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Kenya Excels At The 14th Ealasca Games In Kampala

By Mash Misiko

The County Assembly of Bungoma was well represented at the 14th Edition of the East Africa Local Authorities Sports and Cultural Association (EALASCA) Games, held at Hamz Stadium (Nakivubo War Memorial Grounds) in Kampala, Uganda.

A total of 84 participants from Bungoma County Assembly joined other Kenyan County Assemblies to form Team Kenya. Some teams, such as folk song and Tug-of-war men, brought their full squads after winning in the County Assemblies

Sports Association (CASA) Games.

The EALASCA Games, held from February 23 to 28, 2025, saw Kenya perform well in both sports and cultural events. On the opening day, Kenya made a strong start. The tug-of-war team, made up of players from Bungoma and Siaya County Assemblies, won both the men's and women's categories, exciting the crowd.

Football was a major highlight. The Kenyan women's team defeated Uganda 2-0, and the men's team won by the same score. The official

opening match between CASA (Kenya) and KCCA (Uganda) was thrilling. Uganda took an early second-half lead through Bonny Sebunoni, but Kenya fought back to win 3-1, showing great teamwork and determination.

Kenya continued to shine in athletics, securing several gold medals. The team also performed well in handball, pool, darts, and scrabble. In cultural events, the County Assembly of West Pokot won the folk song competition, with Bungoma taking second place.

Uganda dominated in netball and volleyball, but Kenya's overall success made it the strongest team in the competition.

The Bungoma team's success came from hard work and teamwork. They were selected after performing well in the 5th Edition of the CASA Games in Bungoma the previous year. The team was led by Hon. Joseph Juma, the Majority Leader in the County Assembly of Bungoma. Other key figures included Hon. Anthony Lusenaka (Minority Leader), Hon. Violet Makhanu (Chairperson for Youth and Sports), and Hon. Jack Kawa (Chairperson for Gender), all who helped motivate the team.

Hon. Joseph Juma thanked the county leadership and organizers for their support. He said the EALASCA Games are not just about sports but also help local governments share knowledge, improve governance, and build friendships across East Africa. The EALASCA Games promote unity and cooperation in the region.

With wins in football, athletics, tug-of-war, darts, scrabble, pool, and folk song, Kenya showed its talent in both sports and culture.





Pictorial excerpt for The EALASCA Games, held at Kampala Uganda from February 23 to 28, 2025 Games 2024

Bungoma County Police Commandant Seeks Assembly Support in Fight Against Teenage Pregnancies

By Erick Ngobilo

Bungoma County Police Commandant, Mr. Francis Kooli, has called for a partnership with the County Assembly to tackle the rising cases of teenage pregnancies in the region. The initiative, also supported by Bungoma Governor H.E. Ken Lusaka's Economic Advisor, Ms. Sween Khayanga, seeks to address the challenge through a multi-sectoral approach.

Speaking during a courtesy call to the Speaker of the County Assembly, Hon. Emmanuel Situma, Mr. Kooli lamented the plight of schoolgirls who drop out due to a lack of sanitary towels. He revealed that some young girls deliberately opt for pregnancy as a temporary escape from menstruation-related hardships, only to face even greater challenges after childbirth.

To combat this issue, Mr. Kooli announced plans to establish a centralized sanitary towels bank,

where donations from well-wishers and organizations can be stored before distribution to needy students.

"We are working to set up a sanitary towels bank as a one-stop center for collecting and distributing supplies across the county. The goal is to ensure that no girl misses school, exams, or any important activity due to a lack of sanitary pads," he said.

The police commandant emphasized that poverty is a key driver of teenage pregnancies, as desperate girls often fall prey to exploitative men, including boda boda riders, who offer sanitary pads in exchange for sex. He further appealed for financial support to acquire storage containers for the sanitary pads before distribution.

Speaker Hon. Emmanuel Situma lauded the initiative, pledging the County Assembly's support for

efforts aimed at improving the dignity and well-being of young girls. He called on business leaders and politicians to rally behind the cause, ensuring sustainable solutions to these pressing social challenges.

