



REPUBLIC OF KENYA

THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

THE HANSARD

VOL. III NO. 10

THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 28th February 2024

The House met at 9.30 a.m.

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

PRAYERS

QUORUM

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I direct that the Bell be rung for 10 minutes.

(The Quorum Bell was rung)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Members, we now have quorum. We may proceed. First Order!

PAPERS

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Waqo, on behalf of the Leader of the Majority Party.

Hon. Naomi Waqo (Marsabit County, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, I beg to lay the following Papers on the Table:

1. Annual Report of the Salaries and Remuneration Commission for Financial Year 2022/2023.
2. Reports of the Auditor-General and Financial Statements for the year ended 30th June 2023 and the certificates therein in respect of:
 - (a) African Union and other International Organisations Subscription Fund.
 - (b) Provident Fund – National Treasury.
 - (c) European Widows and Orphans Pensions Fund.
 - (d) National Authority for the Campaign Against Alcohol and Drug Abuse Car Loan and Mortgage Fund.
 - (e) National Land Commission Staff Car Loan Scheme Fund.
 - (f) Contingencies Fund.
 - (g) Statement of Outstanding Obligations Guaranteed by the Government of Kenya – The National Treasury.
 - (h) Rural Enterprise Fund.
 - (i) State Department for Labour and Skills Development.
 - (j) State Department for Implementation of Curriculum Reforms.
 - (k) State Department for Information Communication Technology and Digital Economy.
 - (l) State Department for Wildlife.
 - (m) State Department for Immigration and Citizen Services.
 - (n) State Department for Micro, Small and Medium Enterprises (MSMEs) Development.
 - (o) State Department for East African Community.
 - (p) Prison Farms Revolving Fund.

- (q) Consolidated Fund Services – Public Debt – The National Treasury.
- (r) Witness Protection Agency.
- (s) Green Growth and Employment Thematic Programme (GGETP) – State Department for Environment and Climate Change.
- (t) TVET Curriculum Development Assessment and Certification Council (TVET CDACC).
- (u) National Youth Service – Mechanical and Transport Fund.
- (v) Roads Annuity Funds – State Department for Roads.
- (w) Independent Policing Oversight Authority Staff Mortgage and Car Loan Scheme.
- (x) Business Registration Service – Official Receiver.
- (y) Kenya National Commission on Human Rights (KNCHR).
- (z) Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Next Order.

NOTICE OF MOTION

ESTABLISHMENT OF PRIORITY BOARDING PROTOCOL FOR KDF PERSONNEL

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Member for Lamu East, Hon. Ruweida Obo.

Hon. Ruweida Mohamed (Lamu East, JP): Hon. Deputy Speaker, I beg to give notice of the following Motion.

THAT, aware that Article 239 provides for the National Security Organs, including the Kenya Defence Forces; further aware that, the Kenya Defence and Kenya Special Forces play an indispensable role in promoting and safeguarding national security in accordance with the Constitution; recognising that members of the Forces face life-threatening risks as they carry out their duties to protect our citizens, particularly in high-risk and volatile areas; noting that there is currently no token of appreciation for the remarkable dedication, service and sacrifices made by the Kenya Defence and Special Forces; acknowledging that it is important to accord special privileges and honours to our military and veteran personnel, akin to the practice observed in other countries including being allowed to access services like banking halls and boarding of flights ahead of the general public; further acknowledging that this practice will not only instil a sense of pride among the Kenya Defence and Special Forces personnel, but also enhance their morale and motivation, thereby boosting their performance and commitment to our national security; cognisant of the fact that there exists no national policy framework to facilitate the implementation of such a practice; now, therefore, this House urges that the national Government, through the Ministry of Roads, Transport and Public Works, encourages local airlines to establish a priority boarding protocol for the Kenya Defence and Kenya Special Forces personnel which grants them the privilege to board local aircraft before the general public.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

QUESTIONS AND STATEMENTS

ORDINARY QUESTIONS

Question 043/2024

STATUS OF RECOVERED ASSETS DEPOSITED WITH THE ARA

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Ruku.

Hon. Ruku GK (Mbeere North, DP): Hon. Deputy Speaker, I rise to ask the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) the following Question:

Could the Commission —

- (a) state whether all monies and properties recovered for the State by the Ethics and Anti-Corruption Commission (EACC) under the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act (CAP 59A) have been deposited with the Assets Recovery Agency (ARA)?
- (b) provide a report on all monies and properties that have been recovered and deposited to the Criminal Assets Recovery Fund pursuant to Section 101 of the Proceeds of Crime and Anti-Money Laundering Act (CAP 59A) since the coming to force of the Act to date?
- (c) provide details on how the monies and assets under the Fund have been administered, including specific purposes for which the said Fund and/or properties have been utilised?

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Next order.

BILLS*Second Reading*

THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT COORDINATION (AMENDMENT) BILL
(NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BILL NO.25 OF 2023)

(Moved by Hon. Malulu Injendi on 22.11.2023 - Afternoon Sitting)

(Debate concluded on 21.2.2024 – Morning Sitting)

(Question put and agreed to)

First Readings

THE MUNG BEANS BILL
(SENATE BILL NO.13 OF 2022)

THE STARTUP BILL
(SENATE BILL NO.14 OF 2022)

THE KENYAN SIGN LANGUAGE BILL
(SENATE BILL NO.9 OF 2023)

(The Bills were read a First Time and referred to the relevant Committees)

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Next order.

*Second Reading*THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION (AMENDMENT) BILL
(NATIONAL ASSEMBLY BILL NO.6 OF 2023)

*(Moved by Hon. Mejjadonk Gathiru on
21.2.2024- Morning Sitting)*

*(Resumption of debate interrupted on 21.2.2024- Morning
Sitting)*

Hon. Deputy Speaker: This is resumption of debate. There was a balance of 58 minutes. Who was on the Floor? Hon. Phelix Odiwuor, also known as Jalang'o had three minutes. Is he here? The next person is, Hon. Abdul Haro, Member for Mandera South.

Hon. Abdul Haro (Mandera South, UDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I beg to move the Motion:

THAT, aware that the Constitution recognises the people's respect for the environment as the country's heritage and the commitment to sustaining the environment for future generations; further aware that the...

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Excuse me, Hon. Member for Mandera South Constituency. We are on Order Number 12, that is, Resumption of debate on the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill (National Assembly Bill No.6 of 2023). It was moved on Wednesday last week and we are resuming debate on it. It is not a fresh Motion!

Hon. Abdul Haro (Mandera South, UDM): Okay.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I can see Hon. Jane Kagiri, Member for Laikipia County. Do you want to contribute to this debate?

Hon. Jane Kagiri (Laikipia County, UDA): I will contribute to the next one.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: That is okay. Hon. Esther Passaris, Member for Nairobi City County, you are also on the list. Are you contributing to this debate?

Hon. Esther Passaris (Nairobi City County, ODM): I will contribute to the next one.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: That is okay. Hon. Maina Mathenge, Member for Nyeri Town Constituency. Do you want to contribute to this Debate? *Ahsante*, you may proceed.

Hon. Duncan Mathenge (Nyeri Town, UDA): Hon. Deputy Speaker, this Motion on the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill by the Hon. Member for Embakasi Central has come at a very timely point in the tenure of the Kenya Kwanza Government.

The success of this Government is largely hinged on the performance of the Public Service. As currently structured, the Public Service suffers from lethargy and paralysis on the basis of the fact that most of the senior positions in Government, ministries as well as parastatals, are held in acting capacities by people who hold the requisite experience, skills and qualifications but are unable to make firm decisions at crucial moments because they are serving in acting capacity. The best example is how this has hindered the success of the Ministry of Health, which is charged with the responsibility of delivering the Universal Health Coverage (UHC): a key pillar of the Kenya Kwanza Administration. The Director- General for Medical Services, one Dr Amoth, has been serving in acting capacity for the last six years in that position. How can the technical person heading the Ministry of Health be serving in acting position and have the courage, determination, and full mandate to implement, roll out, and supervise UHC?

We also have acting CEOs in key parastatals in the Ministry including: Kenya Medical Supply Authority (KEMSA) and Kenya Medical Research Institute (KEMRI), which is in charge of research. Even in the agricultural commodities trade, like in the Nairobi Coffee

Exchange (NCE), the CEO is in acting capacity. We know that coffee is key to our farmers and also to the foreign exchange position in our country. Therefore, it is important that the National Assembly provides the proper legal framework to guide on the issue of acting capacity moving forward so that we can unlock the potential of our public servants and the ability of this Government to deliver and perform.

On that basis, Hon. Deputy Speaker, I support the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill and congratulate Hon. Mejjadonk for this timely Motion.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: I also see I have Hon. Kahindi Katana's, Member for Kaloleni Constituency, request to contribute. Do you want to contribute to this debate?

Hon. Paul Katana (Kaloleni, ODM): Yes. Ahsante, Naibu Spika kwa kunipatia nafasi hii nichangie marekebisho ya sheria ya Tume ya Utumishi kwa Umma.

Kwa muda mrefu sasa, tumeona wakurugenzi ambao wameendelea kuhudumu wakiwa hawajapewa nyadhifa au uwezo kamili katika mashirika yasiyokuwa ya kiserikali na pia kwenye taasisi nyingi za serikali. Wamekuwa wakishikilia nyadhifa hizi kwa muda mrefu na hawawezi kufanya maamuzi yanayosaidia hayo mashirika. Kwa mfano, utaona mtu ameshikilia wadhifa kwa miaka miwili, mitatu au minne. Nafasi ya kazi inapotangazwa, yule ameshikilia wadhifa huo kwa miaka miwili au mitatu anatolewa na mwingine kupatiwa nafasi hiyo kwa sababu aliyeshikilia hana uwezo au ushawishi wa kisiasa. Huenda anayepewa wadhifa huo alikuwa mdogo wake kikazi. Inasikitisha kwa sababu inarudisha nyuma ile ari au azma ya mtu kujitolea kufanya kazi yake.

Kuna taasisi nyingine ambazo mtu akimaliza kuhudumu miaka yake, pengine miaka 55, anaongezwa miaka miwili ili kuendelea na kazi ile. Jambo hili limenyima vijana wengi nafasi za kazi. Mtu anayefikisha umri wa miaka 55 au 60 anastahili kustaafu ili kupatia watu wengine, hasa vijana, nafasi hizo za kazi. Kama tumeamua ama sheria imepitishwa kwamba mtu atastaafu akitimu miaka 55 au 60, iwe hivyo. Hiyo itapatia mashirika yasiyo ya serikali na taasisi mbalimbali nafasi ya kufundisha watu fulani ambao watashikilia nyadhifa zile. Isiwe ni mtu mmoja tu aliye na ujuzi Kenya nzima hata asipatie wengine nafasi. Jambo hili limewadhililisha vijana walio na shahada na hawawezi kupata nafasi kwa sababu wanaotakikana kustaafu wanaongezewa muda wa kuendelea kuhudumu.

Ninaunga mkono marekebisho ya Mswada huo. Ahsante, Mhe. Naibu Spika.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. John Kaguchia, Member for Mukurweini.

Hon. Kaguchia John (Mukurweini, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I appreciate this opportunity to contribute to this amendment Bill.

It is very important for us as a country to respect the elderly and people who have served in the civil service for a long time. They have experience and what it takes to discharge their duties. However, we should ensure they support, mentor, and guide younger people to take over service in the civil service as they approach their retirement age, which should be fixed at a maximum of 60 years. We must guide, mentor, train, and expose younger people to the important experience to continue running different arms of Government. I have seen people who have attained retirement age getting extensions of service from their ministries or departmental heads. Whereas we continue benefitting from their experience, it also denies us the opportunity of the energy, vigour, and vision of younger people who are also experienced to continue serving. This inhibits opportunities for younger people. As a country, we must keep encouraging the youth who must attain the requisite experience.

I appreciate that the Government has provided a platform for younger people graduating from universities to gain experience. You know this has been a major problem where Kenyans have been asked to gain experience before applying for jobs. How will you gain this experience unless you get exposed or get an internship? It is important for our country to ensure that young people get those opportunities.

