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THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THE HANSARD

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THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 5th October 2022

The House met at 9.30 a.m.

[The Speaker (Hon. Moses Wetangula) in the Chair]

PRAYERS

Hon. Speaker: Hon. Members, on Order No. 8, the Hon. Deputy Speaker will move the Motion as I directed yesterday. Just as a reminder, she has 20 minutes in moving, and at the closure on Tuesday next week, she will have 10 minutes to reply, by which time we shall have decided who the Majority and Minority are. She may surrender the position to whoever will be occupying the position to reply.

Designated party leaders, Hon. Ichung'wah and Hon. Wandayi, have 15 minutes each, and all other Members have 10 minutes each. It is also important to notify the House that we have quite a large number of colleagues who are first-timers who have not had a moment to make their maiden speech. The tradition and the rules of the House is that when a new Member is making a maiden speech, they will be heard in absolute silence, with no interruptions and no points of order. Unless such a Member is outrageously out of order, the Chair will not intervene. But Hon. Members, try and resist any temptation to rise on points of order when our colleagues are making their maiden speech. Thank you.

The Deputy Speaker.

MOTION

DEBATE ON THE ADDRESS BY THE PRESIDENT

(First Allotted Day)

Hon. Gladys Boss (Uasin Gishu CWR, UDA): Hon. Speaker, I beg to move the following Motion:

THAT, the thanks of the House be recorded for the exposition of public policy contained in the Address of the President delivered on Thursday, 29th September 2022.

Hon. Speaker, I will also take this opportunity, in moving the Motion, to do my thank you and congratulations. First, I would like to congratulate His Excellency the President and his Deputy for their election, and also congratulate you, Hon. Speaker, for your election. I also use the opportunity to congratulate Members of the National Assembly here present. Having been in the campaigns, I know that it is no mean feat. Congratulations again.

I also want to use this opportunity to thank the great people of Uasin Gishu County, the city of champions, the home of champions and the source of champions for electing me. I am greatly humbled by this opportunity. The fact that they allowed me time off the campaigns locally in Uasin Gishu so that I could undertake time in the national campaigns was a big sacrifice on their part, and showed a great honour that they gave me.

I know that I did not even pick my own certificate from the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), but the people of Uasin Gishu did it on my behalf and allowed

me time to do larger duties at the Bomas of Kenya. For that, I use this opportunity to thank them.

I want to finish by thanking the Members of the National Assembly for showing great faith in me, by electing me as Deputy Speaker of this House. I also want to thank the Members most specifically because I know there are Members who are from the opposite political divide who voted for me. For that, I thank you.

Lastly, I wish to thank Hon. Farah Maalim, my worthy opponent, for the great sportsmanship he showed. He undertook that if I won in the first round, he would concede and would not go to the second round, and he kept his word. Thank you. I was not a better candidate, you were. Thank you for that, Hon. Farah Maalim. I look forward to working with you in this House. Kenyans also deserve to be thanked for campaigning, voting, counting the votes and announcing the votes in their various respective polling stations peacefully without any incident. That shows that our country has reached levels of political maturity that we have sought for since Independence.

Moving on to the Address by the President, I wish to note that it was one of the boldest and most transformative agenda setting speech. He has promised to transform the lives of Kenyans. The people of Uasin Gishu are indebted on the point relating to affordable fertilizer and credit because this touches on my own county, which is the bread basket of Kenya. I also welcome his idea of initiating and ensuring that we have affordable housing in this country. This is something that is dear to my heart, having worked in Kibra in a programme called “Shining Hope for Communities”, which is run by two young people, Jessica and Kennedy Odede. I have seen the squalor and lack of sanitation that exists in Kibra, which is just one example. I now see in the speech that the dreams of the people of Kibra, where I have worked, will come true. They will have what they have always wanted; affordable housing, clean area, safe spaces and a place with water, sanitation and power.

I also wish to comment on an issue that I hope and appeal to our Members that when the matter comes before this House, we should support it; ensuring that we have a reformed social security system in Kenya so that we can end old age poverty. All of us know that we look after our aged persons. We pay medical bills for our parents, we take care of our parents at retirement despite the fact that they have worked all their lives, and even had to educate us. This will be something of the past. We will be having legislation coming to this House – and I look forward to it – as it was stated in the Address by the President. It does not make sense to save Kshs.200 a month and after 30 years, you only carry home Kshs,72,000. That must change. It will take painful processes and each of us will be called upon to try and help.

I particularly welcome the idea of reforms in restructuring our health system and our access to universal healthcare for all. Again, this is something that every Member of this House has endured. I am sure everyone has no less than 20 messages a day relating to fundraising events for someone who has either died and has left a pending bill in the hospital; or is in hospital and is unable to get treatment because they cannot afford. We hope that this 13th Parliament is going to be the Parliament that will put that to an end forever. That is encouraging because it is an agenda that was clearly outlined in the Address by the President to this House.

Hon. Speaker, I know I can go on and on, but I wish to stop there so that I can give other Members, especially the new ones who need to make their maiden speech a chance. I would like to donate my time to them rather than take the entire time.

I beg to ask Hon. Jerusha Momanyi to second this Motion. I hope she has come to the House.

Thank you, Hon. Speaker.

Hon. Speaker: Hon. Jerusha Momanyi. Take your stand and second the Motion. Go ahead.

Hon Jerusha Momanyi (Nyamira CWR, JP): Hon. Speaker, first of all, I want to apologise for coming late, but I have arrived.

Hon. Speaker, I rise to second the Motion on the Address by the President. Before that, I want to thank the people of Nyamira County for electing me for the second time. I want to thank the person who gave me the name 'Ntogoro,' which gave me great mileage and gave me victory in the 2022 elections. I promise to work for them.

Hon. Speaker, I second the Motion on the Address by the President.

Thank you, Hon. Speaker.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Speaker: The Hon Member for Molo, Hon. Kuria Kimani.

Hon. Kuria Kimani (Molo, UDA): Hon. Speaker, I thank you for giving me this opportunity to contribute to this Address by the President. First of all, I want to thank the great people of Molo Constituency for the confidence they showed me by electing me for the second time as a Member of Parliament. I will note that since the start of the multiparty democracy, Molo has never re-elected anyone.

(Applause)

I am here as the first person for the last 30 years to be re-elected in that great constituency. This shows the confidence that the people of Molo had in me and in the services that I offered them without discriminating against the various communities that are in my constituency. Molo is a cosmopolitan constituency.

I note that in the Address by His Excellency the President, he saluted the great women that have been elected in single constituencies, and have been re-elected in this 13th Parliament. In the great county that I come from, Nakuru County and City, we were popularly known as the 'Nakuru Girls,' because we produced the highest number of women Members of Parliament in our respective constituencies. We also elected a woman Governor and a woman Senator. I say this as a proud father of a daughter, because my daughter can look forward to dreaming to be any person or be in any leadership position she would like to hold in this great Republic.

Nakuru is very unique. At the start of our county, we elected our senior most, Hon. Jayne Kihara; and at the tail end of our county in Nakuru, we elected the youngest, who is yours truly speaking this morning. But of course, we are happy to have our newest Members, Hon. Mutai from Kuresoi North and of course the *mamba* that swallowed the *jogoo* in Rongai Constituency.

Hon. Speaker, I would like to note the great number of young leaders or young people that have been elected in this 13th Parliament. This Parliament has highest record of young Members who have been elected as MPs. I am very happy that the young people that I was elected with in the 12th Parliament have been re-elected. I want to honour just a few, like the Hon. John Paul Mwirigi, who was the youngest in the 12th Parliament; my colleagues from Kenyatta University, Hon. Ndindi Nyoro, Hon. Karemba and Hon. Pato all got re-elected. This means that we have with us a record of people that are going to become career politicians. I have often said that if you wanted to get a lawyer who has 30 years of experience, you will get plenty of them. If you look for medical doctors with 30 years of experience, you will get plenty of them but if you look for politicians or MPs with 30 years of experience, there are very few. The ones that are there now are, for example, yours truly, the Speaker of the National Assembly, Hon. Moses Wetangula, and His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, Dr. William Samoei Ruto. This, therefore, means that this breed of young people to whom we are giving experience in politics among us will be our sixth, seventh and eighth presidents of the Republic of Kenya.

His Excellency the President noted that the last election was issue-based. When I was campaigning for the Kenya Kwanza Alliance in Molo Constituency, I did not have difficulties explaining how President Ruto is a Kalenjin or not. Our mantra as UDA of “*Pesa Mfukoni*” would drive everybody to that agenda. This is because Kenyans are tired of politics of ethnic mobilisation, and all they have learnt is that when maize flour is sold expensively, the price is the same whether you are a Kikuyu, Luo or Kisii. Equally, when facing unemployment in the country, it affects all people irrespective of the communities they come from. So, I am very happy with the progress we have made. I hope that we will all remain committed and that going forward, our politics will never again be based on our ethnic communities.

Hon. Speaker, His Excellency the President noted the concern that your predecessor, Hon. Justin Muturi, raised several times about the role of Parliament in overseeing the Executive. Many are the times we issued invitations to Cabinet Secretaries (CSs) to come and answer audit queries, or Questions from Hon. Members, but even when they came to address us on the Floor, the answers were unsatisfactory. They used to give excuse after excuse on how they would not be available to answer MPs. This really undermined the role of Parliament in overseeing the Executive. Therefore, I am very happy to note that this Parliament will start reviewing our Standing Orders to allow these CSs to come and answer questions on the Floor of the House.

I am particularly happy that several of our colleagues have been appointed to the Executive: Hon. Aden Duale, Hon. Alice Wahome and Hon. Aisha Jumwa, as well as all the other politicians that will now be serving the Executive. As I congratulate them, I hope that they will not forget where they came from. I hope they do not forget the troubles they had in reaching CSs for them to answer Questions or lobby for projects in their constituencies. We, therefore, hope that when we go to knock on the doors of these people who will be in the Executive, they will listen to us as they would have loved to be listened to when they served as MPs.

Hon. Speaker, the President promised us that fertilisers will be accessible to *wananchi*. True to his word, these fertilizers are available in stores across the country. This was a great departure from the economics of subsidising consumption at the expense of subsidising production. What we saw in the previous Government is that subsidising consumption led to expenditures that could not be accounted for, and we did not succeed even when we tried to lower those prices. This is because research has shown that if you really want to subsidise the cost of a product, the easiest and most rational way is to subsidise its production rather than its consumption.

I note that the President, in his Address, stated that we are overtaxing consumption at the expense of taxing wealth. For a very long time, we have had the assumption that if you increase the tax rates, you will then collect more revenue. However, scientific research such as what we call in economics the Laffer Curve has shown that you will increase the tax rate up to a particular point, where a further increase in that tax rate will lead to collection of less taxes. I am, therefore, hoping that as the 13th Parliament looks forward to debating the Finance Bill, we will not have the proverbial increase of tax rates hoping that we will collect more revenue. I hope that we will have a tax system that is sensitive to the hard-economic times that we are in, noting that increasing tax rates will not necessarily lead to an increase in tax collection.

The President in his Address talked about housing as one of his key agendas. In addition to providing thousands of jobs for our young people, this will also lead to a decent way of living for our people. In Molo Constituency, which is quite rural, we have a big slum called Kasarani. We have families living together in a single room. You have a father, mother and adult children sharing the same tiny wooden room. I am, therefore, hoping that when this project kicks off, Molo will be one of the first beneficiaries and we will provide decent housing for our people.

On the issue of savings, yesterday, I received a call from one of my constituents asking me to move a Bill in Parliament to increase the age of retirement from 60 to 65. This is because their savings in the National Social Security Fund (NSSF) are not enough to cater for their retirement. Although this will be a pinch to us in the long run, we need to be a saving country and save enough so that we do not overburden our children to support our livelihoods when we get old.

With that, I thank you, Hon. Speaker.

Hon. Speaker: Let us have Hon. (Dr.) Nyikal.

Hon. (Dr.) James Nyikal (Seme, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to comment on the President's Speech. I take this opportunity to congratulate you on your election as the Speaker of this House. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of Seme for electing me for the third time. This is a great honour and privilege. I do not take it for granted.

I listened to the President's Speech; it is the shortest President's Address to Parliament that I have listened to in the last 10 years. It is a fairly good summary of the President's manifesto and what he said during his campaigns. It was rather lacking in strategy; I believe that that will come later as we go into the details. It was basically a good summary. The 52 paragraphs actually covered everything he said during his campaigns.