"The County Assembly is committed to supporting any initiative that alleviates the suffering of young girls. I will convene a leaders' meeting to rally County Assembly Members behind this noble cause," Hon. Situma stated.

He also proposed the establishment of a rescue center for teenage mothers and pregnant girls who face rejection from their families. The center, he suggested, could be located in Ndengelwa, where the Office of the Woman Representative is based.

To enhance accessibility, Hon. Situma called for the decentralization of sanitary towel collection

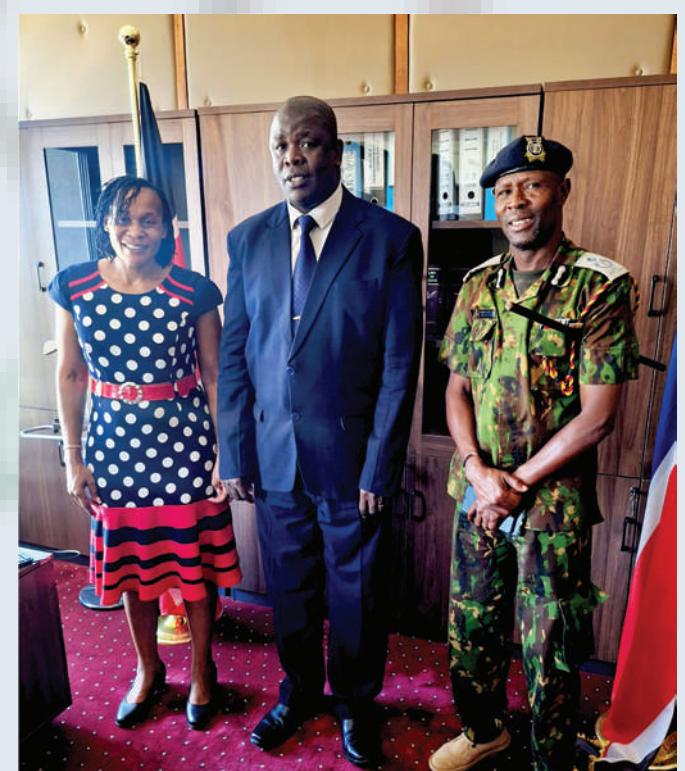
points across all sub-counties, allowing more people to donate and ensuring efficient distribution to those in need.

"Let's establish as many collection points as possible so that donations can reach all parts of the county efficiently," he urged.

In addition to tackling issues affecting girls, Hon. Situma also raised concerns about the welfare of the boy child. He decried the increasing number of underage boys serving sentences in prisons and borstal institutions due to defilement charges, while their female counterparts face little to no punishment in similar cases.

"We need to have a candid conversation about the plight of the boy child and ensure that justice is fair for all," he said.

The Speaker offered to convene a meeting of the House leadership to chat a common position on how the County Assembly will contribute to addressing the challenge.



Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma Hon. Emmanuel Situma, Bungoma County Police Commandant, Mr. Francis Kooli and H.E. Governor Ken Lusaka's Economic Advisor, Ms. Sween Khayanga during a courtesy call to the Assembly

Bungoma Immigration Officers Seek County Assembly's Support on Foreigners' Registration

By Erick Ngobilo



County Assembly Speaker Hon. Emmanuel Situma with a delegation led by Mr. Mukhebi Simiyu, an Assistant Director of Immigrations who doubles as the Officer In Charge of the Bungoma Regional Immigration Office, with Ms. Seline Karisa and Stephen Wandera Mulinga

The Bungoma Immigration Office has called for stronger collaboration with the County Assembly of Bungoma to enhance the registration of foreigners and increase awareness of immigration services available to residents.