To be fair to the people who are retiring, we must ensure that we have a proper and working pension system. We must improve on what we have today. Many people who are retiring have a problem going home because they are not sure that they are going to be taken care of. As a country, we must develop a very good system of taking care of our seniors because these people have served us with honour and dignity. We have stood on their shoulders. We have benefitted from them. We have drawn energy, experience, skill, information, and wisdom from them. We have received many services from them. I want to make it clear that we must also prepare a system to take care of people as they retire, that is, through a proper working pension system. This pension system must have the capacity to release their benefits without having them follow up or queue in offices for many hours or days. We must ensure this system is working.

We also have another category of people appointed to certain acting positions in this country. They are appointed to these positions because we are preparing to hire another person to occupy their positions. We have seen people acting in positions for eternity. We have seen CEOs acting for a long time. Unfortunately, this does not work well for our governance. So long as you are acting in a position for long, you are easily manipulated, guided or over-guided by the people who have appointed you in that acting position. This happens because you are seeking an opportunity to be confirmed one day. Therefore, I highly support that we have an acting capacity for only six months, beyond which we must advertise that position to be filled or confirm the person acting in that capacity.

As we amend the laws, I advocate that those acting in a position get an allowance that is almost equivalent to the pay of the person who sits in that position. We must calculate their salary. We need to know the salary of the position they are acting in, get the difference and pay that difference as an acting allowance so that they are not subjected to more services and work without pay. We have to be fair to Kenyans.

I support this amendment and commend the Mover, Hon. Benjamin Mwangi Gathiru. He has proved that he can take care of people working for the Government in this country. I commend him for having thought about the young people, the pension system for retirees, and the issue of people acting for a long time in positions. Indeed, those who serve in acting positions should either be confirmed in those positions or paid acting allowance as per the law.

Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

The Deputy Speaker: Hon. Jane Kagiri, Member for Laikipia County.

Hon. Jane Kagiri (Laikipia County, UDA): Thank you for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this amendment Bill. I congratulate Hon. Mejjadonk for bringing a very important amendment to this House.

I support that nobody should serve in an acting capacity for more than six months because such a person lacks stability in his or her position of work. Nobody appreciates walking into a job every day not knowing if he or she will be the person serving in that position tomorrow. As a country, we can keep complaining about institutions not performing well yet the lack of stability of persons serving in acting capacity is a reason for poor performance. A person serving in an acting capacity may not be able to make long-term decisions for an institution. These long-term decisions eventually affect the whole country. Equally, the person may not know how long they will be holding the position in an acting capacity. This affects the projection of their career because of the uncertainty of not knowing how best they should perform. Thus, they end up not performing at their optimum. It is also an issue of increased workload to the person working in an acting capacity yet we have not run short of people who can perform and work in Kenya.

With those few remarks, I beg to support the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill. Nobody should serve in an acting capacity for more than six months.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. Members, before we proceed, I would like to recognise a delegation of staff from the United Republic of Tanzania seated in the Speaker's Gallery. The delegation comprises three members of staff from the Budget Office of the National Assembly of Tanzania. They are welcome to observe the proceedings of the National Assembly. On behalf of the R.T. Hon. substantive Speaker, myself and the rest of the Members of the National Assembly, I welcome you to Nairobi.

Asante.

(Applause)

The Member for Mombasa County, Hon. Zamzam Chimba.

Sorry Hon. Zamzam, I have been informed that you had previously spoken on this Bill. I saw your name on the console.

Hon. Adan Haji, the Member for Mandera West.

Hon. Yusuf Adan (Mandera West, UDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I stand to support this very important Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill. The Public Service Commission is the most important employer in this country. It is supposed to be looked at as the best employer in the country because it is a very old institution. It has gone through a lot of ups and downs and it has been perfected for many years. Therefore, it is supposed to be the best employer in the country emulated by the private sector employers and other employers. However, as time goes, we have seen a lot of loopholes within the Public Service Commission. Notably is the number of the heads of departments in Government in acting positions; it is enormous. An acting position interferes with the performance of the heads who are in those positions. They are at the mercy of their boards because they know at some point they will be invited for an interview and it is their boards or the Public Service Commission which will interview them. So, as long as they are acting, they will not perform their duties. They will try to please their board members who will ultimately interview them. The board members can either give them the job or give it to somebody else. It is unfortunate that the acting period has been too long. I support the proposal that nobody should serve in an acting capacity for more than six months. Before the six months elapse, the person serving in an acting capacity should either be confirmed or somebody else is given the job to serve as the substantive office holder of that position so that there is efficiency within the public service.

On the issue of the retirement age, I also support the amendment as proposed. Unfortunately, the reason why many public servants do not want to retire or leave work once they attain the retirement age is because getting pension money is a big problem. Public servants retire and some of them die before they get their pension. It takes too long for them to be paid their pension. Retirees are people who have been in the public service for over 30 years and are used to a certain life style. However, when all over a sudden their salaries are stopped because they have retired, they do not get their pension. The Pensions Department of this country is very corrupt. Retirees are forced to play to their corrupt ways in order to get their pension and they may not afford to pay the corruption price. As a result, many of them are left shocked and die before getting their pension. Therefore, we should come up with ways and means of ensuring that, immediately a public servant retires, he or she must get their pension within a month or two. Otherwise, delay in releasing pension money is what is causing public servants not to be happy in exiting their places of work. They prefer to stay there and request for extension. They do not mentor their juniors to take over from them so that at the point of their retirement they can say that there is nobody who is ready to take over from them and ask that they be given an extension of three or five years. They will do this just because of how the pension situation is.

With those remarks, I support the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill.

Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Hon. John Waluke, the Member for Sirisia.

Hon. John Koyi (Sirisia, JP): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker for giving me a chance to contribute to the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill. People in the civil service in acting positions suffer. Someone can act in a position for many years without being confirmed and some attain retirement age while in acting capacities. I want to thank the Hon. Member who sponsored the Bill. We should support and pass it. Once we pass it, the Committee on Implementation should immediately act on it so that people in the civil service know their positions.

Madam Speaker, you have been in this House for some time now and I can cite the NG-CDF Chief Executive Officer (CEO), Mr. Yusuf Mbuno as an example of a person who served in an acting capacity for six years. As Members of Parliament, we wondered why somebody had to serve in an acting position as a CEO for such a long time. I want to thank the Member of Parliament from Embakasi who thought it wise to bring this Bill to the Floor of this House for debate. Members here come from communities. It is our people who brought us to Parliament and they are suffering, especially teachers. A teacher can stay in an acting position for 10-15 years while teaching. There was a teacher in my constituency who was employed when he had only 15 years remaining before retiring.

This is a good Bill that we should pass so that it can help many people. There are people who are not prepared properly that they will retire when they are 60 years old. When you are 59 or 60 years old, you prepare yourself and mind that you will retire and pave way for the young people. This is compulsory. When all civil servants turn 60 years old, they retire. There are Kenyans who have forged their ages. Some are 70 years old but their identification cards say they are 50 or 55 years old because they lied.

Hon. Deputy Speaker, we need to scrutinise and pass this Bill which says that when you turn 60 years old, you must retire.

I support it. Thank you.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: The Member for Mavoko, Hon. Patrick Makau.

Hon. Patrick Makau (Mavoko, WDM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. At the outset, I support the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill. I agree with all the speakers that when you look at the retirement age, Kenya is in the gap of developing countries or it is perceived to be a developed country. You find someone who is supposed to go home when he is 60 years old but he is still young.

I know there are contracts that are extended to some civil servants which is very okay. We need to tap the expertise and institutional memory of some of them. For example, I have seen very senior civil servants retire from mainstream professions like engineering and medicine. As a country, we can have a data bank where such professionals can be utilised by the nation. As much as we want to create jobs for the youth and unemployed people, we should maintain and retain those who can add value in the service delivery in this country. I have just walked in. I have not checked the Bill. However, I thought it was important for me to add my voice to it.

Thank you very much.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Member for Loima, Hon. Protus Ewesit.

Hon. Protus Akujah (Loima, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I rise to add my voice to this debate. The issue of a person serving in an acting capacity for several years is used by many employers as a way to misuse them. They know they may not make substantive or profound decisions that ensure that an institution moves forward.

This is an abuse because some of these institutions are not run well in most cases as they have been designed. This happens in parastatals. This is where people serve in acting capacities for more than 5 or 6 years. Most of them do not even get benefits in these positions.

They continue earning their salaries. If it is a human resource officer, he continues earning his salary but not in his capacity as the CEO, despite the fact that he has added roles and responsibilities. This is misuse and tantamount to abuse of office.

One other thing that has not been mentioned is the issue of organisations or companies employing people on casual basis. There are people who have worked as casual workers for as many as 10, 5 and 7 years. The law is clear that you cannot work as a casual worker for more than three months. You have to be confirmed or discontinued. This goes on in many organisations. It has to be looked into because these people are being exploited. They are paid very meagre wages. They are misused because of their vulnerabilities.

With those few remarks, I support the Bill. Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Member for Kirinyaga Central, Hon. Joseph Gitari.

Hon. Joseph Gitari (Kirinyaga Central, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker, for giving me this chance to contribute to this Bill. I support and congratulate the Member who moved it. We know that very many people graduate from our universities in different disciplines. Because of the extensions we get from the public service, at times, they are unable to get jobs within State Departments.

I want to cite a serious issue that I noted. I am in the land profession. When they started the Ardhi Sasa Programme, a person who had retired got a contract for two years. Because of inefficiencies, it has a problem to date. If we make it mandatory that when people turn 60 years old, they retire from public service, we will create employment vacancies for our university students. We are parents. There is a saying that tells us when people turn 60 years old, they retire but they are not tired. It is good time for people to go and take care of their siblings and grandchildren.

I support the Bill, Hon. Deputy Speaker.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Thank you. Member for Lamu East, Hon. Ruweida Obo.

Hon. Ruweida Mohamed (Lamu East, JP): Asante, Mhe. Naibu Spika, kwa kunipatia nafasi ya kuchangia Mswada huu. Ninaunga mkono moja kwa moja. Ninamshukuru Mhe. Mejjadonk Benjamin kwa kuleta Mswada huu. Ninaunga mkono wafanyakazi wa serikali wote wastaafu wakiwa na miaka 60. Sasa, Waziri ama wakubwa wa Serikali wana haki ya kuongeza wafanyakazi mwaka mmoja, miwili mpaka miaka mitano. Hii inadhulumu wengine.

Watu wangu wa Msitu wa Boni, Kiunga, Faza Ward na Mtangawanda ambao hawajui watu wakubwa serikalini hawapati nafasi hizi. Kwa hivyo, huu Mswada ukipitishwa, itakuwa haki. Kama mwalimu wa kule Kiunga anastaafu akifikisha miaka 60, wale wa huku wanaojua watu wakubwa Serikalini wastaafu wakifikisha miaka 60 pia. Lakini, sio kwa kuwa anajua mtu, basi yeye ndio anaongezewa miaka. Ninaunga mkono sana Mswada huu. Wakenya wote wastaafu wakifikisha miaka 60.

Pia, ninaunga mkono vile Mhe. alivyosema hapa kwamba matayarisho yafanywe mapema kwa sababu inachukuliwa kama kigezo ili mwingine aendeleo kufanya kazi na kusema hakuna mwingine anawezakufanya taaluma yake. Ni vizuri vile ilivyosemwa kwamba kabla yule mwenye taaluma ile hajaondoka, mwingine atayarishwe achukue hiyo nafasi yake. Isiwe kiegozo cha kukosesha wengine kazi kwa kumpendelea mtu mwingine. Pia, ninaunga mkono pale anaposema wale makatibu washikilizi wasifanye zaidi ya miezi sita. Kusema kweli, tunapoteza sana kwa sababu wakikaa pale, utaona katibu amekuja kazini hata hana morali kwa sababu hajui kesho kutakuwa vipi. Katibu ajue akienda sana ni miezi sita. Aandikwe au atolewe. Kwa haya yote tunayozungumza, iwe ni kwa wale wanaopitia Tume ya Utumishi wa Umma. Nilikuwa nimeshtuka nikiona kuwa itabidi pia marubani na majaji watastaafu kwa miaka sitini. Kitu kinachoweza mfanya rubani astaafu ni afya yake. Daktari akisema huyu hafai kurusha ndege, ndio hafai. Mheshimiwa amenihakikishia kwamba haya mapendekezo ni kwa wale wanaopitia Tume ya Utumishi wa Umma. Majaji hawako kwenye huu mpango. Kwa

hivyo watu wasishtuke wakidhani kuwa ni kwa watu wote Kenya. Kuna wale wengine hawapitii huku. Wao wataendelea na zile sheria zao.

