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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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THIRD SESSION - THIRD MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 14 FEBRUARY 2024



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 10TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Wednesday, 14 February 2024

Parliament met at 2.18 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Deputy Speaker, Mr Thomas Tayebwa, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. It is a day when I thought we would have a universal way of dressing, but it seems the politics has not allowed us. I thought that today, we would put on NUP colours to celebrate Valentine's Day. The only one who has tried to come close is the Government Chief Whip, but he has put on various shades. *(Laughter)*

Of course, today being Ash Wednesday – that one has no dress code, isn't it? Honourable colleagues, today being Ash Wednesday, the Catholic Chaplaincy has organised mass at 5.00 p.m., so, our session will end at 5.00 p.m. so that I can allow you to go for prayers. I will also be joining you for the prayers in the Conference Hall.

Mass will be celebrated by the Rt Rev. Raphael Wokorach, the Bishop of Nebbi, who has already joined us in the VIP Gallery. *(Applause)* The diocese of Nebbi, this year, will be organising Uganda Martyrs Day celebrations at the Catholic Shrine in Namugongo. *(Applause)*

So, part of the celebrations is for today. I hope we can support and give them all the kind of support needed to organise a successful Martyrs Day celebration. I hope we shall also be receiving reports from the Anglican side – which will be organised on the other side – so that we can equally give support to all the groups that are organising the celebrations.

With that, honourable colleagues – I want us to go straight to the statements so that we handle matters of national importance tomorrow when we have the Prime Minister. I know we have very critical statements here on which you would want to comment and give your views. That is my view – that we can handle matters of national importance tomorrow. Okay? The Ayes have it. *(Laughter)*

However, in my communication, I will allow one person.

2.22

MS LUCY AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Amuru): Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity. I start by congratulating you and your dear wife on your 15th wedding anniversary. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS LUCY AKELLO: Indeed, I would like to confirm that you are a very romantic Mukiga. *(Laughter)* Yes. To have a –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Lucy Akello, you can repeat that. *(Laughter)*

MS LUCY AKELLO: Mr Speaker, not many people are celebrating their wedding anniversary on such a day. Moreover, it has coincided with Ash Wednesday, the beginning of the Lent season.

In your communication, you welcomed the Rt Rev. Raphael Wokorach. I must also add, as the Chairperson of the Catholic Chaplaincy, that you are most welcome to the Parliament of Uganda. *(Applause)* This is your second time here. During the first time, we received you as the new Bishop of Nebbi. Today, we receive you to bless Parliament and usher us into a very special 40-day walk with Jesus Christ, and to help us reconcile and be better Christians.

This is a call to all Catholics and non-Catholics to join us today at 5.00 p.m. as we support Nebbi Diocese because they will be animating Martyrs' Day this year. Next year, we will support another diocese, just like the Speaker said. We will also be open to supporting the Anglican diocese that will be animating Martyrs' Day. So, we are one and together in this.

Thank you very much for giving me this opportunity. I wish you a fruitful day, together with your dear wife, Anita. Our regards to her. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you have seen – even Hon. Bahati could not contest that I am the most romantic Mukiga living. *(Laughter)* So, I take this without any contest. Next item.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS:

I) ON THE TRANSITION FROM O-LEVEL TO A-LEVEL UNDER THE NEW CURRICULUM

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister - Honourable colleagues who have brought issues to do with the Education sector under matters of national importance, during the debate, you will raise your issues.

2.26

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Permit me, on behalf of the people of Moyo, to congratulate you upon your wedding anniversary and for living an exemplary Christian life for our people.

Mr Speaker, I stand on behalf of the Minister of Education and Sports to present a statement to this Parliament on the transition from O-Level to A-Level under the new curriculum.

The statement contained herein draws from and embodies clarifications concerning matters of national importance that were raised yesterday by Hon. Harold Muhindo, Member of Parliament for Bukonzo East County, on the transition from O-Level to A-Level under the new competency-based curriculum.

We all may recall that this House approved the rollout of the lower secondary curriculum in 2019 and, consequently, the Ministry of Education and Sports commenced the implementation of the curriculum in 2020, starting with Senior One.

Between 2019 and 2023, the Ministry of Education and Sports, among others, developed and circulated syllabus documents to schools and trained 63,649 teachers across the country. The training is on-going and it is a continuous process to empower the teachers to implement the new lower secondary curriculum effectively. I am glad to inform you, Mr Speaker, that the pioneer cohort of the new lower secondary curriculum will be sitting their end-of-cycle examinations in November 2024.

The Ministry of Education and Sports is currently addressing all challenges related to the competence-based curriculum, to consolidate the curriculum before we progress to the A-Level curriculum.

UNEB has embarked on stakeholders' engagements to increase awareness on the new lower secondary curriculum and what changes are expected in areas such as reporting of results and certificates.

Following the review of the lower secondary curriculum to a competence-based, learner-centred curriculum, the Ministry of Education and Sports found it necessary to revise the Upper Secondary (A-Level) curriculum, as a continuity of the improved teaching methods.

To this end, the Ministry of Education and Sports has so far undertaken the following preliminary activities for the review and rollout of the upper secondary curriculum:

1. Undertaken a needs assessment (evaluation) study on the current A-Level syllabus to determine its inadequacies. To that effect, Mr Speaker, there is a full report available on the websites of the Ministry of Education and Sports, and National Curriculum Development Centre (NCDC);
2. Consulted with universities, tertiary institutions and other education stakeholders on the recommendations of the needs assessment study;
3. Developed the A-Level Curriculum Framework as part of an outcome-based education reform design, which is aligned to the O-Level framework;
4. In addition to documents to guide the implementation, the Ministry of Education and Sports, through NCDC, has developed syllabus materials for the proposed 25 subjects to be offered at A- Level;
5. Reviewed the Teacher Training Strategy to incorporate lessons learned in the O-Level rollout of the curriculum.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports is undergoing Government quality assurance and approval processes for the A-Level curriculum, which will, at a later date, involve this House and the Members will participate and contribute accordingly.

In the meantime, the Ministry of Education and Sports has budgeted in the Financial Year 2024/2025 for the continuation of the review of

the A-Level curriculum to make it competence-based. The ministry will ensure all preparations in terms of training of teachers, instructional materials et cetera, are all made prior, available and adequate before the implementation.

Mr Speaker, UNEB will also administer a transitional examination for the old O-Level curriculum, which will be a one-off examination to the following categories of people:

- (i) Those who sat the UCE examination in 2023, but would wish to repeat the examination;
- (ii) Those who registered, but did not sit the examination or dropped out due to sickness or other conditions;
- (iii) Those who missed the registration for the 2023 examinations due to various reasons; and
- (iv) Adult learners studying on their own or at any learning facilities.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports encourages all the categories I have just read to register with UNEB and not to miss this opportunity. Thank you and I beg to submit.
(Applause)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. I have just seen on page 3(a), where you refer Parliament to a website. Honourable minister, this is not how we work here. If you have a report, lay it on the Table. I request that you find a way of communicating with your team. By the time we finish the debate, you will lay the report on the Table.
(Applause)

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker most obliged. By the time I complete, I will bring the report and lay it on the Table. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I am of the view that since the debate should cover all issues to do with Education, we will receive both statements and have a general debate at once.

These are statements for which we are not passing resolutions. They are for information and we are enriching the minister's statement to go and address some issues.

II) ON THE MEASURES AGAINST
ERRANT SCHOOLS THAT CHARGE
EXORBITANT FEES IN CLEAR
VIOLATION OF THE DIRECTIVES
ISSUED BY GOVERNMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister -

2.35

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on the Floor of Parliament to present a statement on the issue of school fees charges.

The Ministry of Education and Sports shares the concern of honourable Members of Parliament about prohibitive school fees charges, which are denying access to education for a number of learners and compromising the Government objectives of providing affordable, quality education for all and increasing equitable access to education.

It is against this background that the First Lady and Minister of Education and Sports set up a School Fees Review Committee in 2017 that was chaired by Prof. Fredrick Kayanja.

The findings and recommendations of the committee were considered and guidelines were issued while taking into consideration the liberalised nature of the economy and the consequent need for the Government to regulate, rather than control levels of fees by designing guidelines, which schools must abide by.

From the recommendations that were drawn by the committee of Prof. Kayanja, the ministry has come up with a number of measures – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure?–

MR SILWANY: Mr Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter. When you read the report that the minister is presenting to this House, you notice that it is the same report that was presented with everything, including the full stops. We sent back the honourable minister the other time to go and make this report more comprehensive. The same report has been presented to the House; there is no change, not even on the full stop, if you review what is on the *Hansard*.

Would it be procedurally right for the minister to present the same report? We sent the ministry away with that very report to go and make a more comprehensive one. That time, the report was presented by Hon. Dr Musingo, the Minister of State for Higher Education; it is the same report, with the same full stops, commas and quotes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: At least, there is a change of date and signature on the report; so, it cannot be the same. *(Laughter)* Anyway, that was on a light note.

Honourable colleagues, let the minister present because the issues that are coming up are recurrent. Let us wait and then when we go into the debate, we shall bring up these issues. So, let the minister finish.

Honourable colleagues, I have not read the statement. If you have read ahead of me, who is presiding - if I base on you - what if you are misleading me? Honourable minister, please, read the statement.

DR MORIKU: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your wise guidance and protection. Certainly, there are differences. Allow me to present.

Mr Speaker, from the recommendation that was drawn by the committee, the Ministry came up with measures to curb the continuously rising fees charges. These measures were communicated to schools and the general public through press releases and circulars by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports and they were issued in 2018 and 2022. I am going to lay them on the Table thereafter.

These are the directives in the circular;

1. No school, private or government shall increase school fees for whatever reason without written authorisation from the Permanent Secretary, Minister of Education and Sports or from the Chief Administrative Officer or the Town Clerk.
2. Other cash and non-cash requirements outside the approved school fees structure are strictly prohibited. All non-cash items must be catered for in the school budget.
3. Schools implementing Universal Primary Education (UPE), Universal Secondary Education (USE) and universal post-O-level education and training shall strictly adhere to the policy implementation guidelines, where parents decide and agree to contribute towards an emergency in the school and permission is sought and granted by the Permanent Secretary.

