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THIRTEENTH PARLIAMENT – FOURTH SESSION (2025)

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE, AND FOREIGN RELATIONS

REPORT ON:

A VISIT BY THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS ACCOMPANIED BY THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR DIASPORA AFFAIRS TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES; 8TH – 15TH JUNE 2025

THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY PAPERS LAID DATE: 04 DEC 2025 DAY: THURSDAY Tabled BY: DEPUTY MINORITY LEADER FINLAY CLERK-AT-THE-TABLE:

CLERK'S CHAMBERS DIRECTORATE OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS NAIROBI.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS AND ACRONYMS

UAE	-	United Arab Emirates
CBK	-	Central Bank of Kenya
PS	-	Principal Secretary
NIS	-	The National Intelligence Service
MRF	-	Mutual Recognition Frameworks
MOU	-	Memorandum of Understanding
NSSF	-	National Social Security Fund

LIST OF ANNEXURES

Annexure 1: Committee's Report Adoption Schedule

Annexure 2: Committee's Minutes for the Sitting that considered and adopted the report

CHAIRPERSON'S FOREWORD

Global labour migration is a longstanding phenomenon and a significant contributor to the expanding international labour market. Kenyan migrant workers—both skilled and unskilled—continue to cross borders in search of better employment opportunities worldwide. Youth unemployment remains one of the key factors driving the increasing number of Kenyans seeking work in major global cities.

The United Arab Emirates (UAE) has emerged as one of the principal labour destinations for Kenya's skilled, semi-skilled, and unskilled migrant workers. While labour migration is largely viewed in a positive light due to its role in development through skills transfer and remittances, there is an urgent need to streamline processes and strengthen governance systems to ensure the protection of the constitutional rights and overall wellbeing of Kenyan migrant workers.

In recent years, the growing number of Kenyans employed in domestic roles across the Middle East has been accompanied by a worrying rise in distress calls, with many reporting cases of abuse, torture, and mistreatment by employers. As elected representatives, parliamentarians are often approached by constituents seeking help to repatriate relatives or friends facing hardship abroad.

Against this backdrop, the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations, in collaboration with the Committee on Diaspora and Migrant Workers, was invited by the Principal Secretary of the State Department for Diaspora Affairs to undertake a study visit to the United Arab Emirates—Abu Dhabi and Dubai—from 8th to 15th June 2025. The key focus of this engagement included strengthening partnerships on labour mobility, enhancing consular relations, and advancing the welfare of the Kenyan diaspora. The delegation also held meetings with members of the diaspora to provide policy updates and raise awareness on their rights, welfare, and legal protections.

I extend my sincere appreciation to the Members of the Committee who participated in the visit, acknowledge the critical support of the Office of the Clerk of the National Assembly in facilitating the mission, and commend the Committee Secretariat for their invaluable technical and logistical support.

On behalf of the Committee, I am honoured to present this Report on the Study Visit by the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations to the United Arab Emirates.

Hon. Nelson Koech, CBS, M.P.

Chairperson, Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations

1.0 PREFACE

1.1 Introduction

1. The Committee had extensive engagements with the Kenyan professionals based in Abu Dhabi, officials from the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK) and the Affordable Housing Program, and the Principal Secretary of the State Department of Diaspora Affairs. These contributions, which have been carefully analyzed and incorporated into Chapter Three (3) of this Report, enriched the Committee's analysis, ensuring that the outcome reflects the accurate state of affairs.

1.2 Committee's Mandate

2. The Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations is one of the Departmental Committees of the National Assembly established under Standing Order 216 whose mandates, pursuant to the Standing Order 216 (5) includes, among others, *to investigate, inquire into, and report on all matters relating to the mandate, management, activities, administration, operations and estimates of the assigned ministries and departments; and to study the programme and policy objectives of Ministries and departments and the effectiveness of the implementation.*

1.3 Committee Subjects

3. The subject matter of the Committee is stated in the Second Schedule of the National Assembly Standing Orders and includes: *defence, intelligence, foreign relations, diplomatic and consular services, international boundaries including territorial waters, international relations, and veteran affairs.*
4. In executing its mandate, the Committee oversees the following government Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs):
 - a) The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs;
 - b) The Ministry of Defence;
 - c) The State Department for East African Community Affairs (EAC); and
 - d) The National Intelligence Service (NIS).

1.4 Committee Membership

5. The Committee, initially constituted by the House on 27th October 2022 and reconstituted on 6th March 2025, brings together a diverse and experienced team of legislators entrusted with steering the nation's Defence, Intelligence, and Foreign Policy agenda. Its membership is as follows:

Chairperson

Hon. Nelson Koech, CBS, M.P.

Belgut Constituency

UDA Party

Vice-Chairperson

Hon. Maj. (Rtd.) Sheikh Abdullahi Bashir, M.P.

Mandera North Constituency

UDM Party

Members

Hon. Wanjira Martha Wangari, CBS, M.P.
Gilgil Constituency

UDA Party

Hon. Joshua Kandie, M.P.
Baringo Central Constituency

UDA Party

Hon. Hassan Abdi Yusuf, CBS, M.P.
Kamukunji Constituency

Jubilee Party

Hon. Kwenya Thuku Zachary, M.P.
Kinangop Constituency

Jubilee Party

Hon. Odhiambo Millie Akoth, CBS, M.P.
Suba North Constituency

ODM Party

Hon. Logova Sloya Clement, M.P.
Sabatia Constituency

UDA Party

Hon. Kanchory Elijah Memusi, M.P.
Kajiado Central Constituency

ODM Party

Hon. Ikana Fredrick Lusuli, M.P.
Shinyalu Constituency

ANC Party

Hon. (Dr.) Kasalu Irene Muthoni, MP
Kitui County

WDM-K

Hon. Mohamed A. Hussein, M.P.
Lagdera Constituency

ODM Party

Hon. Kirima Moses Nguchine, M.P.
Imenti Central Constituency

UDA Party

Hon. Anne Wanjiku Muratha, M.P.
Kiambu County

UDA Party

Hon. Luyai Caleb Amisi, M.P.
Saboti Constituency

ODM Party

1.5 Committee Secretariat

6. The Committee Secretariat is composed of a dedicated team of technical experts who provide crucial support to the Committee. It comprises the following staff:

Mr. Dennis Mogare Ogechi
First Clerk Assistant/Head of Secretariat

Mr. Lenny Muchangi
Legal Counsel II

Mr. Bernard Njeru
Clerk Assistant III

Martin Sigei
Research Officer III

Mr. Edwin Machuki
Fiscal Analyst III

Mr. Salat Ali
Principal Serjeant-at-Arms

Ms. Noelle Chelagat
Media Relations Officer II

Mr. Alex Amwata
Hansard Reporter II

John N'gan'ga
Audio Officer

2.0 STAKEHOLDER ENGAGEMENTS IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

2.1 Background

7. Global labour migration is not a new phenomenon and continues to be a key contributor to the expanding international labour market. Kenyan workers—both skilled and unskilled—regularly cross borders in search of better opportunities. Increased human mobility, globalization, open borders, technological advancements, and demographic pressures drive this trend. Youth unemployment, currently at 34.27%, remains a significant factor in the growing number of Kenyans seeking employment abroad.
8. The Middle East—particularly the United Arab Emirates—has become a major destination for Kenya’s semi- and unskilled migrant workers. While labour migration offers socio-economic benefits such as remittances and skills transfer, it also presents significant policy challenges. Globally, low-skilled migrant workers often face abuse, inadequate wages, poor working conditions, and discrimination.
9. According to the Ministry of Labour, at least 50,000 Kenyans are currently living and working in the UAE. However, the rise in Kenyans migrating for domestic work has been accompanied by a surge in distress calls involving reports of mistreatment and abuse by employers. These experiences cast doubt on the sustainability and net benefits of such migration arrangements.
10. In response to these concerns, and in line with its oversight, legislative, and representative mandate, the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations joined the State Department for Diaspora Affairs on a visit to the UAE. The visit focused on the strategic migrant destinations of Abu Dhabi and Dubai. Given the Committee’s jurisdiction over such matters—and the persistent complaints and incidents related to Kenyan migrant workers in the Gulf region—the Committee resolved to have a firsthand experience from the victims and other sector players, despite its acknowledged economic contributions.

