We have been seeing... cross-border crimes (and) terrorism," she said.

Nyusi on Tuesday toured the recovered port of Mocimboa da Praia, previously the de-facto headquarters of the jihadists.

In October 2017, about 30 armed men launched a dawn raid on three police stations in Mocimboa da Praia -- marking the start of the insurgency.

Since then, more than 4,258 people have been killed according to conflict tracker ACLED, and 820,000 have fled their homes.

Mozambican forces, backed by Rwandan troops, said in August last year that they had driven out the militants occupying the port.

End of Mozambique, Tanzania pen deals to fight terrorism

Peerless Kwanthanze extend dominance in girls volleyball

Brian Yonga | Thursday, September 22, 2022

In Arusha, Tanzania

Defending champions Kwanthanze Secondary School on Thursday defended their girls' volleyball title on Day Seven of the Federation of East Africa Secondary Schools Sports Association (Feasssa) Games here in Arusha.

Kwanthanze saw off compatriots Kesogon Mixed Secondary School 3-0(25-23, 25-22, 25-17) to win their fourth successive title and six in total at the Tanzania Game and Track(TGT) grounds.

The win ensured Kenya defended the gold title it won at the 2019 edition also held on Arusha.

Kwanthanze were deserved winners answering all the questions asked of them by their opponents, who were making their debut at the competition.

It was also Kwanthanze's second win over Kesogon having also defeated them 3-1 in the Kenya Secondary Schools Term Two Games at Nakuru High School on September 12.

In boys' volleyball, Kenyan champions Cheptil Boys High School qualified for the final after their opponents ESSA Nyarugunga of Rwanda were disqualified for fielding unregistered players and two more players than the required 12.

The match was stopped in the fourth set with the Rwandese leading 2-1 sets.

Cheptil will face holders Standard High School of Uganda in Friday's final.

Kenya will also have a team in Friday's boys' basketball final after newbies Dr Aggrey High School saw off Uganda's Bethel Covenant 81-66 in the semis.

They will face defending champions Buddo Secondary School of Uganda.

End of Peerless Kwanthanze extend dominance in girls volleyball

Ferdinand Omanyala wins LG Sports Personality of the Month award

Agnes Makhandia | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Commonwealth Games 100m champion Ferdinand Omanyala is the LG Sports Journalists Association of Kenya (SJAK) Sports Personality for August.

Omanyala, who has now won the award twice, hopes to equal and break Angela Okutoyis record of three awards.

The award is sponsored by LG East Africa and awarded by SJAK.

The 26-year-old sprinter became the first ever Kenyan in 60 years to win the Commonwealth Games 100m title on August 3.

Omanyala clocked 10.02 seconds to relegate defending champion Akani Simbine from South Africa to silver in 10.13 sec.

Omanyala who walked away with an LG washing machine retailing at Sh105,000 on Thursday.

Its such a great feeling winning the award twice within a space of 12 months. My success in Birmingham will no doubt continue to inspire and encourage many Kenyans over and above paving the way for many other local sprinters to come through, he said.

I feel a lot motivated to keep improving my personal best of 9.77 seconds given that I have two gold medals and an Africa record, added Omanyala.

Omanyala beat a strong field of nominees among them rugby star Billy Odhiambo who racked up his 100th career try at the World Rugby Sevens in Los Angeles, 800m runner Mary Moraa who won gold medal at the 2022 Commonwealth Games, as well as Hellen Wawira who claimed bronze in the para-power lifting competition also in Birmingham.

Two-time 1500m Olympic and World champion Faith Kipyegon was also in the list of nominees,. Kipyegon clocked the second fastest time in history, a World Lead and a Kenyan record of 3:50.37 at the Monaco leg of the Diamond League on August 10.

Other nominees included netball player Beatrice Bucho, Commonwealth games 3,000m steeplechase champion Jackline Chepkoech, Faisal Aden of Equity basketball team and World Athletics U20 Championships 3000m steeplechase gold medallist Faith Cherotich.

LG has been actively supporting the identification and recognition of sporting talent in Kenya through a partnership with SJAK. The purpose of this award is to recognise exceptional Kenyan sportsmen and women for their achievements across diverse disciplines each month and also to signify our commitment to contribute to the development of sport in the country, said Maureen Kemunto, Corporate Marketing and communication manager LG East Africa.