No learner shall be excluded from school on account of a parent's failure to pay the agreed amount in accordance with section 9(3) of the Education Act, 2008. As soon as the emergency is resolved, the school shall stop charging the emergency fund.

4. Where a school board or school management committee has to employ additional teachers to those on payroll, permission shall be sought from the Permanent Secretary in case of secondary education and Chief Administrative Officer or the Town Clerk in case of primary schools to use part of the capitation grant towards the payment of the additional teachers.
5. In line with the above (4), head teachers are warned against employing additional teachers before all the teachers on payroll have been assigned the minimum required teaching load.

All teachers without a minimum teaching load should be promptly reported to the ministry in case of secondary education

or to the respective local government in case of primary schools for appropriate deployment.

All schools must respect staff establishment ceilings for both teaching and non-teaching staff as provided by the Ministry of Public Service.

6. Private schools must adhere to the approved staff employment guidelines. They should formally recruit, contract and effectively manage and develop staff on reasonable employment terms.
7. All Government and Government-aided schools should desist from taking commercial loans. Any school applying for a loan must seek authorisation from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development through the PS of the Ministry of Education and Sports, as provided for in the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.

These guidelines have been widely circulated to institutions of learning across the country through local governments, Kampala City Council Authority, and the Directorate of Education standards.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports prepared a Cabinet Paper on school fees regulation. However, the Cabinet, in a quest to fulfil the pledge of free education for all, directed the Ministry of Education and Sports to submit another memo on compulsory comprehensive free universal education for all.

It is important to note that the Cabinet under Minute 109(CT 2023), approved a list of unacceptable items, which schools are not allowed to charge, including fees for remedial learning and construction, indeed, the Cabinet, approved the comprehensive, compulsory free universal education for all.

The ministry is currently embarking on the process of implementing compulsory free universal education for all and will brief the Parliament accordingly on the progress at an appropriate time.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the Ministry of Education and Sports is committed to ensuring free and equitable access to quality education for all. We, therefore, call upon all stakeholders to play their part accordingly and support the Ministry in delivering her mandate. I beg to submit.

Mr Speaker, on page 5, you see Annex 1, which is part of the approval item by Cabinet on 17 March 2023. These are the allowable items at school. Before I leave, allow me to submit all the circulars that the Ministry of Education and Sports has so far sent to all schools.

I beg to submit the report on the review of school fees charges in Government and private schools that was made back in July 2027.

Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: 2027, honourable minister?

DR MORIKU: I beg your pardon and I wish to retrieve that. I beg to repeat that. I beg to submit a report on the review of school fee charges in Government and private schools that was made in July 2017.

I beg to submit a circular that was sent by the Ministry of Education and Sports to all schools on October 29, 2018, on guidelines on school fees charges.

I beg to submit a circular that was sent to all schools on 4 February 2020 on circular 01/2020 on charging and increasing school fees without permission. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, I also beg to lay on the Table a circular number 13 that was sent to all schools on 11 January 2022 to all chairpersons, boards of governors of secondary schools, school management committees and all the heads, on the arbitrary increase of school fees charges on reopening of schools for the calendar year 2022. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Honourable colleagues, the Rt Rev. Bishop is accompanied by:

1. Fr Kaweesa Ponsiano, the Chaplain for the Catholic Chaplaincy in Parliament,
2. Fr Oromocan Albert Jekyll,
3. Fr Jacan James Maxwell,
4. Fr Luga Joseph, and
5. Fr Ben Chowa. *(Applause)*

I am seeing one whose name I have not been able to get for now. Also, in the House, we have Fr Onen *-(Laughter)-*

Is the Chairperson, Committee on Education and Sports around? Yes.

2.50

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr John Twesigye): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to make comments on the two statements that have been made by the honourable minister. The first one is that of transition from O-level to A-level.

Secondly, when you refer to her statement, she also said that UNEB will conduct examinations for these “leftovers” in the old curriculum. When we interacted with UNEB while we were considering the National Budget Framework Paper, they told us that the time for those transition examinations would be in June or July. I would be comfortable if the honourable minister mentioned a specific date when those examinations will be conducted.

On the issue of exorbitant fees payment, as you are aware, he brought a report here and it was returned to the committee. I am surprised that the same information we were asking from the ministry, which they were not providing to help us complete the processes, is being tabled here. Honourable members, since this information is here in Parliament, allow me to work with the mover of the motion, Hon. Opendi, concerning the exorbitant fees payment. We are going to harmonise a few things on Monday.

On Tuesday, Mr Speaker, please, allow us to bring that report so that we exhaustively discuss the matter on item 3(ii). I request.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Committee chairperson, let us respect the

time provided for in the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. This matter has been long overdue. Your committee has delayed very much. That is why we are having all these issues of pushing the minister to come and bring the statements here. Please, ensure that on Tuesday, you are ready. We shall put you on the Order Paper to present a report of the committee.

MR TWESIGYE: Much obliged, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure, Hon. Odur.

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, when you guided that the two statements be presented and debate ensues, I had hoped that item 3(ii) would be presented as captured on the Order Paper. For emphasis, the item is, *“The measures against errant schools that charge exorbitant fees in clear violation of the directives issued by the Government.”* That is what I had expected the minister to present.

We are aware of these directives and they have been issued since 2020, as she has alluded here. The report we wanted was to tell us that the honourable so-and-so, who owns this school, charging very exorbitant school fees, has been sanctioned; That Hon. Dr Joyce Moriku, who owns this school and is a minister in the education sector, has been sanctioned this way.

Mr Speaker, I would like to move that item 3(ii), which has not been adequately answered, be stood over, the minister sent back and the debate only concentrates on item 3(i) because what has been presented here is not actually what we required on the Order Paper.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let me first pick around two more Members on points of procedure, and then I give – if it is in relation to what Hon. Odur has raised - is it connected to what Hon. Odur has raised? I cannot have “procedure” on “procedure”. I want to know if it is related so that I guide at once. Hon. Opendi?

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The voices of the poor people can only be heard in

this Parliament through the Members. When we delay to tackle some of these issues, then that is an injustice and the people continue to suffer.

I raised this motion over two years ago. As you can see, the problem is actually becoming worse, to an extent that you can even see nursery schools charging Shs 4 million for a nursery child.

I completely concur with Hon. Odur that let us focus on the issue of the curriculum. Allow the committee, together with us, to go and discuss so that we can have a report presented to this House and then we can discuss in detail.

I even have another motion that has been on and off the Order Paper, regarding the Early Childhood Education Policy. There is a policy in place that is not being implemented. We have left nursery education to the private sector. We have a policy passed by the Government where this early childhood education should be incorporated into the primary schools.

Therefore, I would like to agree that let us focus on the curriculum and then handle this matter. Hopefully, next week, we have a whole session to discuss this issue regarding the education sector in this country. That is the procedural issue. *(Laughter)*

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on a matter of procedure. It should be noted that this would be the third time, if we are to turn away this report as presented, and standing over it because it is inconclusive.

Would it be procedurally right if this House continued to send away the minister and demanded for a better report without indicting or reprimanding the same minister? Wouldn't we be breeding impunity?

Wouldn't it be procedurally right that you allow me to move a motion without notice that this House moves to reprimand the Ministry of Education and Sports over its failure to bring a report that would enable this House to tackle

a matter that is very pertinent to the education of our children? Mr Speaker, wouldn't it be procedurally okay, if you gave me that opportunity, Sir? I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, first of all, for clarification, we did not send away the Minister for Education. What we sent away was our own committee of Parliament, which processed a report that we felt was not satisfactory.

We said, "No, committee, go back, improve this report and capture A,B,C,D." - I want to first make that very clear that I am still ruling -

Secondly, as Hon. Jonathan Odur put it, the question was very simple; you put in place all these measures. You set the guidelines, which all schools must adhere to.

We know that there are schools, which are not adhering to these guidelines. What punitive measures have you put in place? Are there no sanctions? That is what we want to know.

Honourable minister, do you have any sanctions in place for schools, which have not adhered to your guidelines? If you want time to come back and bring -

DR MORIKU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Two points to respond to: One is about the date for examination that was raised by the Chairperson -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable minister, you are responding to the Speaker's question because we are on point of procedure.

DR MORIKU: Thank you. The issue raised was about whether we can pass sanctions or not. However, the law has given some gaps in terms of Statutory instruments and regulatory framework.

That is why when the Ministry of Education took the Framework Paper for regulating such that we eventually get the Statutory Instrument to regulate these schools, Parliament, in their wisdom, advised the Ministry of Education and Sports to come up with a comprehensive paper that is going to bring on board the

compulsory universal free education. That goes along with an increment in funding, which is Shs 309 billion. That will cater for the additional funds, which schools are charging in terms of recruiting additional teachers, adding capitation grants and other school charges.

Once that is put in place; we are hopeful that in the coming financial year, we should be in position to implement, then we should be in a position to cut down on school fees charges. That is the advice we got from the Cabinet.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. For the record, that was Cabinet, not Parliament.

DR MORIKU: Yes, that was Cabinet. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Attorney-General, guide us - Government issues guidelines and they are violated. Are such guidelines issued without sanctions?

3.02

THE ATTORNEY- GENERAL (Mr Kiryowa-Kiwanuka): Mr Speaker, allow me to address my mind to that and come back and report on what the law says on that issue.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, allow me to raise this point of procedure with a short background. You did tell us here that the reason the substantive Minister of Education and Sports, approved by this Parliament, cannot attend Parliament is because of COVID-19.

I am wondering if the minister who has no time for Parliament can have time for schools. The procedural issue I am raising is whether this Parliament must not interest itself in what is taking place at the Ministry of Education and Sports.

These ministers you are roasting one after another; first, my friend Hon. Peter Ogwang brought a statement and we chased it. The second day, Hon. John Chrysostom Musingo, brought another statement and we also chased

it. Now, you are about to chase Dr Joyce Kaducu. They take more than three weeks without meeting the minister. They can come here and pretend - and sometimes, even a whole month.

That is why they keep bringing the same statements and just changing their signatures and dates - because the one running the ministry is not accessible and you talked here about COVID-19.

