

# COUNTY GOVERNMENT OF NAIROBI CITY



## NAIROBI CITY COUNTY ASSEMBLY THIRD ASSEMBLY (FOURTH SESSION)

### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

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#### GETTING BACK ON TRACK: RESTORING EFFECTIVENESS AND ACCOUNTABILITY IN SECTORAL COMMITTEES

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**Hon. Members,**

I have the following Communication to convey regarding restoring effectiveness and accountability in sectoral committees. Due to the gravity of the issues the Communication raises, I request all Hon. Members to remain attentive: -

**Hon. Members,**

The strength and effectiveness of any legislative body lie in the work of its committees. Sectoral committees serve as the backbone of oversight, legislation, and representation, ensuring that government policies and programs are implemented efficiently and in the best interest of the people. These committees are tasked with scrutinizing county executive actions, monitoring service delivery, and providing well-researched reports with substantive recommendations to guide this House in making informed decisions. Without active and functional committees, our mandate as representatives of the people is significantly weakened.

**Hon. Members,**

This Assembly has a proud history of vibrant and proactive committees that have played a critical role in ensuring accountability and good governance. In the past, our committees have exposed inefficiencies, influenced policy changes, and provided strong oversight on county affairs. It is through the diligent work of these committees that key service delivery improvements have been realized in various sectors. It is therefore deeply concerning that committees of this Assembly especially sectoral committees have relapsed in their oversight responsibilities. The current state of affairs paints a sad picture that now calls for immediate action by the Chair.

**Hon. Members,**

I have analyzed a number of weaknesses exhibited by our committees which I can summarize as follows: -

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### **i) Failure to Produce Substantive Reports**

Many committees have failed to generate well-researched reports with actionable recommendations. Reports presented to this House often lack depth, are repetitive, and do not provide concrete solutions to the challenges facing the county. This failure has weakened the Assembly's ability to hold the Executive accountable.

### **ii) Lack of Regular Site Inspection Visits**

Committees are mandated to conduct **site inspections** to assess the implementation of county projects and services. However, many committees have neglected this responsibility, choosing instead to rely on second-hand information from county officials. Where they conduct inspection visits, their reports are either not forthcoming or do not provide information that may help to hold to account executive officials who continue to act with impunity. **A critical area of concern is the physical planning and construction area.** We have left executive officials in the planning department to run their affairs with little accountability. This neglect has resulted in the blatant disregard of the Physical Planning Act, leading to the approval of substandard buildings and the proliferation of rogue developers who prioritize profit over safety and quality. For instance, Section 19 of the Physical Planning Act (Cap 286) require involvement of residents before approval of any development. Unfortunately, this has been disregarded on many occasions. Without strict oversight, illegal developments have continued to emerge, endangering lives and contributing to Nairobi's growing urban chaos. The failure of the Sectoral Committee on Planning and Housing to conduct regular inspections and enforce compliance has allowed these violations to persist, putting residents at risk of disasters such as building collapses.

### **iii) Complacency and Laxity Among Committee Members**

There has been a noticeable decline in the enthusiasm and commitment of committee members. Some committees barely meet, and when they do, deliberations are often unstructured and lack focus. In some instances, committee members fail to attend scheduled sittings, further delaying the committee's work or resulting in lack of any substantive output. The House is starved with critical business such as Bills since most committees are holding on business as simple as pre-publication scrutiny of legislative proposals which have timelines. In addition, the most impactful program to Hon.Members and the residents in general i.e. the Ward Development Program has collapsed due to this complacency by the relevant Committee. This also extends to the health of residents especially with the mushrooming of restaurants which pose a public health concern.

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**iv) Delayed or Non-Implementation of Committee Resolutions.**

Even in cases where committees make recommendations, there is little follow-up to ensure that their resolutions are implemented. To make matters worse, I have not seen the Implementation Committee table its report in the recent past. This has allowed county departments to ignore or delay necessary reforms without consequences.

**v) Lack of Proactive Oversight on Major County Programs**

Committees have not been proactive in scrutinizing key county projects, budgets, and policies. Instead of taking a forward-looking approach to oversight, some committees only react after problems arise, making it difficult to prevent mismanagement or wastage of public funds. Why are committees for instance not reporting on issues like a failed public transport system, lack of street lighting in our estates, garbage problem and the challenges in the health sector?

**vi) Poor Coordination between Committee Chairs with respective CEC Members and Committee Secretariat.**

Some committee chairs and members have not established effective working relationships with County Executive Committee Members, Chief Officers, and their own committee secretariats. This has resulted in delays in receiving crucial information, poor communication, and, ultimately, ineffective oversight.

**Honourable Members,**

With the forgoing, I have a duty to guide this Assembly so that it can provide leadership and oversight that drives positive change. Our committees must operate with diligence, commitment, and integrity to ensure that county resources are utilized efficiently and services delivered effectively. I therefore wish to direct as follows: -

1. **Committee Status Reports:** I direct that all the sittings of next week i.e. Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday shall be dedicated to receiving status reports from all Committees. All committee chairpersons must appear before the House next week to present a status report on their work, detailing achievements, challenges, and pending assignments. Additionally, they must provide an assessment of their working relationship with the secretariat, relevant County Executive Committee Members, and Chief Officers. I do not expect the usual annual reports that have been the norm before the Liaison Committee. I expect very informative and forward-looking report and the Chair must understand all the facts in the report. The Clerk is directed to prepare a schedule on How



the Chairs shall appear before the House and convene an urgent House Business Committee to ratify the same on or before **Monday 7<sup>th</sup> April, 2025**.

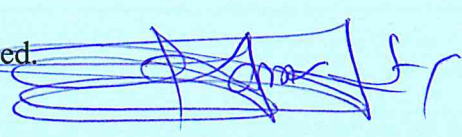
2. **Ward Development Programme:** The Chairperson of the Ward Development Fund Committee must provide a detailed report on the status of all ongoing and completed projects under the Program, including challenges affecting their implementation. The Chair must report on the status of the Bill on this matter and explain why the Committee has not finalized on its consideration at whatever stage it is.
3. **Site Inspection Visits:** Committees must resume regular site visits to assess the progress and impact of county programs and services. These visits must inform the committees' inquiries and subsequent reports.
4. **Planning and Development Oversight:** The Sectoral Committee on Planning and Housing is directed to inspect all ongoing developments across Nairobi and report to the House within two weeks. In line with the **Physical Planning Act**, the committee must also ensure that public participation is conducted for all developments before commencement as required under Section 19 of the Physical Planning Act (Cap 286).
5. **Health and Public Safety Inspections:** The Sectoral Committee on Health Services must inspect all food joints and restaurants in Nairobi and report within two weeks on their compliance with health and sanitation regulations. The safety and well-being of Nairobi residents must remain a top priority.
6. **Review of the Standing Orders:** I direct the Procedure and Rules Committee to urgently finalize and table its report which is long overdue on the review of Standing Orders particularly on the issue of introduction of question times that will see CEC Members appear before this House on Wednesdays to respond to urgent issues.

**Hon. Members,**

Let us recommit to the responsibilities entrusted to us and work towards an Assembly that truly serves the interests of the people of Nairobi. I want to promise that I will personally monitor compliance with these directives, and failure to adhere will attract consequences. The time for action is now.

The House is so guided.

I thank you.



**The Hon. Kennedy Okeyo Ng'ondi, MCA**  
**SPEAKER, NAIROBI CITY COUNTY ASSEMBLY**

**Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> April, 2025**