



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 5 AUGUST 2025



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FIFTH SESSION - 6TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Tuesday, 5 August 2025

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

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to Order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. On 3 August 2025, the nation lost a trailblazer in women's emancipation, Hon. Rhoda Nakibuuka Nsibirwa Kalema. She was one of the first two female Members of Parliament in the National Consultative Council (NCC) from 1979 to 1980. That was the Third Parliament of Uganda.

She represented Kiboga in the Constituent Assembly from 1994 to 1995 and served in several Cabinet positions, notably, Minister of Culture and Community Development. She was also a Deputy Minister of Public Service. The deceased was a remarkable leader whose legacy will live on after her demise.

On behalf of the Parliament of Uganda and on my behalf, I would like to relay our deepest condolences to the bereaved family, the people of Kiboga, the people of Uganda as a whole, and all the women of Uganda. May we rise and observe a moment of silence in her honour.

(The House rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we will wait for communication from the Leader of Government Business on the burial arrangements and the consideration of the Government on the kind of burial that will be accorded her.

Honourable members, on Thursday last week, I directed the Government Chief Whip to adhere to Rule 196 that stipulates that a sectoral committee shall comprise not less than 20 Members and not more than 40 Members.

I specifically cited the Committee on Lands and the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. If the Government Chief Whip is not yet ready, I will invoke the rule and do the assignment myself. If he is ready, we will allow him to come and present the names.

In addition to Rule 196(4) of the Rules of Procedure, I designate Hon. Allan to the Committee on Foreign Affairs. He was originally on the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, but we moved him to foreign affairs.

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Atugonza is an Independent Member and I am the Whip of Independent Members. I am designating my Member. I thank you so much. *[Hon. Nambeshe rose]*

2.05

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe): Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence. In your communication that same Thursday, you gave lots of latitude to the Government Chief Whip, who, of course, acts for the ruling party, that the omissions would be filled from the National Resistance Movement (NRM), and I thought you were being lopsided, respectively. That is why I am seeking your indulgence to allow - Since they are even failing to fill them, the Opposition is more than ready to fill those gaps.

THE SPEAKER: No, they are going to be filled. We are looking at the percentage and the numerical strength in the House. Thank you. Yes, *Mukatuliki*. (*Hon. Ssemujju rose*) Hon. Ssemujju, since when did you become a Catholic? Hon. *Mukatuliki*. [Mr Ssemujju: *"But I saw you pointing at me."*] Honourable *Mukatuliki* -

2.06

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a matter of national importance to raise, if granted -

THE SPEAKER: Pardon?

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, my issue of national importance as I did - Is it granted?

THE SPEAKER: I thought it was about my communication.

MR SSEWUNGU: No, Madam Speaker. You have communicated very eloquently. Yes, Honourable.

2.07

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality Wakiso): Madam Speaker, in your communication, you were addressing a Government Chief Whip. I take this opportunity, as he seeks to obey your directive, to find out - I have seen a notice in the newspapers today announcing several NRM meetings. We are lucky to have the former Chief of Defence Forces (CDF), Gen. Muhoozi, who is also a minister for law and order.

The last time we had a major NRM activity in Kampala, one of the new NRM youth league members from the ghetto robbed people on the streets. Can we get assurance that these meetings we have seen being announced, at which you are going to display various NRM leagues - that, that league will not rob our people? Our people work in Kampala. Or should we ask them not to come to Kampala that day?

Can the minister responsible for law and order assure the country that the newly created NRM league, called the ghetto youth, will not rob our people in Kampala like they did last time? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: How did you confirm that they were NRM?

MR SSEMUJJU: They were putting on the perennial NRM candidate for President, Yoweri Museveni T-shirt with his portrait clearly seen.

THE SPEAKER: Assuming it was another party putting on that T-shirt -

MR SSEMUJJU: That is why I am asking the minister responsible. I am not asking the Speaker because I know the Speaker is not in charge of law and order.

THE SPEAKER: No, no. I want clarification before the minister comes in. Does it mean that if I put on a particular colour, then I belong to that party?

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, there is a minister responsible, so we want to hear him say that they were for the People's Front for Freedom (PFF).

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us not just assume things. Putting on a colour does not mean that I belong to that party. What security should do is to investigate the people who caused that problem. Who are those people?

Mentioning a blank statement that they were NRM is an attack on - You are actually

speculating. Honourable minister, the honourable member is asking, are we safe with those people who are terrorising? I do not want to say they were NRM.

2.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): I assure the country that these activities will be peaceful but like you said, Madam Speaker, a T-shirt per se, of whatever party does not mean that you belong to that party. [*Hon. Ssemujju rose*]

THE SPEAKER: I have not given you the microphone. Talk about the lady.

MS KAAYA: Madam Speaker, thank you so much for remembering our legend. As people from Kiboga, we have lost a mother, a woman activist, and a strategist. I remember when I went through, she was very delighted and said she would push for three more years. I thank God that from the 2021 elections, three more years came through.

Yesterday, we formed a team, as leaders of Kiboga, to also take part in the preparations for the funeral. I stand here to report that we are ready to be incorporated into the national planning committee for the final send-off of our mother. The team is not yet sure whether it will be a state funeral or not. However, I am here to confirm that as Kiboga, we are ready to receive the body of our *mama* and accord her a decent burial. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for observing a moment of silence for her.

