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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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THIRD SESSION - THIRD MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 28 FEBRUARY 2024



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 14TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Wednesday, 28 February 2024

Parliament met at 2.00 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker, Ms Anita Among, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. This afternoon, I was on social media, much as I do not believe so much in social media because they only want to destroy people. I saw what happened in Kagadi; how a Government car ran over a person. Those people were demonstrating over the bad roads.

This driver, of an LC V chairman, could not afford to respect these people who were holding a peaceful demonstration. He ran over a person - I do not even know if that person is alive. It is so unfortunate. That kind of impunity should not continue in this country. An accident is something that we can avoid. It is not like a gun. People are being killed using guns and now, they are even intentionally knocking people dead.

I call upon the lawmakers to make sure that these people are brought to book. MP for Kagadi, we want you to give us a report on what is happening. It is very bad. As the Parliament of Uganda, we convey our condolences to the family of that innocent soul who was killed

brutally just because they were demanding for their rights. Somebody just comes in and drives over a person. That is terrible. That is somebody's child, husband or brother. Maybe that driver also has children.

On Monday the 26th of February, a group of casual labourers from KCCA also marched to the gate of Parliament to agitate for their pending six months' wages. They have not been paid for six months. Article 40(1)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda provides for equal payment for equal work, without discrimination.

I urge the leadership of KCCA to ensure that the aggrieved persons/workers are attended to. People cannot work without being paid. How are their families being looked after? We want those people to be paid because at least we know that money has always been released for wages.

Honourable members, as you may be aware, we are soon embarking on the ministerial policy statements, as per Section 12 of the Public Finance Management Act and pursuant to my earlier directive that the ministerial policy statements should be laid on the Table by the 10th of March. Therefore, we expect to receive the ministerial policy statements.

On a sad note, I would like to inform the House that one of our colleagues, Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho, the old man - he sits somewhere there - has lost his dear wife. She died last night. We condole with him, the entire bereaved family as well as the people of Jonam.

Funeral arrangements will be communicated to Members and we will provide transport for Members who will want to go for burial.

We have already sent some people ahead to support him because he was already broken down. We condole with him. May the soul of *Mama* rest in eternal peace.

Once more, I would like to thank you for coming this afternoon. Thank you.

2.08

MR DAN ATWIJUKIRE (NRM, Kazo County, Kazo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on your communication on the issue of bad driving and impunity – the indiscipline of drivers in this country. I condole with the family that lost their dear one.

However, Madam Speaker, we need to take some action. There is something we have been talking about: illegal sirens – people who claim right of way yet they are not entitled.

Madam Speaker, when you - unfortunately, you may not face it. (*Laughter*) However, for some of us, every minute we get on the road, we are pushed away by people who claim the right of way. They turn on the sirens, make noise and violate the rights of other Ugandans.

Two weeks back, I was driving to work here and there was a double cabin pick up, number UG 4229C, which I later established was for the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

The person driving it came and pushed me in the middle of traffic jam, realising that I could not go anywhere. Actually, he pushed me and the opposite car, directly knocking and scratching our cars. I later established that he is a driver at the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

I reported the matter to the police, but up to now, nothing has been done, even when I gave them the number plate.

Madam Speaker, I request that we take a serious stance against these illegal sirens. I have seen -

THE SPEAKER: The illegal sirens – and we should be able to define who has the right of way in this country.

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Constitution is actually clear so, we only need to enforce it. Maybe we need the Minister of internal Affairs to come here and explain whether they have granted the right of way to extra people or offices. It is too much because thieves and people who are from doing very wrong things have right of way. Even boda bodas have sirens.

THE SPEAKER: We need the minister to come and give us a statement and the list of people who have a right of way, including those with illegal sirens. Yes, Hon. Silwany –

MR SILWANY: Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I want to add is that these sirens are a preserve of security. As the minister comes, I would like to implore Members to agree with me that the minister should come and explain to us how these sirens that are supposed to be used by entitled persons and security end up in the hands of private citizens. When you go to Kisekka Market just here, they are sold everywhere.

THE SPEAKER: I hope somebody is sitting in for the Government.

MR SILWANY: That is the clarification I want the minister to give us.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, further clarification here. Honourable members, you will all speak.

MR BASALIRWA: Madam Speaker, mid or early last year, the police issued directives and they had actually started arresting people who had vehicles with illegal sirens. I recall that it was everywhere and people began removing sirens from their cars.

The issue is not that people do not know that they are not supposed to have sirens; the issue

is impunity. As a country, if we do not address it, the guidelines will be issued - Who are these people pushing other people off the road? You find somebody with a sticker, which says “Mzee pakalast”, and they are moving on the wrong side of the road. I do not know which *Mzee* they are talking about.

THE SPEAKER: Maybe he is talking about his father. (*Laughter*) It could be his father.

MR BASALIRWA: Yes. The sticker says “*Mzee pakalast*” while the person is driving on the wrong side of the road and traffic police is afraid of him. That is the biggest problem.

Madam Speaker, in addressing this matter, let us also address the issue of impunity otherwise, the guidelines will be issued and nothing will happen.

THE SPEAKER: You are the same person who has said that when there was a guideline issued, it had reduced. The enforcers have relaxed so we want to restate that the sirens must be removed. Point of procedure from Hon. Mbwatekamwa –(*Laughter*)

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me an opportunity. I have heard your communication, but before I go there, I want to raise a pertinent procedural matter.

Throughout last week, we saw letters and documents and some of them were signed by His Excellency President Museveni, instructing some people to give away Luzira land. In the same way -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mbwatekamwa, I know that is a pertinent issue, but can we first finalise on my communication and then I will give you opportunity to speak?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Can I hear from the Member for Kagadi. (*Member rose*)

2.16

MS JANEPHER MBABAZI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kagadi): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for condoling with the people of Kagadi. On behalf of the people of Kagadi, I also condole with the family of a one Tuhaise who died in an accident on 26 February 2024 during a road demonstration. He left behind four children and a pregnant wife.

It is so sad that there was a demonstration on the state of Muhorro-Ndaiga Road that we have been crying for in this Parliament for many years.

Madam Speaker, sometime back, I almost died on the same road in 2020. This has been an outcry, but as a result of the demonstration that took place on the 26th, a car rammed over this gentleman and he died on the spot.

This is very sad, Madam Speaker. I have not gathered all the details, but what I know so far is that the driver of the vehicle has been arrested and the police is doing its best to get all the information regarding this incident.

When you look at the video, it is alarming. It is as if it was an intended accident. Being that it was a demonstration, we cannot get the full details right now.

Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you. However, I will bring the full report after the investigations. In fact, today, they are burying the person. Otherwise, it was a very bad incident. I call upon the Ministry of Works and Transport and Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) in particular because this road has been a pertinent issue in Kagadi. Unfortunately, as leaders, we no longer have anything to say because this is a road that cuts across many subcounties; it is around 42 kilometres, but it has never received any attention.

After this incident happened, UNRA deployed its equipment on the road and they have started working on the road this morning. You can see that they come when a crisis has happened. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Even after knowing that the road was that bad, the district that was supposed to make a follow up on issues of the road decided to kill people. Hon. Angura and Hon. Ethel -

2.19

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I also condole with the people of Kagadi and the family that lost their loved one.

It is indeed a pity that when people express their displeasure –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is a free sitting because I can see the chairperson stranded. Chairperson, sit near Hon. Amero so that I am able to see you.

MR ANGURA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It is indeed a pity when people express their displeasure and it ends up like that. I know there are very many bad roads across the country and many of our people are threatening to demonstrate, but many times, we give them hope that something will happen. It is very bad and I hope that the Government comes to the rescue of many other communities who might rise up tomorrow. Now that UNRA has taken equipment to the road, people might use it as a precedent that when you demonstrate, equipment comes. So, let the Government take note.