2.1 The Committee Delegation

11. The delegation to the UAE comprised Members of the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations, and the Departmental Committee on Diaspora Welfare Affairs:
 1. Hon. Abdikadir Husein Mohamed, MP - Chairperson, Leader of Delegation
 2. Hon. Zamzam Chimba Mohamed, MP - Member
 3. Mr. Alex Amwata Mseera - Secretary to the delegation

The Hon. Members accompanied the Principal Secretary of the State Department for Diaspora Affairs, Ms. Roseline Njogu, officials from the Central Bank of Kenya (CBK), and the Affordable Housing Program.

12. The Committee held meetings with Kenyan professionals in the labour sector in Abu Dhabi, drawn from health, Information Communication Technology (ICT), transport, and logistics. Regrettably, Members could not hold similar engagements in Dubai as had earlier been scheduled, despite having arrived there in time for such engagements, due to what the Committee deems serious gaps in the planning on the part of the convener.

3.0 PROCEEDINGS DURING THE STUDY VISIT TO THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES (UAE)

3.1: Brief background of the United Arab Emirates

13. The UAE is a federation of seven emirates: Abu Dhabi (capital and largest emirate), Dubai, Sharjah, Ajman, Umm Al-Quwain, Ras Al Khaimah, and Fujairah. Each emirate is governed by its monarch, and together they form the Federal Supreme Council, the highest constitutional authority in the UAE. It is situated in the Southeastern corner of the Arabian Peninsula, bordering Saudi Arabia to the southwest, Oman to the southeast, and the Persian Gulf to the north. It is an arid desert climate with very hot summers and mild winters. The land area is approximately 83,600 square kilometres.
14. The population of the UAE is around 10 million. Over 85 per cent of the population are expatriates (mainly from India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Philippines, and Western countries). Approximately 50,000 Kenyan nationals are currently living and working in the UAE as of 2025, according to sources from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, including both workers and dependents. Most Kenyan migrant workers in the UAE are employed in low-skill sectors, especially domestic service, hospitality, security, transport, and construction.
15. The value of trade between the two countries increased from Ksh42.5 billion in 2013 to Ksh460 billion in 2023. Kenya's exports include tea, goat and sheep meat, fruits, vegetables and cut flowers, while imports include petroleum products, polymers and telecommunications equipment.

3.1: Brief Background of Abu Dhabi

16. Abu Dhabi is one of the seven Emirates that make up the United Arab Emirates (UAE), a cosmopolitan and innovative city, and the largest of the Emirates, covering 87 per cent of the country's total land area. It is one of the world's richest cities due to vast petroleum reserves, which account for most of the UAE's oil output. The emirate has also diversified in finance and investment, logistics, manufacturing, real estate, tourism and culture, and renewables.
17. As of 2024, the estimated population of the Abu Dhabi Emirate was approximately 3.8 million people. Expatriates make up a majority of the population at around 80 per cent of the population. The male population is higher due to the large number of male foreign workers in construction, transport, manufacturing industry. Abu Dhabi hosts a smaller Kenyan community, approximated at 7000, and is mainly tied to government-linked industries and corporate employment.

3.3 Brief background of Dubai

18. Dubai is a cosmopolitan and innovative city and the second largest of the Emirates after Abu Dhabi. It covers approximately 4110 square kilometres with a population of 3.7 million people. Over 85–90 per cent of Dubai's population are foreign nationals (expatriates). Native Emiratis make up only about 10–15 per cent of Dubai's population. The main drivers of economic diversity in Dubai are tourism, logistics, manufacturing, and the services sector, which provide an opportunity for growth beyond oil and gas, and upon which labour migration is a major beneficiary. Dubai & Sharjah attract the majority of Kenyan migrant workers due to their large hospitality, retail, construction, and service sectors. Approximately 35000 migrant Kenyan workers live here. Other emirates have minimal Kenyan representation or no specific data.

3.4 A Courtesy Call at the Embassy of Kenya, Abu Dhabi

19. The delegation paid a courtesy call at the Kenyan Embassy in Abu Dhabi, UAE, on 10th June 2025.

The delegation was received by H. E Amb. Kenneth Milimo Nganga and other officials at the mission. In his remarks, H.E. Ambassador Nganga welcomed the delegation and introduced them to the strategic, economic, and political interests that the embassy serves, considering that the UAE is one of the biggest labour markets for Kenya.

20. He expressed his gratitude to the Kenyan delegation for hearing and experiencing first-hand the issues they are dealing with in the labour market. He requested an increase in the budget allocation towards the missions to help deal with the many distress calls. He cited times when they have been forced to allow Kenyans in distress to sleep at the Embassy. A safe house would go a long way in helping the number of distressed Kenyans in the UAE.

4.0 MEETING WITH THE KENYAN PROFESSIONALS WORKING IN THE UAE

21. The Committee held engagements at the Kenyan Embassy in Abu Dhabi on the 10th June 2025. The meeting, chaired by the Principal Secretary for Diaspora Affairs, Hon. Roseline Njogu, was attended by officials from the CBK, Affordable Housing, and Kenyan professionals in Abu Dhabi.

4.1 Submission from the Principal Secretary, State Department of Diaspora Affairs

22. The Principal Secretary began by stating that the delegation was in the UAE primarily to meet the migrant workers, share with them what the newly created State Department is doing to support them, and listen to the issues, considering that each country has its unique issues. She indicated that 4 million Kenyans were living in the diaspora, which is larger than the population of Nairobi during the day. In 2024, the diaspora remittances back home hit \$4.5 million, the highest foreign exchange earner in the country. All this was done in an unstructured way, like sending relatives money towards fees, medical bills, etc. Through these engagements, the department was in to ensure seamless and easy transition from diaspora to home by ensuring a safe landing through prior and reliable investments.
23. The PS informed the participants that there is a youth budge in Kenya with the median age of Kenyans standing at 20 years. While this is a challenge, it also represents an opportunity to provide labour services to the other parts of the world which has an older population, like Germany and Japan. With an aged population, it means they do not have enough workers in the health sector, ICT, and creative workers, which are normally performed by the youth.
24. She summarized the support the Department offers to the workers in diaspora into four: That the State Department for Diaspora Affairs is dedicated to championing the protection of Kenya's Diaspora rights and welfare. They are committed to creating an inclusive and supportive environment for Kenyans living abroad, enabling them to thrive and contribute to the development of our great nation. This is through consular services, quick response in distress, rescues, evacuations, repatriations, and rights issues. By rights issues, the department makes sure that the Kenyans in diaspora are not losing their incomes and property. She stressed that welfare matters vary in different places. In Saudi Arabia, for example, the main focus is on making sure that people can leave well and their labour rights. In Germany, the major focus of welfare is on people regaining their citizenship for those who do not have dual citizenship until now. In Lebanon, it has been about the evacuation of people from conflicts.
25. The second pillar focuses on creating opportunities for Kenyans abroad to contribute to and benefit from Kenya's economic development. This includes initiatives to facilitate remittances, diaspora investments, and skills and technology transfer. In engagements, the department is ensuring that Kenyans in the diaspora can vote. The plan is to increase the voter turnout in general elections to ensure that they exercise their democratic rights. It is also ensuring that the diaspora can be a part of the law reform agenda in the country through the Bills and Policies in Parliament. So that the diaspora perspective can be heard.
26. Economic Empowerment is the third pillar that the department was keen on. This pillar focuses on creating opportunities for Kenyans abroad to contribute to and benefit from Kenya's economic development. This includes initiatives to facilitate remittances, diaspora investments, and skills and technology transfer. This is to help Kenyans find good job opportunities abroad and ensure that Kenyans do not enter the labour market at the bottom of the food chain, but rather, with good pay. The department works by ensuring Kenyans who migrate are doing so in a structured way

and within a framework. It is also about supporting the entrepreneurial journey, especially for Kenyans in the diaspora.

