

MURANGA COUNTY ASSEMBLY THE HANSARD

Tuesday 2nd June, 2015

The House met at 9:40 p.m.

(The Speaker Hon. Nduati Kariuki in the Chair)

PRAYERS

NOTICES OF MOTION

ADOPTION OF REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL COMMITTEE ON THE NORTHERN COLLECTOR TUNNEL PROJECT

Hon. Caroline Njoroge: Mr Speaker, I would wish to give notice of the following motion; That, this Assembly adopts the report of the Technical Committee on the Northern Collector Tunnel Project, laid on the table of the Assembly on Tuesday May 26, 2015

MOTIONS

NOTING THE CONTENTS OF THE REPORT OF TRADE, INDUSTRIALIZATION, TOURISM AND WILDLIFE COMMITTEE ON THE INTERNATIONAL TEA SYMPOSIUM IN HANGZHOU CHINA, 2014

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: Mr Speaker, I beg to move the following motion;

That, this Assembly notes the contents of the Report of the Trade, Industrialization, Tourism and Wildlife committee on the International Tea Symposium in Hangzhou China 2014, laid on the table of the Assembly on Tuesday May 26, 2015.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate your good office for allowing me as the Chairman to travel to Hangzhou and join other global tea players in discussing the tea. I must say that we had a good insight; the background of the trip was to inform the committee on the proposed legislation that we had and benchmark on global innovations on tea industry.

Mr Speaker, the symposium was in East China between 10th and 13th of November, on 14th we visited Tawakal Plant machine, the industry related to the tea sector, on 15th we also visited Yi, another manufacturing company where we were able to see the new technology in Tea industry, the Tea plucking machines.

On 17th we visited another value addition factory called Chang yu and we were able to see how value addition is done in China which is among the biggest tea producers in the world. Globally, it is leading the 34 countries that produce Tea. Kenya is number three in tea production; however, China deals with green Tea, not black like the one in Kenya.

The symposium covered areas of Tea processing, bio chemistry, human health, tea economy. It was in three sessions, the first session was on keynote speeches, and the second session was on Country reports whereby each of the 34 countries presented to the symposium what they had been doing in terms of tea development. There were thematic presentations by scientists as the third session; this was in terms of tea Biochemistry.

The objectives of the symposium was to understand the latest innovations in the tea industry, have insights of world tea production, exchange research papers and promote partnerships among the tea research institutes globally, so that we can all share information. Mr. Speaker, one thing that came up from the meeting was that global tea production has been influenced by several factors that cut across all tea producing

countries. This includes prices, demographics, age, education, health, weather changes, per capita consumption, market access, effects of pests and diseases.

We were advised that we must do tea value addition in a different way other than the traditional way, In Kenya we have been doing this Tea business the same way expecting different results, we were advised that as Tea producing countries we must come up with new ways as we market tea as a health product.

In Kenya and our County, you will be surprised that Tea has money, if you allow me, to get an exhibit that I bought this morning. I have two tea sachets of 25g, I bought at Kshs. 20 per sachet, if you convert that, this will be about Kshs. 800 per kilo and this one is in Kenya. If we can buy 1 kg of Tea in Kenya for Kshs. 800, it means Tea has money. If you convert that 1 kilo of Tea is made up of 4 kilos of green tea, if you divide that by four, this constitutes Kshs. 200 per kilo of green leaf, even though you deduct Kshs 50 for manufacture and packaging, Wanjiku can still get 100 and above.

Tea has money, but we must change our way of doing business and approach the value addition way. There are several ways that came out in that meeting about reasons for tea growth like supply, demand, balance of black tea, weak foreign exchanges, high transportation costs. These are things that we have always been told by our people who are in this Tea business.

As a County, in terms of value addition, as we conclude with the Tea Bill, the way forward, we were advised to market tea in relation to health as presented well by a professor that Tea has cancer prevention components, Tea has weight control elements by increasing metabolism in the body. For our brothers and sisters who want to reduce weight, taking tea can reduce it very well.

Tea has positive effects in cardio-vascular diseases, these are heart related disease. When taken as black tea, it will have positive effects on cardio-vascular system, neuro-protective effects to mention just a few. Mr Speaker, going forward, I hope we will conclude with the Tea Bill very fast, those people in the directorate will be advised to approach this area in that line.

