

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

OFFICIAL REPORT

Tuesday, 28th October, 2008

The House met at 2.30 p.m.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker in the Chair]

PRAYERS

QUESTIONS BY PRIVATE NOTICE

COMPENSATION TO PLOT OWNERS AT ARCHERS' POST

Mr. Letimalo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Minister for Roads the following Question by Private Notice.

(a) Is the Minister aware that all developed plots in Archers' Post Trading Centre were demolished to pave way for the construction of Isiolo-Merille Road (A2) as per the Ministry's notice of 14th April, 2008?

(b) Could the Minister provide the particulars of all the affected plots, the names of the owners thereof as well as the assessed value of each plot for the purpose of compensation?

(c) Considering that these were commercial plots, when will the owners of the plots be compensated?

The Assistant Minister for Roads (Mr. Kinyanjui): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) It is not true that developed plots at Archers' Post Trading Centre were demolished to pave way for the construction of Isiolo-Merille Road. The correct position is that there were encroachments on the road reserve after some people were found to have built structures on the road reserve.

Following consultations between the Ministry and owners of these structures, it was agreed that the owners voluntarily remove the structures on the road reserves. So far, some of these structures have been removed while others are still standing there forcing the contractor to skip work along a section of this road.

(b) I beg to lay on the Table a schedule of the names of the occupants of the affected areas at Archers' Post.

(Mr. Kinyanjui laid the document on the Table)

(c) A preliminary valuation of the development affected has been prepared by the District Lands Officer and forwarded to the Ministry of Lands. Compensation, if any, can only be paid upon approval by the Commissioner of Lands.

Mr. Letimalo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it should be noted that this is an old trading centre. These plots were all allocated by the County Council of Samburu. The question of saying

that the developers had encroached on a road reserve should not arise. The owners of these plots are paying rates to the council. How then could the Assistant Minister say that these plots have encroached on the road reserve and that he is putting conditions on whether they will be compensated or not?

Mr. Kinyanjui: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is finding it increasingly difficult to upgrade certain road networks in the country partly because much of the land within the urban centres has been given out or allocated to individuals and, therefore, developed. My Ministry is working closely with the Ministry of Local Government, through the city engineers and county council engineers, to ensure that land that is set aside for public utilities, specifically for roads is taken care of and is not allocated.

As per Presidential Circular No.1 of 2008, one of the mandates of the Ministry of Roads is to protect the road reserves. The Ministry will, therefore, take all necessary steps to ensure that all illegal encroachments on road reserves anywhere in the Republic are not allowed.

Mr. Mututho: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, during the construction of the Meru-Embu Road, all the town centres were spared by the Ministry when we were doing the new road. Could the Assistant Minister confirm to this House that they will not demolish those structures because these are lifetime investments for some people? It is very wrong for us to demolish those town centres just because of poor planning by the local authorities.

Mr. Kinyanjui: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the hon. Member will appreciate that the task of investing in roads is a long-term investment. If we are going to rely only on the land that is available, we will probably never be able to do the infrastructure as we would like to have it done. All plans by the Ministry of Roads, in terms of the land and the area that is required, are communicated to all the local authorities. We would expect that the local authorities do respect this even when the land has not actually been developed; that it remains vacant until such a time when the funds will be available to enable us do the roads.

Mr. Letimalo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have notes here given by the Ministry showing that officials from the Ministry of Lands have been sent to value these plots. Could the Assistant Minister explain whether he has accepted the request for compensation by the plot owners? Did he take into account the lifespan of the plots in respect of the time they were built and the time of demolition?

Mr. Kinyanjui: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we had a meeting with the local community. We have done the survey. Most of the structures that are there are not permanent. Therefore, we have taken that into consideration. As a matter of policy, the Ministry will not pay people who build on road reserves. In this particular case, maybe owing to the confusion that may have arisen, we will consider the issues available and possible compensation on *ex-gratia* basis.

DELAY IN APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN/
VICE-CHAIRMAN OF NACSC

Mr. Sambu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to ask the Minister for Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs the following Question by Private Notice.

(a) Could the Minister explain why the Government has failed to find a replacement for the Chairman and Vice-chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee one year after the resignation of the former holders?

(b) Could the Minister also explain why, since the launch of the District Civilian Anti-Corruption Oversight Committee over a year ago, nothing has been done to constitute such committees countrywide?

(c) What steps will the Government take to address the above situations?

(d) What other specific steps will the Government take to encourage accountability and eradicate the prevailing culture of impunity among citizens as a means of fighting graft in the country?

The Minister for Justice, National Cohesion and Constitutional Affairs (Ms. Karua): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) We have been making efforts to find a suitable replacement for the Chairman of the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee. The Vice-chairman has been acting as Chairman since the resignation of the Chairman and, therefore, the business of the National Anti-Corruption Campaign Steering Committee has not been hampered.

(b) The following has been done since the launch of the District Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Committees:-

(i) Thirteen such committees have been established since 6th February, last year. Another five are in the process of being established in Kisii Central, Busia, Moyale, Samburu and Thika.

(ii) A two-day induction and capacity-building workshop for 99 members of the District Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Committees has been undertaken.

(iii) The National Anti-Corruption Steering Committee has procured offices and paid rent in Malindi, Mbeere, West Pokot, Migori and Narok North districts.

(iv) Office space is being procured in Garissa, Imenti South, Imenti North and Nairobi West.

(v) The Committee has developed and distributed a manual to guide the operations of the District Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Committees. They have also launched a survey on the use of CDF money, which was well publicised.

(c) The Government will facilitate the appointment of a National Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Co-ordinator and recruitment of District Anti-Corruption Co-ordinators who will be the officers responsible for the day-to-day running of the activities of both committees. We will also continue to provide the necessary resources for the operationalization of all the District Anti-Corruption Civilian Oversight Committees.

(d) The Government will continue to build adequate capacity to provide quality, efficient and effective services to the sector institutions, the public and respond to the emerging issues in the fight against corruption. We will also strengthen the legal policy and institutional framework for ethics and integrity. We did that with the legislative measures last year which were, unfortunately, shot down by the Ninth Parliament.

We will also strengthen the Anti-Corruption Ethics and Integrity Programmes throughout the country.

Mr. Sambu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first, I do not have a written answer to this Question. Secondly, it appears that what the Minister is giving are purely the usual promises. For this reason, I would like to get a confirmation from the Minister on whether or not she is committed to eradicating corruption in this country. If she is, could she give some tangible evidence or proof of this commitment?

Ms. Karua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first, yes, there is no written answer supplied to the hon. Member. I have just signed this answer, the Question having only come to our office yesterday. That is what Questions by Private Notice sometimes mean.

It is a strange request from the hon. Member that I give a personal commitment. The commitment to fight against corruption is a Government policy and not an individual commitment. If the hon. Member wants my personal commitment, then he has it. I have done nothing else ever since going to that Ministry other than expound on our policy of zero tolerance to corruption.

Other agencies are in charge of implementing certain other measures that would eradicate

corruption, including investigation and prosecution agencies. Mine is a policy Ministry. Unless he is faulting the policy, I have effectively discharged my responsibilities.

Mr. Sambu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this Committee was formed in May, 2004. Nothing seems to be happening at the district level. That is why I am asking whether the Ministry is really committed to ensuring that things are happening at the district level.

If you go through the Kenya Gazette Notice that established the Committee, you will find that it is a noble and a great idea; about fighting corruption. For example, to establish a framework for a nationwide campaign against corruption is a very noble idea. But nothing seems to be happening on the ground. Is there lack commitment on the part of the Ministry?

Ms. Karua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Committee was established to be the arm of the Ministry. I want to repeat that ours is a policy Ministry. I want to agree with the hon. Member that even within the Ministry, we have asked the Committee to pull up its socks. However, I am quite happy with the survey the Committee did recently on the Constituencies Development Fund (CDF). The Committee has also launched a website. It has a public awareness programme on television which will also be launched. The Committee's work is just to sensitise the public on the effects of corruption.

Corruption is a two-way traffic, namely, those in authority demanding bribes and those who want services offering the bribes. Unless our public is sensitised, that if they continue to offer bribes then they undermine the capacity of the Government to deliver services to them, we will never end corruption. We must live by example.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is also about the way we, as politicians, have handled election campaigns. We have entrenched corruption in this country. Commitment is needed from every Member and every citizen. The Ministry is committed and we are waiting for everybody else to do their part. But we will keep on redoubling our efforts. The Committee has accelerated its activities because it went a little bit down after the Chairman left. But the Committee has now woken up again.

Mr. Sambu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am rather disappointed by the answer given. First of all, I would like to get a written statement on this issue.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, hon. Sambu! The Chair recognises your concern. The ruling, initially, from the Chair, was that Questions by Private Notice or not, written answers must be supplied to the Members of Parliament by the Ministers concerned. But this is an issue that you needed to raise right from the very beginning when you were asking the Question and not when the Question is getting concluded.

In future, once you notice that you do not have a written answer, you should raise that issue and the Chair will direct the Minister to come back with a written answer before he or she replies to the Question. Nonetheless, continue and ask your question.

Mr. Sambu: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Is it in order for me to ask that you defer this Question until I get a written answer, so that I can get more clarification?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: No! No! You had that prerogative at the beginning and not now that the Question has been answered. So, ask your last supplementary question!

Mr. Sambu: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to get a clarification as to when the Minister will confirm these acting appointments. People have been acting for more than a year. When will the Minister confirm these appointments?

Ms. Karua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not saying that we are confirming. We shall be appointing. We also want to change the framework of appointing the membership and to make it institutional rather than individual. We should be concluding pretty soon.

Mr. Sambu: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. What is "pretty soon"?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, that is a good question! When is "pretty soon"?

Ms. Karua: Very soon, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir!

Mr. Sambu: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. How soon is "very soon"?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Minister, give a specific timeframe!

Ms. Karua: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, now that the Member has asked for a timeframe, this will be before the end of this year.

CONTRAVENTION OF COMPANIES ACT BY
FARMERS' COMPANIES IN EMBAKASI

(Mr. Waititu) to ask the Attorney-General:-

(a) Could the Attorney-General indicate when the respective directors of Embakasi Ranching Company, Ngindu Farmers Company, Githunguri Farmers Company and Buru Buru Farmers Company were elected into office?

(b) Considering that the said companies have not held annual general meetings since the year 2000, why has he not taken action against the directors for contravening the Companies Act, Cap.486?

(c) What action will he take against the directors for the said contravention?

(d) When will the Registrar of Companies facilitate the Annual General Meetings for all the above companies and ensure that non-partisan officers supervise the meetings?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: The Question by Private Notice by hon. Waititu will appear on the Order Paper tomorrow in the afternoon. The Attorney-General is engaged in a national duty elsewhere and has sent his apologies on this. So, the direction of the Chair is that the Question appears on the Order Paper tomorrow in the afternoon.

(Question deferred)

ORAL ANSWERS TO QUESTIONS

Question No.146

POSTING OF DRIVER TO RUIRI
HEALTH CENTRE

Mr. Ruteere asked the Minister for Public Health and Sanitation:-

(a) whether she is aware that Ruiiri Health Centre in Imenti North District has a GoK vehicle but no driver; and,

(b) what steps she is taking to employ or post a driver to the health centre.

The Assistant Minister for Public Health and Sanitation (Dr. Gesami): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) Yes, I am aware.

(b) My Ministry has already identified a driver to be deployed in Ruiiri Health Centre immediately.

Mr. Ruteere: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first, I wish to complain that I have not received any written answer from the Assistant Minister. However, if the Assistant Minister has identified a driver, when will he be deployed to Ruiiri Health Centre? Ruiiri Health Centre is in need of a driver. It has taken the Ministry long to deploy a driver to the health centre.

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have already indicated that we have identified a

driver. In fact, I want to assure the hon. Member that, in the next three weeks, the driver will be there.

Mr. Ruteere: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if a driver has been identified, I do not [Mr. Ruteere]

understand why it is going to take three weeks for him to be deployed to Ruiru Health Centre. What will take him that long? What is being done for him to go there? Why would it take three weeks for a driver to be taken to Ruiru? Is it that Ruiru is so far that the driver cannot go there tomorrow?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Assistant Minister, if the driver has been identified, why can he not report there tomorrow?

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have already identified a driver from another area and we hope that he will hand over as soon as possible. I have already indicated that, nevertheless, the driver will be there in not more than three weeks from now.

Mr. Ruteere: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Does it mean that there are no qualified drivers in Imenti North District, to be employed in the area?

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are lacking drivers at the moment. In fact, you will realise that we took ten years without employing any driver. Therefore, suffice it to say that we have identified a driver to be deployed to Ruiru Health Centre in the next three weeks.

Mr. Mwiru: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, is it the pleasure of the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation to be asked Questions so that they can act? The same thing is happening at Marimanti District Hospital in Tharaka District.

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that the problem of lack of drivers is not only in the Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation. The problem of lack of drivers is in most of the Ministries.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not only Ruiru Health Centre that has a vehicle or an ambulance without a driver. In fact, in my own constituency, we have two health centres which have vehicles, but no drivers. We shall continue to employ drivers as and when funds become available and post them to the various health centres.

Mr. Affey: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, this problem is also being experienced Habasweini District. When the Assistant Minister was sending the vehicle to the said health facility, how did he expect the vehicle to be used without a driver? Who is driving this vehicle now?

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is our hope in the Ministry that every health centre will have an ambulance. Unfortunately, we had good partners who gave us these vehicles before we employed the drivers. It is our responsibility now, as the Government, to speed up the process of employing drivers for all these health centres.

Mr. Ruteere: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, before the three weeks are over, what will be happening at the Ruiru Health Centre?

Dr. Gesami: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in fact, we have been borrowing a driver from the area District Officer (DO) to transport patients to the hospital. In the next three weeks, we will continue using the same remedy until we post a driver to the health centre.

Question No.236

FLOUTING OF LABOUR LAWS BY
MULTINATIONAL TEA COMPANIES

Dr. Kones asked the Minister for Labour:-

(a) whether he could table a list of the top management - from the CEO to the Assistant Manager level - in the multinational tea companies in Kericho and Bureti

districts, namely, George Williamson, James Finlay (K) Ltd. and Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd.;

(b) whether he could confirm that the three firms have flouted labour laws by engaging expatriates to do the jobs that should be done by the locals;

(c) whether he could give the statistics of the proportions of unskilled labour from the local community (Bureti and Kericho districts) employed in these companies, giving the specific departments/sections in which they are deployed; and,

(d) what steps he will take to rectify the above anomalies.

The Assistant Minister for Labour (Mr. Ojaamong): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) I hereby table lists of top management from the Chief Executive to the Assistant Manager level of the multinational tea companies of George Williamson, James Finlay and Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd. in Kericho and Bureti districts.

