



## COUNTY ASSEMBLY OF KISUMU

### THE HANSARD

#### SECOND ASSEMBLY – SECOND SESSION

Thursday, 10<sup>th</sup> May, 2018

House met in the Main Chamber at 02:30 p.m.

(The Temporary Speaker (Hon. Victor Rodgers) in the Chair)

#### PRAYERS

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Order Hon. Members! Welcome to this afternoon session of the County Assembly of Kisumu. Madam Clerk can you please take this House through the business of the day.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Next Order!

#### MOTION

#### PROVISION OF SANITARY TOWELS TO STUDENTS/PUPILS WITHIN KISUMU COUNTY

BY HON. CARREN MUGA, NOMINATED MEMBERS

**Hon. Carren Muga:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I would like to move the following motion on Provision of Sanitary Towel to Students within Kisumu County.

Mr. Speaker, Aware that, adolescent/puberty starts at 9 years in both boys and girls alike, this is a stage in life whereby young girls and boys experience amazing changes in that life leading to womanhood and transformation to being a man respectively.

Alive to the fact that girl child at this stage will start experiencing their monthly periods (menstruation) while in school. This is an amazing experience but some of these girls come from background that cannot afford to provide this greatly needed commodity. Thus causing embarrassments to the girl child due to use of homemade remedies. The girl child at times resorts to skipping school days to avoid embarrassments. This is because poverty and some of these girls come from child headed homes that cannot afford to access the sanitary towels.

Mr. Speaker, cognizant to the fact that Gender is devolved and that in the County Government of Kisumu we have a Department on Children, Gender, Culture and Community Services and that this issue that affects one gender can be addressed. That this House has powers to legislate and make laws that will be pro-the-girl child to ensure that the County Government of Kisumu supplies primary and tertiary level institutions with sanitary towels. This will go a long way in helping and eradicating absenteeism of the girl child from school during the “red days”.

I hereby implore the House to resolve that Sanitary Towels be provide to schools by the County Government of Kisumu. I request Hon. Eric Agolla to second this motion?

**Temporary Leader of Majority** (Hon. Agolla): Thank you Mr. Speaker. I wish to second the motion that is before the floor of the House. Mr. Speaker, it is very clear that the County has a Country called Kenya we have a goal of realizing retention of children at 100%. This is from the ECD to Primary to Secondary and from Secondary to Tertiary Institutions or Universities.

Mr. Speaker, for the County to realize these goals we must support this child so that the County Government can set aside some funds to finance this noble idea of providing sanitary towels to our young girls in school so that their safety can be taken care of. We are all aware that only through the approval of the same that they can be recommended because in this world we all know that there are diseases that can be transmitted through the use of improper hygiene. I want to reiterate that I support this so that our girl child which will go a long way in promoting good education of our young girls is attained.

Secondly, I want to support this motion because it has been tried in other counties by various partners and organizations who are donors who offer international support. So as a County we need to make reservation and ensure that we implement the same by factoring this item in the Budget Estimates FY 2018/2019 because this is something that is mandatory and ensure that our County provides for these towels as this will be very good to ensure our children prosper in their education. This can be done. I stand to second, thank you.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): That is well taken Hon. Members. A motion has been moved by Hon. Muga and extensively seconded by Hon. Agolla and I now open the floor for debate?

**Deputy Chief Whip** (Hon. Manuche): Thank you Mr. Speaker. I want to applaud the mover of the motion Hon. Muga for bringing to this House this wonderful motion. It so happened that I

visited those children who are physically challenged and it was quite embarrassing when I saw a girl who was attending her menstrual period. This is because she could not assist herself, and I believe if these schools could be provide with these free sanitary towels they can be taught how to use them by the care-takers when they are in the red days. This is because in some areas to access these towels are very difficult and they cost dearly for such like girls. Mr. Speaker, you will find that these towels if provided in schools, the retention rate will be so high and they will not be compelled to remain at home because of lack of these essential utilities because some are unable to purchase them. Thank you.

**Hon. Ogaga:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I rise in support of this motion and it is very pertinent because I am mama education and that is the more reason why I will not keep mum in this House with issues to do with Education. I care so much about children's education and more so, the girl child. Therefore, I applaud Hon. Muga for bringing before this House this motion.

Mr. Speaker, we have children who have been brought up in abject poverty, we also have total orphans who are being taken care of by the old folks as grandparents, we have orphans being taken care of by their siblings, and we have those who are being taken care of by well-wishers who will only think of food and maybe a place to sleep. The way these children go to school, what they eat and even other requirements at school to enable them meet their basic needs is not their concern. We have girls who are from very remote areas, those who never thought of having periods and they have never known and when it reaches that time they don't know that they require sanitary towels. Even in schools that they are enrolled this is not anything that is thought of unless they are offered support back home and therefore, it is very prudent that the County Government of Kisumu provides this girl child the support because this will enable them be in school comfortably.