(Text expunged as per the Deputy Speaker's directive in the proceedings of Thursday, 15 February 2024.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order from the Member of Parliament for Nyabushozi. *(Laughter)*

MR KAJWENGYE: Mr Speaker, this is a House of records. Kanyaryeru is a subcounty in Nyabushozi constituency, a constituency that I proudly represent here. I want to state on record that President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, whom he calls Mr Museveni, does not own or have a school where he pays school fees as he stated.

What exists in Kanyaryeru, however, is a primary and a secondary school, like they exist in any other subcounty of the Republic of Uganda. Even in Kira Municipality where the Honourable Member of Parliament standing here to speak comes from - there are primary and secondary schools in Kira where the Government of the Republic of Uganda, headed by His Excellency Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, pays Capitation Grant and are Government aided.

That is the position as it is. Is he in order to mislead this august House that the President owns a school and pays school fees?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, Committee on Education, do you want to add before I can -

3.06

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr John Twesigye): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I came to the Parliament of Uganda in the 10th Parliament and right from 2016, I am on the Committee on Education and Sports.

In 2018, I was the Vice-Chairperson. I do not remember any moment when the Committee on Education and Sports brought a report relating to what Hon. Ssemujju is alleging. Could he bring the evidence to the House and lay it on the Table? *(Interjections)* - I need your protection, Mr Speaker, so that I conclude -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, you are on the microphone.

MR JOHN TWESIGYE: Thank you. The Parliament of Uganda bases itself on evidence. I request Hon. Ssemujju, my best friend, to bring evidence of what he is talking about. In my view, what he is telling us is not well substantiated.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, do you want to say something?

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, this morning, the entire top management of the Ministry of Education and Sports were together with the Minister of Education and Sports. [HON. MEMBERS: "Where?"] - The Minister of Education -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable colleagues.

DR MORIKU: Regardless of where - we were together with the Minister of Education and Sports at Nakasero. We were together with the team from the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) and had meetings, looked at the O-Level results, which are to be released tomorrow.

Before that, I had a face-to-face extensive meeting with the Minister of Education and Sports who is also the First Lady. We discussed

matters of the curriculum transition and school fees before I came on the Floor of Parliament.
(Interjections)

We must put the record clear. Therefore, is my colleague, Hon. Ibrahim, in order to stand on this Floor and say that the Ministers of State for Education do not have time to even meet the minister, even after three weeks? Is he really in order, yet I have just been with the minister before coming here? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, you might find that Hon. Ssemujju has tried to access the First Lady and failed and, therefore, he thinks it is difficult for everyone. Anyway, you have given him information that you have met the minister and that you have been meeting.

I remember when I was in Cabinet, the First Lady attended Cabinet. Hon. Ssemujju, I want to clarify that the issue I brought to the House was the COVID-19 restrictions around the First Lady and the President. So, by virtue of her being a wife to the President, that required that we continue doing COVID-19 tests all the time, which was not sustainable on our side.

For convenience purposes - I have seen many ministries without a Cabinet minister here, but they are moving. This is why, as Presiding Officers, when she sought our guidance, we guided her and said, "No, you do not need to be here. When we need you, we shall inform you". [Member: "Order"]

Honourable colleagues, ask me. You do not direct.

On the point of order raised by Hon. Kajwengye, when you become very specific, then you find that as a House, we can demand that you table. So, I request Hon. Ssemujju - because Hon. Ssemujju might be right or wrong, but I must give him chance to prove what he has alleged.

3.11

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Mr Speaker, I am very happy for giving me the chance. I graduated

on the same day with Hon. Janet Kataha. Even as a student, her classes were being conducted in State House. We know what you are talking about.

(Text expunged.)

I do not want to rely - An MP shot up and said, I do not remember and then you are giving evidence. How do we trust you?

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you very much. I am going to bring that report here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, can you bring that tomorrow?

MR SSEMUJJU: No. I will bring it maybe on Tuesday because I need to go and retrieve the report and the *Hansard*. Also, as I make that pledge, if you ordered the technical people here in Parliament to go and bring you that *Hansard* because this might happen here - Hon. Ekanya remembers so he can - (Mr Ekanya rose)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ekanya, please, first wait. What I am asking for are not verbal statements. What I am asking for is what should be tabled here. Hon. Ssemujju, I am giving you tomorrow and tomorrow at 2.00 p.m., I will give you chance. Since you said it is a report of Parliament, it is on the *Hansard*. Clerk, if he requests for it, give it to him even this evening. It is very simple.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I do not want to complain, but I have seen you here giving ministers weeks.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not mind. We shall help you to even look for it.

MR SSEMUJJU: Can Hon. Ekanya remind me of the date so I go and bring it now? (Mr Ekanya rose)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ekanya, please. I will just need a report from Hon. Ssemujju, then tomorrow, I will be able to rule since I could not rule when the Member said, "I can bring the information here." So,

tomorrow, we shall work on that and our office will cooperate with you in case you need information from the Clerk.

Honourable colleagues, allow me to guide on the issue of school fees. We are going to debate school fees on Tuesday, together with the report of the committee.

Honourable minister, please, appear before the committee and give them the measures you have taken, or can take against schools that have failed to adhere to your guidelines. You can even seek the guidance of the Attorney-General. Then, we shall debate that matter.

The debate today is on item 3(i) and other issues to do with the education sector that I had allowed. Let me first allow Hon. Laura Kanushu followed by Hon. Alex Byarugaba.

3.14

MS LAURA KANUSHU (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am back again to ask about the report on special needs education and to say that after the PLE results, we are having challenges as Members of Parliament who represent people with disabilities. We do not know what the Government is implementing. Is the Government implementing inclusive education for students with disabilities? Are they implementing segregated education? We are confused. There is a Member of Parliament here who actually has a child and was asking me where to take the child.

In regard to secondary school, we do not know where children with disabilities who have finished Primary Seven are going. I would like the Minister of Education and Sports to tell us where - I know we have commitments internationally and nationally in our laws to progressively implement inclusive education. However, we do not know right now -

For example, I do not know what to tell a mother who has a child with autism. Where do they take their child for secondary education? The schools that are there are scattered all over

the country and they are for the blind and deaf. They cannot cater for other types of disabilities yet the Government made a commitment to promote and implement inclusive education.

Mr Speaker, we want to know the fate of students with disabilities. What are we implementing as Government? Where are the special needs teachers? In the curriculum, what are we doing about the current teachers? Otherwise, in our understanding, the teachers should be refreshed. If we do not have enough special needs teachers, the current teachers should be given refresher trainings to be able to have children with specific needs within the mainstream schools so they are able to teach them.

Mr Speaker, I need to know the stand and to have an answer to the people of this country who have children who need to go to secondary school and have nowhere to take them. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, I asked you for a statement on the performance of students with special needs, but it has taken forever. I need it tomorrow and it should cover the concerns raised by Hon. Laura. That is a statement we shall start with tomorrow. Otherwise, what do we tell children with disabilities? Most of them are scattered across the country. They reach out to you and you cannot just say - You even give school fees. They have special needs so they need special schools.

Can we have a list of all those schools so that we know the ones, which are government-funded as well as the services and equipment that you give? For the blind, do you give materials, which are readable via braille and all that? Let us have it tomorrow.

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, I had come with a statement on poor performance of learners with disability. However, since it was not on the Order Paper, we did not submit it to your office. However, as you have guided, tomorrow, we can –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You see, how Parliament works is that I receive a statement and then put it on the Order Paper. I do not put a statement on the Order Paper and then wait for you to submit it. If you do not submit and we skip it, it does not look good.

So, I request that you enrich it with the issues raised by Hon. Laura – it can be Part B of this statement – and we have it on the Order Paper tomorrow. Thank you, honourable minister. I had picked Hon. Alex and Hon. Sylvia Awas.

3.18

MR ALEX BYARUGABA (NRM, Isingiro County South, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to associate myself with the honourable minister's report. However, the issue of skilling does not come out.

For instance, in the greater Ankole region, we have only one skilling centre, which sometimes admits about 10 students from every district. I think it is extremely inadequate, given that we have big numbers that would like to partake of this opportunity. If you could give more information about skilling and what the policy pertains, I would be very grateful.

Secondly and lastly, Mr Speaker, I tried to stand up, but I did not catch your eye. Nonetheless, I would like to inform this House. We may not have needed to go to that extent because Kanyaryeru primary and secondary schools were started during my time as the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of Mbarara District, at that time.

These schools do not and are not in any way owned by the President (*Interjections*)- I did ask for some permission. They are not in any way owned by the President. They are just a seed school and a UPE school in that particular subcounty. (*Interjections*) I beg, honestly – (*Interjections*)- If you want to get proper information, get to me.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Alex, please, once you want to challenge the Speaker's ruling, you go to rule 87 and it guides you. (*Laughter*)

MR BYARUGABA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Finally, I think this hullabaloo would not have taken place if - and I would like to implore the Ministry of Education and Sports to come up with a comprehensive law. We have been talking about it; this is not the first, second or third, but the nth time. In the Ninth Parliament, 10th Parliament and 11th Parliament - we are virtually talking about the same thing.

Why can't the Ministry of Education and Sports sit down and come up with an extensive law regarding school fees? I think that it is high time we got this. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, please, rule 82 is on anticipation. We have said the report is coming on Tuesday; so, please, no debate on school fees. I have limited you on issues of school fees because we are handling them on Tuesday. Hon. Sylvia Awas -

3.23

MS SYLVIA AWAS (NRM, Woman Representative, Nabilatuk): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement. However, I would like to point out one issue, which is a challenge in Karamoja. There are students that dropped out in Senior Two while others dropped out in Senior Three and this curriculum is not taking care of them. What is the fate of those students that dropped out of school? It means that when you fail at Senior Four, you have to go back and repeat from Senior One.

This curriculum does not favour parents in terms of school fees. Look at the distance that people have to walk to access schools in Karamoja. To access the next school in Karamoja, you must walk for about five kilometres. For example, in Kosike Subcounty, where I come from in Nabilatuk.

The ministry should ensure that all people are served equally in terms of equalising the services of the Government in the districts. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ababiku -

3.23

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I am of the view that we should discuss why our government-aided schools perform poorly compared to private schools. *(Applause)* This is causing a lot of pressure on the poor parents because they are now striving to take their children to private schools for the purpose of ensuring that they pass and continue with education.