However, on the issue of bad driving and drivers associated with that, you always give us opportunities to go out. I want to believe that while we are there, we benchmark on best practices on road usage and behaviour. Madam Speaker, it is a big crime for a driver in the UK, USA, Dubai and many other places to jump lights. When the red light is on, people panic and make sure they stop. Should you cross, we are told that the fines are so heavy that they deter anyone from committing any road offense that can lead them to such situations.

Madam Speaker, in this country, we are grappling with revenue. This would be one

source of Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) if the Police and other authorities enforced collecting revenue from errant drivers on our roads. You can imagine the honourable who was pushed aside. If you went and looked at my car, it has scratches all over. Almost every day, someone is either threatening to bang it. Because of – *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I hope Hon. Angura is not a bad driver because by the time they scratch your car, you are also driving badly. When you are driving, imagine that everybody is a reckless driver and try your best to be on the safe side.

MR ANGURA: Thank you. Madam Speaker, because of what I have listened to and heard from people abroad, I try to always abide by best practices.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you are taking all the time on – I have a very important Bill.

MR ANGURA: Thank you, I hope we can take this on to improve revenue collections from those errant drivers. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ethel –

2.22

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: I hope it is not on the roads again. The minister is here. There is an issue here of roads that are not worked on, so people do a peaceful demonstration about the poor roads. What we have on the Floor is the one of Kagadi where the locals had a peaceful demonstration and from nowhere, a Government vehicle ran over one of the people and he was killed. He has left behind four children and a pregnant wife. We do not know how those children will grow up and how the wife will be - out of our negligence – let us first hear from the minister.

2.23

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Musa Ecweru): Madam Speaker, this House directed the ministry to come with a status report on the roads in the country. We pleaded with the House to give us a bit of time so that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister could put us together with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The truth, honourable colleagues, is that, at the risk of pre-empting what will be in the report, if I presented the status, I would be lamenting because a lot of work has been done by this Parliament to allocate resources for road maintenance. However, the tragedy is that the money has not come through to the sector for road maintenance. That is why we thought that being a family, we have the Prime Minister to harmonise us first then I will come here with a presentation that gives hope to colleagues.

On Kagadi in particular, it is very unfortunate that the situation of roads in that part of the country is just like it is in Kigezi and other parts of the country. I will be capturing everything in the report.

The sad thing is that the driver responsible unfortunately killed an innocent person. The positive development is that the police have taken it up and I am sure the department responsible for police will inform Parliament on the progress of the investigations and what has been done. We regret what has happened, but it is not something that was intended.

THE SPEAKER: As you come with the report, we would also like to know which category of people the Ministry of Internal Affairs gives sirens.

Secondly, which kind of people or leaders have a right of way? This is one of the things that cause accidents. We need to know all that. Talk about the sirens. Honourable members, please -

MR ECWERU: Honourable members, please. We will give a breakdown of the categories that are entitled to the right of way. Right Honourable, you are one of them.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, why I am asking about which kind of people are given sirens is there was a statement here that even somebody with a number plate written on Anita has a siren.

MR ECWERU: That is certainly illegal and we will –

THE SPEAKER: And he drives on the wrong side. One of them almost knocked down Hon. Kimosho. The case is with the police.

MR ECWERU: Let me specifically come and handle that so that we can guide colleagues as well because I have seen them put a lot of attachments to their cars and what is supposed to happen. We shall then see what happens. Madam Speaker, I will come with the report.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member, not on vehicles, but on Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) workers -

2.27

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We join you and Parliament to send our condolences to the different families, but more especially, that of our colleague, Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho who is part of the Committee on Public Accounts (Local Government), upon the loss of his dear wife. We pray that we will act as a family the way we have always done. Let us do as you have led us such that we remain as a family not only in the good times, but in the bad ones as well. At times, like we also saw on our list, the response was not good. It is important to stand as a family.

Finally, on the matter of KCCA –

THE SPEAKER: Go direct to what you want; that the collections for Hon. Emmanuel should go to Hon. Kinobere. Honourable members, when one of us loses a person - A wife to one of you is a wife to all of us. A husband to one of you is a husband to all of us. I love the unity we have in Parliament. No other institution has this unity. Let us learn to support our own when there is a problem. Let us support ourselves. We

have already sent our support as Parliament, I have sent mine, and the Deputy Speaker has sent his. Please, support Hon. Emmanuel. He is an old man.

MS NALUYIMA: Madam Speaker, on the matter of casual labourers of KCCA, it is similar to several local governments in the country. Nothing can be done, no worker can do casual work. The local governments in the country can no longer operate because of the funds that have been failed, the way we passed this motion. Also, the support they have always been getting is not there. Yesterday, when I asked my Chief Administrative Officer what has happened –

Last time, we were promised here by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that it would release Uganda Road Fund (URF) funds to local governments towards February. We are already in February and it is ending tomorrow, but there is nothing. There is zero release for this quarter.

Madam Speaker, the state of local governments in this country, including KCCA, is getting more and more frustrating. We pray that as we handle KCCA labourers, we also investigate the matter of the rest of the staff in the local Governments concerning what they are supposed to do as far as the decentralisation process is concerned.

We have some roles as the central Government, but they also have roles as the local Government. Somehow, you see frustration and at the end of it all, these are some of the things we will get to see. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member for Workers -

2.31

DR ABDULHU BYAKATONDA (Independent, Workers Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You are all workers.

DR BYAKATONDA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the pertinent communication that you have made to the House today. Madam Speaker, you precisely mentioned the delayed payment of wages to the people. Similarly, a one Sam Okello was also hit when we were demonstrating. He almost lost his ear, but we are trying to see how to fix it in the hospital. This leaves a lot to be desired.

Most of these people have worked for 15 years without a formal contract. They have been deducting their money to NSSF, but it is not remitted. The situation is deplorable. I would beg that the minister appears and gives us a report on this matter. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Itungo, Hon. Hanifa and Hon. Brenda.

2.32

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As my colleagues talk about impunity and the right of way on the roads, my concern on your communication is the issue of guns. You know we have lost colleagues and very important people in this country by use of guns.

Madam Speaker, when you see the way these guns are moved; on boda bodas, bicycles and some even walking - A boda boda is following you with a passenger holding a gun -

THE SPEAKER: Where is that issue coming from?

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE: You mentioned guns, *Mama*.

THE SPEAKER: Yesterday, we gave instructions that they should come with a report on the issue of guns.

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE: *Mama*, in your communication you mentioned guns.

THE SPEAKER: I am saying we gave instruction on the issue of guns so, a report is supposed to come on guns. There is going to be a debate on how people are killed with guns.

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE: Most obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, thank you. Hon. Brenda, Hon. Stephen -

2.33

MS BRENDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luwero): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the issue of casual workers and their wages, we need to establish who is causing this delay in the payment. It could be that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development does not release money or it is KCCA itself. I was in PAC -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Brenda, there is what they call recurrent expenditure and development expenditure. A recurrent expenditure is mandatory; it is always realised and it is a priority. How come I have not got yours? Let KCCA give us a reason as to why these people are not paid.

MS NABUKENYA: Madam Speaker, I think the Minister for Kampala and Metropolitan Affairs should come and make a statement and this matter be forwarded to the committee. It is not limited to KCCA; you find that other administrative units are facing the same problem. When we get this report, we will be able to find the problem and a cure. It has been an issue in the -

THE SPEAKER: What we can first do is to get a report from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to confirm whether the payments are being made then we will hold these institutions accountable for salaries. Hon. Stephen, Doctor -

2.35

MR STEPHEN KANGWAGYE (Independent, Bukanga County, Isingiro): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I want to thank you for your communication in regard to the employees who are doing a great job, but they end up not being paid. It is not proper and it is not happening in KCCA alone.