Mr. Speaker, since the report was sent to the members I do not want to tire them with what we learnt but we benchmarked our countries with China and learnt that as a country we may consider going green production technology in the manufacture of green tea. This is where you do not let the tea wither, because at the withering stage, we have the chemical changes and the tea changes from green to brown.

In green technology, you have tea direct from the shamba, taken to the machine where it is curled or rolled and dried. So when you put the tea in your cup like the orthodox tea, the leaves just open up in the cup and you will have green tea in the cup. So these are some of the things that we learnt as a country and as a county we may need to explore.

We also may need to explore on new tea variety like purple tea, white tea. In this variety you only need to pick the bud only and I am told it is only taken by the Sultan of the Arabs Emirates where we have oil. One kilo costs Kshs. 6500.

The issue of tea development and research in Kenya is out as we have a very competent institution called Tea Research Foundation in Kenya which is found in Kericho, and if you look at what they have done to this county, you may find we may not see it. So as a county though it is not a devolved function we can work hand in hand with them and have them

establish offices here and we fund them so that what they get out of their research we give to Wanjiku here and we are going to assist our people.

Mr. Speaker the challenges that are in Kenya, I need not to go there but they are all captured in the bullet number 12, research and development, production and manufacturing and we as a committee we have noted all the challenges that were raised in that symposium we tried to capture as much as possible as many positive feedback to our bill which is in second reading to have a robust tea growing county.

The findings of the symposium, that is bullet number 13 for the members who want to make reference, is that the demand has continued to be robust. There are implications of the climate change; tea producers have not focused attention on designing products that suit diverse economic status and life habits of people.

Like today I have a daughter who is in form three at Ngiriambu girls' high school, she cannot take tea, she prefers to take other beverages like Fanta and other beverages that compete with tea. I do not know what we are supposed to do so that we come and take the young people on board. I do not know whether we have ready to drink tea beverages. I see them but they have never caught the market so that we try to compete. Even before me on the table is bottled water which is competing with tea. I would like a situation whereby this county because it is the leading tea producer we have bottled tea instead of water going forward.

We also as a county should to market our tea in relations to health benefits. People these days are very cautious about their health and if we go that way, if you want a product to hit the market even if it is tooth paste call it herbal and it is going to hit the market like yesterday.

Even today as a county, I think this is a very big potential area that we need to exploit because these are things that have been researched and we have scientific back up.

Recommendations of the committee are captured in bullet number 14 and I will request that this copy of the report be shared with the CEC because it has a lot of insight. And I will also request that now that we are in the budget making stage, the committee of trade, the committee of agriculture and the whole House we give enough budgetary allocations to tea value addition.

And I will also request that these findings because we are in the final stages of the Tea Bill we make sure as a committee that we do not leave anything out of this report. There was a very big booklet that I was supposed to hand to this Assembly from that tea symposium so that it can form part of our research resources and I cannot see it on the table but I believeOh! I am reminded that it was laid on the table with the report earlier on. So whatever we learnt there is in that booklet and it is part of the research centre that we have in the assembly.

I wish to call upon the members to note my trip, though it was very hard Mr. Speaker I did not even had a clerk to accompany me, so I was basically taking all the notes and it took me so long to compile this report, but I must thank my committee clerk because I shared with her and she fine-tuned the report.

Next time if possible it is good to send at least two people because I may forget something and I am reminded by my fellow member that it is important that different members attend this important symposium. I call upon hon. Catherine to second and I know she will be at pains to second. I thank you.

Hon. Catherine Mugo: I thank you Hon. Speaker, I would like to second this motion that this Assembly notes the contents of the report of the Trade, Industrialization, Tourism and Wildlife committee on the international tea symposium in Hangzhou China 2014, laid on the table of the Assembly on Tuesday May 26, 2015.

The mover who visited China has comprehensively covered on the contents of the report so I will only ask hon. members to support this motion on behalf of our committee. I thank you.

(Question proposed)

Hon. Erick Kimani: I thank you Mr. Speaker sir, I support the report.