SJAK President Chris Mbaisi said: With the monthly award, we are seeing a growing number of upcoming and talented sports personalities among them Angella Okutoyi who won the Wimbledon Open Junior doubles category and won this award for a record three times."

"Rewarding sportsmen and women is an important step towards whipping up the enthusiasts of sports personalities across all disciplines.

End of Ferdinand Omanyala wins LG Sports Personality of the Month award

Highway slay St Mary's Kitende to storm final, Wiyeta stay on course

Brian Yonga | Thursday, September 22, 2022

In Arusha, Tanzania

Debutantes Highway Secondary School of Kenya Thursday qualified for the boys' football final after knocking out holders St Mary's Kitende School of Uganda on the penultimate day of the Federation of East Africa Secondary Schools Sports Association (Feasssa) Games here Arusha.

The Kenyan side secured an impressive 1-0 over the 13-time record champions in a pulsating semi at the Tanzania Game and Track (TGT) grounds.

Striker Humphrey Aroko scored a 49th minute penalty to send Highway into their first final on their debut at the competition.

It is the first time a Kenyan side is reaching the final since 2016 when Barding High School won the title after beating Kitende 1-0 in the final at Kipchoge Keino Stadium in Eldoret.

The final whistle sent the Highway players into a frenzy as Kitende, who were pre-match favourites', couldn't believe they had lost.

Highway will face Uganda's Kibuli Secondary School in Friday's final after they beat compatriots Buddo Secondary School 5-3 on post-match penalties in the other semi.

Highway skipper Teddy Ochieng attributed their success to team work and resilience.

"We came into the match as underdogs and Kitende clearly underestimated us. We dug deep, rode our luck at times, but in the end emerged victorious," Ochieng said.

Highway and Kibuli will clash for the second time having already faced-off in the preliminary stage where the Kenyans won 1-0.

Kenya will also have a team in the girls' football final as Wiyeta Secondary School beat compatriots Dagoretti Mixed Secondary School 3-0 in the last four.

Goals from Edna Wanda, Elizabeth Ochaka and Lavendar Akinyi handed the Kenyan champions their place in the final.

Wiyeta, who last won the title in 2017 in Gulu will face Uganda's St Noa Girls' Secondary School in the final. St Noa beat defending champions Kawempe Muslim Secondary School 2-1 in their last four clash.

End of Highway slay St Mary's Kitende to storm final, Wiyeta stay on course

Mitsubishi Outlander up for grabs at Elisha Kasuku Cup

Larry Ngala | Thursday, September 22, 2022

The second edition of the Elisha Kasuku Cup golf tournament is on this Saturday at the par 72 Royal Nairobi Golf Club course.

A Mitsubishi Outlander will be awarded to the golfer who will strike a hole-in-one at the par three-17th hole.

The 18-hole stableford event, which is open to club members and invited guests, is an idea that was muted last year by a group of friends of the legendary Elisha Kasuku.

They (my friends) decided to honour me by putting together the tournament last year which was very successful and hence they decided to have it again this year, and I feel greatly honoured," said the legendary Olympian Walker-cum-senior professional golfer Kasuku.

This year, the event is being sponsored Sanlam, Victoria Commercial bank, Tropikal Brands, Dove, Acorn, Kenbright, Jibu, and Simba Corporation who have offered the Mitsubishi Outlander.

A total of 19 prizes will be at stake in the various divisions which include men, ladies, guests, sponsors, juniors, and JoBase group besides the car.

Its very refreshing to know that, there are people who appreciate what you have done for them," added Kasuku, who once served as the resident professional at both Royal Nairobi and at Muthaiga Golf Clubs.

A field of 232 players was drawn for the tournament.

Those drawn in the morning, are expected to tee off at 7am, with the afternoon draw set for 11.36am.

Away from Royal, some of the countrys leading lady golfers will be travelling to Nakuru City, for the Ladies Open where those drawn include national team player Mercy Nyanchama who in the absence of the newly crowned Tanzania Ladies open Naomi Wafula and Channelle Wangari, is likely to be the top contender.

Faith Ontune and Frankie Gichuru are also expected to challenge for the title.

Kakamega Sports Club will meanwhile host the Crown Paints golf day, while at Eldoret Golf Club, players from the North Rift region will battle it out for a number of prizes during the Kenya Pipeline Corporation golf day.