We, at one time, witnessed the Deputy Speaker visiting her. She has left a lot of write-ups and literature for us to copy from and emulate the good services she accorded this country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Government, you need to give us an update on how far you have gone with repatriating the body and burial arrangements.

2.12

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also join the rest of Parliament and the country in sending our condolences to the family and the people that she touched. We will be giving out the programme tomorrow, so we seek your indulgence to give us some little time so that we are able to give the exact and accurate information about it.

Regarding the designation of Members, we request that you give us up to Tuesday next week so that we can give a comprehensive fill-up of the different committees by the Government Chief Whip. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. As Hon. Christine said, you need to incorporate the local leaders in the committee that is arranging for the send-off. Yes, Hon Gorreth?

2.13

MS GORRETH NAMUGGA (NUP, Mawogola County South, Ssembabule): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also join the rest of the country to condole with the family of the late Rhoda Nakibuuka Kalema Nsibirwa. On behalf of the Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) and the representative of UWOPA central region, I would like to inform the House that as UWOPA, we shall also have a special arrangement, and we shall communicate.

However, we need to note that as women of this country, we have lost a very commendable person. She has served in several capacities: as a public servant, a politician, a mother, but also in the Buganda Kingdom. She is a woman who used to fight for human rights and –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Gorreth, what will you speak about when we are paying tribute?

MS NAMUGGA: There is something, Madam Speaker, that I would like you to pay attention to because this is so urgent; how I wish you could capture it. This takes us to the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development to

bring a Bill on labour externalisation. It would do us well to cover it during the time of paying tribute to the late Rhoda Kalema. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: How are they related?

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, they are related because we have faced violations of human rights, and the issue of labour externalisation and migrant workers in the diaspora has been on the Floor of Parliament for quite some time. How I wish, during the time of paying tribute, that it can also be part –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have the latitude to ask for that Bill to be brought, without relating it to the death of our *Maama*. Simply come to the Floor and ask for the Bill, and it will be done. Government, the Bill on labour externalisation?

2.15

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Thank you. Madam Speaker, I think the honourable member fell short of mentioning that most of those affected by the issues that are happening in the Middle East are women. I think that is the point she wanted to make.

Nevertheless, we are going to follow up on this Bill by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and we shall inform the House tomorrow on when the Bill will come to the House.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr Bhoka?

2.15

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to raise a matter of urgent national importance –

THE SPEAKER: We have not yet gone to matters of national importance. *(Laughter)* When you want to go to matters of national importance, you wait for the clerk to mention the item. We even have a pending matter, so the clerk can now announce it. *(Applause)*

MATTERS OF URGENT PUBLIC IMPORTANCE

THE SPEAKER: We will only accommodate five for today: Hon. Ssewungu, Hon. Akol, Hon. Acuti, Hon. Bhoka, and Hon. Ababiku.

2.16

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The matter I have is related to an incident that occurred on 2nd August. This was a tragic accident along Mityana road highway where Daystar Junior School children, about 11 of them, were seriously injured, and two died.

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports should come to explain how trips are conducted in schools. What we know is the time of driving, the advance planning, and the age restriction. I am still wondering how a school can get nursery school children from Kampala to go for an excursion in Kasese. Nursery children?

I am – *(Interjections)* - kindly, Members, these are facts I have in my head. I have been a professional teacher; I know what I am saying. Whether it is a P.1 to P.3 child, sending them on that journey is unprecedented. How do they determine – *(Interjection)* - honourable member, I have just started. Let me drive this point home.

THE SPEAKER: Conclude what you are talking about. I think we saw that accident.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, still on the same matter, we need an immediate investigation on organisation of trips. I am not against trips because we know that under the new curriculum and even before it, the five senses are used in schools.

However, with the kind of accident we saw along Mityana Road, the information we got from the police attested to the fact that the driver of the bus fell asleep, and that is why the bus got off the road. But what exactly is involved in having children going for trips?

Madam Speaker, I have observed a number of incidents. Children from different districts leave Kampala and travel late in the night. However, the rules are clear; when children go for trips, they are supposed to report back to school in time so that their parents can pick them up. What is this misconduct or mischievous activities that occur within the buses? At the end of the day, this is what we saw happening.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu, you are talking about buses. I have even seen students and pupils ferried in lorries or trucks. At least those ones were in a bus.

MR SSEWUNGU: My prayer, Madam Speaker, as shadow minister, is that we need immediate investigation and accountability. We want the Ministry of Education and Sports to come and tell us the guidelines and instructions they have given for this kind of behaviour. That is the matter I have; basically dealing with the strengthening and enforcement of guidelines on trips in schools. Otherwise, we are going to face a number of challenges.

Madam Speaker, the fees paid by the parents is also another issue. How can a school charge more money for the trip than the school fees paid to that particular school? Students who go for the trips do not eat - we need to look at all those issues through the Ministry of Education and Sports. They should come here and explain.

I had written a full statement on this, but because it is a matter of national importance, I will seek your indulgence, Madam Speaker, that the Government - and he is behaving well, like the former Hon. Amama Mbabazi. He used to write in a notebook whenever we raised matters. Therefore, he can pick this here, if permitted; he has written so many - used this note also for Ministry of Education and Sports -

THE SPEAKER: I can see how you are missing Hon. Amama Mbabazi.