Hon. Jesse Mburu: I stand to support the motion and from what I have heard from the chairman there are several ways that we can be able to market our tea.

One way that is in my mind if we can have drinking water, sodas and alcoholic drinks bottled we can also have ice tea bottled. Maybe packaged in three ways; one plain, the other one with lemon and the other one with *tangawizi* and maybe sweeteners and then that way we shall be able to market our tea in different forms. I support the motion.

Hon. Rebecca Mwicigi: I stand to support the motion that we note the report and congratulate the office of the Speaker for choosing a very able chair to attend this symposium because of the way he has steered the Tea bill he needed this to add to the bill.

I associate a lot with Chinese community which lives around Nairobi. If you visit Chinese office there is a pot there, you keep on filling your cup and they will never allow you to stay with your cup without the green tea. And when I asked them the reason they said it is the way they promote their tea, and it is not Kenyan tea.

If the value addition issue is implemented I am sure they will not be going for the Chinese tea to drink it in Kenya.

These days in Nairobi you see women going round with tea packs telling you how it is going to reverse your age if you drink it for so many years I am just supporting what the chairman said about tea and health, and that tea goes for Kshs. 3500 per kilo.

If that tea comes from our country you can see how much the farmers will be gaining and they will stop uprooting the tea and as the Chairman said; it is very important that we go direct to the value addition of the tea, especially the green tea. The ice tea is very popular abroad. They go directly to the Kenyan Tea but since we do not sell the Kenyan tea directly, we miss on the value of the ice tea. As the previous Member has said, even the ice tea is very important to the youth their age is going to be a little bit stagnant if they drink it. I support the motion. Thank you, Mr. Speaker sir.

The Speaker: Martin.

Hon. Martin Mwangi: Thank you very much Mr. Speaker sir, I represent Murarandia ward. I also stand to support this motion. I am also supporting it as a tea farmer. We had an opportunity with the Hon. Member for Township this morning when we held a meeting with the Bishop of the African Independent Pentecostal Church of Africa (AIPCA) and another priest where we talked about tea.

The Bishop who had come from Embu said that hawkers are better than the tea farmers. While discussing the problems that tea farmers face, it was noted that even the offerings which tea farmers submit to the church are not worthy to be given to God, that depicts the oppression that tea farmers are subjected to.

Mr. Speaker sir, this is a very good report and if we can implement it, we can realise all the good things in it. The mover has also talked about the Tea Bill which we need to hasten. We came to understand that the tea farmers are being told that what they are producing is over the supply. We also came to learn that this 'oversupply' is man-made, there is nothing like the oversupply of tea in Kenya. What is happening is that there are those cartels that are bringing cheap tea from other countries such as India and when they bring it to Kenya, they say that it brought for the purpose of blending, it is then re-sold outside Kenya as KTDA tea.

Therefore, this House and the National Government need to enact very serious laws which are going to guide and create policies that are going to protect our tea farmers and enable them to come up with the final products.

The tea we are selling is not the final product because when we take it to other countries; we cannot even afford to buy it when it is imported back due to the value added. This is a very good report and I congratulate the mover. I am sure that we will stand with the tea industry because unless we do something, this industry will collapse very soon.

Mr. Speaker sir, almost 10% of the tea has been uprooted in my area, people are now growing coffee and other horticulture. We therefore need to do something as a House because we are here for that purpose and so that we can give guidance. I am sure that if we come up with those policies and implement good reports like this one, things are going to change for better. Thank you, Mr. Speaker sir.

Hon. Caroline Njoroge: Mr. Speaker sir, I also rise to support this benchmarking report from the able chairman for Trade, Industrialisation, Tourism and Wildlife committee. You realise the importance of us visiting other countries. They are going to enrich us with a lot of information that we do not have and will help us even make good policies for the people in the County. I would wish that even the Controller of Budget realises the importance of us going outside the country to learn about the value addition, not only for tea but also for coffee so that we see the value in whatever our people are doing in the County.

Mr. Speaker sir, I congratulate the mover because this is good work. I am sure that even in the Bill we are having for Tea, he is going to add all what he learnt from China to benefit our people who did not have the chance to go out since we are here to represent them. Therefore, I stand to support. Thank you Mr. Speaker sir.

