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(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 15 OCTOBER 2024



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 26TH SITTING - 1ST MEETING

Tuesday, 15 October 2024

Parliament met at 2.01 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 would like to welcome you to this afternoon sitting, and I am happy that you have kept time better than I have.

I would also like to remind the chairpersons of the sectoral committees handling the Rationalisation of Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) that we need the Bills on the Floor of the House. You are the same persons who made empty promises in the caucus. You are the same persons who have not brought in reports and yet we need them on the Floor.

Honourable Members, on a rather sad note, last night we received news of the demise of the retired Bishop of Namirembe Diocese, Rt Rev. Samuel Balagadde Ssekkadde, whose enduring legacy of being a shepherd of God's flock spans over 50 years. The deceased will be dearly missed. May we rise to observe a moment of silence.

(Members rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to remind you that tomorrow, Wednesday, 16th – it is good Hon. Ssolo is here to remind us. We will be hosting the Anti-Counterfeit Expo. The exhibition will be in the parliamentary parking, commencing at 10.00 a.m.

I would like to urge all of you to go and see what is there, especially when you have counterfeits, and you know what counterfeits do to our community. They affect the community, both health-wise and economically but in our legislation. I am requesting that you pass by and check what will be there at 10.00 a.m. tomorrow. Thank you.

In the public gallery this afternoon, we have pupils and teachers of Namagunga Boarding Primary School, Kitende. They are from Busiro South, Wakiso – please stand up, you are very smart.

They are represented by Hon. Ethel Naluyima Betty. Hon. Ethel is still busy working in the office and doing work for you, sister. Hon. Ethel is a very good girl and Hon. Charles Matovu whom the Leader of the Opposition has deployed to do some work for him.

You have very good leaders. Sister, thank you for coming. Please join me in receiving them. Thank you and have a seat. *(Applause)*

In the public gallery this afternoon, we have pupils and teachers from Nabumali Boarding Primary School, Bungokho Central - all the

way. You are welcome and you are very smart, all the way from the land of Bamasaba; you are most welcome. They are represented by Hon. Miriam Mukhaye and Hon. Wanda – Hon. Wanda, first come and greet your children.

MR RICHARD WANDA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I take this opportunity to welcome you, Nabumali Boarding Primary School pupils and teachers; and I thank you for the great work you are doing in our region. I pray for success in the upcoming exams. God bless you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I delegated Hon. Miriam to do some work for me but they are very good people and as you go back, tell Daddy and Mummy that we have good leaders. Next? – Are you rising on communication?

2.09

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Madam Speaker, I would like to observe on behalf of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. We had a schedule for this week that started yesterday, and today we were supposed to meet the leadership from the Ministry of Water and Environment.

However, it was very unfortunate that when a number of committee members turned up for the meeting, we got a communication that the Minister of Water and Environment was not ready for the meeting.

Therefore, we are asking the line ministries that when they are invited, they should not give a response on the day of the meeting because they made us forgo other programmes. That was the Ministry of Water and Environment to the disappointment of the members of the natural resources committee. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Government Chief Whip?

2.11

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I did inform the leadership of all the sectoral committees handling rationalisation Bills that with effect

from Tuesday - which is today, Parliament will be considering their respective reports.

I am also here, as I have seen the Order Paper, to wait for the respective committees to start reporting on the 14 Bills that were read for the first time and formally referred to the six committees of Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Is Hon. Byanyima here? Honourable members, how many times will you meet these committees? You had meetings with these people the first time we appointed the select committee. You again met these people when the Bills were brought back. I am surprised when you say that these people are not available for meetings. Hon. Ssemujju?

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to be helped. Committees do work on behalf of Parliament and they are supposed to report within the timelines, in the rules. They do not work on the orders of whips. The Government Chief Whip has just told Parliament that he told the committee chairpersons of the 14 Bills -

THE SPEAKER: He rose on a point of procedure. Honourable members, it does not matter whether it is ordering, directing, or whichever, the whip of a political party has powers to ensure that his or her committees perform as required. Hon. Oguzu Lee?

2.13

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Madam Speaker, thank you for the reminder about the RAPEX. It has come to my notice that a number of the Bills, which were read here for the first time and committees are expected to report on, were withdrawn the last time. The rules dictate that when a Bill is withdrawn, it must be re-gazetted and then read for the first time.

If you look at a number of those Bills, the gazette number is still the same as for the previous one. It means there has not been re-gazette. Therefore, you will need to guide us on how we will proceed on this matter so that we do not engage in futility because the

committees may be processing Bills that have not complied with procedures.

Secondly, a number of the Bills were also not signed and ideally they should not have been admitted here for first reading. Therefore, this is an issue you may need to interrogate with your legal team and report on. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Eddie?

2.14

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. When these Bills are returned to the committees under Article 90 of the Constitution, like where I am in the Committee on Natural Resources, the Certificate of Financial Application is defective.

Secondly, when they were rationalising, they never looked at what we call, “span of control.” Where they are taking the National Forest Authority (NFA), there are already more than 10 departments. They never provided for the structure on how it will be absorbed. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Oguzu Lee, the Bills were withdrawn in February. The Gazette will always have the gazette number plus the date of the gazette. When you look at the Uganda National Kiswahili Council Bill, 2023 it is Gazette No. 41 and it was gazetted on the 16th of June - wait and I will get you the number.

When you look at the Cotton Development (Amendment) Bill, 2024, it is Gazette No. 36 and was gazetted on 31 May 2024. When you look at the NAADs Bill, it is dated 31 May 2024. I can give you and you have a look at it. Look at the national - that is still Swahili. Therefore, these gazettes have the recent dates. Do you want to have a look at it?

MR OGUZU: Before I have a look, in our current case, we should have had two dates and two gazette numbers; one for the earlier one which was withdrawn and a new date and a gazette number for the Bills which we are now going to reintroduce. Therefore, in a

situation where we only have one, then there is a problem. The Uganda National Kiswahili Council Bill that you are alluding to is a new Bill, which was not one of the Bills withdrawn.

THE SPEAKER: Government?

2.17

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Denis Obua): Madam Speaker, subject to final confirmation from the learned Attorney-General, we were duly notified that all Bills that were introduced for the first reading were gazetted, as required by law.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us now discuss that when we get to those Bills. I have some very important issues. Hon. Taaka?

2.18

MS AGNES TAAKA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on an urgent matter of national importance concerning the state of Kampala-Jinja Highway. This road is a major route for trade in the country -

THE SPEAKER: Rt Hon. Prime Minister, please.

MS TAAKA: However, it has been left in an appalling state with a lot of sections having with potholes. I am also concerned, Madam Speaker, that the maintenance works on sections of the road between Nakawa to Mukono have taken very many years. The works started around Bweyogerere, Mukono during COVID-19 in 2020, but up to today, the works are still going on.

My prayers, Madam Speaker, are that:

1. The Minister of Works and Transport ensures that there is a quick response on the maintenance of the road, especially covering the potholes along the road; and
2. The minister updates the House on the maintenance plan for the Kampala-Jinja Highway and the status of the maintenance works on the road between Nakawa and Mukono.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Rt Hon. Prime Minister, on the issue of the road, you could also tell us what happened to the Kampala-Jinja Express Highway.

2.20

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Madam Speaker, I call upon the honourable Minister of Works and Transport to come here and give the status report of those roads tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, how many ministers are in the Ministry of Works and Transport? Prime Minister, do you now advise us not to discuss anything in regards to works because the ministry is not represented?

MS NAKADAMA: Madam Speaker, Hon. Ocheru was before the committee. Hon. Katumba is out of the country.

THE SPEAKER: Who is Hon. Ocheru?

MS NAKADAMA: Hon. Ecweru Musa was before the committee, Gen. Katumba Wamala is out of the country and I have not yet heard from the state minister Hon. Byamukama -

THE SPEAKER: Can you call Hon. Ecweru to come and tell us what is happening with the roads? Let him leave - a committee should not sit when the House is ongoing.

MS NAKADAMA: Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Whip?

2.22

MR JOHN BAPTIST NAMBESHE (NUP, Manjiya County, Bududa): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In your communication - I thank you for hosting the anti-counterfeit campaign here at Parliament. It is however on record that the Government withdrew from the Bill on anti-counterfeit goods twice.

Even when a private Member was allowed, he has always been frustrated. I do not know now how far it has gone. The truth of the matter is that because of the lack of a substantive law compared to our neighbours, Uganda has become a destination for counterfeits, particularly in pharmaceuticals.

Our people, I am reliably informed, are consuming all manner of counterfeit drugs and that is why I think many disease complications are coming up. Don't you think through this anti-counterfeit campaign, Madam Speaker, you would use this moment to prevail over the Government, which seems to be in limbo with the Bill to expeditiously revive it?

THE SPEAKER: Can we hear from the Government because I remember Hon. Kiyaga - was it Hon. Kiyaga? There was a Bill which was brought on the Floor and the Government took over it. Nothing has happened up to date? You are around- No- We need a response from -

2.24

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Madam Speaker, I have to call the Attorney-General, who is not here right now, to inform us on the status of how or where that Bill is and when it can be presented to Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Do we have only one Attorney-General? Honourable members, we do not have people from Works yet there are issues of works, which must be handled. We do not have an Attorney-General- you have Bills here that the Attorney-General is supposed to handle; how shall we proceed without the Attorney-General?

Honourable members, I do not know how we are going to proceed because I do not want a Bill to be passed then they return it. Can I have the Attorney-General in the House? Yesterday we said we needed a minister for finance in the House.

MS NAKADAMA: Madam Speaker, I have sent the Chief Whip to check on the Attorney-

General and minister for works. So, he is doing that.

THE SPEAKER: We want a minister for finance in the House because we have a report regarding finance. *(Hon. Ssemujju rose)*

Honourable members, first wait so that we get the people we want. Yes, one has arrived. Let us have finance.

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You see, the trouble is that the Prime Minister has now turned herself into a post office. When you come here, you come with your team to transact business but for every minister she says; “Let me call,” and another one, “Let me call.”

Madam Speaker, for me, the issue, if you follow -

THE SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is not a post office.

MR SSEMUJJU: I am only saying that she is reducing herself into that by constantly pledging to call but we need to deal with the most serious issue. If you follow the politics of Africa, you saw what happened in Zimbabwe when a 90-year-old Mugabe was in charge of a country. Things started crumbling because once the chief executive is too old like the one we have, you will have these sorts of problems - *(Interjection)* - Okay, he is young. *(laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, I do not know whether it is talking about the chief executive of the country that gives you votes, and if that is what it does, then there is a problem in this country. As far as we know and we see our President is leading us very well and he is not old. What has he failed to do?

Honourable members, in the VIP gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of members of staff from the Parliament of Ghana. They include Ms Evelyn Brefo, Assistant Deputy Clerk Parliamentary Proceedings Division; you are most welcome. Ms Sheba Nana is a Senior Principal Assistant Clerk. You are most welcome to the Parliament of Uganda. Please join me in welcoming them.

In the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers from Bweyogerere Secondary School from Kira Municipality, Wakiso District; you are most welcome. They are represented by a very good Member of Parliament who loves President Museveni, Hon. Ssemujju Ibrahim Nganda and Hon. Ethel Naluyima. Hon. Ssemujju there, is an *Al hajji* and is a very good person.

In the public gallery also this afternoon, we have students of Makerere University School of Social Works and Social Administration from Kampala Central, Kampala District. They are represented by Hon. Nsereko Muhammad, where is Meddie? Meddie is a very good legislator - he has gone for prayers and Hon. Malende who is also working. She has also gone to pray.

Honourable members, we had an item that was pending for Hon. Ecweru. Can you repeat your question? Let us be orderly.

2.31

MS AGNES TAAKA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The matter was about the state of the Kampala-Jinja Highway. It is filled with a lot of potholes, and where they have tried to do maintenance between Nakawa and Mukono, the works have taken so many years. I do not know how long it takes to do that section of the road, Madam Speaker.

My prayers are that the minister updates the House on the maintenance works between Nakawa and Mukono, and on the maintenance plan of the Kampala-Jinja Highway. May he also quickly respond by carrying out emergency works on the road by covering the potholes to allow a motorable state. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Still on that, you need to give us feedback on the Kampala-Jinja Expressway that was funded. We do not know how far it has gone. Hon. Denes, is it still on roads? I am only taking submissions on roads.

2.33

MR DENES SEKABIRA (NUP, Katikamu County North, Luwero): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Be brief.

MR SEKABIRA: In Katikamu County North, all Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) roads –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable “Arrow Boy”.

MR SEKABIRA: All UNRA roads are in a very bad state specifically, the road from Kasiiso to Mazzi, Kasiiso to Kikyusa and Kasana to Lugosa in Nakaseke.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR SEKABIRA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Paska?

2.34

MS PASKA MENYA (Independent, Woman Representative, Pader): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to inform the House that the road from Puranga-Pajule-Acholi-bur, which is supposed to be under construction right now, is not being handled. Worst of all, the road is impassable. Road users in general are stuck. Business is not going well in Acholi Subregion, especially in the East Acholi Subregion.

The honourable minister briefed me that the road from Puranga to Pajule was to be constructed starting this financial year. However, up to now, we still do not have any information regarding that road.

My prayer is that first, the minister should direct a team from UNRA to go and do maintenance. Areas, for example, from Mochwari, which is from the bridge. We have Ludel which is around Pajule, and then we also have the one from Pajule. The three spots make traders unable to access the road or move.

Secondly, the minister should confirm to us when this road will be constructed or when they will commence the construction of Puranga-Pajule-Acholi-bur Road.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Henry-Maurice –

2.35

MR HENRY-MAURICE KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the issue of roads, we are going to distort your Order Paper because it is a cross-cutting problem everywhere. Remember the other day when Hon. Ecweru was in, and I told him, that as you go to the roadblock in Mabira, as the colleague was saying, there is an area – (*Dr Rutahigwa rose*)

THE SPEAKER: Rukungiri, stand up. (*Laughter*)

DR RUTAHIGWA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You already ruled that we should raise our issues on roads, but the honourable member is saying that it is going to distort your Order Paper. Is he in order?

THE SPEAKER: You know, you never heard what he said because you were seated. (*Laughter*)

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other time we told you, Hon. Ecweru. Madam Speaker, as you go to the roadblock in Mabira, it is a very sensitive area. That spot has been bad even before the NRM Government came to power. It has failed to be put right. It has claimed many lives. It is very dangerous. Every time you reach there, you must first stop and that is how highway robbers attack us. We need Hon. Ecweru to help.

In addition, Hon. Ecweru came and supervised the roads. We even reached your area. He led the delegation and he promised that in one year, those roads were going to be worked on. It was at night and he was there. We need him to give us feedback. Thank you. (*Laughter*)

THE SPEAKER: I need feedback on the road to my area. Member for Mityana?

2.37

MR FRANCIS ZAAKE (NUP, Mityana Municipality, Mityana): Thank you, Madam Speaker. They began working on Mityana-Kampala road, within Mityana Municipality in 2020. Up to date, they are still constructing that road –(*Interjection*) – yes.

THE SPEAKER: Kampala-Mityana?

MR ZAAKE: Kampala-Mityana-Mubende Road, but within Mityana Municipality. We wonder when they will conclude that road because it is too dusty and it has caused many accidents. Please work on it and tell us when you will finish it.

THE SPEAKER: Leave alone the dust; it needs to be tarmacked and it has caused a lot of accidents. Is that all on roads?

Hon. Joan – Honourable members, can we agree to first have a response to what has been raised? All Members who have issues on roads, let us compile them and give them to the minister. On Thursday, he will come with a response on each of them.

Hon. Joan and then we shall conclude.

2.39

MS JOAN ACOM (FDC, Woman Representative, Soroti City): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The issue of roads is also basically affected by the lack of equipment in many of the districts and the cities, and this causes connectivity to have a very big challenge. Could the minister also update us on the state or on the issue of road equipment for many of these cities?

Madam Speaker, imagine a regional city staying without road equipment yet we have money to work on the roads –

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS ACOM: Thank you. Hon. Jonathan, information?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Amos and then Hon. Ndeezi.

2.40

MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the 20th of October, every year, the entire Uganda - the majority of the people who are 99 per cent Christians - go to Panyimur to celebrate and pray as pilgrims. This is because there are two martyrs; Jildo Irwa and Daudi Okello. This coming Sunday on the 20th, many people are going to move to Panyimur for the same.

However, all the roads that lead to Panyimur in Agago North, are impassable. Whether you come from Karamoja, Kitgum, Pader and Lira side. And this year's celebration is going to be led by the diocese of Kotido.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Works and Transport should take urgent action so that on the 20th people can go and pray in Panyimur Shrine. Thank you.

2.41

MR ALEX NDEEZI (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you. Madam Speaker. I have -

THE SPEAKER: The Deputy Attorney-General; we are happy that you have come. We needed you and the birthday boy so much - happy birthday Minister of Finance. Yes?

MR NDEEZI: Madam Speaker, I have an issue of serious concern for my people regarding the results of the recently conducted housing and population census. I am aware that Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS) has admitted that there are some errors in the data which was recently released. I am also aware that UBOS has made commitments to make corrections to this data.

However, people with disabilities are worried for two reasons; first, several times, government officials make general commitments regarding specific issues but they always forget to address issues of the people with disabilities whenever they are fulfilling those commitments.

Therefore, we are here to appeal to this august House to ensure that, in reviewing the data, Uganda Bureau of Statistics should be directed to ensure that the section on disability is taken into account.

The second reason we are here is because looking at the details of the errors, the gaps on disability are so huge. For instance, the data says that in 2014, Uganda had 6.4 million people with disabilities. But in 2024, we have 3 million people with disabilities, meaning the population of people with disabilities has declined by 3.4 million.

Madam Speaker, where did the 3.4 million go? So, this is why we are appealing to you to direct UBOS to ensure that we get answers to these important questions. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can I get feedback from- by the way, Members, why have you forgotten that matters of national importance are for Thursday?

Let us first hear from - today we have few; you cannot spend two hours on matters of national importance. Yes?

2.45

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Francis Musa Ecweru): Madam Speaker, first of all, I start with an apology for coming a bit late. As you know, today the Committee on Physical Infrastructure was sitting and my senior colleague is out of the country. I am the one holding the fort. So, I had to go and explain a few things to the committee. I am happy that finally I am here.

On the onset, we do acknowledge as a ministry that the state of roads across the country, especially very critical roads that link communities and link the country to other parts need urgent attention.

And again, in that background, I think I can have the permission on behalf of my senior colleagues to reveal to this Parliament that my ministry has been directed by Cabinet to take a

list of all those roads that have not been done and are mentioned in the manifesto of the His Excellency, the President.

Initially, the thinking of the Government was that because we did not want to balloon the debt, we would have to go slow, particularly in bringing in new projects.

However, on critical analysis, the Cabinet yesterday decided that on Monday we take a list of those roads - those friends and comrades who were recently privileged to sit in the meeting where His Excellency the President made a presentation. They will clearly remember the number of roads that actually the President mentioned and he repeated them yesterday,

Therefore, he wants me to take those roads - they are not few, present to him and indicate the difficulties that have been encountered in implementing some of his directives and the directives of this Parliament.

