

REPUBLIC OF KENYA



WAJIR COUNTY ASSEMBLY
THIRD ASSEMBLY - FIFTH SESSION

REPORT OF THE SECTORAL COMMITTEE ON TRADE, TOURISM,
COOPERATIVE DEVELOPMENT AND WILDLIFE ON THE FACT-FINDING
MISSION ON THE STATUS OF FRESH PRODUCE MARKETS IN WAJIR
COUNTY.

FEBRUARY 2026

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1.0 PREFACE

Mr. Speaker Sir,

On behalf of the Members of the Sectoral Committee on Trade, Tourism, Cooperative Development and Wildlife, and pursuant to the provisions of Standing Order No. 201(5)(f), it is my pleasure and duty to present to this Honourable House the Committee's report on the fact-finding mission undertaken to assess the status of Fresh Produce Markets in Wajir County.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee undertook a countywide inspection tour from 9th to 13th February 2026 across all sub-counties of Wajir County. The purpose of the tour was to evaluate the current condition, utilization and socio-economic impact of fresh produce markets constructed by the first County Government administration.

Mr. Speaker Sir, these markets were established with the noble objective of improving livelihoods, enhancing food security, promoting Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs), and contributing to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of Wajir County. Unfortunately, the Committee observed with great concern that the majority of these facilities are currently in a dilapidated state, poorly maintained, abandoned, or reduced to structures locally referred to as "donkey shades", thereby negating the original purpose for which they were constructed.

2.0 ESTABLISHMENT AND MANDATE OF THE COMMITTEE

The committee was established pursuant to the provisions of the Standing Order 201 (1-4) which states that;

- ✓ There shall be select committees to be known as Sectoral committees, the members of which shall be nominated by the County Assembly Committee on Selection in consultation with County Assembly parties at the commencement of every County Assembly.
- ✓ A member appointed to a Sectoral committee at the commencement of a County Assembly or at any other time during the term of the County Assembly shall, unless the County Assembly otherwise resolves, serve for the term of that County Assembly.
- ✓ Unless the County Assembly otherwise directs, the Sectoral committee and the subject matter respectively assigned to them shall be as set out in the second schedule.
- ✓ The mandate of the Sectoral committee in respect of the subject matter assigned under the second schedule of these Standing Orders shall only be exercised within the limits contemplated under part 2 of the fourth schedule of the Constitution.

The committee is mandated to:

- ✓ Investigate, inquire into and report on all the matters relating to the management, activities, administrations, operations and estimates of the assigned departments.
- ✓ Investigate and inquire into all matters relating to the assigned departments as they may deem necessary, and as may be referred to them by the County Assembly.
- ✓ To vet and report on all appointments where the constitution or any law requires the County Assembly to approve except those under Standing Order No.192 (Committee on Appointments)
- ✓ Make reports and recommendations to the County Assembly as often as possible, including recommendations of the proposed legislation.
- ✓ Study and review all County legislation referred to it.

3.0 MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE

Mr. Speaker Sir, The committee on Trade, Tourism, Cooperative Development and Wildlife comprises of the following members;

1. Hon.Shamsa Issa Chairperson
2. Hon. Fatuma Sheikh Abass.....Vice Chairperson
3. Hon. Dahaba Yussuf.....Member
4. Hon. Adan Hussein.....Member
5. Hon. Habiba Issack..... Member
6. Hon. Ibrahim HusseinMember
7. Hon. Ayub Abdi OsmanMember
8. Hon. Fatuma Fille.....Member
9. Hon. Adan Adow.....Member

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The Committee thanks the Office of the Speaker and the Clerk of the County Assembly for the support received during the fact finding and report writing.

It is therefore my pleasant duty and privilege, on behalf of the Committee on Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives to table this report and recommend it to the Assembly for adoption.

Signed.....

Hon. Shamsa Issa MCA

(Chairperson)

Sectoral Committee on Trade, Tourism and Cooperatives

4.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON FRESH PRODUCE MARKETS IN WAJIR COUNTY

Mr. Speaker Sir, The Fresh Produce Markets in Wajir County were constructed by the first County Government administration following the advent of devolution, as part of a broader socio-economic transformation agenda aimed at unlocking the county's trade potential and transitioning informal trading activities into organized, regulated and hygienic market systems. This initiative was anchored on the realization that Wajir County's economy, though largely pastoral, depends heavily on trade in fresh produce, livestock products and small-scale agribusiness to sustain household incomes.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the construction of these markets was envisaged as a deliberate intervention to stimulate local trade, enhance food security, improve public health standards and reduce post-harvest losses that were rampant due to open-air trading, exposure to extreme weather conditions and lack of storage facilities. The markets were designed to provide permanent stalls, shaded trading spaces and basic infrastructure that would protect traders and consumers from harsh climatic conditions while ensuring orderly conduct of business.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the markets were intended to serve as structured trading hubs for fruits, vegetables, cereals, meat, milk and other agricultural and livestock-related produce sourced both locally and from neighboring counties. In this regard, the facilities were expected to act as nodal points linking producers, traders and consumers, thereby strengthening value chains, stabilizing food supply and promoting price competitiveness within the county.