A delegation led by Mr. Mukhebi Simiyu, an Assistant Director of Immigrations who doubles as the Officer In Charge of the Bungoma Regional Immigration Office, met with County Assembly Speaker Hon. Emmanuel Situma before also paying a courtesy call to Clerk Charles Wafula. Other officers in attendance included Ms. Seline Karisa and Stephen Wandera Mulinga.

They discussed ways to ensure locals are aware of the immigration office's role and services, such as

passport issuance, which previously required travel to Kisumu or Eldoret before the office was officially opened last year by President William Ruto.

Mr. Simiyu raised concerns about the increasing number of unregistered foreigners living in Bungoma, a border county. He noted that many foreigners reside within local communities, operating businesses or taking up jobs illegally without proper documentation.

"Our people are hosting foreigners in their homes and rental premises, yet a majority of them lack legal registration, making their stay in the country illegal," he stated.

He urged county leaders to sensitize their constituents on the importance of registering foreigners and ensuring compliance with

immigration laws. The officers emphasized that even foreign students must obtain special pupil passes before enrolling in local schools.

The Immigration Office announced plans for routine inspections to verify foreigners' registration status. Mr. Simiyu stressed that conducting businesses or engaging in formal employment without proper documentation is illegal and unfair to local citizens.

Speaker Situma echoed these concerns, highlighting security risks posed by unregistered foreigners. He pointed out that Egyptians, Ugandans, Rwandese, Congolese, and other foreign nationals have settled in Bungoma, with some engaging in trade, working in bars, or serving as domestic workers.

"This is a serious security issue for our people. The porous border and laxity among security personnel have contributed to the influx of illegal foreigners," the Speaker stated.

He pledged to rally Members of the County Assembly (MCAs) to inform residents about the need to report and ensure all foreigners undergo proper registration. Additionally, he called for closer collaboration between the County Security Team, led by the County Commissioner, to curb the problem.

Migori County Assembly's Official Visit to Bungoma County Assembly on SACCO Governance

By Rosemary Wachiye

Asix-member Migori County Assembly Workers Welfare Association delegation visited the County Assembly of Bungoma to benchmark effective SACCO management practices. The delegation arrived on Monday 24th of February, 2025, and was warmly welcomed by their Bungoma counterparts at the county assembly premises.

The visit aimed to gain skills and knowledge in SACCO governance, financial management, member mobilization, loan administration, and regulatory compliance for operating the SACCO. The two-day exchange program included presentations, interactive sessions, and tours of the Bucounty SACCO facilities.

The team led by their SACCO Chairperson Mr. George Maurice Oundo was received by Bucounty SACCO Chairperson Mr. Jocktan Kabeyi, Hon Secretary Ms. Rosemary Wachiye, and the Principal Administrative Officer Mr. Elvis Werunga. Other members of the Migori delegation included the Treasurer-Richard Ambila Onyango, Secretary-Jane Maroa, Vice Chairperson- Beryl Oketch, and two committee members representing the SACCO.

They paid a courtesy call to the Speaker of the County Assembly Hon. Emmanuel Situma who expressed his delight in the tremendous growth made by the Bucounty SACCO. During the meeting, the Speaker shared that he was passionate about the growth of SACCO membership to ensure all staff in the County



The Speaker of the County Assembly of Bungoma Hon. Emmanuel Situma, the Clerk Mr. Charles Wafula with the Migori County Assembly Workers Welfare Association officials during their visit to Bungoma County Assembly on SACCO Governance

Assembly join the SACCO and benefit from it.

Hon Situma cited the creative lending products introduced by the SACCO as the main contributor towards the SACCO's development. He stated that it was high time the SACCO had a front office to efficiently run its affairs and serve the members. The innovative products included allowance buy-off loans processed within 12 hours, education loans with 18-month repayment periods, salary advances, and normal check-off loans.

The Speaker encouraged the visiting delegation, who were in the initial stages of SACCO registration, to expedite the process to establish their operations. He highlighted the SACCO's benefits, particularly how members can quickly access emergency loans. He noted that the Bucounty SACCO had played a critical role in

supporting staff during medical emergencies and family needs, significantly improving employee welfare.