*(Mr. Ojaamong laid the documents
on the Table)*

(b) The three multinational firms have not flouted the existing labour laws by engaging expatriates. The expatriates are lawfully working in Kenya as they have been issued with work permits in accordance with the Immigration Act.

(c) I am not in a position to give statistics of the proportion of unskilled labour from the local community. The statistics available relate to the proportion of unskilled labour to management, as all communities seek employment as Kenyans. Indeed, Section 5 of the Employment Act, Cap.11 of 2007, provides that no employer shall discriminate against an employee on grounds of ethnic or social background amongst others.

(d) I have not noticed any anomalies relating to the labour laws allegedly flouted by the three firms to warrant me to take any action to rectify the same.

Dr. Kones: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to thank the Assistant Minister for that answer. However, we know that there is what we call corporate social responsibility of these companies. One of the ways in which these companies can do that is by employing the locals. To what extent is the Assistant Minister satisfied that these companies have fulfilled that?

Mr. Ojaamong: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that companies have a corporate social responsibility, but I have not yet gone into details to find out whether they have undertaken this duty.

Mr. Nyambati: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if I heard right, the Assistant Minister has said that some of the expatriates who are working in these companies have work permits. It is a shame that the Ministry is giving work permits to expatriates to work here when we have Kenyans who are qualified to do those kinds of jobs. What is the Ministry doing to stop the expatriates who are coming to work here and yet we have Kenyans who are fully qualified to do the jobs?

Mr. Ojaamong: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, those are multinational companies. They do not belong to the Government. So, they have a right to bring in a few international employees.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, even if you look at the number of the expatriates, they are very few compared to the local employees. Just to shed some light on the matter, you will find that, in Unilever Tea Kenya Ltd; for example, 68 people are in the management level. Out of that number, only four are expatriates. Compare them also with the 15,000 unskilled ones.

In George Williamson Ltd; we only have seven people in the management. Only one is an expatriate. There are over 2,000 employees. In James Finlay Kenya Ltd; we have over 15,000 employees. There are only six expatriates. So, we are not encouraging expatriates to come to Kenya

to take over jobs which can be done by Kenyans.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Last question, Dr. Kones!

Dr. Kones: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have looked at the statistics of the number of employees in those companies over the last few years. There has been a general decline. One of the reasons is that multinational companies have started bringing in tea plucking machines. Could the Assistant Minister order that the use of those machines be stopped and the employment given to the local people? If possible, could the Assistant Minister promise to visit those estates and see the working conditions of the workers?

Mr. Ojaamong: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have listened to the concerns of the hon. Member and I undertake to visit those multinational companies and ensure that, even the machines that have been brought do not deny the local people the employment opportunities that are existing there.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we undertake to do that as a Ministry.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Next Question! Question No.343 by Mr. F.T. Nyammo!

Question No.343

RECLAMATION OF DAMS IN
TETU CONSTITUENCY

Mr. Nyammo asked the Minister for Water and Irrigation:-

(a) whether she is aware that Tetu Constituency lacks sufficient sources of clean water for domestic consumption; and,

(b) when the Ministry will commence reclamation of Wandumbi, Karangia and Kiunyu dams and make their water safe to supplement the other water sources for consumption and irrigation purposes in Tetu Constituency.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Minister for Water and Irrigation! Where is the Minister for Water and Irrigation?

*(Mr. Kiunjuri approached the Dispatch
Box from the Back Benches)*

Mr. Assistant Minister, you should be somewhere in the Front Bench!

Proceed!

The Assistant Minister for Water and Irrigation (Mr. Kiunjuri): I am sorry, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I like "tasting" every corner of this House! That is because tomorrow, you can become a Backbencher and you are not used to it!

(Applause)

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) Yes, I am aware that Tetu Constituency lacks sufficient sources of clean water for domestic consumption. About 50 per cent of the constituency is currently adequately served with clean water but, the other 50 per cent is served through rationing.

(b) My Ministry has undertaken an assessment of the rehabilitation of those dams and has estimated that the three dams will cost about Kshs18.5 million. That amount shall be factored in during the next financial year, that is in the 2008/2009 Budget.

Mr. Nyammo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, while I appreciate the answer, may I request the Assistant Minister to consider including that estimate in the Supplementary Estimates scheduled for March/April next year? I say that because those are not just dams. They are meant to enhance fish farming and sporting activities in Tetu Constituency.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we are lucky enough to collect some more funds and the Treasury is ready to disburse some to the Ministry, that will be considered. At the same time, we are not only considering rehabilitating those dams, but we want to construct water reservoirs in the mountain so that we can provide Tetu with water that is deserved by the constituents.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Assistant Minister, I thought we are in the 2008/2009 Financial Year? That is not the next financial year! That is the financial year we are in!

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that we shall factor in some money in either this financial year or the next financial year. I have said that, right now, the Ministry cannot commit itself to do that. But we shall factor it in if we have the Estimates that are coming up.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Then, that has got to be the Financial Year 2009/2010. That is the next financial year.

Mr. Kiunjuri: That is it, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Lekuton: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the target for supplying clean water to every household in this country was expected to have been fulfilled by the year 2000. That has been overtaken by events. Now, I would like the Assistant Minister to clarify what the Government is doing to ensure that we do not only achieve local development goals, but the Millennium Development Goals.

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, could he repeat his question?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Lekuton, could you repeat your question? The Assistant Minister has not heard your question! Get closer to the microphone!

Mr. Lekuton: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I said that the target to supply clean water to every household in this country was expected to have been fulfilled by the year 2000! That actually failed. What is the Government doing to ensure that we do not only achieve local development goals, but the Millennium Development Goals?

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have a water masterplan and also, if you look at Vision 2030, we have given a road map on how we are going to achieve that.

Mr. Gaichuhie: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, considering that there are so many dams in this country that are silted, what is the Ministry doing, maybe, to purchase machinery to clean up those dams? Is his Ministry doing anything in that respect?

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we have our contractor, that is the National Water Conservation and Pipeline Corporation. We are making sure that it is revamped to the extent that it can be a serious corporation to tackle those problems once and for all.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are also making sure that we get the right contractors so that, whoever is given work to construct dams, he or she does it effectively. We do not want a situation that was prevailing before where, a contractor could just go, scoop the dam and before he does the actual proper works, he just leaves the site. Nobody supervises them. We want to make sure that we supervise them, so that they can do a better job.

Mr. C. Kilonzo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of the major sources of drinking water, a while back, has been Athi River. But, to date, Athi River is just one big sewer line! What is the Ministry doing to ensure that people living along Athi River are provided with clean drinking water through, maybe, drilling boreholes?

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, you will accept that those are serious allegations. If a river has really been turned into a sewer line, those are very serious allegations! I would like the hon. Member, either through a substantive Question, to bring that issue to our attention. That way, we can investigate. He can still request us, because he does not have to come to the Floor of the House, so that we can investigate. But, in the meantime, whichever way, we are trying to sink boreholes and construct dams to make sure that we have water for Kenyans.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Last question, Mr. Nyammo!

Mr. Nyammo: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the sake of good order, I have a written answer purportedly meant for the hon. Member for Tetu. The names on the written answer are not my names. Could I request that, that be corrected and my names, as they are officially spelt, be used?

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Kiunjuri: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I request that you order the Clerk's Department do as requested by the hon. Member.

Question No.213

MEASURES TO CUSHION FARMERS FROM
FLUCTUATION OF WORLD COFFEE PRICES

Eng. Maina asked the Minister for Agriculture:-

- (a) whether he is aware that world coffee prices have dropped significantly and, therefore, negatively affected the country's earnings;
- (b) whether he is further aware that due to the above situation, coffee farmers are now uprooting the crop and resorting to alternative farming; and,
- (c) what measures he is putting in place to cushion coffee farmers from fluctuating world prices and to promote their produce in international markets to fetch better prices.

The Assistant Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Ndambuki): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to reply.

(a) I am aware that the world coffee prices have been rising significantly for the last three years, steadily raising the country's earnings.

(b) I am further aware that coffee farmers in Kenya have not been reaping good returns from coffee earnings as deserved.

(c) My Ministry, together with other stakeholders, is undertaking the following measures to promote coffee in the international market to fetch better prices.

(i) Developing a Kenya coffee brand code.

(ii) Undertaking a rigorous grower sensitisation programme.

(iii) We have already allocated Kshs500 million for coffee improvement under the EU-funded quality coffee production. The Kshs500 million will also be used for production and commercialisation, capacity building and research for the next two years.

(iv) As an intervention measure, we have written off Kshs3.2 billion worth of loans which were giving farmers a lot of problems.

Eng. Maina: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the first answer does not relate to my Question. It relates to the future, which the Assistant Minister is talking about. I am talking about the present, where I am saying that farmers have been suffering and coffee production has been going down. Could we address this matter as the present, and not as history or the future?

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am not talking about the future. I am talking about now. I have figures to support what I said. In 2005/2006, we sold 48,835 metric tonnes at a

value of Kshs9.7 billion. In 2006/2007, we sold 53,000 metric tonnes at Kshs8.7 billion. Up to September 2008, we had already sold 42,000 metric tonnes at Kshs9 billion. So, I am not talking about the future. I am talking about now, because the prices have been going up. If you look at the auction, the average in the last three years has been US\$3 per kilogramme, which is the highest ever in the last 14 years in this country.

Mr. Muturi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the Assistant Minister is reading some figures that do not relate to reality. I am a small-scale farmer, who grows some coffee. The Assistant Minister should come out clearly and spell out why production of coffee is at its lowest; the cost of inputs like fertilizer, chemicals and non-payment--- It is of no use giving us statistics when farmers are uprooting coffee trees.

It is true that they are uprooting it! They are even uprooting tea plants, and it started in Othaya! The Minister for Agriculture should do an honourable job of visiting Othaya to tell the President that the problem is at his doorstep. We are uprooting coffee because there are no returns. The EU and other bodies keep on telling us not to subsidize farmers. The question is: When are farmers going to be supported by this Government by being given subsidies as is the case in Western countries?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Member, ask your question! I do not think you have asked it!

Mr. Muturi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, when is the Assistant Minister going to give farmers subsidies as it happens in other developed countries so that we do not depend on---

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay! Yes, Mr. Assistant Minister!

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to give the hon. Member the interventions the Government has carried out in the last three years. They include Kshs3.2 billion which was written off. Secondly, we have already injected Kshs500 million into coffee production. Thirdly, the Government is already providing fertilizer at subsidized prices. Therefore, the Government is doing quite a bit on this issue.

Mr. Muturi: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. Could the Assistant Minister clarify whether CAN is a compound fertilizer? He is promising CAN, which is for top dressing. Coffee requires compound fertilizers, which are not available. Where is this fertilizer that he is talking about so that I can buy it?

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Assistant Minister, are you sure you are talking about fertilizer for coffee and not for other crops?

Mr. Ndambuki: Yes, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I am very much aware that we are talking of coffee fertilizer. The fertilizer which is being brought in by the Government is not only for cereal crops, but also is for tea and coffee farming. It is going to be subsidized fertilizer.

Mr. Linturi: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the Assistant Minister should be in a position to address the problem of coffee, because quite a number of the people in this country depend on it. He has clearly said that he has provided Kshs500 million for coffee improvement under the EU-funded coffee production and commercialisation programme.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want him to tell us, or confirm to this House, why he is saying that he has put in this money to improve the production of coffee when it is actually given to farmers as loans at an interest rate of 11 per cent, and without any grace period? This is not meant to improve coffee production. Why is it that farmers cannot be given money at a lower interest rate and, at least, with a good grace period.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Assistant Minister, I think the previous hon. Member talked of subsidies. There is a difference between a subsidy and a loan!

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, first, even giving the loan at the interest rate we are giving at should be taken as a subsidy. If any other farmer borrows, he will not do so at the rate he was talking about. He will borrow at a higher rate, but here a coffee loan is being given at a

5 per cent interest rate.

Eng. Maina: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. I think we had better get serious! In the first instance, I said that we are being told of the future. My Question is very clear, and it is about what the Ministry is going to do to save the coffee industry. It used to be the number one foreign exchange earner, but now it is nearly in the fifth position. Coffee production fell in 1985 because of what happened, and there has been no effort by the Government to assist farmers to come up and grow this crop. That is the issue! The issue is that they are providing loans, which are being given at near commercial rates. Eleven per cent may look small to the Assistant Minister but it is not small to the poor farmers in Machakos.

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is not the Government that has brought the prices of coffee down; they dropped because of forces in the international market in 1987 and 1988. It came down from 150,000 metric tonnes, which Kenya used to sell, to 50,000 metric tonnes, which we are now selling. It is not of our own making! Again, when the prices went down, our farmers ignored the crop; they stopped attending to it they way they had been doing.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the problem is also not by the Government; it is because of the foreign exchange rate. If the US Dollar is at Kshs60, and our coffee fetches US\$3 per kilogramme, that is Kshs180. If you consider the cost of inputs and labour, what the farmer gets becomes very little.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, however, as a Government, we have now undertaken some interventions. We are giving farmers fertilisers at a subsidized price. We are also giving funds for the farmers to access credit. These are interventions that we are undertaking. We have also written off the loans which have been bothering them for years. These are many things the Government is doing, and I would expect the hon. Member to appreciate a bit what the Government is doing.

Mr. Baiya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the efforts the Government has undertaken have not been adequate and if they had been, farmers would be the first by responding through improved production. However, what we also know is that the Kenyan coffee farmer has been reduced to a producer of raw materials while others in the international coffee market use this coffee to blend it with other low quality coffee and ultimately take it into the market without a brand name.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Hon. Baiya, ask your question!

Mr. Baiya: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, given the vision of the Government with regard to farming; that they should market and brand the product, what is the Ministry doing to ensure that it brands and markets Kenyan coffee so that the Kenyan coffee farmer can get a reasonable return?

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry is really working on that and in the next four months, Kenya will market its coffee in a Kenyan brand.

Eng. Maina: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I intended to ask for your direction over this matter because I do not want it to be brushed aside after a bit of talk. Now, the truth of the matter is that I was looking for a road map towards assisting the industry come up for the sake of this country. There is no need for the Government to spend money on marketing tourism when we can also do the same by enabling the coffee farmers to grow coffee which today is produced at only 25 per cent. That is what I am looking for.

I want to seek your direction so that the Assistant Minister can go back and think. After understanding what I am looking for, he can come back and answer my Question properly.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! If you are dissatisfied with the answer by the Assistant Minister, you can then seek redress under Standing Order No.18, if you so wish. That is the position. At the conclusion of the Question itself and the manner it was answered, the Chair is of the opinion that it cannot direct the Assistant Minister to go back. You can raise this issue under Standing Order No.18. Hon. Assistant Minister, do you wish to say something?

Mr. Ndambuki: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I just wanted to say that out of the Kshs500 million we are injecting, half of it will be used to market coffee overseas.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Next Question by Mr. Warugongo!