Mr. Speaker Sir, special emphasis was placed on supporting youth, women and vulnerable groups through these markets by providing affordable trading spaces and enabling the growth of Small and Medium Enterprises

(SMEs). The markets were expected to create employment opportunities, encourage entrepreneurship, enhance household incomes and reduce overreliance on relief food and emergency interventions, particularly during drought periods.

Mr. Speaker Sir, these markets were strategically distributed across all sub-counties to ensure equitable access and balanced economic development. Their location was meant to decentralize trade activities from urban centers, reduce congestion in town markets and bring services closer to rural communities. Collectively, the fresh produce markets were envisioned as engines of local economic growth, contributors to the county's Gross Domestic Product (GDP) and critical infrastructure for building economic resilience in an arid and semi-arid county such as Wajir.

5.0 OBJECTIVES OF THE FACT-FINDING MISSION

The objectives of the Committee's mission were to:

- ❖ Assess the physical condition and functionality of fresh produce markets;
- ❖ Determine the level of utilization by traders and SMEs;
- ❖ Identify challenges affecting effective operation and sustainability;
- ❖ Evaluate the contribution of markets to local economic growth;
- ❖ Propose actionable recommendations for rehabilitation and revival.

6.0 SCOPE AND METHODOLOGY OF THE MISSION

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The Committee conducted physical inspections of fresh produce markets in all sub-counties between **9th and 13th February 2026**. The exercise involved:

- ❖ On-site observation and inspection of market infrastructure;
- ❖ Engagement with traders, SME operators and community leaders;
- ❖ Consultations with sub-county administrators and market officials;
- ❖ Review of available departmental records and reports.

7.0 GENERAL FINDINGS ACROSS ALL SUB-COUNTIES

Mr. Speaker Sir,

The Committee observed with grave concern that the status of fresh produce markets is largely uniform and consistently poor across all sub-counties visited during the fact-finding mission. The findings point to systemic neglect, weak institutional oversight and absence of sustainability planning, which have rendered the markets largely non-functional. The key observations are as follows:

Firstly, the Committee noted severe structural dilapidation of market facilities. Most markets have broken or missing stalls, cracked floors, weakened support columns, leaking or completely collapsed roofs and damaged walls. In several instances, the structures pose a safety risk to traders and the public, discouraging usage and exposing traders to injury, extreme heat and seasonal rains.

Secondly, the Committee observed a total lack of essential amenities required for functional fresh produce markets. The majority of markets lack reliable water supply, functional sanitation facilities, electricity and proper drainage systems. This situation has led to unhygienic trading conditions, increased health risks, poor waste disposal practices and contamination of food products, undermining public health standards and consumer confidence.

Thirdly, the Committee established that a significant number of markets have been completely abandoned. This was attributed to prolonged neglect,

insecurity, vandalism, poor site selection, lack of access roads and absence of basic services. In some locations, traders opted to operate in open roadside spaces or informal settlements rather than use the existing market structures.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee further observed that many of the abandoned markets have been repurposed into makeshift livestock shelters, commonly referred to as donkey shades. These facilities are currently being used to house donkeys, goats and camels, a situation that clearly demonstrates the complete loss of the intended economic value of the markets and reflects poor asset management of public infrastructure.

Additionally, the Committee noted the absence of functional market management committees and clear operational guidelines. There were no established governance structures responsible for overseeing market operations, maintenance, allocation of stalls, fee collection or security. This governance gap has contributed to misuse, vandalism, lack of accountability and eventual collapse of market operations.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee also observed minimal involvement of the Department of Trade in routine supervision, maintenance and trader sensitization. There were no records of recent inspections, maintenance schedules or budgetary allocations for market operations, further compounding the deterioration.

In summary, the Committee concluded that the challenges affecting fresh produce markets are not isolated incidents but countywide structural and institutional failures that require urgent, coordinated and well-funded intervention by the County Executive.