MR SSEWUNGU: I know he is back with you, but he is doing very well. He used to

take notes, and that is very encouraging, Hon. Bahati. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. David Bahati, you need to take that matter seriously, on how children go on excursions. You find some schools even taking children out of the country.

Now, the issue is, if I am a parent who cannot afford and you are saying these children should go out of the country, won't there be discrimination? Aren't we extorting parents? What are the guidelines that we have on those kinds of things? Do they allow children to move at night? We are talking about nursery and primary children? Even if it is secondary school children. That is a very serious matter.

2.21

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, we will convey these concerns to the Minister of Education and Sports. I am sure that in the course of next week, they will be able to come and make a statement.

Just a correction to Hon. Ssewungu that there is nothing like former Amama Mbabazi. You mentioned that I am behaving like former Amama Mbabazi, and I think you meant the former Prime Minister.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Amama Mbabazi is still there, and he is available. (*A member rose*) What are you laying on the Table? No, you will give him your own time. It is not part of our documents.

2.22

MR ANTHONY AKOL (NRM, Kilak North County, Amuru): Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. I rise on a matter of national public importance. The town council of Elegu has flooded again, and this is something that has been happening almost yearly. Two days ago, I talked about the issue of cholera in Elegu, and coupled with the issue of flooding, the place is now doing badly.

Elegu has national and international characters; all communities in Elegu. When I visited the place two weeks ago, I talked to the Banyankole community, the Baganda, the Luo community, and people from Eastern Uganda. Everybody is there.

This place has been flooding almost every year. Good enough, the Ministry of Trade, Industry, and Cooperatives is on the ground. I think they are now constructing a Shs 26 billion market in the place.

The traders are suffering because all their goods have been washed away. Some vehicles were also washed away by the flood. As usual, when this kind of calamity happens to the traders in Owino market, at least, they get some donations, gifts, to assist them start their life afresh. However, for all these years, the people of Elegu have never gotten this kind of assistance.

Madam Speaker, River Unyama needs about Shs 150 billion and I think the BOQ was also done. It was supposed to be done by Trademark Africa. The good thing is the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives is here. Therefore, I would like to give the following prayers:

First, the meandering of River Unyama should be worked on because the tax that is collected from Elegu is much bigger than the cost needed to correct the meandering river.

The other week we talked about testing and treatment of water in the area. However, as I speak, nothing has been done. Now, coupled with cholera, something needs to be done by the Ministry of Water and Environment about testing and treatment of the water.

I also got in touch and sent the report from the district disaster team to the Prime Minister's office; there is a need for food and non-food items for the people.

Above all, if the traders can at least, this time round, get some resources to start again, because they have been losing every time - and these are people who are struggling for their

children's school fees, to feed, and also get treatment. People are working very hard in the area. Those are my prayers.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Government?

MR SSEMUIJU: When Hon. Anthony Akol was submitting, I saw on the screen that he is still being attributed to the FDC yet he joined the NRM.

Therefore, the procedural issue I am raising is that this is an election year. If I have changed the affiliation, you actually affect my chances of winning when you continue referring to me by my former address. It is not possible that you will continue calling Hon. Anthony Akol FDC when he is NRM.

I am PFF, you cannot call me FDC because I left. Is the intention of those who continue doing that to make us fail elections, Madam Speaker?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, I did not see it. I am concentrating on the debate and I am surprised that you are concentrating on the screen.

Therefore, let us mean business. Let us discuss more important things that affect this country rather than looking at the screens to see what is coming out.

Yes, Government? There is a Minister of Water and Environment here, a Minister of Health here - I can see all the ministers.

2.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (PRIMARY HEALTH CARE)

(Ms Margaret Muhanga): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank Hon. Anthony Akol for this concern. I will immediately write to the Director General of Health Services so that they can come and give treatment to the people.

Most importantly, you need to note that cholera is simply from eating human faeces. Therefore, that means the water is washing away the faeces

of people who are practising open defecation, which we still have in the country at about 16 per cent. We also need to do some health promotion in our areas so that we stop open defecation. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, when there is flooding, the water even washes away the toilets and pit latrines. It may not be that we are just eating those - whatever. Yes, Doctor?

DR NICHOLAS KAMARA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Are you giving information or order?

DR NICHOLAS KAMARA: I would like to give some information. Cholera does not come as a result of eating faeces, and it should be on record.

THE SPEAKER: Contaminated.

DR NICHOLAS KAMARA: It comes as a result of eating food or drinking water contaminated by faecal matter. I think it should be very clear and on record. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. It is out of contamination. Hon. Anywar, what happened to you? Sorry about that.

2.29

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to, first of all, congratulate you and other NRM colleagues for going through the internal elections that were in-house.

I thank those colleagues who prayed for me; I had an accident, but I am much better. I thank Hon. Anthony Akol for coming on board, my brother. We look forward to others joining us very soon. Thank you for taking a bold step rather than playing hide and seek. You have come out openly and that is the way to go.

I also thank him for raising the issue of Elegu. Indeed, as he said, the problem in Elegu has been there for a long time and the place is overcrowded, and the degradation has intensified. Therefore, the intervention of the Government, as he said, to control the flooding on River Onyama is in the ministry and is on course.

We need to focus on how to ensure that degradation is not accelerated and a number of factors are supposed to be considered. They need to have inter-ministerial interventions, not only the Ministry of Water and Environment.