For instance, last week, there is a company under Uganda Investment Authority that contracted people to do their jobs. Indeed, the company called the owners' engineers with MBW, they did their work very well to an extent that even the authority went and verified and they found that the work was neat, but they did not pay them.

They have tried all ways to see how best they can be able to pay their workers and meet all the bills, but they have failed. They have even tried to visit the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, but they do not have any solution for them.

Isn't it good for them to also be heard by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and they see whether their money was given to Uganda Investment Authority that adamantly failed to pay them? They have a lot to do; they have employees, people want their money, but they do not have any solution.

Madam Speaker, the issue is too broad and we really need to see it and be able to get the report from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on how we can be able to help these people. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kunihira -

2.37

MS AGNES KUNIHIRA (NRM, Workers' Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is absurd that casual workers in this country can stay six months without pay. The laws are very clear, especially the Employment Act, that a casual worker is supposed to be paid on a daily basis. We passed the Employment (Amendment) Bill, 2023 and to date, we have not received any response of what is happening. That Bill was trying to streamline issues of casual workers.

Most organisations and companies are recruiting qualified people and teachers as casuals. We need to protect them because they do not benefit in terms of saving with NSSF and everything the worker must get, including leave.

We want to appeal to Parliament that this law is brought back. If it was brought back or it is - *(Interruption)* - I will give the information.

Madam Speaker, we have serious issues that need your attention in terms of the Employment (Amendment) Bill. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

2.38

DR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your communication. I would like to request that I make a comment on the Kagadi incident regarding third-party insurance. One of the biggest challenges we face is that Government vehicles are exempted from third-party insurance. A third party is supposed to address issues of compensation when there is death, injury and damage to the vehicles, but because of the exemption that is not addressed -

THE SPEAKER: Doctor, leave alone exemption of the third party. Even when we say let us have comprehensive insurance on Government property, including the one of Parliament, the Government says, "We do not have that money." None of those cars in the parking that belong to Parliament has comprehensive insurance.

The bus which got burnt in one day - I think it had operated for only one week - did not have comprehensive insurance. Go ahead.

DR OPIO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The issue that we are raising is, because of that, we are having someone who has lost a life and has left his family behind, but there is no way they will get compensation because the vehicles do not have third party insurance. That even goes to the ambulances. We have lost so many of them in accidents, but we cannot get compensation because of lack of third-party and comprehensive insurance.

However, even with vehicles with third-party insurance, there is always no compensation. A lot of money is collected every year as third-

party insurance, but you never get to hear of compensation of property and lives.

I would like to appeal that we need to ensure that this is enforced and implemented for Government and private vehicles. The insurance must pay whenever these accidents happen. Otherwise, they will continue driving the vehicles recklessly because they know they will not be held responsible. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Mwijukye, then Hajj.

2.41

MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Some time back, I was one of those who demonstrated around Kampala because of the potholes; we have been grappling with potholes in Kampala.

When I went down and found women seated by the roadside opposite the gate, some of them crying, I said, now, in addition to the potholes, if we have garbage heaped on the streets of Kampala, what type of city shall we have?

Sometimes when you are driving in town, early in the morning at 4 a.m., you will see these women, some of them are knocked-many accidents have happened in town and these women die. You ask yourself, who can keep the money belonging to such women? Of course, if some people can steal money for HIV/AIDS, what about money for garbage? There is somebody who needs to be punished, so that people know what they are supposed to do when they are in these offices. People are suffering while you are driving around in your air-conditioned car, going to your air-conditioned office, and just sitting on people's money.

I was really disappointed, Madam Speaker, and they were driving past them, going to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). I am happy that you have guided -

THE SPEAKER: I have seen the minister for KCCA.

MR MWIJUKYE: Madam Speaker, I am happy that you have guided. Now that you have seen the minister, let him tell us why they are sitting on money for these women.

THE SPEAKER: The minister may not have an answer now, but we will ask him to go back and get information to that effect. I do not know whether you know about the unpaid wages for six months. Are you aware?

2.43

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY AND METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS (Mr Kyofatogabye Kabuye): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yes, we are aware we have a problem, but it is not six months. Before I came here, I met people and they said that it has been since December last year; it is coming to four months. We are aware of a –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, wait, let us first hear from the Leader of the Opposition. Before the Leader of the Opposition speaks, can I have Hajj?

2.44

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raise two issues. One is on the roads. Madam Speaker, as the minister comes up with a statement, he should include a master plan for controlling traffic -

THE SPEAKER: I like the way you have taken over the role of the Speaker. Yes, you are now the one giving instructions. *(Laughter)*

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The minister should tell this House about the master plan they have to control traffic, especially on the major roads.

Madam Speaker, we have visited some countries, especially our neighbour, Rwanda. Some vehicles are not allowed to move at specific times –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, I made a ruling on the issue of the roads and I

have asked for a report to be presented to this Floor.

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My second issue, by extension, we should also look at the men in uniform who cannot protest or demonstrate, especially those away on foreign missions, in Somalia.

I have reliable information that they have also taken more than a year without receiving salaries. In that respect, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: The issue of people working without payment, salaries - of course, I am going to ask the minister whether he does not get his monthly salary.

2.45

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Madam Speaker, I thank the minister for coming. I also condole with Hon. Ongiertho - we are together in the Committee on Education and Sports - and the people from Kagadi.

Madam Speaker, we need to know from the minister whether these people have contracts and what type of contracts they signed; taking four months, as he has said, is quite long.

Secondly, when you look at these ladies, the labour laws are very clear for such workers. They must be given gadgets to protect them from being endangered in any form. However, they wear aprons. We need to know if they provide those things to them.

Madam Speaker, there is a big challenge about accidents. As of now, in Uganda and Kampala, there are no road signs and no road paintings. For example, Members crossing from the Development House to Parliament is a hurdle. When you go to Entebbe Road, after Kibuye, people cannot cross. What is happening now is that pedestrians are not given respect at all. We used to have spot areas for zebra crossings. They are not anywhere in Kampala. When you ask KCCA, they say that it is the work of the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Madam Speaker –(Interruption) -

MS AMERO: Thank you, for giving way. Madam Speaker, I am rising on information –

THE SPEAKER: You know, Hon. Amero intimidates people with her size.

MS AMERO: Not really. I just requested to give information, Madam Speaker.

The acting Leader of the Opposition was talking about zebra crossings. Maybe some of these accidents would not be happening if our roads were marked. Let alone having potholes, at least we can afford to get paint, and have the road markings so that we know where to cross from.

Madam Speaker, we need to have these demarcations so that people are respected, and they know that this is where the zebra crossing is, and this is a lane I am supposed to be driving in. Otherwise, some of these accidents are happening because people just guess whether they are on the right lane or on the wrong lane. Madam Speaker, that is the information I wanted to give.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you have heard what the woman MP has said on the issue of zebra crossing. There is also an issue of bad driving on some roads, where you need to have humps.

We have a very bad spot on the road between Mbale and Bukedea, which needs to be worked on.

MR SSEWUNGU: Along Masaka Road –

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. As we discuss this issue of workers, and are aware that we lost the minister in charge of labour, isn't procedurally right that the Prime Minister tells this House who is designated to handle issues of labourers, and what they are doing in regard to these demonstrations - KCCA and the related matters?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, now that the reshuffle is almost coming, I know some people are lobbying. –(Laughter)- I like the way some people have started lobbying for positions.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, as I conclude- the works minister should be attentive. If you make an analysis of our highways, Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) is supposed to paint these roads. Most drivers in training, before you get a driving permit, the first qualification is learning road signs.