ANNEX:

BARWAQO FRESH PRODUCE MARKET



HABASWEIN FRESH PRODUCE



BUTE FRESH PRODUCE



8.0 STATUS OF FRESH PRODUCE MARKETS BY SUB-COUNTY

Mr. Speaker Sir,

During the inspection tour, the Committee assessed fresh produce markets across all sub-counties of Wajir County and established that the condition and operational status of these facilities is uniformly poor. In every sub-county visited, the markets were either completely non-functional or operating far below their intended capacity.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee observed that most market structures are physically present but economically inactive. Trading activities that were initially envisioned to take place within these markets have instead shifted to open spaces, road reserves and informal roadside trading points. This exposes traders and consumers to harsh weather conditions, dust contamination and security risks.

The Committee further noted that market designs did not sufficiently factor in Wajir County's arid climatic conditions. Roofs and shading structures are inadequate to withstand extreme heat. In some sub-counties, markets were poorly located, far from trading routes or population centres, leading to minimal trader uptake.

Mr. Speaker Sir, there was no evidence of recent maintenance, rehabilitation or upgrading efforts in any of the sub-counties. Stalls remain unallocated or vandalized, gates and fencing are damaged, and there are no designated areas for waste disposal, storage or cold-chain facilities. The Committee therefore concluded that, across all sub-counties, fresh produce markets are currently unable to fulfill their intended role as centres of trade, SME development and food distribution.

9.0 IMPACT OF THE CURRENT DROUGHT AND HARSH WEATHER CONDITIONS

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Wajir County is currently experiencing severe and prolonged drought conditions characterized by extreme heat, acute water scarcity and declining agricultural and livestock productivity. The Committee observed that the non-functionality of fresh produce markets has significantly compounded the adverse effects of the drought on livelihoods and food systems.

Mr. Speaker Sir, in the absence of functional markets, traders lack adequate shade, storage and preservation facilities, resulting in high levels of post-harvest losses for perishable goods such as fruits, vegetables, milk and meat products. The extreme heat accelerates spoilage, reduces product quality and discourages both traders and consumers from engaging in market activities.

The Committee further noted that the lack of organized markets during drought periods contributes to increased food prices, reduced availability of fresh produce and heightened food insecurity among vulnerable households. Women and youth, who rely heavily on small-scale trading for daily income, are disproportionately affected.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee concluded that revitalizing fresh produce markets is not merely an infrastructure issue but a critical drought mitigation and climate adaptation measure necessary to protect livelihoods, stabilize food supply and enhance economic resilience in Wajir County.

10.0 STATUS OF SMALL AND MEDIUM ENTERPRISES (SMEs) IN WAJIR COUNTY

Mr. Speaker Sir,

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) form the backbone of Wajir County's economy and constitute the single most important source of livelihoods for the majority of households, particularly women, youth and other vulnerable members of the community. The Committee observed that, in the absence of large-scale industries and with limited formal employment opportunities, the county's economy is largely sustained by small traders whose daily economic activities revolve around fresh produce and related value chains. These SMEs play a critical role in sustaining household consumption,

supporting food availability and maintaining economic activity at the grassroots level.

Mr. Speaker Sir, SMEs in Wajir County are predominantly engaged in activities directly linked to fresh produce markets. These include vending of fruits and vegetables, cereals and grains, milk collection and distribution, meat processing and retail, livestock by-products, food vending, small-scale transport services and other informal agribusiness activities. The majority of these enterprises are micro and survivalist in nature, operating with minimal capital, narrow profit margins and limited capacity to withstand economic, climatic and market shocks, particularly during prolonged drought periods.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee noted that fresh produce markets across the county were intended to play a pivotal role in supporting and uplifting SMEs, especially those operated by women and youth. Properly functioning markets were envisioned as organized, affordable and secure trading spaces that would enable SMEs to operate in a hygienic environment, reduce post-harvest losses, improve product quality and attract consistent consumer traffic. In this regard, fresh produce markets were a key instrument for poverty reduction, income generation and socio-economic empowerment of vulnerable populations.

However, **Mr. Speaker Sir**, the current dilapidated state of these markets has significantly undermined their ability to support SME growth and sustainability. Due to the poor condition and non-functionality of the markets, many traders are forced to operate in open spaces and informal settings, exposing fresh produce to extreme heat, dust and contamination. This has resulted in high spoilage rates, reduced trading volumes, unstable incomes and declining confidence among traders and consumers alike.

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee is therefore of the considered view that revitalization and facelift of the existing fresh produce markets is critical to restoring their intended role as engines of SME development and economic

empowerment. The Committee urges the County Administration to prioritize rehabilitation, upgrading and proper management of these markets to ensure they are fully functional and accessible to the public. Such interventions will not only strengthen SMEs but also enhance food security, create employment opportunities and improve the overall socio-economic wellbeing of the people of Wajir County.