Ahsante, Mhe. Naibu Spika.

Hon. Deputy Speaker: Member for Nairobi County, Hon. Esther Passaris.

Hon. Esther Passaris (Nairobi City County, ODM): Thank you, Hon. Deputy Speaker. I wish to contribute to the Public Service Commission (Amendment) Bill, brought by Hon. Benjamin Gathiru. Acting in a position demotivates employees. In the public service, we want to have very good motivated employees willing to serve. When you are in an acting position, you are probably looking for other jobs. You are not sure whether the position is sustainable. You are more focused on whether you are going to be confirmed or not than on your performance.

In the private sector, after a maximum of three to six months of acting, one is confirmed. It is important that the public service also ensures that within six months of employees acting, they are confirmed. This will enable them to know whether they are going to be retained and their new terms and obligations, and if there are any amendments. That is when they sign their performance contracts. That will improve and enhance services in the public service.

When it comes to retirement, there is a huge unemployment rate in the country; but it is important that we also look at the figures. How many people in the public service are due for retirement every year? When we know that we have X number of people due for retirement, we also have to identify the people who will succeed them in those positions. Mentorship comes in very handy. Sometimes we talk about having bloated staff in the public service. There is something the private sector does that the public sector could also do. It is giving people golden handshakes and early retirement so that they can go out there and sustain and maintain levels of employees within the budget. Retirement can be a very painful exercise for a number of people. It is mandatory for the Government to look at how it plans for retirement for the people in public service. They have served this country for many years. Some of them have done amazing work. Of course, we know there is also a crop that does not do good work. A crop that drives the institutions down because of corruption.

Training is also very important for advancement in your career, succession and retirement planning. If we do not deal with the planning for what happens after employees turn 60 years after serving institutions for very long, we will only see an increase in mental health. At 60 years, people are still vibrant and able. If that is the only thing they have done, they need to be helped into retirement. They are still useful citizens of our society.

I also want to speak to pension. When people are going for retirement and they struggle to get their pensions, this is really an inhuman thing we are doing to various employees. There should be a way for workers to immediately access their pension. When the Office of the Auditor-General talked about people receiving pension that they are not actually qualified to receive, it is all corruption. We need to investigate that and protect pensions. Pension money is the hard work of various citizens who have served this country tirelessly. We also have a situation of ghost workers. While we are thinking about retiring people at 60 years, let us look at how many ghost workers we have in the public service. We need to ensure that we have no ghost workers and no corruption when it comes to pensions. We should be efficient in providing pensions for those retiring. We should train and help them to be able to deal with retirement when it is due. We should also ensure that we train the generation coming in.

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

[The Temporary Speaker (Dr Rachael Nyamai) took the Chair]

The Government used to be celebrated for the kind of training that it offered to its employees. We have, however, seen a drop in that. That is why you see laxity when it comes to confirming people who are acting. This could be another way of breeding corruption, because if you want me to confirm you in an acting position, then you have to pay a price. We need to tie all these loopholes and make things mandatory. That is why I commend the Member for bringing this Bill. When it is mandatory, then we do not have all these loopholes where you scratch my back, I scratch yours, or you give me something and I make sure you are confirmed.

I will bring a question on the number of people due for retirement. Are they still in service? What was the reason for the extension? How many people are in acting capacities and why are they still acting? This will help us see which public institutions do not adhere to the law and ensure they treat their employees humanely. Recently, we discussed the need to respect our elders as a society. People who are 60 years old are not useless to the society. They have a lot of wisdom. That is why we recently talked about the need to recognise *wazee* in the community and give them something. Maybe there would be room for us to ensure advisers come to ministries once in a while to interact, serve and contribute. Public participation does that, but they could have another platform. There is a lot of wisdom in experience. That is something that the young generation will not have immediately, but they will acquire.

All in all, I support the amendments and look forward to us as a country becoming more sensitive to how we treat employees, becoming more sensitive to how we reward and celebrate those who have served in the interest of the public and dedicated their lives towards public service.

Thank you, I support.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much. Hon. Gonzi Rai, Member for Kinango. Please try to trace a working microphone. You may proceed to the one on your right.

Mhe. Gonzi Rai (Kinango, PAA): Ahsante sana, Mhe. Spika wa Muda. Nami pia ningetaka kutoa sauti yangu kuhusiana na Mswada huu ulioko mbele yetu. Mswada huu umekuja kwa wakati mwafaka. Tunapozungumzia maswala haya ya kazi, ni muhimu tufahamu kwamba lengo kubwa hasa la Mswada huu ni kuboresha morali ya wafanyikazi katika Huduma ya Umma, kwa sababu ya ule ugandamizaji ambao uko kwenye sekta hii. Kumekuwa na hatari ambazo zimekuwa zikifanyika hasa kwa watu ambao wako kwenye sehemu kame kama kule kwangu Kinango. Pengine mwalimu anastaafu na anayemshikilia anapewa nafasi ile na anakaa pale kwa muda wa karibu miaka sita.

Mhe. Spika wa Muda, unapata kuwa mwalimu huyo anatosha kupewa nafasi hiyo lakini kwa sababu ya kutojua mtu wa kumsaidia, inabidi akae mahali pale miaka sita. Baadaye, mwalimu mwingine analetwa kuchukua nafasi hiyo na yeye anapewa nafasi ya naibu wa mwalimu mkuu. Hili ni jambo la kuvunja moyo sana kwa sababu unapofanya kazi, inafaa tajiri aelewe taabu na mashaka yako. Mfanyikazi anafaa kutosheka na kile anachokifanya kwa sababu ni faida kwa Serikali. Ni muhimu pia yeye ajisikie yuko kazini na anafurahia kazi yake.

Tumekuwa na machifu na wafanyikazi ambao wanafanya kazi katika sehemu kame. Kule Kinango, walimu wanapatiwa *hardship allowance* lakini machifu, County Commissioners, Deputy County Commissioners, Assistant County Commissioners na wafanyikazi wengine wote wa Umma walio kule hawalipwi. Tunapouliza shida hii inatokana na nini, hakuna jibu isipokuwa kuzungushwa. Mkaguzi wa Hesabu huja hapa miaka nenda, miaka rudi akitueleza kuwa mtu anastaafu lakini haondolewi katika orodha ya wafanyikazi; mwenye kumshikilia anabaki pale miaka kumi ili watu waendeleo kupokea pesa za yule aliyestaafu. Wakati mwingine machifu wanapoelekea kustaafu, wanapeana *notice* ya likizo wakisubiri *retire*. Linalostaajabisha ni kwamba baada ya likizo, wanapostaafu, pensheni yao huchukua hata miaka sita kabla ya kulipwa. Wengine wanakufa kabla ya kupata pesa zao.

Mhe. Spika wa Muda, ni muhimu tuwe na utaratibu maalum wa kuhakikisha kuwa mwalimu, chifu au mfanyikazi yeyote anapostaafu anapata haki yake baada ya miezi mitatu au sita. Tunawaua watu wengi. Ni jambo la kusikitisha. Mara kwa mara, tunaskia kuwa wizara fulani ina wafanyakazi gushi na wote wanalipwa mshahara, lakini aliyefanya kazi kwa kujitolea katika nchi hii anabaki akisubiri malipo yake ya uzeeni na hawezi kupata. Hili ni jambo ambalo linafaa kuangaliwa kwa undani.

Ningependa kumshukuru Mheshimiwa aliyelea Mswada huu kwa sababu anajua kitu ambacho kinahitaji kuangaliwa ili kuleta ukarabati na uwiano.

Mhe. Spika wa Muda, kwa hayo machache, asante sana kwa kunipa nafasi. Lengo lilikuwa kutoa sauti yangu.

Mungu akubariki.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Members, the time allocated for this Bill has ended. I therefore call upon the Mover to reply.

Hon. Mejjadonk Gathiru (Embakasi Central, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. Before I reply, I wish to donate three minutes to Hon. Kiragu, Member for Limuru, and two minutes to Hon. Omboko Milemba. I will then use the remaining minutes.

Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Member for Limuru.

Hon. Eng. John Kiragu (Limuru, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I would like to support this Bill. I support the mandatory retirement at the age of 60 because it will open many opportunities for young people to get into public service. We all know that 60 years is not the end of life. There are opportunities in the private sector and these are the people with experience. They will have the resources and experience to engage in many other things. I am one of those people who retired voluntarily at the age of 40 and I am now here. I know it pays.

The problem with retirement is with people who are allowed to act for a long time. Sometimes those in acting capacity end up losing because of manipulation to ensure that they do not get benefits at the end. In my view, when people in service lose their benefits, it is necessary to punish those who sleep on their jobs and make sure they pay. When it comes to the Committee of the whole House, I will bring an amendment to ensure that those who allow officers to act for more than six months pay for it.

I support you. Thank you.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Omboko Milemba.

Hon. Omboko Milemba (Emuhaya, ANC): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I would like to thank Hon. Mejjadonk for bringing this good Bill. He is moving the retirement age from a regulation to an Act so that enforcement can be done strictly. There has been a gap such that when the retirement age is under a regulation, it is manipulated by the Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and people in power to see who they give more time. With this Bill, the retirement age will be in an Act of Parliament that can be enforced strongly. I thank the Mover for that.

Secondly, the provision for acting has been misused. Currently, many public servants are in acting positions for even more than three years. This is denying them their due value for the job they are doing. The Teachers Service Commission is worse because more than half of the deputies head teachers and head teachers are serving in acting positions. It is even worse because the Salaries and Remuneration Commission (SRC) removed the acting allowance that was there. This affirms that every worker who acts for more than six months, including those in commissions, and specifically the Teachers Service Commission, should be paid acting allowance or confirmed.

Finally, although it is not captured, we need to deal with the issue of pension. Currently, many workers have retired but have not been paid their pensions. There are about 8,000 retired

teachers who have not been paid their pensions. Their forms are lying at the Treasury or at the Pensions Department. We need to fix this area to ensure that once workers retire, they are paid their pension within a period of three months.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker and the Mover of the Bill.

Hon. Mejjadonk Gathiru (Embakasi Central, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

As I reply, I would like to thank every Member who has risen in support of this Bill, and for their kind words. While supporting the Bill, Members have pointed out so many gaps within our Public Service Commission by giving valid examples. Some Members have supported it and pointed out areas that this House needs to conduct further deliberations on.

I wish to support the Member for Limuru, Hon. Kiragu; and Hon. Omboko Milemba, Member for Emuhaya, for proposing to move amendments during the Committee of the whole House to make sure that the employer, the appointing agent or the person responsible for the mess is punished. From the debate, it is clear that there is need for clarity. This Bill is not changing anything to do with the retirement age. It is just moving the retirement age from being part of regulation and prescribing it in the Act. In terms of enforcement, it would give more powers and help firm up the process of implementation across the public service.

Further, this Bill provides for the penal provision in the event that the appointing authority allows a person to serve on acting appointment for a period of more than six months to recourse, in regard to acting allowance upon the lapse of the acting period.

From the contribution of Members, it is clear that we all agree that there is need for the amendment to address the issue of succession planning by the Public Service Commission and other service commissions. This is to ensure that all service commissions take necessary steps to ensure that they train other persons in organisations to replace retiring officers as well as those exiting the service.

I, sincerely, thank the Committee on Labour and Social Protection, led by the Chairperson, Hon. Karemba for their consideration and input on the Bill. However, I, totally, disagree with the Committee's recommendations on changing the period for replacing officers serving in acting positions from six months to twelve months. This negates the demand for good corporate governance through succession planning since the public service, as asserted by Hon. Nabii Nabwera, is a growing concern and, therefore, gaps need to be filled prior to the retirement age. As posed by Hon. Gikaria before this House, an institution must always prepare itself for transition. We should not be talking of a period of 12 months for an institution to prepare for recruitment. What stops the institution from starting recruitment for replacement 12 months before someone retires?