However, on our part, as per now, it is of concern that people should get clean water. I want to find out from my ministry what immediate intervention we can have as we work on a long-term solution to ensure that we rectify the heavy degradation that has taken place and heavy occupancy of the place because of booming businesses there. I think the community will bear with the pace of our intervention but for water purposes, we are going to link up with you and see how we can give clean water.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you need to act on that very fast and see how you rescue the people. Yes, Hon. Acuti?

2.32

DR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of urgent importance on the devastation caused by hailstones in my constituency of Kole North.

On Friday last week, we had devastating hailstorms with rain that fell in Apala Parish in Alito subcounty. This resulted in over 4,000 acres of crops being damaged. The majority of these crops were ready for harvest, including cassava, maize and beans.

We also had 23 houses destroyed with three completely demolished and 13 livestock, including goats and chickens also died as a result of it. Eight villages have been affected, and as we speak, they are at risk of food insecurity, lack of shelter, and loss of income.

My prayers are one, we have submitted a report to the disaster committee and also to the Office of the Prime Minister. However, Madam Speaker, the concern is that we have been informed that there are no relief items from the Office of the Prime Minister, and so we are stuck on what we should do.

Secondly, my prayer is that the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness and Ministry of Water and Environment, which handles metrology - this is the third incident in four years with the same geographical location having these hailstones. We would like to have a mapping of all these areas in my constituency, because we have around four areas, and mitigation measures - We also want to know whether we have the capacity to predict where there are going to be hailstones in this country so that we can avert these incidents.

Therefore, my brief prayer is, one, on the relief items, but I am concerned that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has not released money for that, from what the Office of the Prime Minister stated, and preventive measures from the Ministry of Water and Environment and the Ministry of Disaster Preparedness.

THE SPEAKER: Government?

MR BAHATI: Thank you, the honourable gentleman from Kole North, and sorry for what has happened –

THE SPEAKER: He is Hon. Opio Acuti.

MR BAHATI: I know; he is a very good friend of mine. I wanted to remind his voters about the constituency. It is important to note that he has already informed the Minister for Disaster Preparedness, and they have the report, so we are going to remind them to act fast so that they can come at least to get some relief to the people who have been affected, but also, the Minister of Water and Environment is here. They have mentioned something to do with the weather forecast. She can also make a statement if there is any.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS ANYWAR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I, once again, thank Hon. Opio Samuel. As a ministry, despite the fact that we do not have enough money, we have been making efforts for early warnings. We broadcast these warnings of weather forecasts. It is as you said; to tell where there will be a hailstorm when it is still not visible, but the fact is that when we say that there will be heavy rains coming, they are accompanied by other things.

I remind colleagues that we need to prepare for windbreakers. The trees we destroy around our homesteads are part of the problem. It is a combination of interventions and we need to let our people know these. We sympathise with our people and we hope that when we get more money, tree planting should be universal to all of the homesteads to protect against this, and then we will increase the predictability of the forecast as usual.

THE SPEAKER: Dr Bhoka?

2.36

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to raise a matter of urgent national importance about a strategic bridge referred to as Kochi Bridge, located in Waka Parish, Itula Subcounty of Obongi District, funded by the World Bank through a project commonly referred to as the Development Response to Displacement Impact Project (DRDIP) –

THE SPEAKER: Are you talking about a bridge?

DR BHOKA: It is a Shs 2.4 billion bridge that has been –

THE SPEAKER: Doctor, can we discuss that in the next item, when you are talking about the status of roads? Bring it up when the minister is here. Hon. Ababiku?

2.37

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I rise on the issue of the increased rate of school dropouts in Adjumani District as a result of the lack of Government-aided primary schools in some of the parishes.

My prayer is that the Governments should expedite the process of coding of Kozayzam, Itiwasi, Ozonya, and Tianyu Primary Schools.

Madam Speaker, we have been following this for the four subcounties of Arinyapi, Ofua, Adropi, and Okusijani, but for the last four years, no action has been taken. I pray that the Government comes to implement this because many people drop out because they cannot access schools in those parishes, and the population is too high.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, the policy is to have both primary and secondary schools per subcounty.

MR BAHATI: Indeed, it is our policy that we have a secondary school per subcounty and a primary school per parish. We are making very good progress, Madam Speaker, on this policy. However, the House can be updated at the next sitting by the Ministry of Education and Sports on the progress we are making on this policy.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item.

RESPONSE TO AN URGENT QUESTION

(I) STATEMENT ON THE ALLEGED EXTORTION IN THE NATIONAL IDENTITY CARD REGISTRATION AND RENEWAL PROCESS

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as you may recall, a Member raised on the Floor the issue of extortion in renewal of identity cards (IDs) that is underway as part of the mass enrolment process. The Member said that money was being collected for this exercise, and because of that, most people were or are not registering.

We have a report from the Minister of Internal Affairs. Pursuant to Rule 54(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I will now invite the Minister of Internal Affairs to present a statement to this effect.

The issue was raised by a number of Members, including Hon. Akol and Hon. Gorreth Namugga. Yes, honourable minister?

2.41

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. This is a statement in response to allegations of extortion by National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) staff in the ongoing National Identity Card enrolment and renewal exercise.

This statement has been uploaded last minute. Hopefully, Members have it. I beg your permission to proceed with the response.

