

REPUBLIC OF KENYA
MURANGA COUNTY ASSEMBLY
THE HANSARD

Wednesday, 17th May 2017

The House met at 2.33pm

(Deputy Speaker Hon. Gachui Mungai in the Chair)

PRAYERS

MOTION

**REPORT OF THE AGRICULTURE, LIVESTOCK AND FISHERIES COMMITTEE ON
THE STATUS OF THE FISHERIES SECTOR IN MURANG'A COUNTY**

Hon. James Kariuki: I beg to move the following motion;-

That, this Assembly adopts the report of the Agriculture, Livestock and Fisheries committee on the status of the Fisheries sector in Murang'a county, laid on the table of the Assembly on Tuesday 16th May 2017.

The committee for Agriculture Livestock and Fisheries decided to find out the status of fishery sector in Murang'a because it is one area that has been neglected for a long time. We came up with three terms of reference which included:

1. To establish the major constrains of the fisheries sector on both farmers and the county government.
2. To identify potential and opportunity in the fisheries sector.
3. To report on the observations, findings and recommendation of the committee inquiry.

Our committee undertook this inquiry; we have background information with us on aquiculture in Kenya which is divided into three main divisions which are:

1. Warm, fresh water aquaculture dominated with various types of tilapia and Africa catfish which is mainly under very intensive farming and earthen pods.
2. Cold fresh water aquaculture involving the production of rainbow trout under intensive system using raceway tanks,
3. And marine water which underdeveloped.

Mr. Speaker, fishing is a fully devolved function; some of the functions of fishery centre are as follows:

1. Fisheries extension services
2. Up scaling seaweed, fin fish and crustacean culture
3. County fish seed bulking units
4. On farm trials
5. Fish health certification
6. Development and maintenance of fish landing stations and jetties, fish auction centres and fish landing fees
7. Demarcation of all fish breeding areas and fencing of fish landing stations
8. Fish trade licensing and fish movement permits
9. Collection of fish production statistics
10. Enforcement of fisheries regulations and compliance with management measures
11. Implementation of fisheries policy
12. Management measures and regulation and limiting access to fishing
13. Fisheries monitoring, control and surveillance

14. Zonation for aquaculture-county specific diseases

Mr. Speaker, it is good to note that fish farming was not just introduced recently, it started very long time ago but the growth has been very slow characterized by low production.

It is good to know that the reason why fish production has been that low is because our culture is not very keen on fish farming. We are keen on cash crop farming, livestock like cattle, goats, and sheep, so fish is not something that is very common in our culture so as a result the question of developing the fishing sector has been a problem.

But recently there have been people, especially the young people who are keen on fish farming.

The main objective of the department is to facilitate utilization and conservation of fisheries resources through the following functions:

1. Provision of extension services.
2. Co-ordination of fisheries development activities.
3. Capacity building among stakeholders.
4. Production of quality fish seeds from the departmental fish farm.
5. Collection of statistical data for fisheries management and collection of revenue.
6. Restocking of Trout Rivers and improvement of fishing camps.
7. Facilitate fish trade and enforce quality assurance measures on fish traders and their premises in the county.

It is, therefore, necessary to assist those interested in fish farming to create and expand the local fish market through intensive training and extension services. Therefore, any help that we are able to offer to those willing to do fish, is welcome.

Mr. Speaker, this will also help to increase the demand for local fish consumption which is very low because most of our people are not used to taking fish, they are used to beef.

Mr. Speaker, our altitude and our low lying areas are very good for fish farming. In the upper areas of our rivers where the water is very cold we can do trout fishing which is promising and very popular with the tourists.

The Murang'a fisheries station operates a demonstration fish farm of 1.3 acres with 10 fishponds of various sizes covering a total area of about 1200M². The main functions of this farm---

(Hon. Peter Mweri on a point of order)

Hon. Peter Mweri: Mr. Speaker I need your guidance, I can't concentrate, Hon. Kabaka, Hon. Dan and people in the back bench are consulting very widely; this is a very important motion.