27. Diaspora investment is the last pillar of the department. This is to make sure that the Kenyans in diaspora can invest those funds in the country by creating incentives and frameworks that allow Kenyans to find it easy to send money home and provide different investment opportunities that are safer than sending to unreliable relatives and commen.
28. She stressed the important role Parliament plays in ensuring that, through the Departmental Committee on Diaspora Affairs, the relevant policies and legislations are put in place, and oversight is of the department is done. She mentioned the countless times she is in Parliament answering questions on matters relating to diaspora affairs and the welfare of Kenyan workers abroad.
29. In explaining the important role the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations plays, she stated that the Committee oversees the entire Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs. It is the Committee that vets all the Ambassadors and the Principal Secretaries within the entire Ministry. It is the Committee that determines and defends the department's budget. The Principal Secretary mentioned the issue of Safe Shelters for Kenyans in distress and how there has been a lot of canvassing around it in Parliament.

4.2 Submissions from the Kenyan Professionals in Abu Dhabi

30. The Chairman of the team of professionals was very grateful for such a rare opportunity to meet the delegation from Kenya, especially accompanied by the Members of Parliament, who are the people's representatives. He went on to highlight some of the challenges they have, which are listed below:
 31. There was a serious UAE Visa problem that stems from rogue or fake recruiting agents. They dupe unsuspecting people into travelling to the UAE with a promise of a job that does not exist and on a visitor's visa. Some of them even fake work permits, and because most Kenyans are ignorant, they do not know it. And even those who know the procedure, many Kenyans still believe there are shortcuts. Upon arrival and with no job, they resort to very low-paying jobs called *kaliwali*, which can hardly support them. They end up on the streets or join homes of other Kenyans as they figure out how to go back home.
 32. There was a need for a good budget towards sensitization about the entire recruitment process in different countries, with the requirements. This will help Kenyans to see red flags in time and avoid being duped by fake or rogue recruitment agents.
 33. The need for Safe Houses came out strongly in the discussions. Though there are a few incidents of distress in the UAE compared to other Gulf countries, there is generally a need to have them to take care of Kenyans who are stranded after being duped by scrupulous agents. Some lose their jobs after differing with their employers and need a safe holding place as they seek other opportunities or as they wait to travel back home. Out of 10 cases of distress, seven are women, and this necessitates the need for a safe house because they are too vulnerable.
 34. There was an increasing number of cases of mental health problems occasioned by toxic work environments, pressures from work, and personal family issues, among others. Many Kenyans have no opportunity to unwind because of limited resources. A small budget from the Ministry could go a long way in planning a small function at the Kenyan Embassy to bring Kenyans

together.

35. There have been challenges with investing back home in Kenya because most of those investment groups at home are run by conmen. There is a need for effort in vetting some of these investment agencies. Information sharing is very important as it has happened today. Workers in the diaspora should also be given opportunities to invest in retirement schemes like the National Social Security Fund (NSSF).
36. With improved living and working conditions, most people have chosen to settle and have families in the UAE. There is a risk of raising children who are detached and disconnected from their country's culture. There is a need for the government to make interventions and save a generation from losing its culture.
37. To process or renew a passport, workers based in Abu Dhabi have to travel all the way to Dubai. This is not only time-consuming but quite costly. Some of the workers in Abu Dhabi are not given much time to be away from their duty stations, making it very difficult to access the services in Dubai. In that regard, if such services can be offered in Abu Dhabi, it could be very convenient for them.
38. The professionals lamented that their counterparts from other countries, like the Philippines, were paid more than they yet they were the same doing the same job. This, they said, was because of the comprehensive bilateral agreements between their countries and the UAE. There is need to fast-track the signing of bilateral agreements/MOUs between Kenya and key destination countries. Those agreements/MOUs should stick to International Labour Standards.
39. The professionals decried the lack of information on verified and vetted investment platforms. That is how many lands are in the hands of conmen.

4.3 Submission and Responses from Hon Zamzam Mohammed, MP

40. Hon. Zamzam reiterated that the delegation from Parliament was with them to just listen to the Kenyan stakeholders in the UAE as their representatives, so that when they got to Kenya, they would report back to the Committee and Parliament at large.
41. The Hon. Member spoke to the need to have enough labour *attachés*. Currently, there is only one labour *attache* stationed in Dubai and who is only found twice a month in Abu Dhabi.
42. She spoke to the need for more media sensitization to reduce the number of Kenyans who get duped and dumped in the diaspora, necessitating the need for safe houses.
43. She asked for a framework to be developed to document all Kenyan workers as soon as they arrive in the UAE, including where they are working, to assist them in times of distress easily.
44. She also stressed the need for the Kenyans in diaspora to organize trips back home during holidays for the sake of the new generation that is being raised in the Gulf countries, so that they can connect with their roots. Due to serious economic hardships in the country, the government can't address some of the needs, such as the request made with respect to children born in the Gulf being detached from their culture.
45. She stressed the need for an organised and structured way, like that of the CBK and Affordable Housing Program, that helps protect the hard-earned cash Kenyans make and invest back at home.

She requested the State Department of Diaspora Affairs and the Ambassador to benchmark and borrow a leaf from how and why Ethiopians are better organised in terms of their citizens investing back in their country.

46. She congratulated the migrant workers for their contributions back home, which saw foreign remittances from the diaspora top the list of all foreign remittances in the country. Because of this, she asked the State Department to do more on the affairs of the migrant workers, considering that they contribute immensely to the economy.
47. She decried the high commissions being charged by the recruitment agencies. She requested the team to help in relaying information on available opportunities so that these middlemen, who make it very expensive, can be avoided. She implored the Department to find a way to restrict the amount an agent can charge.
48. She lamented the inordinately long days taken after recruitment is done for the youths to get the job placement. The processes should be fast-tracked to maintain credibility and trust among the youth in this noble plan by the government. There is a need to be open on the process, time taken, and what each entails so that expectations are managed.
49. She mentioned the need to convert the Youth Fund to grants. Asking someone looking for a job to provide a Title Deed or Logbook as collateral is unrealistic because, at that age, they do not have those things.
50. There is a need to address our issues amicably as a country when they arise, without painting a bad image of the country. In the short term, it normally works, but in the long run, it denies the country many opportunities. She cited the constant public bashing of recruitment agencies as one of the reasons other countries like Indonesia, the Philippines, and Ethiopia are slowly overtaking Kenya in terms of labour migration.
51. She said that the time is ripe for action by the government after many engagements. The information we have gathered is sufficient for proper actions to be taken. We should employ every strategy we have learned to ensure our youth get these jobs. She stressed that an idle youth is very dangerous, as was seen with the invasion of Parliament.