He commented on the affirmative action in Parliament, where more women have been elected, the re-election of many Members, and serving all Kenyans regardless of how they voted. He talked of the role of CSs in our oversight role and them coming to Parliament. He talked of support for the Judiciary; investing in enablers of the economy, particularly infrastructure; and increased agricultural productivity, support for small traders like the youth, *mama mbogas*, *kinyozis* and *makangas*. All that was in his Speech.

He also talked about the credit provision, the hustlers' fund, better housing, universal healthcare through the NHIF, better debt management and how we should reduce our borrowing. He also proposed that we reduce the current budget by Kshs.300 billion. He also talked about better tax management, improving our social securities, support for the National Government Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) and Senate oversight. All that was there. But as I have said, it lacked in details and strategy. It is our hope that that will come when policies come before us in the House, because that is how it should be.

But Hon. Speaker, there was a striking lack of mention of two things that, in my view, are the most critical in this country. One is unity of this country. It was not clearly mentioned. I did not see any emphasis. Unity is the key to harmony and development, especially after an election that was bitterly fought, won by a narrow margin and contested. We did not agree with the outcome; we went to court and the court made a ruling which, in my view, was a little flawed because of the language that was used. It was enough to say that the evidence before them did not warrant negating the election. It was not necessary to use words like 'wild goose chase', 'red herring' and 'hot air'. That, in my mind, made the decision flawed despite the fact that we accepted it.

Hon. Speaker, there is need for healing. In paragraph 12 of the Address, the President did not bring people together when he referred to the Deputy President becoming the opposition leader and *vice versa*. I do not think that is necessary at this point. Reference to personality cults in paragraph 10 is also not necessary at this point in time. We need to create a nation. We have a country called Kenya, whose boundaries were defined by colonialists, which we accepted. We have a State defined by the Constitution, statutes and all the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). But we do not have a nation called Kenya on this earth. Why do I say that? It is because a nation resides in the hearts of people who believe that the nation is theirs, and they all love it, live in it together, cry and die for it. This is something that this country has not fought for, 60 years since Independence. We have fought for control of the

instruments of government and power, and for distribution of resources. We have never strived to create a nation. In this country called Kenya, if you stand on any of the streets in any town or city and say, “Luos are stupid” or “Kikuyus are bad in this and that way” or “Kambas are bad people,” someone will come and attack you because they feel that they have been attacked. But if you go to the streets and say “Kenyans are stupid or thieves,” nobody will attack you because nobody feels that they have been insulted. Nobody feels that they belong to something called Kenya as a nation. That is why even we, very informed people, talk of the Luo nation, the Luhya nation and the Kisii nation. This is a 1,000-mile journey that in this country, we have not made even the first step. I thought that is what we, in the Azimio la Umoja One-Kenya Coalition, were thinking about. I also thought that, that is what the Kenya Kwanza Alliance were thinking about. Again, we all love the idea but do we practise it? This is the bigger ideal that this country must start fighting for.

The other thing is corruption. I did not hear much on corruption except in paragraph 19, which was in support of the Judiciary. This is the cancer that will eat, prevent or dismantle any promises that we will make to improve the welfare of our people. This Speech seemed afraid to tackle that evil.

Hon. Speaker, we must look at this even in the appointments being made. This House will vet nominees. I do not believe that we want to be guided by the principle of innocence until proven guilty. I think we should be guided by Chapter Six on integrity and morality, where we should tell suspects to stay aside until proved innocent. Such people are not fit to hold a public position. That is the direction we should go. Those two big principles should be our guide.

Hon. Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Murugara.

Hon. George Murugara (Tharaka, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Speaker. Allow me to keep my word of yesterday, that I would congratulate you today. Hon. Moses Masika Wetangula, I congratulate you on being elected Speaker of the National Assembly by an overwhelming majority. I also congratulate your deputy, Hon. Gladys Boss Shollei, my erstwhile classmate and the one who knighted me ‘Sir George.’ I confirm that the National Assembly is in safe hands, and we expect the very best in this term. It is most exciting and we will come here on a daily basis to actually deliberate on issues that touch on our country.

Allow me to also say thanks to the people of Tharaka Constituency, who gave me a second term. It was not easy. Tharaka people are known to be brave. Sometimes they say that they are warrior-some, and all that put together, they rejected all tokens given to them and chose development. That is how I came to this House and I owe them one, which is a big thank you. I also want to thank the people of Tharaka Nithi County because they lived to their expectation. They always promised to deliver, and they actually delivered to Kenya Kwanza more than 92 per cent of the votes cast. That was not a mean feat, especially to the UDA Party, which got almost all the positions together with the sister party, The Service Party (TSP) that brought to this House our Woman Representative, Hon. Susan Ngugi wa Mwindu, who is here.

As we speak today, the people of Tharaka Nithi are hungry because there is a ravaging drought in that area. There is no water. We are calling upon the Government to make immediate interventions to that county so that we are served with food and water. I must confirm to those who were newly appointed that I will be knocking doors. We need water, food, roads and electricity, among other things. Therefore, all the people heading various dockets, especially those from this House, I ask you not to forget us.

Turning to His Excellency the President’s Speech, as it has been stated by every speaker, it was the shortest of the speeches, but the most elaborate. It touched on the Kenya Kwanza plan; a plan that was very well drafted and worked on, released to the country and formed the basis upon which this coalition came to power. The President assured all Kenyans

that he would serve all of us, irrespective of our voting patterns. This was exemplified by actually going to Nyanza last weekend, where he went to pray.

We call upon all Kenyans to embrace His Excellency the President so that he is able to serve us as the symbol of unity in this country. He represents everyone, and he is going to serve everyone. He has also promised to ensure that the three organs of Government are separate and distinct. The Parliament in which we sit – as the National Assembly and the Senate – and the Judiciary will be independent in all aspects, including financial autonomy.

The Kenya Kwanza Coalition plan, which he elaborated on as the bottom-up approach, includes the hustlers' fund, which will be set up. It is my submission that once the legislative assistance is sought by the Executive so that we can implement the plans of Kenya Kwanza Coalition, this House will be more than willing and ready to ensure that the legislative agenda is passed and the country moves on.

He was quite elaborate and emphatic that we must invest more in the country so that we create jobs for millions of Kenyans who are jobless. This is what is hurting us when we go to the constituencies to find young graduates idling in market places or wherever jobless. Sincerely we, as a House, must rise to the occasion. We must now legislate in a manner that will assist our youth to get more jobs, get investors coming in and people putting down their money so that young people can actually get jobs. The trickle-down effect is what we are talking about such that we do not always rely on the money coming from the top. We have to build the base now, so that we move upwards the bottom-up as opposed to the trickle-down effect.

Let us also become savers. We were told so. It is not a question of just consuming everything that we get. Let that saving be commensurate with what we earn. We, as Members of Parliament, cannot contribute the same amount with a P1 teacher who has just been employed in the NSSF. Let it be commensurate with our earning so that we can save and borrow from those savings. The NHIF is very important. We must also contribute proportionately to the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) for every Kenyan. There is no point of contributing little money to take care of your family alone, when actually we know for sure that you earn much more than the people we have upcountry. Let us pay enough for our family, and a bigger number of our constituents, so that eventually at the end of five years, every Kenyan can be covered by the NHIF. They should be able to walk into and out of hospitals, where they are properly treated.

The housing project is part of the Big Four Agenda which collapsed because of various political reasons. It has now become the pet topic of our President. We must give him the legislative legal framework on which he can actually ensure that even those who live in the slums and areas that are not very habitable, including those who live in deplorable states in our constituencies, are given better housing.

Let us talk about infrastructure. As I have said, my constituency, Tharaka, needs roads. We have numerous stalled projects in Tharaka Nithi County, like every other part of the country. We need to revive and complete all these infrastructural development projects, so that Kenyans can also enjoy development like the rest of the world.

He actually made a point on electricity, because there are many rural areas, including my constituency and county again, where the percentages are too low. Tharaka Constituency is at 30 per cent. Gatundu South and Gatundu North may be at 100 per cent. Let us move the money that is meant for those who are in 100 per cent to those that are behind. This is called equalization. We should not be shy to say these things, because some areas in the country are more developed than others. As a result of this, we are lagging behind.

The President is the symbol of unity; we have said so. Let us embrace him and support his legislative agenda and budgetary plans. Let us support whatever he brings as long as it is

geared towards assisting Kenyans so that they can live better lives. Our counties will develop and collect more money. We can do whatever is good for the country.

Some Members have said that the President did not speak much about corruption. As much as it is a monster in this country, it does not require songs day in, day out. Sometimes, the more you talk about it, the more we think that you are actually trying to shield our eyes from hearing this. It is going to be part and parcel of the agenda.

Let me congratulate His Excellency the Deputy President, Rigathi Gachagua, because he is also a hands-on man. He promised to assist the President to deliver on the agenda. We look towards this.

Let me also thank His Excellency the President for appointing one of our own from Tharaka Constituency in Tharaka Nithi County, Prof. Kithure Kindiki. Thank you for that. We have never had a CS before, but we have one now. Thank you, your Excellency the President. We know Prof. Kindiki. We promise that he will deliver to the country.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Speaker: Hon. Member for Gilgil.

Hon. Martha Wangari (Gilgil, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Speaker. I also rise to, first of all, congratulate you on your election as the Speaker of this House, and the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Shollei. I also thank the Almighty God for this very distinguished opportunity and privilege to serve in this House for a third term now. I served with you in the 11th Parliament in the Senate. I was elected to this House in the 12th Parliament. I have now been elected for a second time in this 13th Parliament.

I take the opportunity to thank the people of Gilgil from the five wards: Elementaita, Malewa West, Gilgil Town, Eburu/Mbaruk and Morendat wards. They had the confidence to elect me to represent them in this House. I do not take it for granted, and I promise them that the opportunity and the foundation we put in the 12th Parliament, this Parliament can only get better and bigger. We will definitely work towards making it a model constituency.

I take this opportunity to also congratulate my colleagues in this House. I take it as a special opportunity to congratulate the women elected Members who represent single Member constituencies in this Parliament; the 29 of them and the four of them coming from the great Nakuru County: Njoro, Naivasha, Gilgil and Bahati constituencies. We have shown the way that it is possible and doable.

Hon. Speaker, I look forward to this 13th Parliament for one reason. It is a vibrant Parliament which has more re-elections than have ever been in history. We have never had 60 per cent of us being re-elected in this House. It is a major milestone. That means that we have the institutional memory that is required to run this Parliament. It has also been restructured in terms of the committees. We know that a lot of the work goes on at the committee level. Having 41 Committees – that is 20 Departmental Committees and 21 Select Committees – means that the work will be spread out very well and the working will be better.

I am also very proud that you served as a Senator. I hope that these bicameral relations, just like it was noted by the President in his Speech, will improve in this 13th Parliament, because we represent the same people in our constituencies and counties. We hope that the sibling rivalry that we have seen before will reduce. Whether you serve in the Senate or the National Assembly, we work for Kenyans. We have gone round, because some of the people who were in the 11th Parliament in the National Assembly ended up being in the Senate in the 12th Assembly, and they were complaining. The same has also happened to others, who have become Governors. I hope that we realise that in every place we are elected, it is Article 1 of the Constitution that donates the sovereignty we practise and are proud of. It actually belongs to the people. I also hope that the issue of bicameral relations that we are talking about and sponsoring of Bills by Members across the two Houses can be actualised so that we have a better and smoother House.

I am looking forward to this Parliament because what we had yesterday is a good start of the 13th Parliament—that this House becomes the place in which we debate more without throwing punches or words. That it becomes a floor of debate. That we can respectfully debate regardless of what party one represents. That was also in the Presidential Speech; that it does not matter what party you came into this House through. At the end of the day, there is one Parliament, and we must play our role of legislation, representation and oversight as one House.

On to the Presidential Speech, I will pick a few issues. One thing he noted is that the unity of this country is not something we can bargain about. Even if he was elected by the majority, the minority also must have their say, and he represents them too. I think what he has already started to do – like travelling to areas like Homa Bay last weekend and to areas he did not get majority of votes – has shown commitment that he is willing to embrace every person regardless of the area one comes from. Even as leaders, I hope we get out of that mood. That even if you were elected through the Azimio coalition or through the minority, show up when the President is in your area. This is because we are, at the end of the day, serving the same people. Elections are done and we now have work to do.

On the issue of a bipartisan support from this House, the President was appealing – and not directing – to this House to support his legislative agenda to push the things that he would want to achieve at the Executive. That means that even if you are in the minority and something is good for your people, you do not have to oppose it just for the sake of it. Likewise, you do not have to also support something that does not work for your people, because at the end of the day, you will be accountable to your people.