Question No.222

HEARING OF APPEAL BY MR. S. KARANJA

Mr. Warugongo asked the Minister of State for Public Service:-

(a) whether he is aware that the appeal to the Public Service Commission by Assistant Chief for Kimahuri Sub-Location, Mr. Simon Karanja, who was dismissed from the service has not yet been heard; and,

(b) when the appeal will be heard.

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security (Mr. Lesrima): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am sorry. I had undertaken to answer this Question but when I noticed that it is listed under the Ministry of State for Public Service, I assumed that they were going to answer it. However, the answer is on my table and I can answer the Question tomorrow. I apologise for not coming with the answer.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Lesrima, if I am right, you are not from the Ministry of State for Public Service but from the Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security and you are also of the opinion that this Question belongs to your docket?

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security (Mr. Lesrima): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, it was the opinion of the Speaker that we can handle it since it is concerning chiefs.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Okay! Clerk's Department, we can have this Question on the Order Paper tomorrow afternoon!

(Question deferred)

Question No.246

REHABILITATION OF KAMARINY STADIUM

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, hon. Members! The Question by hon. Chepkitony will be on the Order Paper next week on Tuesday since he is on official parliamentary business attending to some committee work.

(Mr. Chepkitony stood up in his place)

Hon. Members: He is here!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, hon. Chepkitony! How come that you sent the Chairman of your own Finance Committee to come and apologise on your behalf? I understand that you sent hon. Okemo or he sent himself?

Mr. Chepkitony: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was not there last week. I even met you this morning in your office and I thought you knew I was around.

(Laughter)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Okemo came to me hardly 30 minutes ago on the Chair here!

Mr. Okemo: On a point of order, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. It does appear that hon. Chepkitony has come back from the official trip earlier than was anticipated. I am surprised to see him here. So, if you allow him, he can ask the Question.

(Laughter)

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! The Question is deferred to tomorrow afternoon. Hon. Okemo, in future, make sure you have the latest instructions. Do not go for the old instructions!

(Laughter)

(Question deferred)

NOTICE OF MOTION FOR ADJOURNMENT UNDER STANDING ORDER NO.18

UNSATISFACTORY REPLY TO QUESTION
BY PRIVATE NOTICE:
MEASURES TO REDUCE
HIGH OIL PRICES

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order! Hon. Members, I have received a request from the hon. Member for Githunguri, Mr. Baiya, over his intention to move a Motion of Adjournment under Standing Order No.18 at the end of the normal sitting day concerning unsatisfactory reply to Question No.3 by Private Notice raised on Tuesday, 14th October, 2008 relating to fuel prices in the local market.

I have considered the issues raised and the answer given by the Minister and I have acceded to his request. I will, therefore, call upon the Member to move the Motion on Wednesday, 29th October, 2008 at 12.30 p.m. That is tomorrow.

POINT OF ORDER

BAN ON USE OF FIREWORKS DURING
DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

Mr. Olago: Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I stand having given due notice to your office of my intention to seek a Ministerial Statement from the Minister of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security on a matter that touches on the infringement of a section of Kenyans' constitutional rights by the police.

Today marks the first day of the Hindu religious festival of lights locally known as Diwali and it is celebrated with enthusiasm by Hindus all over the world. The Hindu Council of Kenya coordinates the social, religious and cultural activities during these festivities on behalf of all Hindus in Kenya who reside in most of our urban centres. By use of fireworks during these festivities is an acclamation of their religious faith and has been used in these festivities in Kenya since Independence.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, for the first time in our history, the Provincial Police Officer

(PPO) Nairobi, has issued verbal instructions banning the use of fireworks and displays during these celebrations. The order from the PPO has effectively deprived all members of the Hindu community of their constitutional right to worship. Hinduism and its scriptures go back several years and it is a religion that is recognised by our Constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, with your permission, I wish to read very quickly Section 78 of our Constitution.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Order, Mr. Olago! You have put your point very well. It is for the Minister now to give an undertaking.

Mr. Olago: Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir. It reads:-

"Except on judicial consent, no person shall be deprived of their enjoyment of his freedom and conscience". For these purposes, conscience includes religion.

Therefore, the order by the PPO clearly contravenes Section 78 of our Constitution. I have raised this matter with the PPO but I hit a brick wall. I have raised it with the office of the Minister and I notice that his Assistant Minister is in the House and, therefore, in the circumstances of the gravity of the matter, demand that he answers it now.

Thank you, Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Assistant Minister, considering the urgency of the matter and the freedom of worship of a section of the Kenyan society, are you prepared to give the Ministerial Statement now?

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security (Mr. Ojode): Mr. Deputy Speaker, I am ready to give the Ministerial Statement now.

Mr. Deputy Speaker: Mr. Ojode, please, proceed!

It is a day for the Committee of Supply, so be fast!

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT

DETONATION OF FIREWORKS DURING DIWALI CELEBRATIONS

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security (Mr. Ojode): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the authority to detonate fireworks is granted by the Commissioner of Mines who then informs both the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA) and Department of Police as required.

Over the years fireworks display have graced the Diwali celebrations every year. For purposes of safety, the permission predicated by the Commissioner of Mines is predicated on specific conditions that include:-

(a) The shell of over four inches will not be detonated over residential estates but will only be used in specially designated areas like school compounds.

(b) Safety precautions demand that all fireworks must be detonated by trained people.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year one person was killed at the Nairobi Premier Club as he attempted to detonate fireworks without training.

(c) All fireworks will cease at 11.00 p.m. to allow children and families to have peaceful sleep.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, 11.00 p.m.!

(Laughter)

(d) No fireworks will be detonated from private homes or unauthorised premises.

(e) No displays will be conducted near hospitals, airports or other strategic installations.

Despite these clear instructions issued in writing, the organisers of Diwali event have, over the years, deliberately contravened these conditions as can be attested to by the death of one person at the Nairobi Premier Club.

Additionally, the organisers have illegally detonated shells exceeding four inches in residential areas thus causing fear and inconvenience to families well beyond the stipulated time of 11.00 p.m.

However, the Government has no objection at all in allowing the fireworks during Diwali Celebrations.

I want to repeat that, the Government has no objection at all in allowing the fireworks during Diwali as long as the organisers strictly adhere to the safety instructions issued by the Commissioner of Mines.

(Applause)

Mr. Olago: Mr Deputy Speaker, Sir, could the Assistant Minister confirm that [Mr. Olago] subject to those conditions, the Government is allowing display of fireworks? If that is made clear, it is fine with me.

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Provincial Administration and Internal Security (Mr. Ojode): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, that is exactly what I said. I want to repeat that the Government has no objection at all in allowing the fireworks during Diwali celebrations except that the conditions must be met!

Mr. Deputy Speaker: That is fair enough!

Hon. Members, today is a day for the Committee of Supply. The House will, therefore, adjourn at 6.35 p.m. We will have to exceed the normal sitting hour by five minutes because the business has to take three consecutive hours.

Next Order!

COMMITTEE OF SUPPLY

*(Order for Committee read being
the Fifteenth Allotted Day)*

MOTION

THAT MR. DEPUTY SPEAKER DO
NOW LEAVE THE CHAIR

Vote 10 - Ministry of Agriculture

The Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Samoei): Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move that Mr. Deputy Speaker do now leave the Chair.

The overall goal of the Ministry of Agriculture is to attain national security while at the same time increasing crop production, earnings for farmers and agribusiness. The Ministry contributes to our economic pillar in the Vision 2030 strategy and the Medium-Term Plan Strategy for national reconstruction for 2008-2012, as the main productive sector. Indeed, the vision for the agricultural sector under this strategy is an innovative commercially-oriented and modern farming

as a business.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, achieving the goals of national food security requires substantial financial resources to the agricultural sector as was recognised by the African Heads of State and Governments who in their Maputo Declaration of 2003 committed themselves to increase the agricultural sector budget allocation to at least ten per cent of our national budget. Kenya, like many African States, is committed to achieving this target. In this regard, the budget to my Ministry has increased by 4 per cent from Kshs12.5 billion in 2007/2008 to Kshs13.1 billion in 2008/2009. This is absorbed by personnel costs and is not adequate to meet the emerging challenges of increasing food and fuel prices, increasing cost of inputs such as fertilisers and the much needed support the crop development extension services, regulatory services and research programmes of the Ministry require.

I may, therefore, come back to this House shortly in the Revised Estimates, to request for additional budgetary allocation to enable me deliver to the expectations of the people of Kenya.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, the total budget to the seven agricultural sector Ministries is Kshs29 billion. This translates to about 4.5 per cent of our national budget. We should remember the Heads of States and Governments in Maputo had pledged that they will strive to increase their budgetary allocations to 10 per cent.

Only five Governments in the African continent have measured up to the 10 per cent component. Our seven Ministries in the agricultural sector have only 4.5 per cent of the budget. It will be difficult for us, with an economy that is agro-based and with an under-funded agricultural sector, to fight poverty, unemployment or even grow our economy at a rate of 10 per cent as we envisage.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the year 2006, maize production was at 36 million 90 kilogramme bags. In 2007, the production of maize went down to 34 million 90 kilogramme bags. However, we still had enough maize for our national consumption which stands at 32 million bags a year. Because of the post-election challenges this year, we are envisaging that we would have shortage of about three million bags. We have already imported 2 million bags. We might have to request for additional budgetary allocation to import another 1 million 90-kilogram bags of maize to be able to bridge the gap that currently exists between our projected production and our consumption requirements.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, wheat production also went down between 2000 and 2006. In 2006, we had 112 tonnes of wheat produced locally. Last year, we had 106 tonnes of wheat produced locally. It is important for us to realise that we produce only 40 per cent of all our wheat requirements. About 60 per cent of our wheat requirements is imported through the COMESA quota system. I am also pleased to report that we have continued to produce enough beans and pastries for our national requirements. We are a net exporter of all fresh produce such as vegetables, tuber crops and fruits, except for oranges, grapes and apples.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, cash crops also registered increased production, with tea production increasing by approximately 20 per cent to 369,000 tonnes in 2007 from 310,000 tonnes in 2006. Coffee production also went up by about 10 per cent from 48,000 tonnes in 2006 to 53,400 tonnes in 2007. Sugar-cane production also increased by about 9 per cent in 2007 from 475,000 tonnes in 2006 to 520,400 tonnes in 2007. Similarly, pyrethrum extract recorded a remarkable increase of 32.7 per cent in 2007 to 13.4 tonnes from 10.1 tonnes in 2006. Horticulture registered the highest growth ever, with the value of fresh horticultural export increasing by 51.3 per cent from Kshs43 billion in 2006 to Kshs65.2 billion in 2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me now turn to some of the activities carried out by my Ministry during the 2007/2008 that contributed to economic growth. I will give only a few examples because as you may be aware, to serve the over 3.5 million farm-households, the

activities of my Ministry are numerous.

As promised in the strategy for revitalising agriculture, 2004-2014, the Ministry's Strategic Plan of 2005 to 2010 and the annual performance contract, my Ministry has completely revised the extension service network. You can now see some of our 6,000 extension staff moving from one farm to another with their uniforms. A total of 2.2 million farmers were reached during the year, using different extension methods like field days, farm demonstrations, farm visits and farmers training. That is an improvement from the previous year when 1.74 million farmers were reached.

During the year, the Ministry also began implementing the National Farmers Information Service which is a telephone based information service to farmers. It can be accessed through mobile phones or the internet. Farmers would be able to access information by simply sending an SMS through their mobile phones.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, Agricultural Training Centres, commonly known as ATCs, have been crucial for training and dissemination of new technologies to farmers. Over the last three years, upgrading of existing facilities and construction of new ones has been stepped up, in addition to provision of equipment. In 2007/2008 alone, a total of 54 buildings were renovated, while 13 new hostels and offices were constructed. In addition, agro-processing equipment worth Kshs5 million was purchased and distributed to all ATCs. My Ministry successfully completed the purchase of Waruhiu ATC at a cost of Kshs48 million, and made part payment of Wambugu ATC. The two centres have been under lease to the Government since 1957. Due to the improved status of ATCs, a total of 620 courses were conducted in 2007/2008, with an attendance of approximately 18,600 farmers, staff, youth and other stakeholders, compared to only 451 courses in 2006/2007.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in addition, 341 workshops, seminars and meetings were held and attended by about 11,000 participants. Field demonstrations held in those centres benefited 54,000 farmers, youths and school parties.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry, through the Agricultural Mechanisation Service, commonly known as AMS, spread around the country and made deliberate efforts towards promoting food security through support to water harvesting in marginal areas. Services offered include construction of water pans that will be used for supplementary irrigation by farmers and other users. During the financial year, my Ministry provided 44 double-cabin pick ups and 61 tractors and implements at a cost of Kshs460 million to the Agricultural Machinery Service. The machinery is now being used to plough for farmers and construct water pans for farmers at an affordable cost. The AMS also participated in the resettlement programmes of our Internally Displaced Persons (IDPs).

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the last financial year, my Ministry was allocated Kshs132 million for the development of cotton. That money was used for the establishment of a new Cotton Development Authority to co-ordinate and promote cotton activities; seed bulking, purchase of planting seeds, pesticides, fertiliser and spray pumps for farmers. It was also used for farmer mobilisation and capacity building, strengthening of extension services and promotion of cotton value addition. As a result, the area under cotton increased from 32,000 hectares to 35,000 hectares in 2007. That resulted in production of some 24,900 metric tonnes of seed cotton which earned farmers Kshs501 million.

Mr. Deputy Speaker, Sir, last year, we launched a new programme called the National Accelerated Agricultural Input Access Programme (NAAIAP) at a cost of Kshs245 million. The programme targets resource poor families and farmers with free fertiliser and seeds for, at least, one year. The programme also follows those farmers to ensure that they graduate from Kilimo Plus, which is a very initial step of that programme, to Kilimo Biashara, where they are self-sufficient in food and incomes. The programme operated in 32 districts and assisted 36,000 farmers with a starter kit, which the Kilimo Plus of fertiliser and seed--- Through the programme, farmers have

increased productivity of maize from four bags per acre to 15 to 30 bags per acre. Thus, beneficiaries are assured of food security and surplus for sale and reinvestment in farming.

Among the other partnerships, my Ministry has launched Kilimo-Biashara Partnership with other partners in the sector with the aim of lending approximately Kshs4 billion to promote agricultural activities along the value chain. Since we launched this programme in May, 2007, over 960 farmers have been loaned a total of Kshs780 million at an affordable rate of 10 per cent; also training of agro-dealers to improve service provision to our farmers has received due attention.