4.4 Submission from Hon. Abdikadir Hussein Mohamed, MP.

52. Hon. Abdikadir Hussein Mohamed took the attendees briefly through the budget-making process in Parliament. He mentioned that the Committee on Defence, Intelligence and Foreign Relations deals with budgets of all foreign missions and the State Department of Diaspora Affairs. He reiterated that despite the limited resources, the Committee has endeavoured to increase the allocation towards the State Department of Diaspora Affairs even in the face of austerity measures in place.
53. The Committee was fully aware of the need for safe houses, evacuations, and repatriations, but due to the scarcity of resources, some of those needs have been. However, owing to the very critical role the department plays, and having experienced the need firsthand, Parliament was going to push for even more allocations in the Report recommendation following this visit. He cautioned that it may not happen in haste because of the bureaucracy of the process of budget-making in Parliament, but it will happen.
54. He mentioned the complicated nature of the workings of the Committee with the State Department,

because apart from appropriating the monies, they also must provide oversight on how the money is spent.

4.5 Submissions from the Central Bank of Kenya

55. In their submission, officials from the Central Bank of Kenya told the gathering that the government was providing the diaspora with opportunities to invest in low-risk government securities, which also fetch good returns. So that in case they needed opportunities to invest, that would guarantee the safety of their investments, then Government securities and pension funds are safer avenues of investing.
56. The current portfolio stands at KSh6 trillion. He encouraged the team to take advantage of those opportunities. In 2024, there was an infrastructure bond that attracted an interest of 18 per cent, tax-free and payable to your account. The stakeholders heard that the Central Bank allows investments as individuals, *chamas*, and investment groups.
57. He did explain that CBK was now making it easier to invest. In the next few months, it will be possible to pay into the bank via mobile money from anywhere in the world. The bank is also in the process of coming up with a card payment to ease the process of investment.
58. The officials reiterated that they were there to listen to the stakeholders so that they could come up with even more innovative solutions that could ease investments back home.

4.6 Submissions from Affordable Housing

59. The officials from Affordable Housing mentioned the home ownership program, which they said does not discriminate against those who are not eligible for the Housing Levy back in Kenya. The government has made it possible for Kenyans to own homes at interest rates way below the market rate of 18 per cent. Those in the social category get the houses for as low as 3 per cent. Those earning between Ksh21000 and Ksh149000 can access the loan at 6 per cent. Those earning over Ksh150000 can access the house for 9 per cent.
60. The Boma Yangu Portal has been deployed so that those as far as the UAE can register, apply for a loan, or start saving. Upon attainment of a 10 per cent deposit, you can apply for a home; verification will be done back at home, and a unit will be allocated to you.
61. Apart from owning a home, many opportunities abound on the supply side. You can have a project done within the confines and guidelines of the policy of Affordable Housing. The Affordable Housing can buy the project, and you will recover your entire investment.

4.7 Responses from the Principal Secretary

62. The Principal Secretary informed the participants that the Government is in the process of signing Mutual Recognition Frameworks to ensure that when Kenyans join this labour market, they are at par with their peers from other countries. She mentioned that she had been tasked by the President to work on the MRF. While there exist frameworks in the UAE, they are still insufficient. She told the team that they will need their input, especially on matters of compensation, as they work on the framework. Kenya is also pursuing the issue of minimum wage in the diaspora. Borrowing a leaf from the Philippines, the President had tasked the Department and the Ministry of Labour to come up with a minimum wage bill for Kenyans in the diaspora, especially the lowest-income earners. This will reduce distress. The country runs the risk of losing business to other countries, but as long as Kenyans earn a wage they can live on and not struggle, and not live in distress, where they will need to be rescued.

63. On matters of safe shelters, the PS reiterated that it is a case she has been on for the last two years as she pushed to get funds. While it is an expensive venture, she said it is worth it considering the contributions of diaspora remittances on foreign exchange earnings. With the support from Parliament, there is every hope of one of them being rolled out soon. Meanwhile, the Department is looking for partnerships to start with a few countries, such as Saudi Arabia, Qatar, and the UAE, as pilots. She also asked the diaspora to help think of ways they can support, especially on logistics, considering that they are already doing it.
64. On skills transfer, the participants were informed that Kenya has a database of Kenyans with skills. Anybody can be a part of it through a link that would be shared. When called upon, it is important to plug in so that the country can know what the Kenyans in diaspora are able to do.
65. She mentioned that the passage of culture to the next generation is the responsibility of the parents. However, teams in a diaspora can come together and organise events that can bring people from home together. The various groupings can also organise cultural forums like Kenya Nights, as happens among the diaspora in the United States of America.
66. Regarding investments, the PS informed participants that the department is launching the Diaspora Investment Strategy (DIS) to comprehensively address issues such as ease of investment, access to information, and available options for investment. The decision to invite key investment players like CBK and Affordable Housing to join the trip was driven by the department's proactive response to the need for information on safe investment opportunities for the diaspora. When asked whether the diaspora can invest in NSSF and other private pension funds for retirement, the PS assured the team that these pension schemes remain the safest and most reliable ways to save for old age, thanks to the regulatory frameworks in place to protect members' savings.
67. The government is expediting the processing and issuance of travel documents like passports and certificates of good conduct. Recently, the wait times have been reduced. Regarding the request for a Consular office in Abu Dhabi, the PS stated that an officer from Dubai will come to Abu Dhabi twice a month to accelerate the passport renewal process for Kenyans living there.
68. Five bilateral agreements have been signed to create more job opportunities for Kenyans abroad, while some are in the pipeline as the country showcases to the rest of the world what it has in terms of skills and knowledge. The government has equally come up with policies that protect its citizens in the challenges that come with labour migrations, such as human trafficking. The Labour and Trade attachés are normally in Abu Dhabi every Wednesday to deal with any issues.
69. The PS informed the participants about the emerging challenge of the unregulated players in the field. So far, sufficient work has been done on regulating recruitment agencies. The problem now remaining is dealing with the fake, unlicensed agents who are preying on gullible and unsuspecting Kenyans. The government is going to step up sensitization, but more impact can be realized if the diaspora workers share the information on job requirements and documentation on the various platforms. That will go a long way in helping to protect the brand of the country, which is being tainted by fake agents. She pleaded with Members of Parliament to help sensitize the public on human trafficking. The Office of the Women Representatives would come in handy because most of the victims of distress are women.