I disagree with the recommendation by Hon. Mugambi Rindikiri on amending Section 81. This Section gives room to officers who would wish to retire early to do so after attaining the age of 50 by giving the authorised officers' employer at least three months' notice, which is in the spirit of the amendment proposed in the Bill. That is to encourage old Kenyans to embrace retirement to create more employment opportunities for the youth.

I thank fellow Members who have found some parts of the Bill to be punitive and discriminatory. With much humility, I remind this House that we need to continue coming up with legislation and proposals to better the public service. I invite Members to make further amendments during the Committee of the whole House.

I would like to give hope to our youth that; that, this House will continue to come up with legislations to ensure that the many years spent in school gaining knowledge and skills result in meaningful employment. Let us give hope to our junior officers whose goal and aspiration in public service is to be promoted to higher offices. I believe that by this Bill introducing succession planning, it would make them realise their dreams, and gain the power to see the change we all aspire for.

I beg to reply.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Hon. Benjamin Gathiru.

Hon. Members, putting of the Question for this Motion is deferred.

(Putting of the Question deferred)

THE COTTON INDUSTRY DEVELOPMENT BILL
(Senate Bill No.5 of 2023)

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Mary Emase.

Hon. Mary Emaase (Teso South, UDA): Hon. Temporary Speaker, I rise to move that the Cotton Industry Development Bill (Senate Bill No.5 of 2023) be now read a Second Time.

This Bill seeks to provide for the production, processing, marketing and distribution of Cotton and its products in Kenya. The Bill seeks to establish the Cotton Industry Board and provide a framework for cotton farming to ensure value addition to cotton and its related products, and for connected purposes.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, before I delve deeper into the contents of the Bill, allow me to present a synopsis of cotton farming in this country to enable Members to better appreciate the intention of the Bill.

Cotton farming started in this country way back in 1907. It reached its pick in 1985 when cotton was the main foreign exchange earner for this country. It was a valuable cash crop that sustained many families in the areas where cotton farming was undertaken.

I come from the Lake Region, where cotton was one of the main cash crops. I remember picking cotton and seeing it on almost every farm in my neighbourhood. However, today the story is different. In the 1970s and the 1980s, Kenya produced close to 100,000 bales of Cotton annually. This compares very well with our neighbouring countries like Tanzania and Uganda. Uganda produced 400,000 bales of cotton while Tanzania produced 700,000 bales then. That means there is a lot of potential in cotton farming. We used to have millers' industries like the Kisumu Cotton Millers, famously known as KICOMI then, which used to do the ginning. However, by 2014, we were hardly producing 25,000 bales of cotton.

Today, we can hardly produce 7,000 bales, which translate to 3,000 metric tonnes of lint. What happened? Where did the rain start beating us? The collapse of cotton farming in Kenya is blamed on a number of factors, including poor performance of weak farmer organisations, high cost of production, inadequate quality seeds, overreliance on rain-fed production and the middlemen.

Currently, there is confusion. Those who have already registered to be cotton farmers, and have started planting cotton, do not know where to take their produce. The ginneries that have been operationalized are very few and sparsely distributed thus increasing the cost of transportation and giving an advantage to middlemen to take over and earn from the sweat of cotton farmers.

There is also lack of research and development. The last time this country did any serious research and development on cotton and produced improved seeds was in 1989. During the cotton boom in the 1970s and 1980s, the Government had supported the industry through the Cotton Board of Kenya, which had organised marketing strategies, and farmers were being paid promptly. So, the board actually invested heavily in factories such as Raymond's, RIVATEX as well as KICOMI.

We had ginning factories built across the country in Malindi, Kilindini and Kisumu. During that time, there were even experimental farms for research and development in Malindi, Mombasa, Voi and even Kibos in Kisumu. The textile market was liberalised in 1991, after

which the Board became ineffective. Importation of second-hand clothes commenced. This posed a serious challenge to the local cloth industry, and the firms gradually collapsed.

What we are asking is whether this can be reversed? These challenges can be addressed. Therefore, the sector still has a huge potential. All those that have been revived are private ginneries except one in Luanda, Busia County. A lot still needs to be done because there is great potential that is untapped, which can create a lot of employment opportunities. Today, we only have three existing factories: RIVATEX, SUPRA and Thika Textile Mills. The three require 100,000 bales of lint, which is equivalent to 45,000 metric tonnes to operate at optimum capacity. However, as I said earlier, the current production is only 7,000 bales. What happens to the balance? The balance is being imported from the neighbouring countries: Sudan, Uganda and Tanzania. We could actually engage our farmers to begin to produce so that we create more value and benefit our farmers in this country. Some of the ginneries we have are Meru Ginnery in Meru County; Sugin Ginery in Tharaka Nithi; Kitui Ginery in Kitui County; Makueni Ginnery in Makueni County; Salawa Ginnery in Baringo County, and Luanda Ginnery in Busia County.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, so many others have not been operationalized. Even in Busia County, where I come from, we still have Amukura and Malakisi Ginneries. We only have one in Mulwanda. For a farmer in Teso North or Teso South to transport his cotton all the way to Mulwanda in Funyula is quite a distance. There are so many of these ginneries across the country, and they may require to be operationalized if we are to achieve our objective.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, in short, I am just saying that the average ginning capacity utilisation across ginneries is less than 25 per cent due to low supply of raw materials – that is the seed cotton.

Further, in 2019, the country embraced BT Cotton so as to scale up cotton production. BT Cotton is a high yield pest resistant and drought tolerant improved breed of cotton but it was so expensive that very few farmers came on boarded through a subsidy programme. However, I am happy that currently the government has taken it up in the list of farmers who have just been registered. They were supplied with BT Cotton seeds and we expect to get better yields and better output out of those interventions. A few farmers were accommodated then.

That is very important because we are setting up industrial parks. They are expected to do ginning, textile production and cloth making with the main goal of creating employment opportunities. This cotton seed can also be used to make cotton seed cakes that can be used in dairy farming, thereby, increasing production of milk. It can bring down the cost of milk. It will help to create a lot of opportunities for our farmers.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, allow me to go back to the Bill. As I said, the objective of this Bill is to promote the development of a globally competitive cotton industry. The Bill seeks to facilitate the production, value addition and processing of safe and healthy cotton and its products. The Bill provides a framework that will promote the generation of high income for cotton farmers and traders. This Bill provides a framework for the continuous and sustainable research and extension services for the development of the cotton industry and to facilitate the introduction of modern farming techniques and general modernisation of the cotton industry. This Bill also seeks to provide a framework for provision of financial support to the various players in the cotton industry. This is contained in Part I. Part I also provides for interpretation of a number of terminologies that will be used in this Bill. It provides definition of the board, the Cabinet Secretary, the Chief Executive Officer and the Cotton industry, which includes growers, ginners, spinners and cotton value addition industries. Basically, Part I is on interpretation and the objects of this Bill.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, Part II speaks to the establishment of the Cotton Industry Board. It provides that there shall be established a Cotton Industry Board. It goes further to give the powers of the Board. The Board will have its headquarters in Nairobi but it will also

at its own discretion decide to open an office in any other location in the country for purposes of efficiency and effective management of its affairs.

The Bill also speaks to the composition of the Board. It will have a chairperson appointed by the President. It will have a total membership of nine persons. It also speaks to the qualifications of the members of the Board. Three of them shall have degrees – the chairperson, a nominee of the apex body of the cotton industry and a nominee of the Council of Governors. The remaining six members, who will be representing cotton farmers – one from each region specified in the Second Schedule – will be required to have secondary school education certificates.

Clause 8 speaks to the qualifications for appointments to the Board. It also speaks to the tenure of those Board members, which is three years, and what it takes to vacate office. Some of these are standard procedures as per our Constitution. I believe Members have a copy of the Bill. It says that a person shall cease to be a member of the Board if that person is absent without reasonable cause for three consecutive meetings, becomes an officer, an agent or a member of staff of the Board, and many others.

This Bill also speaks to the functions of the Board. It says that the Board shall regulate and promote the development of cotton growing and ginning. It will advise the Cabinet Secretary which counties qualify as cotton producing. It shall also make recommendations to the Cabinet Secretary on the implementation of the strategies, plans and policies relating to the cotton sector. The Board shall regulate the importation and exportation of cotton lint and cotton seed. The Bill also provides for marketing of cotton products and by-products in both local and foreign markets. It also speaks to the committee of the board and delegations by the Board. Hon. Members, the Bill further speaks to the appointment of the CEO. A person is qualified for appointment as CEO if he is a Kenyan citizen, holds a degree from a university recognised in Kenya and has, at least, 10 years of experience. I have to mention this because I know it will be of interest to Members.

The Bill also speaks to the functions of the CEO. He is the officer responsible for the day to day management of the affairs of the Board; manage the funds; be responsible for management of the staff and the board; oversee and coordinate the implementation of the policies, programmes, objectives of the board, and cause to be prepared for the approval of the board the strategic plan, annual plan, annual budget and audited accounts of the board.

The Bill in Part II also speaks to the removal of the CEO from office. Those are standard procedures, and I will not go into details because we go through this every day. If you are bankrupt, liable for gross misconduct, convicted of criminal offense or if you resign in writing and many others.

This Bill also speaks to the staff of the board, protection from personal liability, the common seal of the board, signing authority, all letters and instrument written or made by or on behalf of the board shall other than those required by law, be under seal. It speaks to the meetings and when they should be held.

Part III of the Bill speaks to the role of the county government, this being a devolved function. That is why this Bill originated from the Senate because county governments will have a bigger role to play. That, each county government shall implement the national Government policy relating to the cotton sector, regulate and promote the development of the cotton industry within the respective county, consider application for certificates, permits and licenses, coordinate the activities of the persons, organisations and any other associations within the cotton industry in the respective county, and facilitate access by players in the cotton industry to such resources and financial support as may be necessary to promote the development of the cotton industry in the respective county.

I want to mention something on registration. This is very critical and is in Part V of the Bill. That, a person or entity shall not carry out the business of a cotton grower, cotton ginner,

cotton cooperative society or cotton association, unless such a person is registered by the respective county government in which the business is undertaken.

Notwithstanding subsection (1), a grower who is a registered member of a cooperative society or cotton association which is registered by a county government, shall be exempted from registration by the county government. This is because if you are already registered by the cooperative society or by the cotton association, you do not have to be registered again by the county government. Sub-section (2) shall apply to a grower on condition that the cooperative society or cotton association is registered in the same county. So, you cannot be registered in another county and then you seek exemption in this county. It has to be within the same county.

The Bill speaks about the role of the county government in Clause 32 that, the County Executive Committee Member shall designate such collection centres as the members shall, in consultation with cotton growers in the county, determine. Remember that a cooperative society shall be formed in every ward and they will manage the farmers in the distribution of inputs, controlling of pesticide and collection of cotton. Centres have to be designated where cotton is collected and deposited before other processes.

This Bill is very important and I want all of us to support it for purposes of improving cotton farming in this country. Looking at Part VI on miscellaneous provisions, each county government may enact county specific legislation. It talks about legislation to be followed and the criteria for registration of cotton growers within each respective county. So, each respective county is given leeway to process its own legislation.

Part VII has the transition provisions whereby Clause 51 states:

“51. On the appointed day, all rights, obligations and contracts which immediately before the coming into operation of this Act, were vested in or imposed on the Agriculture and Food Authority (AFA) with respect to the cotton sector shall, by virtue of this section, be deemed to be the rights, obligations and contracts of the board as the case may be.”

This transfers all contracts, litigation funds and assets to the board, so that it takes responsibility to any reference in any other legislation that refers to AFA in any written law or in any contract, document or instrument of whatever nature in relation to cotton, shall, on appointment day, be read and construed as reference to the board.

I urge all of you to support this, Bill. Before I close, I take this opportunity to thank Hon. Betty Syengo, who was the originator of this Bill in the Senate and my co-sponsor. I urge Members, especially those from the cotton growing regions to support because they know what it meant to our farmers, when cotton was doing well in this country. We need to reclaim the glory of cotton because the Government is ready to support. I was looking at the Budget Policy Statement (BPS) yesterday and revival of the cotton industry is key. It has been captured and taken to the Ministry of Trade as one of their core priority areas.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I beg to move.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Who is seconding your Motion, Hon. Emaase?

Hon. Mary Emaase (Teso South, UDA): I request Hon. Injendi Malulu, Member for Malava to second.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Malulu Injendi.