Back in Nairobi, Muthaiga Golf Club which was the venue last weekends of the KPA Corporate event, will host the Captains Golf Tour being sponsored by Cooperative Bank.

End of Mitsubishi Outlander up for grabs at Elisha Kasuku Cup

Nyeri to host Junior Golf tournament

Joseph Kanyi | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Preparations are underway for the third leg of the Junior Golf Foundations Mt Kenya edition which will be held on Sunday at Nyeri Golf Club.

More than 50 children from Nyeri, Nyahururu, Nanyuki and Thika are expected to participate.

The foundations representative, Baldev Singh, said that the maiden edition was staged earlier this year at Nanyuki Sports Club and the second one in Nyahururu.

This is a programme to bring golf to the grassroots where it matters. The objective of this event is to look for talented children and to train them for the future, said Baldev.

We are looking at years to come where we will be having young professional players hatched from this programme, added Baldev.

He encouraged parents to take their children for training.

End of Nyeri to host Junior Golf tournament

Yet another chance for sports actors to commit to limiting climate change

James Mwamba | Thursday, September 22, 2022

Located between the desert of the Sinai Peninsula and the Red Sea, the Egyptian resort town of Sharm el-Sheikh is home to Kafr el-Sheikh Sporting Club which plays in the countrys second-tier football league.

But from November 7 to 18, Sharm el-Sheikh will be associated with something whose effects are intricately intertwined with both sports, and the future of the town which is a key tourist destination.

Sharm el-Sheikh will host the 27th session of the Conference of the Parties (COP) to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change from November 7 to 18.

Leaders from around the world will attend the 2022 United Nations Climate Change Conference at Sharm el-Sheikh to take stock of progress made in reversing global warming since COP 26 held in Glasgow last year, and to make new commitments to the fight against climate change (long-term changes in global temperatures and weather patterns).

Being a coastal town (it lies at an altitude of only 44 metres), Sharm el-Sheikh is vulnerable to the effects of climate change just like Mombasa.

This column has in the past argued that being a human activity, sports is both a contributor to, and is one of the casualties of global warming.

The sporting fraternity the world over should join in the fight against climate change by adopting eco-friendly behaviours that reduce or avoid emission of greenhouse gases (like carbon dioxide and methane) which contribute to climate change.

The United Nations Environmental Programme defines carbon footprint as the total amount of greenhouse gases generated by our actions. Since the 1800s, human activity has been the main contributor to climate change, chiefly due to burning fossil fuels like coal, oil and gas.

For example, when star players opt to fly alone directly to the venue of a tournament instead of taking a single flight together with the rest of the team, they contribute more to climate change because each star player in his own flight leaves behind a carbon footprint.

As world leaders meet to tackle issues on climate change, athletes and sports entities should commit to making the world a better place not just for themselves, but also for the people they entertain on the pitch.

Which is why a picture of Paris Saint-Germains star player Kylian Mbappe bent double in uncontrolled laughter beside his coach Christophe Galtier at a press conference early this month in Paris left me gutted.

The Sh6 billion-a-month players apparent incredulity over his teams commitment to fighting climate change shocked me.

PSG were facing accusations of failing to take the threat of climate change seriously after travelling 380 kilometres in a private jet to Nice for a football league match, instead of taking a train to the city which is on a high-speed train line.

Taking an aeroplane from Paris to Nice leaves behind a bigger carbon footprint than a two-hour ride on a high-speed train.

The Paris-based team won 3-1 in Nice, but not on the court of public opinion. Asked by journalists whether PSG had discussed an offer from the state railway group SNCF to provide travel for them to away games, Galtier initially smiled at the idea in a silly way at the press conference, then sarcastically said the Parisian giants were looking into traveling to away matches by sand yacht. Mbappe bent double in laughter over the suggestion.

Clip goes viral

The clip went viral on social media. French Prime Minister Elisabeth Borne and campaigners condemned Galtier and Mbappe for being out of touch and arrogant at a time when Europe is facing an energy crisis and spiraling temperatures linked to climate change.

The poster boy of French football and a famous son of Paris, a city which has lent its name to the Paris Agreement, had just shown such indifference to climate change. I was consumed by the ignominy.

Mbappes home city of Paris hosted the 2015 UN Climate Change Conference in which the Paris Agreement, a legally binding international treaty on climate change, was adopted by 196 parties. It aims at limiting global warming to below 1.5 degrees Celsius compared to pre-industrial levels.