Hon. Speaker, the issue of health or universal healthcare is very pertinent and critical. We spoke about it in the 12th Parliament. But, how much was done? Just yesterday, a lady from an area called Ngomongo in my constituency was in my office. She is called *Mama* Kamingo and is 73 years old. She uses the NHIF to get treatment. At old age, you know you will always need funds to go to hospital. She has not been able to make her contributions for a whole year. The amount may look small, but with COVID-19 and the drought that has ravaged the country, raising that money to put in the NHIF card is not easy. What we had in the last Parliament is the issue of getting the elderly covered under the NHIF and the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) without paying. We have good proposals and policies but, where is the implementation? At the end of the day and as a 70-year-old you get cash transfer of Kshs.2,000 per month. By the way, it has not been updated for the last three or four years. People who have reached that age are not getting that money. Those that get it get it late and they end up spending all the Kshs.2,000 on health issues. This is because they probably have arthritis, diabetes or hypertension to manage. They end up taking all that money to health.

At this point, I do not think there is any Member in this House who does not have a *WhatsApp* group to raise funds to pay medical bills or even get bodies from hospitals. This agenda has to be thought out well. I hope that the nominated CSs, especially for health, will be at the forefront to ensure that every person gets a good cover and is assured of treatment. The other issue on health is that, as an agenda of the Executive, it has to be a shared agenda with the governors and the Council of Governors (CoG). Under the Fourth Schedule of the Constitution, this issue is with devolved units. Having dispensaries and health centres operationalised is very critical. This will help us get rid of the issue of getting people going for malaria and antiretroviral (ARV) drugs, and immunisations at the Kenyatta National Hospital (KNH) or the Moi Teaching and Referral Hospital (MTRH). We should take it to the dispensaries. That level should be able to cater for issues of malaria, diarrhoea, immunisations, ARVs and other small issues. That is so that we leave referrals to national and Level 5 and Level 6 hospitals.

Hon. Speaker, the President also touched on education. It is also coupled with the nomination of the CSs. If there is something we must get right in this country is the model of

education that we are talking about. I am happy that he has also started on policies by getting a taskforce to look at the Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) model so that we do not mess up a whole generation of tomorrow. I will tie this issue of education with the NG-CDF. Right now, so many children are at home. I know many Members are being told “we need bursaries, we need to go back to schools”. Teachers are saying they cannot allow children in school because bursaries are gone. We need to get this generation back to school. The issue of free secondary education has not come out properly. People are suffering and a whole generation of children will be lost if we are not careful.

To close it, I want to talk about water and housing. I know many of us have slums. This housing agenda by the President must be cascaded to the constituency level. I have an issue in Bondeni and Kasarani, and I hope we expand that agenda to the rural constituencies. I take time to note.

Thank you.

Hon. Speaker: The Hon. Rahim Dawood.

Hon. Rahim Dawood (North Imenti, Independent): Thank you, Hon. Speaker. First, let me congratulate you for being elected as our Speaker, as well as the Deputy Speaker, Hon. Shollei. I also congratulate all Members of Parliament from the 12th and 11th Parliament who have been re-elected, as well as the 12 Independent MPs who have been elected to this House. That has gone a long way to show that sometimes we do not believe in parties, because parties short-change us.

I thank the people of North Imenti for electing me for a third time. Being elected as an Independent Member was a very tough job. But I thank my people of North Imenti for having faith in me. I am the fifth MP in my constituency since Independence. We have another constituency, Buuri Constituency that was split from Imenti Constituency. The first MP was Harvester Angaine, who was accorded the title ‘the King of Meru’. After that came Hon. Nteere Mbogori – and I am glad that we have our *mama* Meru County, Hon. Elizabeth Kailemia, her daughter, who is with us now. Then after that we had Hon. Mwiraria. Then we had a one term MP, Hon. Silas Muriuki. Being the fifth MP since Independence, I am very happy. This is my third term.

Moving on to the President’s Speech, first I would like to congratulate President Ruto together with his deputy, Rigathi Gachagua, on their election. It was a tough campaign. I also congratulate the worthy competitor, the former Prime Minister, Raila Odinga, together with my former leader of NARC-Kenya, Martha Karua. I congratulate them for accepting that they did not win after the judgement of the Supreme Court. I heard Hon. Nyikal talking about the terms which were used in the Supreme Court. Those were not offensive at all, according to me. That being what it is, there is a government of the day and the President has been chosen.

Hon. Speaker, I want to talk about the President’s Speech where he talked about reducing the price of fertiliser. Yes, the price of fertiliser has been reduced to Kshs.3,500. Unfortunately, that is as far as it goes. At the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB), people buy fertiliser at Kshs.3,500. As soon as they are out of the gate, the prices go up to Kshs.5,000. Not everybody gets the fertiliser; even those who have registered. I have complained about this to the national administration. We should go further because we have devolution in place. We have devolved units and the National Government Administration Officers (NGAO) - the chiefs and assistant chiefs. We need to take the fertiliser to where people are: the sub-locations, locations, divisions, and not just to the country headquarters. Unless we do that, we will not achieve what is meant to be done.

Hon. Speaker, we need to know more regarding the hustlers’ fund. I believe it is a good idea if implemented well. The Members of the 11th Parliament know about the Uwezo Fund and many funds in many constituencies. The Uwezo Fund has been depleted, unlike some which are doing well. In my constituency, I have disbursed Kshs.60 million up from Kshs.16

million of Uwezo Fund. So, we need to replicate the hustlers' fund and let it be administered from MPs' offices to reduce paperwork and red-tape. Let us do it through the Uwezo Fund. It will be much better and easier to manage. MPs should be told that it is a revolving fund and not for free. Until we inculcate that in our people, they will not repay it.

The President spoke about informal settlements as well as housing. In my constituency, we have not had title deeds for one or two places since Independence. It is very important to empower our people. They should have title deeds to their property because if they do not, how will they develop what they do not have papers for? At our place in Meru, we have done surveys for a long time, and I wish the incoming CS for Lands and Housing would look at Shauri Yako, which is an informal settlement. I am not saying *shauri yako* to our Hon. Speaker, but that is a name of an informal settlement next to the sewerage plant in Meru and next to Gakoromone Market, which is the biggest in the whole of East and Central Kenya. Up to date, we have not got title deeds. The housing dream is a very good thing. The Deputy Speaker said that Kibera will be changed. We need change everywhere there are informal settlements. Let us have slum upgrading projects which were there initially, but funding was inadequate.

Hon. Speaker, it is good that our President promised the Judiciary more funds so that justice can be dispensed. The President spoke about it even yesterday. The head of Judiciary, the hon. Chief Justice (CJ) Martha Koome, comes from my constituency. In as much as we would like justice to be dispensed, the CJ and the whole Judiciary should not put roadblocks on any legislation which comes out of this Parliament and delay whatever is supposed to be done. As we are speaking, we are speaking from two sides of the mouth. One, we are talking about the Constituency Development Fund (CDF) Act of 2013, that was said to be unlawful. But we made changes in 2015 and it is now the NG-CDF. These are two different things. I believe that in law, something with a different name is not the same as another. In his Address, the President talked about NG-CDF being a game changer. He has said in private that he supports us having the NG-CDF. We need to move with haste to entrench the NG-CDF into the Constitution. I believe already one MP is pushing for that. As Members of Parliament, we need to ascertain that we have the NG-CDF, because school children are at home because there are no bursaries. We talk about free primary or secondary school, but there is nothing that is free. Yesterday, I got a call from one of the parents who told me they are asked to pay for one thing or the other.

Hon. Speaker, the other thing is the national debt. We need to reduce our national debt. I agree with the President that we need to reduce the Budget by Kshs.300 billion. But the money should not be removed from the development budget. It should be removed from the recurrent expenditure, because we all need roads and a lot of other things in the constituencies. When they bring the Supplementary Budget, they should not think of removing the Kshs.45 billion of the NG-CDF, because the Supplementary Budget will not pass in this House. I believe that is the feeling of this House.

Thank you, Hon. Speaker. I congratulate you again.

Hon. Speaker: The Hon. Member for Kilgoris.

Hon. Julius Sunkuli (Kilgoris, JP): Hon. Speaker, thank you very much. I also wish to begin by giving thanks to the people of Kilgoris for electing me to Parliament. It has been noted that this has been a long hiatus away from this House, but I spent useful time serving as Kenya's Ambassador to China. That was a very useful moment. I congratulate you Hon. Speaker on your election to this good seat. I know you are quite capable, and this House will sometimes enjoy some of your good humour; I hope you still have it the way I used to know you. I also wish to congratulate the Hon. learned friend, Hon. Gladys Boss, for her election as your deputy.

Sometime back, there was an opinion poll that held that Kenyans were the most optimistic people in the world. Ten years ago, we attended a very colourful ceremony at

Kasarani. The ceremony was the inauguration of the Jubilee Party President and Deputy President, very well conducted by the now Hon. Deputy Speaker. I was sitting next to some prominent Kenyans and we watched the way Kenyans were watching the presentation of the agenda of Government at that time. I asked a senior colleague of mine who was sitting next to me what he thought about the new Government, and what he thought about the President and the Deputy President. That senior colleague, who is now deceased unfortunately, said to me that he thought the two would perform very well. He was very optimistic that Kenya would go places. They actually digitally showed us the Kenya of their dreams. We were all very hopeful as we went back home. Some of us went back to our legal practice and waited for the great moments to happen. Ten years later, the successor of President Uhuru Kenyatta had this to say. He says, "I have news and it is not very good news, our financial situation is not very good". The President of Kenya has said that the financial situation is not good, the economy is bad. In fact, the Deputy President has used much clearer words and said the economy is very bad.

Hon. Speaker, of course there are questions that will be asked. How did we arrive at this situation? This is from an optimistic situation to declaring our economy to be very bad. We would like to do some post-mortem on what were the actual causes of this situation. I do not know whether that will help much. The situation requires much of our attention. This Parliament should consider itself not a war government or a constitutional parliament but a parliament that must sort out the economy. More than anything else, things that will pain us, things that must set us scratching our heads are how to bring back the economy to shape because we are not doing well. The many things that we promised our people on the campaign trail depend on our economy.

Unless we sort out the economy, there is very little else we are going to do so we wait for the Government to present to us their economic policies and see what can be done differently. I know most of the people who were in the Jubilee Government are also in this Government. The only consolation we have is that I hear the President is very well advised by the economists. I hope these economists will crack this nut and tell us what ought to be done so that we come out of this conundrum. The economy is what has caused a lot of unemployment and of all, problems Members will face in their constituencies. I think we will tackle many but the one that will give us a lot of disappointment is the unemployment issue. Where are we going to get jobs for the many young people we have today? If we do not deal with the economic problems, many of us will not be re-elected because young people do not want to hear about it. They want jobs and they do not want us to tell them that we faced sharks in the Jordan. I think in the first case they do not know that there is a Jordan to cross and so we have to sort out the economic issues today and not tomorrow.

I noticed the President has laid strong emphasis on agriculture and coming from an area where agriculture is the main activity, the President must be supported. The problems are because of production. Production in agriculture is a very expensive thing in Kenya, not just the fertilizer but the hiring of tractors and fuelling but, it is a good step that we have addressed the issue of fertilizer. Unfortunately, if you tell farmers to go to NCPB to buy fertilizer and then say they must be registered, that is not good because that will be creating red tape and it will encourage corruption. Make available these fertilizers in shops so that people can buy them from there without having to go get a signature from the District Officer (DO) or from the chief. They need to access and buy fertilizers from shops.

The President has addressed the issue of health and it is a very touchy issue. We are looking at it from the point of universal healthcare. I think that is okay but I would also like to ask this House, although it is a House that believes in devolution, whether health is actually right for devolution. I think giving the health function to people at the county level before we prepare them is risking lives of many Kenyans. It is time for this House to reconsider bringing the health function to where more experts are because not every governor is ready to look at

health the way the country would. I believe we should not have devolved health that soon. We still need our doctors to be controlled and posted centrally so that we can develop our facilities well.

At some point the Government hired some machinery which they would have bought at the same price. We should acquire three machines: the MRI and cancer machines then place them in the hospitals in our localities. I register my thanks to the Speech.

Hon. Speaker: Hon. Member for Endebess.

Hon. (Dr.) Robert Pukose (Endebess, UDA): Thank you for allowing me to register my thanks on the President's Speech.

First and foremost, I congratulate you, Hon. Speaker, Moses Wetang'ula, for your election as Speaker of the National Assembly and Hon. Boss Shollei for being elected the Deputy Speaker. I thank the great people of Endebess for having seen it fit to elect me as their Member of Parliament for the third time consecutively. I assure them I will continue delivering the services as I did before and make sure that there is great development within that area. When you read our Constitution in Article 1 it says that all sovereign powers belong to the people of Kenya and shall be exercised only in accordance with the Constitution. People may exercise their sovereign power either directly or through democratically elected representatives.