Hon. Malulu Injendi (Malava, ANC): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I rise to Second this Bill with a lot of nostalgia because of what cotton meant to our country particularly, western Kenya.

I also want to thank the Government for focusing on western Kenya and reviving most of the sectors that had collapsed, cotton being one of them. This sector was booming in the 1970's and 1980's. Interestingly, it went down and the people who were growing cotton began

suffering. Hon. Temporary Speaker, besides cotton production which collapsed in the 90s, we have seen that sugarcane production has also faced the same fate. It used to boom those years, but it somehow died in western Kenya. Tea farming particularly in Vihiga also faced a similar fate. Paper production by the Pan Paper Mills also collapsed in the 1990s.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, most of us may wonder why most of them collapsed. It is due to the liberalisation processes that were there in the 1990s. This got Kenya unaware in terms of managing their sectors. I am saying it with a lot of nostalgia, because Kenya was the third largest producer of cotton in East Africa. It was considered a key player in the industrialisation process of the country. We have slowed down on industrialisation, because these sectors collapsed as I have mentioned them.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, during that period, we used to hear of KICOMI. It was a household name in western Kenya. We also had other gineries elsewhere that were famous for what they were doing for the country in terms of production of clothing, blankets and even employment. For those who do not know, KICOMI was Kisumu Cotton Millers. With the liberalisation in the 1980s, production began to fall. With the free markets, the prices were left to the market forces. Prices began to fall and it was not matching with the cost that farmers were using to produce.

Interestingly, corruption set in during this particular time, affecting cooperatives because of brokers. This also affected producer prices and the cost of farm inputs. Pesticides became so expensive to be accessed by farmers. There was also delayed payment to farmers. Delayed payment has even been affecting Mumias Sugar Factory, a giant in sugar production and also the Nzoia Sugar Factory. Farmers have stayed for two years without any payments after making supplies. You cannot expect a farmer to continue producing when this is a happening.

This collapse has caused a lot of suffering to most Kenyans, and particularly persons who are much dependent on this in western Kenya. I support this Bill fully. It is a wake-up call to reorganise the sector. This Bill will reorganise the production, processing, marketing and distribution of cotton in the country. When this is done, the beneficiaries will be the farmers and Kenya. We will reclaim our lost glory when it comes to production of our crops and the financial stability in the country.

I have also noted that this Bill seeks to establish a Cotton Industry Development Board. This is key to revitalising the industry. Cotton was the first one to collapse, then sugar production in the country was next. You recall in 2010, just recently, the Kenya Sugar Board was abolished because of the Constitution of Kenya 2010. This is when we began suffering in our sugar production.

In the recent Bill we passed here which is in the Senate, the Sugar Act, seeks to revive the Kenya Sugar Board, which will create control and order in sugar production sector. The establishment of this Board will go a long way in ensuring that there is order. When there is no order in a particular sector, corruption thrives and the economy loses money, and labour.

As much as I have talked about cotton production affecting us as farmers, I am just citing this as a case because I come from western Kenya, where this was really key. We are aware that cotton production is suitable in twenty four counties in this country. It includes counties in Western, Rift Valley, Nyanza and even Coast region.

This Bill is timely. I have some roots in the Gikomba Market, and some Members here may not believe it. I have also had a *Mitumba* (second hand) business. I normally visit my colleagues that we used to be with to see how their business is doing. The people in Gikomba are really suffering. The *Mitumba* I used to sell came from the United Kingdom (UK). Presently, the people I used to work with there are crying because *Mitumba* from the UK are not available. They come after three or four months, but very expensive. The only *Mitumba*

they are accessing is those from China. If you look at the kind of clothes the present generation is putting on, you will see a reflection of the China culture, in terms of size and everything else.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, if we revive cotton production in this country, our business persons in Gikomba will benefit. They will start accessing this clothing cheaply within the country. This will promote our economy by promoting the people who rely on *Mitumba*. They will access their own clothing from the region.

I want to thank my sister, Hon. Mary Emaase, for this Bill. I Second.

I thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Hon. Injendi.

Hon. Members I would like to recognise students seated in the Public Gallery this morning from Porterhouse Primary School in Westlands, Nairobi. You are welcome to the National Assembly to observe proceedings of the House.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Members, the first opportunity will go to Hon. John Mutunga. Member for Tigania, and Chairman Departmental Committee Agriculture and Livestock.

Hon. (Dr) John K Mutunga (Tigania West, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker for the opportunity to contribute to this very important Bill. I would like first of all to thank Hon. Emaase and the Senator who came up with this Bill. The two are doing a great job to this country.

Cotton is one of the most important but forgotten value chains in this country. It is forgotten, because we have not been keen at supporting it for a while. Many intervening factors have led to this particular situation as it is right now. Therefore, the Bill could not have come at a better time. The Bill speaks to the development of the entire industry. It speaks to providing for production of cotton in a variety of ways and processing of cotton. It highlights the processing of cotton and is very emphatic on value-addition. It also highlights products that come from the cotton crop, marketing and distribution of cotton and cotton products.

Looking at aspects of the value chain such as production, many Kenyans living in medium and low altitudes would benefit immensely if they engaged in cotton production. However, such benefits are not accruable if they produced cotton and they did not know where to take it. I will be talking about that in a moment. Many Kenyans would engage in cotton processing, which has huge opportunities. First, it would engage many people in terms of employment. Secondly, it would lead to value-addition of the products and open up opportunities for Kenya to sell our products in other parts of the world. It would bring in the very scarce foreign currency. Cotton is a huge contributor to the development of our country.

As brought out in the Bill, establishing the Cotton Industry Board is key. I want to specifically recognise the fact that it is being called the Cotton Industry Board and not the Cotton Production Regulatory Board. In this case, the Board encompasses almost everything that happens within that particular value chain. Therefore, it provides for the framework for cotton farming such as identification of areas where cotton will be produced, approaches that will be used in cotton production, engagement of different producers of cotton and promotion of cotton production. It will also look at value-addition in the cotton industry, which starts right from the farm, and includes activities such as producing good lint or good cotton products from the farm, separation of contaminants from the lint at the ginnery level, and activities that go on in textile milling and spinning so that we can produce apparels and clothes. Cotton is a key crop in this country.

The Bill speaks about high income generation through cotton farming and trading. Cotton manufacturing also leads to engagement of our people.

The Bill gives us an opportunity to closely focus on the necessary technologies in the cotton industry. It also encourages our researchers to innovate different varieties of cotton based on the agro-ecologies of our country. It will also help us to challenge our universities and research institutions to come up with appropriate management practices for cotton development in our country. Therefore, it specifically focuses on giving us an environment to intensify research in the cotton industry. The Bill is key in the sense that it re-organises efforts within the cotton sector and enables the upgrading of technologies, innovations and management practices in the country.

The Bill will help us to promote the use of cotton. Cotton has many uses. It is used in the production of textiles and apparels, which at the end of the day results in a huge clothing industry. It is also used in the production of livestock feed. Our country suffers when it comes to availability of raw materials for livestock feed production. We have to import the protein components of livestock feed, which are industrial by-products of cotton, sunflower and others crops. After oil extraction, cotton seed is a major component in livestock feed manufacturing. We have been importing this from other countries like Tanzania and Uganda.

The Bill gives us an opportunity to boost the textile industry in our country. This industry is key. Even after huge interference by introduction of second-hand clothes in the market, the textile industry is still the second most important employer in this country. Evidently, there are shops all over, most of which sell cotton products. However, if you ask yourself how many of those cotton products are of Kenyan origin, made from cotton from our farmers, they would be very few. Therefore, we need to focus on re-organising this industry. That is why the sponsors of this Bill have hit where it matters.

Cotton peaked in terms of performance in our country in 1984. That is when we could produce over 70,000 bales of cotton. We had around 52 textile mills in the country. Many people were engaged in the cotton industry. We were producing many textiles and apparels of our own, and the textile and clothing industry was the second largest employer in the country. Unfortunately, many things happened to the sector, which Hon. Emaase has very ably articulated. They led to this value-chain being considerably affected. The number of mills has reduced from 52 to a mere 15, that is, if they are even working. Job opportunities in the cotton industry have considerably gone down. The cotton industry has collapsed. Therefore, the Bill has come to resuscitate it.

We can sometimes explain ourselves out of the global economic reforms, bring in issues of the Structural Adjustment Programmes (SAPs) of the 1980s, or the many trade liberalisation attributes and say that that is why the cotton industry collapsed. However, the truth is that we stopped supporting that industry. We stopped supporting the farmers of this country. We had ginneries all over, but today, we have a paltry 15. The current production rate, from a peak of 70,000 bales back then, is only about 7,000 tonnes. The country has a huge potential of producing up to or more than 200,000 metric tonnes. It is possible for us to move cotton production from 7,000 metric tonnes currently to more than 200,000 metric tonnes. Let us look at the impact of having 193,000 metric tonnes more of cotton in this country. That translates to many more Kenyans engaged in production, handling and harvesting of the cotton and more ginneries will be revitalised, rehabilitated or refurbished to process the cotton. It also means that many more motor vehicles will be used to transport the cotton and many more industries will be opened. It will also mean that more Kenyans will earn a living through employment. As a country, we suffer high unemployment in terms of per capita. Our unemployment rate is extremely high but we have God-given opportunities in this country which we can embark on and do a great job.

In this year's Budget Policy Statement, this important industry has been allocated only Ksh170 million. The Ksh170 million compared to what has been proposed to be allocated to

other sectors is peanuts. It is very little. It is almost nothing considering a budget of more than Ksh4 trillion. This industry has the greatest potential to employ Kenyans.

Right now, our President moves from one country to another to negotiate bilateral labour agreements and open up avenues for Kenyans to work out there. We are looking for opportunities to engage young Kenyans. We have more than four million highly qualified graduates in this country looking for jobs. On the other hand, we have a God-given opportunity to employ millions of Kenyans in this industry. We have farms and luckily, we have a hard-working community of farmers who are ready and willing to do whatever it takes as long as we guarantee them markets for their products. Something is wrong. We need to correct ourselves. We need a national conversation on the Kenya that can help us out because the configuration of the current Kenya is not helping us out significantly. It can solve most problems and can create the needed employment.

Cotton can bring in foreign exchange. We have the African Growth and Opportunities Agreement (AGOA), where the American Government has given us unlimited access of their market with our cotton products as long as they are from Kenya. Unscrupulous traders have even tried to misuse this particular opportunity but as a nation and Government, we need to focus on producing cotton in this country and we shall exploit this particular opportunity and bring in the dollar that is very much needed. So, this potential is lying out there and does not require a lot of effort.

The physiology of cotton is such that it can grow in the medium to low altitudes. Medium to low altitude areas are warm. It can be grown in some of the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASAL). This country consists of over 80 per cent ASALs. We only have about 16 per cent of arable land where we can grow crops and expect to get yields from rain. But, on the other hand, we have a lot of land in the ASALS, marginal areas, that cotton can be grown.

Our research institutions have not been left behind. They have been working on different varieties of cotton. Indeed, in the Kenya Agriculture and Livestock Research Organisation, (KARLO) cotton is an important crop. They have innovated BT Cotton that does not require a lot of chemical application to kill pests that basically affect it. It is a variety of cotton that has already been injected with a gene that makes worms unable to eat it. Basically, this particular gene works in a way that once they eat, they fall off and are unable to continue eating. Therefore, there is considerable cost reduction in terms of chemical usage.

They have gone further and multiplied this variety so it is available. On the other hand, we have a huge population of very poor farmers who need assistance. This is the point on which we need to focus on as a country.