Yet another chance for sports actors to commit to limiting climate change

James Mwamba | Thursday, September 22, 2022

It is encouraging that global sporting federations like Fifa, Federation Internationale de l'Automobile, World Athletics, among others have since signed up for the UN Sports for Climate

Action Framework which aims to reduce carbon footprint from sporting activities. The aim is to organise sporting competitions with as little carbon footprint as possible.

End of Yet another chance for sports actors to commit to limiting climate change

Why stringent rules on coaches is a necessary evil

Barnaba Korir | Thursday, September 22, 2022

About a fortnight ago, Athletics Kenya released a raft of new regulations governing the conduct of coaches in the country as far as training of Kenyan athletes is concerned.

One of these rules is that all foreign coaches must provide their physical addresses and details surrounding their training of our athletes. Furthermore, AK plans to conduct verification and subsequent licensing of coaches who have passed the minimal moral requirements to partake in their trade.

All athletics training camp will also be registered, including details of the personnel within and their respective duties. These new rules may seem a bit high-handed, especially for those who may have previously found it easy to undertake their nefarious activities in the country.

However, for those aware of the machinations of unscrupulous coaches and managers, these rules are an idea whose time has come. We have to crack the whip because if we do not do that, then we will be negating our duty to always safeguard the welfare of athletes.

Due to the lack of proper regulation in the past, many athletes have unwittingly fallen prey to rogue coaches who mislead them into anti-doping violations.

We are beholden to every upcoming athlete at the grass-root who wants nothing more than to realise their potential and grace the grandest of stages to display their art and craft. Athletics should be a source of livelihood for all talented stars who get to earn their sweat the right way.

Train clean, run hard and win fairly: that has always been our mantra as AK and it would be negligence on our part to let a few individuals soil Kenyas reputation as a powerhouse by perpetrating anti-doping offences. Presently, Kenya is in the unenviable position of being classified as a category A country, where there is the highest propensity for anti-doping violations.

Without these stringent measures in place, the loopholes for doping offences by rogue coaches and managers will soon be gaping ditches that need a lot more to renovate. Thus, as much as some people may feel hard done by these regulations, they are a necessary evil that will benefit many more people than those who will be hurt.

We continue to explore more avenues to clamp down on this vice and anyone caught perpetrating it will not receive a mere slap on the wrist.

Korir is the Chairman of Athletics Kenyas Nairobi branch.

End of Why stringent rules on coaches is a necessary evil

Kenya should critically assess the foregone revenues in tax incentives

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

Tax incentives in Kenya: Citizens' understanding of their impact on the economy

By Tax Justice Network Africa (TJNA), the East African Tax and Governance Network (EATGN), and Africa Centre for People, Institutions and Society

What are tax expenditures?

When a government wishes to financially support a vulnerable sector or community, it does so in various ways.

For example, to address period poverty in Kenya by improving girls access to sanitary pads, the government could decide to provide free or subsidised sanitary pads to schools by allocating funds to the relevant ministries for their provision. This would be reported as a direct expenditure.

Alternatively, the government could exempt pads from value-added tax (VAT) to reduce their cost. In doing so, the government would be foregoing the tax that girls would have paid when purchasing sanitary pads. This is also an expenditure by the government, but more specifically, a tax expenditure.

Tax expenditures are the revenues foregone by a government through tax exemptions, incentives, deferrals, or allowances. Essentially, any deviation from what the actual tax rate should be, is a tax waiver.

The importance of tax expenditure reports

In the same way that reporting on direct expenditures by government ministries is treated as a crucial aspect of the budget-making process and inspires public confidence, so should reporting on tax expenditures.

Tax expenditure reporting enhances the transparency and accountability of the government in public finance management. Tax expenditure reports help the public understand how much the government is losing, or foregoing, due to various tax incentives and exemptions.

Further, understanding who the beneficiaries of these exemptions and incentives are, as well as the underlying purposes, enhances public participation in revenue conversations. It enables the public to evaluate whether tax concessions are meeting their intended purposes (e.g., increasing foreign direct investment), and helps governments to ascertain how efficient the tax incentives are.

Kenyas 2021 Tax Expenditure Report

Despite the importance of tax expenditure reports, many African countries still lag behind in publishing them.