On 29th of October I was glad that when the President came to this House, we had all the three arms of Government which the Constitution recognises in the same Article 1. The sovereign power in the Constitution is delegated to the State organs; Parliament, Judiciary and Executive. When the three arms of Government were in this House, it brought us together and that was very important.

I listened and I have read the President's Speech. When my senior colleague in the profession, and we are also in the same category as Members of Parliament, Hon. Nyikal, referred to Article 10 as being divisive in the President's Speech, I had to re-read it. The President said: "I submit to you that the fact the election was so close is an indication that what unites us is always much greater than what divides us." With the support of Kenyans, we have launched ethnicity as a central principle for organising our politics and, therefore, we are retiring it for good. We are also retiring ethnic mobilization and personality cults, together with their practices of exclusion, discrimination, patronage and nepotism. Many of the young Kenyans in the streets did not look at themselves as Kikuyus, Sabaots, Luhyas or anything. They looked at themselves as Kenyans. This issue of people talking of maybe Kalenjin nation or Kikuyu nation is because of politicians polluting Kenyans. If you sit at home with your children, they never think of themselves as any other person. They consider themselves Kenyans.

Hon. Speaker, the President talks of his administration allocating Ksh50 billion every year to the Hustler Fund from which micro, small and medium enterprises can access affordable credit to start and expand their businesses. Many Kenyans are looking forward to this Hustler Fund. They are looking at this House to see what legislation can be provided because as far as the President is concerned, he laid down his policy. He did not have to give the details. It is upon us to give the details.

I have heard some people question the President's Speech brevity and lack of details. It is upon this House to come up with the details. How do we operationalise the Hustler Fund? The President has said we can allocate the Ksh50 billion every year to make sure Kenyans access affordable credit; the *mama mbogas*, the *boda boda*, and everybody else including your constituents will have access to the Hustler Fund to do their businesses. This calls for the unity of this House to come up with legislation and regulations to operationalise this Fund.

The President further said there is tremendous opportunity for the House to fully take up its role in resolving the systemic issues that limit access to affordable homes and finances.

We saw the other day the President going to Mukuru Kwa Njenga to launch the housing project. We have not seen him going to other areas and talk about the same. My friends Hon. Kaluma and others from Homa Bay County missed an opportunity because I am not sure whether your people in Homa Bay Town have adequate affordable housing. The Governor and Hon. Kaluma were away and tweeted to say that they needed to have been informed yet it was in public domain that the President was going to attend a church service in Homa Bay. It was upon you to make sure that you welcome the Head of State and raise the issues concerning your people especially about housing matters.

In the President's Speech on matters health, which I am also passionate about considering my background as a medical doctor and a consultant surgeon for that matter, he talked about universal healthcare. He went on further to say that we must look at it right from the area of preventive and promotive while looking at chronic illnesses. We are in a society where many of the lifestyle illnesses such hypertension, diabetes, obesity and other illnesses set in as a result of our lifestyles. We should look at issues of universal healthcare coverage, right from promotive to preventive of chronic illnesses. We should also make health insurance covers affordable and accessible to every Kenyan. This is because many of us receive requests from our constituents to help settle medical bills of their relatives, yet not all of us have the ability to raise those amounts every now and then. With universal healthcare which covers their medical needs, it will make life much easier for everybody.

Lastly, among other things is the issue of the fertilizer subsidy. Considering that Endebess Constituency is an area that is agriculturally productive, our farmers will welcome the idea. We want the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) to have a better way of making sure that fertilizers reach the farmers in an efficient manner, so that we can increase our production.

With those few remarks I want to record my thanks to the President's Speech. Thank you.

Hon. Speaker: The Member for Bonchari.

Hon. Charles Onchoke (Bonchari, UPA): Thank you, Hon. Speaker, for the opportunity. I congratulate you and Hon. Gladys Boss, who was my lecturer at Parklands School of Law, for being elected Hon. Speaker and Hon. Deputy Speaker of this House. I also take this opportunity to thank the people of Bonchari for having confidence in me and electing me as their Member of Parliament. I will be representing them in this august House through motions, debates, statements, questions and legislation as a way of representing their interests as we talked and as was advised during the campaign period.

I have had time to look and listen to the Speech by the President in the 13th Parliament and like you have noted, it lacks in detail. I hope in due course there will be policies put in place to support its intentions and wishes for it to be actualised. I note that he talked about cutting recurrent expenditure in paragraphs 40, 41, and 42 of the Speech. He talks about enhancing savings so that we have money for our investments. He talks about controlling the public debt which had grown astronomically. He also talks about the poor culture of savings which undermines investments in this country as well as affordable housing. With regard to savings and investments in this country, often we forget to take note that investments are both local, international as well as foreign. When we look at what makes Kenya attractive or not attractive as an investment destination, there are a number of things that we need to learn and take care of. The cost of doing business in this country is quite high. When you talk to an investor, both foreign or local, they all attest to the fact that the cost is pretty high. This needs to be looked at and be controlled through this 13th Parliament.

In addition to that, there are inefficiencies, corruption and a lot of gatekeepers when looking for simple things like approvals and licences. It takes up to five years to start a business in this country. I am writing a book with some people about doing business in Kenya. In our

research, one of the things that stands out in Kenya compared to other countries in the region, is that because of the above reasons, we are not very attractive to investors. In most cases when we talk about affordable housing, we tend to focus on urban areas. The reality is that for those of us who come from rural areas or constituencies, housing is a big problem. Many people do not have decent housing. I hope and pray that we are going to look at this so that we have decent housing for our folks in the rural constituencies like Bonchari.

What you hear around is that foreign reserves are dwindling, and the cost of living is skyrocketing. As we talk about trying to move forward the free market, let us take cognisance of the fact that we need to take care of the poor members of society so that they are not disadvantaged. Most developed economies have initiatives and programs that provide nets for the poor and the elderly people who otherwise are disadvantaged.

Youth unemployment in Bonchari stands at about 60 per cent. We need to have a conversation on how to deal with this issue because it is a time bomb. I hope legislation will be brought in this House to address this problem. This is because I believe it is not unique to Bonchari only but everywhere in this country. Our youths are our future, they have talents and skills and just want opportunities.

The poverty index in Bonchari is one of the highest in the country at around 44 per cent. I will bring Statements or Bills to help alleviate this problem because my people are very hard working. They are good farmers who only need opportunities, uplifting and little support so they can fend for themselves.

One thing about this country, especially for those of us who come from agricultural areas, is that prices for our commodities are very poor. The value chains are inefficient and this is something we need to look at. As parliamentarians representing the people, we need to take care of this so that the value chains are made more efficient and farmers get a decent pay for their sweat. This will encourage them to contribute towards the economy and make it grow. After all, agriculture is the mainstay of this economy.

Education standards in Bonchari are unpleasant because the infrastructure is very poor. We did not get much allocation from the Ministry of Education. I hope in the current Budget or future budgets, they will support infrastructure in our schools so that they can have a friendly environment which will enable our students to learn and get skills needed for them to be useful members of the society.

Bonchari probably is one of the few constituencies without a Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) institute. I hope in the next one or two years we will have a TVET built there. This will enable many young people to acquire skills in plumbing, masonry and so on. The infrastructure in Bonchari is very poor specifically our roads and lack of energy. I will push to get the support of this Parliament so as to build roads which will enable our farmers to take their produce to the markets.

Social protection in this country is something far from celebrating. For those of us who have taken up these positions, every day we will get phone calls from people asking for help. This is because they are unable to afford the basic commodities and services or livelihood. We need social protection and the money allocated to the elderly people should reach them in good time. The records should be updated so those falling in this age group are taken care of and supported so that they can buy food, clothes and medication.

I am a big supporter of universal healthcare. In this country, this is something we have been talking about for a long time but it looks elusive and cannot be accomplished. I pray this time it will be accomplished because we can do it. Another issue you will be hearing from the people is about medical bills. The cost of healthcare in this country is very high. I hope we can find a solution to this. If you walk to any hospital or physician, the bills are very high. This is worse for the ordinary people in the villages. I recognise this is a function of the county governments but I think we can bring ideas and Motions to make our healthcare affordable and

accessible to the people. Otherwise, we will be attending burials every other time. Like, in my constituency they are so many and we cannot afford more.

It is unfortunate and regrettable that in this century or era a number of people in Bonchari do not have title deeds for their land particularly the people of Simwaga in Bonyando, Bogiakumu Ward. I hope the Government can look into this and make it possible for them to acquire title deeds for the land. I want to thank the people of Bogiakumu, Bomorenda, Riana and Mariba. I am here to work for you. I will be advancing their course and pushing their interests in this Parliament. I pray we develop our constituency together.

Thank you, very much.

*[The Speaker (Hon. Moses Wetang'ula)
left the Chair]*

*[The Deputy Speaker (Hon. Gladys Boss)
took the Chair]*

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Let us have the Member for Gatanga, Hon. Edward Wakili.

Hon. Wakili Muriu (Gatanga, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. Let me start by congratulating the President, Dr. William Samoei Ruto and his Deputy Rigathi Gachagua for being elected as the 5th President of the Republic of Kenya. I also take this opportunity to congratulate Hon. Moses Wetang'ula, the Speaker of this House. Hon. Gladys Shollei, I congratulate you my able classmate for being elected as Deputy Speaker of this Parliament.

First of all, allow me to thank the great people of Gatanga for giving me an opportunity to serve them as their Member of Parliament for the next five years. This is a great honour and dignity which I promise to reciprocate by serving them diligently with all my mind, knowledge, wisdom with God before me.

I want to make a few remarks on the President's Speech which in my opinion resonates very well with the great people of Gatanga because they are farmers and traders. In his speech the President addressed issues of farming and trade. He elucidated on the need for the Government to provide cheap fertilisers. The reason *unga* costs Kshs220 today is because of added costs in the farming process, from the seedlings, fertilisers to farm inputs. That is why I support the President's Speech because he addressed the issue of production as opposed to consumption. I pray that going forward other than getting cheap fertilisers, we will get subsidies in terms of cheap seeds, inputs, implements and reduced cost of power especially for farmers who pump water for irrigation.

I also want to address the issue of agro-processing which is connected to farming. Sadly, almost 60 per cent of the youth in Gatanga are unemployed. We should embrace agro-processing in agriculture like we have done with tea for avocados and macadamia. I believe and trust that our youth will get employment. This will enable us to expand the net of the people contributing towards paying taxes in this country. It is my belief that to do meaningful farming, we should embrace modern day technology. One of the things to do is to avoid reliance on the natural rain and embrace irrigation.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I will bring a Bill shortly to address the issue of water in Gatanga. It is sad to mention that Ndakaini Dam has been supplying the whole of Nairobi with water. All that water is diverted away and not a single drop of it is consumed by the people of Gatanga either domestically or even in terms of irrigation. I will table a Bill shortly before this House to address the issue of irrigation so that there can be equitable distribution of that water in such a way that the people of Gatanga where the dam is situated, can use it for irrigation and consumption as well as serve the people of Nairobi.

I also want to bring up the issue of universal health. One of the biggest challenges in Gatanga, where I come from, is health. I have seen Members elucidating on it and it touches almost every corner of this country. Members of Parliament are carrying huge loads. Every day we get messages. We are added to WhatsApp groups where we are required to contribute money each and every day towards medical support of our people. The President elucidated that he is going to make sure that we are able to embrace universal healthcare where our people will get their National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) cards. The burden we are bearing for them will be offloaded from our shoulders and that money can be used to do other things. Therefore, I pray to the Members of Parliament that when the legislation is brought before this House to revamp and restructure NHIF in such a way that it can be responsive to our people's needs, we support it fully.

I wish to support the Presidential Speech especially when it comes to addressing the issue pertaining to the Hustler Fund. That is the way to go because Kenyans do not want to be given a fish, but a hook to go and fish. The moment we are able to put aside Kshs50 billion each and every year to support the hustlers, the *mama mboga*, the *mtu wa mkokoteni*, the *kinyozi* and many more, we will empower our people at the bottom to ensure that everybody puts a shilling in their own pocket and are able to contribute to the economy.

To that end, I am planning to bring in a Vendors and Hawkers Bill to this House because despite the fact that we can bring those funds to our people, there is no legislation recognising hawkers, the vendors in our streets or even those small traders. What happens is that whenever county government officials see them on the streets, they chase them away and hold onto their goods. Even before we bring the Hustler Fund, we need to come up with legislation to protect, empower, and recognise those hustlers.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I also want to support the issue of the National Government Constituencies Development fund (NG-CDF) which the President also supported in his Speech. The NG-CDF, as we have seen in almost every part of this country, has done marvelous. I want to assure the people of Gatanga that the CDF Act 2015 is alive and kicking and we shall support education, food programmes, and all infrastructure developments which are pending to ensure there are proper services to our people.