For example, if Parliament had said, "We have passed a Bill for Kampala-Jinja Expressway," and it is true that a loan has been passed but there seems to have been a challenge in finding resources for compensating perhaps the people who are supposed to be affected by this project, we must indicate that.

So that Cabinet will pronounce itself on Monday, and after I will come again to fill this Parliament in on what we have discussed and resolved and I can assure you comrades, the thinking that I saw yesterday is that Cabinet is going to make a decision and get resources that will fix these roads once and for all - (*Interjections*)- we are a Government, that is why we are here. I am also aware that again the directive that we were given yesterday was that when we are making this presentation, what has been lacking so much is money for maintenance.

We have done close to 6000 kilometres now but we have not put enough resources for the maintenance of these roads. So, a directive was given that when we are coming to Cabinet we must also provide for that so that the Cabinet

will pronounce itself. Madam Speaker, I beg that you allow my humble self to go and make that presentation on Monday -

THE SPEAKER: So, what are you going with on Monday?

MR ECWERU: All the roads that are critical that must be fixed, then present to cabinet -

THE SPEAKER: Where are you going to get those roads?

MR ECWERU: Madam Speaker, we have the list.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, as I said before, all the Members, including myself, who have roads that need to be worked on - you have an example of the bridge between Bukedea and Bulambuli where children have even died in Kamutur-Bulambuli but nothing was done. We only need a marram Bridge not even need tarmac.

Therefore, let us get all that written. I can compile all of them in writing, sign it off, and give it to the minister for Monday, including the ferries; let us simplify it that way.

Let us go to the next item because you know *Jajja* might need to go, but before *Jajja* goes - the potholes? Yeah, he is going to handle them. There was a question raised by Hon. Alex on the issues of census. *(Members rose)* Members, you, first, allow Hon. Alex to get a response. Government?

2.51

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):

Madam Speaker, before I go to the census, I want to give facts. When I entered this House, my colleague, that gentleman there, the Member of Parliament from Mityana, said that the road from Busega up to Mubende is a horrible road. I pass there every weekend. The road from Busega to Mityana - to a place called Nalutuntu - is a beautiful road. It is only from Nalutuntu, Kiganda, Kyenda to Mubende,

which is in a sorry state. However, the good news is that the contractor is on site. He at one time *-(Interjections)-* please, listen to me -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, continue.

MR MATIA KASAIJA: The contractor, Energo Projekt - we must admit - there was a bit of a problem advancing money to him. Now, that problem has been sorted. So, in about three, four or five months - for those of you who use that road - you will see a difference.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR MATIA KASAIJA: You have asked me a question, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I did not ask you. It was asked by a Member - the House is asking you about the census.

MR MATIA KASAIJA: Oh, the census!

THE SPEAKER: Yes. *(Laughter)*

MR MATIA KASAIJA: Madam Speaker, I beg - we are preparing a statement and, therefore, I do not want to give you -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Alex, are you listening?

MR MATIA KASAIJA: We are preparing a statement. Next week, we will be here with that statement, so that we give you the full facts. If I answer this and that one, it is not good. So, I beg you for your indulgence. Next week, we will be coming with that statement, precisely, to tell you what happened.

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter. *(Laughter)*

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, the issue of the census is a serious one. Census data is what the Government needs for planning. If we look at how things are run in this country, a lot of things are going wrong because the decisions we make are based on opinion, but not data.

For the success of the census exercise, you need political leadership. From the submissions of the honourable minister, I can see a detachment between the political leader and the technical people who implement these things.

Yesterday, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, if I could cut you short, the minister has not made any statement on the census. The minister is coming with a statement on the census next week. Let us interrogate his statement next week.

Members, originally we had said that we would sit up to Friday, but we have agreed with EALA that they will be sitting in the morning and we shall be sitting in the afternoon. *(Applause)*

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, can I make my -

THE SPEAKER: In the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers from Light College Katikamu. They are represented by Hon. Nsubuga and Hon. Ethel Naluyima. You are most welcome. You are very smart. Join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Hon. Lee, let us get the report on the census next week.

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, I take your guidance. My invite was that the sectoral committee responsible must actually examine this issue further. They will, in that process, be able to interact with -

THE SPEAKER: After the report.

MR OGUZU: Okay. That makes sense. However, the other issue I wanted to raise, for your attention, is that the minister brought a treasury memorandum here in relation to the custodian board and they have not implemented any of the proposed action points. We need to know why the minister is not taking action on the issue of the custodian board. There are properties that they are supposed to deal in, but they are not dealing in them. They are not

accounting for the properties; we do not know what is in the accounts of the custodian board. There are many issues, which they are sitting on, yet the laws empower him. He is here.

With your guidance, Madam Speaker, we need to understand from him why they are not accounting to Ugandans on the issue of the custodian board.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you are deviating me from the Order Paper. Let me have the LOP.

2.57

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to join you in wishing – you called him “*Jajja*”? – *Jajja* Matia Kasaija a happy birthday. I do not know how many years he has made today, but I am sure there are very many. *(Laughter)* We wish you –

THE SPEAKER: He is just sweet 16. *(Laughter)*

MR SSENYONYI: Okay. So, he is young. Madam Speaker, the issue I want to raise, actually, falls within his docket. Yesterday, I teased it out, but we agreed that since there was the absence of colleagues on the front bench, we would tease it out today.

In carrying out our critical mandate of oversight – keeping the Government in check – there are entities that we keep going to. Last week, on Monday the 7th, together with some colleagues, we went to Amuru District in northern Uganda – to Atiak Sugar Factory. Good enough, they did welcome us, unlike ROKO, which I was giving you an update about - they took taxpayers’ money, but do not want to be held accountable. We shall probably pursue that one as we go along.

However, with specificity to Atiak Sugar Factory, there are a couple of concerns, Madam Speaker – and, hopefully, the minister for finance and the Government generally, can provide some answers.

The taxpayers have so far injected Shs 553.71 billion into the Atiak Sugar Factory project. This is a project that excited many people because it sounded good – it set out well. It sounded good for northern Uganda; people were going to get jobs. It was considered good for Uganda, generally. However, along the way, there are too many questions that need answers.

The factory has not been operational over the years, and they are not sure when they will get to operate and produce sugar. They have their own concerns and frustrations as well towards the Government, just like we have our concerns about the project generally and the Government's involvement and all of that.

Madam Speaker, the company spends money on a daily basis, even though there is no sugar being produced, because they run machines which -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, how I wish you give us the report of your tour from the day-, Atiak, ROKO and others so that it becomes part of the record of this House, and you will be able to respond to the issues that you are raising when it is a record on this House.

MR SSENYONYI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is what I was planning to do - a comprehensive one, but I thought to tease out very quickly -

THE SPEAKER: You can even do an individual report.

MR SSENYONYI: Some of these issues, so that he prepares a response. So, I wanted to give a three-minute summary. I will present the lengthy one for our records and all of that, but I thought I would tease these out, also for him to put his technical people on notice to get him all the information that he requires. It will just take three minutes.

The company is frustrated because the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC)'s presence seems to be absent. After all, UDC is there on

our behalf. They are saying, "We do not see them-, we do not know what is happening." They say they do not have raw materials. They are looking forward to having all the machinery present to them to be able to operate.

One of the questions that the minister needs to answer is: Does the Government have shares in this company? If so, how many shares and to what tune? We need to know.

THE SPEAKER: And which type of shares?

MR SSENYONYI: Exactly. How are we ensuring that the investment of taxpayers is returned? That there is a return on the taxpayer money - Shs 553 billion - because they are not producing sugar yet money has been injected. This has been the habit, almost every year there is a request for more money for this entity. And as I mentioned to the management of the entity, I am interested in that company being functional as opposed to collapsing. Why? Because taxpayers' money has been injected there. If it collapses, we lose Shs 553.7 billion. We want it to be functional but we do not know what is happening.

Madam Speaker, as you have guided, there will be a lengthy one but I thought I would tease this out for the minister to get set to update this House and the country, so that we know what is happening with the taxpayers' money that was injected in this project. Thank you for now.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Are you giving information?

3.03

MS ASINANSI NYAKATO (FDC, Woman Representative, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise an issue of national importance. Last week, on Thursday, a recently appointed Presidential Advisor, Mr Ayeranga Christopher Michael, was kidnapped by unknown people and taken to an unknown place.

It is coming to two weeks but the efforts by the family, relatives, lawyers and friends to trace him have gone unrecognised. This is against

the 48-hour rule that the Presidential Advisor has not been produced to Court.

Madam Speaker, as people from Bunyoro, we are so worried that if a presidential advisor can be kidnapped without any trace -

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS ASINANSI NYAKATO: What will happen to the ordinary Uganda? My prayer, Madam Speaker is that if Hon. Ayeranga is accused of any crime, he should be brought to court and given a free and fair hearing.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, I also pray that the Government explains the whereabouts of the Presidential Advisor, Mr Ayeranga Michael Christopher. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, the Leader of the Opposition in Parliament raised some issues for your attention. He just needs assurance from you that you are aware.

MR MATIA KASAIJA: Madam Speaker and colleagues, I have heard and you can be sure that I will give you satisfactory answers again next week. Thank you very much. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Leader of the Opposition in Parliament, you bring the report on all the institutions you visited, and then the minister will be able to respond to that. Yes?

3.06

MR JAMES KABERUKA (NRM, Kinkizi County West, Kanungu): Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. Yesterday, you did guide that when the Prime Minister is here, we can get the answer. Our embassy in Nigeria is facing very serious issues and it is about being stifled to operate.

Apparently, since the 1st of July, the staff at our embassy in Abuja have never been paid. Reason? The Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Foreign Affairs, and the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST) who

appoints the accounting officers- There is no accounting officer in Abuja.

Madam Speaker, this Parliament and the Executive allocated the money to construct very good and magnificent offices at Abuja, but the contractor is demanding a lot of money and cannot be paid yet. The money is there. That one is going to cause a surcharge to the Government.

Through you, Madam Speaker, I would like the Prime Minister to take this matter, such that we get a response. Maybe tomorrow, with your guidance - he is here. At least we get- because these are our people who are suffering yet Abuja is now a big elephant that we need to tap into. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Sit down. Honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development can you make a follow-up that we have an accounting officer in Abuja?

MR MATIA KASAIJA: It cannot always be next week.

THE SPEAKER: Let us have an accounting officer.

MR MATIA KASAIJA: Madam Speaker, and my dear colleagues, we are aware of what is taking place. We are aware. A few days ago, we debated that question. One of the officers decided to take a role that is not theirs. We are investigating and I can assure you that, that officer will be brought back to Kampala as quickly as possible. Well, I cannot - because I cannot force a foreign country. Well- *(Interjection)* - no, I will not be able to divulge this, because an investigation is going on. So, when the investigations have been concluded, then we shall know what happened. But as for removing the officer, it is something that we are working on so that he can come back to Uganda.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The Government on the issue of kidnap - kidnap has again started. On the Presidential Advisor?

3.09

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO

(Ms Rukia Nakadama): Madam Speaker, sorry for the kidnap of our Presidential Advisor. *(Laughter)* It is now two weeks that he is - we do not know his whereabouts, anyway, it is alleged. We are not very sure.

I would invite you, Madam Speaker, that you allow me to involve Ministers for Internal Affairs and Security to come and inform us about the alleged kidnap of our Presidential Advisor.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE 44TH
WORLD FOOD DAY CELEBRATIONS - 16
OCTOBER 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister for agriculture? Go on; I will give you time. First, wait.

3.11

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (AGRICULTURE)

(Mr Fred Bwino): Madam Speaker and colleagues, Uganda will join the rest of the world to commemorate the 44th World Food Day on 16 October 2024. This year's event will be celebrated at the National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NaSARRI) in Serere District. NaSARRI is one of the institutes of the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO).

Madam Speaker, as you may be aware, every 16th day of October, the global community comes together to celebrate the World Food Day, calling on everyone, including the Government, academia, civil society, private sector and individuals from various sectors of society, to rally against hunger and build sustainable food security.

The event, which coincides with the founding of the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) of the United Nations, raises awareness

and calls for action to support those who suffer from hunger and to ensure food and nutrition security for all.

The theme

This year's event will be celebrated under the theme, "Right to Foods for a Better Life and a Better Future". This theme emphasises the fundamental human right to access safe, nutritious and sufficient food, as a foundation for ensuring healthy lives today and sustainable futures for coming generations.

Better food underscores the legal and moral responsibility to ensure that every Ugandan has access to nutritious and safe food. The country stands to address the pressing need to eradicate hunger and malnutrition by ensuring that adequate food is central to improving health, boosting productivity and ensuring the well-being of communities. Addressing food security positively impacts on education, employment and economic stability.

Having sustainable food systems and agricultural practices today will secure food availability for future generations. Investing in sustainable farming, efficient water use, and agricultural research and innovation is key to ensuring food security in Uganda, amidst climate change.

National celebrations

Madam Speaker and honourable colleagues, as earlier highlighted, the national celebrations will be held on the 16th at NaSARRI in Serere. NaSARRI, located in Serere, Teso Subregion, is one of the oldest agricultural research institutions under NARO. The institute will also be holding its centenary celebration, as we celebrate this World Food Day.

As a key institution focused on semi-arid and dry areas, NaSARRI plays a vital role in reviving traditional and orphaned crops such as cotton, millet, sorghum, cow peas, groundnuts, sunflower and simsim, which are highly suited to Uganda's semi-arid regions.

The above crops, once staples in many parts of Uganda, have seen a decline over the years due to the introduction of more commercialised crops. However, NaSARRI has worked to revive them, recognising their resilience to drought, nutritional value and importance for food security in regions with unpredictable rainfall patterns.

NaSARRI's research has highlighted sorghum as particularly beneficial for diabetic patients, as it helps regulate blood sugar levels. Sorghum is rich in dietary fibre, which slows the digestion and absorption of carbohydrates, leading to better control of glucose in the body.

Other nutritional benefits of sorghum include being rich in antioxidants, gluten-free, high in proteins, mineral-rich, rich in B-vitamins, and a key contributor to agro-industrialisation, as it is a raw material for beer-making.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, Her Excellency, the Vice-President of the Republic of Uganda, Maj. (Rtd) Jessica Rose Epel Alupo has been invited to preside at the function in Serere. I take this opportunity, on behalf of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, to invite you, Rt Hon. Speaker, and all the honourable members to join Her Excellency the Vice-President, the people of Teso and the rest of Ugandans in this commemoration of World Food Day in Serere District.

The main event will be preceded by a tour of selected agricultural value chains and model farms in Teso Subregion, concluding with a fish, sorghum-porridge, and coffee night tonight. This is in recognition of the importance of these crops to Uganda.

This will constitute a testimony of the various investments the Government has undertaken in agricultural research and development in the Teso Subregion, progress made in agro-industrialisation, and also demonstrate the importance of the agricultural enterprises being promoted in the area.

A number of exhibitions will also be organised, showcasing research and value-added products including groundnuts, fish, beans, sorghum, coffee, millet, sweet potatoes, as well as mechanisation and irrigation technologies, among others.

Madam Speaker, on the same day, we shall launch newly released crop varieties successfully developed by our NARO scientists. I call this a major highlight because it is a great breakthrough for researchers who spend a lot of time with countless hours in laboratories, fields, and trials, incubating, grafting, and testing the new crop varieties.

This is always great news for researchers, farmers, and the entire country. In line with this, NARO's focus is on producing climate-smart and resilient early-maturing crops or seed varieties. It is these varieties that will sustain food systems in the country.

The newly released bean varieties are NABE 14R and NABE 12CR. These are superior because they are resistant to the bean anthracnose and root-rot disease.

The newly released groundnut varieties are NARONUT 3R, NARONUT 4R and NARONUT 5R. These have exhibited higher levels of resistance to diseases, drought and are expected to contribute significantly to Uganda's agricultural landscape.

Call for action

Madam Speaker, allow me to inform you that the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) is coming up with great innovations and technologies. If well-funded and fully commercialised, these products and prototypes will solve bottlenecks faced by the different enterprises along the agricultural value chains.

The Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries has visited some stations and is impressed with the innovations. For emphasis, improved funding from the Government will give impetus to agricultural

research, innovation and development that is best suited for the Ugandan context.

May I also remind you, honourable members, that historically, the venue for this year's event - the National Semi-Arid Resources Research Institute (NaSARRI) handled both crops and livestock research, making it an integrated centre for semi-arid agriculture.

However, over time, the livestock research component was shifted away from Serere, which, in hindsight, may have been a strategy to increase the specialised centres of excellence. However, livestock remains a critical part of the livelihood in the semi-arid regions where pastoralism and mixed farming systems are prevalent.

As part of the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries' commitment, there is now a strategic effort to restore livestock research and production to the region of Teso and the surrounding areas.

In conclusion, I wish to point out that from the policymakers, researchers, to the multipliers and off-takers, distributors, retailers and farmers who produce the various foods we consume, we each have a role to play in ensuring that not only adequate food is provided but should be safe and nutritious for all.

Together we can promote the right to food for a better life and future in our country. Thank you. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement is self-explanatory and not subject to debate. Go and attend the World Food Day which is going to be at NaSARRI, in Serere. Please go and see what is there.

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: The statement is supposed to be written by the minister but it is written by the -

THE SPEAKER: It is not written by what?

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: This is a statement supposed to be submitted- a minister's

statement but the minister has not owned the statement because it is written by the Permanent Secretary (PS) and that is an anomaly, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The minister works through technical people.

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: Yes, but the minister has to own it. In this Parliament, we sign all pages of the committee reports.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you sign the report. The minister will sign the report because that is a small thing.

MR BWINO: Madam Speaker, the statement is signed by the minister but as a procedure of communication between the Permanent Secretaries and the Clerk to Parliament, it is the PS who signs the forwarding letter but the statement is signed by the minister.

THE SPEAKER: Is it a forwarding letter or a statement? What is signed?

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: Can the minister show us where the minister has signed? The statement is there and there is a forwarding letter. Show us where the minister has signed or where you have signed.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, a forwarding letter is always written by the PS to the Clerk to Parliament. Now, if a minister was the one writing, he would write to the Speaker. That is how things work. *(Laughter)*

MR BWINO: Madam Speaker, here with me I have a signed statement, signed by the Minister and I hereby lay it on the Table.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE SHORTAGE OF ESSENTIAL MEDICINES AND HEALTH SUPPLIES (EMHS) AT HEALTH FACILITIES

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Health? Yes, there is a procedural matter.

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rules do not allow Members of Parliament to just walk to your chair like that. The procedural issue I am raising relates to these statements.

The earlier one read - similar to many statements that are brought here on international days; you have said that we do not even need to debate it. Whether you should not consider the Government producing a chart here of those days because there is an international day being marked every week from food to everything.

This particular day of food has a bearing on the statistics and the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development said he will deliver a statement next week because this is about hunger and food security.

Madam Speaker, two issues in one: The first is whether these statements should not be evaluated and instead of ministers coming here as if they are on a talk show, they just send or pin them at the entrance and we find them there.