[Mr. Deputy Speaker left the Chair]

*[Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker
(Prof. Kaloki) took the Chair]*

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to assure the House that I will put even more effort towards the achievement of food security and incomes for farmers. I intend to continue with the efforts to sustain the gains made by my Ministry in the last five years, and make even more gains. Therefore, I need more financial resources and support from this House. While appreciating the Budgetary allocation the Government has put in my Ministry, I express my sincere appreciation to our development partners for their support to the Ministry to the tune of Kshs3.69 billion that we have received from various donor countries and organizations. The funds will be used to enable us implement the many activities planned by my Ministry in this financial year.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I will now turn to the activities that I have planned to implement with the Budget allocated in this year. First and foremost, I intend to focus my attention towards funding activities that will ensure effective service delivery and sustainable growth of the agricultural sub-sector. Some of the highlights are:-

- (i) to facilitate increased agricultural productivity and output;
- (ii) to promote agricultural products enhancement;
- (iii) to review the development of agricultural policy and legal/regulatory frameworks; and,
- (iv) the management of administrative functions.

The four programmes cover the strategic objectives that my Ministry is implementing within its strategy plan for 2006 to 2010.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, following the creation of additional districts and divisions, there is need to construct and equip offices in the new stations.

In addition, transport facilities have to be improved to the required levels in order to enhance service delivery to the farmers and other clients. There is also need to continue improving the facilities of the Agricultural Training Centres (ATCs) so as to be at par with other institutions offering similar services. In this regard, the Ministry will, during the year 2008/2009, finance construction and refurbishment of 48 stations across the country. In addition, 12 Agricultural Training Centres will be rehabilitated and acquisition of Wambugu ATC will be finalised. The Ministry also plans to continue strengthening the extension services in the country by providing more transport facilities and operational funds. All technical officers will also be provided with uniforms to enhance their visibility. Authority is also being sought from the Ministry of Finance for the employment of additional staff to strengthen the extension services.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry will continue implementing a number of extension projects such as the National Agricultural and Livestock Extension Programme, the Kenya Agricultural Productivity Programme, the Agricultural Sector Programme Support and the Private Sector Development in Agriculture, among others, with support from development partners. I intend to use these donor funds, together with allocated Government counter-funds, to

implement these agricultural extension and development activities planned for this year. With this support, I expect to reach some 2.5 million farmers through farm visits, field days, road shows, training and workshops. In addition, my Ministry will also continue to provide support to research through the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI).

My Ministry will continue to strengthen the Agricultural Mechanisation Service throughout the country, so as to achieve the above goals. To this end, my Ministry will purchase more earth-moving machinery to assist in bush-clearing, land levelling and construction of soil and water conservation structures. Through these programmes, I expect to reach at least 35,000 farmers throughout the country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, good quality planting material is critical for production of any crops, let alone basic food crops. However, some of the food crops such as pulses, legumes, millet, sorghum and root crops, that are suitable for Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs), which we call "orphan crops", do not attract participation of private seed companies for seed multiplication.

The Ministry intends to address the issue of inadequate planting material for ASALs by using various mechanisms to source, multiply and distribute to farmers, the identified crops. These mechanisms will include sub-contracting seed companies to produce some of these seeds and facilitate individual farmers, and ATCs, to carry out multiplication of seeds. Through this programme, I expect to supply half-a-million tonnes of various seeds and planting material. This year, under this programme, we have spent about Kshs150 million; we distributed seeds under this programme to various regions in the country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, despite its potential for food production, Kenya still ranks high among the food insecure countries of the world. In order to achieve food security, my Ministry has initiated, and will continue to implement, a food security programme named "Njaa Marufuku Kenya", whose goal is to contribute to reduction of poverty, hunger and food insecurity among the poor and vulnerable communities by 2015. I intend to reach at least 40,000 poor farmers with this programme. My Ministry will also collaborate with other Ministries implementing food security measures to enhance this programme.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in 2008/2009, my Ministry will continue to support the cotton sub-sector, and will focus on the following areas:-

- (i) promotion of cotton production;
- (ii) bulking of planting seed;
- (iii) purchase of value addition equipment and machinery for training; and,
- (iv) farmers capacity building in value addition, technologies and strengthening of extension service while supporting cotton research and provision of demonstration farm inputs.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in order to further address the problem of food security and poverty reduction among some 3.5 million small-scale farmers, I will continue to implement the National Accelerated Agricultural Input Access Programme, as mentioned earlier. In this financial year, my Ministry intends to reach some 500,000 farmers in 48 districts across the country with the Kilimo-Plus and Kilimo-Biashara packages.

To further demonstrate the Government support to facilitate access to affordable input in the last financial year, we also developed the National Fertiliser Development Strategy and Action Plan, so that we can chart the way forward on improved access and affordability of fertilizer in line with Vision 2030.

To implement the strategy on price reduction through bulk buying of fertiliser, my Ministry will be seeking an additional Kshs6.3 billion to be able to actualise this programme. To enable me effectively implement these activities I have enumerated from paragraphs 18 to 27, I propose to spend Kshs7,805,921,570 under the Recurrent Expenditure, and Kshs5,287,737,194 under the

Development Vote.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the objective of the second programme is to legally empower our stakeholders through improvement of the current agricultural legal and regulatory framework. The process of policy formulation and Bill drafting takes time. Due to numerous Acts that need review, amendment or repeal this process is unlikely to be finished soon. In line with this, one of the flagship projects in Vision 2030 is to prepare a harmonised legislation that reviews all these Acts and addresses them at once. I shall soon lay the Bills on the Table for debate. We have close to 130 different pieces of legislation that govern the agricultural sector. We intend to reduce these 100 or so pieces of legislation to about seven. This will help us manage the sector better and reduce the areas of conflict. In the last three years, we have been preparing these Bills. As I have said I will table them in this House shortly.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, with liberalisation of the agricultural sector, it is critical that enabling regulatory framework be put in place to ensure that all players adhere to set standards and regulations. I will bring to this House legislation to amend the Act under which the Kenya Plant and Health Inspectorate Services (KEPHIS) operate so that we can add additional responsibility to the organisation. This will ensure that they not only deal with plant health but they also begin to deal with issues of fertilizer, pesticides, herbicides and soil conditioning so that the farmer operates with as much information as is practically possible.

To carry out these activities listed from paragraphs 29 to 33, I will seek approval to spend Kshs973,756,996 under the Recurrent Vote and Kshs79,600,000 under the Development Vote.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, my Ministry is also plagued with issues of value addition. We sell our tea under circumstances that are not conducive for the farmer to get as much earnings as possible. Only 1 per cent of all our tea is Value Added. The rest; 99 per cent, is sold in bulk in an auction and we lose our premium tea.

My Ministry will engage in a clear policy on value addition of all our products from tea to coffee, through all our fresh produce. This will ensure that we not only enhance our farmer earnings but also increase our revenue from foreign exchange when we export these products. In these efforts, I intend to spend Kshs136,415,000 under the Recurrent Vote and Kshs305 million under the Development Vote.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, supervision, monitoring and evaluation are critical for success of the implementation of activities. It is for this reason that my Ministry attaches a lot of emphasis on planning and administrative issues. We work in collaboration with international organisations such as FAO, IFAD and International Desert Locust Organisation. However, due to past default in payments, there are arrears that we owe to these organizations which have accumulated and are currently standing at over Kshs700 million. I intend to negotiate a phased out programme to clear these arrears and reduce them to some Kshs390 million. It is the Ministry's intention to have a long-term view towards offsetting all arrears.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to request the House to approve an amount of Kshs13,065,658,764 to meet the Recurrent and Development Expenditure of my Ministry for the year 30th June, 2009.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I beg to move.

The Minister for Public Health and Sanitation (Mrs. Mugo): Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I beg to second the Vote for the Ministry of Agriculture.

Let me start by commending the Minister and his team for striving to make Kenya food sufficient. The biggest responsibility of any government apart from defending its citizens, is to make sure that they are food sufficient and that no citizen goes hungry. That responsibility falls squarely on the Ministry of Agriculture to grow sufficient food for this nation and ensure food security, food safety together with other Government departments.

Mr. Deputy Temporary Speaker, Sir, I want to support highly, the request by the Minister for Agriculture that the budget for the Ministry of Agriculture should be raised much more than it is currently. We all agree that agriculture is the backbone of our economy. It is one of the most important Ministries because it relates to food, and food is health and life just like water.

I would like to see a lot more attention paid to the woman farmer because she is the farmer really, in this country. Majority of the small-scale farmers are women. That is where most of the food for this country comes from. The woman tills the land, goes to the market and puts the food on the table for her family. So, she needs to be supported more and empowered.

We would like to see the services of extension workers rejuvenated all over the country to ensure that farmers get the appropriate technology regarding the growing of crops, storage and marketing. We would like to see women also being given title deeds for the land so that they can also be able to raise more food for their subsistence and also for commercial purpose. We need to improve the market for the farmer.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, let me also touch a bit on food security and safety. Right now, there is a lot of talk about the genetically modified foods and seeds. As a nation, we require more information in this area. We do not know whether these foods are safe for the health of Kenyans.

I would like to ask the Minister for Agriculture and his team to put more focus on the modified seeds. Do we have modified seeds in the market? Is it happening? Is it safe for Kenyans? Do we have a law to regulate their use? That law was brought to this House, but I do not think we passed it. If we did, it has not been implemented. First and foremost, as we ensure food security, we must also ensure food safety. We should ensure that the foods have no health risks.

I also want to talk about the technology of growing food in very small pieces of land. I have visited a couple of agricultural shows and I was very impressed by the way the Ministry of Agriculture is growing food in very small pieces of land or even in drums. They grow enough food to feed a family in drums, considering the fact that most City dwellers do not have a real piece of land to plant vegetables for their families.

I come from a peri-urban constituency, which has some small pieces of land where people can grow food for their families. This happens in many other areas in urban centres. I would like to encourage the Ministry of Agriculture to hold field days and exhibitions, like I have seen in Dagoretti. I was very happy with the Ministry of Agriculture. Many people came to see how this is done and I am sure they have started to grow foods for their families. We should not only do this at the show grounds, but we should also bring it to the people.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to commend the Minister for the Irrigation Programme which I am sure he is working on with the Ministry of Water and Irrigation. If we harvest rain water, this country can be food-sufficient. We have enough land to grow food. We have enough labour. We have all the young people who are loitering because they lack something to do. I hope that the Ministry of Agriculture will team up with the Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports and develop schemes and programmes where these young people can work to produce food for this nation and also earn money for themselves.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we know small countries like Israel are food-sufficient because they use every space well. They use their human resource well. They use modern technology. We have enough experts who can guide our young people instead of them wasting so much time with nothing to do. They should be used to produce food for our consumption and also for export. Our country can become an exporter of food if we revive our agricultural sector.

This will also help us to fight poverty. I believe that our strength for fighting poverty does not lie in industries. It lies in the agro-industry. That is what we have in plenty. If we develop our agriculture, both large and small-scale farming, and make sure that we do not endanger our family

granaries, I believe that poverty will be a thing of the past. We must also encourage our people to value working on their farms. They should not only think about the white collar jobs. They should also look at agriculture as a resource. We have land which is a resource for our people to produce enough food and create enough jobs for everybody in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we should also encourage the line Ministries to come together and form some taskforces to ensure there is food security and safety in our country. We have some taskforces, but I believe they are not operating the way they should. The Ministry of Public Health and Sanitation as well as the Ministry of Agriculture should have a common ground. I want to encourage the Minister for Agriculture to join me, so that we can form a strong union, where we can ensure that our people have enough food to eat, which is also safe.

With those few remarks, I beg to second.

(Question proposed)

The Assistant Minister for Medical Services (Mr. Mungatana): Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want to thank you for giving me this opportunity to also make my contribution to this Motion.

I want to support the Minister in the vision that he has very clearly shown to this House. He has stated that one of the things that he would like to achieve in this budget is to see a commercially-oriented and innovative agriculture for the benefit of our people in keeping with the Vision 2030. I want to state that there are some very good ideas that the Minister has proposed, which we need to support. However, there are things that surely, need to be done for us to achieve a commercially viable agriculture for our society.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, looking at the agricultural sector in the Coast region, one of the things that I have found clearly missing here is that, the Minister has forgotten to talk about the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB). He has mentioned that we are anticipating a shortage of three million bags of maize this year. The average consumption of Kenya is 32 million bags of maize. If people are not encouraged in terms of earnings from the maize crop - I am talking about maize production because it is the main thing in this country - we are not going to have increased production.

In terms of innovation, has the Ministry thought about increasing the number of cereal purchase depots within the Coast region? If people do not see money coming into their pockets, they are unlikely to produce for purposes of securing increased production in agriculture.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in terms of innovation and thinking commercially for the ordinary people of the Coast Province and many other regions, the Minister should increase the purchase power of the NCPB. Currently, I am aware of a NCPB depot which is buried somewhere in Kwale. It has even got into the people's mentality that they are only growing maize for purposes of feeding their families. If people are not told that they can make money from growing maize, then the strategy of making agriculture commercially viable is going to fail. I want to plead with the Minister that he must start focusing on those food deficit regions in order for us to increase production. It is not enough to sell machinery and all those programmes without making a fundamental change in the minds of the people. That would be by making money available and constructing depots to purchase the food that will be produced.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the second point is still sticking on the vision of creating commercially viable agriculture. If you look at the Coast region and the lower Ukambani area, mango production has been a source of income for many families for many years. When you look at the Tana Delta and come down towards the Athi Delta down here, fruits are grown in large quantities. But the mango fruit, which has been a source of sustenance for many families, has

received absolutely no mention in terms of the Ministry's priorities! Then what happens? What happens is that the commercial-mindedness of producing that crop goes down! People are not encouraged to be rich in terms of production!

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have seen here that the Minister intends to spend Kshs132 million for cotton development alone. If you look at the target of cotton, without saying that, that is not important, it is grown for export. The number of catchment areas and the money that is going to be produced is not comparable to mango production! Mangoes have been there for many years and yet, we do not see innovation in the Ministry to try and trap that agriculturally and commercially viable production.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we would like to see, in the next Budget or in his Revised Estimates, the creation of a Mango Development Authority, so that more people could be trapped into the economic chain in this country. It is not enough to fear these things. These things must be put into reality. The reality is that thousands of families depend on the mango crop. There is a huge market, as you are aware, but it is not being tapped. The people, therefore, are losing. The country is the net loser.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I was very happy to hear about the plans that the Minister has in terms of reducing the number of Acts of Parliament that govern the agricultural sector. Time has come for all of us to look again at the laws that we have been making and the policies that have governed the making of those laws. So, that move, in particular, to harmonise legislation across the board is a very, very welcome move and we should support it.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, right now, we have a big menace, not only in my constituency, Garsen, but in many parts of the country, where people are living close to the wildlife, or even with cattle and other animals. There is a totally outdated policy in terms of valuation of crops in the event that wildlife attacks your farms and destroy everything. The amount of money that is allocated for paying maize or tree plants that are still growing is almost peanuts!