11.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

Mr. Speaker Sir, based on the Committee's observations during the fact-finding mission, the following recommendations are proposed to address the challenges facing fresh produce markets in Wajir County and to ensure their sustainability, functionality and contribution to local economic growth:

a) Immediate Rehabilitation and Maintenance of Market Infrastructure

- Prioritize the structural repair of all market facilities, including roofing, stalls, flooring, support columns, fencing, and gates to ensure safety and usability.
- Install or repair essential utilities such as water supply, sanitation facilities, electricity, proper drainage systems, and waste disposal mechanisms.
- Ensure market designs are climate-resilient, incorporating adequate shading, ventilation, and protection against extreme heat and seasonal rains.

b) Operational Management and Governance Structures

- Establish functional Market Management Committees in each market with clear roles, responsibilities, and accountability mechanisms.
- Develop and enforce operational guidelines covering stall allocation, fee collection, security, maintenance schedules, and routine inspections.

- Strengthen the Department of Trade’s oversight and supervision role by ensuring regular monitoring, reporting, and support to market management.

c) Trader and SME Support Programs

- Provide affordable and secure trading spaces targeted at women, youth, and vulnerable groups to promote entrepreneurship and economic empowerment.
- Facilitate access to microfinance, training, and business development services to enhance SME capacity and sustainability.
- Introduce market-based incentives such as reduced fees for early adopters, hygiene compliance, or consistent trading to encourage regular utilization of market facilities.

d) Infrastructure for Storage, Preservation and Climate Adaptation

- Construct cold storage and preservation units to minimize post-harvest losses, particularly for perishable items like fruits, vegetables, milk, and meat products.
- Provide shaded and ventilated spaces for traders to mitigate the impact of extreme heat and harsh weather.
- Integrate drought-resilient measures and emergency response facilities to ensure markets remain functional during prolonged dry periods.

e) Market Location and Accessibility Improvements

- Review the siting of existing markets to ensure proximity to trading routes, population centers, and rural communities.
- Improve access roads, parking and connectivity to facilitate smooth movement of goods and consumers to and from the markets.
- Incorporate clear signage and information systems to enhance visibility and attract traders and consumers.

f) Sustainability and Funding Measures

- Allocate dedicated budget lines for routine maintenance, rehabilitation and operational expenses of fresh produce markets.
- Encourage public-private partnerships for market development, management and service delivery.
- Introduce transparent revenue collection systems to ensure funds generated from markets are reinvested in their upkeep and improvement.

g) Community Engagement and Awareness

- Conduct regular sensitization campaigns for traders and the public on hygiene, proper market usage and the benefits of organized markets.
- Encourage community participation in monitoring, reporting and safeguarding market infrastructure to minimize vandalism and misuse.

12.0 CONCLUSION

Mr. Speaker Sir, the Committee concludes that the fresh produce markets in Wajir County, while strategically important for local trade, SME development and food security, are currently in a state of widespread neglect and non-functionality. The dilapidated infrastructure, lack of essential amenities, inadequate management structures and minimal oversight have rendered these markets largely unusable, pushing traders into informal and unsafe trading environments.

The non-functionality of these markets has directly affected the livelihoods of traders, particularly women and youth, undermined SME growth, increased post-harvest losses and exacerbated food insecurity, especially in the context of prolonged drought and harsh climatic conditions.

Revitalizing these markets is therefore imperative, not only as an infrastructure intervention but also as a strategic socio-economic and climate adaptation measure. The Committee firmly believes that prompt, coordinated, and adequately funded action by the County Executive, in line with the recommendations provided, will restore the intended purpose of these markets, strengthen local trade and SME development, enhance food security and contribute to the overall economic resilience and prosperity of Wajir County.

Mr. Speaker Sir, In light of this, the Committee adopted this report as signed below and prays that the Wajir County Assembly passes and adopts this report.

S/NO	NAME	DESIGNATION	SIGNATURE
1.	Hon. Shamsa Issa	Chairman	
2.	Hon. Fatuma Sheikh Abass	V/Chairman	
3.	Hon. Dahaba Yussuf	Member	
4.	Hon. Adan Hussein	Member	
5.	Hon. Ayub Abdi Osman	Member	
6.	Hon. Habiba Issack	Member	
7.	Hon. Ibrahim Hussein	Member	
8.	Hon. Fatuma Fille	Member	
9.	Hon. Adan Adow	Member	

Mr. Speaker Sir, It is my humble prayer and privilege to present this comprehensive report to the esteemed members of the house. This report, stemming from the diligent efforts of the Wajir County Assembly Committee on Trade.

Mr. Speaker Sir, I beseech the house to pass and adopt this report.

Thank you for your attention and consideration in this important matter and God bless us all.