Mr. Speaker, those who have a way of doing it, you will find them using rags of heavy pieces of cloths because that is what their families can afford. These rags are uncomfortable and unhygienic so I want to appreciate what Hon. Agolla said about hygiene conditions. This is another area that we should really delve on. Other girls use very clean pieces of clothes and they get infections. When that happens they don't even attend classes because they have to seek for medication and in the long run it becomes very expensive when taking care of them and even the girls missing out of school because they have to go for medication. They never have confidence because they don't have the right towels to use, but when they have these sanitary towels they will be care free about their presence, but when they cannot access these towels they will not be free to stand from the chair she is using at school, and if she stands, walking becomes a problem she becomes shy and participation in class becomes difficult and in the case that they are outside for co-curriculum activities, they cannot participate because their minds are worried. When they have these utilities it raises their self-esteem and ego and takes care of their frequent attendance at school and therefore that will not be absent from school because they are feeling like they are not themselves at that time.

Apart from just availing this to our girls, we should also think of talking to them on how to use them because some of the girls have never seen them. We have had some public private partnership on this and there are schools that has been lucky to get such like Ahadi Kenya is supporting and there are other organizations that are doing the same.

I would also be very selective and say that if the County Government is ready to do this then they need to go for disposable sanitary towels. Re-usable are a bit cheap and in the long run they are expensive and hard to take care of.

Mr. Speaker, the boy child also need to be told about this. I always encourage members and teachers back at school that the boy child should also be on board so that they see it as something natural.

When we avail this to our girls then it is going to be important because we have girls who are lured by men. Buying a girl a pack of sanitary towel will make him misuse this girl child. A mother may not be in a position to purchase that for her daughter but when a man is able to buy it and even show her how to use it then you will find him sleeping with this girls.

I hear us calling Kisumu a great county. If we want to be great today and tomorrow and forever then education to our children has to be given priority. We have to take care of our girls. These are leaders of tomorrow and when you educate a girl, it's like you educate the entire nation. I appreciate and support the motion. Thank you.

**Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Victor Rodgers): Very well. Yes Hon. Oiko Pete.

**Hon. Oiko Pete:** Mr. Speaker, thank you for this chance to air my views on this motion that relates to our young girls. It will be very unfortunate if our girls goes through the same life their mothers and grandmothers underwent by failing to value menstruations among the young girls.

We need to take care of them so that this period is not a problem to them. It should not be a problem that would stop the young girls from going to school because we are in the current world where we need to face the reality. It is very important that a policy should be made so that a County Government takes up this issue and the relevant department goes down to the working table to approximate the number of young girls in schools. The financial implications that would be needed here so that they are taken care of.

Let us not just talk about it without going into the financial implications. I don't think this can attract heavy expenditure on their part. Even if that is the case, based on its weight it deserves a good attention.

I remember those old days when young girls were going to school while on their periods and the boys would laugh at them that so and so is bleeding blood. That was so discouraging that young girls would stop going to school.

Let us take good care of them so that they see it as a normal thing to happen to them. This would promote education among the young girls. When a young girl is on her period and she lacks the pads because the homemade measures being talked about are also hard to get, the County Government should take it upon itself to provide this essential materials to our young girls so that they feel part of the society. They will know that this is part of their lives and they are valued by their Government.

When that kind of situation would prevail among the young girls then they will go to school in masses and there would be effort on their side so that they also succeed in their education. I support the motion and urge the House to pass it to ensure that it is implemented. I beg to support.

**Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Victor Rodgers): Yes Hon. Ollows.

**Hon. Ollows:** Thank you Mr. Speaker. I support and thank Hon. Linnet for this motion. This is a problem that the girl child is struggling with and has really affected their education. I support.

**Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Victor Rodgers): Juma.

**Hon. Juma:** I stand to support the motion. Towels are easy to move a around with and I think the girls can carry one or two pieces while going to school. We would also want the girls to compete with boys in school and this has not been possible due to the fact that they abstain from going to school during their periods. This normally impact on their performance. Let us support the motion.

**Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Victor Rodgers): Very well. Yes Honourable Member for Market-Milimani Ward.

**Hon. Kanga:** Mr. Speaker, we have got a larger number of the Honourable Members who are ladies than men. This is commendable because they are taking matters of this House seriously like never before. The motion brought by Hon. Muga is very timely.

As you are aware that we are approaching the budget timeline, we are going to appropriate budget estimates. It is good for the House that we are going to pass this motion in a record time so that the money is factored for purpose of buying sanitary towels for our girls in schools.

I am very passionate about girl child education because I am a father to many girls. We need to look at this motion in a wider scope taking into consideration the students who are also studying in other counties who are citizens of this county. Therefore the motion should be a bit enlarged to accommodate them.