I thank the President for thinking about subsidising production rather than consumption. This is the point at which we should intervene in the cotton industry and buy farmers seeds and distribute them in all the marginal areas and cushion them so that they prepare their land in time to receive the seeds for cotton production for this country. As we do that, we should also think about reviving the industry. I appreciate the fact that the processing industry is not Government-managed today; it is a lot more private. We call upon private practitioners to work closely with the Government and use very specific data, production and productivity language, such that they know if we open up a particular number of acres of land to cotton and especially a given known variety of cotton, we shall produce a lot of it and therefore, the absorption capacity will have to be matched by the production capacity. The mistake we make sometimes is that we ask farmers to produce, they do that, but leave them with the product. That is the predicament of some of the planning that was done in the past. I would like to laud the current Government and caution that we need to plan production with the consumption capacity of the country. The supply of cotton must be matched by the demand of the cotton. As we move into the future, let us engage as industry players in the confines of this particular legislation by underlining and underscoring the importance of the legislation. Let us engage sector

stakeholders to know how much of land we can open to cotton, and how much seed we can produce. We can go as far as having contract farming that will help us to locate or to lock up the market. We have seen developments in the agricultural sector which are guaranteeing returns to farmers. We have seen guaranteed minimum return to coffee at Ksh80 per kilogramme of cherry and we are moving towards guaranteeing a kilogramme of milk at Ksh50. This is the point at which we need to work out our arithmetic very carefully, and guarantee cotton farmers that once they produce, they will sell at a particular price per kilogramme. That way, we will help the farmers to make informed decisions which will help us to increase the production of cotton. Production in this country, lately, has been quite volatile. The volatility has been brought about by the fact that the industry players are not sure. The promises they give are not certain and production cannot be targeted to a specific known market.

In structuring the value chain, we need to know the handlers in the cotton industry. Who are the first off-takers from the farmers? How are they organised to cover an area comprehensively and take all cotton produced there? How are they then linked to the market? How is this market growing? That is so that we can advise our farmers very carefully. Right now, as few as they are, maybe 15 ginneries, our industries are importing cotton from countries like Uganda and Tanzania. They do not have better land to produce cotton or better personnel to advise on cotton production. They do not have better farmers to grow cotton. They also do not have as hard-working farmers as we have. They are only a little bit more organised. Why can we not be organised as a country? That is why this Bill is important.

Let me talk a bit about the mills that we have. They are 1900s innovations. They are very old. With the changing times and fortunes, their processing capacity, efficiency, and effectiveness have become outdated. They are using outdated technology. Technology has changed. If serious about revitalising this industry, we must change the processors. We must improve the mills.

There are certain costs related to cotton processing. If you listen to the stakeholders we had as a Committee, we have listened to them extensively. One of the key issues they are bringing out strongly is the cost of electricity. It is costly in this country. We need to focus on subsidising electricity where we can see immense potential for production and growth. In this industry, we need to see how to focus on subsidising electricity because processors will need more electricity.

Let me pause by asking a question. Why do we say that cotton is an important industry? First, it is a labour-intensive industry. It requires human labour to produce, weed, spray and harvest cotton. No machine has been invented to harvest cotton. Human beings will have to pick cotton. The harvesting of that cotton will require human beings. Collection of cotton and the management attributes of lint as it is ferried to the ginneries will require human labour. We have a sufficient supply of human labour. We are advantaged. The question is, why should we not take advantage of this particular situation?

The second key issue of this industry is its intensive and extensive link to other sectors. Cotton links to other sectors because many people use cotton products. Today, everyone in this honourable House is wearing a cotton product. If you go out there, you will find people in cotton products. Cotton is an important crop and industry that needs support.

I do not need to dwell much on the Bill because Hon. Mary Emaase has done it. The importance of the industry to stakeholders is key. That is why it would be important for us, as Members of our Committee, to speak to that. To sum up or close, I would like to say two things.

One, what is the guiding principle when it comes to supporting important productive sectors in this country? We need to answer that question as a country. We should answer it very carefully and get the correct answer. What is the guiding principle for supporting a productive sector? If you look at agriculture and rural and urban development, you will find that agriculture has only been given a paltry 3.5 per cent in the current Budget Policy Statement

(BPS). It is priority number eight, yet it is the most important. You cannot speak about Kenya without quoting something in agriculture. You will not be talking about Kenya. Agriculture is the mainstay of this economy, yet we allocate it 3.5 per cent.

It is not that we are not guided as a country. We are signatories to the Maputo Declaration, signed in 2003, which said that we were supposed to have increased the funding to agriculture as a proportion of the national budget to 10 per cent in about five years. Come to 2008, we had not done it. There was a review of the Maputo Declaration between 2013 and 2014. This was held in Equatorial Guinea, in a town called 'Malabo'. That provision was reviewed. They came up with specific parameters to measure the growth and development in agriculture by putting money into it because money drives development.

Despite the Malabo Declaration, which has specific targets in every agricultural sub-sector, Kenya has not responded yet. Then, we have bi-annual reviews. We have underperformed in the greater majority of the aspects every time we are reviewed. The question is, do we not know? Is it that we do not know? Is it that we are ignorant? Is it that we do not care? I want to say what I said in the beginning. You are out of order if you speak about this country and do not talk about agriculture. You are not speaking about Kenya.

Secondly, we have the potential to support this country to go where it is supposed to go. Countries that grew in the past, the so-called developed countries, grew from industries like cotton. They rose from the textile and apparel industries. Why are we wasting an opportunity as we watch our people languish in poverty?

I support this Bill.

(Applause)

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Racheal Nyamai): Thank you very much, Chairman of the Departmental Committee on Agriculture and Livestock. Very well-spoken.

Hon. Members, I would like to welcome students from Muna Secondary School in Limuru Constituency of Kiambu County who are seated in the Public Gallery this morning. You are welcome to the National Assembly to continue observing the House proceedings.

(Applause)

Hon. Geoffrey Odanga, Member for Matayos Constituency.

Hon. Geoffrey Odanga (Matayos, ODM): Thank you. I was just about to ask you to also look on your left. You have done it very promptly.

From the onset, let me thank Hon. Beth Syengo and my neighbour, Hon. Mary Emaase, for originating and co-sponsoring the Cotton Industry Development Bill (Senate Bill No.5 of 2023).

A lot has been said about the industry and cotton farming in the past in many areas of this country. Going and looking around, you will notice that cotton can grow in many parts of the country. Cotton does very well in Western, particularly in Kakamega, Busia, and Bungoma, and in four counties of Nyanza: Kisumu, Siaya, Homa Bay, and Migori. It also does very well at the Coast. It is doing very well in many parts of the Eastern region. I visited Embu last year. We found cotton doing very well.

Cotton was collapsed. It was very unfortunate for those of us who benefited from growing cotton. When I was growing up, much of my school fees were paid through cotton farming. I carried *magunia* of cotton to the nearest collection centre and a store around Busia town. We had two stores in Busia town. One was on the Matayos side, and the other one on the Teso side. We had a lot of ginneries in the country. Most have collapsed.

The Member of Parliament for Nambale will confirm that the ginnery in Nambale is no longer operational, the same as that in Malakisi. The only ginnery that seems to be operational is the one in Muluanda. All these ginneries were helpful to our farmers. We need to go back to cotton farming. Other than being a source of textiles, cotton farming produces cotton cakes and oils. It was an important economic activity in the regions where it was practised. This industry collapsed because of poor leadership. One day, a former President of the country said that even his ministers wore mitumba clothes. This alone encouraged many people to go into selling second-hand clothes, and they forgot about farming. This country has not taken manufacturing very seriously in the past.

I am happy that the current and last parliaments have seriously scheduled some crops that will help the country go back to where it was in the 70s and 80s. The Departmental Committees on Agriculture in the 12th and 13th Parliaments have taken the scheduling of crops very seriously. They have brought back crops like coffee, tea, cotton, sugarcane, coconut, and many other crops so that Kenyans can earn a living. Cotton is very critical in the value chain as it benefits the farmer. We want this Bill to bring good provisions to benefit the farmers, millers, and any other person along the value chain. If this is done, the 13th Parliament will go down as one that took care of the interests of Kenyans.

The Chairperson has talked about the Malabo Declaration, which Kenya has not implemented. In 2022, our budget for Agriculture was 2.8 per cent. We need to put our feet forward to ensure that we improve our budgetary allocations for agriculture to 10 per cent so that we make a difference. In the 80s, we were known as an agricultural country. “*Kilimo ndio uti wa mgongo wa Taifa letu*” was a common slogan. We need to go back to this. We have to engage in manufacturing and agriculture to empower our people.

I support the Bill. I also urge other Members to support it so that we go down in history as a Parliament that thought about our people.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you. Hon. Abdul Haro, the Member for Mandera South.

Hon. Abul Haro (Mandera South, UDM): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I support the Bill from the onset and thank Hon. Mary Emaase for moving it. The Chairperson has eloquently described the importance of cotton in this country. I cannot over-emphasise this. The cotton industry creates jobs in the textile industry if revived. The Chairperson also mentioned that cotton is a cash crop suitable for marginalised areas and is grown in about 24 counties, which is almost 50 per cent of Kenya. It is grown for its fibre and its products are used for many purposes, like making oil. It will surprise many that cotton fibre can be used to make flat panel TV screens. Cotton seeds can make plastic materials, explosives, and quality papers. Cotton cords can be used to make tyres.

Cotton is also an environmentally friendly plant. Research has shown that growing cotton increases land use efficiency by 13 per cent and decreases greenhouse gas emissions by 39 per cent. It also reduces soil loss per acre by 50 per cent and water use by 89 per cent. Under the Kenyan Government Policy for Addressing Poverty, Vision 2030, cotton has been identified as a key sub-sector with the potential to benefit eight million people living in drier areas where it is grown. This is how important cotton is and why this Bill is important.

I am happy that the Bill has clearly described the functions of the cotton industry. These functions are well thought-out, especially the regulatory process in terms of imports and exports. The Bill also talks about the promotion of the cotton industry, particularly in the diversification of cotton products, marketing, and technology transfer. I am also happy that the role of county governments is well described in the bill, especially the regulation and promotion and how farmers and traders will be coordinated within the counties.

I only have an issue with Part V of the Bill. Clause 5 talks about registering several actors in the cotton industry, including the cotton grower. Why should a cotton farmer be

registered with the county Government? This is an unnecessary barrier to cotton farming, and it should be addressed in the next stage. Why should a graduate in agriculture be required to register with the county Government when they want to invest in the industry? Although some people will view this in terms of levies, the Bill indicates that no levies will be paid for registering cotton growers. However, Clause 39 further suggests that the Cabinet Secretary can impose a levy payable to the Board to develop the cotton industry. This will settle my worries if addressed.

Otherwise, I support the Bill.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for allowing me to contribute to this Bill.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you.

Hon. Timothy Toroitich, the Member for Marakwet West.

Hon. Timothy Kipchumba (Marakwet West, Independent): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker for giving me this chance to contribute to this very important Bill. I rise to support it. I wish to thank Hon. Mary Emaase for this very progressive piece of legislation that seeks to implement our Constitution. Agriculture is a fully devolved function. It is part of the transformative agenda of the Kenya Kwanza Government, which is a plan it has put in place. For this country to industrialise by 2030, as it was envisaged, we must invest fully in the agriculture sector.

This Bill is progressive because even though agriculture is a devolved function, ordinarily, we expect county governments to develop the legal framework. We need uniformity of laws in this country. If each county government develops a framework on the devolved areas under the Constitution, we shall have a multiplicity of competing legislation. If we go this route of having a uniform legal and institutional framework, then we shall have laws that cut across.

We have had challenges since the inception of devolution. I had a chance to work in the county government before joining this House. If a function is devolved, the 47 county governments should develop their legal frameworks. For example, there is the issue of Early Childhood Development Education (ECDE) teachers, which I raised sometimes back in this House. There is a disparity in curriculum, management, and remuneration. This is because we have not heeded the constitutional provision on policy. The national government should develop most of the policies on devolved functions. I support this Bill because it provides a comprehensive legal and institutional framework for the cotton industry. Even if county governments develop frameworks or laws, we shall have a standard, uniform law that guides the entire country in developing them.

I agree with Hon. Mary Emaase that to develop and industrialise this country, we must invest in cotton. It is produced in the western parts of this country and also where I come from—Elgeyo Marakwet County. The challenges are the lack of markets and institutions that manage the cotton industry properly in this country. Since we will form a Board that we will cascade to the county governments, it will lead to investor confidence in cotton growing in this country.

The biggest challenge that we have in this country is marketing. Our people grow cotton on a small scale, but its quality is not in tandem with what is produced outside the country. So, we need to invest in research. I am very happy because this Bill provides clearly that the Board that will be established will set up a research unit. This will ensure that we get quality and modern cotton that can compete globally or internationally in terms of markets.