There is a great need for a change of policy in that direction. Farmers take a long time to put in money, inputs, fertiliser and investments into the growing of crops. But when an hippopotamus, for example, walks out and eats all your rice crop at one go, the agricultural officers--- If it is animals like cows or goats which have come and fed on your farm crops, the amount of compensation from the agricultural officers is peanuts! That has really created poor people across the country! When you look around, the people who have been attacked by wild animals like elephants and other animals--- That policy has, more than anything else, returned people backwards! Agricultural officers are people who have an attitude that is not acceptable. That is because when they come to see your maize crop, just say: "This is a few shillings!" If it is a goat or a cow that is lost, for any reason, the kind of assessment that is given is always different.

So, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we would like to see a policy change in that direction. Even in the question of the law that allows compulsory acquisition of land by the Ministry of Agriculture, that law has not been utilised because the Minister has not been given sufficient coverage! So, we have had an issue in terms of how does the Minister and the Ministry make policies that will increase agricultural input, output and value across the country? In some areas, where the farms ought to be consolidated or acquired to increase production, that is not being done or effected because the legal provisions are very weak! That particular move has been and should be very, very welcome.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, finally, in supporting this Vote, we would like to see a strong move in the Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs) towards increased production of seeds that survive in that area. That is because every time we hear about the tree crops of coffee, tea and pyrethrum, we do not hear about ASALs.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, with those few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Wamalwa: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I also rise to support the Motion. This a very important Vote. When our founding fathers founded this nation, they declared that the most important things in this nation that we had to fight with at the dawn of Independence was hunger, disease and ignorance. Poverty ensures hunger in this nation. When you look at the three, you will find that a nation that is not self-sufficient in food--- A hungry nation cannot be a stable nation!

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that, amongst the three, if we were to look at the Ministry of Agriculture, which ensures our national food security; if we were to look at the Ministry of Health, which deals with disease; if we were to look at the Ministry of Education, which deals with education and the fight against ignorance, you will find that they are all very important Ministries. Out of the three, the Ministry of Agriculture is the one that has been given the least attention and resources and yet, it is the most important!

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I listened to my pastor last Sunday during the service and he was talking about faith, hope and love. He said that, amongst the three, the most important was love. But I believe that amongst the three Ministries, the most important, really, is the Ministry of Agriculture. That is because without feeding a nation--- Or anyone who is not able to feed his family cannot be respected! Any child going to school hungry will learn nothing. Any nation, however secure in terms of military equipment, but with hunger, is the most insecure nation on earth.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, looking at history, the greatest army of Napoleon Bonaparte was defeated because of hunger, and the cold winter in Russia, yet it had the largest army and the best equipment. In Kenya, we have given our No.1 slot to education, defence and health and have forgotten about agriculture. The Kshs13 billion that the Minister is seeking today is far from enough, especially in a year like this. With the post-election violence, we know what happened in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, official Government records show that about three million bags of maize were burnt and destroyed. This country faces a food deficit, because many farmers were IDPs. I come from Trans Nzoia. It is the food basket of Kenya, yet it was one of the hardest hit in terms of violence. Many of the farmers were not able to access their farms, and those who were able to do so, could not afford inputs.

The price of fertiliser doubled from Kshs1,800 to Kshs4,000. Two weeks ago, I raised an issue in this House that the price of fertiliser had skyrocketed to Kshs6,500 per bag. The Minister has assured that they were going to import subsidised fertiliser. He indicated that by Friday last week, the fertiliser would be in this country. If this did not happen, they would resign. Well, I do not know if the Minister has resigned or not.

I do not know if this subsidised fertiliser is in the country or not, but I know that we have a perennial problem of fertiliser in this country. We must come up with strategies on how we can establish a fertiliser factory in this country, where we can produce fertiliser and avail inputs to farmers at affordable prices. This would boost productivity.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, every year, as we approach the planting season, we are always late in accessing or importing fertiliser. The Minister has been at pains before this House, trying to explain what they are trying to do about fertiliser, yet we are always late. Whenever the fertiliser arrives, it is at unaffordable prices and farmers are not able to plant on time or as they may wish.

When Heads of State met in Maputo, in their wisdom, they declared that each country shall strive to, at least, set aside 10 per of their annual budgets for agriculture. Kenya was one of the countries that subscribed to this declaration in Maputo. Up to now, we are told that five countries have complied. Where is Kenya? We heard of poorer countries than Kenya, that are now self-

sufficient in food.

We have heard about the story of Malawi. This was a country whose population relied on relief food, but through proper planning, commitment by the government and allocation of enough resources to the agricultural sector, today, as we speak, Malawi is one of the countries that are a success story in turning around the situation and achieving national food security. It is not only doing that, but Malawi is now able to export food. Why can Kenya not do this? We have very able, qualified and learned manpower in the Ministry and in the country. What we have been lacking is the goodwill to support this very important Ministry, and this must be done. Though we support this Motion, we feel very strongly that the money allocated is not enough. When the Minister comes back, we must support that more funds are allocated to this very crucial Ministry.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we will also be urging that the Ministry should look at such institutions as the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) and the Agricultural Development Corporation (ADC). These are institutions that have been helping the Kenyan farmer.

In May 2008, this House passed a Motion, that because of the devastation by the post-election violence, we would have a reprieve for the farmers by writing off the AFC loans owed by farmers who were affected by the conflict and are unable to service them. Though, as my friend Maj-Gen. Nkaiserry has said, this was passed this House, up to now, nothing has been done. I did not hear the Minister mention anything or any intention to do anything about restructuring the AFC, or doing something to help farmers access finance. We appreciate the *Kilimo Biashara* initiative, but where is the AFC in all this? This is the natural home of farmers, but nothing has been done. Farmers still continue to lose their farms.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, after the post-election violence, it is business as usual, farms are being auctioned and no regard has been given to what this House passed concerning the suffering of farmers of Kenya. We urge that something be done to restructure AFC and the ADC. If enough funds are given, these two institutions can be revamped so as to help the Kenyan farmers and, through that, boost productivity in this country.

I am very happy to hear the Minister say that they are going to put in more money towards extension services. This was one service that was very effective in the late 1980s and 1990s, but as we speak, the extension service workers hardly access farmers. Farmers need this help! They need to be educated, not only through annual agricultural shows, but also need extension service providers to go out to the villages and to their farms, however small or large, to bring the farmer up to date with the latest technology and inputs. This is a crucial aspect in the war against hunger and poverty in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also very pleased to hear the Minister talk about restructuring KEPHIS and extending the mandate, so that it will not only be looking at the health but also at the issue of fertiliser. This is something that we need to support, because we have very qualified technical staff at KEPHIS that I believe are under-utilised. We need to put in more to ensure that more of this reaches the farmer.

I wish to also state that in the area of wheat growing, it is shocking to hear that we are only able to produce 40 per cent, and we end up importing 60 per of our wheat, yet when you go to Narok and other parts of this country, there is enough land. We do not understand what is happening, but this is one area I would expect that the Ministry would put in more, so that we can produce more and achieve national food security.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

The Assistant Minister for Agriculture (Mr. Ndambuki): Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me this opportunity to support this Vote.

From the outset, I would like to thank the Minister and the entire Ministry for maintaining a good record, and the write-up that has been presented to this House. We know that if there is a

Ministry that goes through a lot of problems, it is the Ministry of Agriculture. You can tell this by the Questions which we get in this House. A day never passes without a Question to the Ministry of Agriculture. This is evidence of the kind of problems we face.

There are so many Ministries, which get a lot of money compared to the Ministry of Agriculture, yet this is the only Ministry that can help this country to put food on the table at an affordable price. If given enough funding and support, I can assure you that, with the personnel and the know-how the Ministry has, we can change things in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you go to the Ministry and look at what they have done, although it has not been quite passed over to the Kenyan citizens, you will notice that they have done great. When it comes to research, the Ministry with its stakeholders have done a wonderful job of multiplying seeds. We cannot meet the demand of the seeds. I am sure that you are a witness to this because I was talking to you about seeds. We are unable to meet the demand for seeds in Kenya. For us to close that gap, this Ministry needs a lot of money.

The Ministry needs to be given money for research which is going to be channelled to the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI) which has really helped this country, although many people do not know that. Although its land in various stations has been grabbed, it has continued to do great.

Of late, KARI has come up with many different types of seeds which are weather and disease resistant. Others are early maturing seeds which lead to higher yields, for example, of potatoes and cassava. If you see what they have done with cassava, you cannot believe it because they have come up with a fast maturing type of cassava which leads to high yields. You can harvest 40 tonnes of cassava from one hectare using this seed type. They have also gone further and come up with what they call value addition to this cassava. You can eat *chapati*, *mandazi* or *ugali* made from cassava. These are the kind of things that we need more money to invest in. I am sure we will be able to minimise the problem of famine that we have been facing.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is interesting when you hear most of the hon. Members here talk of only two types of foods which are maize and beans. That is why we have famine year in, year out. We have forgotten other crops like millet, sorghum, cow peas and many others. If we could encourage our people to plant some of them, we would solve the problem of famine. They do not need a lot of rain to mature. As Members of this House, we should advise our farmers not to concentrate on maize and beans only but plant other crops which are really favourable in our areas.

The Ministry has even go further to sell fertiliser at subsidised rates. This is the first time it is happening. If you go to town to buy fertiliser, you will find that they are selling Di-Ammonium Phosphate (DAP) fertiliser at Kshs6,600 per bag. No farmer can afford this price. However, now, the fertiliser that is coming will be sold at under Kshs4,000 and this is really a great reduction. That element of reduction is going to be borne by the Government. So, we really need to support this Ministry by asking the Government to allocate it more money so that we can address food security in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like this Ministry to have a demonstration farm in every constituency. Some of the demonstration farms are too far that they cannot be reached by many people. If a single demonstration farm could be located in every constituency, many people would visit it and learn at the same time. Even our students would visit such farms and learn. We can use these demonstration farms also for seed multiplication because we need a lot of seed to fight famine that has been ravaging this country.

The Ministry has also really tried with some interventions. For example, the other day, we had Kshs3.2 billion which is supposed to be borrowed by cereal growers and dealers of fertiliser. These are some of the interventions to make farming easier for our farmers because they cannot

access money to buy fertiliser at the current market prices. It is true that we have been having field days. Since I came to this Ministry, I have gone to more than 20 field days but they are not enough. We need to have many more field days so that our farmers can see the different kinds of crops and seeds they can plant in their areas.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other issue we need to deal with, is the one of fake seeds. The Kenya Plant and Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) has really tried to reduce the number of fake seeds. We know that some years back, our farmers bought fake seeds, chemicals and fertilisers but KEPHIS has reduced some of these instances. For example, the organisation has come up with an emergency number and I would like hon. Members to note it down so that they can inform their farmers what kind of maize seed is favourable in their areas. It is a very simple number. You can send a Short Message Service (SMS) to either Celtel or Safaricom by using the following procedure: "Maize#(hush) and then you write your division and send it to 2964 and you will be given a list of all types of maize seeds which can be grown in your own division. This is one way and we are also trying to encourage KEPHIS to even do more more with other crops so that we can really fight these fake seed sellers.

We have also increased our investigations and dealings with seed growers. We need to also come up with regulations to control these seed growers because the multiplication of seeds is on the

increase and we want to make sure that we get seeds of high quality and resistant to some of the diseases. We can only do that if this Ministry is given enough funding and facilitated. The extension officers should be able to move from one place to another. I thank the Ministry because most of our extension officers can now move from point "a" to "b" to do their work. You can now see them in uniforms. You can identify them from a crowd of people. They are also motivated. So, I would like hon. Members to make use of these officers. You should visit and invite them to your constituencies. Until we as leaders start farming, our people will not take it seriously. We have to take it seriously.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

The Assistant Minister, Ministry of State for Defence (Maj-Gen. Nkaisserry): Thank you Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me the opportunity to contribute to this very important Vote.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, first of all, I would like to commend the Minister, Assistant Ministers and the entire technocrats of the Ministry for presenting a very workable budget, despite the fact that it is under-funded.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the overall goal of the Ministry is to achieve food security. Achieving food security for our country requires that the Ministry is funded accordingly. When you look at the Ministry's budget in the financial year 2008/2009, it translates to roughly Kshs13.1 billion. To me, for the Ministry to achieve food security, that is an unfair allocation. If we do not achieve food security, we will continue on the dependency syndrome of relief food. There are quite a number of strategies that the Minister put across while presenting the Vote of his Ministry. He alluded to the fact that there is an increase in maize and wheat production. But if the Ministry was given more money, it would have made a great difference.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, according to the Minister, the horticultural sector raises about Kshs65 billion from foreign earnings. If we were able to produce maize, which is the staple food for Kenyans, the amount of money we use to import food would be ploughed back to improve seed quality and expand the acreage of farms under maize, beans and wheat. While I commend the technocrats of the Ministry, I would have expected them to come up with a strategy on how to increase maize, wheat and beans production. These are the staple foods for this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, if you take the example of ASAL areas, I think the

Ministry has not done enough to ensure that those millions of acres can be used to produce these staple foods for Kenyans. We have a problem of climate change. So, we cannot rely very much on the rains. So, the Ministry should have come up with plans for irrigation. They should have come up with plans to put up irrigation schemes.

I would like to tell my friend, the Assistant Minister for Agriculture, that we require a demonstration farm, at least, in every constituency. This is where farmers could come to learn how to produce crops in their farms. However, we can only achieve this if we have the resources. As I said, with a budget of Kshs7.8 billion for Recurrent Expenditure and Kshs5.2 billion for Development Expenditure, I do not think the Ministry will be able to achieve the overall goal of food security for this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think the Ministry requires to be supported. It should at least be funded to a tune of not less than Kshs25 billion. That way, we can demand irrigation, demonstration farms and agricultural training centres (ATCs) in every location. We are not producing enough food because sometimes, we do not have the technology and know-how. Therefore, if these services can be found at the locational level, food production will increase in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry has gone out of its way to help Kenyans. It has written-off loans to coffee farmers to the tune of Kshs3.2 billion. The Ministry is also planning to write-off loans for sugar-cane farmers to the tune of Kshs42 billion. What is amazing is that the Ministry is not even thinking about writing-off the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) loans owed by farmers. However, these loans are not more than Kshs300 million. The Ministry does not have a plan to cushion livestock farmers who took loans through AFC. I would also like to appeal to the Government to consider waiving loans for livestock farmers.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, many years ago, the former regime wrote-off AFC loans. However, the loans were never written-off. The AFC technocrats made sure that the farmers still owed the parastatal those loans and the interest continued to accumulate. Now, they are not able to repay the loans. We have just come out of a drought spell between 2005 and 2006. I would like to say it here without any fear of contradiction that, the farmers will never pay the loans because they do not have the means to pay them.

It is, therefore, important for the Ministry to go back to its books and see how it can mitigate this problem. This amount is not more than Kshs300 million. If the Ministry can write-off Kshs3.2 billion and it is also contemplating to write-off Kshs42 billion, why can they not waive the Kshs300 million owed by livestock farmers? I would like to appeal to the Ministry to consider this request.