THE SPEAKER: Please do.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Madam Speaker, NIRA began the mass enrolment and renewal exercise on 27 May 2025. As of 4 August 2025, we have received 8,254,778 applications for renewal, 834,020 applications for first-time registration, and 33,160 applications for Get-First ID for children who are now of age to receive their identity cards. This, together, is a total of 9,121,948 applications. Card production and issuance are also underway.

That said, NIRA has noted with concern the increasing complaints of extortion, corruption, and bribery at service centres perpetuated by impostors, NIRA registration assistants, and other cadres. The vice has taken the following common forms:

1. Selling forms;
2. Paying to skip the queue; and
3. Extorting at different stages of the application process by different players.

NIRA has taken the following steps to address this menace:

1. Arresting and reprimanding the perpetrators and evoking disciplinary procedures. Below is a list of persons so far reprimanded.

In Mubende District, we have: Tulibamu, a temporary registration assistant. The action taken against him was that he was arrested. He is out on bond and terminated –(Interjection)- can I proceed and finish, then I can answer your questions?

THE SPEAKER: Who is in the *Hansard*? (Whereupon the Clerk-At-Table walked out) - General, continue.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Thank you, honourable members, for that observation. I was at the action taken, starting with Mubende District.

Some staff of NIRA have been arrested:

- a) Tulibamu, a temporary registration assistant, arrested, out on bond, and his services terminated;
- b) Ssempeebwa, another temporary registration assistant. He was arrested, is out on bond and terminated;
- c) Nalweyiso, a temporary registration assistant. She was arrested, is out on bond and terminated;
- d) Nuwaine, a temporary registration assistant. He was arrested, is out on bond, and terminated.

In Mityana District, Lutayisire, a temporary registration assistant was arrested, is out on bond, and terminated. In Wakiso District, Epalat, a temporary registration assistant was suspended and later terminated. In Mukono District, Wamala, a temporary registration assistant was suspended and then terminated.

At the Headquarters here at Kololo, Kasasira, a temporary registration assistant was arrested, escaped from detention, and terminated.

In Busia District, Ojambo, an information technology officer was arrested and taken to court. He is out on bond and on interdiction –

THE SPEAKER: Out on bond or bail?

GEN. MUHOOZI: Out on bond. I will explain later why they are on bond. The complainants do not come back to give evidence for the prosecution to take place.

THE SPEAKER: What I am saying is that if you are out of court, they give you bail. Is it out on police bond?

GEN. MUHOOZI: Bond.

THE SPEAKER: Okay.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Bond. In Alebtong District, Hatewu, an office assistant was arrested. That one was taken to court, is on bail, and interdiction. In Kyankwanzi, Nabuguzi, an information technology officer was arrested and taken to court. She was remanded and also interdicted.

In Kyotera District, four of them have been arrested and bonded as investigations continue. These are; Nantongo, Samula, Kisekka and Ayesiga. Kisekka is a businesswoman, not a NIRA staff. In Abim District, Mwanje, an information technology officer is under disciplinary process.

2. We are strengthening internal and external communication across all media platforms, emphasising free registration, encouraging people to report corruption, and advising all persons to desist from corruption.
3. Providing forms being sold free of charge. On that, how to get the form is included in the report: <https://nira.go.ug>. Some of these forms are the ones being sold, yet they are available free of charge online.
4. Providing an online service that does not require one to have a physical form, also on <https://pre-reg.ncis.nira.go.ug/pre-registration>. That one is also available online.
5. Sharing with the public a hotline for reporting corruption. This is 0776-501-071. Also, sharing an email address to assist victims in detailing the issues they

have faced during the exercise. To date, we have received 30 complaints via this email address.

6. Distributing uniforms with identity tags across the country to ease identification of bona fide NIRA staff.

Some challenges have been encountered and these include the following:

1. Clients not willing to disclose the full details of extorting staff and accompanying evidence. This makes cases difficult to prosecute. For example, in Kassanda, the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) was informed by the complainants about people extorting. He caused the arrest of two NIRA staff and two non-staff. They were taken to Kassanda Police Station for one week, but no one reported to make a statement or lodge a formal complaint. They were released on bond, awaiting the complainants' coming forward.
2. Brokers and middlemen masquerading as NIRA staff to extort from the public.
3. Partners supporting the exercise over whom the authority has no control, including local council chairpersons and others, soliciting bribes under the pretext of being NIRA staff. Oftentimes, these act as brokers.
4. Literacy levels of some of the clients who are unable to read and write, and therefore, seek services from middlemen.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I would like to reiterate that the process of enrolment and renewal of national IDs is free of charge. We call upon the public to be vigilant and bold in reporting anyone trying to extract money from them. Together, we can get the culprits.

I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, you have heard that there is a toll-free number that has been given to the public to be able to report these cases. We also need

to encourage the population that in case there is anybody extorting money, we should be able to report them to be handled legally. And to the public, registration is free of charge. Yes, Hon. Bakkabulindi?

2.50

MR CHARLES BAKKABULINDI (NRM, Workers' Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the information he has given us. Mostly, it is about the culprits who have been mismanaging the exercise but our concern is the speed. Even the young people we have taken there have taken more than three to four months - no answer.

Leave aside ours that we were for renewal, we do not know when we will ever get our national IDs but how about the new entrants? If you could comment about the speed so that we get hope -

For example, somebody who has been introduced and gone to Kololo will take about two months but now we do not know when.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you will also tell us about those who registered at the beginning and when they will receive their IDs. Yes, Hon. Okot?