The Kenyan government only recently began publishing its tax expenditure reports; and even then, the 2021 Tax Expenditure Report was published following much pressure from international financial institutions such as the IMF, to increase fiscal transparency and tax efficiency.

One of the most important aspects of a tax expenditure report is the level of detail. The ideal report includes every tax waiver, and in Kenya, this is supported by the Constitution.

Ideally, the report should outline all the waivers provided by the government, and then give estimates of the revenue loss occasioned by this.

Kenyas 2021 Tax Expenditure Report did not achieve this. Surprisingly, several tax regimes, including the tax incentives that the government provides within the countrys special economic zones (SEZs) and export processing zones (EPZs), were missing from the report.

This is particularly important because in the past few years, there have been calls for reviewing the efficacy of EPZs and SEZs. In essence, the benefits of these zones in comparison to what is being lost through tax incentives have been questioned. Publishing the tax expenditures of these zones would enable a cost-benefit analysis to be conducted, and allow for more informed decision-making.

Another missing detail in the tax expenditure report is the income tax concessions provided for foreign aid by the Kenyan government.

Tax exemptions on foreign aid are a controversial subject as evidenced by the general uproar following the income tax exemptions to Japanese firms, consultants and personnel who are undertaking projects that are financed through grants. These involved 16 projects that amounted to about Ksh328 billion.

Further, double tax relief measures should be included in the tax expenditure report. Kenya currently has 14 double

Kenya should critically assess the foregone revenues in tax incentives

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

taxation agreements in force. Double taxation agreements often provide lower rates of taxes, and in some instances, they are exploited, leading to double non-taxation.

Since Kenya is increasingly widening its double taxation treaty, it is important that tax expenditures under double taxation agreements be included regularly in the report.

The 2021 Tax Expenditure Report indicated that value-added tax (VAT) in 2020 had the highest tax expenditure at 2.18 percent of GDP, in comparison to tax expenditures under corporate income tax (CIT), which was at 0.53 percent of GDP.

However, tax expenditures under CIT could potentially be higher than under VAT once some of the important aspects that were omitted in the 2021 report are included.

Gender inclusion in tax policy decision-making

Gender inclusion in tax policy decision-making

What next?

It is highly commendable that Kenya has publicly released its first tax expenditure report. To ensure that the government is held accountable, it is essential that tax expenditures be included in the budget-making process and presented annually.

Further, it is necessary to ensure that allincentives are included in tax expenditure reports, including those provided under the EPZs, SEZs, and other preferential tax regimes, as well as double taxation agreements.

In the absence of any specific tax expenditure reporting, it should be imperative that reasons for such exclusion are provided. This will ensure that fiscal policy is shaped in a manner that is fair, equitable, and efficient.

Further, the reports should be used to evaluate tax expenditures. With the data generated through the tax expenditure reports, it is important for the government to carry out cost-benefit analyses on the tax concessions provided. Are they meeting their intended objectives? This data will be very helpful in shaping Kenyas tax policy regarding tax incentives.

This article is part of activities of the forthcoming African Parliamentary Network on illicit Financial Flows and Taxation (APNIFFT) Conference, plus the Pan African Conference (PAC) on Illicit Financial Flows and Taxation, to be held in Lusaka, Zambia, from 26-29, September 2022.

End of Kenya should critically assess the foregone revenues in tax incentives

New IFC podcast promotes women in Africas renewable energy sector

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

With renewable energy forecast to play a growing role in Africa's energy future, IFC has launched a new podcast series to promote the role of women in the sector as senior executives, engineers and thought leaders.

In the She Powers Africa podcast, host Terryanne Chebet, an entrepreneur and media specialist, speaks with leading women in Africa's renewable energy space to light the path for the next generation of African women leaders into the dynamic sector.

The first three episodes feature Jennifer Boca, Head of Environmental, Social and Governance at Lekela Power; Olaedo Osoka, CEO of Daystar Power in West Africa; and Carol Koech, the Country President for Schneider East Africa.

This engaging podcast is ideal for women interested in working in the renewable energy sector and also for anyone concerned about climate change in Africa and curious about the practical solutions. Renewable energy is Africa's energy future and ensuring more women are part of that future will enhance the sectors success," said Anne Kabugi, IFC's Regional Gender Lead for Africa.