Therefore, I propose that the honourable minister brings a report here with all the associated challenges so that we can be able to achieve compulsory education for all.

Two, as Madi subregion, we have a big problem with Amelo Technical Institute. For over 10 years, Government has failed to finish the construction of this institute. I have been to the ministry and I have written several letters, but no action has been taken. Can the ministry go to Adjumani and we have a stakeholders' meeting to resolve this matter immediately?

Lastly, there is *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. John Musila -

3.34

MR JOHN MUSILA (Independent, Bubulo East County, Namisindwa): Thank you, Rasta Speaker. *(Laughter)* Mr Speaker, thank you. I will restrict myself to Item 3(I) regarding the new curriculum.

I request the minister to explain whether she has a mid-circle report for UCE candidates. When we started, we should have crafted a way of monitoring and evaluating and such a report would guide us on whether one, the new competence-based learning is taking root, especially in the schools across the country and two, whether retooling of the teachers towards the same curriculum is effective enough.

We should not have waited for all this time to

begin grappling with how the new curriculum entrants joining A-Level next year should be handled. The ministry was sleeping on the job.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I wish for the minister to tell us exactly - because in her insinuations, she seems to be concentrating more on government schools. The Education Act, 2008 spells out the education law and policy for all the schools in this country. I run two private schools and I have to go by the law. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Hajjati Melsa -

3.27

MS MELSA AVAKO (NRM, Woman Representative, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this golden opportunity.

I appreciate the minister for this statement because we all know that education is a prerequisite in our lives. I particularly appreciate the competence-based learning that is being fronted in our curriculum and we know that the curriculum is a key aspect of education.

My appeal to the ministry is to increase awareness because press releases and circulars sometimes do not reach grass root levels. My concern is that the ministry should champion not only press releases and circulars, but also find other avenues of creating awareness so that our people at grassroots level understand the curriculum in detail. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member for Fort Portal City, followed by our champion.

3.28

MS IRENE LINDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Fort Portal City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, we raised an issue of teachers who were not trained in the new curriculum and today, the minister has not addressed this issue. It is a very big problem. In other schools, we have teachers who are not trained and yet the ministry expects them to teach our students.

Another issue that I would like to raise is about time. These days, when you look at how schools are being run, children and students are being pumped. They study from 7.00 in the morning up to 7.00 in the evening. Therefore, I would like to know from the Minister of Education and Sports whether in this new curriculum, you have addressed this issue. This is because the students and pupils are very stressed.

It is affecting them and even households because previously, pupils and students used to help their parents in the holidays with housework and in providing labour for food. That is why you are seeing that in most households, people do not have food because it is now one person working for the family.

We need to know what the Ministry of Education and Sports is doing to address the issue of time to be able to defend and support the parents on issues related to time for these children. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member for Erute North.

3.29

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO (NRM, Erute County North, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Christine Akello, a Member of Parliament from Erute North Constituency and a retired teacher. I taught for 10 years as a secondary school teacher. Let me take you back because history keeps on repeating itself.

Honourable minister, what we have discovered in the education sector is that we keep on – There is what they call trial and error. You try this, dump that one and move to another one. We talked of entrepreneurship, which is part of skilling and that affected business studies like Commerce. After teaching them and they have sat their papers, they have nowhere to go.

However, the challenge is that people come up with their ideas. Somebody wakes up and comes up with an idea and teachers are trained in two weeks. They are taken for training, not proper training; it is just a workshop. You do not call it training yet the same teachers are

supposed to go and teach. The problem is that we do not have teachers who can train; the teachers are half-baked and some of them cannot pass the subject they teach. There is a need for you to go back to the drawing board.

Secondly, I cannot go back to class and teach because things have changed. One, you come up with the ideas, but there are no instructional materials. There are no textbooks in the schools. How do you expect the children to perform? That is why the syllabus and the timetable are overloaded. You remember in those days, we used to study from 7 a.m. up to 2 p.m. and people would go for a break, but now even nursery kids go to school at 4.00 a.m. What are you doing at school? They are not sleeping and that is why we have poor performance.

Therefore, we need to sit down because education is a large thing; it is not just talking about skilling. There are people who have studied and dropped out, but they cannot go for skilling. I think we need to do a lot.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Silwany and then I will come to Hon. Kangwagye.

3.31

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, I have two issues to raise.

The first one is that the ministry is giving one examination period, but we are aware that there are children who will sit and not pass even the second time. There are children who may be sick and not available to sit this exam this one time.

What is the proposal of the Government for this category of students? Will they be provided with another opportunity to sit? It cannot be a one-off and then you close out the rest of the people.

Secondly, we are talking about the new curriculum, but when I look at the primary school in my village; Makoma, Bulidha Subcounty, a UPE school, the teachers do not have materials for the new curriculum.

What plan does the Government have on this particular matter of providing rural schools with materials? The minister did not talk about that. I request her to inform Parliament about what they are going to do concerning materials. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kangwagye followed by Hon. Wokorach.

3.33

MR STEPHEN KANGWAGYE (Independent, Bukanga County, Isingiro):

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity because when you allow someone to speak about education, it is a real life to live. I would like to thank the minister for her statements particularly the one on O-Level and A-Level. I would like to implore the minister that as she comes back to present to us, she should be more detailed and tell us the subjects that are going to be covered and the ones that have been retained; those that have been rejected so that someone can know and so that the public can benefit from that.

Mr Speaker, I beg for your indulgence to speak on this issue. Thank you very much. There is this “animal” called privatisation. By definition, it is the transfer of businesses and industries from the public sector to private ownership or control. When you talk about that, the minister can sometimes be “grilled”, “roasted” here yet she has no law that protects her from sanctioning a private school owner who has an opportunity to do this business as a real business. This person will charge the money he or she wants simply because it is business.

Now *–(Interjections)–* Yes, it is imperative to sit here as a House and we guide the ministry and come up with a real law that will help us to make sure that the ministry is protected or the person is tied somewhere. Failure to do this is purely business because you have given me an opportunity and the law protects me to start up a business in the education sector. I will start it and tell you “to come with your child, this is the money to pay. Failure to do that, it is your choice and right to look for another school.”

Otherwise, Mr Speaker, this lady must be protected and the ministry fully guided to come up with a document *–(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Wokorach –

3.35

MR SIMON PETER WOKORACH (NRM, Aswa County, Gulu): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I join the colleagues who spoke previously to appreciate the honourable minister for the statement.

I would like to address myself on two issues. The Government policies are very clear that in every parish, we should have a primary school. In all the subcounties that we have in the country, there must be a secondary school and at the county level, a skill-training centre.

When you look at my area, especially my constituency and in Gulu District as well, we have subcounties without secondary schools and many children drop out at the primary level. Beyond that, you do not see any person joining secondary school because of the fees and so many factors surrounding that.

Mr Speaker, early last year, many schools were picked for coding. In my constituency, we submitted about 10 schools for coding. To-date, there is no clear information and yet when you go to back to the community, members would love to hear the feedback from the Member of Parliament. I kindly request the honourable minister and the ministry to update the country on how far we have gone as a country regarding coding. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Lyantonde -

3.37

MS PAULINE KEMIREMBE (NRM, Woman Representative, Lyantonde): Thank you, Mr Speaker. From the minister’s statement regarding transition from O-Level to A-Level, she talked about how they are introducing instructional materials to the A-Level classes. However, surprisingly, even O-Level children lack instructional materials, especially in rural

areas.

Secondly, you also talked of Kiswahili being taught in all schools. Surprisingly, the teachers were not inducted and there are no Kiswahili books in most of the primary schools. How do you expect the teachers to teach Kiswahili?

There are so many computers lying idle in rural schools because there is no electricity in those places. I think before the ministry sits down to draft something, at least involve the rural stakeholders so that they also benefit from the kind of changes you are proposing in the ministry. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Balimwezo then Hon. Lucy Akello.

3.38

MR RONALD BALIMWEZO (NUP, Nakawa Division East, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Parents play a critical role in the academic path of their children. Most of us parents used the old curriculum and we know the old curriculum.

Mr Speaker, we do not know this new curriculum. Therefore, we cannot even assist our children; we cannot help them at home. The ministry has not given us a plan or sensitised the parents of those students who are using the new curriculum.

Yesterday, I met my teachers, particularly the head teachers and directors of studies. We made a plan to make sure that we sensitise the parents, particularly those who have children in secondary.

Mr Speaker, it is also on record that about seven months ago, I raised a matter of national importance about schools that have continued to teach children beyond the normal studying hours. I earlier gave you an example of a child who was taken early in the morning at 4 a.m. He dozed and slid off a *boda boda* and a speeding car crashed him dead. We have such scenarios that are happening, but the minister has not made a statement as requested by this Parliament seven months ago.

I ask you, Mr Speaker, to put the minister on notice to present that statement. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Lucy Akello - Honourable minister, we shall need that statement.

3.40

MS LUCY AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Amuru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to also acknowledge the report of the minister. I want to comment on the NCDC and how much consultation is done with the respective stakeholders.

I have a very strong feeling that not many stakeholders, including parents, were consulted before coming up with this curriculum that is taught to our children.

Mr Speaker, you recall that last year, I raised an issue here. Unfortunately, I am yet to get a response regarding the curriculum that is being taught to our children.

I laid on the Table textbooks of Primary Five and Six where our children as young as nine and 10 years were being taught that abortion is legal - (*Interjections*)- Yes, I laid a textbook here; Science textbook approved by the NCDC about the use of contraceptives.

Why would a child as young as 10 or nine years be taught about issues of contraceptives? All types by the way; I am not just talking about one type of contraception. All types, just think of any. These are the things that are being - How does it benefit a child who is just nine years?

My concern is that even as we develop this curriculum, can we take into consideration our cultures, values and what we stand for? That is why I say that we must have a thorough consultation with all the stakeholders as a country. I think it is very dangerous for us to come up with a curriculum that is half-baked.