He advised both teams to focus on low-risk business ventures to protect shareholders' savings from potential losses. He emphasized that their lending practices should ensure members can access loans quickly and at reasonable interest rates. Drawing from Bungoma's experience, he recommended starting with salary-based loans before venturing into more complex financial products.

The team also met with the Clerk of the County Assembly Mr. Charles Wafula who welcomed them well. He called upon officials to put in place clear structures in the running of the SACCO in compliance with the legal requirements. Mr. Wafula applauded the SACCO for the initiatives to ensure its economic growth. He specifically mentioned the importance of ensuring accountability and robust financial management systems that had helped Bucounty SACCO achieve an impressive loan recovery rate.

The Clerk equally shared that plans were underway to reopen a restaurant on the premises which the SACCO will rent out to a prequalified service provider. Besides saving time for staff and Hon. Members to get meals, it will also reap benefits for SACCO members.

They held enriching deliberations with the County Director of Cooperatives Mr. Moses Welikhe who took them through SACCO laws and regulations. He emphasized the need to adhere to the stipulated laws for the SACCO to operate optimally. Mr. Welikhe provided comprehensive guidance on registration requirements, governance structures, and regulatory reporting obligations. He also shared case studies of successful SACCOs across the country and common pitfalls to avoid.

Before concluding their visit, the Migori team was given a tour of the SACCO's operations, including their record-keeping systems and loan processing process. The delegation expressed gratitude for the warm reception and valuable insights gained during the visit. Both teams agreed to maintain communication and continue sharing best practices in SACCO management.

Criminalization Of Poverty: The Struggles Of Informal Workers In Public Spaces

By Celestine Moshong

In towns and cities across Kenya, Majority of residents rely on the informal sector to earn a living. These individuals, from street hawkers selling fresh produce to small-scale traders and transport operators, are the backbone of urban economies. However, instead of receiving the support they need to succeed, many face severe restrictions, harassment, and even criminalization by local authorities.

The informal economy is made up of various activities outside formal regulatory frameworks. These include selling food, operating small businesses like barbershops, recycling waste materials, and running mini-bus transport services. For many individuals, particularly those in low-income groups, these jobs provide the only means of livelihood.

Unlike the formal sector, which is regulated by national and county laws that safeguard workers' rights, the informal economy is partly unregulated. Unfortunately, municipal policies often fail to protect or recognize the vital role of informal workers, making their livelihoods

precarious and subject to constant threats.

Informal traders often referred to as the Jua Kali sector face numerous challenges, ranging from bureaucratic red tape to harsh treatment by law enforcement officers in the name of County or municipal askaris. County governments require traders to obtain permits, yet these documents are often expensive and difficult to access, forcing vendors to operate illegally. Municipality regulations frequently sideline informal workers, as they are rarely included in policy-making processes that impact their trade. Law enforcement officials often impose fines, confiscate goods, and even arrest vendors. In some cases, traders are subjected to bribery and extortion, further worsening their financial struggles. Many designated trading areas lack essential services such as clean water, sanitation, storage, and waste disposal. The absence of adequate street lighting and security also exposes traders to safety risks. Rising temperatures and extreme weather conditions threaten perishable goods, leading

to income losses for vendors selling fruits and vegetables.

The suffering of informal workers highlights the urgent need for policy reforms that strike a balance between maintaining orderly urban spaces and supporting economic inclusion. County governments should recognize informal workers as key economic players. Instead of criminalizing informal traders, authorities should implement supportive policies that enable them to operate legally and with dignity. Socio-economic challenges should not be addressed through punitive measures. Alternative dispute resolution mechanisms (ADR) and mediation should be prioritized over arrests and fines. Policies affecting informal workers should be developed through participatory consultations, allowing those impacted to voice their concerns and contribute to solutions.

(The Writer is a legal counsel at the County Assembly of Bungoma)



Jua Kali selling their goods by the roadside



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