Finally, I want to thank the President for nominating gallant soldiers to be Cabinet Secretaries. I want to recognise the nomination of my mentors Hon. Moses Kuria, Hon. Alice Wahome, Sen. Kipchumba Murkomen, Sen. Kindiki Kithure, Njuguna Ndung'u, and Ms. Rebecca Miano. I wish and pray that this House will find favour and support and nominate them.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member for Mandera South.

Hon. Abdul Haro (Mandera South, UDM): Thank you Hon. Deputy Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank my constituents for having elected me as their Member of Parliament. It was a tough election in my constituency and many parts of Northern Kenya particularly because of the raging drought and many pastoralists went through very difficult times choosing between tending to their animals and participating in the democratic process of electing their leaders. I, therefore, thank them very much for having elected me as their Member of Parliament. I come from Mandera South Constituency which is in Mandera County bordering a very difficult neighbour, Somalia on one side, and Ethiopia on the other side.

Coming back to the President's Speech particularly between paragraphs 5 and 7, I am encouraged a lot about the confidence that Kenyans have in Parliament and the Executive. The President's Speech was very inspiring in the sense that he noted that more Members have been re-elected to the National Assembly and Senate. He also mentioned the broad-based support the Government has in 39 counties having achieved 25 per cent in the 35 counties. His Excellency reminded us, and maybe this is a challenge to us, that the confidence shown in us

both as Parliament and Executive, must be translated in terms of raising the bar to serve Kenyans and also to ensure that there is accountability to the electorates who have elected us.

As a Member of Mandera South, my people who I represent in Parliament will definitely be happy to support the legislative agenda of His Excellency the President because it is transformative on many issues that affect the people of my constituency. The President particularly talked about people living in the region where I come from, that is, North Eastern and in particular Mandera County who have historically felt left behind or marginalised. The Speech was very inspiring because he said his administration will be open and transparent. He assured us that his Government will serve all people in all wards of each constituency and all constituencies in every region. That was very reassuring and very hopeful for us with constituencies in peripheral areas of this country like Mandera.

The President's promise to seek additional resources to support the bottom-up scaling of justice as well as his promise of allocating Ksh50 billion to the Hustler Fund is inspiring because majority of the people I represent in Parliament happen to be at the bottom of the pyramid. Both initiatives which is part of the President's legislative agenda, that is, bottom-up scaling of justice and the Kshs50 billion Hustler Fund for Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) is a timely and most welcome idea. I would say that we need bottom-up not just in scaling of justice but also scaling up of key Government departments in some of these peripheral constituencies like where I come from.

In some constituencies, like where I come from, we need to have National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) offices. We need to have birth and death registration departments and Identification Card registration offices. Not only do we need to scale up justice at the top level but we also need to scale up justice bottom up in some of those key departments that I have just mentioned.

The plan of scaling up productivity in agriculture is a welcome idea particularly from the region where I come from. I want to emphasise that the livestock part of agriculture should be given equal prominence to the crop part of agriculture. When we talk of consumption and subsidies in favouring or supporting and investing in production, the initiative should go beyond the fertilizer programme and improve on livestock production. My take therefore, is that, just like we have seen the support to fertilizer, we need to see some subsidy in livestock production, so that we can have livestock development to improve in our production.

I am planning to bring a Bill to the Floor of this House on livestock insurance to deal with the perennial drought problem which wipes out our livestock. Livestock farming is the main economic activity of our people. If our livestock dies, we should be able to get compensation.

The Address by the President talked about lack of electricity as a major hindrance to development. The idea of facilitating development of innovative and effective modalities to provide better off grid systems is very welcome. A large part of my constituency is not connected to electricity. Electricity goes along with internet and telephone connectivity. You cannot access the internet in the absence of electricity, given the importance of internet in this country. For those who are in business, most of the procurement process in the county and at the national level is done through the online system. If you are not connected to electricity and the internet, you may not be able to access those opportunities. Students who join university have to do their registration online.

The plan of restructuring the NHIF and National Social Security Fund (NSSF) to make them better social insurances is a good idea that resonates very well with us.

The most important point that I would like to mention is drought. The President mentioned that the response to drought for 3.5 million Kenyans who are affected is for 23 Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) or counties. He talked about mitigation as a solution to drought. That plan should go beyond mitigation and look at the adaption measures and how to deal with

loss and damage. I come from a region where drought is a cyclic phenomenon. When you are in that region, you are either struggling to get out of the drought situation or you are preparing to get into the situation. Drought has been a problem majorly because of climate change. This has been caused by pollution. Pollution has been contributed to by major powers with big industries. As a country, we need to look at how we approach this matter with the Conference of Parties (CoP) coming up in Egypt very soon. We also need to look at the issue of climate change and pollution from the principal of “the biggest polluter pays”. This can be considered by our country. The idea of giving our people relief in every drought season can be resolved by asking the biggest polluters of our climate to start compensating our people. The problems that are being faced by the North Eastern and other parts of the Northern Kenya region are as a result of environmental pollution, millions of kilometres away.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member for Marsabit.

Hon. Naomi Waqo (Marsabit County, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, for allowing me to add my voice to this very important debate on the Address by the President. Before I get into that, I want to congratulate you and our Speaker. I also want to congratulate the President and his Deputy for running a very serious campaign, winning the elections and for all that is in place right now.

I thank God for giving me the opportunity to be a Member of the 13th Parliament. I thank the people of Marsabit for giving me the opportunity to represent them in the 13th Parliament.

From my experience, the Address by the President was one of the best. He spoke on matters that affect every Kenyan. For the last few years, Kenyans have faced challenges due to COVID-19, a poor economy and drought. Kenyans needed to hear that message of hope from the President. The message came at the right time when they were eagerly waiting. He spoke to issues that affect us. He was able to cover every part of the country in his Speech. In the brief Speech, he was able to demonstrate high quality of leadership with good understanding and showing people that he was ready to keep the promises that he made during campaigns.

The President spoke about re-elected Members, women who have been elected and the peaceful elections. That means a lot to me because when Members get re-elected, it shows that we are building our leaders and confidence in their leadership thus they will be able to prove quality leadership. They will also be able to finish their projects and this allows for continuity in the work that they began.

When he touched on the issue of elected women and encouraged women in leadership, it gave me a lot of hope, putting into consideration the challenges that women go through in elections and as they offer themselves for leadership positions from other people and their counterparts. This shows that our President is ready to walk with women in a very special way such that come 2027, we will have more women in leadership. I want to encourage women who dream to be leaders; those who dream to be Members of Parliament in whatever capacity. It takes a lot of courage and prayers. It takes a lot of prayers and determination. You cannot just sit and say that the Government is for us as women. I just want to encourage women like me to work hard, fight for their space and be there, so that they can be elected by their constituencies.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, again, the President touched on the peaceful elections and that gave me a lot of hope because the issue of ethnicity that has always been there is no longer a problem for us. In 2022, we went through many dynamics. Kenyans united and elected the leaders they wanted without putting clannism and ethnicity into consideration. This is something that has affected many parts of the country, especially where I come from, though not particularly during election time. It is something that has dragged Kenya down in a big way. It has hindered development and stopped us from electing visionary and capable leaders,

but this time round, Kenyans demonstrated a different way of dealing with that. It gives us hope that very soon, we will get out of this challenge.

I congratulate our country and citizens for remaining peaceful throughout the election time and for also bearing in mind what unites us. We are together, we are one nation, and we will live together. It has given us a good example of taking care of each other and being your brother's keeper.

His Excellency the President assured us that his administration will be open, transparent and will rely on oversight. We know our past experience. Therefore, when the President gives assurance to Kenyans that his administration will be open and transparent enough, this will give every Kenyan the confidence to give their best to the nation. We know that Kenyans are very hardworking people, and everything depends on the leader. The fact that he has given us the assurance will encourage the 40 million Kenyans who work hard every day to feed their families to even go an extra mile so that our country can be one of the best.

In his Speech, he also touched on the idea of Cabinet Secretaries explaining policies and answering Questions on the Floor of the House to enhance accountability. That is one of the best things that can happen. It gives us a good working relationship. Accountability is one thing that has been missing in our country. By doing this, we will be able to feed the country with information, as it is power. Every citizen will follow what is happening and as Questions are answered on the Floor, members of the public will know that Members of Parliament and Cabinet Secretaries are doing their work. With that good representation, we are only assured of good progress.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the President also spoke about affordable credit which makes a huge difference in the rate of business growth. Access to affordable credit is what Kenyans need today. Families have lost their businesses since the COVID-19 pandemic broke out and because of the poor economy. Families have faced financial challenges and constraints, many have committed suicide, many are depressed, people have developed terminal illnesses and are unable to sustain their families. This has affected Kenyans in a very negative way. The speech gave a lot of hope. The idea of affordable credit makes a huge difference as he said, and Kenyans will be revived. People will be able to revive and enhance their businesses. They will also be able to start businesses and move on. There is no better gift to our citizens than that.

In addition to that, he mentioned the Ksh50 billion Hustler Fund per year. This is a big relief. As we know, poverty is one thing that has affected our country for many years...

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Let us have the Member for Sabatia Constituency. Member for Sabatia, you better go to the back. There seems to be a working microphone.

Hon. Clement Sloya (Sabatia, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, for the opportunity you have granted me to address this House for the first time. Before I say a few words, I thank the President of the Republic of Kenya and his Deputy for being elected to those offices. I also thank the Speaker, Hon. Moses Wetang'ula, and you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Madam Boss Shollei, for being elected by this House as the Deputy Speaker. I also thank Hon. Musalia Mudavadi, the Chief Cabinet Secretary of the Republic of Kenya, who happens to be a resident of Sabatia Constituency, which I represent. He assisted me so much and I must thank him for the support he gave me throughout the campaign period. I also thank the people of Sabatia for giving me the opportunity to serve them as their area Member of Parliament (MP) for the next five years.

We have six wards in Sabatia Constituency, which I would like to quickly name. They are Lyaduywa-Izava Ward, where I come from, Chavakali Ward, Sabatia West Ward, Busali Ward, Wodanga Ward and North Maragoli Ward. Those are six wards. The people from these wards overwhelmingly supported me and voted me in as their Member of Parliament with the highest number of votes. I would like to thank them so much. I also want to thank my County Women's Representative, Madam Beatrice Adagala, and the outgoing Member of Parliament,

Hon. Alfred Agoi, for the support they accorded me. I must thank them. I also thank my opponents with whom I battled so much. They gave me the experience that I required to emerge the winner. I must also thank them because they were worthy opponents and they helped me get to where I am.

The people of Sabatia Constituency have many problems. I will name just a few. We have youth unemployment which is hitting the constituency hard. We must do something to ensure that we rectify the situation. We have poor road networks which make connectivity in the villages and nearby constituencies a very big problem. I will seek to push this agenda in the House to ensure that we have good roads through the National Government - Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF) that we hope will be reinstated very soon. We also have bursary issues. In the past, we have seen discrimination in distribution of bursaries. We will ensure that once CDF is reinstated we get equitable share bursaries based on needs.

We also have a housing problem in Sabatia. Many people live in abject poverty and cannot put up homes for themselves. There are leaking roofs. In the past, we have tried to work on a few. We seek to continue doing the same through the programmes we are going to set up in the near future.

Turning to the President's Speech, I singled out one element to do with the Hustler Fund. The President said we will capitalise on existing technologies, both in the public and private sectors, in distribution of the Hustler Fund. I urge the people, especially the youth, in Sabatia to tap into this by going for ICT training so that they can be part of distribution of the Hustler Fund, which I am very sure is going to work well for them.

I also want to commend the President for proposing transformation of Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA) to Kenya Revenue Service (KRS) in a bid to make it a people-friendly entity. One thing is that when people who earn a salary are paid, a big percentage of that money goes to KRA through PAYE. So, the change of name from KRA to KRS is supposed to make the entity a friendly partner to the people who pay tax.

Far from that, security has been a problem in my constituency. There are rising cases of insecurity. The police stations are understaffed. When the Standing Orders are amended to allow Cabinet Secretaries to come to the House and answer questions, we will ask the CS for Interior and National Administration to ensure that police stations within Sabatia Constituency are well equipped and well-staffed to ensure that we enhance the security situation.

The President also touched on subsidising fertiliser and bringing the prices down to Ksh3,500 per bag. I want to report to the people of Sabatia, through this House, that our fertiliser was received at the Chavakali National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) depot and farmers should be ready to purchase the same fertiliser at that rate through that depot. I want to thank the President so much for the second time for having stood with some of us to ensure that we make it to this House.