Here, all our roads do not have paint. Where there is paint, Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Works and Transport and Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) have left the lorry drivers, who carry sand and clay, to just drive anyhow. The law is very clear: If you are carrying anything and you pour mud on the road, you must clean that road. However, because you have kept quiet, that is what is happening.

As I conclude, Madam Speaker, I pray that the Ministry of Works and Transport comes back to their work and puts road signs.

In Kampala, we need Zebra Crossings. Pedestrians must be respected just like those who are driving. They are all at the same level. It is only that they do not have vehicles. They must enjoy their rights on the road the way people who drive enjoy theirs.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Was there an issue by Hon. Mbwatekamwa? Members, I have got complaints on how some of the Members go to radio stations or to the public and abuse and attack colleagues.

I want to remind you that you have immunity only when you are in this House. Outside this House, somebody can take you on, legally. So, if you have any problem – for instance, if I have a problem with Hon. Joan, we shall come and finish it from here. Do not go on radio because with radio, you do not have the immunity. That is just a reminder.

Yes, Hon. Mbwa?

2.53

MR MBWATEKAMWA GAFFA (NRM, Igara County West, Bushenyi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The procedural matter I am bringing up is that on 10 July 2022, President Museveni wrote a letter to Hon. Gen. Kahinda Otafiire, the Minister of Internal Affairs, instructing him to relocate Luzira Prisons to pave the way for the construction of an international conference centre and commercial hub.

Madam Speaker, on 22 -

THE SPEAKER: Do you have a copy of that letter?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: I will table it, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Do you have a copy of the letter?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Yes, I do.

THE SPEAKER: Where is the letter?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: It is here.

THE SPEAKER: Lay it on the Table.

MR MBWATEKAMWA: I beg to lay it on the Table afterwards because I need to -

THE SPEAKER: No, no, no. *(Laughter)*

MR MBWATEKAMWA: I have some notes on this one, but I promise that I -

THE SPEAKER: Give me a copy of the letter.

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Madam Speaker, I beg to table two letters. One is entitled “Relocation of Luzira Prisons and the construction of Uganda International Conference Centre and Commercial Hub”, signed by President Museveni.

I also beg to table a letter entitled “Invitation to a consultative meeting...” – the one of the President is dated 10 July 2022 and the one

of Gen. Kahinda Otafiire is dated 22 February 2022, inviting stakeholders in regard to the directive by the President.

Madam Speaker, the procedural matter that I would like to bring to your attention is that all this has been going on, on social media, but we have not had any minister or Prime Minister coming to tell this House if it is true or not.

As we talk now, the minister, Gen. Kahinda Otafiire, is well-known to be a land grabber – *(Laughter)* - and has been involved in –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mbwa, one, was this letter copied to you?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: No, I am a whistleblower. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Two, do you know the law in regard to leakage of official documents?

MR MBWATEKAMWA: This letter is no longer secret; it is due to public demand that I am supposed to table this letter in the House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the issue of the Official Secrets Act applies. However, if it is true – because I cannot take this as a true statement – we will ask the minister to come and give an explanation.

This is an instruction that the prison should be shifted. It has no problem. What has a problem is the process. Is the right process going to be followed? That is the issue.

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Madam Speaker, the justification I am bringing – where there is a problem – is that the minister who is inviting people for a consultative meeting is well known to be a land grabber in this country. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, can you raise that issue when Gen. Otafiire is in the House? *(Laughter)*

MR MBWATEKAMWA: Thank you. *(Mr Macho rose)* I will allow you, Hon. Macho, but let me -

THE SPEAKER: I am saying that our rules say you cannot speak about a person who is not in the House. Can you raise the issue when the honourable member is in the House?

MR MBATEKAMWA: Madam Speaker, I withdraw, but I can bring other points.

THE SPEAKER: So, have your documents. You will bring the issue when Hon. Otafiire is in the House. Leader of Government Business, please, invite Hon. Otafiire to be in the House, for him to get that information.

MR MBWATEKAMWA: This is a Member who is always absent. I do not know when I will find him. I wish I could be heard, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mbwa, I have said – Leader of Government Business?

2.59

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Muruli Mukasa): Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen.

MR MURULI MUKASA: I would like to thank you for your wise guidance – and, of course, you have referred to the rules quite correctly.

I will definitely do my part to invite Gen. Otafiire to come to the House so that Hon. Mbwa can raise these issues when he is around and Gen. Otafiire can have something to say.

Much obliged. I will invite him.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, in the Distinguished Strangers' Gallery this afternoon, we have Hon. Simon Peter Aleper, the former Member of Parliament for Moroto. You are most welcome. *(Applause)* He is here to follow the proceedings on Karamoja Development Agency (KDA).

In the Public Gallery this afternoon, we also have a delegation of Karamoja student leaders

from higher institutions of learning. You are most welcome. *(Applause)* Thank you so much for coming. Join me in welcoming my uncles and aunties. *(Applause)*

3.00

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also thank the minister. The issue of Luzira is very pertinent and –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, I have already ruled.

MR SSEWUNGU: I am just seeking your guidance on the time frame when the minister should come and report. The issues rotating around land –

THE SPEAKER: He knows that House sits on Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. *(Laughter)*

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, he is not here and it is a very serious issue.

THE SPEAKER: He will come. Next item. Honourable members, I hate it when we are proceeding and all of you stand on point of procedure. Why don't we move with what is on the Order Paper? *(Laughter)* Let us first have the next item.

BILLS FIRST READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL KISWAHILI COUNCIL BILL, 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Rule 128(1) of the Rules of Procedure, we have a Bill for the first reading and the Bill is a vital enabler for the East African Community process and I know, all of you want to learn Kiswahili. Can we now call the minister to come and lay the Bill? Hon. Hellen, do it from there. They will bring and lay it on the Table.

3.02

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DISABILITY AFFAIRS) (Ms Hellen Asamo): Madam Speaker, this Mukiga here is disturbing me. *(Laughter)* He is doing a lot of sign language, but that is just for the House.

Madam Speaker, in accordance with Rule 128 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda, I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Uganda National Kiswahili Council Bill, 2023”, be read for the first time. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Give it to that Mukiga to bring it for laying. *(Laughter)*

MS ASAMO: Madam Speaker, the Certificate of Financial Implication is attached. I beg to lay it on the Table and ask my good friend, Hon. Kaberuka to lay the documents on my behalf. Thank you. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, in furtherance to Rule 129(1) of the Rules of Procedure, the Bill is referred to the sectoral Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. The 45 days as prescribed, stand. Please lay it on the Table.

3.04

MR JAMES KABERUKA (NRM, Kinkizi County West, Kanungu): Thank you, Madam Speaker – *(Laughter)* On behalf of the minister, I hereby lay the mentioned documents. I beg to lay. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, honourable for your courier services. *(Laughter)* Honourable members, we asked for a statement from the minister on strategies of the Government to stabilise maize prices in the country. Minister, do you have the report? Do you have something to say?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON
STRATEGIES BY GOVERNMENT TO
STABILISE MAIZE PRICES IN THE
COUNTRY

3.04

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (CO-OPERATIVES) (Mr Fredrick Ngobi): Madam Speaker, the statement that required us to brief the House on strategies the Government is employing to stabilise maize prices was received rather late and we request for more time. Preferably next week, we will be able to bring the statement. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, there are things we can handle very fast here. Yesterday, Hon. Bahati was here and gave an assurance to report today. Now, they have changed faces; the minister has come and Hon. Bahati is not around. We cannot proceed like that, Madam Speaker.