3.0 COMMITTEE OBSERVATIONS

70. The Committee made the following observations:

- a) There was a significant diaspora presence and economic contribution since Kenya signed the initial bilateral agreement with the UAE, which saw many Kenyans get job opportunities in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. With proper management, this sector has the potential to grow, injecting a significant amount of revenue into the economy. Kenya boasts a median age of 19 years. While this presents a challenge to the country on employment opportunities, it is also an opportunity to export skills and knowledge to countries with an ageing population, like Germany and Japan.
- b) While the government has made tremendous progress in weeding out rogue recruitment agencies and providing a regulatory framework that governs their operations, a new challenge exists of fake recruitment agencies that operate outside the regulatory framework. They still defraud unsuspecting and ignorant Kenyans by promising them non-existent jobs, or promise them white collar jobs, only to land them as domestic workers. Many Kenyans are tricked into travelling on Visitor Visas with no actual job offers—often due to rogue agents using fake documents. Fake work permits are issued, leaving migrants jobless or stuck in "kaliwali" (low-paying) jobs upon landing in the UAE. The UAE labour laws provide that for one to be employed, they must possess an employment letter, a signed employment contract, a work permit, and an employment visa.
- c) There is a serious need for safe houses to temporarily provide a haven for Kenyans living in the UAE. Compared to neighbouring destination countries, the UAE records fewer cases of distress calls, but the numbers have been growing, majority of them being women. The Embassy has been forced on several occasions to host most Kenyans in distress at the Mission, which interferes with other operations. These houses can be used to house Kenyans who end up in the UAE at the hands of fake recruitment agents and with no work to do. Some Kenyans, upon differing with their employers, end up on the streets. This safe house could provide a temporary haven as the distressed look for another job or arrange to travel back home.
- d) Fraudulent and dubious investment schemes in Kenya. Many Kenyans would like to make investments back home and actually do, only for their investments to land in the hands of conmen and cowwomen. Some end up losing their investments to relatives and friends whom they trust to invest on their behalf.
- e) There still existed inordinate delays and challenges for Kenyans living in Abu Dhabi in processing or renewing their passports and other documents. They have to travel to Dubai for those services, which is time-consuming and costly. Plans were in place to ensure officials are sent to Abu Dhabi at least twice a month to process the official documents for Kenyans residing in Abu Dhabi.
- f) There exist wage disparities between the Kenyan migrant workers and those of other countries doing the same work. For example, the salary for a Kenyan domestic worker in Abu Dhabi is 50 per cent less than a domestic worker from the Philippines. This was attributed to strong bilateral agreements that exist between the UAE and countries such as the Philippines. The agreements outline what should constitute the minimum wage to the advantage of their citizenry.
- g) The Committee observed a serious information gap. Most Kenyans were uninformed about the procedures and documentation required to land jobs in the UAE. Rogue and fake recruitment agents and conmen have continuously used these gaps to defraud Kenyans and even land some in the UAE using fake documents.

- h) Recruitment agencies continue to charge very high commissions, which inflate the cost of migration. These high costs reduce the gains the country is making in sending as many young Kenyans to the diaspora. Sometimes, the young job seekers are asked to deposit a Title Deed or Logbook, which realistically, they cannot have.

- i) While the Committee undertook the visit on an invitation from the State Department of Diaspora Affairs, the State Department officials excluded the Hon. Members from most of the engagements with the stakeholders, both in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In a meeting with victims of the fire in Dubai that saw Kenyans lose their lives while others got injured, Members were kept at the reception at the Kenyan Consulate in Dubai waiting for over 30 minutes. All this while, the receptionist kept informing Hon. Members that the Principal Secretary was holding a meeting with those victims and would see them once her meeting was over. No single consulate official or official from the State showed the courtesy to either receive the Hon. Members or let them in the meeting, despite having informed Hon. Members to attend the meeting.

4.0 COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

71. The Committee recommends that the State Department for Diaspora Affairs, in conjunction with relevant MDAs, should:
- a) Ensure that bilateral agreements/MOUs between Kenya and key destination countries conform to International Labour Standards. Issues such as working conditions and the minimum wage bill must be captured in those agreements to safeguard migrant workers from exploitation by their employers.
 - b) Aggressively engagement with other foreign governments that require skilled manpower to ensure that opportunities for employment for Kenyans are created overseas. All pending BLAs should be given priority.
 - c) Undertake wide sensitization and public awareness on labour migration to the masses through roadshows, media campaigns, the people's representatives, among others. The masses need to be informed not only about the available opportunities overseas but also the processes involved, the bodies involved, and the duration involved to avoid being duped by rogue or fake recruitment agencies.
 - d) Ensure that all employment documents are attested by the Kenyan Embassy in the UAE before submission for action in Kenya. This will ensure that Kenyans do not land in the UAE for non-existent jobs and reduce distress calls.
 - e) Accelerate the dissemination of information to the Kenyans in diaspora about more structured and safe avenues of investment within the country. This is to safeguard the diaspora investors from conmen and unreliable relatives. The government institutions that provide avenues for investment, like the CBK, should make it easy to invest for Kenyans in the diaspora without having to use middlemen such as relatives within the country.

SIGNED:  DATE: 04/12/2025

**THE HON. MAJ. (RTD.) SHEIKH ABDULLAHI BASHIR, M.P.
VICE-CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE,
INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS**

LIST OF ANNEXURES

ANNEXURE 1: COMMITTEE'S REPORT ADOPTION SCHEDULE

**ANNEXURE 2: COMMITTEE'S MINUTES OF THE SITTING THAT
CONSIDERED AND ADOPTED THE REPORT**

ANNEXURE 1:
COMMITTEE'S REPORT ADOPTION SCHEDULE



REPUBLIC OF KENYA
THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
13TH PARLIAMENT – FOURTH SESSION- 2025

DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE, AND
FOREIGN RELATIONS.

REPORT ADOPTION LIST

REPORT ON:

A VISIT BY THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE
INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI IN
THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR
DIASPORA AFFAIRS

We, Members of the Departmental Committee on Defence, Intelligence, and Foreign Relations, have pursuant to Standing Order 199, adopted this Report and affix our signatures to affirm our approval and confirm its accuracy, validity and authenticity today, **Tuesday 2nd December, 2025**

	NAME	SIGNATURE
1.	The Hon. Koech Nelson, CBS, M.P. (Chairperson)	
2.	The Hon. Maj. (Rtd.) Sheikh Abdullahi Bashir, M.P. (Vice Chairperson)	
3.	The Hon. Yusuf Hassan Abdi, CBS, M.P.	
4.	The Hon. Wanjira Martha Wangari, CBS, M.P.	
5.	The Hon. Odhiambo Millie Grace Akoth, CBS, M.P.	
6.	The Hon. Kanchory Elijah Memusi, M.P.	
7.	The Hon. (Dr.) Kasalu Irene Muthoni, M.P..	
8.	The Hon. Kirima Moses Nguchine, M.P.	
9.	The Hon. Kandie Joshua Chepyegon, M.P.	
10.	The Hon. Kwenya Thuku Zachary, M.P.	
11.	The Hon. Luyai Caleb Amisi, M.P.	
12.	The Hon. Muratha Anne Wanjiku, M.P.	
13.	The Hon. Logova Sloya Clement, M.P.	
14.	The Hon. Ikana Fredrick Lusuli, M.P.	
15.	The Hon. Mohamed Abdikadir Hussein, M.P.	

ANNEXURE 2:
**COMMITTEE'S MINUTES OF THE SITTING THAT CONSIDERED AND
ADOPTED THE REPORT**



**THE NATIONAL ASSEMBLY
13TH PARLIAMENT - FOURTH SESSION - 2025
DIRECTORATE OF DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEES
DC - DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS**

**MINUTES OF THE 60TH SITTING OF THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON
DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS HELD ON TUESDAY, 2ND
DECEMBER 2025, AT 10:00 A.M., IN COMMITTEE ROOM 26, 5TH FLOOR, BUNGE
TOWER, PARLIAMENT BUILDINGS.**

PRESENT

1. **The Hon. Maj. (Rtd.) Sheikh Abdullahi Bashir, M.P.** - Vice Chairperson
2. The Hon. Wanjira Martha Wangari, C.B.S, M.P.
3. The Hon. Yusuf Hassan Abdi, C.B.S, M.P.
4. The Hon. Kanchory Elijah Memusi, M.P.
5. The Hon. Kandie Joshua Chepyegon, M.P.
6. The Hon. Kirima Moses Nguchine, M.P.
7. The Hon. (Dr.) Kasalu Irene Muthoni, M.P.
8. The Hon. Luyai Caleb Amisi, M.P.
9. The Hon. Muratha Anne Wanjiku, M.P.
10. The Hon. Mohamed Abdikadir Hussein, M.P.
11. The Hon. Ikana Fredrick Lusuli, M.P.