2.52

MR PETER OKOT (DP, Tochi County, Omoro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report. I would also like to bring to the minister's attention that the slow pace of renewal of national IDs is not necessarily a result of extortion. For example, in my area in Omoro District, most people are not turning up for renewal of their national IDs because they have deposited their national IDs with moneylenders.

If you are to go for renewal, you need the expired national ID, which most people cannot do. The ministry needs to do something. The President was categorically clear that no moneylender should accept national IDs as collateral.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, that is outside the scope of what we asked the minister to present. If you have deposited your national ID with a moneylender, what do you want the minister to do?

MR PETER OKOT: Madam Speaker, it is also important to note that this is also slowing down the pace of renewal of national IDs.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Nakimuli, then Hon. Atyang.

2.53

MS HELEN NAKIMULI (NUP, Woman Representative, Kalangala): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for giving us the report. Allow me to speak about the islands in regard to the national ID renewal.

Most of our people have not accessed this because of the distance between the islands as well as extortion. People have to travel from one island to get to where the kits are and they are asked to give some money. They say, if we cannot access you, give us money such that we can get to where you are. They claim that the office has not given them enough money to travel from their office to the people.

THE SPEAKER: From one island to the other island. Therefore, minister, you need to make sure that these people reach the local person.

MS NAKIMULI: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: There is information from Hon. Lucy, then you can come.

MS LUCY AKELLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The issue of distance is a big problem. Over the weekend, I was in a place called Okidi in Atiak subcounty. I got a request from the community to help them hire a generator so that the NIRA officers can get closer to people and have them registered, especially the elderly. When I accepted, they said, "It is not only for the elderly, the distance is very long for us too."

Therefore, this is a big challenge, not only for the islanders but also for us who represent rural districts without electricity, with long distances. The minister should therefore look into this because these people are poorly facilitated.

2.55

MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the information and guidance to the public. Honourable minister, initially, many people erred while entering their names for national IDs. They had third names, which are not in coordination with their formal documents now. Many people are now making corrections to their national IDs, but the district NIRA offices are not able to do that. These people are sent to the main office in Kampala to do correction of their names, and yet many of them are not able to afford transport to come to Kampala. For those who can afford, because of extortion, they are not given quick services.

Mine is also related to the first person who talked about the timing. How long should one take to access a national ID, after registration or application for correction of names?

I have a teacher who has toiled for over one year. He went through the entire process and applied for correction of his names. Since June last year, he has not got his ID because of *ping pong*. They tell him to wait, come back next month, up to date. Unless we become specific with the timing when one should access a national ID, things will never go well.

2.57

MS HOPE NAKAZIBWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Mubende): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also want to join honourable members to appreciate the honourable minister for the report. However, in his report, he said that they are dealing with the NIRA staff in as far as handling extortion is concerned. In Mubende District, there is a chain of people extorting money from people who come for registration.

I am glad he mentioned some of the officials from Mubende who were arrested over the same but we need to go beyond the NIRA staff. The other case is about hard-to-reach areas. For example, we have Butoloogo Subcounty -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Grania, you are talking about going beyond the NIRA staff. That is what the minister said; that some people do not want to give information. There was a businessperson and a medic who were arrested. So, encourage your people to give information on who is doing what.

MS NAKAZIBWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Good enough, I was in touch with my people when this process started. I interacted with them to find out what the challenges were.

However, most of the time, I would direct them to see the Parish Internal Security Officers(PISOs) and the Gombolola Internal Security Officers(GISOs). However, whenever I would talk about that category of group, Madam Speaker, the people would become angrier because they say some of those people were the ones extorting when it came to registration because they had to give them letters to take to the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) offices. Some of them might disguise or misidentify themselves as being in those offices. So, honourable minister, a strict measure should be put to ensure that the people who work in those offices also do the needful.

Madam Speaker, just a minute; about the hard-to-reach areas like Butoloogo. There are areas where people do not have access to electricity yet they also have to be registered. We need to know from the honourable minister whether the budget we give to NIRA to do that registration does not cater for the generators and the fuel, like Hon. Lucy has mentioned.

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Rwemulikya?

3.00

MR IBANDA RWEMULIKYA (Independent, Ntoroko County, Ntoroko): Thank you, Madam Speaker for the opportunity. I would like to thank the honourable minister for his response or report. Honourable minister, I come from Ntoroko, which borders the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and in this exercise of renewal, we have had a challenge where people have been tossed here and there. These are Ugandans with national identity cards, but when they go for renewal, they keep disturbing them; “Go back to GISO, go back to DISO” whereas these people have national IDs and they are Ugandans.

I do not know why these people should be disturbed and tossed here and there. “Go to DISO, PISO or the Resident District Commissioner (RDC)” and yet these people got national IDs.

For instance, if people have come for the first time, they should be vetted. But people who have national IDs are being disturbed. Honourable minister, I do not know what you are going to do in the case of Ntoroko because we have people who have been disturbed and have failed to renew their national IDs because of the technicalities from some of your staff members. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Olympian; Hon. Acon?

3.01

MR JULIUS ACON (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to comment on the beautiful report the honourable Minister made.

However, I need clarification. Yesterday, I went to renew my ID at Kololo because my ID is going to expire in 2031 but I was sent back because they said I did not need to renew.