Secondly – *(Interjection)* – I am not ruling. Is the honourable minister in order to fail to come and report to this House on such a simple matter of maize prices when people are growing maize?

Yesterday, I said it here, Madam Speaker, that maize bran is more expensive than its kilogram. Is he in order to run away from their responsibility? It is not fair.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, giving them to up Tuesday will not cost us anything. Hon. Odur -

3.06

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I also thank you for your patience always with us Members because when we raise issues, you pay attention until the end and you give guidance.

Madam Speaker, I am here to request your guidance on rule 43(2), which says; “*Questions may be asked of the Commission relating to*

the administration of Parliament or other Commission matters.”

Madam Speaker, I am requesting your guidance because I have issues, I want to raise to the commission which is fully constituted relating to the administration of Parliament or other commission matters.

I am also aware that many of our colleagues here would like to raise. I have tried to contact some of the commissioners and raise the issues, but they dismissed me and said they do not report to me. *(Applause)* I can put it on record.

I want your guidance, Madam Speaker, if I can raise them now or not. Alternatively, you give me some good time to be able to raise these matters so that the commission can answer not only to us, Parliament, but also to members of the public. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: You can write your issues to the Chairperson of the Parliamentary Commission and then the issues will be responded to. Thank you. Next item.

BILLS SECOND READING

THE NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY, UGANDA (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable- Who are you putting to order?

MR SSEMUJJU: I am putting the House to order. *(Laughter)* Sometimes we take this Parliament too far. The Minister of State for Kampala who has just run away was not only talking on one phone, but two. His neighbour, whose son was accused of taking over a hill in Karamoja has been on WhatsApp since he entered here. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, I think you have been lenient and I think this habit is growing. The reason rules do not allow people to be on the phone is that you treat Parliament with respect.

The point of order I am raising is whether ministers are now allowed the same way they harass us on the road to speak on their phones, and others on WhatsApp as Parliament is going on. One was on two phones; he has just run away. Madam Speaker, have the rules been revised to accommodate ministers who are misbehaving?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as I was saying, let us maintain decorum. Decorum is very important. It is not good for you to start picking a phone here; a two-phone tycoon. You are here and there. All of us have phones, but we do not do that. It is just out of respect. Can we go to the next item?

BILLS SECOND READING

THE NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY UGANDA (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance, can you move a motion in relation to your Bill?

3.11

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (NATIONAL GUIDANCE)

(Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The National Information Technology Authority Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024” be read for the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Bill seconded? Honourable members, it is seconded by Brig. Gen. Charity Bainababo, by Hon. Rose, by the Minister of Local Government, Hon. Esther Afoyochan, the Minister of Public Service, the Minister of Water and Environment, the Attorney-General, Member from Karamoja, Hon. Gume, Hon. Cuthbert Abigaba, Hon. Tom and Hon. Hellen Asamo. The Bill is seconded.

Would you like to speak to your Bill? Honourable members, I would like to guide you; listen. Let us hear about the Bill. If you do not support it, I am going to put the question. The question I will put will be whether we can allow this Bill to go for second reading.

Honourable members, let us listen to the chairperson of the committee who is our colleague and hear what he has to say about the Bill. When we listen to him, you will either recommend to us to adopt the Bill and have it move for the second reading or not. After that, we shall put the question. If you do not agree with us going to second reading, say “Nay”. Honourable minister, can you speak to your Bill?

MR KABBYANGA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Cabinet, on 22 February 2021, under Cabinet Minute No. 43 (CT 2021), approved the recommendations of the Rationalisation of Government Agencies, Commissions, Authorities and Public Expenditures. The structures to facilitate the implementation of this recommendation on RAPEX were designed and approved by Cabinet.

Within the framework, the Cabinet approved the mainstreaming of the functions of the National Information Technology Authority (NITA-U) into the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance.

Madam Speaker, the policy behind the Bill is to give effect to the Government policy on rationalisation of Government agencies and public expenditure, which was approved by Cabinet on 22 February 2021.

The intention of the Bill is to:

- (a) Enable the dissolution of the National Information Technology Authority of Uganda and mainstreaming its functions into the ministry responsible for information, communications technology and national guidance;

- (b) Substitute the short title of the Principal Act for the National Information Technology Act, 2009; and
- (c) Transfer the administration of the Act to the ministry responsible for information and communications technology, and national guidance.

Madam Speaker, the general principle is that the staff of the National Information Technology Authority Uganda, who are affected –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let the minister finish presenting. The problem is that you do not want to listen. Can you summarise?

MR KABBYANGA: Madam Speaker, the Minister of Public Service shall provide details on how many staff are affected and how much is required to pay off the affected staff. The Ministry of Public Service will also provide details on the source of funding to pay off the staff affected. I beg to move. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can I now call – Hon. Macho, I will send you to the National Theatre. *(Laughter)* Can I now have the chairperson of the committee – deputy chairperson of the committee?

3.18

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tonny Ayoo): Thank you, Madam Speaker and honourable members –

THE SPEAKER: Try to summarise for us.

MR TONNY AYO: Madam Speaker, I beg to present the report of the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance on the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024.

On 22 February 2021, under Minute No.43 (CT 2021), the Cabinet adopted the principle of rationalisation, where certain government

agencies, commissions and authorities would be merged. Others would be mainstreamed, while others would be done away with altogether, as a measure to reduce public expenditure and facilitate effective and efficient service delivery.

The objective of this is enshrined in the policy for Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX), where Government intends to achieve institutional harmony, reduce service duplications and overlap, and reduce administrative costs and service delivery. The spirit behind this is the emerging socioeconomic and technological development, which has called for the introduction of a flat structure that enables MDAs to share common resources as well as have collaborative interaction across board, while also saving the Government of Shs 905 billion annually.

The Government states that some agencies were established without due consideration of specific institutional harmony, functional duplication, jurisdictional ambiguities, overlaps and affordability. While others have served their purpose, they have ceased to be of relevance.

The Government is further cognisant of the fact that it incurred high costs administering the agencies, which has put a strain on the National Treasury at the expense of effective service delivery. This, coupled with its skewed salary scale, has created salary disparities between the public and agency staff, leading to demotivation of staff in the public sector.

The Government has opted to carry out rationalisation as a way of rectifying the above-highlighted issues, which is going to be achieved through a merger, repealing, and mainstreaming of agencies/entities.

Among the entities earmarked for rationalisation is National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (NITA-U), which is to be mainstreamed to the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

The proposed amendment to the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda, (Amendment) Bill, 2024, laid before Parliament on 20 February 2024, seeks to give effect to the decision that was adopted by the Cabinet on rationalisation of agencies.

Madam Speaker, as you have guided, I wish to move straight to recommendations, but also highlight a few issues on clauses. We have opted to look at the Bill according to its object, clause by clause, and give our recommendation, if you may allow.

The Committee on ICT and National Guidance considered the Bill for the dissolution of the National Information Technology Authority, (NITA-U), and mainstreaming the function of the authority to the Ministry of ICT. The committee noted that the Bill has an object clause 1, which provides the rationalisation of either mainstreaming or merging an entity as shall be discussed below.

The committee did a critical analysis of the object clause and examined the viability of mainstreaming NITA-U *vis-à-vis* other objects. The committee further examined how NITA-U affects the national treasury, and national mandate, how it performs and its importance in the role of achieving Government development goals and whether this role is being performed by any other entity.