APOLOGIES

1. **The Hon. Koech Nelson, CBS, M.P.** - Chairperson
2. The Hon. Odhiambo Millie Grace Akoth, CBS, M.P.
3. The Hon. Kwenya Thuku Zachary. M.P.
4. The Hon. Logova Sloya Clement, M.P.

IN ATTENDANCE

NATIONAL ASSEMBLY

- | | | |
|-------------------------|---|---------------------------|
| 1. Mr. Dennis M. Ogechi | - | Clerk Assistant I |
| 2. Mr. Bernard Njeru | - | Clerk Assistant III |
| 3. Mr. Martin Sigei | - | Research Officer III |
| 4. Ms. Noelle Chelangat | - | Media Relations Officer I |
| 5. Mr. Alex Amwata | - | Hansard Officer II |
| 6. Ms. Mirriam Magutt | - | Intern |

AGENDA

1. Preliminaries – Prayers, Adoption of the Agenda.
2. Communication from the Chair.
3. Confirmation of minutes of previous meeting.
4. **Consideration and adoption of reports on:**

- a) **A visit by the Departmental Committee on Defense, Intelligence, and Foreign Relations to Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates with the State Department for Diaspora Affairs and**
- b) **An inspection visit to the Kenyan Diplomatic Missions in the United States of America (the Consulate General in Los Angeles and the Embassy in Washington DC) conducted from 14th to 23rd May 2025.**

5. Any Other Business.

6. Adjournment/Date of the next Sitting.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/309/2025:

PLELIMINARIES

The meeting was called to order at 10.25 a.m., and prayer was said. The agenda above was unanimously adopted, having been proposed by Hon. Ikana Fredrick Lusuli, M.P. and seconded by Hon. Wanjira Martha Wangari, CBS, M.P.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/310/2025:

CONFIRMATION OF THE MINUTES

Confirmation of minutes of the previous sitting was deferred to a later date.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/311/2025:

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

The Chairperson informed the Committee on the following:

1. A correspondence from the Director General of the National Intelligence Service requesting for rescheduling of the intended inspection visit by the Committee to the National Intelligence Service Hospital in Kitusuru to any date between 13th and 18th December, 2025. It was resolved that the activity be undertaken after resumption from the long recess which is scheduled to commence on 5th December 2025.
2. The Defence Cooperation Agreement between Kenya and France had been committed to the Committee for consideration with a view to approval for ratification. It was resolved that the Committee would handle it after the long recess that was scheduled to commence on 5th December 2025.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/312/2025:

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF A REPORT ON A VISIT BY THE DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE AND FOREIGN RELATIONS TO ABU DHABI AND DUBAI IN THE UNITED ARAB EMIRATES WITH THE STATE DEPARTMENT FOR DIASPORA AFFAIRS

The Report on a visit by the Departmental Committee on Defense, Intelligence and Foreign Relations to Abu Dhabi and Dubai in the United Arab Emirates with the State Department for Diaspora affairs adopted The Hon. Luyai Caleb Amisi, M.P. and seconded by Hon. (Dr.) Kasalu Irene Muthoni, M.P., M.P.

It was adopted with the following observation and recommendations:

OBSERVATIONS

- a) There was a significant diaspora presence and economic contribution since Kenya signed the initial bilateral agreement with the UAE, which saw many Kenyans get job opportunities in Abu Dhabi and Dubai. With proper management, this sector has the potential to grow, injecting a significant amount of revenue into the economy. Kenya boasts a median age of 19 years. While this presents a challenge to the country on employment opportunities, it is also an opportunity to export skills

and knowledge to countries with an ageing population, like Germany and Japan.

- b) While the government has made tremendous progress in weeding out rogue recruitment agencies and providing a regulatory framework that governs their operations, a new challenge exists of fake recruitment agencies that operate outside the regulatory framework. They still defraud unsuspecting and ignorant Kenyans by promising them non-existent jobs, or promise them white collar jobs, only to land them as domestic workers. Many Kenyans are tricked into travelling on Visitor Visas with no actual job offers—often due to rogue agents using fake documents. Fake work permits are issued, leaving migrants jobless or stuck in "*kaliwali*" (low-paying) jobs upon landing in the UAE. The UAE labour laws provide that for one to be employed, they must possess an employment letter, a signed employment contract, a work permit, and an employment visa.
- c) There is a serious need for safe houses to temporarily provide a haven for Kenyans living in the UAE. Compared to neighbouring destination countries, the UAE records fewer cases of distress calls, but the numbers have been growing, majority of them being women. The Embassy has been forced on several occasions to host most Kenyans in distress at the Mission, which interferes with other operations. These houses can be used to house Kenyans who end up in the UAE at the hands of fake recruitment agents and with no work to do. Some Kenyans, upon differing with their employers, end up on the streets. This safe house could provide a temporary haven as the distressed look for another job or arrange to travel back home.
- d) Fraudulent and dubious investment schemes in Kenya. Many Kenyans would like to make investments back home and actually do, only for their investments to land in the hands of conmen and cowwomen. Some end up losing their investments to relatives and friends whom they trust to invest on their behalf.
- e) There still existed inordinate delays and challenges for Kenyans living in Abu Dhabi in processing or renewing their passports and other documents. They have to travel to Dubai for those services, which is time-consuming and costly. Plans were in place to ensure officials are sent to Abu Dhabi at least twice a month to process the official documents for Kenyans residing in Abu Dhabi.
- f) There exist wage disparities between the Kenyan migrant workers and those of other countries doing the same work. For example, the salary for a Kenyan domestic worker in Abu Dhabi is 50 per cent less than a domestic worker from the Philippines. This was attributed to strong bilateral agreements that exist between the UAE and countries such as the Philippines. The agreements outline what should constitute the minimum wage to the advantage of their citizenry.
- g) The Committee observed a serious information gap. Most Kenyans were uninformed about the procedures and documentation required to land jobs in the UAE. Rogue and fake recruitment agents and conmen have continuously used these gaps to defraud Kenyans and even land some in the UAE using fake documents.
- h) Recruitment agencies continue to charge very high commissions, which inflate the cost of migration. These high costs reduce the gains the country is making in sending as many young Kenyans to the diaspora. Sometimes, the young job seekers are asked to deposit a Title Deed or Logbook, which realistically, they cannot have.
- i) While the Committee undertook the visit on an invitation from the State Department of Diaspora Affairs, the State Department officials excluded the Hon. Members from most of the engagements with the stakeholders, both in Dubai and Abu Dhabi. In a meeting with victims of the fire in Dubai that saw Kenyans lose their lives while others got injured, Members were kept at the reception at the Kenyan Consulate in Dubai waiting for over 30 minutes. All this while, the receptionist kept informing Hon. Members that the Principal Secretary was holding a meeting with those victims and would see them once her meeting was over. No single consulate official or official from the State showed the courtesy to either receive the Hon. Members or let them in the meeting, despite having informed Hon. Members to attend the meeting.