We should also look at subsidies like the subsidised fertilizer that we have currently. We have increased productivity in maize production. As we pass this law, we need to introduce some subsidies for cotton seeds so that our people can afford them. If possible, they can be supplied for free so that more farmers can plant them. We should set up ginneries in the respective counties that grow cotton. We may produce cotton in large quantities but lack the ginneries and markets, which are big challenges.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I support this progressive Bill that creates a legal and institutional framework in the cotton industry in this country.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you. Hon. Dorice Donya, Member for Kisii County.

Hon. Dorice Donya (Kisii County, WDM): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I also thank the Mover of this Bill. It has taken me back to my high school days, when we were taught the definition of agriculture as the science or practice of farming, which includes cultivating the soil for growing crops and rearing animals. I remember I asked my teacher what else we could do with animals apart from eating them. When you are a new student, you do not have information. The teacher gave me an example of sheep, which has wool used for making clothes.

As we proceeded with agriculture in class, we learned about cash crops in Kenya. We mentioned sisal, which we do not have in Kisii County. We used to grow pyrethrum in some areas, which paid for the school expenses for most of us. There is also tea, wheat, and cotton, which we are discussing now. We should also not forget coffee. The sweetest one was from Kisii land.

If we look back at what ails our land, it is stopping the use of agricultural research centres. Why did they die? One of the factors is that there is no infrastructure. We have the answers to all these questions. Infrastructure led to their fall. As I went through my notes, I read about the National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) centre in Washington, D.C. It has employed very many people and contributes to the economy of the USA. If we improve our research centres, over 40,000 people will be employed. The agricultural research centres will give answers on how we can improve our cotton and offer training.

I can remind Members like my colleague, Hon. Lillian Siyoi, that we learned about soil pH. Farmers do not have this basic education. These are some of the things that ail our agriculture sector. There is also crop rotation. This discussion reminds me of the agriculture lessons. Let me rejoice and talk about them. We rarely do crop rotation. We were even told to stop planting sugarcane, coffee, and pyrethrum because they take over 18 months to mature. We were told to start planting crops like potatoes, which take three to four months to mature. In the process of planting crops that take a short time to grow, we killed the coffee and cotton industries. We forgot that the most lucrative cash crop is cotton. We cannot afford cotton T-shirts even during campaigns. We go for the cheap ones. That means cotton is lucrative. We support this Bill by Hon. Emaase. We should also bring back the glory of those days of planting wheat, tea and sugarcane.

As we improve the cotton sector, we should look at the quality of the cotton we plant. This is because we can have a scenario where consumers in our country do not embrace it, and then we start importing it, which kills the farmers. What has killed sugarcane farming in Kenya is the fact that farmers bear a lot of costs during production. In the sixth month of growing sugarcane, we import a lot of cheap sugar. Therefore, it becomes a loss to farmers during the harvesting of their sugarcane. We should rethink how to protect farmers. We should avoid a lot of talking and instead concentrate on actions. Whatever we say on the Floor of this House should make more sense to those who are listening to us. That is why it is called a hallowed House.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you.

Hon. Njeri Maina, Member for Kirinyaga.

Hon. Njeri Maina (Kirinyaga County, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. Although my colleague Hon. Donya has said that the sweetest coffee is from Kisii, I can assure her it is from Kirinyaga County. The cotton textile apparel industry is a huge market with the potential to contribute around 9 per cent to our GDP. It is a priority crop under the Bottom-up

Economic Transformation Agenda (BETA) of the Kenya Kwanza Government and the Agricultural Sector Transformation and Growth Strategy (ASGTS) under Vision 2030.

Luxury brands like Tommy Hilfiger, Calvin Klein, and others are known for contract farming in countries like Indonesia. Kenya can tap into that to ensure we maximise our farmers' output. I have had the luxury of visiting Brazil. The textile industry in Brazil is worth over US\$60 billion, creating employment for millions of its citizens. This Bill is, therefore, timely and very crucial. It will support cotton farmers under the Kirinyaga Cotton Cooperative Society from Ria Gicheru, Murinduko, South Ngariama, Nyangati, Tebere and Muthithi in Mwea Constituency.

Revival of cotton ginneries will also cascade to value chain job-creation opportunities, given that the Government is now focusing on ensuring we have industrial parks in various counties. Kirinyaga County is one of the counties constructing an industrial park in Ndia Constituency to ensure farmers benefit and create job opportunities for the young people of Kirinyaga County. This House allocated Ksh500 million in the main budget to the Kirinyaga Economic Processing Zone (EPZ). This value chain must be supported even with legislation to ensure maximum output.

As we speak about cotton and the revival of the Mwea ginnery, it is also important to ensure that farmers get guaranteed minimum returns from cotton. In the past, farmers were getting as low as Ksh50 per kilogramme, which made them to do away with cotton farming. BT cotton farming is now being done in my constituency in over 100 acres. If we increase the price to at least Ksh100 per kilogramme, I am certain that farmers will get the motivation to farm cotton.

It is also important to note that most of the ginneries operating in Kenya have an output of about 50 per cent because they do not have the latest machinery. We need to automate the process to cut the cost of production for farmers and ensure that they get good returns from cotton farming. Due to the competition in the market, it is also important for us to have goodwill. This will be a county endeavour, as agriculture is now a devolved function from the national government, in terms of interventions if need be so that we can stabilise the industry.

As I wind up, I urge this House to prioritise a proper framework in terms of regulations for the revival of all cotton ginneries. Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Kirinyaga. Hon. Lilian Siyoi, Member for Trans Nzoia County.

Hon. Lilian Siyoi (Trans Nzoia County, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me this chance to also contribute to this Bill moved by my friend, Hon. Emaase. I support it. Almost all the Members have spoken about job creation. We are privileged in this country because our land is very fertile. The only problem is that we have ignored crops that could bring too much profit to this country and concentrated on those that create monopolies. The western region is one of the areas that are good cotton producers. This area was left behind because farmers lacked markets, information, and seeds when we planted cotton some years back.

The Mover of this Bill has spoken about production, processing, marketing, and distribution. On production, we must develop a framework where we will have a board that will enable farmers to know the kind of seeds they need. They also need to do good soil testing to know what can be planted in what area to avoid duplication and monopoly of plantation in this country. If we can help farmers produce and improve their production, it will be profitable for this country.

I also want to talk about processing. When we plant crops but do not have factories to process the produce, it discourages farmers, and they may disregard what they can produce well and instead start growing what is marketable. This may lead to planting what is not suitable

for the soil they have. If there are factories to process our produce, it will help farmers and encourage them to grow more cotton.

This Bill has come at a good time because the President has provided money to ensure we build enough industrial parks. The reason for making more industrial parks in this country is to ensure that farmers and business people have a place to store their crops and products as they source for markets. I support this Bill and congratulate its Mover. I hope the whole House will adopt it to help farmers produce cotton, process, market, and even transport it to other countries.

Thank you very much for this chance.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you.

Hon. Patrick Ntwiga, Member for Chuka/Igambang'ombe.

Hon. Patrick Ntwiga (Chuka/Igambang'ombe, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker. I rise to support this Bill brought by my colleague Hon. Mary Emaase. This country has lost so much on cash crop production. If I look at a county like Tharaka Nithi, where I come from, all the way from Igambang'ombe to the whole of Tharaka, cotton was the leading cash crop when I was a child. Right now, very few farmers have scattered cotton in their *shamba*. It is not because they do not want to grow it but because the market has dwindled. If you look at statistics from 1980-1985, this country produced almost 70,000 bales of cotton annually. Right now, we have only 5,000 bales every year.

I am part of the Government under President Ruto that promised people jobs. Agriculture is the greatest source of employment in this country. If we can list crops that are forgotten in this country like cotton, *ndengu*, and sugarcane, we will create employment and do away with unemployment.

The Member is suggesting that after we enact this Bill, the Ministry should come up with regulations. This is where the problem always comes in. In my view, when it comes to regulations, we need to address the issue of production, marketing, processing and exporting. That is the biggest problem we have faced with coffee and tea farming where one person is the farmer, marketer, processor and exporter. When coming up with regulations, we need to separate laws to clearly show heads of different chains so that one person does not lead the whole chain from production to exporting.

They have also said that regulations will be made to stabilise the prices. I want to suggest that once we revive this crop, we set up a revolving fund similar to the Coffee Revolving Fund to ensure that farmers get a minimum guarantee as they produce it.

We are trying to revive very many crops. For instance, in the case of coffee, we have put so much effort, but farmers are complaining that the industries are depilated and the machines have broken down. I am sure it is the same thing with the cotton industry; most ginneries are broken down. They are using outdated machinery and that increases the cost of production and processing of cotton. I want to propose that once the board is formed, it is allocated funds to revive the ginneries so that we can have modern equipment to process cotton.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, registering farmers is a good thing. We are doing this because we need to know the number of cotton farmers so that when you are importing fertilizer and the seeds, you have the quantities and the sizes of their land. This helps the Government in planning for farmers.

It is high time we addressed what will be aggregated in the industrial aggregation centres that the counties are putting up in collaboration with the national Government. You at times look at some counties' investment in the aggregation centres and wonder what they will finally aggregate.

This is a very good Bill. If we can revive cotton and aggregate coffee, tea, and *ndengu*, Tharaka Nithi County will be taken care of.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I support this Bill.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Igambang'ombe.

Hon. Members, I would like to welcome students from various universities under the Umbrella of Annual Muslim Youth Leadership Summit and Awards seated in the Public Gallery. You are welcome to the National Assembly to observe the proceedings. Please help me to welcome them.

(Applause)

Thank you very much. Let us have Hon. Cecilia A. Ngiti, Member for Turkana County.

Hon. Cecilia A. Ngiti (Turkana County, UDA): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me this chance to add my voice to this very important Bill. I would like to thank Hon. Mary Emaase and her colleague for sponsoring this Bill. The revival of the cotton industry can be a solution to many of the economic issues that we are facing. It is nostalgic to speak about cotton. Turkana is well known for drought, but during my childhood, we used to grow cotton along River Turkwel and River Kerio.

In Turkana, we have Morulem, Katilu and Turkwel irrigation schemes. I know how cotton looks like. It is a very funny plant. Once you finish harvesting one part of the land, you find that the other side has blossomed and is ready for harvesting. It is a very good plant. Cotton is a drought resistant plant that can be planted in all parts of the country.

As my colleagues have mentioned, cotton outfits are very expensive worldwide; Zara and Tommy Hilfiger. This means that if we revive this industry, we will make a major stride economically.

When cotton was being grown in my area, the only disadvantage was delayed payment. There were Indians who used to come to Turkana to buy cotton. They used to pay once or twice in a year. It was hard to wait for that long for the Indians to come and buy cotton while people had nothing to eat. That is the only thing that discouraged our people. With good legislation and research in place, we will know how to plan our farms such that as we wait for payment from cotton produce, we can plant other crops.

The other menace that is affecting our irrigation schemes in Turkana is a weed called *Mathenge* in Kikuyu, *Prosopis juliflora* in English and *etirai* in Turkana. It is a big menace. Most of our farms along the river have been taken over by this weed. Farming is now a challenge in Turkana. I believe we will curb this weed if cotton farming is revived in Turkana.

Thirdly, I support this Bill because it will create employment. We will have cotton industrial parks as proposed in the Kenya Kwanza Manifesto. This will create employment. Money will exchange hands and our economy will stabilise.

I heard someone say that research has shown that cotton is also used as animal feed. Turkana County, which is a pastoralist community, can then use cotton as animal feed. It will be very beneficial to our county.

I want to be on record in support of this Bill. Cotton production is welcome in Turkana. We will practise it along the River Turkwel and River Kerio. It will help us to deal with the *etirai* menace.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Hon. Member for Turkana. Let us have Hon. Geoffrey Mulanya, Member for Nambale.

Hon. Geoffrey Mulanya (Nambale, Independent): Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to speak about this noble Bill.

Firstly, I wish to congratulate Hon. Mary Emaase, my neighbour, for co-sponsoring this particular Bill. Cotton is a raw material for textile industry. We have been talking about the need to create jobs for our youth who are graduating from universities. Students undertaking

Mechanical Engineering courses have been really affected because we do not have factories to engage them even for attachment. Cotton is one of the crops that will help us solve this problem. As we talk about legislation which would establish a Board that is going to manage cotton growing in this country, we must first of all ask ourselves questions. Why did cotton growing stop in this country? My constituency is lucky to be housing one of the oldest cotton ginneries in this country – Nambale Cotton Ginnery.