The committee also evaluated the ministry's effectiveness while it performed the function that NITA-U is currently performing and the consequences that arise from the proposed dissolution of NITA-U and mainstreaming its function to the Ministry of ICT.

The committee also critically examined the would-be consequences if NITA-U is dissolved and how they would be addressed, including staff and board members, contracts and litigation, among other members.

In clause 1, the Bill states that the objective of the Bill as being to give effect to rationalisation of the Government agency and public expenditure. The object is further detailed in

subclause (2) and states that the object is meant to do the following:

- (a) To dissolve NITA-U to relieve the Government of the financial drain on its resources and the burden of wasteful administration and expenditure;
- (b) To facilitate efficient and effective service delivery by clearly delineating the mandates and function of the ministry with respect to functions of the National Information Technology Authority Uganda, thereby avoiding duplication of mandates and functions;
- (c) Promote coordinated administrative arrangements, policies, and procedures within the public sector for efficient and successful management, financial, accounting, and budgetary discipline of Government agencies and departments; and
- (d) Elimination of blotted Government structures and functional ambiguities in the Government agencies and departments by restructuring and reorganising agencies and departments of the Government.

The committee critically examined the object above and observed as follows:

Concerning the dissolution of NITA-U to relieve the Government of the financial drain on its resources and the burden of wasteful administration and expenditure, the ministry did not have specific estimates for revenue and expenditure for rationalisation of NITA-U as required by Section 76 of the Public Finance and Management Act.

The ministry did not provide details on the breakdown of actual amounts that would be needed for the terminal benefits and severance pay to staff and board members, the new salary scale of the new structures of the ministry and the cost of administering the operations and functions, following the merger.

The committee further observed that the certificate of financial implication provided had inadequacy since it lacked estimates of the revenue and expenditure for at least two years. This made it hard for the committee to

evaluate the alleged drain by NITA-U on the Consolidated Fund and the savings that would arise from mainstreaming NITA-U.

NITA-U on the other hand, demonstrated with the statistics the money the authority contributes to the Consolidated Fund through the issuance of licenses, permits, and certification and commercialisation of the national backbone infrastructure, which has amounted to approximately Shs 200 billion over the last 10 years and projects another Shs 150 billion over the next five years.

NITA-U states that it has saved the Government up to Shs 1.248 trillion through the centralised hosting of critical application management on the national backbone infrastructure -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Rita, we want quorum. First wait the roll call.

MR AYO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has also helped reduce duplication of up to about \$92 million by establishing the National Data Centre and Disaster Recovery (DR) sites hosting 287 critical applications in over 100 Government institutions. It has saved the Government up to \$49 billion by providing Internet bandwidth at a reduced cost from \$70 megabyte per second to \$30 megabyte per second per month and it is expected to reduce further from \$35 to \$20 megabyte per second.

All the aforementioned demonstrate that the National Information Authority, Uganda NITA-U –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, please I want all of you here; this is a very serious Bill. I want the numbers. Chairperson committee, summarise.

MR AYO: All the aforementioned demonstrate that NITA-U has not caused any financial strain on the Consolidated Fund as it meets its own cost of operations and further adds money into the fund while at the same time saving the Government of other costs as illustrated above.

Madam Speaker, I have the second observation on clause 2. I wish I could present this too. In respect to clause 1(2)(b) and (d), which address the need to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery by clearly delineating the mandates and functions of the ministry with respect to the functions of the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda, thereby avoiding duplication of mandate and functions.

The committee observed that there was no duplication of mandate between the ministry and NITA-U – (*Applause*) - the ministry was tasked with the policy of strategic leadership and supervision of the entire information technology industry, while NITA-U was mandated to coordinate and regulate information technology services in Uganda in the context of social and economic development of Uganda.

The ministry stated that with the dissolution of NITA-U, the regulatory function of NITA-U would be transferred to the Uganda Communications Commission, which was not in line with clause 11 of the Bill, which states that the functions of NITA-U were to be transferred to the ministry.

Secondly, we observed that there was no corresponding amendment to the Uganda Communications Act, 2013 to expand its mandate to cater for the regulation and co-ordination of information technology services in Uganda in the context of the social and economic development of Uganda, which the ministry stated would be handled by UCC.

Madam Speaker, the Electronic Signatures Act, No. 7 of 2011, the Electronic Transactions Act, No.8 of 2011 and the Data Protection and Privacy Act of 2019 were not amended, which leaves the identified laws with no implementing or administrative agency if NITA-U is dissolved.

Madam Speaker, permit me to now go to the general recommendations of the committee. The committee recommends that clause 1 of the Bill be rejected on the following reasons:

1. The failure to demonstrate the financial drain caused by NITA-U on the Consolidated Fund;
2. The failure to demonstrate the duplication of roles between UCC and Uganda Telecom Company Limited;
3. The lack of oversight over the performance of the function currently performed by NITA-U. If NITA-U is mainstreamed as the ministry will be acting as the judge and the jury;
4. The fact that there were no amendments to the Uganda Communications Act to provide for the takeover of functions and co-ordination and regulation of information technology services in the context of social and economic development of Uganda that was being performed by NITA-U;
5. Additionally, not having any amendments to the Electronic Act, 2011, Electronic Signatures Act and the Data Protection and Privacy Act, 2019 to cater for the administration in the absence of NITA-U;
6. The failure by the Ministry of ICT to previously perform the same role of NITA-U before the establishment of NITA-U; and
7. The overall achievement of NITA-U in championing the interests of government efficiently and effectively in digital transformation agenda and the recommendation of the Ad Hoc Committee of Parliament to inquire into the rationalisation and merger of Government agencies that NITA-U be made as a semi-autonomous agency. The recommendation was passed and adopted by this honourable House.

To conclude, the committee would like to reiterate that while it is in full support of rationalisation, it underscores the important and critical role that ICT plays, not just nationally, but globally.

It has also noted that there is need for Government to provide all the necessary information and make all the necessary amendments to the law to enable it attain its rationalisation with a reduced exposure to litigation, minimal disruption of services and unnecessary financial strain.

NITA-U is the only IT business and implementing arm of Government and so, maintaining it as an autonomous entity will enable the consolidation of all Government ICT efforts, ensure that critical and high-volume Government IT system that NITA-U is currently hosting and maintaining, continue to function seamlessly while also eliminating duplication.

The committee observed that the decision to mainstream NITA-U into Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, therefore, should be stayed to allow the institution to continue championing digitisation, fulfilment of Government aspirations enshrined in Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan III and possibly IV. *(Applause)*

In light of the aforementioned and submission presented therefore, as a summary, the committee recommends that NITA-U is retained as a strategic semi-autonomous agency of Government to spearhead the digital transformation programme for socio-economic development of Uganda and the Bill for dissolution of NITA-U be rejected by this House as a whole. I beg to report. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, I wish to lay on the Table the minutes of the committee meetings generated while we process the Bill and the report.

I would like to recognise and appreciate the members of the committee and my chairperson, Hon. Magogo, who is not able to be here to present the report by himself. He was able to guide us until we came out with this report. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you have heard the report of the Committee on ICT. Do you want to debate?

Honourable members, first of all, under the rules, the report is supposed to be there for three days. In the circumstances, can we have a Member move for the suspension of the rule?

3.37

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that Rule 130(5) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, be suspended for purposes of considering this particular report.

THE SPEAKER: Is it seconded that we suspend the rule and we debate?

HON. MEMBERS: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Ssewungu, Hon. Elijah, Hon. Jonah, Hon. Wilfred, Hon. Kwizera, Hon. Nathan, Hon. Peter - by the whole House. We are now going to debate.

I now put the question to the motion on the suspension of the rule to allow debate on this Bill now.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Rule suspended.