RECOMMENDATIONS

3. The Committee recommended that the State Department for Diaspora Affairs, in conjunction with relevant MDAs, should:
 - a) Ensure that bilateral agreements/MOUs between Kenya and key destination countries conform to International Labour Standards. Issues such as working conditions and the minimum wage bill must be captured in those agreements to safeguard migrant workers from exploitation by their employers.
 - b) Aggressively engage with other foreign governments that require skilled manpower to ensure that opportunities for employment for Kenyans are created overseas. All pending BLAs should be given priority.
 - c) Undertake wide sensitization and public awareness on labour migration to the masses through roadshows, media campaigns, the people's representatives, among others. The masses need to be informed not only about the available opportunities overseas but also the processes involved, the bodies involved, and the duration involved to avoid being duped by rogue or fake recruitment agencies.
 - d) Ensure that all employment documents are attested by the Kenyan Embassy in the UAE before submission for action in Kenya. This will ensure that Kenyans do not land in the UAE for non-existent jobs and reduce distress calls.
 - e) Accelerate the dissemination of information to the Kenyans in diaspora about more structured and safe avenues of investment within the country. This is to safeguard the diaspora investors from conmen and unreliable relatives. The government institutions that provide avenues for investment, like the CBK, should make it easy to invest for Kenyans in the diaspora without having to use middlemen such as relatives within the country.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/313/2025:

CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF A REPORT ON AN INSPECTION VISIT TO THE KENYAN DIPLOMATIC MISSIONS IN THE UNITED STATES OF AMERICA (THE CONSULATE GENERAL IN LOS ANGELES AND THE EMBASSY IN WASHINGTON DC) CONDUCTED FROM 14TH - 23RD MAY 2025)

The Report on an Inspection Visit to the Kenyan Diplomatic Missions in The United States of America (The Consulate General in Los Angeles and The Embassy in Washington Dc) was adopted having been proposed by Hon. Wanjira Martha Wangari, CBS, M.P., and seconded by Hon. Ikana Fredrick Lusuli, M.P.

It was adopted with the following observations and recommendations:

OBSERVATIONS

It was observed that:

1. The Consulate-General in Los Angeles, California

- a) Tourism, entertainment, and creative industry opportunities - Los Angeles and the Pacific region are global hubs for media, entertainment, and tourism, yet Kenya's presence is limited. The Consulate has initiated contacts with film academies, production houses, and industry leaders, but follow-through and structured incentives remain lacking.
- b) Diaspora engagement and untapped potential - The Kenyan diaspora in the Pacific region numbers about 27,700 (2020 Census), concentrated in California, Washington, Arizona, and New Mexico, but the actual figure may be higher due to undocumented Kenyans. While diaspora forums exist, structured programs to harness investment, skills transfer, and cultural promotion are underdeveloped.
- c) Consular services delivery and efficiency gains - The Consulate has improved efficiency through an appointment system and mobile outreach programs, serving over 2,000 passport applications and 800 ID requests in six states in 2023, generating \$36,916 in revenue. However, the overall output of 2024/25 remains modest relative to diaspora size.
- d) Cultural diplomacy and sports promotion - Kenya has successfully used events such as the LA Rugby Sevens, LA Marathon, and cultural festivals to promote its image. With the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics ahead, there is a major opportunity to amplify Kenya's cultural and sporting presence.
- e) Academic and Research partnerships - Several promising academic collaborations are in progress, such as Machakos University with California Polytechnic, CUEA with Charles R. Drew University, and University of Nairobi with UCLA. However, bureaucratic delays have slowed implementation in some cases.
- f) Financial Sustainability and Revenue Generation - Appropriation-in-Aid (AIA) collections have been inconsistent, with sharp declines during COVID-19 due to the shift to e-Citizen, but a rebound in 2022/23 and 2023/24 following Mobile Consular Services (MCS). However, foreign exchange losses and delayed disbursements continue to undermine spending capacity.
- g) Operational Costs and Property Management - The Consulate incurs high recurrent rental costs for the chancery and the Consul-General's residence, despite the facilities being suitable. Proposals to purchase properties have not been acted upon.
- h) Service Delivery and Staffing Efficiency - Centralized passport processing in Nairobi causes delays, staffing levels are limited, and occasional ICT system downtimes reduce efficiency. The Consulate has proposed decentralization, IT upgrades, and provision of a digital ID kit.
- i) There was need to adopt the agency consular services model and roll it out across all states in the US in place of the mobile consular services (MCS), which had proven unsustainable both financially and operationally. Unlike the MCS framework, which relied on costly logistics, constant staff mobility, and temporary setups while offering inconsistent reach, the agency model provides a stable, predictable, and cost-efficient alternative. It involves outsourcing administrative aspects of passport processing to accredited agencies, while the three Kenyan missions in the US retain the critical role of validating applications and dispatching them to Nairobi for final processing. This model ensures continuity and reliability of consular services, reduces public expenditure, expands accessibility for citizens across the US, and enhances the credibility and effectiveness of Kenya's diplomatic and service delivery architecture.

- j) There is urgent need to invest in tourism promotion on the West Coast of the United States, a key hub for outbound international travel. While Indonesia attracts nearly 14 million tourists annually with strong promotional infrastructure in the US, Kenya receives about 2.8 million tourists yet has minimal presence in this critical market. Establishing a robust tourism promotion office on the West Coast would expand visibility, boost arrivals from a high-value source market, and strengthen Kenya's brand as a premier destination.
- k) There was need to prioritize labour mobility to the United States with a strong focus on skilled professionals such as nurses, teachers, and IT specialists. These sectors face persistent shortages in the US and present significant opportunities for Kenya to position its highly trained workforce competitively. By investing in targeted training, certification alignment, and bilateral labour agreements, Kenya can expand employment opportunities abroad, increase remittance inflows, and strengthen its reputation as a reliable source of skilled human capital.
- l) Targeted academic partnerships with US institutions are poised to open pathways for skilled labour mobility. For instance, the collaboration between the Catholic University of Eastern Africa and Charles R. Drew University of Medicine and Science on nursing training equips Kenyan nurses to meet international standards and access US employment opportunities. However, a planned partnership with Machakos University collapsed due to delays at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, leading to a missed opportunity to advance Kenya's labour mobility agenda.
- m) Immense economic potential of the Pacific Region - The Western United States, particularly California, Silicon Valley, and Seattle, represents a hub for global trade, technology, and green innovation, yet Kenya's engagement remains limited.
- n) Diaspora as a strategic asset - The Consulate's jurisdiction covers a growing Kenyan diaspora community across 13 states, but structured programs to harness their economic and professional potential remain underdeveloped.
- o) Promising business linkages already initiated - Early efforts such as linking KNCCI with the Los Angeles Chamber of Commerce, exploring cut flower exports, and promoting Kenyan brands like Tusker, tea, and coffee show Kenya's untapped potential in consumer and niche markets.

2. The Kenyan Embassy in Washington DC

- a) Opportunity in AGOA renewal and expanded trade relations - The Embassy has intensified advocacy for the renewal of AGOA ahead of its expiry in September 2025, recognizing its central role in sustaining Kenya's export competitiveness in the US market. However, Kenya's exports remain concentrated in raw commodities rather than diversified value-added products.
- b) Strategic opportunities in education and innovation partnerships - The Embassy has facilitated linkages between Kenyan universities and U.S. institutions (e.g., Tom Mboya University with University of Tennessee, Egerton with Bowie State, and the Open University of Kenya with Howard). These partnerships hold potential for strengthening Kenya's innovation ecosystem but remain fragmented and under-coordinated.
- c) Diaspora engagement as a driver of investment and remittances - The Kenyan diaspora in the U.S. contributes 56 percent of total remittances to Kenya, making them the single largest

source of foreign inflows. While the Embassy has strengthened diaspora services and welfare programs, structured diaspora investment frameworks remain underdeveloped.