However, it is the same thing happening to all Ugandans. Do we have to renew when it is still valid or not? Because this is the one thing which the whole country would like to know.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Wandwasi_

3.02

MR ROBERT WANDWASI (NRM, Bungokho County South, Mbale): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I really want to appreciate the minister for the report given to us. However, my concern is what is the reason as to why a number of our people are being extorted through dubious ways.

Madam Speaker, we still have some places in the country that do not have clear networks but I do not know whether the Ministry of Internal Affairs has tried to find out about that from the ministry for ICT.

A case in point, I have a subcounty in my constituency called Bukyiende. It does not have a single mast. Whenever these workers are dispatched to go and register people in that area, they take time and whoever goes there cannot be captured because of the network challenge. I would like to know from the minister of internal affairs whether he has taken cognizance of that.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, Hon. Peter?

3.03

MR PETER OKEYOH (NRM, Bukooli Island County, Namayingo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable minister, thank you for the statement, but as people who come from the islands, I want you to help us. Like my colleague from Kalangala stated, moving from one island to another – for example, moving from Lolwe Subcounty headquarters to Hama, Siro or Wayasi – these people need fuel but they are not facilitated. That is a serious issue.

Secondly, in the case of Namayingo. In the statement, you have stated these people have uniforms they wear for identification; I have not seen any. Was it in isolated places, or it is country-wide? And then finally, I would like to know from you, minister, about Ojambo who was arrested in Busia but you stated that he is on bail. In fact, Ojambo's case is a serious one, and I would like to know, and for you to tell the country, what was the cause for Ojambo's arrest, and what steps have been taken because people were there, gave their statements, and to date it has not been handled. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member from Buhweju?

3.04

MR EPHRAIM BIRAARO (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister, particularly for having the details of the culprits apprehended so far and the actions taken. We hope that the case will be prosecuted to a good end.

Madam Speaker, I take particular concern about people failing to follow up their cases to give more evidence to the police. In my area, we have suffered many cases like murders, defilement, rape where people fail to follow up because of the lukewarm trust they have in some police officers.

Secondly, another important aspect about the IDs is that you find people who were - there were errors done by NIRA people in recording some people's age. For example, I have a cousin sister who is now 86 years old, with a 57-year old daughter who has an identity card. Unfortunately, my elder sister who is 86 has got an identity card reading 35 years of age. When you go to – I have taken many people to the district headquarters at the NIRA offices but they tell us they don't have the App in their computers to rectify the error, so they tell us to wait for infinity. What does the minister say about that? Very aged people and the problem, Madam Speaker, is that we as MPs, being ATMs of some communities – people who have missed on the money for Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) say, "You pay us that money because we are qualified to be 80 years but we are not getting the money, so can you compensate us?" all because of faulty identity cards. What is the remedy for that?

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, can we first have that responded to?

GEN. MUHOOZI: Madam Speaker, I will start with one of honourable Biraaro – errors. I think there is another honourable member who raised the same issue. Errors especially by NIRA staff with old people's details.

Madam Speaker, allow me to go back and work on this and report to you, and in particular Hon. Biraaro, I would like further and better particulars of the case so that we follow through, because if it is NIRA staff, then it is up to us to correct the error. But if it is an error by the person - the client, who made the error while registering – that is why I think there is even a charge, because you made an error and it is up to you to rectify it, but you need to go to the headquarters. Unfortunately, we do not do corrections at the district centres in this exercise.

Then the islands people; fuel, logistics are all provided. This Parliament provided money for this exercise. There is no excuse at all why islands or other hard-to-reach areas are not accessed.

The honourable member from Busia talked about uniforms. I said uniforms were not there now. But because we need to identify people, that is why we are going to issue uniforms to NIRA staff with tags for ease of identification of those who extort from the public.

Ojambo's case; he is on bail, but he is also interdicted. However, the case is not fully dealt with. He was taken to court, charged, and released on bail. That is what I can say about Ojambo.

Places without internet and distances

We need to make clarification on the whole process thus far because you have raised a number of things. Some we can rectify immediately, but some, like those places without internet, we need to get stopgap measures, and share the same with the public on the alternatives we have for places without internet, and especially for old people who cannot move up and down.

Then, Hon. Acon, is your ID still valid? Yes, up to 2031. However, since the new ID has more enhanced features, including the iris, you can still apply to change. There is that provision.

THE SPEAKER: Is it “can” or “should”?

GEN. MUHOOZI: You may, Madam Speaker, but if you want to remain with your valid ID until it expires, you can do so. If you choose to change to the new one, you are allowed. I do not know why they pushed you away, Hon. Acon. I will assist you in having your features taken for the new ID. And, yes –

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, we had the opportunity to take all the ID data from here. Can the minister explain to this House the timeline for releasing and issuing these national IDs? By the time you came here, you had promised two weeks. Now, it has been over a month.

THE SPEAKER: He is going to respond to that. He is responding point by point. He has not reached there.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you for being very good. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: There is another point of clarification.

MS AMERO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The clarification I would like to seek is in regard to the expiry of the national IDs. I am a Ugandan and when you give me the expiry of my national ID, say, for example, for 10 years, does it mean that you have only given me 10 years to be a Ugandan and so I might have to change? Otherwise, I am born here; I am from here and I expect that at least the national ID should be open so that we do not bother people.