Two, the issue of food security and hunger; the report of the Uganda Bureau of Statistics has figures of Ugandans who are food insecure. How do we consume- even as you said that we go and read this statement in relation to statistics that are still doubtful; the statistics have issued a number of Ugandans who are food insecure and you have now said that we go and read this statement.

We would want to read it in relation to the figures in the report. Can we be advised, what do we do before the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development comes here with the final statement on the statistics?

THE SPEAKER: The statement has been provided for, under Rule 52(1) and as you said, it is a routine. When there is a function, say Independence Day, World Food Day, World AIDS Day, or World Teachers' Day, the minister comes with a statement.

Now, the issue of the census - we are waiting for the report. Everybody is very eager about

the census. The deviation of what happened during the census - we want to understand and that is the report we are getting next week.

I do not think people in Kira will die of hunger between now and next week because you said that they want food; they will not die. Next item. Let us first get to the issue of medicines. For us in Busoga, the medicines are not there completely.

3.29

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (PRIMARY HEALTHCARE) (Ms Margaret Muhanga): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

Allow me to express my appreciation to you for granting us this opportunity to respond to the concerns raised by the honourable members regarding the shortage of Essential Medicines and Health Supplies (EMHS) in health facilities across the country.

It has been reported that many health facilities have previously experienced stock-outs of essential commodities and have been unable to provide quality services due to delayed commodity deliveries and a low-order fulfilment rate by the National Medical Stores (NMS).

Madam Speaker, the widespread shortages of EMSHS in Government health facilities were primarily a result of NMS being unable to access distribution funds from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in a timely manner. As a result, NMS would receive the funds late and would not deliver the services to the health centres as scheduled.

However, I am pleased to report that this challenge has now been resolved. Starting 1st July 2024, NMS was able to receive the distribution funds from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and commenced distribution as planned. Medicines are now distributed according to the published delivery schedule, including the backlog which had not been distributed to the high-level facilities by the close of the Financial Year 2023/2024.

Madam Speaker, allow me to take this opportunity to thank the Government and this august House for the additional allocation of Shs 139 billion in the Financial Year 2024/2025 budget to NMS. This funding has significantly increased the quantity of EMHS available for Government health facilities. As a result, NMS now has three delivery schedules, and these are;

1. Bimonthly delivery schedule. This is done every two months. This is the delivery schedule for medical and health supplies for regional referral hospitals up to health centre II;
2. The monthly delivery schedule for vaccines and EMHS including oxygen is sent to the national referral hospitals; and
3. Quarterly delivery schedule for all health facilities for bulky items, which include mama kits, IV fluids, syringes, liquid soap, and Jik. These are delivered quarterly.

Madam Speaker, as you may be aware, artificial shortages of medicines and health supplies at health facilities is caused by the theft of the EMHS health facilities and the irrational prescription of those medicines by some of the health workers. This compounds the problem of EMHS shortages.

The Ministry of Health is working with NMS and other stakeholders to implement the last mile accountability, up to the final beneficiary, of essential medicines and health supplies at health facilities using IT innovation. The first phase is expected to be completed by the end of June 2025. This will provide information on medicines dispensed at the health facilities.

It is important to note that all the above interventions address the supply side of the medicines, but the most important and suitable solution is found in disease prevention and health promotion that addresses the demand side. As minister of PHC, I urge all of you, honourable colleagues, to embrace and communicate this message of prevention effectively.

Finally, allow me to register my appreciation to the august House for your continued support to the health sector and re-assure you of the ministry's commitment to improve the delivery of essential medicines and services in terms of quality, quantity and timely delivery now that the challenge of inaccessibility of funds for distribution has already been addressed by the finance ministry.

Madam Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable Minister of Health. Hon. Rose, Hon. Judith, Dr Batuwa, Hon. Noah, and then Dr Apea –

3.35

MS ROSE OBIGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I thank the minister for the able response, but she has not said anything about leprosy, which is on the increase in West Nile. In the whole country, West Nile leads in leprosy. Unfortunately, Terego leads in the whole country.

In 2020, the whole country had a total number of 234 cases of leprosy. West Nile alone had 165 cases out of the 234. In 2021, the national figure was 407 and West Nile had 384. In 2022, the national figure was 581, West Nile had 439 and so forth.

Madam Speaker, people still treat leprosy as a curse, therefore, making the victims isolated. They do not have any help because they end up losing their fingers and toes. In most cases, they have advanced wounds.

Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Let us be brief in our submissions.

MS OBIGA: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I kindly request that the Ministry of Health takes leprosy as an emergency and addresses it. I will lay this paper on Table because it has all the details so that the minister –

THE SPEAKER: Please state - of course, we need to know the authenticity of the paper.

MS OBIGA: The paper is from –

THE SPEAKER: You can share it with the minister because it should be authentic.

MS OBIGA: Thank you. I will allow my brother to say something. (*Hon. Oguzu rose*)

THE SPEAKER: Are you from Terego?

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, in some cultures in Uganda, such as the one we practice, there is still a belief that leprosy is a cultural issue. When you offend some people and they cry, you actually get affected. We have been practicing this kind of culture.

This culture is conflicting with what the Ministry of Health people tell us about this disease. In their risk communications, I think it would be good to reconcile this kind of contradiction so that people know exactly the causes of leprosy. Is it true that one can be affected culturally? I see that is contributing to the prevalence of the problem. So, I pray that you let the minister go on the ground and dig deeper.

3.38

MS JUDITH ALYEK (NRM, Woman Representative, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the honourable minister for mentioning in her report about disease prevention and health promotion.

Kole District is one of the districts that has a vast shortage of medicines. I would interest the Ministry of Health - we prioritise health promotion and disease prevention because more than 75 per cent of the disease burden that is reported in our health facilities can be prevented.

From today onwards, we need to focus on putting more money into disease prevention because we have the public health workers, we have the health inspectors called environmental health workers and health educators who the Ministry of Health actually employs. However, these people are not well facilitated to carry out their jobs. Let us give them motorbikes

and fuel to run around in the communities to sensitise our people because it is as if health education has gone somewhere. We are not seeing it anymore. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Dr Batuwa, a minute.

3.40

THE SHADOW MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Timothy Batuwa): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to respond as the shadow minister of health in a short but very elaborate way that the problem of shortages of medicine in the country needs us to find well-defined solutions to settle; if you look at it from the angle of malaria, which is the biggest disease burden. In 2022, the World Health Organisation, which is an authority in matters of health, indicated in its report that there are 12.7 million cases of malaria in Uganda annually, meaning every day 34,000 Ugandans get sick with malaria.

In the same report, 17,556 are estimated deaths, which means 48 Ugandans die daily of malaria. Malaria is a curable disease and that gives us a better understanding of what medicines we need in the country.

I have been with the Committee on Health and we have gone through various hospitals in Northern Uganda, eastern and western. It hurts to get into those hospitals and knowing that 48 Ugandans die daily, you find no malaria drugs in those hospitals; in Padibe, Moroto and Kabale - yet the same drugs are on the shelves at National Medical Stores (NMS) in Entebbe. What is missing is the money to fuel a truck to transport the drug from the shelves in Entebbe to that distant health facility to save the life of the five-year-old child or the life of a mother.

I looked at the documents of National Medical Stores, during the budget process, the cost of logistics for National Medical Stores is only 7 per cent.

Our prayer has always been that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development front-loads that money, 7 per cent is small. For a quarter, National Medical Stores needs 25 per cent. But this logistical support is only 7 per cent. They can do it in one quarter.

Madam Speaker, when they front-loaded in June this year, we had very effective drug distribution, just as the Minister has indicated. So, for the last three months, we have seen a very good distribution of medicine.

I have no comment and I appreciate the report, but I am not sure whether in this coming quarter we are going to have drugs that are well distributed in the facilities, simply because we are not sure whether the Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development is going to front-load that money.

So, I urge the honourable members of Parliament to resolve this matter. I know that the Government is convinced by the Integrated Financial Management System (IFMS) that they are following, where there are budget lines. Therefore, for logistical support, they will also send 25 per cent of that money.

Let us make a resolution on this and an exception on the IFMS that for that particular budget line of logistical support, the entire 7 per cent that NMS needs to distribute drugs for the entire year be given to them at once and all we have to demand is effective distribution of medicine. Thank you.

3.44

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budairi County West, Sironko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thought you had not seen me –

THE SPEAKER: No, how can I fail to see you?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Medicine is a very important thing in this country. We have discovered that even the pricing of medicines by NMS are higher than pharmacies. And yet, those who enjoy economies of scale, would be buying more medicine for the same money.

They were saying that the Ministry of Finance is not doing well but let Parliament also investigate how much it costs - let me take an example of Panadol, how much is it in NMS? How much is it in the pharmacy?

We made an investigation and discovered that the price of medicine in NMS is higher than in the pharmacies. Now, when they come to Parliament and they talk about medicine, everybody will raise that we need medicine.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has delayed bringing it but they are not finding out what the problem is. I want to plead with Parliament that if you are talking of transport, first and foremost, NMS has trucks and contracts with outsiders who supply them with fuel and whatever.

It cannot be an excuse that they cannot get fuel from Shell to transport the drugs. They are doing it deliberately so that they come here and everybody gets up, saying, “Ministry of Finance is a problem, NMS is right” so that they get away with their crime.

I plead to you, honourable members of Parliament, especially the Committee on Health, to take a keen interest in the operations of NMS. Yes, drugs are essential and important but, in most cases, even when they are delivered, they are drugs which are not needed in the hospitals, most drugs are expiring on the shelves.

Secondly, they get drugs from outside, which remain with a small lifespan, which those countries want to dump. In fact, they give them out mostly for free, because the destruction costs are high. So they have got them at a cheaper price but they overprice them to us. And when they come here you say, “NMS is doing well” and you blame others. The Committee on Health needs to do a thorough investigation into the operations of NMS before you come to cry in the House. I beg to submit.

3.47

DR NOAH MUSA (Independent, Koboko North County, Koboko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the report and I also want to thank the Minister of Finance Planning and Economic Development for the front-loading of funds for distribution.

In the earlier discussion of the matters of medicine in this House, we realised the issues

were about the releases for NMS, which were coming late.

I would like to make a comment on the artificial shortage of medicines, which exacerbates stockouts in health facilities.

In the minister's report, he did not provide us with a solution on how we are going to address this. The issues of polypharmacy at health facilities and theft.

When I was still actively practising, we used to use the health unit management committees to ensure that the medicines were appropriately managed and during deliveries, they would be present in receiving then we would encourage them to regularly visit the health facility to see how medicines are used.

Currently, we have Information Communication Technology (ICT) which provides solutions for managing medicine usage at health facilities to control the exit of medicines from stores to the prescription desks. So, I would like to implore the minister to explore these possibilities in facilities with the power and where these ICT solutions can work so that we can address the issues of shortage of medicines as a result of theft. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The management system should be able to help in the monitoring of the drugs. Dr Apea - we have agreed that we should have a front-loading of money that is meant for drugs.

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE SPEAKER: We have also agreed that the sectoral committees should take a keen interest. Hon. Nathan has talked about the cost of the drugs that should be monitored and how it is being managed. Dr Acuti, this is under you and I know that you are very capable, you will manage this. Have a keen interest in these drugs.

3.49

DR SAMUEL ACUTI (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In our northern Uganda report, we did a very extensive review on what is driving the drug shortages. Front-loading was an issue that happened last financial year but was addressed this financial year.

We also have the issue of artificial shortages – the drug is actually available at the facility, but the patients cannot access it. This is what we observed when we went on the ground; this is why we made a very strong recommendation, that we must digitalise the drug system itself so that from National Medical Stores (NMS), you can trace the patient who received that Panadol, antimalarial or injection. There is still a big gap in that particular area.

However, we take note of this and we will continue to see what else can be done to strengthen that area.

THE SPEAKER: Originally, we used to get SMSs – do you still get them? I stopped getting them.

3.50

DR AGNES ATIM (NRM, Woman Representative, Amolatar): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The issue of medicine is so emotional. You have mentioned one of the issues that I am raising, that when we started this 11th Parliament, we engaged NMS and we would receive the SMSs. When you were at the constituency, at times, you would even be invited to go and receive the medicines. My issue is about the stakeholders' involvement in the process of medicine, logistically and also at the health centre level.

Our committee chairperson has recommended the issue of Information Communications Technology (ICT), but I would also propose that as we digitise all these processes, it is important that we also revitalise the health management system. I wonder whether it is working or not, but in my constituency, you just get to hear of how some of these storekeepers are arrested for selling these drugs, or, when

the drug authorities are getting the medicine from the Government being sold at the clinics.

Therefore, I think the involvement of stakeholders that used to work well – somehow – needs to be revitalised.

Finally, the issue of stock-outs is a logistical and operational issue. My colleague has alluded to procurement. In this country, most of our Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) are very quick to buy what they cannot manage or deliver where they are. I think the planning should involve procurement to delivery and management. I do not think you can go and buy medicine when you do not have fuel to take it to the next level. There should be some politics or corruption or connivance somewhere.

As a House, we should stop approving procurement without the delivery of some of these facilities that we need at the health centres. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, you need to know that it is our constitutional right, under Objective XIV, that we must have access to health services, among others. You need to take it seriously and make sure that all hospitals have drugs.

Yes, Hon. James, Hon. Linda – (*Members rose*) - honourable members, you will speak on other things.

3.53

MR JAMES MAMAWI (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report. The minister clearly indicated how the process for NMS is undergoing. You clearly stated that we used to get messages whenever drugs were delivered to our areas. However, the issue is that whenever the drugs are delivered, you may find that the essential drugs are lacking.

Madam Speaker, if you go to my hospital in Adjumani, you may find many drugs that have expired. They are not used in health facilities,

but, still, our own people are lacking drugs. What type of deliveries are those? How are those deliveries done? The belief is that we have districts that submit requests for drugs and that the drugs are submitted or taken to those districts, according to the request made by the respective district or health facilities. However, on deliveries, you cannot get those.

On the issue of the health unit management committees, we want to thank the Government very much. The health unit manuals, which were given by the Government, show that for a person to be nominated to the health unit management committee, he or she must have been at least a Senior Four leaver. These would be able to monitor the processes, which are taking place in these health facilities.

However, still, that is not enough, Madam Speaker. We need the Government to take deliberate efforts to empower these health unit management committees to know their work so that they will be able to help the Government in a – (*Member timed out.*)

3.56

MS IRENE LINDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Fort Portal City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also thank the Minister of Health for the statement and I agree with her that yesterday, two trucks delivered drugs to my city. Drugs are delivered once in two months, but within one week, there are no drugs in the hospitals. There is need for us to increase the budget for these medicines because what is being delivered is not enough. These hospitals end up running without drugs and putting patients –

THE SPEAKER: Maybe there is need, first of all, to check whether there is theft of these drugs and accountability of the drugs that are being delivered.

MS LINDA: Yes, Madam Speaker. Also, cases of accidents have increased on the road. In most of our referral hospitals, when you look at the surgical wards, they are very dilapidated and small. There is need for the Government to budget for money to improve our surgical

wards in the regional referral hospitals. Thank you.

3.57

MS SAUDA KAUMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Iganga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Still, on the issue of SMSs, I think that due to the demand by the MPs, NMS started sending SMSs whenever they could deliver. However, now, it is a habit that they send SMSs even when they have not delivered. When they send you the SMS and you call the hospital, they say: “We have not received anything.” *(Laughter)* I wanted to notify you about that.

The other thing, Madam Speaker, is that the people of Iganga have been demanding that, maybe, they bring the pharmacies – because every time they are crossing the road to go and buy medicines from across the road. People who go to buy the medicines are being knocked down, leaving sick people in the hospital. They are making a request that, maybe, the Government allows for these pharmacies to be brought inside the hospital. *(Laughter)*

Even on Saturday morning, we had an accident. On several occasions, we have been asking Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) to put humps on that road, but they have been failing. However, at least, they have heard our cry and they are going to put the humps.

Another issue that I brought on the Floor of Parliament was about the electricity. Babies have been dying because the electricity line is not proper. They depend on the generator, yet the money they allocate to the hospitals is small. Even the steriliser broke down. They had to go to a health centre III of some subcounty to bring the steriliser from there to the general hospital. I think that is not proper.

THE SPEAKER: I was actually surprised about Soroti – how they could take a patient from the referral hospital to be operated upon in a health centre III! The person died. –There is a problem.

MS KAUMA: Madam Speaker, you are right. That is what is happening in Iganga. Sometimes, because the theatre is not operating, patients from the general hospital are referred to Health Centre III.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, take note of that. Honourable members, referral hospitals are referring patients to Health Centre III. I have evidence to that effect, it happened in Soroti Referral Hospital and the patient passed on. Yes, Hon. Atima?

4.00

MR JACKSON ATIMA (NRM, Arua Central Division, Arua): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the report, and the ministry for helping National Medical Stores (NMS) to come up with the schedule for delivering drugs. This has sorted issues of drug shortage in the facilities.

Honourable minister, I would like to draw your attention to the area of artificial shortage. As the honourable colleague noticed, you did not come up with a solution for how you will address this artificial shortage. Theft of drugs and essential items in health facilities has been the order of the day. Arua Regional Referral Hospital has been associated with such theft, we got equipment, and an ambulance stolen from the hospital.

When security investigations were still ongoing - Honourable minister, your ministry decided to transfer those personnel who were involved to another location, transferring the same problem from one facility to another instead of prosecuting these people and bringing them to book.

Number two, the concern I would like to put before the minister, is we have government spending money -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you have debated this issue for over an hour.

MR ATIMA: I just wanted to make that one point.

THE SPEAKER: Rule 52 gives you one hour. There is a Motion from Hon. Ebwalu -

MR ATIMA: Madam Speaker, can I make that one point?

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR ATIMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable minister, one point I wanted to make is that the Government spends money on personnel, especially Internal Auditors of these facilities. What work are they doing? Are they checking these thefts, are they supervised? Or are they employed for doing nothing?

THE SPEAKER: Why is Hon. Ebwalu scared?

4.02

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (Independent, Soroti West Division, Soroti): I am not scared. Madam Speaker, just a second before I move a Motion, Parliament in its wisdom, in April 2021, passed a resolution to honour Dr Epodoi and the medical personnel in Soroti Hospital for the historical operation that they conducted to separate the conjoined twins.

These twins were referred to Mulago Referral Hospital, Mulago condemned them and they were referred back to Soroti Hospital. Soroti Hospital, with its humble doctors, conducted the successful operation. The Parliament at that time made a resolution that the hospital be equipped and renovated.

As I speak, the theatre of Soroti Referral Hospital has been condemned. That is one.

Number two, Soroti Hospital is operating without a medical ward, Number three, because of the problem with the production of the oxygen Plant, we do not have the power for the plant - we keep moving in and out of oxygen stock.