I was requested by my constituents that if I had the opportunity, I should pass this message to the Ministry of Agriculture which is in-charge of AFC. They are not prepared to pay the loans because they do not have the means to pay. Therefore, the only option open is to write-off the loans. How can we write-off these loans? The Ministry needs to look for funds to cushion AFC. We know AFC must survive. So, cushioning AFC will be the best way out of this problem.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to propose to the Ministry that ASAL districts have not been given due consideration on production of food. As I said earlier, if we can have ATCs and machinery in all the constituencies, I think the issue of food production will be improved.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Minister talked of substantial financial resource requirement. However, he has not told us how we could get this to enable the Government to support the Ministry.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Konchella: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for giving me this

opportunity to contribute.

I also stand to support the Ministry's Budget as proposed by the Minister. He has shown that he is able to turn around the agricultural sector in this country, at least, from what we have heard him saying. But it looks to some of us that the Ministry of Agriculture is about traditional agriculture. It has nothing about the future or arid and marginalised areas. Ukambani, today, is almost a net recipient of relief food. Even when the Assistant Minister spoke here, he was not able to tell us about any programmes for irrigation in Ukambani, so that the people can feed themselves as opposed to being net receivers of relief food.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in my own constituency, we grow maize and other agricultural crops. Every time the maize is ready for harvest so that the farmer can sell, the Ministry has no money. So, half of that maize ends up going to other places. Farmers in other districts buy maize very cheaply because of the flooded market. As a result, right now, the four litre tin that is used to sell maize in rural areas costs Kshs100, as opposed to Kshs30 or Kshs40 before. That is because the Ministry has depleted all the maize stocks in the Kilgoris Depot to feed the rest of the country. Yet, when we had maize to sell to the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB), the Ministry had no money to buy that maize. So, that is one of the things that I would like to ask the Minister.

We have two harvesting seasons in Trans Mara; January and, sometimes, July. Could the Ministry allocate money to the NCPB so that, when the farmers are ready to sell their maize, it can buy it? We are able to supply between 200 and 400 bags as a district. Right now, there is a problem. In my own district, which is a net producer of maize, people are not able to eat. They are going hungry because their maize has been taken away. I think we should have a minimum stock holding in every district. People who sell their maize must have something left to feed their families. So, that is one problem.

I want to echo what Maj-Gen. Nkaisserry has said about arid areas with regard to livestock farmers. The livestock farmer is the most marginalised person in this Republic. That is because when the Ministry considers writing-off loans, it is only for traditional farmers - coffee, tea or other agricultural crops. That is simply because majority of people who work in the Government come from those traditional farming areas. Therefore, those from arid areas are really marginalised not just in terms of agricultural inputs, but also in the *Jazima* thing. The other day, we saw Turkana dying of hunger. There is rainfall once in a year in that place. We can use that area for farming because the soil is very fertile.

One of the things that we would like to ask the Ministry of Agriculture and the Government is to allocate money to the people to produce their own food in those regions. It is a big problem. People are dying because of lack of planning by the Government. Rural people cannot plan for themselves. It is the Government that can plan for them. Otherwise, a nation that cannot feed its own people really, is not a nation. That is why we have all those problems. It is a shame that people can die in a country that is able to feed itself.

I agree on the 10 per cent allocation of Government Expenditure to this Ministry. The Ministry should tell us if it has got the additional allocation by the Government. What is it going to do to make sure that it does not end up with Anglo Leasing type of projects? We used to have something called Ken- Ren which should have produced fertilisers in this country for about 40 years. I do not know whether it is there or not. People are talking of wanting to start it all over again. I hope we are not going to end up with another Anglo Leasing project. I think the people of Kenya need managers of their economy for the future of their children. We do not want managers and distractors who will make everybody poor and a few rich. The rich will become richer and the poor, poorer.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I had an investor in my constituency who wanted to

put up a sugar factory. Indeed, we produce the highest amount of sugar-cane that we supply to South Nyanza Sugar Company (SONY). That sugar factory has no capacity to crush the cane. So, sugar-cane ends up staying in the farms for sixty months. By the time you take it to the sugar factory, the sugar content is very low. It is actually not able to pay the loan or even the inputs by the farmer. That investor tried for three to four years to apply for the licence and meet the requirements. That investor is not using money from the Ministry of Agriculture or the Government. He is using his own money to put up a factory and help the farmers to improve their livelihood.

But the Ministry of Agriculture, through the Kenya Sugar Board, which I think is the most corrupt organisation in this country, deliberately refused to license those people. Now, the people of Trans Mara have lost jobs because the proposed factory would have employed between 300 to 400 people. Under what law did the Kenya Sugar Board refuse an investor to put up a factory that would have crushed and extracted sugar from sugar-cane?

There are some regulations that are an impediment to the development of this nation? When we talk about Vision 2030--- We will never attain it when we have Kenyans who are holding positions in the Government and whose motive is to enrich themselves through corruption. Their motive is to ensure that nobody else is able to have a future. That is why Africans are poor. It takes about three to four years for an investor in this country to create jobs by putting up an industry. In Rwanda, it takes one week. Why? Those people think about their people. They think about the future of their nation.

It is high time the people of Kenya and, particularly, employees of the Government, realised that they earn their salaries because the people of Kenya pay their taxes. They should improve and enhance the people of Kenya's ability to access jobs, particularly our youth. Today, I would have employed 300 to 400 youths in Trans Mara. But officials of the Kenya Sugar Board cannot give a license because they want to be paid certain amounts of money or there are rules that must be met. I do not know what rules because the land does not belong to them. It belongs to my people who grow sugar-cane. That sugar-cane is rotting in the farms. It is a pity and a shame.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we are able to grow tea in Trans Mara, and we have enough land to even grow maize. In most of the traditional farming areas, there have been subdivisions of land and now it is so small that it is agriculturally unviable. I expect the Ministry of Agriculture to look at the country and think about where they can expand food production. Trans Mara is one area where we can expand food production because we can grow tea and maize there, but the agricultural machinery that farmers can hire is in Kericho. When you go there, they are being used to work in one or two acres small farms, yet we have 100 acres where the farmers can grow maize.

I want the Ministry of Agriculture to give priority in terms of land use, by supporting farmers who are able. I am asking the Minister to bring some agricultural machinery to Trans Mara and Kilgoris. When that is done, we will produce up to 300,000 or 400,000 bags in a year. We have land but farmers cannot afford to produce enough food. We can also grow tea like any other area.

With those few remarks. I beg to support.

Mr. Muthama: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I rise to support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture, which is a very important Ministry in our country. It is a Ministry which the livelihoods of Kenyans depend on. As we all know, food provides national security, and that needs a lot of seriousness. Farmers of this country have suffered under extremely difficult conditions, and due to that, the common *mwanachi* has continued to suffer. This country has been unable to produce enough food for the people. Since Independence in 1963, we have been struggling to feed our people. We have imported food, borrowed and begged other countries to assist us with food.

You will be in agreement with me, and I say this on behalf of all Kenyans, that a country that cannot feed its citizens is a country that can be regarded as the poorest in the world. We have made many steps in development in different areas but the production of food has completely derailed and affected development in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, Kenyans have fought and killed one another due to land. Kenyans do not just want to sit on it but to produce food. Kenyans believe in food. Every human being in the world will consider their way forward if there is enough food to feed themselves and their family. Kenya, as a country, has failed in that area completely. We have discussed, issued statements and written books, but implementing the theories has been next to impossible. Today, Kenya is a country that can produce coffee. Our coffee is among the best in the world, but the industry has been completely been shut down unceremoniously and quietly. Something somewhere has gone wrong.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, Kangundo Constituency used to produce a lot of coffee. There was a lot of money when coffee was being sold to generate good income for this country. Today, farmers have planted maize, beans and other crops, so that they are able to get food.

It is common knowledge that we all have different talents. We have farmers who grow coffee, sell it and it is exported to earn this country foreign currency, which is converted into local currency and paid to farmers who, in turn buy maize and other foodstuffs. This is not the case. Money has been set aside by this Ministry to buy maize and beans, but there is no allocation to coffee or tea farming. If the market in Europe, or overseas, is affected, the farmer in Kenya is affected; there is no programme that has been laid down by the Ministry to rescue that kind of a situation.

My kind request to the Minister is that funds must be set aside, and production in this country should not be left in the hands of foreigners to play around with, control, dominate and tell us what to do. They wake up one morning and decide the price of tea or coffee and the Government allows them to market our produce. In this situation, the farmers who grow coffee and tea are paid the lowest price. My kind request to the Minister is that he should set funds aside, so that when the market is accepted in Europe, or overseas, the Ministry should buy and store the farmers' produce and sell it when the price is good.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the backbone of the economy in this country is agriculture. Anybody who thinks otherwise is cheating himself or herself. Regarding the issue of fertiliser, we have talked here, Questions have been asked and there have been promises that prices are going to be brought down, but nothing has taken place. For how long are we going to tell our farmers that the House is still debating the issue, and that the prices are going to be brought down, or that the Government is going to be involved and soon or later, the commodity will be affordable?

The issue of fertiliser prices has been a dream. The leadership of this country has denied Kenyans their rights. Today, we are buying mango juice imported from South Africa when our mangoes are rotting. What is the Ministry of Agriculture doing to put in place programmes that will ensure that not only is the produce of Kenyans guarded, but also benefits them.

We all know that if Ukambani, some parts of Coast Province, Eastern Province, North Eastern Province and Central Province have enough water, it will be very easy for the Government to supplement the produce that comes from Rift Valley and western Kenya, and this country will have enough food. Where do we get Kshs10 billion when there is drought to import food, and when there is no drought that money is not there? Where does that come from when it cannot be found now and be used to give Kenyans water, so that they can produce their own food.

We are sending our children to school on empty tummies. There is no way they will listen

and understand the teacher because they are hungry and are looking for food. The school-feeding programme by the Government is a great shame. The Government gives two bags of maize and one bag of beans to a school, and we are told that the Government has tried its best to feed our children. Four hundred students cannot be fed on two bags of maize and one bag of beans. It is a shame!

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry should come up with a programme. The Government should know that Kenyans are getting tired. I am saying that Kenyans are getting tired up to a point where, sooner or later, they will burn those bags of maize. Those bags of maize do not take them anywhere! We want a proper programme. Kenyans have a right to get it. They deserve it!

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, it does not stop there. With regard to dairy farming, in North Eastern Kenya, we have many animals. When there is a drought, those animals die and farmers lose money. I wonder whether it is extremely difficult, with all the experience we have in this country, for the Ministry to set aside funds and rescue livestock farmers in those areas. The Government can do so by buying the animals, slaughter them and store that meat. It can even sell that meat to Kenyans. Forget about exporting it! Export is also very important and we know that it generates good income for Kenyans.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, with those few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Yinda: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for noticing me. I appreciate that you have given me time to support the Vote. I would like to thank the Minister for bringing the Vote, so that we can discuss it and support him.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Agriculture is very important. But, as my colleagues have said, the budget that is allocated to the Ministry is way too low.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I think that, that budget should be much higher. As the Minister said, if he brings the requirement for additional funding, this House should give him all the support that he requires.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, this country can grow almost anything. We have very fertile and beautiful land. We have natural rivers. We have lakes. We have almost everything! Yet, when you hear about food shortages, you may even think that we live somewhere in the desert!'

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, this country is not meeting its food requirements basically because of poor policies. We do not have strong policies in place and, if we have them, we are not using them. Maybe, it is high time we started looking at our strengths, weaknesses and possibilities of making sure that we provide enough food for this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the Ministry of Agriculture is way too large. The Minister told us today that there are about seven sub-sectors of the Ministry. In many countries of the world--- For example, in Sri Lanka and India, the tea sub-sector is, in itself, a full ministry. That is not happening here. That is why you find that the Ministry is over-stretched. This is because it is dealing with too many issues. It is my feeling that at a later stage, we need two Ministries to deal with agriculture.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when you look at coffee, for example, Kenyan coffee used to be very famous. It used to fetch a lot of money. But I think we are to blame. Farmers are not well informed that, if prices are high today, it does not necessarily mean that they will remain high all the time.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, there are times when there are over-productions. More so, Kenya is not the only country that is growing coffee or tea. Therefore, it is also good to educate farmers that prices of commodities in the world will always depend on supply and demand.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I heard the Minister talking about value addition for tea and coffee. All that is very good. But we must also admit that, even if we go into value addition, we are still going to compete with other traders who are already in value addition. Value addition also, is affected by many other issues, for example, infrastructure. You may want to do

value addition but, when you look at where you transport, for example, your tea, there are no roads.

We do not have roads in this country. Three-quarters of our road network is gone! Electricity costs are too high! The availability of water is also a problem and, if you get it, it is very costly. So, before we can even talk about value addition, it is good to plan how we are going to reach there. At the moment, I think it is a tall order to talk about value addition before we deal with some of the issues that I have mentioned.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, cotton used to be a very profitable crop in many areas in this country. Nyanza, for example, used to grow high quality cotton. But, at the moment, nobody wants to grow cotton simply because of lack of a market. If there is a market, the price is not correct.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, with regard to tea, for example, it is an industry that has worked. It is always very strange in this country that we go out of our way to mess up with things that are working well. We have gone out of our way to kill institutions that have worked. Once upon a time, we used to have Kenya Farmers Association (KFA). It was the link between farmers. It used to provide farm implements. But it took only one day to kill KFA because one individual, who was running it, was not in favour with the Government of the day! We started Kenya Grain Growers Co-operative Union (KGGCU). I do not know where it went! At the moment, we are talking about National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) dealing with farm implements. But even now, NCPB is not in many areas in this country. I would like to see a situation where NCPB has depots in all the constituencies in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to see the Ministry seriously subsidising farmers with low cost fertilisers and seeds. That is because without those two, it is going to be very difficult to increase food production in this country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, irrigation and dams go hand in hand, and I would like to ask the Ministry of Agriculture to look at ways of improving irrigation systems and dams in this country. I think this is an area where both the Ministry of Agriculture and the Ministry of Water and Irrigation need to work together. Dams could help in many areas in this country by increasing agricultural production in the dry or semi arid areas.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, extension officers play a major role in this country. There were times when extension officers were almost everywhere assisting farmers. At the moment, I am afraid to say that extension officers are no where to be seen. These are the people who should work very closely with the farmers to educate and help them till their land, and grow crops that would give them high yields; this can happen only if these officers work. I would like to see the Ministry get strict and ensure that all the constituencies have Agricultural Extension Officers to help the farmers.

I will now turn to the price of commodities. At the moment, we have a problem with Pakistan, which is one of the largest buyers of tea from this country. The problem is simple; it is that Pakistan feels that they also grow rice which Kenya needs. Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, at the moment, Pakistan has reduced their local tax on tea to 10 per cent. They have reduced their tax on Kenyan tea to 10 per cent. They are looking at the possibility of the Government of Kenya reducing tax on Pakistani rice coming to Kenya. We cannot underestimate Pakistan, because they are buying a lot of our tea and without their support, the tea prices will deatinately go down.