We note that farmers were really demotivated by the low pay that came as a result of competition arising from the other materials coming in from other countries to the textile industry. When most of us go to buy fabric, we love cotton-made. Kenya is capable of growing cotton. Why then do we import from other countries? The moment we support the cotton industry, we will create jobs for our youth and also, support our farmers.

We also have sugarcane as a cash crop, but it takes 18 months in the farm. Secondly, sugarcane would also compete with other food crops to an extent that most farmers would plant both and therefore end up having no place to do their farming for domestic use. Cotton lasts for only three months in the farm and this would allow our farmers, and especially those in the Western Region and Nambale Constituency, to cultivate food crops in both the long and short rains in the months of August to December. With such a kind of balancing, we would ensure we have food for our families and at the same time farmers would have money generated from cotton farming in the month of December because it grows well in hot weather and not in the long rains.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, having gone through the Bill, I note that we have a framework on how to control farming and trading of cotton. The question that we must, however, look into as the Legislature is the policy around selling and motivation of farmers. Once a farmer is motivated, we would be assured that cotton growing would be sustained in this country. Once the farmer is not motivated, we would go back to the same problem that we started with, where farmers are demotivated with the chorus of cotton growing but when they go back to their farms, nobody is growing this cash crop.

I support this legislation and from my end I will be proposing some amendments to the Bill when it comes to the committee stage.

Thank you, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

Hon. Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Feisal Bader, Member for Msambweni.

Hon. Feisal Bader (Msambweni, UDA): Asante sana, Mhe. Spika wa Muda, kwa kunipatia nafasi nami pia niongeze sauti yangu kwa kuuchangia Mswada huu.

Ningependa pia kumpongeza Mhe. Emaase kwa kuuleta Mswada huu muhimu katika taifa letu la Kenya. Ukulima wa pamba ni sekta ambayo imetelekezwa kwa muda mrefu; kwa miaka mingi. Kama taifa, tumepoteza kiuchumi kwa muda mrefu. Kwa hivyo, ninataka kumpongeza Mhe. Emaase kwa kuuleta huu Mswada ambao utarudisha haadhi na kuboresha ukulima wa pamba.

Ukulima wa pamba haufanyiki sehemu za Magharibi tu bali pia Mkoa wa Pwani katika Kaunti za Kwale, Lamu, Kilifi na Taita Taveta. Ni masikitiko makubwa sana kwa kuwa huu muda wote, hakuna hata kinu kimoja cha kuchambua pampa katika Eneo La Pwani. Ningependa kumpongeza Mhe. Rais na Serikali ya Kenya Kwanza kwa kuwaangalia watu wa Pwani na kuhakikisha kuwa wakulima wa pamba watafaidika. Kwa muda wa wiki mbili, Mhe. Rais atakuja rasmi kuzindua kinu cha kuchambulia pamba katika Eneo Bunge ninaloliwakilisha la Msambweni, Wadi ya Kinondu.

Mswada huu utalinda wakulima kutokana na wale madalali ambao wamekuwa wakinyanyasa wakulima kwa muda mrefu.

Tunapoangalia katika sekta ya sukari, imeanguka minajili ya madalali. Mswada huu utasaidia pakubwa, kuwaondoa ili wakulima wafaidike.

Huu Mswada pia, umetaja ongezeko la dhamani wa pamba. Kila wakati tunaposikia ongezeko la dhamani kwa bidhaa, inamaanisha kuwa mkulima atapata faida kubwa kwa sababu gharama ya bei pia itapanda.

Pili, tunaposikia ongezeko la dhamani, inamaanisha kuwa ajira itapatikana kwa vijana wetu. Hili ndilo swala ambalo tunalipatia kipao mbele kama Taifa. Sitaki kuendelea zaidi ya hapo lakini niwasihi Wabunge wenzangu kwa ujumla waunge mkono huu Mswada ili tuipitishie uwe sheria kwa haraka.

Asante sana, Mhe. Spika wa Muda.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Asante, Mbunge wa Msambweni. Hon. John Waluke, Member for Sirisia.

Hon. John Koyi (Sirisia, JP): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for giving me a chance to contribute to this Motion.

We have a ginnyery called Malakisi Ginnyery which collapsed some years back. I want to thank Hon. Mary Emaase for bringing this Bill to the House so that we fight and make sure that we revive all the ginnyeries in the country that had collapsed.

Farmers are ready. Last year, people from Sirisia where I come from and Teso North harvested 65,000 tonnes of cotton. I am happy that we are reviving this crop because Kenya has been importing materials yet these materials can be found in areas such as Machakos, Makueni, Coastal Region, Homa Bay and Western Kenya where farmers are ready.

The only problem is that cotton seeds are not available. They were there last year but not this year. We need to ask the Ministry of Agriculture and Livestock Development to make the seeds available. We know that they are imported. It is easy to grow cotton. It is planted on the second season in Western Kenya. By then, we will have harvested all the food crops that we need. It is used to make bar soaps and animal feeds. Cotton seeds and sunflower seeds are useful to farmers from that region.

I am happy with the way Kenya Kwanza Government is struggling on every sector to make sure that our young people are employed in different fields. This should continue so that we realise the potential of cotton seed. The country imports *mitumba* but if we have our own cotton, Hon. Temporary Speaker, we are going to reduce that. I used to be in the Military and the Kenyan Military used to buy uniforms from Rivatex East Africa Limited. I am happy that Rivatex East Africa Limited is ready to buy the cotton in many millions of tonnes so that they make clothes and good cotton suits.

I rise to support and thank Hon. Mary Emaase for bringing this for the people of this country to realise that Kenya Kwanza Government is really working. I also thank the President of this country for his initiative. The Hon. Raila Amollo Odinga is being prepared properly by His Excellency the President to join...

Hon. Rahim Dawood (North Imenti, Independent): On a point of order, Hon. Temporary Speaker.

Hon. John Koyi (Sirisia, JP): *Kwenda uko.*

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Rahim Dawood, what is out of order?

Hon. Rahim Dawood (North Imenti, Independent): Hon. Temporary Speaker, he was irrelevant because Hon. Raila Odinga has nothing to do with this Cotton Bill. If he wants to praise him, he can go to the media centre to do that.

Hon. Temporary Speaker, I also wish to speak on this Bill.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): That was irrelevant. Hon. Member for Sirisia has already concluded. I can see him stepping out.

Hon. Zamzam.

Hon. Zamzam Mohammed (Mombasa County, ODM): Asante sana Mhe. Spika wa Muda kwa hii nafasi ili niweze kumpongeza dadangu Mhe. Emaase kwa kuleta Mswada huu

leo Bungeni. Pamba iliweza kupandwa mwanzo katika sehemu za Pwani. Hapo ni mwaka wa 1830. Pamba imekuwa bidhaa adhimu sana ambayo ina mapato mazuri sana kuleta katika Taifa letu. Mimi ninapenda kupigia pono mjadala huu wa leo nikisema tupatiane nafasi hii pamba iweze kukuzwa sehemu zote za taifa. Ilikuwa yakuzwa Lamu kama vile Mheshimiwa wa Msambweni amesema na sehemu nyingine za Pwani. Pamba kando na kutengeneza *materials* za nguo, sisi twaenda kuchukua sehemu zingine za nje. Imefufua viwanda vyetu. Tunataka viwanda vya Rivatex na KICOMI vifufuliwe. Twamuomba Rais pia atujengee pale Dongo Kundu kwa *Special Economic Zone* kiwanda cha kutengeneza pamba.

Kando na hiyo, pia imeongeza ajira kwa watoto wetu ndani ya Taifa hili manaake *Export Processing Zones (EPZ)* wameajiri zaidi ya vijana karibu 200,000. Vijana wetu wanaofanya katika hayo makampuni ya pamba wameweza kupata ajira kule. Zile mbegu za pamba unaona zinatoa sabuni, mafuta masafi, chakula cha kuku, yaani kila kitu ndani ya pamba kina thamani yake. Kwa hivyo mimi ninataka kusema kwamba hii pamba na hata bidhaa zingine ambazo ni *cash crops* kwetu tukifufua basi itaweza kufufua uchumi mkubwa wa Kenya na maisha yatakuwa mazuri katika Taifa letu. Tukiweza kupandisha pamba katika anga ambazo zinasifika, tutaweza pia kupandisha ya chai, nazi na pia korosho. Hizi ni bidhaa ambazo tukiziwekeza katika ukulima, mazao ya taifa hili yatakuwa mazuri na hata Wakenya watakuwa na furaha ya kulipa ushuru.

Ninampongeza sana Mhe. Emaase maanake ninayaona mambo yanaenda vizuri. Kama mama kaunti wa Mombasa, ninaomba kwa heshima kwamba watujengee ile *Special Economic Zone* Mombasa. Hii ni kwa sababu hata sisi pia ni wakulima wa pamba. Itatuwezesha kupanda na kuwaajiri watoto wetu.

Ninamshukuru Rais kwa kufungua ile ya kule Msambweni. Kama alivyosema ndugu yangu, panapo sifa hupewa sifa. Ikiwa Rais anafanya kazi vizuri, mimi mama Zamzam sina budi ila kumpongeza. Leo ninampongeza kwa sababu akienda kutufungulia mradi ule, utakuwa unashika watoto wetu wa Pwani. Ni mradi ambao utaleta ajira na mazao mazuri katika mkoa wetu wa Pwani.

Ninakupongeza, Mhe. Emaase. Tukaze kamba, tupande pamba na Kenya tuikuze na pamba. Asante sana.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Julius Rutto.

Hon. Julius Rutto (Kesses, UDA): Thank you very much, Hon. Temporary Speaker, for this opportunity. I rise to support this Bill by my sister, Hon. Mary Emaase and the Senator.

In support, it is candidly wise enough for us to appreciate that Kenya is a sovereign country. In school we were taught that the basic needs of human beings are food, shelter and clothing. Kenya is struggling to address the issue of food and shelter through affordable housing. But the serious matter before us is the aspect of clothing.

For the 50 million plus Kenyans who dress day in day out, this is an economic activity which we cannot accept to lose to somebody else. All Kenyans appreciate clothes from Turkey, China and *mitumba* from abroad or any other country we buy clothes from. Dressing 50 million plus Kenyans is an activity that can grow the economy of this country.

Growing up, we knew about Rivatex East Africa Limited in Eldoret. This factory is up and running but it is faced with many challenges like shortage of cotton which is the raw material of the fabric they produce. We are aware that Kisumu Cotton Mills (KICOMI) in Nyanza was closed down. We also know that the sugar belts and Lake Basin areas are good for production of cotton.

For Kenya to sustain itself and address the economic tribulations and challenges we are going through, we must direct our resources and minds in the right direction. After producing our raw materials, we export them and facilitate employment in foreign countries. This is because by buying clothes from Turkey or any other country, we facilitate employment in those countries and the growth of their economy.

We are facing another challenge of forex exchange and the constant volatility of our foreign exchange because of demand of the dollar in procurement of basic needs. Therefore, this Bill has come at the right time. We now need to bring our minds together as a nation from the Legislative and Executive point of view so that the little resources we have can be put in the right place.

We can produce the right materials to sort out our problems because we are looking at a domestic market of 50 million plus Kenyans who need clothes. Cotton is the main fabric used in children clothing from their earlier stages. Also, we cover ourselves with cotton beddings. Therefore, this is a serious issue. We need to put the little resources we have in the right direction so as to address the basic needs of human life that is food, shelter, and clothing.

I support this Bill because Rivatex East Africa Limited is ready to serve this country. We need to bring back KICOMI and many other sectors so as to create employment and a market valuation system that will stabilise our economy. If we go this direction, Kenya will be saved and remain sovereign. We are not going to live by the mercy of the donors, but stand to live as a country, Kenya and appreciate that this is our economic activity.

Thank you very much for this opportunity.

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Thank you very much, Member for Kesses.

Hon. Members, I see a few of you had interest. Hon. Ngikolong, Hon. Rashid Bedzimba and Hon. Dawood, I hope you will get another opportunity.

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Speaker (Hon. (Dr) Rachael Nyamai): Hon. Members, the time now 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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