Madam Speaker, I would like to remind the Ministry of Health and the Government to go to their archives, take this up, and equip Soroti Hospital as we passed as Parliament. Having

said that we have debated this matter, and listened to the honourable minister, I, therefore, move a Motion - (*Interjection*) - information - Member for Soroti -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we have debated this issue. We have all issues concerning the medical sector and we have got very good reports from the sectoral committee. Honourable minister, you know it is a constitutional right for one to have health services on top of other issues and ensure timely and planned delivery and procurement of medicines to the hospitals or health centres

All the hospitals we have should be functional. However, it is unfortunate that some hospitals are not functional. They are not reachable because of the bad roads, and the supply chain of drugs from NMS to the hospital is a problem. You need to work on that.

MR EBWALU: The Motion has been overtaken. I therefore raise a Motion that we stop the debate so that we move to other matters on the Order Paper.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR OGUZU: I am rising to second the Motion that -

THE SPEAKER: Have I put the question?

MR OGUZU: No, because the Motion must be seconded before you even put the question.

THE SPEAKER: Have I put the question that is it seconded?

MR OGUZU: That is why I rose, to second the Motion.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, it is not a laughing matter, we need the supply chain to be clear. Honourable members, do not wait to come to the House. Go to the ministries and tell them you do not have the drugs. Next item -

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE
STATUS OF HEALTH FACILITIES IN
NORTHERN UGANDA

THE SPEAKER: I ruled it. The Aye's had it.

MS MUHANGA: Thank you -

THE SPEAKER: Just a minute young – I will come back in a bit. In the public gallery, we have pupils and teachers from Crane Junior School, Lira City. You are most welcome. They are presented by Hon. Vincent Obongo Shedrick. Hon. Shedrick is around and Hon. Jane Ruth Aceng, the Minister of Health. Thank you for coming. First stand-up; you are very smart. You are most welcome.

In the public gallery this afternoon, we have teachers and students from St Stephen's Secondary School in Njeru Municipality, Buikwe, represented by Hon. Diana Mutasingwa and Hon. Jimmy Lwanga. The Leader of the Opposition deployed Hon. Jimmy Lwanga. You are most welcome. Thank you for coming. When you go back tell them you have very good Members of Parliament. Yes, Member for Bizkaia County?

MR MUZAALE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Two months ago, I presented a case here regarding the defaults on the YAKA meters -

THE SPEAKER: On what?

MR MUZAALE: On the new Yaka meters.

THE SPEAKER: How does it come in as a procedural matter now?

MR MUZAALE: Madam Speaker, I request that you listen to me.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member representing Buzaaya, let us first finish the issue of medicine. Let her give us the response on medicine.

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (PRIMARY HEALTH CARE) (Ms Margaret Muhanga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me start with Hon. Obiga's question. On leprosy, we shall send a team from the Ministry of Health and I will connect you with everybody so that they can get in touch with you to verify and also get a feel of the problem in West Nile.

Hon. Judith Alyek, I agree with you that 75 per cent of the diseases that we are treating in this country are preventable, so we better go for prevention rather than cure.

Unfortunately, sometimes, poor feeding causes malnutrition, overfeeding causes obesity and obesity is a disease too; also, feeding on the wrong diet and not working out our bodies. We need to exercise our bodies every day rather than sitting and then driving home and watching television and getting to sleep

Dr Batuwa, I am grateful for the question you have raised on malaria. However, the numbers are 16 people per day which is really sad. We should not be losing our children – mostly children and pregnant women to malaria. However, the good news is that the World Health Organisation, as you are aware, passed the vaccination for malaria and sooner or later, we shall roll it out.

Hon. Nandala said that the medicines from National Medical Stores (NMS) are more expensive than those in pharmacies. However, I do not understand that question because I know that NMS does not sell medicine. All they do is distribute to health centres that belong to the Government and Public, Private-Not-For-Profit (PNFPs).

Dr Musa talked about the theft of drugs. You know that there is a Health Monitoring Unit at the State House which deals with that. I hope you have also seen the National Drug Authority (NDA) arresting a number of people hiding these drugs in their homes. I have seen Dr Medard Bitekerezo in very many places talking about these culprits that steal drugs from our health facilities.

Dr Agnes Apea, thank you for your question, however, all this comes back to our own communities because every health facility has got a management committee. We need to go back, as legislators and representatives of the people, and find out whether these management committees really go to these health facilities. This is because a management committee can even recommend to a Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) or District Health Officer (DHO) that there is an errant health worker who does not come here or who steals drugs and these people will be dismissed.

Hon. James, I have heard your cries from Adjumani and I would like to tell you, Members - most of you raised the question of SMS - sometimes we change numbers and then they remain sending on the old number - because some people are saying they get them, others are saying they do not get them. So, I will take the information to NMS so that everybody receives the medicines.

Hon. Linda from Fort Portal City, thank you for appreciating that at least you get the messages and also that you saw trucks delivering drugs. Now, your next step should be to check whether these drugs are being used in health facilities or in private people's clinics.

Dr Acuti said that drugs are delivered but patients do not get them. This comes to the same thing - the management of these hospitals. These are management officers who are picked from the community nearest to these health facilities. Therefore, if they were monitoring well - you know, a drug is not a pin or a needle; it is something a little bulky and so when you carry it out of the hospital sincerely, if you are not seen by a colleague then an *askari* will see you. If the *askari* has not seen you, the community alone should report such people, even if they are beneficiaries of these stolen drugs.

Hon. Sauda, I would like to thank you for your good question on NMS not sending messages nowadays and also having no electricity in some of our health centres. In my next report, I will be giving a status report only on Northern

Uganda, but we have also written to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to make sure they take an extra mile to connect facilities that host people like schools and hospitals, to electricity.

Madam Speaker, you have given your own experience where a person died while being referred from a bigger hospital to a smaller one. We do not allow that at all. You cannot have a general hospital and then refer someone to a health centre IV. A health centre III is even worse because it does not have a theatre.

Therefore, I wonder which people did this and whether they were reprimanded. This is because as a ministry we have a rewards and sanctions committee which is supposed to handle such characters who misbehave in the health sector.

Hon. Atima and Dr Hon. Ebwalu also talked about thefts - I have called you doctor - be a doctor for once. Anyway, yes, we really need to honour that doctor who separated conjoined twins in Soroti, but Mulago National Referral Hospital has also done several of these - by Dr Sekabira - he is a senior surgeon and I have met some of the conjoined twins that he has separated.

Thank you, honourable members, for all these questions and we are open to meeting with you and discussing, even one-on-one, in my office so that we can see how to sort out the many difficult problems. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: How are you dealing with the issue of stealing drugs, where we are saying you need a management system to carry out an audit trail?

MS MUHANGA: Madam Speaker, I explained that we have the Health Monitoring Unit at State House which has arrested quite a number of people, especially health workers who have been stealing drugs.

However, we still get those complaints from people and many of them have been arrested, others have been arraigned in court while

others have been interdicted - quite many of them

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members -

4.18

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Madam Speaker, drugs are not just lost at the health facilities -

THE SPEAKER: No, Hon. Lee – Next item?

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT) ON THE AUDITOR-
GENERAL'S REPORT ON UGANDA'S
HIGH COMMISSION IN DAR-ES-
SALAAM, NAIROBI, AND MOMBASA
CONSULATE FOR THE YEAR ENDED 30
JUNE, 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you will recall that on Thursday, 29 August 2024, the report was presented to this House, but the final decision was - No, that is not the one - but the chairperson of the committee is available. Is it the chairperson or vice-chairperson? Hon. Namugga, please go ahead and present the report.

Former minister of ICT –

4.19

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) (Ms Gorreth Namugga): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for recognising me in that capacity. I thank you for the opportunity to present this report and my committee chairperson for giving way and mentoring me. I also thank you for giving us a mighty team in the Committee on Public Accounts - Central Government. It is a committee of 47 members who have executed their mandate which is the reason why we have managed to submit many reports on the Floor of Parliament.

Madam Speaker, as you have rightly said, my name is Hon. Gorreth Namugga representing Mawogoola County South and the Deputy

Chairperson of the Committee on Public Accounts – Central Government (PAC-Central). I am here to present – (*Interjection*) – former, she has said, Shadow Minister of Science, Innovations and Technology in the alternative government.

Madam Speaker, I am here to present a report of the Committee on Public Accounts – Central Government of the Auditor-General's report on Uganda's High Commission in Dar-es-Salaam, Nairobi and Mombasa for the year ended June 2022/2023.

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay a copy of the minutes and also beg to lay a copy of the original report.

Madam Speaker, Uganda has over 35 foreign representations abroad in terms of embassies and consulates which are audited yearly by the Auditor-General. However, over the last three years, the committee has not been able to consider these reports, mainly because of budgetary constraints and yet some of these Missions have continued to attract qualified opinion reports from the Office of the Auditor-General.

Madam Speaker, I therefore appeal to your office to ensure that we facilitate the committee to carry out its mandate of overseeing these Missions to reduce the queries that are raised every financial year.

Honourable colleagues, I will go straight to the Auditor-General's report, and I will begin with the Uganda High Commission in Tanzania.

Honourable colleagues, I would like you to note that the mandate of Uganda's High Commission in Tanzania is to promote commercial diplomacy and Uganda's interests in the United Republic of Tanzania, Zambia, Mozambique, Malawi, Comoros, and Madagascar.

Madam Speaker, this Mission received a budget of Shs 9.5 billion. This was the budget out of which Shs 4.5 billion was warranted. They had a shortfall of Shs 5 billion -

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, we have Bills on agriculture. I hope you are coming back.

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, I Would like the House to take note that the budget for this Mission had a shortfall of Shs 5 billion which automatically affected the operations of the Mission.

Madam Speaker, I will go to the performance under Non-Tax Revenue (NTR). Honourable colleagues, this Mission planned or budgeted to collect Shs 84 million out of which Shs 83 million was collected representing a performance of 98 per cent.

However, the committee observed that the High Commission of Dar-es-Salaam had under budgeted for the NTR for the year in question and that is the reason why it over performed.

Therefore, the committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should take realistic NTR targets based on a trend analysis and consider exploring new sources of NTR to enhance revenue collection.

The performance of the Government of Uganda (GOU) warrants

Madam Speaker, as noted previously, they had a shortage of Shs 5 billion. This was meant for programmes such as governance and security and activities such as the relocation of the chancellery from Dar-es-Salaam to Dodoma in compliance with the decision of the Tanzanian Government to move all government offices, including Foreign Missions, to Dodoma. However, this could not be done due to lack of resources.

Madam Speaker, the committee was informed that the High Commission had already invested over Shs 69 million in preparing the design documents in anticipation of the construction. These funds are therefore likely to be rendered wasteful in the project because the project was not implemented due to the shortage of funding.

Madam Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government should provide money for the completion of the project to enable the Commission to be moved to Dodoma and also the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should consider entering into a Public-Private Partnership (PPP) agreement with the private sector, including NSSF, to fund the construction of the new chancellery in Dodoma.

Unsupported budget outputs

As noted in the previous reports, honourable colleagues, the Mission, contrary to the Public Finance Management Regulation 11(2), the Auditor-General observed that the budgets for all the outputs that were assessed were not supported by individual activity costing, Madam Speaker. This automatically affects the implementation of these outputs.

Therefore, the committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should be cautioned for flouting Public Finance Management Regulations, in relation to the costing of activities at the time of budgeting. This is the reason why some activities are either not implemented and others are left out at the time of implementation of the budget while others are over-costed at the time of procurement.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should consider organising periodic capacity building and enhancing intervention for the planners at the mission. Madam Speaker, this should be effected immediately because this affects the implementation of the plan for the Mission.

Madam Speaker, on the implementation of output still, the Auditor-General assessed the implementation of the same eight outputs and noted that the outputs were partially implemented.

Madam Speaker, from all the reports that we have presented as PAC-Central we have a challenge. We do the budgeting but items are partially implemented. This means that you will have idle investment. You start on an item;

it is stopped in the middle which means that the Government will not deliver on its mandate. At the end of the day, it affects service delivery.

Madam Speaker, the Accounting Officer should be held responsible for all the activities that were partially implemented according to the work plan.

Also, the Accounting Officer should ensure proper planning, budgeting, and including costing of activities to guide budget execution.

Madam Speaker, there is also a query on the failure to develop land. The Auditor-General observed that the Mission owns two plots of land in prime locations in the city centre. However, this land had remained undeveloped or underutilised for more than five years. One plot is located in Dar-es-Salaam. The details are under 'Land at Kaunda Drive'. This land is idle, and there is no development on the same land. Still, there is also another plot of land that houses the old official residence of the ambassador on Yasser Arafat Road. The land has also remained idle for the last five years.

Therefore, the committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should make a business case for developing the properties in order for it to get priority under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

Secondly, the committee recommends that the High Commission through the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should consider the option of entering into a Public-Private Partnership arrangement with the Uganda companies to develop that very land. Madam Speaker, this land is in prime areas and once we invest in it, it can be a source of revenue to our country.

Government preparedness to open up a Consulate in Arusha

Madam Speaker, the Auditor-General noted that during the financial year under review, the Government opened up a Consulate office in Arusha with the primary objective of promoting Uganda's interests in the East African Community Secretariat. However, the

Auditor-General reviewed the current state of the Consulate and noted the following:

1. The Consulate was significantly underfunded, which was affecting operations and in the financial year under review, the Consulate was only provided with Shs 480 million.

Madam Speaker, we are speaking about Missions Abroad. If these Missions are not given adequate budgets, we shall suffer diplomatic embarrassments, as you have been observing, honourable colleagues. Therefore, they need to be given the money so that they can represent us very well.

1. The Consulate also lacked computers, and office equipment. Can you imagine Missions lacking computers?
2. Also, the Consulate was understaffed and lacked critical staff such as the consular officers and administrative officers who are critical given the activities that the Mission should be handling.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, the committee recommends that the Accounting Officer continues to engage the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for adequate resources to optimally operate the Consulate. So, the Consulate in Arusha is underperforming because of inadequate funding.

The next consulate is Mombasa. Madam Speaker, during the financial year under review, and you should note that the mandate of this consulate is also to promote and protect Uganda's national interests in Kenya and other countries of accreditation. They also received a budget of Shs 6 billion and only received Shs 5.8 billion having a shortfall of Shs 468 million.

On the performance of Non-Tax Revenue (NTR), it was noted that there was a misrepresentation of figures between the Office of the Auditor-General and the entity, where according to the approved NTR for the financial year under review, the consulate had

budgeted to collect Shs 57 million. However, the accounting officer disputed the above figures of the Auditor-General and instead submitted that they were supposed to collect Shs 6 million.

These figures, Madam Speaker, were confusing and this was according to the report of the Auditor-General. However, the committee noted that the conflicting figures quoted in the Auditor-General's report and that of the accounting officer was misleading and did not give a true picture of what transpired in the organisation. Moreover, the accounting officer did not remit even the little that was collected.

The Shs 3.4 million was not remitted, reportedly collected during the financial year to the Consolidated Fund, which was irregular and illegal contrary to Section 30(1) of the Public Finance and Management Act.

The accounting officer acknowledged the non-remittance of funds and attributed it to the hefty bank charges that took the whole money.

The accounting officer said that all the money that was collected was absorbed in bank charges, and that is why the money was not remitted to the Consolidated Fund.

The committee recommends that;

- i. The accounting officer should always liaise with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in order to arrive at a more realistic NTR;
- ii. The accounting officer should conform to Section 30 of the PFMA and ensure that all transactions are captured in the books of accounts for completeness; and
- iii. The Accountant-General should organise capacity capacity-enhancing refresher course for the officers in the accounts section.

We observed, much as there is understaffing, but the staff in the accounting department were very – I should not say that they were incompetent, but the performance was far below standard and the Office of the Accountant-General should take note of that.

In the performance of Government warrants, we noted that the budget was Shs 6 billion and they only received Shs 5 billion, which was a shortfall of Shs 446 million. Automatically, this affected the performance of the mission.

The committee recommends that the Government should fully fund the consulate to promote and attract trade and investments.

Utilisation of warrants

The Auditor-General reported that out of the warrants of Shs 5.8 billion availed to the consulate during the financial year under review, only Shs 5.4 billion was utilised, resulting in unutilised warrants of Shs 408 million. Much as there was a shortage in releases, even the little that was released was not fully utilised.

Therefore, the committee recommends that;

- i. The accounting officer should strengthen financial control measures and ensure accurate posting in the financial statement.
- ii. The accounting officer should ensure that the affected activities are rolled over for implementation in the subsequent financial year.

Implementation of outputs

The Auditor-General noted that out of the four outputs that had been fully quantified with a total of 25 outputs worth that money – what is unique about this mission, at least their outputs were quantified. We really commend them for that.

The committee agrees with the Auditor-General that non-implementation of - much as these were quantified, but they still have some activities that were not implemented. This speaks to the Shs 408 million that of those activities that were not implemented yet, the money was received.

Diversion and mischarge

From a sample of transactions reviewed, the Auditor-General noted that funds to the tune of Shs 18 million were irregularly charged from

the activities on which they were budgeted and spent on other activities which were out of the budget. Madam Speaker, Shs 18 million might look little, but this is accountability. This is Government money and it ought to be accounted for.

The committee recommends that the accounting officer should be held responsible for diverting the Shs 18 million.

Lack of a land title for the consulate land at Plot 1/505 on Nyali, Mombasa, Kenya

The Auditor-General reported that the consulate was allocated land measuring approximately one acre at Nyali, Mombasa by Uganda Property Holdings in 2022. The land was valued by the Government Valuer and the consulate intends to construct the chancellery and the staff accommodation.

The Auditor-General noted that they were still processing the title for the same piece of land. Up to now, they have no title. Therefore, the committee recommends that the accounting officer should expedite the process of obtaining the title to ensure that the ongoing construction work is completed and in time.

Lastly is the Uganda Commission in Nairobi

We should take note that we lost our Ambassador Hassan Wasswa Galiwango in January 2023. We continue to condole with the family of our late colleague. However, this House should note that up to now, the ambassador has not been replaced. We do not have a substantive ambassador in Nairobi.

I will not say that this is a diplomatic embarrassment, but we should take note. We need to have a substantive ambassador recruited. We should take note that the mandate of this mission is to promote and protect Uganda's interest in Kenya and the region.

It has a double mandate as a bilateral station with multiple accreditations to Kenya and multilateral representation to the UN environment and UN habitat. The mission of

Nairobi is a bit unique. Its scope is very wide. I wonder why the Government has not picked interest in recruiting a substantive ambassador for that mission. I think for the last one and a half years; we need to take note.

During the financial year under review, the mission had a budget of Shs 14.072 billion and also received a supplementary of Shs 330 million, making a total of Shs 14.402 billion. However, Madam Speaker, we should note that all the budget was released for this mission.

The performance of NTR

The Auditor-General reviewed the NTR estimates for the year under review and noted that the mission had budgeted to collect NTR of Shs 350 million during the year under review and only collected Shs 210 billion, which is an under-collection.

The committee recommended that;

1. The accounting officer should incorporate all sources of revenue in order to come up with a realistic NTR; and
2. The Accountant-General should consider offering capacity-building sessions in bookkeeping for the head of accounts to enhance credibility, accuracy and consistency in the books of accounts.