That is for me the biggest point and I ask you,

honourable minister, to give me an answer as to how far we have gone with that issue that I raised. For me, it is a very big concern as a mother. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Shartsi Musherure followed by Member for Jonam and Hon. Zijjan -

3.41

MSSHARTSIMUSHERURE (Independent, Mawogoola North County, Ssembabule): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to draw your attention to a project in the Ministry of Education and Sports; Uganda Secondary Education Expansion Project where the ministry is supposed to construct 116 new seed secondary day schools targeting 60 districts. This project is also meant to focus primarily on improving access to lower secondary education in underserved areas and populations including refugee hosting communities.

As we speak, there have been many delays in the implementation of this project and yet the Government is already paying this loan. I would like to bring to the attention of this House that this money, approximately \$150 million from the World Bank, was approved in July 2020. It has a closing date of next year, 2025.

Can the Ministry of Education present to this House the progress made and why no work has begun on this project? Can the line ministry also inform the House what will happen if the loan is not paid yet we are very excited about this project? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Jonam, Hon. Zijjan, Hon. Macho -

3.45

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is about the transition from O-Level to A-Level. In the minister's statement - Honourable minister, thank you for that statement.

In the statement, she states that they have consulted with the universities on the

curriculum for A-Level. I wanted to find out what the recommendations from the universities were.

I am asking this question because, Mr Speaker, in one of the workshops we had last year - I am a member of the Committee on Education and Sports and the NCDC presented and there was a lady - a professor from the university, who was asked to discuss the paper from the NCDC about the proposed new curriculum for senior five and six.

The professor stated very clearly that A-Level is where you start to develop children to take specific professions. If it is Engineering, there are clear subjects that you are supposed to undertake to be able to go into Engineering. If it is Medicine, there are clear subjects that have to be taken.

She asked, "At A-Level, where is the room for something new if you want your children to develop professionally?" Her suggestion was that if after senior four, there are children who would like to take skills development, let them go for skills development. Meanwhile, the others who want to proceed onto some specific professions, they have to go back to the old subjects for those specific professions.

That is why I was asking; what was the recommendation from the universities? If one of them, a professor, is stating this way, it means even the universities are still not sure or probably they are even opposing the idea of having to develop a new curriculum at A-Level. Thank you very much.

3.47

MR DAVID ZIJJAN (Independent, Butembe County, Jinja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to commend the ministry and the Government for the effort to try to catch up and transform education in our country.

The challenge we face is that this new curriculum is not supported by commensurate infrastructure across the country. There are subjects, which require research, where students are required to have laptops at school

or at home, to conduct research in order to appreciate the subjects back home.

However, we live in communities – my own constituency hardly has a school that has electricity, let alone the homes where these children come from. Even if one donated a laptop, there would be no charging points either at home or at school for children to be able to operate laptops. The parents are technologically incompetent, the children are incompetent, the teachers themselves do not appreciate technology to the extent of being able to assist in research.

There is a new subject called DIT where students are required to pay extra costs. Some schools are asking for Shs 200,000 or Shs 150,000 –(*Interruption*)

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you, honourable colleague, for giving me way. Why I want to give you information is because after the research, the new curriculum programme is student-centred. The child takes the lead. Now, after research, students are supposed to come back and present their discussions.

So, in a classroom of 120 or more, can a teacher be able to listen to each one of them or what they have been able to give, collect them and then derive out something? The information I would like to give you is about the structures in schools; we do not have enough classes to divide students into enough numbers and we put a ceiling on the teachers – the number of teachers we have cannot sustain a child-centred learning situation. (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.50

MR GEOFFREY MACHO (Independent, Busia Municipality, Busia): Mr Speaker, my honourable colleague, Hon. Zijjan, has tickled me to talk about Busia Border Seed Secondary School that was a beneficiary of the project that Hon. Shartsi Musherure talked about.

I faced a rough time last week. An official from the ministry called us and all stakeholders that

they are coming to visit the site where Busia Border Seed School is going to be built. To my surprise, the call came in the day and the next day, when we had gathered people in Central Parish where the school is supposed to be located, the officer was ordered by somebody from the ministry not to go to Busia. He was told that they had cancelled that school with immediate effect.

Yesterday, I was surprised when the Town Clerk called me and even sent me a copy of the letter that people have been on the ground this morning, but Busia Border Seed Secondary School has been cancelled.

All that is happening when we hear news that we have ministers who have allocated themselves three, four schools. I am still searching for their names. I believe the Ministry of Education and Sports officers are planning through a fire brigade system.

Therefore, it is my prayer, Mr Speaker, that –(*Interjections*)– I am not taking information now. Through you, Mr Speaker, I would like the minister who is here to tell me why Busia Border Seed School was removed from among the beneficiary schools. We submitted a title of two-and-a half acres, the reason they are saying that they want Busia Border Seed School to have five acres – The President wrote a letter saying that they should not build schools on five acres in a town like Busia, which is turning into a city in future.

Mr Speaker, I need your help to direct the Minister of Education and Sports, who is here, to go and tell the people of Busia why Busia Border Seed Secondary School was removed from the list.

If not, these people from education ministry should never step in Busia unless they have reason to. This is a very important matter. It was a presidential pledge. In Busia, we have only one secondary school. Most of my youth have nowhere to go. When we do cross-border trade, they call us other names.

Therefore, I need your help to direct –(*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Macho is sending me to negotiate and again, he is threatening the people I am supposed to negotiate with. Honourable minister, please, you will have to respond to the cries of Hon. Macho when responding to the questions. Hon. Kaaya, Hon. Bwanika, Hon. Migadde and Hon. Olanya -

3.53

MS CHRISTINE KAAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern goes to the carrying capacities in schools. Most inspectors of schools have forgotten to monitor this. Your child gets aggregate four, goes to a school and the class has 600 plus students. When you go to the dormitory, they tell you, "Do not worry, in a month, another dormitory will have been established". The issue of carrying capacities in schools needs to be ascertained because the inspectors have forgotten about it.

As of yesterday, my teachers from Kiboga District informed me that the capitalisation grant for this term has not reached their bank accounts. I am wondering, the term started on the 5th, and February is the second month in the financial quarter. What is delaying money from reaching these accounts? Teachers are just improvising chalk and all the necessities that you can think of. Can we get confirmation from the minister that these funds will reach the school accounts soon? I thank you, Mr Speaker.

3.54

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Competence-based curriculum is based on what a student is going to do, and not what he knows. That presupposes that students must spend more time in the society because what they are going to do is not at school, but in the society.

Uganda has one of the longest school calendars in the whole world. We spend 253 days at school. If we are going to implement competence-based learning, students must find more time in the society. The countries, which use competence-based education, the average days at school is 180. For us, we have an extra

of 70 days; that cannot be a programme for competence-based education.

I pray that the Ministry of Education and Sports revise the school calendar so that our children and students find more time because society becomes a centre of learning in a competence-based curriculum. I request that we revise our curriculum so that our students can have more time in our society. This is so that they can pick skills based on the curriculum. I so pray, Mr Speaker.

3.56

MR ROBERT MIGADDE (NRM, Buvuma Islands County, Buvuma): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Many times, programmes have been set up for the best interest of Ugandans. However, there are many times when we are actually ill-prepared to implement these same programmes. For example, the new curriculum provides for the teaching of Chinese and the reason is known. There is Swahili, French and others.

Many times, our areas have lagged behind because they do not provide for these specific programmes. For example, in the Islands, where you provide for teaching of ICT, you send textbooks to teach ICT in this era of technology, but you will find a child who has never had chance to touch a keyboard.

Even during COVID-19, when we were giving out examinations on TVs, many children did not get the opportunity to gather at the learning site where there was a single TV. How well have we prepared the teachers and the schools in implementing this?

Mr Speaker, there was a time an assessment was done, where teachers sat an exam given to pupils. Many of them failed, which meant that those teachers needed refresher courses. How often do we take these teachers for refresher courses?

Lastly, on the seed schools; we passed a loan and fortunately, you were on that committee when we moved around the country.

The areas that were to benefit were known

and they were on the record of Parliament because we presented a report here. It is quite saddening now that the Ministry of Education and Sports officials are moving around the country, trying to move seed schools from areas that were recommended, on this Floor. This, at the end of the day, is going to affect the implementation of the loan and we are already paying commitment fees.

My request to the ministry is for an update to be laid before Parliament on the actual beneficiaries as presented then, otherwise, we are destined to the wrong direction. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

3.59

MS MARGRET RWABASHAIJA (Independent, Workers' Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to bring to your attention that one of the big schools in Kampala is Old Kampala Secondary School. In December, 25 teachers were transferred to other schools, and I do not have a problem with transfers.

However, one of them had retired last year in September, but he was also transferred, according to the records, and then two deputies and two others were granted study leave. Some of these people went to where they were posted, only to find that some of the subjects that they teach were not offered in the curriculum of those schools.

Therefore, they are roaming around and what is annoying is that the even the head teacher and the two deputies were also transferred, and yet about three months ago, the Inspector General of Government got to know that there was a lot of corruption; a lot of money had been lost and they have a report. Even the auditors testified that there was a report.

My proposal is that these people should be granted a listening ear so that they know what is happening because they are not at school. A number of learners are also concerned.

Kampala City Council Authority (KCCA) was given instructions - according to what the teachers are saying - that these people should

be deleted from the staff list. This school is near and I know some- *(Member timed out)*.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The minister has taken note of the issue.

4.02

MR GILBERT OLANYA (FDC, Kilak South County, Amuru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I start by appreciating the Minister of Education and Sports for adopting the new curriculum.

I am a teacher by profession and currently, a PhD candidate at Kyambogo University. *(Applause)* I participated in developing the curriculum for secondary schools. The new curriculum is the way to go for Ugandans. In the old curriculum, if a child dropped out in senior six, they would completely have nothing to do. However, with the new curriculum, if a child dropped out in Senior One, Two or Three, they would be very active, sharp and they would have some skill for their livelihood. I, therefore, thank the ministry for adopting this new curriculum for Ugandans.

Mr Speaker, our fear is that the development of a curriculum is not a one-day job; it is a process. At Kyambogo, we advised the ministry to start working on the curriculum for A-Level. The last lot, which is in Senior Four, is sitting this year. They are supposed to be in A-Level by March next year, but up to now, they have never come up with the curriculum and syllabus for A-Level.