By 2040, renewable energy could account for more than 60 percent of new electricity generation in sub-Saharan Africa, excluding South Africa, according to the Africa Energy Outlook 2019 from the International Energy Agency.

But, despite the sector's importance, women lag behind men in leadership and technical jobs in the renewable energy sector and represent just one third of the renewable energy workforce in Africa, according to research conducted by IFC on womens participation in Africa.s renewable energy sector.

The podcast is produced by IFC's Energy2Equal programme and its Women in Renewable Energy in Africa Network (W-REA), which both aim to enhance women's participation in the renewable energy sector.

Listen in.

End of New IFC podcast promotes women in Africas renewable energy sector

EMTECH to pilot a US CBDC in The Digital Dollar Project Sandbox Programme

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

EMTECH, a first-of-its-kind central banking infrastructure provider, has announced it will take part in the recently introduced Technical Sandbox Programme by The Digital Dollar Project to explore the new possibilities of a US Central Bank Digital Currency (CBDC) the digital dollar.

As one of the four announced technical vendors, EMTECH will bring its unique API-First and Energy Efficient CBDC Platform to test various use cases for cross-border payments.

The firm is joining a high-profile group of former US regulators and financial services experts. This initiative marks the next step in our effort to convene the private and public sector in a symbiotic exploration of a central bank digital currency in the US, said Jennifer Lassiter, executive director of The Digital Dollar Project.

EMTECHs Founder and CEO, Carmelle Cadet, is a former Global Business and Finance Leader at IBM. In 2021, she was invited by the US Congressional Financial Services Committee to testify on whether the US dollar should be digital.

A market leader in central banking infrastructure, EMTECHs mission is to leverage technology to enable access to inclusive and resilient financial ecosystems. Its exciting to be part of the Digital Dollar Project Sandbox, and we are looking forward to collaborating with the federal government, policymakers, and private sector organisations to pilot CBDC options that encompass retail or wholesale models for cross-border payment use cases, said Mrs Cadet.

In her testimony, she highlighted the firms vision and focus on helping central banks to build modern digital cash infrastructure using blockchain and distributed ledger technology (DLT). A consistent recommendation to the White House and the Congressional Committee is the use of a regulatory sandbox to enable faster and safer innovation from and with the private sector.

The current ecosystem for cross-border payments is a complex nightmare for financial service providers to navigate. EMTECHs CBDC Platform, with its API-First approach and high-performance DLT, is a more modern design that were excited to bring to the Technical Sandbox Programme, said Tabor Wells, Chief Technology Officer at EMTECH.

Earlier this year, the firm announced its partnership with Hedera Hashgraph to build an energy-efficient CBDC to support its newly announced GREEN CBDC Framework, which is designed to help central banks unlock unprecedented value in deploying a CBDC. A key pillar of the framework is reducing the carbon footprint of financial services, while also limiting energy demand from fragile power structures. You can learn more about the GREEN CBDC Framework at greencbdc.com and emtech.com.

Read more about the technical sandbox in DDPs Press Release.

About EMTECH

EMTECH is building the next generation of central banking Infrastructure to drive inclusive and resilient financial markets. The company provides software solutions and services to connect central banks, other regulators, and financial services providers, in a user and developer-friendly way.

EMTECHs API-First platforms power regulatory data exchange, currency issuance, and currency movement in financial markets. It is a diverse global firm that makes financial ecosystems inclusive and resilient by design. For more information, visit www.emtech.com.

End of EMTECH to pilot a US CBDC in The Digital Dollar Project Sandbox Programme

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

By Evans Ongwae

Kenya performed well in cushioning its citizens against Covid-19 economic shocks, but could have done better. This is the overall scorecard by UN Women, following a study. In particular, the report stresses the importance of ensuring that adopted economic stimulus and recovery packages are gender responsive and address the gender equity gaps.

Titled, Engendering Fiscal Stimulus Packages and Recovery Efforts Adopted in Response to the Covid-19 Health and Economic Crises, the report states: Compared to African countries, efforts by Kenya to cushion and promote recovery of citizens and businesses during Covid-19 through Economic Stimulus packages are commendable. However, UN Women points out that the country could have achieved more had it made those fiscal and monetary measures more gender-responsive.