I also took note of that mission's account section which was performing below standard and the Accountant-General should take note. As we proceed with this submission, we should also take note that the newly renovated building in Nairobi was – Do you know what happened when Generation Z had riots? Our building was burnt which was a serious loss to our country and you will get the figures as we proceed.

Utilisation of warrants

The Accountant-General reported during the year under review that we had that budget as I indicated and they received it 100 per cent. The Auditor-General observed that the mission did not spend funds to the tune of Shs 1 billion,

representing 7.16 per cent of its funding. On further scrutiny, it was noted that this amount was majorly compromised of funds released for the refurbishment of Uganda House during their under review.

During the year under review, the mission received Shs 1.034 billion, but the refurbishment did not take place at that time. The accounting officer explained that the bulk of the affected activities were a result of budget cuts. They claimed that there were budget cuts, yet the Auditor-General indicated that the money was received.

The committee recommends that;

- i. The accounting officer should ensure that work plans are strictly followed and implemented timely; and
- ii. The Accountant-General should consider offering capacity building.

Implementation of outputs

The Auditor-General assessed the implementation of the sampled six outputs, with 11 activities worth Shs 14.4 billion and denoted that

1. One output with one activity and expenditure worth Shs 0.088 billion was fully implemented.
2. The Auditor-General reported that the mission did not implement the following activities: they are many, but we can note a few:
3. Three business-to-business meetings between tourist operators in Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania were not organised; and
4. Staff were not trained to support tourism marketing and handling.

The committee noted that non-implementation of outputs and activities despite receiving the money, implies that the money was diverted to do something else, which leads to a diversion.

The recommendation of the committee is that the accounting officer should ensure that all outputs/activities are implemented as per the approved work plan and should seek approval where a need arises.

Compliance with national planning and budgeting requirements

The Auditor-General reviewed the certificate of compliance for the annual budget for the financial under review and assessed the report issued by the National Planning Authority (NPA) and found that overall, the mission's performance of the Budget Framework Paper (BFP), and annual budget was at 58 per cent compliance, in relation to delivering activities according to the National Development Plan III through the use of corresponding output indicators.

The mission registered non-alignment to the BFP and annual budget on the following;

- a) Science-based capacity building
- b) Government institutions enrolled
- c) Commercial diplomacy.

Madam Speaker, the committee recommends that the Minister of Foreign Affairs should liaise with the National Planning Authority to have foreign missions appraised in a manner that fits within the mandate and outputs according to 1.5.

Refurbishment of Uganda House

Madam Speaker, the Government of Uganda owns a commercial property in Nairobi, Uganda House within the twin building on Plot 209, Kenyatta Avenue.

The Auditor-General reported that the mission proceeded with the procurement of the contractors, as you may see but there were delays in the works.

However, colleagues should note that much as the activities were later executed to the end, you are going to face challenges of accountability because the building was burnt before the

handover. The Government of Uganda spent money to the tune of Shs 14 billion - we get the right figure.

The Auditor-General reported that the mission proceeded with the procurement of the contractors for the remodelling of the twin building and the contract worth Kshs 740 million, which is equivalent to Shs 24.4 billion.

Hardly before the handover, the building was burnt by “Generation Z” during demonstrations.

I beg to submit and I thank you for giving me the opportunity to submit and thank Honourable colleagues for their contribution.

4.42

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I also thank the committee for a very good report. My major concern is the poor absorption capacity, yet many entities do not have money to use.

As I agree with the recommendation of the committee, the Government must do more than what we recommend, so that at the time of deploying accounting officers and other officers to take responsibility for managing institutions, they send people who can do work properly beginning from planning.

As Parliament, we have re-echoed that we should not appropriate money unless it is properly planned for. That means we were not told the right thing at the time of appropriation. If we knew that more was planned for, but the capacity to utilise was low, probably as Parliament, we would have rejected the appropriation of such an amount of money.

Madam Speaker, I support the Government in the role given to our embassies for commercial diplomacy, but unless we budget appropriately because you need to market your country and that calls for several activities.

However, the figures in this report reflect that in many of the embassies, we have not provided enough money for these people to play the

role of commercial diplomacy. Therefore, on a case-by-case, I support the recommendation to add more money for most of the embassies. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. On the issue of virement, under Section 22 of the Public Finance Management Act, where the accounting officer is supposed to get permission from the minister to divert funds and failure to do that, they must be made responsible – *(Interruption)*

MR SSEKIKUBO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a procedural point. The committee has reported that the Uganda House was burnt down yet it had just been refurbished at a cost of Shs 24.4 billion –

THE SPEAKER: How much? Shs 24.4 billion?

MR SSEKIKUBO: Yes. However, the major aspect I rise on is, seeing the Attorney-General and the Minister of Foreign Affairs-Uganda House must and should be a diplomatic property. It was gutted, not by electric short circuits but by Kenyan citizens who deliberately moved to torch down the mission –

THE SPEAKER: For diplomacy, you may not say Kenyan citizens. You may say the house was burnt.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Our brothers -

THE SPEAKER: Our brothers and sisters.

MR SSEKIKUBO: However, not within our boundaries but within the Kenyan jurisdiction. Madam Speaker, wouldn't the Government take this up? One, an attack on a foreign mission should not just pass off casually as they seem to be doing.

Number two, all that was lost must be made good by the host country. We are not probing that; before we put our accounting officers to task. This was an act of aggression. A protest note should have been attached. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Attorney-General.

4.47

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): I appreciate my colleague for raising that matter. I had not noticed that the Minister of Foreign Affairs was here. For purposes of diplomacy, as the Speaker has guided, this matter is being handled at a diplomatic level. I believe that at the right time, a report will be Tabled here. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister for foreign affairs. That is a very pertinent issue.

4.48

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (REGIONAL AFFAIRS) (Mr John Mulimba): Madam Speaker, thank you, for the opportunity to respond to this particular very important matter.

When Uganda House was torched, the Government of Uganda was very concerned, but I must also say the Government of Kenya was equally concerned. The matter was handled at very high diplomatic levels where a Letter of Regret was sent from the Government of Kenya by His Excellency the President of the Republic of Kenya, to his counterpart, the President of the Republic of Uganda.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs received a copy, but as you are aware, the head of diplomacy in the country is the President. We even discussed this matter at the Cabinet level, and the President pledged to handle this matter diplomatically. So, the matter is being handled. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ssekikubo? Honourable minister, I just want to show you something.

I was calling Hon. Ssekikubo - You show him. *(Laughter)* Hon. Wilson? Honourable minister, we may not be very good at diplomacy but all we want is our house, period. If it had happened here, it would have been an issue. We want our house. Yes, Hon. Wilson?

4.50

MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have listened to the report majorly covering East African missions –

THE SPEAKER: Let him finish and then you get clarification. *(Mr Oshabe rose_)* Hon. Patrick, since when did you become – eeh! *(Laughter)*

MR KAJWENGYE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I liked it when the committee recommended that the underfunding of these missions leads us to diplomatic embarrassment – and we have said this time and again.

The other rider in the report is about accounting officers. I have had the opportunity to serve in diplomatic missions for a considerable time. These foreign service officers are actually diplomats from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, recommended and appointed by the Ministry for Finance and, actually, supervised. The majority of the accounting models they use are homemade and controlled from here. Therefore, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Auditor-General and all others – surely, it should not be that Parliament is the one recommending. These are their officers. They are accountable since we have most officers under their docket.

I would like us to put the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to task. It is their responsibility because they are handling public finance.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR KAJWENGYE: Secondly, there is the issue of Arusha. The consulate in Arusha is a recommendation of the East African Community and all member states have deployed their ambassadors to Arusha, to support the implementation of the Treaty. It is absurd that ours, as Uganda – Uganda is the champion of the East African Community Federation so, it cannot be that it is Uganda that is underfunding her own mission. It is really unfortunate. I would like us to walk the talk. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Clarification from Hon. Patrick?

MR OSHABE: Madam Speaker, sometime back when our traders were trading in South Sudan, they lost property and many goods. The heavy diplomacy that people are talking about here ended up asking Uganda to pay. It is our government – money was passed here to pay the traders. I want to hear from the minister –

THE SPEAKER: It was a partial payment.

MR OSHABE: It was partial. They said it is diplomacy – “after diplomacy, we have ended up agreeing that it is you who is supposed to pay your traders”.

THE SPEAKER: The story behind Uganda paying that money was a “guarantee”. Uganda was paying for and on behalf of South Sudan; it is a debt to South Sudan. I remember very well, in the 10th Parliament – and I was in this House – when that was passed. The agreement was written. We even went to South Sudan for the same thing. So, we only guaranteed, because the traders were our traders and they were suffering. We said: “We cannot let our traders suffer; let us pay on behalf of South Sudan.” South Sudan is to repay.

MR OSHABE: Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Maybe you will make another clarification.

MR OSHABE: Actually, Madam Speaker, you brought it out very well. Thank you very much. Now, I want to know from our minister: is it not going to be the same story regarding what happened in Kenya that your diplomat is going to end up saying: “Uganda, please, clear your bills. We shall see because it is you who love East African Community very much than the rest of -”

Madam Speaker, that was the clarification I needed from the minister.

THE SPEAKER: Dr Bhoka, Hon. Milton, Dr Keefa Kiwanuka and then Hon. Eddy.

4.55

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee for the report, particularly on the consulate in Mombasa because recently, we were in Mombasa.

THE SPEAKER: Please, use one minute.

DR BHOKA: We had a Ugandan who had a health problem and the consulate did its best to rescue that Ugandan, and for that we are very grateful.

I have two quick issues and the first one is related to the issue of commercial diplomacy – and within the context of the East African Community where we need to support our traders for export promotion. Indeed, a number of our traders are grappling with the issue of entering the East African Community markets. Many have lost money, especially in the Republic of South Sudan. I really wish we could build the capacities of our embassies within the East African Community, Africa and beyond, in real commercial diplomacy for export promotion.

The second issue is related to tracking our citizens when they enter and exit a country. I have interacted with a number of Ugandans within and outside Africa, on whether or not their embassies know about their presence. To my dismay, many of the citizens are not registered to the extent that when problems arise, it is very difficult to trace and evacuate them.

What is being done by the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our embassies to see to it that even if it is not brick and mortar, we have a digital mechanism of tracking the entry and exit of our citizens in these countries? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Milton?

4.57

MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee

for the good report, but at the same time, I wish to register my disappointment on the non-deployment of a substantive ambassador, to date, for one-and-a-half years. This underperformance could have been occasioned by the non-deployment of a substantive ambassador to Nairobi.

Madam Speaker, I do not know whether it is deliberate – maybe my minister will clarify on whether they have kept updating the Head of State on this vacuum. This is because before the deployment of the late Hajji Galiwango, it took a lot of time to have an ambassador in Nairobi. I do not know whether the potential is not being felt or seen such that it can take this long to have an ambassador. We have career diplomats who are a little idle when you visit some missions. They are idle, redundant and complain of no deployment yet we have a vacuum at certain embassies.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We do not want people who are too idle.

4.59

MR IDDI ISABIRYE (NRM, Bunya South, Mayuge): Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for the report. I want to say that the East African Community integration calls for widening and deepening integration in economic, social and political areas. Having one passport and the proposal of having one currency calls for removing the embassies.

Why should we have embassies in a country that we are yearning to have, like the East African Community? Therefore, Uganda is losing interest in these embassies. Maybe we are ahead of other countries. Otherwise, we would now be thinking of how best we put our embassies right because the report gives us so many weaknesses and issues that our Government needs to address.

Madam Speaker, under the East African Community integration, we need to have a country that does not call for embassies. If you own one passport for the entire region, why do you call for an embassy? We are yearning to

remove borders such that we have one country where everyone is supposed to move and trade freely. You do not need to visit an embassy because we are talking about one country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Iddi, do you know the relevance of an embassy in a country? Maybe you need to understand that first before you can talk of abolishing them.

The minister will give us the importance of having those embassies. Dr Keefa, Hon. Onzi? If you have talked today, do not stand up. Yes, Dr Keefa?

5.01

DR KEEFA KIWANUKA (NRM, Kiboga East County, Kiboga): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for this report. There are two issues: one is about the performance of the embassies. The other is about whether these embassies are being audited.

Now that you have looked at the performance, it should go a long way in improving service delivery in these embassies. However, when I was the Chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development, there was a very significant problem that the budget of the Auditor-General was being cut.

It is supposed to be a protected budget and their budget was about Shs 76 billion, but sometimes, it was being cut by about Shs 30 billion, sometimes Shs 36 billion at will. There was always talk of recognising that it is very important, but not being recognised. As a result, many embassies were not being audited.

THE SPEAKER: In addition to what you are saying, Dr Keefa, even the Committees of PAC Central and Foreign Affairs, should have their budgets increased for them to be able to go and do oversight in those embassies, please.

DR KEEFA KIWANUKA: As a result of their budget being cut, many embassies were not being audited. Therefore, the sort of findings that you are bringing up now were not being

monitored across other embassies in the world. Embassies were one of the significant areas that were affected and of course, other public work agencies.

It is very important that we get commitment from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that their budget will be recognised and protected. I would also be very happy if the chairperson could mention, at least from your sampling, how many embassies have been audited, as from the last financial year.

The second problem, which I note as a growing area of concern, is the area where projects are prioritised, started, and given money but then they are not completed. That is becoming very characteristic of public service performance. It will be very important to get a feel as to how many projects have stalled around the public sector area with an explanation as to why.

It would also be very important to get commitment from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that moving forward, we will now prioritise the projects that have started instead of starting new ones, which is unexplainable. Moreover, with that sort of management, it is very difficult to tell how projects are performing because you cannot measure their performance. It has started but not completed. That is my submission.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, hon. Onzi?

5.04

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My concern is about funding these embassies vis-à-vis the facilitation in terms of salary to the staff. I had an engagement with our staff from our Embassy in China and they expressed a lot of concern that many times when they are seconded as staff members to these embassies, the Government does not take into consideration the cost of living that varies from one country to another.

Sometimes they may consider the cost of living of an East African country or some of these

African countries but they do not take care of the variations. This has affected them greatly. Sometimes even for them to come home is a very difficult situation. Even taking their families and being with them is a very huge challenge.

If they are to come back home, they may come once a year. That is what they can afford. Therefore, my concern is that when these staff are seconded, there is need for us to carry out the cost of living assessment such that their payments will be in line with what they can afford. Even accommodation is a serious challenge to them. We should not just dump them there that we have employed and sent them, but we should be able to provide better services for them. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

5.06

MR ALBERT LOKORU (NRM, Tepeth County, Moroto): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I want to thank the committee for the wonderful report. I also want to thank the presenter of the report for being supersonic and audible enough.

Madam Speaker, it was a very good speech and she read it on time. That is what I was trying to mean.

THE SPEAKER: That is how you start. *(Laughter)* That was a joke.

MR LOKORU: Madam Speaker, I am puzzled with what the report has revealed especially in the area of incompetent accounting officers because they are there to do good work for Uganda. If they are incompetent, it means that the money that they are given to do the work for the country is diverted and we lose -

THE SPEAKER: Maybe we could use a better word other than “incompetence.”

MR LOKORU: Okay, that is what I observed from the report.

THE SPEAKER: No, she did not say, incompetent. She was polite enough. She said they are not doing the right thing.

MR LOKORU: Most obliged. Actually, they are not doing the right thing with the money they are given and that gives a bad indication and a bad impression for the country. Something must be done, Madam Speaker, to ensure that competent people are deployed to work in these consulates. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The next Members will speak in the next report. We have another report. Hon. Faith?

5.08

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Madam Speaker, I also join colleagues to thank the committee for doing a good job. I have two issues: the first one is the recommendation on capacity building, especially on bookkeeping in Dar es Salaam and Nairobi. They quoted both countries.

I think that is a recommendation we should do away with because it suggests that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs employed people who do not even have a diploma from the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). If you have a diploma from UCC in Uganda, you can do basic bookkeeping. You do not need the Accountant-General to train you.

THE SPEAKER: Training can be continuous. You know, we are living in a changing environment.

MS NAKUT: Okay.

THE SPEAKER: It is not cast in stone. You find that you need to catch up with the changing accounting systems.

MS NAKUT: Alright. Much obliged, Madam Speaker. However, the committees and all of us should make a distinction between indiscipline and incapacity. We should not shy away from punishing indiscipline.

If it is a true capacity challenge, that is alright. However, where there is indiscipline, for example, not declaring Non-Tax Revenue or declaring Non-Tax Revenue and expensing it as bank charges, that is indiscipline. Why

would we give a recommendation on capacity for an issue that requires disciplinary action? I see that as a problem with this report and it is difficult for the ministry to implement.

The second issue, Madam Speaker, is the misunderstanding that the problems in Government agencies arise because of lack of money. For example, the report cited that the consulate in Dar es Salaam lacked basic office equipment against a budget that received warrants over Shs 4.5 billion. Basic office equipment could cost less than Shs 10 million.

Therefore, it is a management problem. It is not a problem of lack of money. We should prescribe the right solution for the right problem. The right solution here is to find out why management is not procuring basic office equipment to facilitate their work. They are embarrassing us by having an office without basic computers when they have a budget. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Christine and then the minister.

5.11

MS CHRISTINE KAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. The committee has been declaring that the accounting officer is liable for the losses. I would like to hear from the minister himself concerning the 2002 incident, for example, where the accounting officer did not report the Shs 3.4 million collected in the Mombasa consulate. What has been done to that person so far? This is because liability means paying back.

Madam Speaker, there is also a diversion, under the consulate of Mombasa, of over Shs 18 million and this money was spent on other items. This is contrary to our policies. When we say that the accounting officer should always liaise with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, we expect the accounting officer to return our money.

When you look at the Nairobi Consulate, they report that the Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) - they

actually performed so poorly that they did not foresee that they would not raise rent from the buildings.

We wonder; they projected that we would collect more, and yet the building was already burnt. This is one of the areas that make us happy; when we over-exaggerate our budgetary figures to show that we are going to earn a lot yet, for sure, we should not over-exaggerate our budget to make us think that we have a lot of money.

Madam Speaker, they also cited rent arrears since 2010. We are wondering - even small landlords in Uganda can opt for services of very small property agents, and they raise rent. How come we have all these arrears from 2010? I am beginning to have doubts. I believe some money may have been collected and entered into somebody's pocket.

Madam Speaker, we thank the Tanzanian Embassy for at least performing to the level of 98 per cent. They projected they would raise NTR of some serious money and they really performed very well. We congratulate those who did well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister? Hon. Enos, you will speak on the next report. You can wait for me for a moment.

5.15

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (REGIONAL AFFAIRS) (Mr John Mulimba): Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Where is the Chairperson of the Committee on ICT? Honourable minister, continue as we wait for the chairperson.

MR MULIMBA: Madam Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. I thank the committee for the well-elaborated report and also the colleagues who have observed a number of concerns.

First, we do appreciate that the findings of the committee speak to the plight of the ministry, as espoused in many of our management plans

which we have laid on this Floor many times. All the issues which have been raised, I think, largely relate to shortage of budget.

We also acknowledge that there could be issues of capacity and I commend you, Madam Speaker, for the clarification you have given to the effect that training, research and development are key components in a living and growing organisation.