Lastly, this was supposed to be first but I thought it should come last. I want to thank God the Almighty, who made all of us come to this House. I urge all Members of Parliament to stand together to ensure that we work for our people. I am very sure my neighbours in Emuhaya, Hamisi, Vihiga and Luanda will stand with me as I will stand with them to ensure that we address issues surrounding our constituencies to make our county a better place than we found it.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Member for Malava, who will be then followed by Member for Migori County.

Hon. Malulu Injendi (Malava, ANC): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. Before I register my thanks to the President's Speech, I would like to congratulate you on being elected Deputy Speaker and Moses Masika Wetang'ula on being elected Speaker of this House. I also want to thank the people of Malava for electing me for a third time as their Member of

Parliament. I think it is because of what I did for them. They had trust in me. I want to assure them that this time I will again serve them so diligently to levels that will satisfy them.

I also want to congratulate William Samoei Ruto for being elected as our President and, most importantly, for proving that he is an honest and trustful person. I am speaking as a member of ANC, which joined hands with UDA and FORD-Kenya. He has lived to the promise of what he pledged he would grant us. He has not been deceitful. I want to thank Moses Wetang'ula and Musalia Mudavadi for choosing to work with William Ruto. The people of western Kenya are so happy that this time round, for the first time, they have benefitted from the person they supported. In the past, our leaders such as Moses Wetang'ula have suffered. I remember in the last Parliament he gave a lot of support to a particular friend, our neighbour, who actually demonised him. We recall what happened in the Senate. We remember what happened here in the National Assembly. Thank you, Mr. President, for being faithful and being honest and for avoiding politics of deceit.

Turning to the President's Speech, some people have been saying it was so brief. Our President seems to be a very brilliant man. Interestingly, his half-hour Speech captured aspirations of most Kenyans. Its length is what we are contributing on the Floor of the House. What touched me most is the issue of loans, particularly to small-scale traders, the so-called hustlers. I have a case from western Kenya. Most people in western Kenya have a phobia for loans. This stems from their history with loans from the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC). In the 1970s and 1980s, our people used to get loans from AFC but most of the loans did not help them. Instead, because of high interest rate, most of our people defaulted and they lost land which they had given as sureties. So it has been very difficult for the people to take loans. When they began warming up to the idea of loans, unfortunately issuing institutions were asking for very high interest rates. So the people developed some fear for loans.

I am very happy the President actually talked about ensuring that hustlers get loans at lower interest rates. This will boost the economy. Most of us are where we are because of accessing affordable loans. Even as hustlers get this money, I would urge that we design the law in such a way that interest rates do not change along the way. Banks are very fond of changing interest rates along the way. That makes it difficult for hustlers to do business. The small-scale traders also pay taxes. Currently, there are so many taxes levied by the national and county governments. I would propose that as we develop this programme, we take care of the numerous taxes that affect small-scale traders. I want to thank the President for his commitment to hustlers and for taking action on the so-called *Fuliza* loans. I have also seen some action being taken by the Co-operative Bank of Kenya in lowering interest rates and appealing to people to take loans at affordable rates.

The other thing that I took a lot of interest in is the proposal on the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF). Most people who pay a lot of money are the hustlers. Most of these Members of Parliament and I earn over Kshs1 million. We pay Kshs1,700 every month to National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF). However, the hustler is required to pay Kshs500 every month. When you look at the rate that the hustler pays and then you compare with what I pay, he pays a lot of money.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, this is a step in the right direction. We should contribute to NHIF depending on how much we earn, so that the rich or well-off persons like us can contribute more, so as to carry the people who rely on us to help them in terms of their health.

There is something that I want this NHIF to do. Currently, the usual hustlers are restricted to only one medical facility. For example, I have employees whose families are in the rural areas, but they work here. They are restricted to seek medical attention in only one facility. When the one I work with falls sick, he travels all the way to upcountry. Interestingly, NHIF looks like it is for the well-off persons who have a lot of influence. When we fall sick, we go to any hospital that is listed by our insurance companies. The NHIF normally follows us

there to take care of our medical expenses. However, when it comes to the common *mwananchi*, they restrict him or her to a particular facility, instead of having several of them. This is what it is. We are talking of universal healthcare for all Kenyans. If we restrict them to one facility, then we are being restrictive to them.

What is also of interest is the Hustler Fund. We have come to a stage where we have to harmonise those Funds. We have the *Uwezo* Fund and the Youth Enterprise Development Fund. They should be merged to one fund that can be useful to our people. When it comes to group workings, my experience is that it varies from one community to another. When it comes to *Uwezo* Fund which goes to the various groups, I realised that the formation of groups is a challenge to most of our youth and women. I urge the Government to merge the Hustler Fund with *Uwezo* Fund and then we individualise them so that individuals can take the money and become responsible.

Finally, I applaud the President for choosing most of the Cabinet from here. The last Government collapsed because of Cabinet Secretaries (CSs) who were technocrats. They only listened to the people who put them in Government. They were so rigid in their operations. I thank the President for choosing persons who have tasted and know everything in politics. They will open their doors to the sitting Members of Parliament to access them for the sake of the persons who sent them to Parliament.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I register my thanks to the President's Speech.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Malava. We will now go to the Member for Emurua Dikirr, Hon. Johana Ng'eno.

Hon. Johana Kipyegon (Emurua Dikirr, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity to make a contribution on the President's Speech. Before I make my contribution, I wish to congratulate the President of the Republic of Kenya and his Deputy on being elected. I also wish to congratulate Hon. Speaker and you for winning the election in this House. I know that the current Speaker was also the Senator for Bungoma County. I also congratulate him for winning that particular seat in that area.

I also wish to thank the people of Emurua Dikirr for finding it good and useful to elect me back to this House for the third time, and giving me an opportunity to serve in a new Government. This is very important because the Government is forming new issues. Partaking in the matters of the country is also very important.

The President's Speech was a very important turning point in our country. That is what I will tackle. I wish to state clearly that I support it because it dealt with so many things. One of the issues which the President raised in this House is the intense election which we undertook on 9th August 2022. I had so many bruises in this country. It was a very intense competition. There were a lot of issues which were being undertaken. The President mentioned that the country needs to come back together, work together and move forward.

The President dealt with the plan that he has set for the country. He mentioned about housing which he wants to bring out as a very fundamental issue in his Government. Remember that most of the people in this country live in temporary houses and slums. It is a very important issue for the President to have put it as one of his undertakings, to ensure that people live in good and affordable houses. Several employees in this country pay rent. If we accumulate it, it can buy houses during the time those people are employed. It is a very good idea. I wish to support the President. If it is possible to divert rent or house allowances which most of the employees are being paid to buy those houses, by the time they retire, they would have bought houses.

He also talked about food sufficiency. Currently, there are some areas which are ravaged by famine or drought. I am happy because the President looked at the question of subsidising the production of fertiliser, but not the end product. The President was also proper

in stating that he wanted to remove the fuel subsidies of the end products. We should subsidise the production which will bring down the price of those foodstuffs that we use.

The President also talked about the Kshs50 billion that would go to the Hustler Fund. This was his very major campaign tool, while he was going round the country. I believe that the money will assist, in a big way, the hustlers who are down there. The women, men, and youth will access that particular Fund.

He also talked about the management of public resources. For a long time, our country has been losing a lot of money which is allocated to different ministries because of wastage and mismanagement. That is bigger than corruption. If the President puts more scrutiny on the management of resources and wastage, the country can come back to its vibrancy.

The President addressed corruption by allocating resources to the Judiciary. If the Judiciary is empowered and given its autonomy, it can deal with the corruption cases firmly and fast. The Government entities meant to deal with corruption are the Directorate of Criminal Investigations (DCI), the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) and the courts. If those autonomous bodies are given proper funding by the Government, I believe corruption in this country will go down. Actually, it is not the Executive that deals with corruption. It is not even Parliament. It is the DCI and the EACC. The cases that are handled by those entities end up in court. If we allow the courts to do their work properly without arm-twisting and intimidation, corruption in this country will come down.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the President also talked about the debts that have put this country down. As we speak, we are told of trillions of shillings which this country is paying every year. We are talking about preparing a budget of about Kshs2 trillion, raising revenues through taxation and spending about Kshs1.5 trillion on payment of debts that the country has incurred. We remain with about Kshs600 billion or Kshs500 billion, which is not enough even for recurrent expenditure. That means we are borrowing to fund even recurrent expenditure, an undertaking that is very wrong. I believe the statements that the President made about the debts incurred by the country are very correct. We support him in that undertaking.

The President also talked about health. The health function has partly been devolved but as one Member stated here, it should not have been devolved at all. If the health function was to be devolved, at least, certain aspects of it should have remained within the National Government so that they could be properly managed. Many people are admitted in hospitals but most of them are not able to pay the bills incurred. The President talked about enhancing the National Hospital Insurance Fund (NHIF) so that it can easily pay for people who are taken to hospital. There are so many people selling parcels of land and their fortunes because of hospital bills. If proper enhancement is made on the NHIF, those people would obviously not be incurring such losses.

The President also talked about the Equalization Fund and the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF). The matter of the Equalization Fund has been in this House and in the budgets. It is in the Constitution, but there was only one disbursement that was done by the Government. I believe this Government will put more effort to ensure areas that have been marginalised for long also benefit from the Equalization Fund. The question of the NG-CDF has been restated majorly by most of the Members. We need to align it with the Constitution so that the NG-CDF can continue helping people in our constituencies. Schools have since been opened and parents are complaining of the fees because there is no disbursement by the NG-CDF.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I support the Speech by the President and congratulate Members who have been appointed to Cabinet Secretaries' (CSs) positions. We are waiting to scrutinise and pass them here.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Next is the Member for Gem. Before he starts, I just want to assure Members that we are doing well. We will have sufficient time in the afternoon for those who will not get a chance to speak in this morning Sitting. We appreciate your interest in this Motion. We still have six or seven Members who can go ahead.

Hon. Elisha Odhiambo (Gem, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. Allow me to congratulate you for your election and that of Hon. Wetang'ula. Allow me to also use this opportunity to thank the people of Gem for giving me a second chance to represent them in this House. They voted with confidence in acknowledgement of the development that I have done for them during the last five years.

Coming to the President's Speech, the President mentioned that the elections that were conducted were very competitive. I think he took cognisance of the fact that even the difference in his victory was just 200,000 people. Therefore, he is cognisant of the fact that this country was divided into two. Given the tone of his Speech, I believe he is going to work hands on to ensure that Kenya is united.

In his Speech, the President mentioned the need for reducing the budget by Kshs300 billion. I think it is possible. Our technocrats at the Treasury have an easier job to do. If you asked me, the easier way to reduce the budget by Kshs300 billion would be to look at the last five years' absorption rate in all ministries. If you look at the percentage absorption, it majorly borders on about 65 to 70 per cent. If you were to use absorption rate based on the ministries, it would be much easier to reduce the Kshs300 billion without specifically looking at the line items. I encourage the technocrats at the ministry to look at the absorption rates in the line ministries to determine how efficient a ministry is in absorbing their budgets.

The President also spoke about the agriculture subsidy. In the world over, agriculture is not meant for profit. All countries, including the United States of America and the United Kingdom, subsidise agriculture to ensure that the citizenry have food on their table. I support the initiative. What we need to do is to look at the framework and the regulations that govern the distribution of fertilisers to farmers. I urge the relevant ministry to think about when Kenya attained Independence. We had officers in the field who collected data and ensured that farmers were supported. I encourage the county governments to re-think that strategy if we have to ensure that food security is sustained.

The President also spoke about the Hustler Fund, which I believe will help hustlers. More importantly, it is on our foothold to ensure that the regulations are better than the way we distribute *Uwezo* Fund. As you would realise, once the framework of the Hustler Fund is set, it is important that we are clear whether the Hustler Fund is going to be given as a grant or an interest-free support to hustlers. A majority of the citizens believe that the Hustler Fund will be free. The leadership from the functional co-operative ministry will have a problem in recovering monies lent out through the Hustler Fund. So, it is important to think about it that way.

The President also spoke about the Kenya Revenue Authority (KRA), which I think is important for the country. For a long time, small businesses in Kenya have been closed down by KRA. When small businesses are closed, the many Kenyans employed by those businesses lose jobs and their families end up suffering. If we rebrand KRA to the Kenya Revenue Service (KRS), they will re-evaluate their mandate and ensure that they treat those who pay taxes in a way that creates traction for them to pay more. Taxation should not be viewed as a punitive measure of killing businesses.