Deputy Speaker (Hon. Gachui Mungai): The hon. member is very right, remembering we are in honourable House you consult very softly; the two hon. members, I don't want to mention them.

Hon. James Kariuki: Thank you. The main functions of this station that is not far from here are;

1. Production of quality cat fish and tilapia fingerlings for supply to farmers.
2. Serving as a farmers training centre to impart practical aquaculture skills.
3. A referral centre for schools, colleges and individuals interested in fish farming.
4. Research in fisheries and fish farming

This particular farm should be fully utilized, but so far what we know and according to our research, the farm is not fully utilized because when we talk about being a referral centre for

schools, college institutions and individuals, there are very few schools and colleges in Murang'a and individuals who are doing fish farming.

Mr. Speaker, there is little or no notable production of fingerlings in the farm to meet the huge and rising demand from farmers due to low funding. In fact, one of the greatest problems with the fisheries sector is that it is never factored in the budget. We do not give it money, we give money to other sectors in agriculture but we have never given a single cent to fish development.

Mr. Speaker, the farm also lacks adequate and up to date fish farming facilities, like hatcheries which are required for practical training by the farmers. We have one very good fish facility in Sagana from where most of our fish farmers get their fingerlings from. The dilapidated state of the department fish ponds is of major concern to us and requires rehabilitation and procurement of new breeding stock in order to provide quality fingerlings to farmers.

Mr. Speaker, this report is in our files and the statistics are there for all of us to see. We have a total of 19 members of staff in that department who are grossly underutilised; we have the principal fisheries officer, the senior fisheries officer, two chief fisheries assistants, and five fisheries assistants, five fish farming extension officers, one clerical officer, one driver, one senior charge handler, and one cleaning supervisor.

Mr. Speaker, as a committee, we feel that these people are getting paid for doing very little; we should give enough money to the fisheries sector because it has potential for growth so that we can assist our farmers.

There are ponds that are available in Murang'a and most of them were under the Economic Stimulus Programme (ESP) in the past regime; the ponds are still in existence, although we know that most of them are no longer working.

Mr. Speaker, we have 442 in Kangema, 400 in Maragua, 341 in Kandara, 432 in Kigumo, 121 in Kiharu, 368 in Mathioya, 178 in Kahuro, and 230 in Gatanga; they are a total of 2,512. The number of farmers involved in fish farming in Murang'a today is about, 2,390 and the source of our fingerlings for the farmers in all the sub-counties is mainly from Sagana, Murang'a and a private enterprise called Jasa.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to go straight to the opportunities and potential that is in existence in the fish sector. Despite the shortcomings encountered, there exist opportunities and potential for growth of the sector that would enhance the economy of the county and raise the rural incomes. These include promotion of recreational fisheries through sport fishing and related activities. This can only happen along our main rivers like the Tana River. Ornamental fish farming can be supplied to the existing Kenyan Market and extended to the wider African Market.

Mr. Speaker, ornamental fish farming is a very wide market but I doubt whether there are any farmers in Murang'a who are in it, yet it is a very lucrative business. If you go to posh offices in Murang'a, Thika, Nairobi and other towns you will find this ornamental fish, some of which are kept in the office.

With a rise in agriculture other auxiliaries and factories would spring up e.g. fish feeding industries which would create more employment for our youth. We can also promote cat fish aquaculture in cold tea zones of the country especially the areas near the Aberdare's where the sources of our rivers are.

The committee made the following observations as a result of that inquiry;

1. That there are inadequate extension services to fish farmers.

2. That farmers' lack access to market information that would help them improve the fisheries activities. One of the things that disturb farmers is market and fish farmers are not an exception that is one area that will need to be improved especially with the help of the country government.
3. There are limited funds towards the department of fisheries and as I have said, in our budget we have never had funds for fishery sector.
4. Lack of readily available fingerings and as I have said the one in Murang'a is mostly a demonstration pond. Most farmers go to Sagana and others all the way to Kajiado and other places.
5. Lack of quality and affordable fish feeds , this is one area that when I talked to the fish framers they were crying that we do not have fish feeds that are of good quality.
6. Fish farming is not well commercialized in the county, that's obvious because it looks like alien to our culture.
7. Low public investment in the fishery sector.