My colleague, who was thinking that we should put out the issue of training - I think you will be reminded that all accounting officers need to undergo regular training because accounting standards are international in nature and they keep changing annually. Therefore, that is the basic reason why we should have them equipped quite often.

On the other hand, you are also aware that the Government of Uganda has recently transitioned from sector-based budgeting to program-based budgeting. That is the general nomenclature and not all of us have migrated yet. Therefore, we need to keep equipping our staff. We cannot judge them as incompetent on account of the Auditor-General's report. After all, in many cases, this is an opinion formulated and the processes are undertaken where accounting officers are invited before committees of Parliament and they put up a defence. That is the ultimate conclusion.

Madam Speaker, colleagues have spoken here about Uganda House, but I invite colleagues to look at the terms and conditions under which the construction and eventual handover was envisaged. In all these contracts, there is a provision of *force majeure*. I know the Attorney-General can speak to that.

I invite Members to look at what *force majeure* is. It talks about circumstances which are beyond us, including civil unrest. By the way, let us just remind ourselves that it is not the Government of Kenya nor the Government of Uganda which was responsible for the burning. It was on account of civil unrest and clearly covered under *force majeure*.

As I have said, we are handling this matter diplomatically. I really plead that, honourable colleagues, you leave this matter as it were. I agree, Madam Speaker, that Uganda needs her house and we are doing everything it takes to ensure that it is reclaimed bilaterally.

The issue of budget cuts has surfaced many times in the report. This has been our plight, as a ministry, and I would like to thank members of the committee and Members of the House for sharing their concerns with us.

I do agree with you, Madam Speaker, that the budget of the Committee on Foreign Affairs needs to be enhanced to enable members of the committee to appreciate what is happening in the missions and embassies, and also play oversight because we pick it from you for our action. We are not everywhere, as the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but you rightly play your role and we pick from you for action.

Finally, the performance of our missions abroad should not be overly charged on solely how much they have spent or absorbed. It could be partly but we also need to understand this. Sometimes, the warrant approval comes late and that is why there is low absorption of the funding – *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of procedure from Hon. Enos. *(Hon. Obigah rose)* - use it now, since they are still looking for space.

MS ROSE OBIGAH: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. Most of our embassies are in a dilapidated state. Wouldn't it be procedurally right for the minister to give us a comprehensive report on how much is needed to reorganise all the embassies of Uganda? We can do it in phases so that we have a face of Uganda wherever these embassies are.

It was so embarrassing in Ottawa. Our embassy house was growing trees, apart from grass. We will be grateful if the honourable minister can come here with a comprehensive report so that we know how much budget we can give him, other than saying, "Money here; money there".

Wouldn't it be procedurally right for him to give us a comprehensive report on the state of embassies and the amount of money he needs? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. There is another one from –

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. My question was going to the minister; it is more of a clarification. He is talking about *force majeure* and my understanding is that a project renovation worth more than \$6 million should have had project insurance. In most project insurances today, we have extensions for political unrest.

Therefore, I am seeking guidance from the honourable minister on whether we did not have insurance because I do not see why we are pushing the Government of Kenya to compensate us, yet there was an option for project insurance. Kindly clarify that.

THE SPEAKER: Doctor?

DR SAMUEL OPIO: Yes, further clarification. In the report, the committee indicated that the challenge in the construction of the Mombasa Consulate is because there are challenges in transferring the title from Uganda Property Holdings Limited to the consulate or Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

When you look at the mandate of Uganda Property Holdings Limited, it is actually to secure and manage Uganda's real estate investments domestically and internationally. They have 39 properties in Kenya, Uganda and even London in the UK.

I am surprised that instead of transferring the embassy properties to Uganda Property Holdings Limited, we want to transfer the titles from Uganda Property Holdings Limited to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, yet this is a 100 per cent Government-owned entity. They are not drawing any money from the Consolidated Fund. They have even expanded their portfolio through some of the investments and reinvestments and I believe this will help solve the problem of undeveloped embassy land.

I want the minister to clarify why we cannot hand over this property to Uganda Property Holdings Limited to manage and maintain it because the embassies have failed. We are seeing a lot of undeveloped land that we risk losing. Thank you.

5.23

MR BONIFACE OKOT (NRM, Youth Representative, Northern): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I also need some clarification from the minister. I believe that for hardware to operate well, it needs good software.

As leaders of G77+China and the 120 countries under the Non-Aligned Movement, I want to understand from the minister when the Government is bringing to this House software for our foreign affairs sector - our consolidated foreign policy. It appears as though we simply have ad hoc pieces of legislation that we are operating on and we cannot properly align our actions with our national – *(Member timed out.)*

5.25

MR HENRY MAURICE KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have interfaced with Uganda Property Holdings Limited, as the Committee on National Economy. We have equally interfaced with our consulate in Mombasa.

Madam Speaker, I invite you to pick interest. Some of these areas are very strategic for Uganda. The team from the Consulate of Mombasa will be in Uganda - I think - this coming week. I request that you give audience to those people and the team of Uganda Property Holdings Limited so that by the time the minister comes to give you some information, you are already well-informed about what is going on.

These are strategic areas, but the minister and his team - I am hesitant to use the word, "Government" - are very slow on some of these things. We do not understand the reasons as to why some of these things are not executed

as required and we lose revenue, and at the end of the day, we find ourselves losing property. Therefore, I request you to use your office, pick interest and investigate some of these things.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. *(Hon. Nandala-Mafabi rose.)* Not BCU; I am coming to you.

MR WAMBEDE: Madam Speaker, I thank you for giving me the opportunity. I am seeking clarification from the minister, following the report presented to us here.

There is an issue of unemployment, which they talked about - that our embassies are short of staff. We recently read in the newspapers that there are staff in the foreign affairs ministry who are not deployed to the extent that it caught the President's ear. He had to intervene and write to the Minister of Foreign Affairs to employ people, beginning with so-and-so. That is very embarrassing. I do not know where the ministry is to recruit personnel.

Secondly, this is another clarification. We were here early this year, around March or April, and there was an issue with the Iranian Embassy where they had allegedly turned our premises into a private business – *(Interjections)* - not in Dubai. It was here in Naguru, where somebody took over the premises of the embassy and was doing private business.

The minister stood up and said, "I will come back here and clarify to the House". Can the minister clarify on those two issues? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairman, Bugisu Cooperative Union (BCU).

5.28

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County West, Sironko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to inform the minister that for him to say that the accounting officer explained to the Auditor-General and that was all, is a mistake. That is why the House is raising issues and making recommendations on those accounting officers. What you have to agree on is that whatever will be taken here

will be implemented as the House has agreed; that is number one.

Number two, we know the reason the properties of missions abroad were transferred; some to Uganda Property Holdings and some in other names because of - You remember the case we had in the International Criminal Court (ICC). That was the reason; because our properties were supposed to be grabbed.

The Government of Uganda does not insure property. If they buy a car, it is written off for the whole year. If they build a house, it is also written off for the whole year. That is why if the house is burnt, there is no insurance.

So, in Kenya, I do not know *-(Interjection)-* yes, I am just helping you to understand.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, maybe to substantiate what Hon. Nandala-Mafabi is saying, being somebody who is in the Government – Listen, I am telling you. Check these cars of yours in Parliament, including the buses which - remember one of our buses got burnt. It was not insured - wait. The Government of Uganda does not insure because they think the insurance is more expensive. I am making a correction on the insurance.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, you are right. That is why I was saying it is now open - It is telling us -

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: That it is time to - *(Interruption)* - Let me make my -

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: They gave me clearance.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: I was on the Floor and the Speaker was helping me so that you can understand. *(Laughter)* He has refused to understand.

Madam Speaker, I get worried with such people who do not want to understand. It is important now for the Government to start to insure our properties. Whether – *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Nathan Nandala-Mafabi is a senior legislator in this House.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nathan -

MR KIBALYA: Hon. Nathan Nandala-Mafabi is a senior legislator in this House. One of the few things we expect out of him is that when he sees somebody who is coming up, he should be seen to train and put right.

If you insist on the Floor when somebody new is standing to put a few things right or give you information and you insist - Madam Speaker, those are some of the few things we would not expect from senior legislators.

Have the courtesy and leave him, even if he is not going to tell you what you wish to hear. As a senior, just give him space. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nathan, just listen to Hon. Enos. Maybe he has something he wants to learn from you.

5.31

MR ENOS ASIIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and Hon. Nathan, for giving me space. The argument is that the person who was contracted to repair the house is usually required to take insurance by the industry; it is a general rule.

Now, my argument is not about the Government that contracted, but the person who was contracted. In most cases, they have project insurance and it is them to claim for the losses. I even mentioned that in most cases, they take project insurance with an extension of political unrest.

The question to the minister was, can he clarify whether the project contractor who was doing repairs on Uganda House did not take out insurance. If he took out insurance, then we do not have to recommend that the Kenyan Government should compensate us.

Instead, we should recommend that we recover from the project insurer and then the project insurer should go to the Government or wherever he can to push for third-party claims. Thank you.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Hon. Enos, what you are trying to say - We are talking of the Uganda Embassy which was already in existence and it was burnt; it was a property of Uganda.

You see - *(Interjection)* - listen to me. It was not a project that they were building a new house and it was burnt. Even if they were building it, what would happen is that we, as Uganda, would wait for - When you hand over, you must hand over a complete project and not the one which is burnt.

However, in this case, it is the house which was being renovated that burnt. Anyway, I do not want to go there. I will teach you when we are outside. Madam Speaker -*(Interjection)*- yes, because if you do not want to learn, it is very dangerous.

The final issue is that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will never bring here any report. We have said, in this House many times, that they bring a report about the state of our properties outside and what they need. They have been always committing that in one month they will do it.

They have done it more than 10 times. I am not so sure if my brother, Hon. Mulimba, can bring it. He will say that he is going to bring it knowing that Parliament will forget and they will wait for the next Parliament.

It is important that Parliament institutes a committee to deal with and manage our properties abroad, see what is happening there and how to act on them but if you are going to send the Minister of Foreign Affairs, I can tell you that he will come again after one month and they will have nothing. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Solomon –

5.34

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The clarification I am seeking from the minister is that he is talking about enforcing a Joint Use Agreement (JUA) and also that we are handling things diplomatically but, can he unpack it for us and say that at least we have reached this level regarding the negotiation or you have done something like this? At least give us information but for you to blatantly say that we are handling it diplomatically, I think this is hiding some facts.

I request you, honourable minister, to give us some facts; what level have you reached and how far, much as you talked about enforcement of JUA which we are all aware of? That is the clarification and additional information that I am requesting the Minister of Foreign Affairs to add to Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, can you respond to what they are raising? I will give you time, Member from Isingiro.

MR MULIMBA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to start with the last one. Hon. Silwany would like us to unpack what we mean by handling and what level we have reached.

I would like to say that it is not fair for us to go into the details of this. All we can assure you is that we have made substantive progress and we seek your patience. We will be back to give you the outcome. All we can assure you is that the Uganda House will be redeemed. Thank you.

Now, the issue of Hon. Enos Asiimwe who was talking about project insurance and also taking insurance by the contractor, I am not very sure whether Hon. Enos Asiimwe is privy to the contract for this particular renovation in order for you to have an informed position of whether they took insurance for the project or not.

If you did - *(Interjection)* - no, the seeking of information was with assertion, as if he

was aware. What I stated earlier still stands; the property had not been handed over to the Government of Uganda. It was still in the hands of the contractor who was a few weeks away from handing it over. However, we have engaged the other gear of diplomacy and also bilateral engagement.

The issue of Uganda Property Holdings vis-a-vis – I think the doctor there was the one who talked about why we are processing a title to the embassy instead of leaving it to Uganda Property Holdings.

Madam Speaker, the role of Uganda Property Holdings is to manage non-diplomatic assets or properties of the Government of Uganda abroad. Non-diplomatic commercial properties of the Government of Uganda do not enjoy diplomatic immunity.

The responsibility of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is to own, on behalf of the Government of Uganda, all diplomatic property, which also enjoys immunity. I wonder where the discomfort would come from when the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would like to take over and thereby enjoy diplomatic immunity. I hoped somebody would even be happier.

This is also related to the assumption by Hon. Nandala-Mafabi that the transfer was occasioned on account of the ICC ruling. That is not correct. It is not true whatsoever. The Government of Uganda has always owned property before, not even in recent times and all property which belonged to the Government of Uganda, under the Ministry of Foreign Affairs or which is diplomatic in nature, enjoys immunity.

There is nowhere we would want to transfer from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs where we have diplomatic immunity, to where there is no immunity. When I talk about immunity, it means that not even the indictment of the ICC can have them attached. That is not a fair comment and it is not true.

In respect to foreign policy, I have been here before and we have said and I want to repeat

that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs did her role of coming up with a draft and thereafter passed it to the Head-of-State for his final nod. Once he gives a final nod, we shall now have the approved version of the foreign policy.

Having read the press, somebody talked about property in Naguru which was being used by somebody. I want to say, not known to us. At least not known to me. Maybe we would welcome that information. I am even not very sure whether we have a property in Naguru - (*Interjection*) – Nakuru – Madam Speaker, maybe you can give clarity.

THE SPEAKER: Clarify.

MR WAMBEDE: The property I was referring to is the Iran-Uganda Friendship Hospital in Naguru here. It was being used by a private person for his business. It came on the Floor here. You said that you were investigating and that you would come back and report to the House but we have never seen that.

THE SPEAKER: Is it for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs?

MR WAMBEDE: It is the Ministry of Foreign Affairs who looks after those -

MR KAJWENGYE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The property the Honourable Member was talking about came out of our report that we presented here; Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, when we were investigating the land that belongs to Uganda Police. It has nothing to do with the Foreign Affairs but it is being handled at the Ministry of Internal Affairs level.

Parliament made its recommendations, and I am under no fear that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is actually doing the right thing in putting them into practice.

MR MULIMBA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also want to deflate the assertion by Hon. Nandala-Mafabi that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will never table a report here. I think that is a very unfair position. We have been

here before and I want to promise that we will be here again.

Madam Speaker, we recently tabled before Cabinet a status report on properties of the Government of Uganda owned by missions abroad, and the paper was adopted. We are even proposing a rent-to-own strategy instead of renting as it were.

We will be back to this House to present a report - of course after Cabinet - here in the Parliament. I want to confirm that we shall be here as we have often done.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR MULIMBA: Madam Speaker, I think I have largely answered all concerns of colleagues. If there is any which I have not answered, I will come back later. Thank you.

5.43

MR ALEX BYARUGABA (NRM, Isingiro County South, Isingiro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just have three clarifications: one, Foreign Affairs, as a sector, gets very little money compared to the work assigned to it so much so that at one time, the ambassador's house in Nairobi actually had torn curtains. It took the effort of the committee that went to Nairobi to force the accounting officer, to take him to the shops and buy these curtains. Yes.

Sometimes, even the accounting officers in – (*Interjection*) - thank you, that is the right word; poverty of the mind. Sometimes we send very mean accounting officers who mistreat mission staff.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, please, we have a Bill – Hon. Rose, sit. When you are going out, I will want you to log out because I want to know the people who have been around. Honourable members –

MR BYARUGABA: I was finishing, Madam. You talked of the Uganda House in Nairobi and the very unfortunate incident that took place some time back. Up to now, I do not know whether the ministry has carried out an

investigation of its own to establish the cause of that fire.

Why do we rush to the conclusion that it was the Gen-Zs? Possibly that is why the President says, "Leave that to me, I will handle." Because he is so bright and sharp, there could be that other possibility.

Remember the house was under construction. Had you done any audits before the handover? You are saying it was going to be handed over in about two weeks. Certainly, there must have been an audit of sorts. Suppose there was some mismatch between the money so far dispensed and the work available?

THE SPEAKER: Can we conclude on this?

MR BYARUGABA: I, therefore, appeal to the ministry to carry out an independent investigation to ensure that we take a very deliberate and clear-cut diplomatic decision so that we do not antagonise the relationship between our two sister countries because of a fire that nobody knows its cause or source. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Professor.

5.46

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA (Independent, Sheema County South, Sheema): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have an issue with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs. For quite some time - I hope she is listening - as far as I know, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not had a documentation centre.

You go looking for information from the ministry - At one time when we are carrying out research for the African Peer Review Mechanism (APRM), they would say, "This information or this treaty is with ambassador so-and-so."

I would like to hear from the minister that you have put in place - this does not require a lot of money - a documentation centre that even if you want to look at the treaties; those we have been concerned with, there is where one can go.

How can we be in existence for 60 years and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs does not have a documentation centre? Madam Speaker, I would like to hear from the minister whether they have put in place a small library, what I am calling a documentation centre?

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nakut?

5.48

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish that the record be corrected. The minister, in his response, said that the auditor just gave an ordinary opinion. The record must be corrected because the auditors give an opinion of assurance to the users of a financial statement –

THE SPEAKER: And is there “ordinary opinion” in accounting? It is either qualified or –*(Laughter)*

MS NAKUT: Exactly. Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: It can never be “ordinary”. Withdraw the words. You should never play with accounting words; they are not ordinary.

MR MULIMBA: Madam Speaker, I did not use the word “ordinary” whatsoever. I did not. I only said they are “qualified opinions”. That is what I said; it can be checked. I never used the word “ordinary”. However, that said, can I –*(Interjection)*- I said “opinion”. I never used the word “ordinary”, Madam Speaker. I am very careful about that. Now –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, if by mistake you made use - I know you are a diplomat. If, by mistake, you mentioned the word “ordinary” then, it should be withdrawn.

MR MULIMBA: Madam Speaker, I did not mention the word “ordinary” at all.

THE SPEAKER: I am saying, if by mistake –

MR MULIMBA: If by mistake I did, then it should be withdrawn.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. He is a diplomatic person. Honourable members, you have heard from the minister and the committee – And you need to continuously update us on what is happening.

I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) on the Auditor-General’s report on the Uganda High Commissions in Dar-es-Salaam and Nairobi and the Mombasa consulate for the year ended 30th June 2023 be adopted by this House, with amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE SPEAKER: We expect a treasury memorandum from you within six months from the day of adoption of this report. Next item?

BILLS SECOND READING

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

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we have the Bill – this is under rationalisation. I now ask the minister for ICT to move a motion for the second reading of the Bill.

5.51

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 National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time.

THE SPEAKER: Is it seconded? *(Members rose_)* Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Okaasai, the minister for water, the minister for public service, Hon. Ogwang, the minister for foreign affairs, the Deputy Attorney-General (DAG),

the Government Chief Whip, Dr Nekesa, Dr Alanyo, the chairperson – by the whole House. Would you love to speak to your Bill?

MR KABBYANGA: Madam Speaker, as we are all aware, the policy behind this Bill is to give effect to the Government policy for rationalisation of Government agencies and public expenditure, which was adopted by the Cabinet on 22 February 2021.