The President partly spoke about the cost of living. However, he missed an opportunity to tell us how we are going to lower the cost of electricity. In the whole world, it is only in Kenya where the law of supply and demand does not work. In a country where we have more electricity than demand, the price of electricity should go down. For example, in Kenya, we produce about 2,900 Megawatts (MW) of electricity per day. The consumption in the evening

when *Mama Mboga* is cooking is 2,237 MW. This means we have a surplus. What the technocrats should ask themselves is how to create traction for the 600MW not in use so that we use it to lower the cost of electricity for the ordinary Kenyan at home.

I urge the President to relook at the life-line program which he and former President Uhuru Kenyatta started where they were charging Kshs12 per Kilowatt Hour (KWh) for the ordinary Kenyan. We are here to ensure that Kenyans enjoy cheap electricity, and that the manufacturing sector becomes robust because we are able to create traction for consumption of our kilowatt per hour charge so that this country can grow.

As we talk of lowering the cost of electricity, it is important to note that the country is investing in nuclear energy. Site characterisation has been done in Kilifi, but we have not had funding to establish a nuclear reactor there. The nuclear plant will help in having a robust health system in the country. A nuclear research reactor will help the country in the production of isotopes that are useful in cancer treatment and in research of both agriculture and medicine. Diseases like COVID-19 and Ebola will have ultimate technological solutions to help the country manage the menace. It is important that as we focus on issues to do with the cost of living. We should also focus on issues that will help sustain lives in the long run.

The President talked about healthcare, which is a good thing. From a county development fund and a county perspective, we need to have a formal framework where the National Health Insurance Fund (NHIF) cover at the constituencies is not duplicated at the counties. As Members of Parliament, we need to decide whether NHIF will be given at the county or at the constituency level.

Last but not least, the President did not talk of how he was going to stabilise the shilling. I expected he was going to encourage those who have invested their money abroad to bring it back to the country thus giving the thieves an opportunity to bring back money into the country. I am certain that in the last Cabinet, there must be cabinet secretaries who shipped their money abroad. In the near future, I expect that there will be traction for them to bring the money back so that the shilling can stabilise.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Now we shall have the Member for Mwea.

Hon. Mary Maingi (Mwea, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity. I want to start by congratulating you on your election as the Deputy Speaker of this House, and that of Hon. Moses Wetang'ula as the Speaker of the National Assembly. I would also like to thank the great people of Mwea Constituency for electing me to this august House, and for electing me as their first female Member of Parliament. I promise them that I will do everything within my capacity to live up to their expectations.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, allow me to briefly speak on the President's Speech. I will touch on a few areas. On healthcare, the President spoke to the issue of universal healthcare for all. We all know that a healthy nation is a wealthy nation. The expensive healthcare facilities are out of reach of our people. Therefore, people have resorted to self-medicating. Others even go to herbalists because they cannot afford the expensive healthcare services in this country. It is a good start that the President mentioned that the Universal Health Coverage (UHC) is going to take care of chronic ailments. As Members of Parliament, we are all in WhatsApp groups where we have to raise funds for expensive chronic ailments like cancer. Families have been financially drained and cannot make ends meet. With the delivery of UHC, the country will be headed in the right direction.

On the matter of the Judiciary, I support the President in increasing funds for the Judiciary. This is an indication that going forward, all the constitutional Government agencies will work independently and with utmost independence.

I wish to support the President in his Speech, on the subsidised fertilizer. He mentioned that we are going to have a policy on production subsidy. Going forward, I hope the subsidy

production will be extended to other areas like certified seeds, herbicides, acaricides and others. That way, we shall be food secure and we will even increase our food reserves.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the President also mentioned something about Public Private Partnerships (PPPs). It is my prayer that the PPPs are going to come up with projects that are going to harness the water that flows into the Indian Ocean. It is only in Kenya where we have floods and famine and we cannot marry the two situations. If the water harnessing projects are taken up by the PPPs, we are going to be food secure. Through irrigation, we are going to increase food production and food in our reserves. We can even be food exporters.

Overall, the President's Speech was full of hope and inspiration for this country. It was a great speech.

I thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Mwea, for being brief. We shall now have the Member for Mumias East.

Hon. Peter Salasya (Mumias East, DAP-K): Hon. Deputy Speaker, you caught me off-guard, but let me try and see what I will say. I have realised that there are many things that are happening in this House.

Let me begin by thanking the people of Mumias Constituency and, more so, to the women, for giving me this opportunity. They trusted and gave me their votes without me giving them anything. I will, therefore, serve them in full capacity.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, there is the issue of *monos* in this House. The first-time Members are not given opportunity to address the House. In situations where there is a good Motion to contribute to, we are told to wait a bit, and that we cannot comment. It is unfair for us first-time Members. Going forward, we seek your intervention so that we can be given time to make our contributions.

Secondly, we have committees in the House. His Excellency the President last week gave out his Speech. He talked about our economy and how we can revive it. We have the Public Investment Committee (PIC), and many Members are salivating to be members. My request is that the Members who have previously served in PIC but have not provided leadership in terms of oversight should not be given another opportunity to serve in the said Committee, so that we can put there the right people who can provide oversight.

We have seen many parastatals in this country, like Nzoia Sugar Company and others that are not performing very well and yet, this House should be providing oversight to enable them do their job well.

The President talked about electricity, on which I fully support. The cost of doing business in this country is very high. It is important, therefore, that we come up with ways of reducing the cost of electricity. This can be done by allowing other suppliers to operate in the sector so that it is not only Kenya Electricity Generating Company (KenGen) that produces electricity in this country. We must do away with monopoly. Kenya Power and Lighting Company is also not doing so well and we need to legislate on it.

I want to congratulate the President for touching on the agriculture sector. This is an area where we need to do value addition because we import most things. That has really weakened the Kenyan Shilling. We need to do a lot of research on how to improve the lives of Kenyans by reducing the cost of living.

Another issue I would like to address is that of Mumias Sugar Company. It is one of the issues that have brought me to this House because I have been fighting for its revival. The sugar industry has been taken over by cartels in this country. You will find one person with 60 companies and yet, the Government industries are not performing very well. I request this House to push forward so that we can pass the Sugar Bill. There is this "animal" called Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA), which must be disbanded. Kenya is an agricultural

economy and we cannot categorize all crops as food crops. Let sugar-cane be categorized as cash crop. There is a lot of confusion in AFA.

We have a lot of issues to talk about, Hon. Deputy Speaker, Sir...

(Loud consultations)

Hon. Deputy Speaker? *Pole ninapata*. I also want to ask about the issue of electricity. Most women from my constituency told me that they would want to see me in the television speaking when I get to Parliament. We also have Rural Electrification and Renewable Energy Corporation (REREC), which is not performing so well; like the way Kenya Rural Roads Authority (KeRRA) is. My request, therefore, is for our villages to be given more transformers. This will enable more households to get electricity to enable them follow our programs as it happens in the other parts of the country.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I am so grateful for giving me a chance to deliver my Maiden Speech. As a youth, we are going to deliver. Are my minutes over?

Halafu, I want to congratulate Madam Boss Sholei.

(Laughter)

You are informative. You guided me the last time I had many questions and provided leadership. Most importantly, please, give us, the *monos*, time to express our issues. *Tuliangusha* veterans. We are all equal in this House. I was *monolised* in Form One and hence, I cannot be *monolised* in this House again.

Thank you.

(Laud consultations)

An Hon. Member: On a point of order!

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Mumias East. Thank you for the compliment.

I just want to assure Members that we still have today and tomorrow. Many of you will definitely have an opportunity to speak. However, to respond to the Member for Mumias East, no one is doing what you are implying we do, which you were informed by the Hon. Speaker that it is un-parliamentary language and, therefore, I will not mention it again. You will all get equal opportunity to speak. In fact, you have donated five minutes of your time voluntarily.

I have seen many Members who have put up interventions and, at the same time, they are on the queue. We are almost reaching them. Obviously, you are trying to catch my attention but I can definitely see everybody from the screen here.

Let us have the Member for Mwingi West. Member for Kilifi South, I can see you.

Hon. Nguna, please go on.

Hon. Charles Nguna (Mwingi West, WDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me an opportunity to address this House for the first time.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, let me take this earliest time to thank, appreciate and acknowledge the people of Mwingi West for re-electing me for the second time to represent them in this august House.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank and appreciate the Almighty God for giving Kenyans a peaceful election. Let me appreciate the Rtd. Hon. Raila Amolo Odinga, Hon. Stephen Kalonzo Musyoka, all the principals including the President and the Deputy President for accepting the verdict of the Supreme Court regardless of the outcome.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, we are taking this responsibility during the most difficult time when we are facing global challenges such as inflation, drought, conflicts in almost all the parts of Eastern Europe, including Ukraine and Russia. All in all, we need to forget the past and stop blaming or apportioning the failures of the past regime and concentrate with what is at hand.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the President was brief and articulate in terms of the issues he raised. One, he celebrated the issue of dislodging ethnicity in our country. We are yet to see it practically, and we are patiently waiting to see how he is going to balance the appointments – the cabinet secretaries, permanent secretaries, ambassadors and other appointments during this period.

The other issue that the President articulated, which made every Kenyan happy, is that he committed himself in front of this august House that he is going to serve Kenyans fairly. Let us wait and give him time. But we expect each and every appointment to address the issue of gender, ethnicity and religion. I salute the President for that.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, the President committed to rely on both Houses for oversight duties. I am, therefore, calling upon my colleagues who committed to preserve and protect the integrity of our Constitution to not make decisions based on how our parties are going to dictate to us, but on how we are going to protect the interests of Kenyans. For that reason, the President said he will overly rely on the two Houses on matters of legislation.

The other issue that came up is the facilitation of cabinet secretaries to appear on the Floor of the August House to answer the Questions from Members. The 12th Parliament had a lot of challenges. Cabinet Secretaries (CS) failed to attend committee meetings after being summoned. I think this will be appreciated if we can have them on the Floor of the House to articulate their issues.

The other agenda the President promised the country was on scaling up of productivity in agriculture. But let me be frank that we have started on the wrong footing. We cannot allow Genetically Modified Organism (GMOs) to take place in our country. We know the impact of how they can be detrimental to our nutrition. That is why we need to address the issue of scaling up agriculture in terms of constructing dams, adding more earth dams, water pumps and emphasize on the issue of clean agriculture instead of re-introducing GMOs. Europe and some developing countries are emphasizing on clean agriculture more than GMOs. I am calling upon the President to focus on irrigable land, issues of earth dams, water pumps and dams to ensure there is plenty of food production in our country.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I cannot overemphasize on the issue of affordable credit facilities. Many Kenyans have great business ideas but they lack capital to implement what they have in their minds. The President is committed to ensuring that there are free and affordable credit facilities in our country through the creation of Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) which we just saw. The Credit Reference Bureaus (CRB) have really been punishing Kenyans as their approach on credit scoring has been very punitive. My hope is that the President will commit himself to what he has promised Kenyans in terms of changing the formulation of CRB and the way they have been operating to create the scoring system.

Another issue that we need to address is the issue of capital projects. We have so many stalled projects in our counties and constituencies. I would like to remind the President of the Kabati-Migwani-Bondeni Road, which has stalled from the Kitui-Kibwezi Road. I would have actually wished that the President would commit that he is going to complete all the projects that were initiated by the previous regime. I would urge him to do so in order to ensure completion of all the projects which stalled. Kenyans will be very happy to see issues of water, roads and electricity being sorted out. Electricity is a department that needs serious attention and I am happy the President acknowledged it. We have so many fake transformers that were installed ten years ago in our country. There is also inequality in terms of distribution of power projects, electrification and metering. You will find that most of the time the Kenya Power

Company (KPC) actually installs electricity, but they delay in installing meters and this has been an issue. We need adequate and timely metering and distribution of electricity, as the President put it.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, there is the issue of management of public debt. I am happy that this House has created a Committee on Public Debt Management. I do not have an issue with borrowing money as a country. The issue is whether we borrow money to implement projects at the right price, or projects that will spur economic growth.

Lastly, we can speak so much, but allow me to comment on the issue of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF). So many students and parents are eagerly anticipating the President to issue an executive order for the NG-CDF money to be disbursed to our constituencies immediately.

With those few remarks, I support.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Mwingi West. We will now have the Member for Kilifi North.

Hon. Ken Chonga (Kilifi South, ODM): Thank you, Hon Deputy speaker. It is Kilifi South and not Kilifi North.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: My apologies.

Hon. Ken Chonga (Kilifi South, ODM): Thank You. First of all, Hon. Deputy Speaker, let me take this opportunity to congratulate you for the position that you hold. Indeed, for people like us who are following what you are doing, we appreciate that you actually earned that position. Your past experience is *in tandem* with the position you are holding. Congratulations!