Those were our observations as a committee and we had the following findings;

1. There are few extension officers with limited mobility, resulting to limited access to fish farmers meaning they do not have the means to reach farmers deep in the rural areas.
2. There are weak or no linkages of the departments with research institutions, regional or international organizations concerned with fishing activities.
3. Lack of policies and legislations to govern the fisheries sector has resulted to limited budgetary allocations to the department. As we speak we have policies and concept areas in other areas but we do not have a single one in fish farming.
4. The department does not have access even to the limited fund allocated to it.
5. Some fish species are not supported by unfavorable climatic conditions of some areas.
6. Most farmers are not able to access quality fish feeds due to the high cost of the feeds
7. There is only one registered fish cooperative society namely Kigumo fisheries co-operative
8. The high investment capital required for procuring fish farming equipment including fishing facilities and other basic aquaculture inputs has discouraged public investment into the fishery sector.

The committee therefore after lengthy deliberations came up with the following recommendations;

1. That the county government should hire and deploy more extension officers and enhance their mobility by providing vehicles for field activities such as monitoring and inspection even if it is not possible to provide them with vehicles we can provide them with motorbikes
2. The fisheries department should liaise with research institutions, national government institutions, department of fisheries and other organizations to enhance access to critical information on new aquaculture technologies, market and challenges for the sector.
3. The County Assembly should enact legislations for the fishery sector. In addition the county executive department should also prepare policy guidelines and regulations for the sector. This is a legislation we would love to pass in this Assembly so that the

fisheries sector is no longer taken for granted and it is given the attention it requires even in terms of budgetary allocation. This will help a lot of people especially the young people interested in fish farming.

4. We also recommend that the county government should provide readily available fingerlings and according to diverse climatic conditions across the county. Mr. Speaker, the one we have in Murang'a has limited fingerlings, and most of the famers have to go to private enterprises to get them; the nearest is in Sagana.
5. That the county government should provide farmers with subsidized fish farming inputs and feeds since the county is known for subsidizing maize seeds and manure, it would be important for us to subsidize fishing inputs and feeds.
6. The committee recommends that the fisheries department should direct more efforts towards the commercialization of fish farming through capacity building, mobilization and registration of more fisheries co-operatives across the county.
7. That the department should put in place sufficient infrastructure and programs for fish farming, post-harvest handling and processing to curb losses, through provision of freezers and vehicles with cooling facilities to transport fish.
8. The committee further recommends that the county government department of Agriculture/Fisheries should hold seminars and workshops with farmers for sensitization and information sharing and also establish a hatchery to provide farmers with fingerlings.

Mr. Speaker, I am happy to report that this report was prepared by my Agriculture committee and in our view, we are satisfied that we have done justice to the fisheries sector in Murang'a.

I will urge the members to pass this motion, such that even if we will not be there when the legislation is passed, there will be a guiding report that they can use for the purpose if they have the capacity to do so, I doubt but time will tell.

I request Hon. Charity to second the motion.

Hon. Charity Rugu: I second the motion

(Question proposed)

(No debate arose)

Deputy Speaker (Hon. Gachui Mungai): If there is no debate, the mood of the House is like the mover's prayer has been accepted. I will call upon the mover to respond.

Hon. James Kariuki: Thank you Mr. Speaker, silence means consent that is what I was taught; I expect the motion to pass unanimously.

(Question put and agreed to)

ADJOURNMENT

Deputy Speaker (Hon. Gachui Mungai): The House stands adjourned until tomorrow 2:30 p.m.

The House rose at 2:58 p.m.