Teachers are supposed to be trained and we advised them to start training teachers for A-Level as early as possible, but up to now, they have not done anything. The current Senior Four students will sit in November, but we may have a crisis. It might be trial and error. We shall be doing everything in a rush because they will have nowhere to go, yet they must go to A-Level.

We need an expert to guide this country; there is no gambling and politics in education. We are discussing the future of our nation. The quality of the country - *(Member timed out)*.

4.05

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I had two issues, but somehow you have picked me late. Yesterday, Hon. Ssemujju, who is a Member of the Budget Committee, made a statement that there was no money for the A-Level curriculum.

I wanted him to explain; however, he is not here. The minister should take note. This is because you said that you are in the process of making the A-Level curriculum and yet Hon. Ssemujju said that there is no money in the budget; you can reconcile.

Yesterday, we agreed to debate today: On the lower secondary school curriculum, the minister should be sincere to this House so that we look for a solution together.

This curriculum started during COVID-19. The NCDC did not have time to move around because of the restrictions. There is a report from NCDC on the number of teachers that were not trained because of the COVID-19 restrictions and because of money. Again, you have a report from NCDC that they have been struggling with the material for these schools.

Mr Speaker, I sit on the Committee on Education and Sports. This is becoming interesting because UNEB, in its presentation, requested for money to start training teachers who are going to examine the new curriculum. According to the new curriculum, there is a continuous assessment that is going to contribute 20 per cent to the final examination. The teachers in the schools are not trained on the curriculum, the materials are not there, yet they must do continuous assessment. *(Applause)* That is where the problem comes in.

Mr Speaker, continuous assessment means a teacher must be in class with students giving them assignments, tests and continuously assessing them. There is also a challenge where some schools do not have science teachers. Some teachers are shared, others are borrowed.

Madam Minister, you need to address this matter of continuous assessment and that of the teachers.

As Hon. Olanya has said, we all know that the new curriculum is the way to go, but you must address this issue – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Omara –

4.08

MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. As we address the matters of the curriculum, there is a new system; the system of admission in the Ministry of Education and sports needs to be rectified.

As parents, we have been to schools receiving admissions for our children. I was in one of the schools and what I noted was quite astounding. The Ministry of Education and Sports limits the number of admission for some of the schools, which is right on the basis of the capacity. They say they are admitting students with aggregates four and five, but you find headmasters or headmistresses of these public schools reserve 50 or 100 and just admit others. They will stop at aggregate five, but then start taking children with aggregates 12, 13, 15, and leave one who has aggregate six or seven.

I met parents who were very crestfallen. They were saying, “where is equity? Where is justice? Why do you reserve 50 positions for stakeholders, leave students that have passed so well and prefer the ones who have not passed?”

This needs to be investigated. Since we are talking about the curriculum, which provides a basis for pupils and students to compete, when they pass, public schools must make sure that the best in class takes the first precedence. You do not have to reserve any position for anybody. *(Applause)*

I want the Minister of Education and Sports to tell me why they have caused problems to our students, pupils and parents on account that

they have not taken them and preferred those who have not passed well. I sense corruption here. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Jonathan, the LoP.

4.10

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The first point I would like to make is that the competence-based curriculum has some core items that should be planned for deliberately. I want to thank colleagues who raised the issue of the infrastructure and structure.

If you look at the digital literacy, which is a core component of the competent-based curriculum - how do you expect children who are in the rural areas to be able to make it in digital literacy? They do not have computers. The networks that are supposed to supply them are not available. Even access to radios and televisions is not there.

On the aspect of critical thinking, the ability for the children to solve the problems of this country requires that the children are exposed to the current challenges the country is going through to help them develop that capacity earlier.

We usually joke here in Uganda - and it might be true - that some of the vehicles we drive are a handwork of students of some countries from as low as primary schools. Some of the computers and the phones that we are using are products of children as young as seven or eight years. So, where are we in this whole idea of thinking?

The other aspect I want to emphasise is that our education system is such that you spend three years in pre-primary school, seven years in primary, four years in O-Level, two years in A-Level and then go to university. In this competency-based curriculum, are you also looking at that?

The reason I am raising this, Mr Speaker, is that Parliament was denied an opportunity to discuss this curriculum. If the minister is listening to what Members are suggesting, you would now imagine that had you provided that opportunity and accepted Parliament to make an input, you would not be having the challenges we are having now.

Therefore, I want to appeal to the Government that when you have policies that are well-intentioned for this country, you should not hide it from the stakeholders because they are our children and these are the children we expect to take the mantle from us when the time comes. We have actually put the cart before the horse and that is why we are now meeting these challenges.

Even on the aspect of financing alone, the ministry is grappling with financing to implement a programme they initiated themselves. Ask yourself: is the Government thinking in reverse, that when they bring a good programme, they cannot finance it? Where do you want to take this country?

Lastly, we had a system that was linked. You would leave primary school with some competencies, but now, those subjects were carefully eliminated. In fact, if we had implemented the old curriculum, the Technical Drawings *-(Applause)-* the Art and Craft, the woodworks, the Cookery - I think there was something to do with Home Economics etcetera. These are the same things they are bringing and branding it to be competence-based education. So, before we do away with something that has worked for this country, let us evaluate and not take these rushed decisions that we will regret after some years.

The circumstances I have seen in this House, and having listened to how Members have made their submissions, I want to appeal to you, Mr Speaker, since this is a unique circumstance, to find an opportunity and invite the senior minister to be here. I have listened all through. So, find space. I want to invite the minister who is here and the one not here, to really pay attention to this *Hansard* because

Members have made very good submissions and I think it will help you. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, just address the direct question, which we asked on the transition from O' Level to A-Level. (*Dr Moriku rose*) Be seated, honourable minister. You have not answered it at all. The steps you have taken so far cannot address it because this is the time when my son is already in senior four and I expect to know the combination of the subjects he is going to take.

So, we do not know. Are there combinations? This is why Hon. Harold said some schools are telling them to choose combinations based on the current curriculum for A-Level. Yet, when you read up the steps you have so far taken, you can see that you still have a long way to go for these learners to be able to catch up with the new curriculum.

If you are still at stakeholder engagement level, listening to so and so - What are we going to do? Honourable minister, please, respond to the issues raised by the honourable members.

4.15

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank my colleagues for raising very critical issues. That shows the importance of education, which is everybody's responsibility to ensure that all our children are educated.

Mr Speaker, I recall my statement was that the new competence-based curriculum was brought on this Floor of Parliament in 2019 and it was approved by this House. The rollout started in 2022, shortly before COVID-19 came on board.

There is a difference between the curriculum and the implementation guidelines. Most of the issues that the Members have asked are about the implementation guidelines.

I would like to start with the critical issues that

have been raised. That statement addresses the new competence-based curriculum. It is very clear that we are not transitioning from the new lower secondary competence-based curriculum to a new competence-based upper secondary curriculum.

We are moving from this very curriculum, which is competence-based, to the continuous curriculum of A-Level. Why? The statement has made it clear that we have to make consultations widely, as colleagues have raised and come up with the competence-based A-Level curriculum, which is not starting with this current Senior Four as they go to Senior Five.

Having said that, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me get you very well. Tell me, with this competence-based curriculum, which I have studied in O-Level, how I will do History, Economics and Literature/Divinity (HEL/D) as my combination and how does it fit within the Government's strategy of STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Mathematics)?

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, this competence-based curriculum has a wide range of subjects and these students are moving to the A-Level curriculum, which has specific subjects, either science-based or arts-based. The difference is that they have acquired more skills, which are more competence-based as opposed to the old curriculum at A-Level, which is not competence-based.

However, as of now, Mr Speaker –*(Interjections)*–

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, the minister is being honest. What the minister is saying is that we are not prepared to continue with this curriculum while at A-Level for now and that for the time we have, we are not able to do it. So, whether we agree with her or not, at least that is the truth and the country has known.

We have clarified it to the country. So, go back,

look at how your children are performing and tell them to fill in for combinations depending on where you feel they are performing best. That is what she has said.

Honourable minister?

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, please, I need your protection. Allow me to respond to the issues that have been raised by the Members. There is an issue that has been raised by the Member and I wish to respond to it before I go further.

Number one, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has requested that we allow her to respond to your issues and then she can allow for clarification.

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, I was listening to Members when they were raising issues and it would be unfair for me not to respond to quite a number of issues before we come up with clarification. Number one, there is a provision for repeating a class if the child has not made it. The implementation guideline is clear.

Two, the issue of monitoring and evaluation has been raised. The Directorate of Standard Education – *(Members rose)*–

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure, Hon. Nakut? *(Laughter)*

MS NAKUT: Mr Speaker, the main reason we expected the statement from the minister was to address the issue of the transition of our children who are now going to Senior Four, who do not know their next step. The minister has continued to explain all the other things, even when she has conceded that in this particular one, there is a challenge.

Mr Speaker, if you could allow, let the minister address this issue of the transition. We are not proceeding rightly. There are our children – I am a mother of those experimental children and a number of colleagues here are. Some are exempted because their children are already graduates. No wonder we are handling this debate like this.

That issue must be addressed. We have these children who have gone through this new curriculum. You and I know went through the old curriculum at O-Level and A-Level and know that the two are different from the new one. We have these children now in a new curriculum, and we expect them to go to the old curriculum. That is tormenting. Our children's mental health is going to be compromised.

As they move –*(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, get back on and help me to understand what you want the minister to do.

MS NAKUT: Thank you. The mental health of our children – the stress of reading for an exam in Senior Four is bad enough, but it prepares you for the tougher exams in A-Level. Now, our children who have not gone through that tough process are going straight to the tough process of A-Level. That is how much their mental health is going to be compromised.

With all the challenges of mental health that we have in this country, we are exposing a very difficult age that we will fail to control in this country.

The minister has confessed before this House that it is not practically possible to have a new curriculum befitting this curriculum at A-Level. In 2025, they will still be in the planning phase.

My proposal is that our children who are in this experimental stage of the curriculum be exempted from A-Level. *(Interjections)* Yes - there are many countries that do not do A-Level and people go to university. Our children will - because it is not in the interest of our children that they be experimented on.