Let me also take this opportunity to thank my people from Kilifi South. It is one constituency which does not normally elect a Member of Parliament twice since time immemorial, but they found value in me and elected me for a second time. I really appreciate them so much.

Moving on to the Presidential Speech, it was in all ways very exciting. It was very good. It touched most of the areas we were interested in, especially when he spoke about the NG-CDF. As we speak, all the calls which are coming in are because of students who are out of school for lack of fees. For the President to recognize that the NG-CDF plays a vital role in the community, we really appreciate. We hope this Parliament will move very fast to align the NG-CDF with the Constitution so that, in future, those who are supposed to benefit from it can do so. The issue of managing the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) is another agenda that was well received by the people.

With all said and done, in my opinion, the only observation that did not go well was the time that the President took to present his Speech. It was so short and yet we were expecting so much from the President. Members of Parliament actually were ready to wait until 7.00 p.m. to hear all the basket that the President was carrying. I was surprised at why the President made it so short. Having known him as a friend, he is not the type of person who, in the evening, would have wished to have something somewhere and given that *Mama Rachel* was seated in the Speaker's Row, I do not know why he was in such a hurry.

We wanted to have time with him. In fact, I was going to tell him not to run away like *Murife* when he was being told not to run. I could see the President walking out in a time when we seriously needed him. Why am I saying this, Hon. Deputy Speaker? There are quite a number of issues we expected to hear him comment on. These issues included land acquisition and squatters in Kenya. If you look at where I come from, in the Coast Region, 80 per cent of the land is actually a reserve of Government properties and yet, there are so many people who do not have a place to stay. There is a serious problem of absentee landlords.

Those who have access to the Ministry of Lands headquarters have taken advantage of the prevailing situation and transferred those parcels of land to themselves, selling them off in

their own interests and forgetting the plight that the people of the Coast are undergoing. This needs to be addressed because it is not only happening at the Coast, but nation-wide. We wanted to know if there are any structures being put in place.

There are reports like the Ndung'u Report and many others regarding land. Nothing has come to this House to show what is contained in them and yet, people are looking forward to the Government to address this issue.

I also wanted to hear from the President about the global forum we had at Kenyatta International Convention Centre (KICC) in 2020 regarding the blue economy or *uchumi samawati* in Kiswahili. In that conference, we were told that the biggest wealth Kenya can benefit from is the blue economy. Looking at the Indian Ocean, Lake Victoria and Lake Baringo, we have been told that there are immense resources down there. We know some organisations have been established to ensure that we access the potentiality of those resources, but nobody knows what is going on. We were told there are millions of jobs for the youth but, up to now, we have not seen anything.

I wanted to hear from the President on the issue of corruption. Corruption has eaten our country. To be honest, the poverty level being realised in each homestead is as a result of corruption. Last year, the retired President, Uhuru Kenyatta, complained that Kenya was losing close to Kshs2 billion everyday as a result of corruption. This translates to Kshs60 billion in a month and Kshs720 billion in a year. This is not pocket change but money that can change the lives of our people. However, this issue was not discussed on the Floor of this House.

I also wanted to hear about the many non-performing government parastatals. They eat the economy of the country because we are spending so much resources on them. I wanted to know what is in stock so that whatever is spent on those parastatals can be translated into helping the people of Kenya. Unfortunately, this never came out.

Kenya has come a long way to have all these challenges. Indeed, as Hon. Elisha has said, there are some innovations that need to be empowered. He talked about the issue of nuclear energy and empowerment of the Nuclear Energy Board. As we know, anybody who contracts cancer rushes to either India or the Arab world. This is because they have perfected the manufacture of nuclear isotopes which treat cancer. Many of our folks in the villages are dying due to this disease. The Nuclear Energy Board was established and for the last 10 years, it has not made any strides. Right now, they are putting up a plant somewhere in Kilifi North. Are there any measures being put in place to ensure that this organisation makes a leap so that our people can access medicine for the sake of saving lives?

Hon. Deputy Speaker, I appreciate you for giving me this opportunity to speak on the President's Speech. In as much as you are in Kenya Kwanza, the President made a promise in this House when he was delivering his Speech – that, he will ensure Kenya remains united. We are yearning to see this.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Member for Kilifi South. We will have the Member for Sigowet/Soin Constituency.

Hon. Justice Kemei (Sigowet/Soin, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me this opportunity to register my thanks to the President for his Speech in this august House.

First and foremost, let me take this opportunity to congratulate the President and his Deputy for being elected to lead this country. I also congratulate you and the Speaker for being elected to preside over the affairs of this House.

I take this opportunity to thank the great people of Sigowet/Soin Constituency for seeing it fit for me to come back to Parliament. I represented them in the 11th Parliament, but stayed out of Parliament for five years. The thought that comes into my mind is being considered as a good thing, but being reconsidered as better. I thank them most sincerely,

especially those in the four wards of Sigowet/Soin Constituency; namely, Kaplelartet, Soliat, Sigowet and Soin. I promise to serve them diligently as per the oath of office that I took.

Coming to the subject matter of our debate today, I want to thank the President for his exposition of policy on the process of transforming this country as per his agenda. My colleagues have alluded to the fact that the Speech was short. To me, the 52 paragraphs were fittingly short because we will get more details through legislative proposals, policy interventions and regulations. So, we should give the President the support he needs to transform this country.

My colleagues have spoken on quite a number of issues, and I do not wish to go into them. In brief, I thank the President for his decision to reduce debt in this country. The fact that he said within three years we should be having surplus in this country is quite good. I commend him for this. Of course, it is dangerous for a country to have the kind of spiralling debt we have been witnessing over the last few years.

On the issue of savings, the many tourists who come to this country are ordinary people. They are not necessarily the rich people in their countries, but their culture of saving has improved to the extent that even low-income people are able to tour other parts of the world. We want to impress upon our people to ensure that whatever they earn, they put aside a little money as savings.

There are the ongoing reforms on the education sector in this country. The Competency Based Curriculum (CBC) had very good strategic intent, except for the burden it has put on pupils and parents. This requires this system of education to be reformed without losing the strategic intent which made us change from the 8-4-4 system to the CBC one.

The President talked about water for all. It is a good thing to have water. In as much as people may think that Kericho is green and it rains throughout the year, I come from the most marginal parts of that county where we need water so that our people can irrigate their farmland and have water for domestic use.

The President also touched on the issue of the National Government Constituencies Development Fund (NG-CDF). This kitty has been transformational when you look at the kind of development that we have in our counties. The county governments get more money than NG-CDF but, if you look in all the counties, you will see more projects funded by NG-CDF and fewer projects funded by the county governments.

I want to request my colleagues to be available when the day comes for us to discuss the NG-CDF. Let us not shy away from the fact that we are the representatives of the people and we perform important roles in the development of this country. Even if it means initiating an amendment process to entrench the NG-CDF in the Constitution of this country, we should not shy away from doing so. We need to do it.

In the Constitution, the people of this country created two Houses – the Senate and the National Assembly. They did not opt for the House of Commons and the House of Lords as in the United Kingdom. They did not go for the House of Representatives and the Senate as in the United States of America. They opted for the National Assembly and the Senate with distinct responsibilities as per Articles 94, 95 and 96 of the Constitution. As leaders entrusted with leadership in this country, we should not engage ourselves in turf wars that do not help the people of our nation. If it comes to a situation where we need to support the Senate so that they can perform the oversight role, it is my submission that we will have to do just that. The Senate and the National Assembly is a brotherhood created by the people of this country to be able to serve them better. There is no lower or upper House. It is just a brotherhood of two Houses separated by a passage. That is what the people of this country decided to go for.

On the issue of subsidies, in all economies in this world, the better intervention is to provide subsidies at the production level, not at the consumption level. I want to thank the President for that bold decision. We cannot subsidise consumption. We need to subsidise

production. As we do that, we should not just stop with the issue of cheap fertilisers. We need to go beyond that so that we can give our people better drought resistant seeds, the kind of technology we require that will improve agricultural production and productivity in this country. We are still basically an agricultural country. If we want to grow, industrialise and improve the economy of this country, the fact of the matter is that the base of that improvement is agriculture. All interventions that we must do in agriculture, including irrigation, we must do so that we can have enough food for export. We should also be bold enough to remove the cartels and the busy bodies that have occupied the value chain in this country such that the farmer who toils on a daily basis is one who is very disadvantaged person while those in the value chain are rich. The sweat from the farmer has got no benefit to him. We would wish that, at the time when we are discussing all the interventions that have been proposed by the President, we should be able to give our ideas.

Finally, as a student of communication, I was taught that people start losing interest when you speak beyond seven minutes. The Speech by the President was a good 30 minutes long. That speech was long enough to draw us to what we need to do as the Legislature so that we can take this country forward.

In agreement with what I have just said, I want to end my speech. Thank you for giving me the opportunity so that somebody else can use the extra two minutes of my time to speak on this important subject matter.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you, Hon. Member. I just want to let honourable Members know that I have been informed and I have noted the challenges that some of the Members have had with their cards. The Members for Kangema, Jomvu and Moiben constituencies, I am informed that it shall be addressed and, therefore, they shall get an opportunity in the afternoon. Members, we have made very good progress. I hope we shall make similar progress in the afternoon. For now, I would like to call upon the Member for Soy Constituency to make his contribution.

Hon. David Kiplagat (Soy, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, allow me to take this great opportunity to, first, thank the people of Soy for electing me to represent them. There were quite a number of issues that we discussed during the campaigns and also during public participation meetings. I want to assure them that we will make sure that we will deliver. I know there are quite a number of challenges on the ground, but let them relax and as soon as the Government is in place, we will ensure that we embark on development projects that will change their lives.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, secondly, I would like to take this opportunity to thank you, being our Woman Representative and as the Deputy Speaker of the National Assembly. I want to thank you, on behalf of the people of Uasin Gishu. You have our maximum support and we shall work together for the people of Uasin Gishu.

I also want to thank all Kenyans, and in particular the people of Soy, who participated fully in ensuring that the Government of Kenya Kwanza is now in place. We want to assure them that the only thank you that we are going to deliver is to make sure that we do the developments we have set forth through our manifesto.

Before I embark on the Address by the President, I want to say that we have challenges as a country. Kenyans will be looking upon Parliament and, in particular, the National Assembly, to make sure that some of the independent bodies, including the Independent Electoral and Boundaries Commission (IEBC), are made to function properly. We put there men and women who can stand independently so that we can avoid the likes of *Cherera* and the group. We want to call upon this Parliament to make sure that, as we embark on our business, one of the institutions that is so important and dear to Kenyans is the IEBC. We need to put up commissioners who are independent, fair and are able to adjudicate on elections.

On the Presidential Speech, I would like to really congratulate the President for having made the best Speech ever, although some of our colleagues are saying it was the shortest Speech. It might be short in length but in content, it had everything that we need to look at so that we can improve the lives of Kenyans. One of the issues, which was our campaign child, is the issue of bottom-up. I want to tell all the hustlers in this country to relax as we make sure that the Hustlers Fund is in place. When putting in place the legislation and the policies to govern the Hustlers Fund, we need to make sure that money will be accessible to the *mama mboga* who is down there. We have had so many funds like *Uwezo* Fund, Youth Fund and the Women Fund, but we are going to set up the Hustlers Fund in a way that funds will be accessible to those who did not go to school and those who went to school. The model that will work better is anchoring it in the National Government-Constituency Development Fund (NG-CDF) model so that we have officers all the way from the village-level up to the national level, so that we can make it a success.

Another issue why I really support the President is the fertilizer subsidy. I come from Uasin Gishu County. As we all know, Uasin Gishu is an agricultural county. We want to thank the President for having put subsidy on fertilizers thus reducing the price to Kshs3500 per bag. Our people are requesting that the price reduces further to Kshs2000 or Kshs2500 per bag. It is very important that, as a country, we tell ourselves the truth. We cannot subsidize consumption. We cannot subsidize *ugali*. We can only subsidize production because, at the end of the day, we need to live within our means. The current national debt is so high that we have to tell Kenyans the truth – that, we cannot afford those manner of subsidies, especially consumption subsidies. Let us subsidize our farmers. There is a lot of work to be done in the Ministry of Agriculture.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, I thank you very much for your interest in the debate. Most of you have put in great insights and suggestions on this debate. I appreciate each and every one of you. I also thank you for your congratulatory messages inside and outside the House.

The Member for Soy Constituency, Hon. David Kiplagat, will have six minutes during the afternoon Sitting.

ADJOURNMENT

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, the time being 1.00 p.m., the House stands adjourned until this afternoon, at 2.30 p.m.

The House rose at 1.00 p.m.

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