The remedies in this proposed Bill, first of all, are to:

- (a) Enable the dissolution of the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda and mainstream its function in the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, thereby, inter alia, relieving the Government of a financial drain on its resources and the burden of wasteful administration and expenditure;
- (b) Facilitate efficient and effective service delivery by clearly delineating the mandates and functions of the ministry in 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 for –
 - (i) ensuring efficient and successful management, financial accounting and budgetary discipline;
 - (ii) enabling the Government to play its proper role more effectively;
 - (iii) enforcing accountability.

The Bill has 35 clauses. I beg that the House considers this Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I now call the chairperson of the committee to present their report.

5.55

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tonny Ayoo): Thank you, 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.

Before I present the report, I beg to lay on the Table the committee’s report and the minutes of the meetings that the committee held while processing this report. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Please, lay.

MR AYOO: Madam Speaker, on 24 September 2024, the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was tabled for the First Reading in accordance with Rule 128(2) of the Rules of Procedure and referred to the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance for consideration.

The committee examined and evaluated the Bill in accordance with rule 129(2) and hereby reports.

On 22 February 2021, under Minute No.43 (CT 2021), the Cabinet adopted the principle of rationalisation where certain Government agencies, commissions and authorities were to be merged, others mainstreamed, while others were done away with altogether, as a measure to reduce public expenditure and facilitate effective and efficient service delivery.

This was intended to achieve institutional harmony, reduce service duplications and overlaps and reduce administrative costs of service delivery.

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

National Information Technology Authority, Uganda was established by the NITA-U Act of 2009 to coordinate and monitor the development of IT in the country within the context of social and economic development and commence operation in the Financial Year 2010/2011.

Madam Speaker, I invite you and the Members to point 2.4: earlier consideration on the NITA-U (Amendment) Bill, 2024. On 20 February 2024, the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024 was read for the first time and thereafter considered by the Committee on Information, Communications Technology (ICT) and National Guidance, which reported its findings on the Bill on the 28th of February.

The committee, in its recommendation to the House, rejected the Bill in its totality, citing the intention of mainstreaming NITA-U into the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance as ill-prepared. It thus asked that this recommendation be abandoned and instead called for the maintenance of the Authority as a strategic semi-autonomous agency of Government charged with the mandate to continue championing digitisation in the fulfilment of the Government's aspiration enshrined in the Vision 2040 and the National Development Plan.

The House agreed with the committee and adopted the committee's position to maintain NITA-U as a semi-autonomous agency of Government. However, after the House had rejected the Bill, it was re-tabled in Parliament by the minister for reconsideration, having addressed some of the issues that were previously raised by the committee and adopted by the House, with the emphasis on the shift in the Government policy, which could only be achieved with the rationalisation of agencies and departments to deal with the several inefficiencies and duplication of roles, among others, to free up resources to improve the efficiency in service delivery by the Government.

Madam Speaker, I invite you and the honourable members to point 6.0: Observations and recommendations of the committee. The committee observed that the Bill was affected by the law revision process that led to the release of the new red volumes containing the laws of Uganda as of 1 July 2024. This exercise led to the law acquiring new chapter numbers (CAPs) and adjustment of the different sections of the law. The Bill will therefore be adjusted accordingly to reflect the changes to the sections of the law where necessary.

The Certificate of Financial Implication was one of the issues that the committee presented to the House that resulted in the rejecting of the previous Bill. The committee observed that the ministry submitted a revised Certificate of Financial Implication dated 31 July 2024. The certificate indicated that the rationalisation of NITA-U will cost Shs 2.503 billion in the form of terminal benefits for affected staff.

The certificate further provides that the expected savings from the rationalisation of NITA-U shall be Shs 16.445 billion per annum resulting from the reduction in administrative and personnel-related costs.

The certificate also stated that the impact on the economy resulting from the rationalisation of NITA-U in the short term will include administrative disruptions, restructuring of the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance to accommodate additional roles, short-term unemployment for some of the common cadre staff and also loss of special skills set in some instances. There will be disruption in the financial sector such as delay in repayment of salary loans acquired from lending institutions by staff and there may be huge drawing from the National Social Security Fund.

The certificate projects that in the medium to long term, there will be significant benefits such as streamlined governance, cost saving, enhanced accountability and better integration and standardisation of processes for the ICT and e-government services across the Government.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development projects that the rationalisation generally will result in the redistribution of income in the economy in light of the anticipated investment in other sectors reviewed of the mainstream public service remuneration leading to an improved Gini coefficient ratio on the economy.

The second issue that led to rejecting the Bill was on relieving the Government of a financial drain on its resources. The ministry stated that the Government continues to incur a high cost of maintaining the duplicated structures for both the ministry and Government agencies in the ICT sector. The current wage cost implication for the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance is Shs 34.82 billion per annum (wage bill alone, excluding administrative costs).

With the mainstreaming of NITA-U function, the wage bill will be Shs 25.6 billion, registering a saving of Shs 9.2 billion annually before consideration of the operational cost savings such as rent, vehicle maintenance and other running costs. Currently, the Government spends over Shs 30 billion on NITA-U operations alone. This saving will be channelled towards other critical Government priorities such as the provision of social services, that is, health and education.

The other challenge that has been continually raised is the disparity in salaries between the agency employees and their counterparts in the traditional Public Service, which has generally affected the morale of the traditional public servants. The Government is seeking to rectify this through rationalisation.

The rationalisation process will allow the Government to re-engage the staff being recruited at certain levels similar to their counterparts in Public Service.

The next issue was the generation of revenue for the Government. The ministry was of the view that the Government could make a lot more revenue with commercialisation of the National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI) and expansion of its utilisation beyond the

existing customer base. Currently, NITA-U has a licence to supply Government and Internet Service Providers (ISPs), and wholesalers, while curtailing Government revenue that can be made from the NBI.

The committee was informed of the proposed transfer of National Backbone Infrastructure to Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited (UTCL) for management and commercialisation. With the transfer of NBI to UTCL, the NBI can be used for retail purposes in addition to Government and ISPs wholesalers thus widening the customer base and in turn increasing the revenue generated by the Government.

For comparison purposes, while NITA-U has been making an average of \$8 million for the past two years, with the expected volume at UTCL, the NBI is likely to generate at least \$120 million annually.

For the Government to raise these gains, the committee emphasises that the NBI needs to remain under the complete control and ownership of the Uganda Government. The proposal of Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited as the lead commercial arm of the Government in the ICT sector to manage and commercialise the NBI should be backed by its capacity to do so.

The committee further proposed that for the Government to realise the projected gains from the NBI, the Government should identify credible investment partners to consider recapitalising Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited or listing UTCL on the stock exchange to allow ordinary Ugandans to acquire shares and raise the necessary capital to revamp and make it more competitive in the market.

Implementation of UDAP Gov-Net

The National Backbone Infrastructure Phase V Project

The Government, through the National Information Technology Authority - Uganda

(NITA-U), is implementing the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project, a government network (UDAP Gav-net), worth \$200 million, of which \$60 million is a grant.

The loan seeks to expand digital connectivity, enabling digital transformation for the Government and promoting digital inclusion for refugees and host communities.

The financing agreement between the International Development Agency and the Government of Uganda provided grounds upon which the financing could be suspended or cancelled. One of them is where the project implementing entity legislation has been amended, suspended, abrogated, repealed, or waived to affect, materially and adversely, the ability of the project implementing entity to perform any of its obligations under the agreement.

Two, the dissolution of NITA-U will trigger a default of this clause, which can lead to cancellation or suspension of the loan.

The second project is the National Backbone Infrastructure Phase V, which is being financed by the Export-Import Bank of China to the tune of Chinese Yuan 1,049 billion, approximately \$150 million, and is running for four years.

The Government considered the provision of the agreement and the project, most especially, the legal implications of dissolving NITA-U. The committee noted that both agreements state that where the legal status of NITA-U is altered in any way, it is grounds for termination or suspension of the agreement.

The Government then proposed to have a transition period of three years to allow NITA-U to continue to fully implement the project.

The Attorney-General, while appearing before the committee, proposed that the committee inserts a commencement clause providing that the Act shall come into force three years from the date of its publication in the Gazette following the President's assent. The three years would enable the Government to

implement the project without interruption or delay.

The Attorney-General stated before the committee that during the three-year transition period, NITA-U will continue exercising its full power under the National Information Communication Technology Authority Act (Cap.200) and will administer and implement different acts under its mandate.

The committee further observed that there were issues that were previously raised regarding the rationalisation of NITA-U that the Bill has still not addressed. Key among these are:

- i) The lack of oversight over the performance and functions previously performed by NITA-U;
- ii) The fact that there were no further amendments to the Uganda Communications Commission Act to provide for the regulation of technology;
- iii) No further amendments to the Data Protection and Privacy Act, Electronic Transaction Act, and the Electronic Signature Act are administered by NITA-U to provide for new parties to administer them, leaving these laws in abeyance.

The transfer of regulatory roles

The committee observed that the ministry had stated that with the dissolution of NITA-U, the regulatory function of NITA-U would be transferred to the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC).

The committee noted that the Bill was silent on this transfer of roles. Instead, the Bill has emphasised that the function previously performed by NITA-U shall be performed by the ministry.

The committee further noted that with the ministry stating that the regulatory role of NITA-U would be performed by the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), there was no subsequent amendment to the UCC Act.

The committee is of the view, therefore, that the Uganda Communications Commission Act (Cap.103) be amended to expand its mandate to cater for the regulation and coordination of information technology services in Uganda in the context of the social and economic development of Uganda.

The committee, on further evaluation of the transfer of the function of NITA-U, noted that the Authority was also mandated to administer the Electronic Signature (Cap.98), the Electronic Transaction Act (Cap. 99), and the Data Protection and Privacy Act (Cap.97). The Government has not made any amendment to this Act to mandate any other entity to administer these acts.

Once NITA-U is dissolved, the committee is of the view that the ministry utilises the transition period to make all the necessary amendments to ensure that no law is left without administration and that the ministry finds the most suitable entities to administer this and make the corresponding amendments to the laws to effect that change.

Madam Speaker, while considering the administration of the different acts and mandates, the committee emphasises the need for separation of roles, especially regulatory and oversight roles, to avoid situations of a miscarriage of justice and violation of the principle of natural justice.

The committee is of the considered opinion that the ministry utilises the three-year transition period to address all the issues and make the necessary amendments to the relevant laws to ensure the smooth running of the entire ICT sector.

Finally, the committee is cognisant of the fact that rationalisation is a result of a shift in the policy and legal framework by the Executive, with a belief that it will result in a reduction of government expenditure, realigning their operations to the need and provision of the National Development Plan IV.

The Government has gone to great lengths to demonstrate the success it can potentially gain if rationalisation is given full support and implemented as desired.

The committee, therefore, supports the rationalisation policy of the Government but emphasises the need for the Government to address itself to some of the challenges highlighted to ensure that the process achieves the intended objectives highlighted therein.

Committee recommendations

- i. That the Bill be passed with the proposed amendments as shall be discussed;
- ii. That during the transition period, the Government endeavours to address the challenges highlighted by the committee to ensure that the ICT sector is well aligned and administered with a clear policy and framework; and
- iii. That the law provides for a transition period to avoid providing for completion of ongoing critical projects.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would like to report that the committee has examined the National Information Technology Uganda Authority Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024, and observes that NITA-U should be given a three-year transition period to enable it to complete critical ongoing projects without disruption. The three-year transition period will also offer the Government time to address all the issues raised by the committee and realign the ICT sector to make it more effective and efficient.

Further still, allowing for the transition period will minimise disruption in the NITA-U mandate, which can generate potential damage to the host of programs and livelihoods and it will take a long time to recover.

It is, therefore, in light of the aforementioned that the committee recommends that the National Information Technology Authority Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be passed into law subject to the proposed amendment. Madam Speaker, I beg to report.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable chairperson. First, I congratulate the Parliament of Uganda because one of our former general councils has been appointed Solicitor-General of Uganda. We have produced a Solicitor-General; that is Pius Biribonwoha.

Two, I congratulate the Minister of Education and Sports. As much as we are going to host the Africa Cup of Nations games (AFCON) in Uganda, we have also qualified for it. *(Applause)* We have just qualified now - in South Sudan. Congratulations, Uganda, Hon. Ogwang, Her Excellency, the First Lady and His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda, and most importantly Federation of Uganda Football Association (FUFA) *(Laughter)* Members, you have heard –

6.18

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS)

(Mr Peter Ogwang): Madam Speaker, it might be too early for us to celebrate but I want to confirm that we have just won our game, which was a crucial match between Uganda and the Republic of South Sudan in Juba.

As of now, team Uganda is leading on the table. So, Madam Speaker, I would like to confirm mathematically that we need to pray that the Republic of South Africa - listen to me, wins a game against Congo Brazzaville that guarantees us an automatic qualification for the Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2025 in Morocco.

However, I would also want to say this: in the event that Congo wins, we will need only one point out of the two games left. So, I still want to confirm, on behalf of the Minister of Education and Sports, and on behalf of His Excellency, the President.

Madam Speaker, in a special way, I would like to thank you and your dear husband, for supporting football and sports in the country.

I congratulate the president of the Federation of Uganda Football Association, the entire team, and the technical staff at FUFA House

for the good job done. To our boys in Juba, thank you, for making us proud. Viva Uganda, viva Uganda! Thank you

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable members. I now open the debate on the report. Remember the report is informative. Yes, Hon. Oguzu Lee

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: There are some things we need to sort out with Hon. Oguzu Lee, which will be responded to by Hon. Nathan

MR OGUZU: Madam Speaker, I have looked at the Bill we are processing and noticed that it is the same Bill that we rejected and was withdrawn but then reintroduced for our deliberation.

To avoid making this Parliament look - I would move that we first stay proceedings on this Bill until we resolve these issues indoors and then we could – *(Interjection)* - if you want me to bring up the issues clearly, I can.

The Bill, which is now at second reading is the National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024. It was gazetted on 31 May 2024. The Gazette number is thirty-six, and the volume is CXVII.

We processed this Bill earlier on but when we reached this stage, the House took a decision to reject it. After some time, the Bill was supposed to be reintroduced but the introduction process is that it has to first be gazetted. After gazetting, you take it through first reading after which it is sent to the committees, and we would be able to process it.

So, here we are processing what we already rejected and it was not taken through a process of re-gazettement. If we proceed that way, we will be doing something illegal.

Secondly, I have also requested to examine this Bill under Rule 232 because we want to know if the mover of the Bill has owned it. The Bill remains unsigned. It is not - because I have

been - under our rules – (*Interjection*)- we need to know when that signed one was introduced because we were supplied with copies by the Clerk to Parliament. So, when was the signed copy introduced in Parliament?

Documents are introduced in the House by being laid here before they can be reproduced. So, someone cannot bring a document through other means and it becomes –

THE SPEAKER: You said you had a procedural point?

MR OGUZU: As a procedural matter, I would like you to guide us if we can proceed on a Bill, which was rejected and withdrawn without re-gazettement. That is a matter you should be able to resolve.

THE SPEAKER: Attorney-General?

6.23

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate Hon. Oguzu Lee's concerns but the Gazette he is referring to is of May 31, 2024, which is the second Gazette when the Bill was re-gazetted.

THE SPEAKER: Re-introduced.

MR KAFUZZI: Yes, re-introduced – (*Interjections*) - you have just read the number and it is here with me. It is Gazette No. 36, and item No. 63 on the Gazette. So, Madam Speaker, the Bill was re-gazetted.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, if I can recall, this Bill was tabled in the House after gazetting the first time in February and I was the one presiding when we passed this Bill - we actually rejected it.

When we rejected it, the Bill was withdrawn. When it was withdrawn, they called the caucus. The Bill was then returned after re-gazetting it, in May when my colleague was sitting here to receive the Bill for the first reading. So, this gazetting is the second one. For the first gazetting - you can go and check in the library for the first gazetting.

MR KAFUZZI: Mr Okema has just helped me with his laptop. The first gazette came out on 15 February 2024.

THE SPEAKER: What is the number?

MR KAFUZZI: This is gazette number – the date is 15 February 2024, Gazette No. 14, Volume CXV11

The second is Gazette No. 36, Volume No. CXV11 of 31 May 2024

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nathan?

6.27

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County South, Sironko): Madam Speaker, I think the Government is changing its policy saying they want to leave authorities and come back to the Central Government. I recall when they were forming authorities here, I was in this House and I said, "Tomorrow, they will eat you up." Here, they have come to bite us –

THE SPEAKER: They have eaten.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: I think they have finished us. Madam Speaker, I would be very happy - I have heard the chairperson saying that when we take it back to the ministry, we are going to save this much. In short, the operation cost will go down and the salaries, I think, will go to Public Service salaries.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: And we shall harmonise. Before I make my genuine and sincere comment, maybe the Government needs, first of all, to think about the right salary for a person. If they have thought about that, even the civil servant needs a better salary to do work. If you take back this institution, they will demand that they should be paid maybe a higher salary than the other one.

However, having said that Madam Speaker, the moment you say that you are giving National Information Technology Authority-Uganda

(NITA-U) three years, then you will scrap it. Then, they are going to pay themselves in these three years properly; they are going to rob.

We either make a decision now that it ends or not, because what they are doing is basically being transferred from NITA-U to the ministry. I am sure the ministry is saying it has the capacity to do what NITA-U was doing. Of course, the assets and obligations will be transferred to the ministry –*(Interjection)*- NITA-U is 100 per cent owned and administered by the Government.

Therefore, if we want rationalisation to take effect, it should be immediate. If you delay the process, there is going to be real theft and even they will maybe destroy the infrastructure. By the time they hand it over to you, there will be no infrastructure.

I would like to ask the Attorney-General to either change the statement that he made to the committee or tell us the safeguards because we are now going to put in more money to police the work of NITA-U, which will be more expensive. It is now if you do not want to destroy the system. Either he withdraws it and says, the Government has decided NITA-U goes, and we will go with the assets and liabilities so that we deal with the liabilities now, we pay people maybe the three years' salary, and we call it off. These ongoing projects are transferred to the ministry to manage immediately.

You delay, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we had a loan, which we approved in this House and it was attached to NITA-U. We presumed that by that time, the loan would be paid off. And then, we are also preparing for a transition period. As you heard, there are other laws to be amended for NITA-U to be effective in the ministry. Therefore, they are giving time for those other laws to be amended.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, it is the Government of Uganda that negotiated the loan and not NITA-U. This loan is being paid by the people of Uganda. We would

advise that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development goes back - you see, there is no way that the way they got money - let me give an example, assuming it was the World Bank that gave the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the person who signed the contract would be the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, despite the fact the money went to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

Therefore, it would be important that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development says that we are not changing anything -

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order – *(Laughter)*

MR ASIIMWE: Madam Speaker, I am wondering whether my honourable colleague read the report very well. The clause that was negotiated in the loan is well stated in the report and it clearly says that the implementing agency has to be NITA-U. When there is a change, the Government has to notify the lender, which I think is the World Bank.

I do not know whether my colleague is in order to assume that the minister who asked for three years did not consider that. Thank you.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, I am happy you have said that there is no order because the man who was raising it was asleep. You see –*(Laughter)*– That is why the Speaker could not rule. So, Hon. Enos, you must learn that from now onwards, when you are raising your orders, you must be careful, especially when I am. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nathan, now that you have ruled on yourself, let us have Haji, then I come to you, Pato.