It was not their choice that they get born late or born to young parents. For you, your children are already graduates: you no longer care about the children of other people; or, because your children study under international curriculum, you do not care about the rest of us. These children – you are making them go through all the hell just because you are experimenting. We will not accept that.

Let our children be exempted from A-Level and given an equivalent award automatically. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister-

DR MORIKU: Mr Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity once again. As I have put it in the statement, a lot of work –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, let us listen to the minister.

DR MORIKU: I have put in the statement that a lot of work has been done as far as the new competence-based A-Level curriculum is concerned, but it is in the process. My statement is very clear. I wish to implore you, if you could allow me, to let me get back and consult the Government on this specific matter and then, next week, I come back with conclusive information. That could be the way.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I think that is - when a minister says she wants to go back and consult; let us give her time because it includes the Cabinet. Let her report back on Tuesday.

All issues will be handled at that time. Next item.

III) ON MATTERS RAISED ON THE PROCESS AND GUIDELINES ON THE RENEWAL OF THE NATIONAL IDENTIFICATION CARDS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. As the minister comes, I know why emotions are running high. I have a candidate in a school that belongs to a minister. The child asked me what he was going to do. Of course, I could not answer. I thought this was seamless; by the time we change from this to that, then you will know the transition. You started with year one and continued moving for four years. I thought we had prepared for the transition.

This is a very delicate issue and I am glad,

honourable minister, you have taken that step of going back to consult before you come back. The whole country is in confusion on this issue. Yes, honourable Minister of Internal Affairs.

4.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi):

Mr Speaker, I have a statement today, regarding the responses to the matters raised on the Floor of Parliament yesterday on the exercise of mass enrolment and renewal of National Identity Cards (IDs). In the course of yesterday, more questions were generated and I was instructed to come up with answers to those questions, and below are the responses;

1. Members sought assurances that the ICT processes will be concluded in time. My response is as follows:
 - (i) Fifty per cent of the software work for the workflows that form part of new enrolment, renewal, replacement and change of particulars is completed;
 - (ii) There will be a pilot phase beginning 30 March 2024; and
 - (iii) Factory review for kits and data centre equipment, which are the core components, will take place in the next two to three weeks.
2. The economics and logic of renewals. The renewal of the IDs is premised on the following:

Renewal is a legal requirement as provided for in the Registration of Persons Act, 2015, which was informed by the reasons that I am going to elaborate.

One of the reasons for that law provision was that changing biometric features of the face and fingerprints that appear on the card and encrypted in the bar code – these happened. And renewal seeks to have the latest features of a person for identification; and deteriorating security features namely; holograph, micro text on

the card by reason of wear and tear, and vagaries of weather and handling.

However, the logic of the reasons I have given above is premised on exclusively card-based national IDs. Aware of the dynamism of technology, that is why a mobile platform is included in the new ID, which enables one's profile to be updated electronically.

3. Recruitment of staff and time constraints; why not to begin now, instead of waiting for funds?

We know this is a time-constrained exercise. The adverts for recruitment will go out beginning 15 to 19 February 2024. Shortlisting, interviewing and hiring is scheduled to be completed by 30 March 2024.

4. The use of national IDs as collateral by money lenders. This was from Hon. Dr Lulume and many other honourable members.

The first point is that the use of national IDs as collateral is illegal. The National Identification and Registration Authority (NITA) is in the process of securing and improving the verification of cards and letters by third parties who seek to determine the identity of persons, which will render the need of retaining cards redundant.

Secondly, the regulators of money-lenders should strike off such persons who unlawfully retain ID cards from the record of authorised money lenders. This is work within and across Government.

Further, citizens should report such matters to the police to allow the entity to handle perpetrators lawfully. The problem is that the victims are also, in a way, perpetrators of this practice because they go to borrow and allow themselves to be abused by giving away their IDs as collateral.

5. Why is there a window and charges for express services as we plan to do, yet driving permits are instantly issued and

renewed? What lessons can be borrowed from that aspect?

The answer is that driving permits are instant because there is no citizen verification. The process of reviewing the depth of family relations in Uganda and lineage is going to be automated to a given extent, but where inconsistent information is provided by a person, this has to be reviewed. Examples of such information include the following:

- (i) Applicants declaring parents who are younger than them;
 - (ii) Applicants whose tribe is not the same as father, mother or grandparents;
 - (iii) Applicants who do not indicate to which indigenous community they belong; and
 - (iv) Applicants relating to origin whose information contradicts information that already exists on the register.
6. Will you beat the deadline? Yes, we will and I will commit to do that.
7. How adequate is or was the training in India?
- (i) The training in India was held at the prestigious International Institute of Information Technology Bangalore (IIITB), where the Modular Open Source Identity Platform (MOSIP) was innovated and incubated. So, we trust their efficacy;
 - (ii) The training was carried out by persons who have been involved with the technology since it was started; and
 - (iii) It was a hands-on and practical training and not academic, and involved customisation of selected use cases in Uganda's legal regime.

8. Deployment of staff who have cultural/ethnic/linguistic connections to the areas of deployment is necessary to ease the exercise. We cannot agree more.
- It is a requirement in the Project Implementation document to hire persons who live within a radius of 40 kilometres of the area of enrolment and speak the local dialects.
- Secondly, recruitment will be managed by District Local Governments.
9. What contingencies are planned for people with disabilities, namely; erased fingerprints, no fingers at all or even no eyes? Will there be a special template for them? The answer is the biometrics being taken include:
- (i) Face - everybody has a face;
 - (ii) Iris; and
 - (iii) Fingerprints. At least one of these features will be considered for this special class of people.
10. Why are passports not used as alternate documents for identification and services? My answer is: I would like to say that passports are travel documents. They are not identification documents and cannot be an alternative to national IDs. To get a passport, you must first have a national ID.
11. What becomes of the unpicked old, but valid IDs? The answer is, the owners will be entitled to a new ID and the old ones will be retrieved and destroyed. In any case, these IDs are still in the custody of NIRA.
12. What plans are there for Ugandans in the Diaspora?
- (i) The new system provides for online pre-registration and registration at embassies; and
 - (ii) The NIRA will carry out outreach exercises in selected countries with populations of Ugandans exceeding 10,000.
13. Are there any extra plans for far flung areas like mountains - I think this was raised by the honourable member for Ik, Hon. Hillary Lokwang - and the islands?
- Far-flung and hard-to-reach areas will have personnel from those particular areas to carry out the exercise. They will also be availed with the necessary equipment and facilitation.
14. How will the enrolment of migrants and foreigners be avoided?
- Local Council 1 chairmen and GISO/PISO will be present at every enrolment centre. But, we also need extra eyes of the vigilance of the public because sometimes some of these are compromised.
- Two, the district citizenship verification committees are being put in place for persons whose citizenship is in doubt. So, these are self-reinforcing to the first verification level.
15. Will this data be integrated across the Government? Yes, NIRA already interacts with all agencies of Government.
16. Will the unexpired IDs also be renewed? If not, what about the added features like the iris - how will they be included? Does one have to wait till the expiry to renew their ID? Why is there continuous enrolment before the real exercise begins?
- My answer is as follows:
- a. The validity of the ID runs from the time of enrolment, including the old ones we have;
 - b. Unexpired cards will be renewed if the holder of the card so desires. All processes and facilities are in place for this;
 - c. There is continuous enrolment for IDs so that there is no vacuum in service

delivery. The law tags the provision of certain services to the presentation of a NIN or national ID; and

- d. Persons below the age of 16 years only acquire NINs and not cards. So, there is continuous enrolment for this category.

17. IDs of Uganda and regional integration issues - how will uniformity/timelessness of the ID card, and international standardisation be achieved?

Uganda's ID card aligns with ISO standards, governing size, durability, security and validation. As you may already be aware, the card is already used as a travel document in the region.

18. How will the issue of the Ugandan Banyarwanda be sorted to allow enrolment? This exercise is meant to register all Ugandans; among these are the Ugandan Banyarwanda. These even appear in the Third Schedule of the Constitution.

The ones who qualify, therefore, are eligible and will be enrolled within the provisions of the Constitution of Uganda and all the related laws that govern citizenship.

19. Face veils for Muslim women - are they allowed when registering? If not, why? What are the international standards?

NIRA registers Muslim women wearing face veils. This is based on ICAO Standard 9303, which allows for applicants with head covers on religious grounds to be photographed with their veils on.

20. The time between registration and issuance of the ID - is it instant?

The response is no, unfortunately. Card production equipment is centrally located in Kampala. It is laser printing high technology equipment that costs a lot - up

to Shs 7 billion a piece - and it does not make economic sense nor is it affordable to acquire one for each district.

21. How will the Maragoli people be registered?

The issue of the Maragoli requires that the tribe be added to the Third Schedule of the Constitution of Uganda as one of the indigenous communities. Honourable members, we request that we fast-track this matter through the necessary constitutional reviews.

In the meantime, however, and for purposes of this exercise, a decision had been made earlier and advice given. Quite often, they acquire citizenship by registration as an interim measure so that they get IDs and passports.

22. How have the tests been done? Were they on the MOSIP platform or the existing old obsolete systems at NIRA?

My response is that the tests were carried out in NIRA in a specially created environment for migration tests.

Last, but not least, I want to comment also on the reported constraints of the JAVA. I want to report that there is none. Each one under the JAVA has his role and it is being executed smoothly.

I hope this adequately answers the honourable member's questions. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I am not re-opening this matter. I have cross-checked rule 52 - no, listen, it is the minister who accepts clarification. So, rule 52(2) - I have just checked whether I carry over the debate or not. It should not exceed one hour as per the rules.

Yesterday, we even exceeded one hour. So, I do not want to re-open this; all the other issues will be followed up by the Committee on Internal Affairs. We are going to be processing the ministerial policy statement. These are issues

that they will report on, but also ensure that, indeed, we have a smooth running. Thank you.

I wanted to allow Hon. Feta but the rule was tying me down. Honourable colleagues, we are going to receive – I have checked, and I still have some time - we are going to receive two reports, which are the next items, and then we debate them tomorrow.