- d) Staffing Gaps Undermining Service Delivery - The Embassy has an approved establishment of 34 staff but currently operates with 29, leaving critical vacancies, particularly in foreign service officers and consular assistants. These gaps strain service delivery given the Embassy's multiple accreditations and large diaspora population.
- e) Financial and budgetary constraints limiting embassy operations - The Embassy faces chronic under-provision in its budget, compounded by foreign exchange losses, lack of development funds, and reduced AIA revenue due to the e-Citizen transition. These constraints limit its ability to deliver effectively on its mandate across six accredited countries.
- f) Procurement rigidity hindering efficiency - Strict application of Kenya's Public Finance Management Act, 2012 within the U.S. context has made procurement inefficient, with delays in acquiring essential services and items due to approval thresholds and non-alignment with U.S. market practices.
- g) Limited diplomatic reach due to multiple accreditations - The Embassy in Washington, D.C. is accredited to five additional countries (Mexico, Costa Rica, El Salvador, Honduras, and Nicaragua), yet geographical vastness and high demands in the U.S. prevent effective engagement with these nations.
- h) Financial and budgetary constraints eroding operational effectiveness - The Embassy suffers from under-provision of funds for travel, maintenance, and national events, while foreign exchange fluctuations erode purchasing power. The shift to e-Citizen also reduced Appropriation-in-Aid (AIA) revenues without compensatory exchequer support.
- i) Procurement inefficiencies hindering service delivery - Current procurement rules under Kenya's Public Finance Management Act, 2012 do not align with U.S. laws, leading to delays, high costs, and impractical procedures, especially where approvals above Kshs. 500,000 are required from Nairobi.
- j) High rental costs despite government-owned properties - The Deputy Head of Mission is incurring unsustainable rent costs of Kshs. 1.74 million per month, despite Kenya owning several residential properties in Washington, D.C., which could be allocated by seniority to reduce expenditure.
- k) Foreign Exchange and budgetary strain - Budget allocations in Kenya Shillings are undermined by U.S. dollar fluctuations, while inadequate funding for maintenance leaves owned properties vulnerable to deterioration.
- l) Leveraging strategic trade opportunities through the U.S. Chamber of Commerce - Engagements with the U.S. Chamber of Commerce identified opportunities for Kenya in sectors such as coffee, tea, ICT, textiles, and renewable energy, yet structured follow-up mechanisms remain limited.
- m) The current lease agreement for the Deputy Head of Mission at a monthly rent of \$13,500, which amounts to an annual expenditure of \$162,000 (approximately Ksh 21,060,000), is financially unsustainable and represents a significant drain on public funds. A more prudent and fiscally responsible strategy would be to utilize one of the government's state-owned properties in Washington D.C., such as those recently renovated on 29th and 32nd Streets, to house senior diplomatic staff. This approach would eliminate exorbitant rental costs for high-

ranking officials, while allowing for more manageable rental arrangements for junior officers, thereby ensuring the efficient use of state assets and achieving substantial cost savings for the mission.

- n) The renovation of Kenya House at 10201 Sorrel Avenue highlights a fragmented procurement strategy that led to significant cost overruns. The final project cost of nearly \$373,000 was more than double the initial contract of \$169,500. This increase was driven by awarding separate contracts and approving over \$63,000 in change orders and "unforeseen" extra repairs. This piecemeal approach ultimately inflated the final expense.
- o) From the repairs at 4453 29th Street NW, the embassy incurred a significant financial loss due to poor contract management. The original \$40,215.00 contract price included the costly item of removing and replacing the entire carpet. When the contractor instead opted for the much cheaper alternative of polishing the existing wood floors, the contract price was curiously kept the same.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee recommended that:

General Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Foreign and Diaspora Affairs (in conjunction with relevant MDAs) should:
 - a) By December 2026, roll out the agency consular services model across all 50 U.S. states. Accredited agencies will handle administrative tasks while missions will validate and dispatch. It should aim to reduce costs by 40 percent and increase access by 60 percent in three years.
 - b) By 2027, decentralize passport processing to missions and equip them with a Digital ID kit, cutting turnaround time by 40 percent.
 - c) Introduce an appropriate foreign exchange buffer in mission budgets by 2026/27 FY to address foreign exchange losses.
 - d) Revise procurement thresholds for missions abroad by 2026, allowing independent procurement up to USD 50,000 while maintaining audit oversight.
 - e) Use PPPs to acquire new chancery/residential properties in high-cost locations (e.g., Los Angeles, Washington D.C.), cutting rent expenditure by 25 percent by 2028.

Specific Recommendations – Consulate-General in Los Angeles, California

2. Consulate-General in Los Angeles, California should:
 - a) Develop a five-year Kenya Creative Economy Promotion Strategy targeting Hollywood, negotiating at least two filming agreements by 2027 and rolling out a film incentives framework within 18 months. (Consulate Los Angeles, MFA)
 - b) Scale up consular outreach by committing to at least four missions annually across the 13 western states, aiming to process 5,000 passports and 2,000 IDs by 2027. (Consulate Los Angeles, MFA)

- c) Launch a Kenya Olympics Cultural & Sports Promotion Plan (2025–2028), targeting participation in at least 10 cultural/sports events annually, securing five corporate sponsorships by 2027, and showcasing Kenyan culture at the 2028 Los Angeles Olympics. (Consulate Los Angeles, MFA, Ministry of Sports & Culture)
- d) Establish a Kenya–Pacific Academic Partnerships Desk by 2026 to formalize at least five MOUs by 2027, secure 100 scholarships/faculty exchanges by 2028, and initiate three joint research projects in health and agriculture by 2027 (in conjunction with the Commission for University Education).
- e) In collaboration with KTB, establish a Kenya Tourism Promotion Office in California by mid-2027, targeting a 20 percent increase in U.S. arrivals by 2028.

Specific Recommendations – Kenyan Embassy in Washington DC

- 3. Kenyan Embassy in Washington DC (in conjunction with relevant MDAs) should:
 - a) Establish a Kenya–U.S. Academic Partnerships Desk at the Embassy by 2026, consolidating all bilateral education links and ensuring at least five MOUs by 2027.
 - b) Develop a Kenya–U.S. Export Diversification Roadmap (2025–2028), aiming to increase value-added exports by 25 percent by 2028, while securing AGOA renewal by September 2025.
 - c) Establish a Kenya–U.S. Higher Education and Research Hub by 2026, targeting 10 MOUs by 2027 and 500 student/faculty exchanges by 2028 in STEM, health, and agriculture.
 - d) Launch a Kenya Diaspora Investment Platform (KDIP) in Washington by 2026, mobilizing USD 500 million by 2028, with annual diaspora conferences starting in 2026.
 - e) Establish a Kenya–U.S. Trade and Investment Working Group by 2026 to secure three sector specific MoUs (coffee, ICT, textiles) by 2027 and mobilize USD 200 million in U.S. investments by 2028.
 - f) Implement a seniority-based housing allocation policy by 2026, ensuring senior officers use government-owned properties, with a target of reducing rental costs by 50 percent within two years.
 - g) Introduce (under guidance of the Ministry’s Internal Audit Department) mandatory mid-project reviews for all property renovations above USD 20,000 to enforce cost renegotiations if scope changes, ensuring value for money.

MIN.NO.DDC/DIFR/314/2025

ADJOURNMENT AND DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING.

The meeting was adjourned at 11:25 a.m. The next meeting will be held on notice.

SIGNED:

DATE: 04/12/2025

**THE HON. NELSON KOECH, CBS, M.P.
CHAIRPERSON, DEPARTMENTAL COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE, INTELLIGENCE
AND FOREIGN RELATIONS.**