THE SPEAKER: We can now start the debate.

3.39

MR DAN ATWIJUKIRE (NRM, Kazo County, Kazo): Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, can I have all of you in the Chamber? Hon. Katuntu, you are next.

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee for the work well done. First, Madam Speaker, according to this report, the rationalisation of NITA-U fails flat on three grounds that have been used to promote the concept of rationalisation.

1. On efficiency, according to the report, it does not meet the test;

2. On duplication, the report does not find that there is any duplication; and
3. It even fails on the requirement of Certification of Financial Implications that is supposed to move with the Bill.

Madam Speaker, we need to handle this matter systematically and slowly. In a letter dated 2 February 2024 to the Executive Director, NITA-U, a company known as Soliton, was demanding \$36 million for them to hand over the management of the national backbone infrastructure to Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited.

This means that just for premature termination, which will come as a result of this Bill, the taxpayer is required to give out Shs 143 billion in compensation, yet the total budget and the figure provided for in the Certificate of Financial Implications indicated Shs 78 billion.

What this explains is that those who are tasked with the rationalisation and mergers have either not done a good and thorough job of knowing what is required and what it will take for the economy, or they are deliberately misleading the country to lead us to a situation where we cannot sustain the policy reversal that we are undertaking as a country. *(Applause)*

Finally, Madam Speaker, it will look very awkward. We shall be held accountable as Parliament. Ugandans will not forgive us that at a time when the economy is doing badly, we can be part of the group that can sanction more draining of the economy by passing a policy that does not justify or prove any benefit to this country. I support and beg that the Bill be rejected. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Before you come in, I want to hear from Hon. Katuntu, on the issue of Soliton. Soliton appeared before us in a committee during those good days of the Committee on Public Accounts (Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE).

3.42

MR ABDU KATUNTU (Independent, Bugweri County, Bugweri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I even go to that, I was privileged and honoured to be the vice-chairperson of the committee, which this House set up; it was headed by Hon. Nathan Byanyima. I had the opportunity to listen to the Minister of Public Service.

One thing, honourable colleagues, that you must notice is that the whole process does not have a study. *(Applause)* The whole process! I challenge the Minister of Public Service to lay any study report about this whole process. All committees handling these processes, please, ask the relevant ministers to put the study on the Table, institution per institution and/or agency per agency.

As Hon. Kimosho says, there are three reasons for the rationalisation. One is efficiency. Let us look at efficiency, first. Are you telling me that the mainstream ministries in the Government are more efficient than these agencies? We know the mainstream ministries, Hon. Muruli-Mukasa. Those who put their coats at the desk and disappear and come back at five o'clock; we know them.

I am waiting to listen to every minister, to say this particular agency is inefficient and they give the particulars and details and then go ahead to show that this ministry where we want to revert this institution to, is more efficient.

Two, Madam Speaker, let us look at costs. I have listened – I will take the information – *(Interruption)*

MR SSEMUJJU: The information I would like to give you, Hon. Abdu Katuntu, is that I moved a motion here on vehicles – for Uganda to go for zero fleet. Hon. Muruli-Mukasa asked for time to go and study the motion. He actually invited me for a meeting in his office. He said the reason we should go slow is that they did not know how many vehicles the Government had.

That is the information I wanted to give you on their level of efficiency. *(Laughter)*

MR KATUNTU: I think this can only make us laugh because we cannot comment on it. The people who were privy to this discussion were Hon. Muruli-Mukasa and Hon. Ssemujju. *(Laughter)*

However, Madam Speaker, I do not think the mainstream ministries are more efficient than many of these agencies. No! Let us look at the justification for NITA-U today.

I have not heard anywhere that the minister has explained how efficient the ministry where he wants to revert this institution is. Nowhere!

Duplication? Let us look at duplication. Madam Speaker, where is the duplication in all this? We just want details. What is not correct, honourable colleagues, especially the ministers, is for you to just come and cite “Cabinet decision” – you know, “under minute this, Cabinet decided this; under this” – so what, if the Cabinet decided? You must now justify that Cabinet’s decision to us. That is what we have been waiting for. *(Applause)* Please, justify that Cabinet decision to us, with details.

Madam Speaker –*(Mr Muruli Mukasa rose)* - if Hon. Muruli-Mukasa wants me to yield the Floor, I will because debating is –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Muruli-Mukasa, the rule of the House is that when a Member is speaking, you sit. However, if you have information, please, give it.

MR MURULI-MUKASA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to inform Hon. Katuntu, my colleague - he said that there was no study to back the rationalisation. I would like to inform him that there was, indeed, a study to back rationalisation -*(Interjections)*- that is the information I want to give him.

MR KATUNTU: No, honourable colleagues, I will handle that. Madam Speaker, Hon. Muruli-Mukasa is a much respected elder in this House

and actually, a friend of mine. It is not good enough to say that “There was a study”. You would have said “The study was undertaken by so and so, the report is this” and it is laid on Table. *(Applause)* That is what we say.

There is no committee – first of all, Madam Speaker – and I do not always like this sort of dialogue, but I was a member of the Byanyima Committee. Actually, I was Hon. Byanyima’s vice. We asked you for that study and we did not get it. I do not know which Member of this House has had a look at it – including you, Members of the Cabinet. You stand up and say there was a study.

Who did the study? We want the one who did the study and let that study be laid on the Table because it is not confidential. If it is a study, let it be laid on the Table because that is the only way we can get guidance.

THE SPEAKER: If there is a study on review of statutory bodies, please, lay it on the Table. - How much money?

First of all, I want to understand if we get an income? Is there Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) from National Information Technology Authority-Uganda (NITA-U)? If we want to merge institutions that take away money, then let them go very fast. However, if there are those that bring in money, we can keep them. *(Applause)* Honourable member, read the document and lay it.

MR MURULI MUKASA: Madam Speaker, I would like to lay the document that contains the study that was done on the entire process of rationalisation.

THE SPEAKER: Go specifically to NITA-U. - Honourable members, can I have your attention? Honourable members, whoever is making noise –

Honourable minister, as you look for NITA-U, can Hon. Katuntu finish? Honourable minister, sit and look for NITA-U. When you are ready, come and read it.

MR KATUNTU: Madam Speaker, I would like to conclude because I know about the document he is reading and it has no study. A study is supposed to be research undertaken, entity by entity. Can -

THE SPEAKER: You must have the quantitative and qualitative analysis.

MR KATUNTU: He should tell you which professional undertook that study. It is not there. If it was there, can any chairperson of a committee tell us whether that study has been availed to the committee? [Honourable members: "No"] It does not exist.

Madam Speaker, with a heavy heart, I ask Hon. Muruli Mukasa to concede that something went wrong. That does not mean that other agencies do not need rationalisation - they do. On this particular one, I do not see any logic or common sense or legal or economic sense. I, therefore, stand to support the report of the committee. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Avur -

3.53

MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will start by thanking the committee for the work well done. *(Members rose)*

THE SPEAKER: Can we let Hon. Avur submit?

MS PACUTO: I want to particularly contribute to the area of drain on the National Treasury.

In the past years, NITA-U has immensely contributed to an increased mobilisation of NTR in this country. Therefore, in no way, is it a drain on the National Treasury. I want to demonstrate this. Madam Speaker, you requested the minister to clarify whether NITA-U contributes NTR to the Consolidated Fund. Yes, it does. I want to read the figures for the last three years on what they have generated and what they project to mobilise in the next three years.