Now, these reports, honourable chairperson, I am giving you a maximum of 10 minutes because Members have been with them and they are going to read them since they know we are going to handle them. Next item, Clerk.

**MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH ON A FIELD VISIT TO THE
ACHOLI SUBREGION TO ASSESS THE
PREVALENCE OF NODDING SYNDROME**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, honourable chairperson-

4.43

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON HEALTH (Dr Charles Ayume): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the Report of the Committee on Health on a Field Visit to the Acholi Subregion to assess the Prevalence of Nodding Syndrome, with the accompanying minutes of the committee. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, as you have guided, I will go through this report. Allow me to draw your attention to the introduction, which is page one. There is some information that I think we should go through.

Causes of Nodding Syndrome

It is currently not known what causes the disease, but its closely associated evidence has been put forward. It is hypothesised that Nodding Syndrome is a neuro-inflammatory disorder caused by antibodies to *Onchocerca volvulus*, which is transmitted by the *Simulium* black fly, which breeds in fast-flowing rivers.

The Nodding Syndrome was previously

unknown in the Acholi Subregion. The hypothesis of *Onchocerca volvulus* as the cause is not universal in all *volvulus* endemic areas.

I want you to note that *Onchocerca Volvulus* is endemic in many parts of Africa, Latin America and Asia where it causes river blindness, yet Nodding Syndrome has only been reported in a few areas of Africa; that is Tanzania, South Sudan and Uganda. Nodding Syndrome only occurs in children.

The symptoms

In addition to the classic nodding of the head, as the condition progresses, seizures manifest and other psychiatric symptoms like depression, anxiety, disorientation and wandering away from home, aggressive behaviour, psychotic features, behavioural difficulties, declining cognitive and motor function, growth failure and physical deformities, leading to severe disability and in some cases, death.

Treatment

There is currently no treatment for Nodding Syndrome. The treatment aims at symptomatic relief and includes the use of anti-seizure medications like carbamazepine, phenytoin and sodium valproate for seizures, nutritional, behavioural and physiotherapy. The treatment with Ivermectin to kill the *Onchocerca Volvulus microfilariae* is not effective against the adult parasites. Of course, rehabilitation is important. The background, Mr Speaker, is quite lengthy and –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, rule 34, which governs field reports, is very clear. You lay and highlight major recommendations, then I appoint time for debate. You have five minutes now.

DR AYUME: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will make use of the five minutes. Let us go to page 3. The areas that we visited are highlighted; Pader, Omoro and Lamwo. The prevalence of Nodding Syndrome in the African countries is well highlighted; like I had mentioned, they are

Tanzania, Uganda and South Sudan.

Mr Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to page 5, which is about the findings, observations and recommendations.

5.1 The extent of prevalence of Nodding Syndrome in Acholi Subregion. There are five tables. Table 1 is Pader District and it has about 1,000 cases. Table 2 is Kitgum and shows that there are 527, table 3 is Lamwo, table 4 is Omoro and table 5 is Gulu District.

Committee observations

According to records from the district local governments –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ayume, rules do not allow you to read observations. It even says, “Key recommendations” if I can read for you rule 34(2): “*Upon laying of the report under sub rule (1), the chairperson or the member shall present a brief summary of the report and highlight the key recommendations contained in the report.*”

DR AYUME: Thank you, well guided. Let us move to page 10. The committee recommends as follows:

- i. The Ministry of Health should continue scientific research to establish the exact cause of Nodding Syndrome and consequently, prevent curative measures. This should include resource allocation for research and treatment.
- ii. Health facilities should have special clinics or clinic days to handle victims of Nodding Syndrome. This means there should be at least three staff who can effectively diagnose Nodding Syndrome and prescribe the management plan.
- iii. Parents/guardians/caretakers of children with Nodding Syndrome and the community should be assisted about the importance of their children adhering to treatment to avoid relapse or worsening of the progress of symptoms.

- iv. The Ministry of Health should conduct refresher training for health workers and the village health members on Nodding Syndrome. Since the last training was in 2016, most of the staff trained have either been transferred or left for various reasons. Newly recruited staff have limited knowledge on nodding syndrome.

On page 11, the committee recommends as follows:

- i. The Ministry of Health, in consultation with local governments of districts affected by Nodding Syndrome should establish the exact number of Nodding Syndrome patients and homes affected by Nodding Syndrome.
- ii. Since nutrition is an important component of treatment, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should provide support to the affected families. For example, drawing from the monetary support to elderly under the SAGE programme, a similar monetary intervention can be provided to each patient. This can be costed annually based on the number of Nodding Syndrome patients per district and money disbursed to the respective local governments. For example, District A, 1,000 patients, times 50,000 times 12 months would be Shs 600 million per month.

On page 12, the committee recommends that given the distances that patients or guardians have to travel to health facilities for assessment, VHTs should be continuously trained and engaged to act as the first point of care, that is identify, report and refer. They can also deliver drugs to patients who are deemed to be clinically stable.

The committee recommends as follows:

- i. If funds for running a standalone rehabilitation centre are inadequate, these services should be integrated in the surrounding health facilities and the necessary funding be made available for recruitment and running costs.

- ii. The Ministry of Health together with the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should come up with integrated guidelines for the management of Nodding Syndrome.

On page 13, the committee recommends that to ensure sustainability, Nodding Syndrome coordination meetings can be integrated into routine district and sub-regional meetings. This should include periodic situation reports on Nodding Syndrome situation.

In 5.2.6, the committee recommends that PHC allocation non-wage for affected districts be increased to cater for patients.

5.3. The impact of Nodding Syndrome on families - the economic and social impacts. I would like to draw your attention to page 15. The committee recommends that:

- (i) The local leaders should organise community dialogues aimed at sensitising the people about Nodding Syndrome in order to reduce discrimination and stigmatisation of victims and their families.
- (ii) The health facilities through the VHTs should conduct counselling for both parents/caregivers and patients who are mentally stable.
- (iii) The community development officers or probation officers should be supported to handle follow-up cases of violence to Nodding Syndrome patients.

On page 15, on the reproductive health of Nodding Syndrome patients, it is very important. I encourage Members to take time and read it.

On page 17, the committee recommends that:

- i. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development together with the Ministry of Health should put in place measures to protect against, but also manage survivors of gender-based violence and their

children.

- ii. The Justice, Law and Order sector should treat Nodding Syndrome patients as a vulnerable group and consequently penalise perpetrators as such.

Support provided to families of victims of Nodding Syndrome

Mr Speaker, that is self-explanatory. It shows the different Government agencies that have provided support.

On page 20, in general, the committee observed that:

- i. Most of the support provided to the affected families by the entities above was one of intervention, but does not cater for affected families.
- ii. Some interventions like the food supplies are just a temporary relief to the affected families since the quantities given cannot last long enough.
- iii. Nutrition is a key ingredient in the management outcome.

As I conclude, although the first case of Nodding Syndrome was reported officially more than 15 years ago, the available literature does not point towards a definitive causative agent. The high association with *Onchocerca volvulus* transmitted by the *Simulium* black fly seems to be the most plausible explanation.

There is need for a holistic approach to manage Nodding Syndrome. The success of its management depends on how much of Nodding Syndrome can be integrated in the routine health and social services of the affected areas as opposed to having it as a standalone programme. This includes continuous training, monitoring and follow-up; community screening programmes, laboratory tests and treatment. It should be one of those diseases reported on a monthly basis in the district. There needs to be continuous community awareness about the identification, predisposing factors

and adherence to treatment.

The Government should commit resources to nutritional support through a financial stipend for affected families or a monthly food hamper and nutritional supplements. This should be channelled through the district local governments.

Those patients who have retained good cognitive function can be integrated back into the school system, while adults should be skilled and given start-up capital.

A lot still remains unanswered about Nodding Syndrome in regard to the exact causes and treatment. Government should continue to fund scientific and epidemiological research studies on Nodding Syndrome and this should be retrospective, current and longitudinal studies.

There is evidence that socio-economic support and medical services were provided to the affected families and communities.

Therefore, the committee would like to thank the Government of Uganda, Centre for Disease Control, the local governments of the affected districts and the various health partners for their contribution in managing Nodding Syndrome.

Special thanks and recognition go to Prof. Idro, a Ugandan paediatrician, and Prof. Sylvester Onzivua, from Moyo District, who have conducted research in Nodding Syndrome, which has provided a lot of valuable information, but also earned them international awards in the area of scientific research. I beg to submit, on this 14th day of February 2024.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable chairperson.

DR AYUME: For the record, Mr Speaker, it is called Nodding Syndrome, not nodding disease. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. (*Ms Christine Akello rose*) Rule 34 on this report does not allow. Here, we apply rules and not the mercy of the Speaker.

Honourable colleagues, I will be appointing debate time for next week because I talked to the Minister for Health; they are in the field and yet I want them to be here. It would be unfair for me to have communicated to the minister and allow a debate when she is not here.

It also gives you time to read the report, analyse it and consult because somehow, somewhere it is very technical. Chairperson Committee on Health, the Alcohol Bill; your committee is late.

DR AYUME: Mr Speaker, the Bill was referred to two committees, the Committee on Trade and to the Committee on Health. Cognisant of the challenges of processing a Bill as two committees, I would, therefore, like to ask for more time, 30 days. We still have some stakeholders that we need to engage.

In light of the fact that there were unforeseen factors, like the Christmas break, the House adjournment due to the National Budget Framework Paper and the loss of our dear mother, therefore, Mr Speaker, I would like to ask for 30 more days to conclude that business. Thank you, very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can see that you have mobilised all excuses. (*Laughter*) This is a very critical Bill that requires us to do wide consultations, but Mr Chairman, my worry is we are also receiving over 30 Bills from the Government for harmonisation, merger Bills and we are about to go into the critical part of the budgeting process. Therefore, 20 days should be enough for you.

DR AYUME: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Most obliged. For the record, I am not stifling the Bill because I do not have any interest in the alcohol industry. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you are invited for Mass, which has started just now at 5.00 p.m. led by the Bishop of Nebbi, and it is in the Conference Hall. Please, let us join the rest for Mass.

The House is adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00
p.m.

*(The House rose at 5.00 p.m. and adjourned
until Thursday, 15 February, 2024 at 2.00
p.m.)*