With those few remarks, I beg to support.

The Assistant Minister for Education (Prof. Olweny): Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I want to make a few comments in support of the Motion.

In this country, we are not doing enough to produce our own food. The Government is not doing enough to produce enough food to feed Kenyans. We, as a country, as I have said, are doing

too little to feed our people. The Ministry of Agriculture is not doing enough with regard to production of food in this country. We cannot expect to get enough food if farmers are not being supported. With the agriculture that I know, farmers must be supported.

If you go to the US, Europe, Asia and China, India and Japan farmers are supported. If you go to Australia, farmers are supported. Why are we not supporting ours? Colonialists used to support farmers in this country, but when we took over the Government, somewhere along the line, this practice was stopped. Farmers must be supported in one way or another. You can call it guaranteed minimum returns scheme or anything. Get the best word for it; there are some words which our development partners do not want us to use, but the best way to produce enough food is for farmers to be supported.

Look at the price of fertiliser today. Who can afford it? It is too expensive! The Government must find a way of subsidizing the cost of inputs. Farmers must be subsidised. You can use whatever word you want to use like "production support" or whatever it is, but farmers must be supported for us to get enough food. Otherwise, we do not have enough.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, one of my colleagues has just talked about extension workers. Extension services are also a must. For me, there is no point of having officers at the headquarters here formulating policies and coming up with good ideas, and researchers doing all the work they are doing in this country if we do not have the link between the results of research and the consumers, who are the farmers. That is the agriculture that I learnt at the university. Our Government must give the Ministry of Agriculture enough money to employ extension workers. Another problem is that the Ministry does not have enough resources to employ extension workers, at least for the subsistence farmers. Other commercial large scale farmers can employ - of course they have them - their own extension workers, but the bulk of the farmers must have extension services rendered to them. So, the Treasury must avail enough money for the Ministry of Agriculture to have extension workers, otherwise we are just playing games and I do not see us getting anywhere with it. Today, the food we are producing in Kenya is the equivalent of what the US used to produce in the 19th Century. We cannot feed our people!

When it comes to technology, we have very good researchers in this country, and they are doing very good work. But something has come up in the world today; it is called "Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO)". I do not know what this thing is like to Kenyans, politicians, people in the civil society and some people who claim to be farmers, yet they do not have an acre to cultivate. They just say that we are going to kill them.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I want any political leader in this country to tell me who has died when she or he fed on foodstuffs that resulted from research. Who has died; but how many people died yesterday on the roads because of automobile technology? How many died the other day? Tell me! Even here, many of us are wearing cotton fabric. Some of the beautiful shirts that we have could be made of GMO cotton. Who is complaining of body itching? Let us not block technology. The world is moving and you hear hon. Members also complaining that people are bringing bad technology here. I think it is wrong for law makers to dream of things that have never been. Let us not block technology! Biotechnology is with us; it is in the whole world; if Kenyans want to block it, it will be bad for us. The world is moving so fast away from us.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, 70 per cent of the economy of my constituency is from the sugar-cane industry. That is what we feed on. Sugar money is what took me to school because the first sugar-cane factory was put up in my constituency in the 1920s. We have problems in the sugar industry in my constituency. Miwani Sugar Factory is in receivership and it is in fact, rotting. Muhoroni Sugar Factory has been in receivership for all that time. The former Minister for Agriculture in the last Government, hon. Kirwa, said that he was going to do something to improve the status of the sugar industry in my constituency. Nothing happened until the last month of the

last Government in November when they came up with the idea of selling Miwani which is a rotting factory through privatisation, but things went the wrong way. The same happened to Muhoroni.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, today, there are receiver managers on the ground but they want to change them. Is changing the management the problem? The Ministry of Agriculture must tell us the truth. Changing the receiver managers will not solve the problem of that factory. It will not! We know very well that even Miwani has been in court ever since and some people in the Kenya Sugar Board (KSB) and Ministry of Agriculture just think of changing the management. Is that the solution to the problem? Will it be the solution to sugar industry problems in Muhoroni constituency?

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when they were giving a licence to a man in Kibos to put up a factory, I warned them that they were going to create problems. Yesterday, there was a physical fight between managers of Kibos and Muhoroni sugar factories over sugar-cane. Either politicians or our professionals do not want to listen to other people's advice. Now, we have a very serious problem because people literally fought yesterday. Someone was injured while fighting over sugar-cane. I told the former Minister, hon. Kirwa, that this was going to cause a big problem and now they fought yesterday. They are still going to fight and the police are involved.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I usually inform officers in the Ministry of Agriculture but they do not want to listen to me. I have also informed the KSB people and they too, do not want to listen since some of them have special interests. I hear someone has an interest of bringing back one of the former receiver managers who was kicked out because he messed up with money.

The Ministry of Agriculture should be serious when it comes to addressing the problems facing the sugar industry because the same things that hon. Ruto is talking about today used to be said by hon. Kirwa. He said that we are going to privatise and do this. Was it ever done? Nothing was done.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am happy with the way he has handled the cartel of importers in the sugar industry. He has done a good job there. However, this also needs to be extended to other commodities like grains because they are causing problems to our farmers. So, let the Minister for Agriculture do things that will benefit the country.

Thank you. I support the Motion.

Mr. I. Muoki: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for this opportunity. At the outset, I would like to say that I fully support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture because I want to believe that if it is supported properly and the same happens to the infrastructure of this country, we can raise the economy of this country to higher heights.

As the Minister rightly put it when he was moving this Motion, the Ministry of Agriculture needs a lot of money to be able to undertake the activities that they have listed and also to turn round the current performance of the Ministry to some good expected levels.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, as I contribute to this Vote, two countries come to my mind. Recently, Malawi was performing very poorly in terms of agriculture and when the Government, through their President, took serious planning in the agricultural sector, where he was also acting as the Minister for Agriculture, things have turned round and their performance is very good. I also think of a country like Israel which is drier than the driest parts of Kenya and yet it is able to produce fruits which can be consumed locally and exported to other countries. So, in a nutshell, I am trying to say that if the Ministry of Agriculture is properly empowered in terms of good budget allocation and its officers plan properly, then we can move on very well.

The emphasis of the Ministry of Agriculture has been on those crops which we have been talking about like coffee, tea and so on. If you look at it critically, you will find that the arid areas form about 80 per cent of our country's cover, whereas the other portion is only about 20 per cent.

Since Independence, our emphasis has been on tea, coffee, pyrethrum and those crops in the highlands.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, it is high time that the Government and particularly the Ministry of Agriculture thought of having affirmative action in these Arid and Semi-Arid Lands (ASALs). With a land cover of about 80 per cent, if these areas are properly utilised, we can have a lot of output to satisfy this country and also to export.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the issue of dependence on one region for certain crops is dangerous. If you look at the situation that we went through at the beginning of this year, whereby most of the maize that we use comes from Rift Valley, the moment the post-election violence flared up and they were not able to produce it, it led to a shortage of maize in the country. If we had planned such that other parts of the country can also produce maize and other crops, we would not be in this kind of situation. So, it is very important for the Ministry of Agriculture as they plan, to make sure that each part of the country can produce food for that region and the entire country.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I come from the arid zones and I am sure that if there was good emphasis on these zones, we can have a lot of development in these areas. I am thinking of something like horticulture. I come from Ukambani region. In particular, I come from Mutomo District and we have so many rivers passing through there. We have Tana, Athi and other rivers. If there was a good irrigation programme and we tried to promote horticulture like planting mangoes, citrus fruits and even vegetables, which on a small-scale have done very well in that area, I am sure we can develop this area and the kind of poverty which we talk about would be a thing of the past in Ukambani.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, you are my neighbour at home and if this was done, I am sure you will be one of the very key beneficiaries of this programme. Therefore, I am appealing to the Ministry of Agriculture to look at the issue of irrigation farming as opposed to rain-fed farming in the arid zones because sometimes the rains are not reliable and if we entirely rely on them, then at one time or another we shall fail in our programmes.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I would like to say that there has been a shortage of seeds. I think one way of improving this is by using seeds that are ideal for that area. For example, we have maize seeds for arid regions and the highlands. If farmers can be committed in seed multiplication in those areas, it would go a long way to improve agriculture in the areas. About 20 years ago, we had a pilot project in Mutomo which was sponsored by DANIDA.

I remember vividly that farmers were given, say, two kilogrammes of cowpeas seeds at a subsidized price and within a very short time, the seed multiplication was very successful. I am requesting the Ministry of Agriculture to use that approach, as they plan the seed multiplication. I am sure the Kenya Seed Company might not be very keen on seed multiplication but if the Ministry takes that approach, we can go along way in achieving this.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, having said that, I would like to take this opportunity to ask the Ministry of Agriculture to supply seeds to our area. We have had rain failure for a number of seasons. We do not have seeds, therefore, it is likely that the expected rains which will come in a week's time or so, are the most reliable rains in our region. Therefore, if the rains come and we do not have seeds, we shall be back to the same vicious cycle of famine relief. Every time a *mheshimiwa* from Ukambani stands up, he or she says, "we have no food, we want relief food". This would be the right time to supply the seeds because the rainfall which is reliable in our area, is about to come.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, in the past, the performance of the staff of the Ministry of Agriculture has been very good in my region. Even now it is good. However, we have a problem of shortage of staff. You may have one agricultural officer in a division and as you know,

areas in arid regions are very far apart. So, you find that the person is doing his or her best to cover the region but his coverage rate will not be sufficient to assist farmers. I know there could be some financial constraints in terms of employment of staff but if we could have enough coverage of agricultural field staff, it would be very useful. The few who are in the field are very useful. I have had time to interact with some of them. They are encouraging and down to earth. If the coverage of the staff was sufficient, farmers would gain a lot from their input.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other point I would like to comment on is about the roads. There are some road networks which are undertaken by the Ministry of Agriculture but when it rains, we experience problems of transporting the food to the market. I would like to appeal to the Ministry, because I know they have a provision which deals with roads, to give more allocations for this. Although it does not rain in most part of the year, but when it rains, the roads become impassable. If that money will be used to do the roads in the rural areas, it would be very useful and development would be realised.

With these few remarks, I beg to support.

Mr. Chachu: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I stand to support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the policies that were exposed by the Minister were quite innovative and also forward looking. In particular, I am impressed by the strategies in the policy that tries to make this country food secure. It is very encouraging to see that there are policies embedded within the sector that aim at supporting our farmers by increasing their income and also capacity building largely through extension services.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, coming from an arid district, I appreciate the Ministry's policy of investing in marginalised areas. They are investing in dry land farming whether through rainfed agriculture or irrigation. If we have to address food insecurity in this country, we have to address the problems of these areas that are food insecure. These areas are always prone to drought. As a country, we use so much money during drought to feed our population in those marginalised areas. I urge the Ministry to go the extra mile and come with a sector which is devoted to dry land farming. We can learn from Israel and many other countries in the world. There are countries with very dry environments like ours but they have managed to make their population food secure. There is a lot we can learn from these countries and through that, I think we can make some progress in making Kenya not only food sufficient but also have food surplus to even export to other countries in the region.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we can invest in traditional food crops that are well adapted to these areas. These are foods such as sorghum, millet and others. These foods have traditionally done so well in the so called low potential areas. I encourage the Ministry to pilot this. Let us not be afraid to pilot it. This is a lesson that we can learn and move on. If the pilot projects in the desert areas may not work, that is not a problem. We can learn from that and through the pilot projects, we can come up with very innovative strategies to make these marginal areas food secure.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, if we were to be innovative and make this country food secure, the budget of Kshs13.1 billion is not sufficient. I think food security is one of the most important things that a sovereign nation which wants to protect its borders has to invest in. I strongly urge the Government to increase the budget for this Ministry to a reasonable level that can cope up with the kind of strategies and policies that the Ministry wants to implement.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I am also encouraged to see that even all the new districts which were created before the General Election, including my district; Chalbi District, are well captured in the allocations. That has not been true for a number of Ministries. I have been keenly looking at the allocations to our district and I am really encouraged to say that they have

been well captured by this Ministry. However, I wish the Ministry would take the bull by the horns and even invest in a district like mine. It is largely part of the larger Chalbi Desert.

I am sure if the Ministry can invest in some of those drought prone and difficult areas, that is where we can learn and come up with the necessary strategies and approaches to make this country food secure. I really hope, in next year's Budget, Chalbi District which is part of Chalbi Desert, will be well captured. Some of the pilot programmes can be undertaken by investing in rain water harvesting because we receive good rain.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I urge the Ministry to come up with an integrated food policy strategy. I think for us to be food secure, it is more than just crop production or farming. Let us look at issues of livestock production by working with other Ministries. We should also look at fishing by working with other Ministries. For instance, in northern Kenya--- The larger Lake Turkana is in northern Kenya. It is in Marsabit District in particular, but goes all the way to Lodwar and other areas. Those are the areas that are so much insecure in terms of food. They are the areas that are always prone to drought.

We should invest in fishing and livestock, as much as we invest in rain-fed agriculture in those areas. Let us have an integrated policy approach by working with other Ministries to make our country food secure. We will only make Kenya food secure if we invest in those marginalised areas that are seen as a liability to this nation. If we look at the potential that they have and invest in fishing in Lake Turkana, livestock and agriculture, maybe, those areas will have much to contribute to this nation's economy.

With those few remarks, I support the Motion.

Mr. Mureithi: Thank you very much, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, for catching your eye. I am very grateful.

I stand here to support this Motion on the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture. I am very proud today because the current crop of officers from the Ministry of Agriculture has really started working. I am very grateful because down there in the rural areas, you can now see the extension officers. You see them not necessarily because they wear their uniforms which they have been given, but because they have become available to the farmers and they are moving around. I feel that the Ministry of Agriculture is a key Ministry. When we talk about the Ministry of State for Defence, in actual fact, we speak about the Ministry of Agriculture. That is because unless you feed your nation--- A nation can rise against itself just because of farming. Therefore, the Ministry of Agriculture must be the central Ministry that must be considered before all the other Ministries.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, it saddens my heart to see that Kenya, being a member of the Maputo Declaration, where we were supposed to set aside 10 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP) to agriculture, we have only been able to give the Ministry of Agriculture 4.75 per cent, which is even less than what was supposed to have been given according to the Maputo Declaration. In spite of the fact that the Ministry of Agriculture has the most highly qualified people, they do not have the capacity, equipment and resources to go around.

As a result, they are unable to achieve what they have put in their Strategic Plan, which I have had an opportunity to read and which is very good as far as we are concerned. They have come up with issues like Kilimo Biashara. They have come up with programmes through show map, so that they can do roads that can lead to high potential areas.