Mr. Speaker, aware that in the modern times when you come to co-curriculum activities that are sports which includes football for ladies and all other sport activities, it would be shameful to deny a child when others have been engaged to the co-curriculum activities. While others enjoy

the girls are still suffering silently somewhere and they cannot engage in sports because of the situation which could be addressed. I always stress on chapter 4 of the constitution which stress on the bill of rights. This issue is addressed in article 43 (a) which states that;

*“(1) Every person has the right—*

*(a) To the highest attainable standard of health, which includes the right to health care services, including reproductive health care.”*

Reproductive health starts at menstruation and part be states that;

*(b) To accessible and adequate housing, and to reasonable standards of sanitation.”*

Sanitation is where we are talking about the sanitary pads. The House is within its mandate to pass this Bill so that money is adequately factored for our students. I support this motion.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Yes Hon. Obonyo.

**Hon. Obonyo:** With regards to the motion that has been brought in this House by Hon. Muga, I stand to support it because it is an important motion. We are the parents who gave birth to these children and these girls are really suffering in the schools where they are studying. This motion has been brought earlier to the Assembly and it is going to be past for the girls to get the sanitary towels. There are some homes within Kisumu County which are not well off and they are not able to buy these sanitary towels and they are also not able to buy food in their homes. That is why we are saying that at this time we are asking the County Government to help our ladies to be able to get these sanitary towels. Sometimes when these girls do their exams at schools, they are not able to concentrate due to lack of these sanitary towels. Thank you and I stand to support.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Yes Hon. Philemon.

**Hon. Philemon:** I stand to support the motion that considering the poverty level that our girls are going through with the possibility that so many of them are exposed it is very important that we pass this motion and I would urge that we apply mechanism that should be put in place so that this particular bill does not come to waste. We must be very careful to debate on the care of giving the girls and the boys. Women have gone to the upper level of being considered into so many things that we are even forgetting about the boys. We should consider gender disparity and be able to empower all these people. This is a very timely motion and we should give a priority towards this.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Yes Hon. Beatrice Odongo.

**Hon. Beatrice Odongo:** Thank you Mr. Speaker, I would like to call on the mover of the motion to reply.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Yes Hon. Muga.

**Hon. Muga:** I want to thank all the Members who have contributed to this motion. I thought it was very wise because the child belongs to both the mother and the father. I have confirmed in this House that both the male and female Members of this Assembly have overwhelmingly supported the motion that sanitary towels be provided to the girls. There are some homes as you have heard that sometimes these children even miss food to eat and so they cannot be able to buy the sanitary towels. We have orphans where you find that the mother died and now the child grows with the father. Sometimes it becomes hard for the girl to discuss these issues with the father. Now the girl stays quiet with this issue and the men who have money take advantage of this and lure them by buying sanitary towels. This is where these girls get impregnated at an early age.

We talk of primary, secondary and tertiary education where you find that there are some girls who acquire their education very fast and go to colleges. There are girls who are in colleges and they are being supported by the well-wishers. The well-wisher provide you with food, pay for your school fees and buy for his/her children sanitary towels while forgetting the child that he/she is supporting is also in need of these sanitary towels.

The reason as to why I brought this motion to this House was because I remembered my early days and I was from a very poor family. I found it hard when I was going to school. At times you would get a stain in your dress and the boys would laugh at you. This makes you go out of school and once you are out of school, boys would be learning. This happens at least 3 to 5 days in a month and if you calculate in a year, you will find out that the girl child would really miss a lot of learning. For the success of our girls in the schools, we need to find a way in which these sanitary towels can be provided for to our girls in schools. If we provide these sanitary towels to the girls, they will now go to school because there won't be anyone laughing at them when they are in school. By the time we will be providing these sanitary towels, our girls will go under education and we will educate them on how to use these sanitary towels. We want them to grow up when they know very well of their menstrual period.

These days you find that when the boda-boda men take the girls to school see that stain and ask them what has happened? The girl would be startled and embarrassed. That is when the boda-boda men will lure the girl and buy for them these sanitary towels. We want to request the County Government of Kisumu that when the budget will be forwarded, we need to factor in the issue of sanitary towels. The provision of these sanitary towels is also being conducted in other Counties. I want to thank you all for supporting this motion.

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): Very well Hon. Member. Having discussed this motion to its depth, I hereby put a question that the motion be adopted.

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*(Question put and agreed to)*

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**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): This motion is adopted and stands committed to the committee on Children, Culture, Gender and Community Services. Next Order!

**ADJOURNMENT**

**The Temporary Speaker** (Hon. Rodgers): There being no any other business, the House stands adjourned to Tuesday 15<sup>th</sup> May 2018 at 2.30pm.