Madam Speaker, in the Financial Year 2019/2020, NITA-U was able to generate Shs 18,944,797,775 to the Consolidated Fund. In the following Financial Year 2020/2021, NITA-U generated Shs 21,138,938,697 to the Consolidated Fund. In the Financial Year 2021/ 2022, on an increasing trend, NITA-U generated Shs 25,582,167,744 and in the Financial Year 2022/2023, it generated Shs 45,500,028,367

Madam Speaker, these are the projections for the years to come. In the Financial Year 2023/2024, it is projected that NITA-U will generate Shs 53,044,443,291. This is because there is most likely to be an increased need for the services of NITA-U by Ministries, Departments and Agencies, local governments and private clients, in the areas of internet and bandwidth.

In the Financial Year 2024/2025, it is projected that NITA-U will generate Shs 64,735,268,230. For Financial Year 2025/2026 - *(Interjections)* - that is the last one so listen to it because it is increasing - NITA-U will generate Shs 75,614,102,537 to the Consolidated Fund.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen.

MS PACUTO: In a nutshell, NITA-U contributes to the revenue that is so much needed by this country in terms of NTR. Besides that, this Parliament passed two loans to the Ministry of Information and Communications Technology and National Guidance. When the Committee on National Economy was processing one of the loans, it realised that it was a conditional loan and it is on the record of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: It was not one, but both.

MS PACUTO: It was actually both that it must be implemented by NITA-U. Short of that, the lender will withdraw. That is a contractual obligation between the Government of Uganda and the lender.

Now, at this time, the same Parliament goes around to say “Let us rationalise NITA-U.” Madam Speaker, I stand here to say that I do not oppose the rationalisation of some entities; however, for NITA-U, I think we need to stay it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, I have had a chance to look at the document. I cannot say it is a report.

It says, “*The Ministry of Public Service - Uganda: Review and Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure* By:

*Ministry of Public Service
Plot 12 Nakasero Hill Road
P. o. Box 7003
Kampala-Uganda”*

When you look at 3.1.7: Information and Communication Technology (ICT) and National Guidance Sector and (b)which, is Merger, it states, “In line with digital convergence, the regulatory function for voice, data and broadcasting should be put into a single regulatory body; by merging NITA-U & UCC into a single communications services regulator” – (*Interjections*)

Honourable members, the minister wants to respond to what the Members are raising; the chairperson of the committee raised a number of issues on which you need to give feedback. What the committee is saying is that there is:

1. Failure to demonstrate the financial drain caused by the NITA-U on the Consolidated Fund and it has just been explained.
2. Failure to demonstrate the duplication of roles between the ministry, UCC, Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited (UTCL) with NITA-U;
3. The lack of oversight over the performance of the functions currently performed by NITA-U. If NITA-U is mainstreamed, the ministry will be acting like the judge and the jury;

4. The fact that there is no amendment to the Uganda Communications Act, 2013 to provide for a takeover of the functions of coordination and regulation of information technology services in the context of social and economic development of Uganda that was performed by NITA-U;
5. Additionally, not having any amendment in the Electronic Transaction Act, 2011, the Electronic Signature Act, 2011, and the Data Protection and Privacy Act, which would accommodate what NITA-U does; there is no amendment to that effect.
6. The failure of the ministry to previously perform what NITA-U used to perform before the formation of NITA-U;
7. The overall achievements of NITA-U in championing the internet in Government agencies, which has led to efficiency and effectiveness in the digital transformation. You can give us a response to all to convince the House.

MR MURULI MUKASA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First, I would like to thank the committee for producing this report. Indeed, the issues that have been mentioned by the committee and amplified by you point to one thing and that one thing is that we need more time to gather all the evidence that is required so that the committee can have –

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: Madam Speaker, I rise on a point of procedure. The basis of rationalisation was the assumed study; which study has been found to be defective. Secondly, a study to rationalise would have attracted the attention of the Auditor-General to look at the assets and liabilities of each of them and the role of the National Planning Authority would not have been avoided.

In view of the fact that we have found out that the study was not done qualitatively and quantitatively, wouldn't it be pleasing to this House to send away this assumed study back

to the Government to conduct a thorough study and come to amend whatever they want to amend? Otherwise, the rationalisation is based on a wrong study. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I do not want you to bundle all these ministries of rationalisation. Just yesterday, you passed a Bill and it went through. These Bills are different. They perform different activities. We cannot reject everything. You will not reject everything. We are not going to send back anyone. We are not going to send back the Bills when they bring them. Let us resolve it in the House.

MR MURULI MUKASA: Madam Speaker, before the point of procedure was raised, I was going ahead to - I think I could go ahead and explain my point in view of all that has been said –

THE SPEAKER: But you are explaining all those points. Don't you have a Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance? Why are you bothering yourself? You are not the sponsor.

MR MURULI MUKASA: I am not the sponsor, that is true, but we agree –

THE SPEAKER: Are you the Leader of Government Business?

MR MURULI MUKASA: For now, you know, I was delegated as the Government Chief Whip. What we have agreed on with the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance is to beg the indulgence of the House and you, Madam Speaker, that we go back and get some of the information that is required. We shall interact with the committee and then come back to prove to you that what is being asked for is there. I beg the indulgence of the Speaker and the House that we go back. *(Members rose)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, all of you sit down. Sit down. If I hear anybody talking - Hon. Solomon, you are a Commissioner and

you are busy talking. Honourable members, the Bill is before us for the second reading. The minister is saying the debate is over. Is the debate over?

4.07

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): Madam Speaker, I beg to move a motion that the debate closes.

THE SPEAKER: Is it seconded? Is the motion seconded? Please, move the motion well.

MR NIWAGABA: Madam Speaker, having heard the submissions and the debate from the Members on the motion in respect of the report of the Committee on Information, Communication Technology and National Guidance, I beg to move under rule 81 that the debate closes and the question as to whether the Bill should be read for the second time be put.

THE SPEAKER: Is it seconded? *(Members rose)* It is seconded by Hon. Mbwatekamwa, Hon. Mariam, Honourable member for Kazo, Hon. Avur, Honourable member for Kinkizi, Honourable member for Kagadi, Hon. Isabirye, Hon. Aber - even this side, by the whole House apart from the ministers.

MR OKUPA: Madam Speaker, this is a Bill brought in by the Government. You have asked for seconders of the motion such that we move to the second reading.

THE SPEAKER: Let me first put the question.

MR OKUPA: Just a moment. Just a moment, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Let me first put the question. I put the question for the second reading of the Bill. We are going for the second reading. The question is on Hon. Niwagaba's motion, whether we should go or not for the second reading.

MR NIWAGABA: Let me be very clear -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the question is on Niwagaba's motion.

MR NIWAGABA: My motion is that the debate closes. If the Members support that the debate closes, answer yes. Once you have answered yes, then we go to the next question, which will be whether the Bill should be read for the second time. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Members have allowed that we close the debate and we go for the second reading. I am going to put the question and listen. I am going to put the question as to whether we should go for the second reading of the Bill. If you agree that we should go ahead with the second reading of the Bill, then after we go clause by clause, you say "Aye", but if you are not in agreement for us to go for the second reading- Members are you getting me?-

Honourable members, if you are not in agreement with the continuing with the second reading, you say "Nay." Are we together? - Listen. In the second reading, when you say "nay", it collapses the Bill. You retain NITA-U as it is.

Honourable members, please, sit. Who has not understood? About the quorum, we have 224 members as opposed to 176. I do not want anybody to go and say there was no quorum. We have the quorum.

I now put the question that NITA-U (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time. - Honourable members, if you are going to continue confusing me, I will ask you to put up hands.

(Question put and negatived.)

THE SPEAKER: The House is adjourned to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 4.16 p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 29 February 2024 at 2.00 p.m.)