I think it is high time the Ministry of Agriculture did some bit of engineering. Take a case in my Ol Kalou Constituency. It is a high altitude area and it is very cold. Some crops like maize take 13 months to grow. The Ministry of Agriculture should now start thinking of commodities that are youth-friendly. I do not think there is any youth who will wait for maize to grow for the next 13 months, and then get Kshs1,700 as we were told by the Minister the other day. His counterparts in the milk industry wake up at six o'clock, deliver their milk to some milk processors and, within two

weeks, they are paid their money. So, what we should now be thinking about - and I am glad that we have a team here led by the Assistant Minister and the Permanent Secretary - we must start looking at high value crops.

I have heard what has happened in Ukambani. We have rivers criss-crossing the area. We should now look for high value crops. What do I mean by high value crops? You can grow very beautiful strawberries in Ukambani. It takes a very short time to grow them. Why should we import strawberries from South Africa and Israel? Why can we not grow them here ourselves in the drier areas of Ukambani and Ol Kalou? Why can we not grow sugar beans. We are importing sugar, although it was recently stopped. But we can grow sugar beans such that companies like Coca Cola and other companies can use our refined sugar. The rest of the sugar can be used for other areas.

I would also like to say that there has been a major problem because the Ministries are so diverse. There are ministries of Livestock, Water and Irrigation, Agriculture and Fisheries Development. Due to diversified Ministries, we do not have a coherent policy that addresses the farmer at the farm-gate level. When those boys and girls take their milk to the dairy processors and come back, they have nothing else to do. They should have done something like processing. Right now, I am very happy because I have seen the Ministry is doing what we call appropriate technology.

But when I attended the Field Day at Oljororok Farmers Training Centre, what shocked me is that the appropriate technology is based on the supply of electricity. Majority of people in this country do not have electricity. So, the appropriate technology that must be developed by the Ministry of Agriculture must be commensurate with the technology that we have. Take for instance, the sealing of crates. What I saw was an electric machine that does the polythene and fills very well. You go to the rural areas like the one we call Nyairoko where women are doing it with candles. You have air entering polythene just because they do not have some machines that can be utilised without using electricity. Take, for instance, the issue of drying wood. Right now in Nyandarua, we are throwing away a lot of cabbages. Yet, we have areas in Ukambani where we could take those cabbages.

We saw that on television. We could take those cabbages there and, through the solar system, we could dry the cabbages, potatoes and crops and feed the people. What we do not have in this country is the mechanism of distribution. We have so much food that is being fed to the cows, yet, we have some food deficit areas where that food could be delivered. That way, we could alleviate the problems that we have. I cannot imagine a grandmother with five children going to look for food in Ukambani, yet, in my constituency, cabbages, carrots, potatoes are being sold by the road side. So, let the Ministry of Agriculture discuss and find out how to have distributive mechanism so that, we can remove food from the high producing areas to the drought and hunger areas. Until we do that, this country will always have seasons in which we give people food. We use Kshs10 billion to import food and yet, we have food that can be distributed to those areas.

There is so much innovation that we can do in that area. Take the precipitation of Nairobi. When we have so much rain, people drown even in their own cars, yet, we can tap that water downstream and use it during the dry season. We should let rain water run into rivers that are there so that people can irrigate their farms. We should learn from countries like Israel where they have reclaimed deserts. We have a lot of precipitation here, but the will, power and ability to harness that water for human and livestock consumption is not there. We cannot have hunger in this country when we get more than average rainfall. Therefore, I would like to see a situation where in future when Ministries are being created, one Ministry has one senior Minister and other Ministers are under him, so that the senior Minister can co-ordinate the related Ministries and create packages that can be sold out to areas.

I would like to say that the Ministry is trying a lot but, unfortunately, it really has a problem

in terms of its resources. With 4.75 per cent of the total Budget of this nation, this country will always have a problem. Why should we import fertiliser? That money should be diverted to productive use and creating jobs for ourselves here. We take that money outside to create jobs in other countries. Here, we have nothing to do and only wait for drought, yet we have created jobs in other countries.

Let us get out of the box, because there are very educated people all the way to the grassroots. I would like to say that when I was in the Ministry of Agriculture, we used to have weather forecasting. We used to call all the stakeholders and do forecasting every year in terms of rainfall, hunger, plenty or deficit. I do not know whether this is still done, so that a group in Nyandarua knows its excess food can be taken to an area with food deficit. This country must address itself to the distributive mechanism. If we do this, the practice of showing hunger on the television will no longer be there. It will be a thing of the past. If well distributed, our food is enough.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I feel very happy today and I would like to support the Ministry of Agriculture. The Government should be able to allocate more resources to this Ministry, so that we can eradicate hunger from our nation.

With those few remarks, I support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Dr. Munyaka: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I also stand to support the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture. I want to congratulate the Minister for a very well presented document.

I want to agree with the Minister that the allocation for the Ministry is quite low and, as many hon. Members have already said, according to the Maputo Declaration, the Ministry of Agriculture and other line Ministries, is supposed to get around 10 per cent of national Budget. It appears that in Kenya we are not very serious with agriculture. That is why we are suffering, have a lot of problems and our farmers are suffering. We have many Government parastatals which deal with agriculture but they are collapsing. For example, the Pyrethrum Board of Kenya, Kenya Tea Development Authority (KTDA), Kenya Planters Co-operative Union (KPCU) and so on. We can see the impact of inadequate budgetary support.

Kenyans are actually repeatedly being told about hunger. For example in Ukambani region, we are always talking about hunger. Currently, I know of people who are already starving, and the Government needs to look at that situation so that it may save lives. We understand that Government institutions concerned with hunger react when people start dying. We would like the Government to be proactive, so that it does not act when people start dying.

When we talk about food security, I remember in 2006 the maize harvest was 36 million bags, but the Government policy was that the National Cereals and Produce Board (NCPB) was to purchase from farmers 3 million bags to be part of Strategic Grain Reserves (SGR). So, we are wondering where the 33 million bags was supposed to go. Unfortunately, most of the maize crossed our borders. In 2007 the harvest was 33 million bags and the NCPB bought 3 million. So, we are talking about 30 million bags left with the farmers. That is when unscrupulous traders take the maize out of the country. We are wondering why we have a very bumper harvest and after one year we are thinking of importing maize, whereas we could have just changed the Government policy of limiting the SGR. We should be able to open up our cereals depots for all the produce, which the farmers get, so that--- For example, if the 36 million bags are sold to NCPB, we would be stable with our food supply. Today, we are talking about importing 3 million bags to save the situation.

I would actually request the Ministry of Agriculture to consider doing away with that limit on SGR, so that whatever maize is produced in the country is bought by the Government and put in our stores and later when there is drought, it is distributed to our people.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, currently, in Kenya we have two major farming

seasons. There are the long rains which start in January. That is in Rift Valley, or Trans Nzoia, the main bread basket of Kenya. We also have the short rains season in areas of eastern, central, coastal and southern regions. But the Government does not place any emphasis in support of the farming activities in those regions. We hear the Government reacting by giving farmers in the Rift Valley fertiliser when they are about to plant, but in these other regions where people are also very active, there is nothing like Government support. So, we feel that the Government neglects some areas where people can do some farming and prevent occurrence of famine every now and then.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the price of fertiliser has been a major issue. Two years ago it cost Kshs1,500 per bag, and now DAP costs Kshs6,000 a bag, yet we have African countries which produce fertiliser. We have Senegal, Egypt and South Africa, which are producing fertiliser. Why can we not put our efforts together and establish a plant to manufacture our own fertiliser, so that we can be self-sufficient? We are now having the East African Community (EAC); so the five countries should pool resources and come up with a plant which, will manufacture fertiliser and supply it to the region.

Regarding seeds, it is a very serious issue. The Kenya Seed Company is a Government parastatal, and it is a producer of seeds using research from the Kenya Agricultural Research Institute (KARI). We have many other seed traders who have no backing of research. That is why we find many seeds come to the country and then fail after being planted. The Government should be able to assist all seed importers and anybody trading in seeds to use research by KARI, so that we develop seeds which are good for our country, instead of using only Kenya Plant Health Inspectorate Service (KEPHIS) as a licensing body; this is because it tests a very minor portion of the seeds development. Our conditions may not be the same as those where the seeds originate from.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I know that flower farming is a multi-billion shilling business industry. But it appears that the Government has no hands in the flower industry. It is controlled by cartels which actually make so much money out of that business. My request is that, if the Government could exploit that industry and spread it to the local citizens, people could benefit. Whatever financial income that Kenyans can get out of that farming, would be able to benefit them. The Government will also earn a lot of money from the flower industry. But the way it is now, it is like they are doing their business freely, making a kill and not involving Kenyans and the Government.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, when we talk about regulatory bodies like KEPHIS and Pesticides Chemicals and Products Board (PCPB)--- We know that after harvesting, many grains in Kenya are attacked by weevils. That is because of failing chemicals. We request the Ministry of Agriculture to be very alert and ensure that PCPB is able to know that the chemicals that are supposed to preserve our grains are working. I remember at one time, about eight years ago, there was a bumper harvest in Ukambani and most of the harvest went down the drain because of attacks by weevils. The chemicals failed!

Otherwise, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, thank you very much. I beg to support.

Dr. Kones: Thank you, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir. I also rise to support this Motion on the Vote of the Ministry of Agriculture.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we all know the importance of the Ministry and I really do not want to dwell so much on it. Many hon. Members have talked much about it. The Ministry is very critical for the survival of any country. Indeed, the security of any country is dependent on its food security situation. This Ministry is very critical in that aspect.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, to date, a very good percentage of our foreign exchange is from agriculture. I believe it still ranges between 20 per cent to 25 per cent of our Gross Domestic Product (GDP). Therefore, it means that, as a country and as a Government,

we must attach a lot of emphasis when it comes to resource allocation to this Ministry. It is a Ministry that also creates job opportunities for our youth.

However, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, we realize that, over the past years, performance in the sector has been wanting to some extent, particularly on the food security aspect. If the trend continues, we will become more food insecure and the Ministry must put in place very stringent measures to ensure that this trend is reversed.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I have said that if the country is food insecure, then the general security of the country will be in danger. So, I really want the Ministry to take very specific and elaborate measures to ensure that we reverse this trend.

I come from a tea growing area and people have gone into tea growing at the expense of growing food crops, so much that year in, year out, there has been a food deficit in my area. I think this is a situation where the Ministry must take a lead in educating the farmers that we need to balance between food crops and cash crops, so that we do not overdo one thing.

Having mentioned tea, we all know the challenges that, that subsector is facing. There was a Question this afternoon on coffee, and I think the challenges being faced by coffee farmers are the same as the ones being faced by tea farmers. I know the Ministry recently made an attempt to gazette some new rules on tea growing. I believe that, that is far short of our expectations in as far as the challenges facing the tea sector are concerned.

We still need to effect very radical changes in the tea sector, particularly. My view is that most of the problems that we face in the tea sector are in the marketing chain, because the greatest percentage of tea proceeds goes to middlemen and brokers, and something in the region of 15 per cent is what goes to the farmers. I think, we should shorten the marketing chain. I have already given a notice of Motion to amend some of the sections in the Tea Act, so that we treat tea like any other business. Tea is a cash crop; it is not a food crop. If tea, at some point, is not giving you any cash as a farmer, then the farmer must be given an opportunity to opt for any other business that gives him or her profit.

So, some of these archaic rules in the Tea Act that make it illegal to uproot tea bushes when it is no longer profitable must be changed. These rules, which make it mandatory that we can only sell our tea through the Tea Auction, I believe also cause one of the problems that need to be addressed. We need to allow our factories to be independent, and to look for own markets. We need to empower them to look for their own market and sell their produce directly from the factories.

So, Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I believe that the Ministry is going to support my Motion; I am happy to note that we have seen some positive moves, or attempts being made by the Ministry to address some of these challenges but we still need to do more.

Another area which the Ministry needs to look at very critically is the quality of seeds. Over a number of years, the quality of seeds that we get, particularly in the South Rift, which I can talk about with authority, have been very poor. So, this is an area that the Ministry needs to look into and find out what happens at the Kenya Seed Company. In the past, it had been rated to be one of the best companies for producing quality seeds, but looking at what has happened over the past five or so years, the quality of seeds has been going down, and it is an area that the Ministry needs to look into critically.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, again, when it comes to extension services, I think I can almost say they have collapsed in the country. I do not see Agricultural Extension Officers visiting farmers any more. So, we still need to look at a more co-ordinated way of intensifying these services. I know there is under-staffing which is common in most of the Government Ministries but I believe this should be addressed if we are serious about food security in this country and also if we are very keen on promoting agriculture. We also need to look at what our

policies are at the national level because we want this Ministry to also contribute to Vision 2030 which the Government is pursuing.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, some years ago, maybe about ten years ago, I worked in the Ministry as an Economist. When I visited it recently, I realised that there is a very acute shortage of Economists and Planners who are supposed to assist the agricultural officers in formulating proper policies for the Ministry. I believe probably this is one area that needs to be looked at because without proper policy formulation at the national level, which triggers down to the lower level, then you might just end up putting in funds year in, year out and the outcome is minimal.

However, this Ministry is very critical. I also want to agree with the Minister that the level of funding to the Ministry slightly falls below what is expected.

I can see the Minister pointing at the clock and I think it is time. I beg to support. Thank you.

Mr. Njuguna: Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, I thank you for granting me this chance to contribute to this very important Vote. I wish to thank the very hard working Minister for making a very prompt presentation on this Vote. As I make my remarks, I wish to direct my attention to one or two areas.

One area is about the role that has been played by the Agricultural Finance Corporation (AFC) in this country. There was a time when the AFC was very vibrant. It used to be led by very skilful managers and its role was dynamic and vibrant.

I do not know where its strength went. It needs to be given some strength and to be seen to be serving the interests of our people.

Mr. Temporary Deputy Speaker, Sir, the other thing that needs to impact on the role of the AFC is to make sure that it is given a lot of adequate funds so that the same could be realised to the farmers in good time. We also realise that the AFC is handicapped sometimes because some farmers are given funds and they are not able to repay. This money must be pursued and brought back to the accounts of AFC so that the same can be channelled to other needy farmers. We also remember that we had what we called Guaranteed Minimum Returns (GMRs) and this was a very important component. It needs to be brought back so that those farmers interested could also take advantage of the availability of the facility.

With regard to wheat farming in this nation, we realise that we are spending a lot of money on it. We need to support the local farmer. He needs to be paid well and in good time. At times, this crop is attacked by army worms and there is nothing that they can do.

ADJOURNMENT

The Temporary Deputy Speaker (Prof. Kaloki): Thank you, hon. Njuguna. You will have eight minutes tomorrow to continue with your contribution to the debate.

Hon. Members, it is now time for the interruption of business. The House is, therefore, adjourned until tomorrow, Wednesday, 29th October, 2008 at 9.00 a.m.

The House rose at 6.35 p.m.