Hon. Peter Kihungi: Thank you Mr. Speaker sir. I stand to support the report and congratulate the member for the hard work and the passion he has for the Tea farmers. As the members have said, I hope we can apply whatever he learnt as we work on the Bill and as we work for our tea farmers. We can never bury our heads in the sand as the representatives of the Murang'a people where we have the largest supply of tea in Kenya from small scale farmers. We need to talk about tea and take any action to do with it. We should make sure that it remains where it is if it is doing well and try to improve if it not doing well.

It has been demonised that whenever you talk about tea, there is a war that you seek to create. There are people who have been prepared to make sure that nobody talks about tea, nobody comments about it and nobody comes up with any idea to do with tea. I want to thank this House because it has managed to resist this war. As a result, farmers are gaining confidence with the County Assembly of Murang'a. When I go to my ward, people

usually ask me when the Tea Bill will begin to work. They do not know the content but they just believe that we have good will.

Therefore, Mr. Speaker sir, I feel we must continue to be creative when we think about our tea farmers. Let us make sense when we talk about coffee and tea, let it be sensible every time to try to see whether we can move the standards of tea from where it is. If it cannot be moved, we better work out on how to remove it because there is a crisis. This thing is making our people poorer with time. They cannot think because their 100 % of their land is occupied by tea. If they do not do away with the tea, we must improve it.

Mr. Speaker sir, I want to thank the members and the House for the way they have confidently continued to fight for the tea farmers. I know that one day, we will deliver them and they will appreciate the First Assembly of the Murang'a County for the courage that we have. I hope that we will not retreat, let us continue to talk and do a lot of research to see whether we can add value to our many farmers who have put all their land, value and riches on tea. I support the report. Thank you Mr. Speaker sir.

The Speaker: The mover to respond.

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: Thank you Mr. Speaker sir. I must thank all the members who have contributed. I am overwhelmed by their contributions. Hon. Jesse, your contribution on value addition is the way to go. Hon. Mwicigi, your contribution---

The Speaker: Do not address the Hon. members directly.

Hon. Charles Kirigwi: Thank you Mr. Speaker sir, I am guided. I believe that the issue of the organic tea is captured very well in the Tea Bill.

I also noted and I am saddened by what is happening in Murarandia ward about the uprooting of this commodity. I must request the members of this Assembly that, as Hon. Kihungi has said members of the public have a lot of confidence with this Assembly in getting them out of wherever they are in terms of tea farming.

In terms of tea development, we must be seen to be doing something effective from 1st July and I believe that we will have passed the Tea Bill by that time. I also believe that the relevant committees will put enough resources for value addition on coffee and tea in the budget we are currently discussing because we must be seen to be doing something on the same.

Something was mentioned on the oversupply. Mr. Speaker sir, I happen to have been a board member/Director of KTDA and I noted with a lot of concern that Kenya is a net importer of tea. There are a lot of vessels coming to Kenya with a lot of containers with very poor quality teas from Vietnam, Sri Lanka. They buy one or two containers from our good teas and then blend. Blending is mixing the bad teas with the poor teas. It is then re-exported as Kenyan tea. That is maybe beyond our Assembly but I hope that the National Assembly and the Senate will try to address that instead of fighting our Tea Bill because the matter is at the national level.

Having said that, I really request this Assembly to come together, there are a lot of cartels who have been fighting our Tea Bill. Mr. Speaker sir, you were the Chair at one time and you could feel the heat of people trying to beat our good intention. I believe that we must move forward and actualise whatever we will put in paper. I believe that at the opportune time, and of course with the guidance of your office, we will be in a position to move to the next level and have the Tea Bill to be an Act.

I humbly request the Assembly to stand up and we keep strong together. Let us stand by our resolution to support the farmers, let the representation role in our obligation come out very well. Lastly, tea has money; you cannot keep doing the same thing the same way while expecting different results. Thank you Mr. Speaker sir.

(Question put and agreed to)
(Applause)

ADJOURNMENT

The Speaker: That being the case, Hon. members, we now adjourn until 2:30 p.m. this afternoon. The House Business committee will meet immediately after this sitting. Thank you.

The House rose at 10:18 a.m.