The study is a gender-responsive assessment of the fiscal and economic stimulus package adopted in response to Covid-19 in Kenya. It provides vital recommendations for engendering government measures in response to crises as well as for economic recovery now and in the future. It pinpoints where the governments stimulus packages fell short, and offers suggestions on how to make economic stimulus packages more responsive to the needs of women, men, boys, and girls.

Engendering economic stimulus packages means taking into account the experiences and specific needs of women, men, girls, and boys, as well as the underlying causes of vulnerabilities, including gender gaps or inequalities, gender relationships, power structures, social norms, and leadership. These should count in both the design and implementation of the stimulus measures, the report states.

During the launch of the report last month jointly with Kenya's Cabinet Secretary for Public Service and Gender, Prof Margaret Kobia, the UN Women Kenya Representative Anna Mutavati, reiterated the importance of gender data in ensuring women and girls were not left behind in the development agenda.

We know that gender equality and womens empowerment are prerequisites for strong institutions, stable communities, and economies. Evidence from all around the world shows that investing in womens economic empowerment sets a direct path towards gender equality, inclusive economic growth, and wealth creation.

The UN Women study compared Kenyas response with what South Africa and Nigeria did. It recommends some lessons for Kenya to pick from the responses of the two Sub-Saharan African nations.

Consideration of the needs of women, men, boys, and girls in the design and implementation of the economic stimulus packages enhances economic and social inclusion and prospects of achievement of outcomes of cushioning against the shocks as well as recovery from the Covid-19 pandemics, the report offers.

The study is anchored on UN Womens commitment to supporting government efforts that contribute to womens livelihoods and their access to social protection, healthcare, infrastructure, food, and housing, among other sectors that the government has prioritised.

The analysis focused on economic stimulus packages implemented during the financial year 2020/2021. These include cash transfers to vulnerable families; National Hygiene Programme or the Youth Employment Programme; support to the educational sector; support to small and medium-sized enterprises liquidity; support to the construction sector; support to the health sector; support to the agricultural sector; support to the tourism sector; support to the environment; and support to the manufacturing sector.

An important underlying factor in response to and adaptability to changes in times of pandemics and crises is the feminisation of poverty, the UN Women analysis notes.

The study found that women, more than men, were deprived of social economic participation, information, and nutrition, and were generally multi-dimensionally poor. This is a key salient pathway in which gender contributes to disproportionately negative impacts of Covid-19. Women are also, more than men, involved with caregiving activities, including caring for the children, the sick, the elderly, and persons with severe disabilities.

Gender inequalities cause women and men to respond and adjust to pandemics and crises differently. Disasters and pandemics such as Covid-19 disproportionately and negatively affect women and girls when compared to men and boys, because of gender segregation in most economic activities, which is further reinforced by gender inequalities.

Unknown Author | UnKnown Date

Moreover, there has been an increase in gender-based violence, more specifically violence against women and girls.

Following the study, UN Women suggests that in times of crises, such as those comparable to the Covid-19 pandemic, Kenya could:

Consider expanding the sector coverage (of its stimulus package) for better economic recovery outcomes. This includes extending support to sectors such as housing, energy, and transport infrastructure.Temporarily expand social protection coverage during pandemics, through special programmes to reach previously uncovered beneficiaries.Consider extending social protection to practitioners in early childhood development, small-scale farmers and teachers, as well as those in creative, cultural, and sports sectors.Increase the amounts of cash transfers per recipient, for all the existing beneficiaries.Consider establishing a social relief from distress grant for caregivers, aimed at reducing increased unpaid care work during pandemics.Consider targeting micro, small, and medium enterprises (MSMEs) in all sectors of the economy, and not only in certain selected sectors.Consider implementing an unemployment insurance fund and compensation fund for health practitioners, and provide a temporary employee relief scheme for domestic workers.Consider enforcing the Access to Government Procurement Opportunities (AGPO) provisions, or even increasing the proportion reserved for women businesses.Implement special support to survivors of gender-based violence (GBV) and also, in partnership with civil society, establish a mechanism for linking them to shelter houses. This would address some of the challenges related to increased GBV during pandemics.

Overall, the analysis showed that the size of Kenyas provisions regarding various fiscal measures is small, measured by the size of the issues the specific measures target.

End of UN Women to Kenya: You did well in cushioning citizens against Covid-19 economic shocks, but

Heres how to style for your five senses

Florence Bett-Kinyati | Thursday, September 22, 2022

They call it sensory design, an approach that embraces the five human senses and incorporates them into the design of whatever you are creating.