6.33

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala): Madam Speaker, there is a government in Uganda. which is the Executive and it needs to act

boldly with intent and precision. Otherwise, if we do the kind of game we are doing with the key institutions, we risk paying heavily. Three years are few if you count one, two, and three, but in terms of the health of an institution, they are life-changing.

Given that NITA-U has resources and borrowed money for which you are supposed to pay for some time. Therefore, if you are going to attempt - we better establish this principle now, because going forward, this notion of three years is: first, legislation in anticipation. By our rules of procedure, we are stopped from legislating in anticipation. That is a standard rule here. You cannot make a law thinking that when the pregnancy is born, it will be like this; you cannot do that.

Secondly, in terms of the management of society and resources of the Government, and the Uganda we all know, if you give an institution three years' existence, you have already hanged it and passed judgement that it is to die, but should live for three years as you are operating and manning a loan with huge resources; they know they are going.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, let this Government, if it believes in what it is doing - by the way, I am a strong believer in a downsizing government and in an effective, lean, efficient government. We all do but the question is: how do you go about it?

We are presuming that in three years, there will not be a Parliament. There will be a Parliament, Madam Speaker, and there will be a Speaker. It may be you or anyone else. So, if the Government is ready, even tomorrow, to rationalise any agency, let it come here with the losses. We are ready.

However, for us now to legislate in anticipation and pass a law and say, by this date, you will be ready, therefore, you will take this institution away, is a little stretching –

THE SPEAKER: There is information from Professor.

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Let me first make my case before I get the information and I will be informed by anybody. So – *(Interjection)*- information from Professor.

PROF. MUSHEMEZA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am one of the few people in this House who participated in making the Constitution of Uganda. Hon. Kivumbi should listen, the information is to you. I am one of the few people that made the Constitution of Uganda. Hon. Kivumbi should listen because this information is to him. I am one of the few people that made the Constitution of Uganda in this House.

In the Constitution of 1995, we provided transitional provisions. And you know very well that the Constitution is supreme in relation to subsidiary legislation. So, if we can provide transitional provisions in the Constitution, what about subsidiary legislation? Therefore, the question of legislating in anticipation does not arise in this case.

THE SPEAKER: Legal Counsel-

MR BAKA: There is a – *(Hon. Kivumbi rose)*- you sit. The issue of legislating in anticipation does not arise at all. Legislating in anticipation, for example, is to say, in 2028 we shall have oil revenues and at that time we can do A, B, C, D. There we will be anticipating. What we are saying is that we are rationalising effective that date, which we have put which is just -

THE SPEAKER: Effective date -

MR BAKA: A transitional period - the effective date or the date of commencement is the one we are putting ahead. It has nothing to do with anticipation and do not confuse this House with matters that you seem not to understand very well.

THE SPEAKER: It is not that he does not seem to understand.

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Actually, Hon. Mugabi has made my case.

THE SPEAKER: There is another information from –

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Let me first answer the two; the Professor and Hon. Mugabi. The reason for putting a date for three years is that certain conditions have to be met; certain processes will have to be undertaken and after -

THE SPEAKER: That is what the report is saying.

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Yes, and after fulfilling those conditions, then the institution will be ready to transit. You presume that date and that is why the professor needs to understand; that by that very date, A, B, C, D would have been achieved. Now, you are exactly making a case, presuming and assuming that by that date certain things will have been done.

Unless I do not know English like my brother, that is anticipation. Just go to any dictionary and try to understand the meaning of anticipation; it is that certain things would have been done on that particular date. If you are a lawyer of some substance, you should know - you are the Chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs - I get worried when you cannot define anticipation. We can now go to the dictionary and get the meaning of the word “Anticipation.”

I would like to put you in the right place and to be very knowledgeable that you are -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable -

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Yes, Madam Speaker. The Chairperson of the Committee on Legal -

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order -

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: The chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs must tell us what anticipation means. By my understanding, he said, I do not know but I want to inform you that because you want to legislate in a particular -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us discuss the report with decency. Everybody here knows what he or she is talking about. The report is very clear. Yes, Hon. Patrick.

6.41

MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, KASSANDA COUNTY NORTH, KASSANDA): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for introducing a transition period. We just want to have a break and throw away these agencies.

Yes, I support rationalisation 100 per cent but how about the projects? What about the laws that are needed to be amended as stated by the report here? Hon. Muwanga-Kivumbi, Kassanda District was created in 2015. We became a district in 2018. Members of Parliament sat here and said that in 2018, we shall create a district called Kassanda.

So, even this can happen, to say this agency will stop working in three years. I see no problem having a transition where proper closure of an agency can be done.

Madam Speaker, we have a very big problem. I wanted to raise this earlier when we were talking about roads. At the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) that you are talking about, everyone is seated because they do not know what is going to happen. We are going into elections next year, and so, we should create a transition period that can assure these people who work there to think thus: “At least for this period I have a job and I can do my work.”

At Uganda Road Fund, everyone is seated because they do not know what is happening. The roads are breaking down. So, we need to guarantee that transition period for people to know that for this period they will be moving in this direction. Thank you, Chairperson, for the report.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I have heard enough debate. There is a motion from Hon. David.

6.43

MR ENOSI ASHIMWE (NRM, KABULA COUNTY, LYANTONDE): Madam Speaker, I move a motion that the debate be closed and the House constitutes itself into a Committee of the Whole House to discuss the details of the Bill.

THE SPEAKER: Seconded? Okay, it is seconded by the Government Chief Whip, Minister for Foreign Affairs. Hon. Ssekikubo, you will bring it up at the committee stage, please. The motion is further seconded by the whole Front Bench. I now put a question that the Uganda Information Technology Authority Uganda (Amendment) Bill 2024 be read for the second time.

(Question put and agreed to.)

BILLS
COMMITTEE STAGE

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

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, I have 103 Members physically present, 89 Members on ZOOM and so, the quorum is there. *(Applause)*

New clause

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, committee chairperson.

6.44

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tunny Ayoo): Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

The Bill is amended by inserting, immediately before clause 1, the following –

“Commencement

This Act shall come into force three years from the date of its publication in the Gazette.”

Justification

- 1) To provide for a transition period to allow NITA-U to fully implement the UDAP and NBI Phase V projects, whose terms required that the project implementing entity is maintained as at the time of executing the contracts; and
- 2) To give the ministry time to re-align the sector and regulatory framework and address all the issues highlighted by the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. *(Mr Oshabe rose_)* Hon. Patrick – yes, let me, first, hear from the minister – the owner.

MR KABBYANGA: I agree with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Attorney-General?

MR KAFUZI: I am in agreement with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the proposed new clause stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

New clause, agreed to.

Clause 1, agreed to.

Clause 2

THE CHAIRPERSON: Committee chairperson?

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Madam Chairperson.

Clause 2 is amended in the headnote by substituting for the phrase “Act 4 of 2009” and wherever the phrase appears in the Bill, with the caption “Cap. 200”.

Justification

To align the citation of “The National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, 2009”, to the revised edition of “The National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, Cap. 200”, as at 1 July 2024.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, Hon. Nathan?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, the committee has agreed – and, of course, Parliament has passed the three years. That means that after three years, it will no longer be an authority.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: This is it yet the headnote is reading the “authority”. If we amend the headnote first, it will be easy, so that this one does not come into place, because we are aligning it to other laws. This is creating another law to be administered under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Attorney-General?

MR KAFUZI: Madam Chairperson, it will be an authority until the end of the three years because that is when it lapses.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Attorney-General, this law is going to be in place for three years because you have said that there will be a transitional period. So, the current law is going to remain in force for three years. We are making the law, which will start immediately after the three years; Attorney-General, you need to look at it again.

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. Attorney-General, I am seeking a clarification. As you have guided, we shall send this Bill to the President. Is he going to assent to it when we send it or he is going to assent to it after three years? After answering that - because this is to inform what Hon. Nathan is saying.

The Attorney-General has said that for the headnote there is no problem. However, assuming the President assents to the current headnote tomorrow, are we going to change it after three years so that it reads - will the Act read another headnote?

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Nathan, what is your argument on the purpose of amendment of the Act 4 of 2009?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Yes, Madam Chairperson.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Look at the justification – “To align the citation of “The National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, 2009”, to the revised edition of “The National Information Technology Authority, Uganda Act, Cap.” – you know there was a revision made on 1 July 2024.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, what we are saying – first of all if we have agreed that the transition period is three years, it means that the current law will be the one operating. That means –

THE CHAIRPERSON: We should not revise it.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: No, I am coming to that - it will operate because this law is coming into effect after three years. Therefore, the law, that we are putting in place now, should have a very good headnote. If you say “authority”, it must have authority. That is why – we are either adding one of the other laws, which we have in the ministry that manages ICT, and this is also another Act –

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Nathan, your argument may seem inconsequential when you go to clause 3. Clause 3 says: “Amendment of short title of the principal Act
For the short title of the principal Act, there is substituted the following -

“THE NATIONAL INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY ACT, 2009.” So, read it together with clause 3.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, that is where I am – and that is why there is no need to amend clause 2 now, as the committee has proposed. It says: “Clause 3 is amended in the headnote by substituting for the phrase “Act 4...” - there is no need if we are going to do it in clause 3.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, Hon. Silas.

MR AOGON: I saw the wisdom from my elder brother - (*Laughter*) - but I also have my wisdom. Now, Madam Chair and the chairperson of the committee, this transitional clause is trying to tell us that whatever we are instituting in this amendment will not come into effect until three years. Even what you are talking about will not come into effect until three years have lapsed. So, just relax about it and it is sorted. I think the committee is on the right track for now.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Exactly.

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and honourable members. When you get back to the report on point number six, observation and recommendation, you will notice that the committee observed that the Bill was affected by the law revision process that led to the release of the new red volumes containing the laws of Uganda as of 1 July 2024.

This exercise led to the law acquiring new chapter numbers and the adjustment of the different sections of the law.

The Bill will, therefore, be adjusted accordingly to reflect the changes to the sections of the law, where necessary.

MR KABBYANGA: Madam Chairperson, I agree with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 2 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 2, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 3

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: Madam Chairperson, I have done a count of the Members present in this Chamber -

THE CHAIRPERSON: They have been going out -

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI: No, Madam Chairperson, I have done a count of the Members present in this Chamber. There are approximately 73 - yes, and by that, we do not have the 100 Members.

Madam Chairperson, I rise on a point of procedure because you are amending a law to ascertain whether we have a quorum in this House.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Clause 3?

DR BATUA: Madam Chairperson, we are looking at a law that is going to make a number of people lose jobs and positions. I will definitely contest in the courts of law. So, I believe the issue of quorum is very important and we should address it by ascertaining whether we have it or not before we proceed.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I counted them before you mentioned. People have been moving up and down. The only permanent person here - like Hon. Ogwang was here. Where is he? He has gone out? Well, he is coming back. People are on and off. Go to clause three.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 3, agreed to.

Clause 4, agreed to.

Clause 5, agreed to.

Clause 6, agreed to.

Clause 7

THE CHAIRPERSON: Clause 7, Yes, committee chair.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Madam Chairperson, with due respect to the professor and my teacher, once a point of procedure is raised and governed by the rules, it is only fair that you determine a point being raised.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Hon. Ssekikubo, do not hijack the microphone. Kindly! Please, I will give you time. Yes, Chairperson of the Committee on ICT and National Guidance.

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Chairperson and honourable members. Clause 7, is amended in the headnote, by substituting for the phrases “Section 2” and “Section 1.” Thereafter, align the numbering of the affected sections in the Bill to sections in the revised National Information Technology Authority Act, CAP. 200.

The justification is to conform to the numbering of the sections under the revised National Information Technology Authority Act, CAP. 200.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Minister?

MR KABBYANGA: I agree with the committee.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, Deputy Attorney-General?

MR KAFUZI: I concur.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 7 be amended as proposed.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 7, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 8, agreed to.

Clause 9

THE CHAIRPERSON: Yes, committee chairperson.

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Madam Chairperson and honourable members. Clause 9 is amended by substituting for the proposed Section 3 of the following two Administrations of the Act. “This act like any other Law administered by the National Information Technology Authority shall, on the commencement of this Act, be administered by the ministry.”

The justification is to conform to the numbering of sections under the revised National Information Technology Act, Cap 200.

And two is to ensure that there is no gap created in the administration of any other Law following the abolition of the National Information Technology Authority. I think this is where Hon. Nathan was raising issues. Thank you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Silas.

MR AOGON: You said it was administered by the ministry. I would love to find out.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Ministry of ICT once the three years are over. Yes, Hon. Atkins.

MR KATUSABE: Madam Chairperson, I am in total agreement with the minister and the committee, and also with the Attorney-General (AG), but my only challenge is that this Bill is supposed to give us clear variables. I would request that you give Members time to modify and align the statement because this is a Bill, and it is a returned Bill. So, I think we are here to do a good job. If this was statistics, Madam Chairperson, we would be talking about statistical interpolation and statistical extrapolation.

Therefore, Madam Chairperson, I kindly appeal to you that you allow colleagues to modify and align some of those statements. Thank you very much.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Christine.

MS KAAYA: Madam Chairperson, there is also another concern that when we -

there is “ministry.” That is why we are putting that.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Chairperson, listen to Hon. Christine.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Thank you. I put a question that clause 9 be amended as proposed.

MS KAAYA: When we expect to implement or to bring into effect this Law, we must have pointed out the exact department in the ministry at this moment. I am not comfortable for us to continue saying “Ministry.” It might come to three years when we have not highlighted exactly where the authority is going.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 9, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 10

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 10 stands part of the Bill.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Departments are administrative; those are not -

(Question put and agreed to.)

MR OGUZU: Madam Chairperson, I have a similar concern. The concern is that we are supposed to have somebody to hold accountable for our actions because we are only saying “the ministry.” In most cases, it is the minister because we can hold the minister accountable. However, the ministry is just at large - I do not know where this practice is coming from. Maybe, some people would throw more light on where it is applicable and how it has been operating. In most laws, it has been the minister doing A, B, C, and D so that at the end of the day they are held accountable. Maybe the chairperson can – *(Interruption)*

Clause 10, agreed to.

Clause 11, agreed to.

Clause 12, agreed to.

Clause 13, agreed to.

Clause 14, agreed to.

Clause 15, agreed to.

Clause 16, agreed to.

Clause 17, agreed to.

MS NAKUT: Madam Chairperson, the ministries already exist and they are functioning; their structures are there. Therefore, we do not need to go -

Clause 18

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 18 -

THE CHAIRPERSON: It is about the administration of the Acts.

MS NAKUT: Yes.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, thank you very much. The chairperson of the committee said that where there is “an authority”, you replace it with “the ministry.” Where there is “an executive director”, you replace it with “the minister.” Now there is a board. Why are you replacing it with a ministry and not another person?

MR AYO: Madam Chairperson – *(Interjection)* - hold on.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Do you want to clarify?

Remember what he said; where there is “authority”, you replace it with “a ministry.” Where there is “an executive director”, you replace it with “the minister.” Now there is the board, who do you replace it with?

MR AYO: When you get through the Bill, we are only substituting where there is “the ED” for “the minister.” Where there is “NITA-U”

THE CHAIRPERSON: You know the board is dissolved. I put the question that clause 18 stands as part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 18, agreed to.

Clause 19, agreed to.

Clause 20, agreed to.

Clause 21, agreed to.

Clause 22, agreed to.

Clause 23, agreed to.

Clause 24, agreed to.

Clause 25, agreed to.

Clause 26, agreed to.

Clause 27, agreed to.

Clause 28, agreed to.

Clause 29, agreed to.

MS KAAYA: In some instances, the executive director has been replaced by the minister, but in clause 30 (a), here the executive director is replaced by the permanent secretary.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that clause 30 stands part of the Bill.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 30, agreed to.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson -

THE CHAIRPERSON: It is an accounting role.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: That is why I am coming in. This one does not need to be a Permanent Secretary (PS). It should clearly

say, "accounting officer." The justification is that there are ministries with PSs but the accounting officers are different. That is why I wanted to -

THE CHAIRPERSON: That is okay. It can be opened up -

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, that is why I wanted to say -

THE CHAIRPERSON: I have not objected. It is okay. Open it.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Chairperson, I wanted to say that in clause 30, we substitute the word "executive director" with the word "accounting officer." The justification is that not every PS in a ministry is an accounting officer.

THE CHAIRPERSON: The justification, hon. Nathan is that you can be a PS in an institution when you are not the accounting officer. Remember you are the ones who approve accounting officers. At times, you remove them because of some queries or whichever.

MR OGUZU: Madam Chairperson, maybe before the committee chairperson comes to the Floor, we also decided on the board being dissolved. I wanted the minister to clarify to us whether they will not need to perform any of those functions of the board at any one time - *(Interjection)* - yes, because you may need to give it some reflection.

Otherwise, if you need to play some of those functions, we need to save some of them and give them to you.

THE CHAIRPERSON: Honourable members, where are we? Can I first have you on the issue of Hon. Nathan. You will make me get lost; let us move systematically.

MRAYOO: Thank you, Madam Chairperson. I wish to concede to the proposed amendment by Hon. Nathan, that at some point the Permanent Secretary (PS) may not be the accounting

officer. So, restricting it to the PS when there is an accounting officer, I think now we leave it open as an accounting officer.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that Clause 30 be amended as proposed by Hon. Nathan Nandala.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Clause 30, as amended, agreed to.

Clause 31, agreed to.

Clause 32, agreed to.

Clause 33, agreed to.

Clause 34, agreed to.

Clause 35, agreed to.

The Tittle, agreed to.

MOTION FOR THE HOUSE TO RESUME

7.19

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (National Guidance) (Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Madam Chairperson, I beg to move that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

THE CHAIRPERSON: I put the question that the House do resume and the Committee of the whole House reports thereto.

(Question put and agreed to.)

(The House resumed, the Speaker Presiding)

REPORT FROM THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

7.19

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (National Guidance) (Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Madam Speaker, I beg to report that the Committee of the whole House has considered the Bill entitled, “The National Information Technology, Authority, Uganda Amendment Bill, 2024” and passed with amendments.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE HOUSE

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

7.20

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (National Guidance) (Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the report from the Committee of the whole House be adopted.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that the report of the Committee of the whole House be adopted by this House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

BILLS
THIRD READING

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

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister.

7.21

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (National Guidance) (Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill entitled, “The National Information Tech-

nology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024, be read the third time and do pass.

THE SPEAKER: I put the question that The National Information Technology Authority, Uganda (Amendment) Bill, 2024, be read the third time and do pass.

(Question put and agreed to.)

A BILL FOR AN ACT TITLED
“THE NATIONAL INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY AUTHORITY, UGANDA
(AMENDMENT) ACT 2024”

THE SPEAKER: Title settled and the Bill passed. *(Applause)* House adjourned to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

*(The House rose at 7.21 p.m. and adjourned
until Wednesday, 16 October 2024 at 2.00
p.m.)*