In home styling, sensory design is in the elements you bring into your home and the overall effect they have on you and your familys wellbeing.

The philosophy behind it is that your space should engage your five senses while balancing and calming you. Here is how to accomplish this in your own home:

Sense of sight

You want a home that looks good. You want you, your family and your guests walking through your door and encountering a feast for the eyes.

A home that looks good is one that has balanced visual elements such as colour, scale, placement and light.

It also subconsciously balances other styling elements such as cohesion, form and function.

The sense of sight responds to questions such as, What is your homes colour theme? Are your pieces to the right scale of your space? Have you placed them in a way that enhances balances, allows people to walk freely?

Also, Are there patterns that draw the eye? Is light sufficiently pouring into the space, both natural and artificial light?

Think through these questions as you get down to work.

You want a home that looks good. You want you, your family and your guests walking through your door and encountering a feast for the eyes.

Sense of hearing

The sense of hearing is stimulated by the sounds in your home. You want sounds that calm and soothe you, sounds that put you in a restful zen-like space.

There are some annoying sounds in the home that can throw you off kilter: a leaking tap, the moaning sound of a loose furniture leg, windows and doors that creak when the wind blows, and a refrigerator near its death.

You can also have environmental noise such as car traffic and too loud music.

Cancel out the unsettling sounds and enhance the soothing sounds. First, fix what is broken: tighten that loose furniture leg, oil the window and door joints and ask an electrician to fine-tune your appliances.

For environmental noise, install curtains that absorb outside noise. Rugs also absorb noise and are recommended for the bedroom.

Lastly, consider installing devices that emit soothing sounds. Say, a white noise machine, an air humidifier and Bluetooth speakers. If you are feeling extra, install indoor water fountains.

Sense of touch

The sense of touch is stimulated when you see something and you suddenly get an impulse to feel it beneath your fingertips.

How luxurious does that suede feel? Is that sisal basket as rough as it looks? Will my toes sink into that plush living room rug?

Any piece with texture automatically stimulates the sense of touch. That said, bring textured pieces into your home that will make it feel the way you want.

Velvet and suede bring in luxury and posh. Natural fibres such as wool, sisal and wicker bring a touch of homeliness and are connectedly African.

A plush rug will be inviting. Leather furniture will make your space feel like a gentlemans club. Metalwork has an industrial vibe.

Textured throw pillows are cosy and easy. Also incorporate the sense of touch into your walls with textured wallpaper, artwork on canvas, and photos with fascinating frames.

Sense of smell

The sense of smell is one of the most powerful senses because it entrenches itself into memory.

Heres how to style for your five senses

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You are far more likely to recall space and its associated emotions when you catch the scents that dominate that space.

It doesnt matter how much time has passed, you will recall a lot and in a lot of surprising detail.

Knowing this, then be aware of the scents you bring into your home, the emotions they evoke and the memories they create.

Select those that uplift, soothe and bring joy. Citrus scents uplift you and give your home a clean feeling.

Lavender and vanilla scents are calming. Jasmine and cinnamon are warm scents that enhance memory. Mint and coffee scents invigorate.

To style for the sense of smell, burn scented candles, fire up the humidifier and fill up the reed diffuser with your targeted scents.

Also, master the art of making your own potpourri. Lastly, buy cleaning products that have the scent you love, say toilet cleaner, floor shine and air freshener.

Sense of taste

Setting up a dining table for guests is far different from setting one up for your familys daily meals, but the result should be the same: whetting of appetites, homeliness and the togetherness of the family.

This can be incorporated in two ways. One, master the art of using stylish dinnerware to set up what feels like a Roman feast, on your dining table.

Setting up a dining table for guests is far different from setting one up for your familys daily meals, but the result should be the same: whetting of appetites, homeliness and the togetherness of the family.

Buy dinnerware and other accessories that enhance this feeling of everyday festivity.

Consider accessories such as flower vases, candle sticks, table mats and runners. Another way to style for the sense of taste is to couple it with the sense of smell.

Catching a coffee scent will make you want to drink coffee. A citrusy smell will have you craving a tall cold drink of a refreshing beverage, one that has ice cubes sashaying on its brim.

Vanilla will remind you of a warm love-filled kitchen.

@_craftit,

End of Heres how to style for your five senses