Also, this exercise should not be optional for us to say that we are going to renew the IDs and it is for those whose IDs have expired. It should have been a national exercise for everybody and we shift from where we have been to the new system so that the IDs are uniform. Taxpayers' money should be used in the right way.

Madam Speaker, the clarification I seek is whether after 10 years I will cease to be a Ugandan.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. One would also ask why you give an expiry date for a passport.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Madam Speaker, and Hon. Amero in particular, on the 10 years, I explained earlier that this issue is a universal practice. The assumption is that in 10 years, your features change. *(Applause)* However, I understand that is a sentiment shared by many people. Even the cost of renewing is not affordable, I think for the country. So, maybe as we get more access to smartphones, and the internet, we shall reach a day when we shall just scale up the features online.

I agree it is disturbing every 10 years to spend all this money to renew, but the assumption is that in 10 years, the features of a person change. In 10 years, the paper ID itself degenerates. However, hopefully, we want to go to the e-ID and even the e-passport when all the conditions are conducive.

If I may, I want to go to the other questions, and then I will wind up. Hon. Rwemulikya, about people on the border being tossed around, yet they have old IDs, we shall work on that one and sort it.

Hon. Nakazibwe, you do not need to pay money for these people to access you because money was given for the exercise, including generators and all those excuses that people have been making for not coming to the people to register them.

Hon. Akello, I think we shall review the exercise and the constraints this far and then make a general statement to the public, especially regarding hard-to-reach areas.

Hon. Nakimuli – I think I answered that one.

Hon. Okot, on moneylenders having IDs: IDs are not collateral. We have talked and talked about this, and it takes two people to make this mistake: the cardholder and those moneylenders. Both are culpable. So, we want to, with the help of leaders like you, Hon. Okot, if you know – some people, I think, are vulnerable because they do not have anything else to stake in order to get loans. It is unfortunate that they reach an extent of giving their IDs. However, we need to take

it together as leaders and get those IDs from the moneylenders for the people to have them renewed during this exercise.

Honourable members, if you can help with further and better particulars so that we follow up because it is illegal to hold somebody's ID as collateral for a loan.

Speed of issuance of cards

Initially, we had a hitch, but now card issuance is ongoing. We had a hitch because this exercise has been between the Uganda Security Printing Company (USPC), which was given the contract for cards, and another contractor for the software.

The software was more advanced than the card aspect, but the card aspect is also catching up, and we have got cards. However, there are protocols for filling the information from the software to the cards. That is why we got a delay, but hopefully –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, when you acquired the software, couldn't you get to know that there's compatibility?

GEN. MUHOOZI: Compatibility is there, but the availability of the card was a little bit delayed. The money was paid, but we delayed getting the cards to be concurrent with the software. We have corrected the anomaly, and card issuance will be faster. Hopefully, not beyond two months going forward.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, you have heard the issue of the cards. Yes, Hon. Christine?

3.17

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to appreciate the minister for the report. There is a statement that the minister made that some staff were arrested and terminated. I expected him to have given us a reason or a confirmation that, before the termination of those officers, some confirmation

was seen that they had extorted the money. For purposes of the record, we needed that.

Madam Speaker, in Kumi District, we have categories of children who have not got their names –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Christine, they were arrested, taken to the police; the police did the investigation and found them culpable. By the time they were found culpable, that was when they were sanctioned to be taken to court. Some of them are on court bail, and others are on police bond. It is based on that report that action was taken. If you heard very well when the minister was explaining.

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT: Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, we have a case of children who were registered in primary school, and now they are in secondary school, but up to now, they do not have their name National Identification Numbers (NIN). May we get an update from the minister on the plan to help these children?

We also have students who have had problems with their names and dates of birth. They applied to NIRA - that time they were supposed to get the current Identity cards that we have, but they were not successful. Can we get information from the minister on the way the ministry is trying to help that category of students and other people who had mistaken on the IDs that they have at the moment? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you

MR MASABA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The clarification that I am seeking from the minister concerns the issue of people who made errors in their IDs.

The minister stated that there are cases where errors were made by the NIRA staff and others by the applicant. The clarification I am seeking is; how are you able to determine which error was made by either the applicant or NIRA staff? For example, I have a relative called

Masaba. They spelt his name as Masabo. Instead of a, they put an o in the name. He was made or forced to pay that money to change it.

I would like to know how they can determine this, because, as far as I know, everyone who tries to change any detail on their national ID is required to pay a substantial amount of money.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister?

GEN. MUHOOZI: I will start with the last one. Some unscrupulous individuals have changed their dates of birth, particularly civil servants, simply because they do not want to retire. That is one deliberate mistake we have noted in the exercise of registration.

Then, there are people who today write their parents are A, then tomorrow they say they are B. That one cannot be NIRA staff. So, those are examples of the mistakes of the applicants.

For the names, that one I think is most likely done by NIRA staff. So, we shall correct that one. Then – (*Hon. Bakkabulindi rose*) – Yes, Hon. Bakkabulindi? Just a minute, I wanted to – Okay, honourable.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, have you become a Speaker? Can you finish what you are supposed – Hon. Bakkabulindi, first wait. Let him first respond to what was asked, then you come in. You just sit near here.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Hon. Christine talked about – but the Rt Hon. Speaker clarified that one. She wanted confirmation of termination. I can produce it, but they were terminated because, administratively, we had to take action. Once a complaint is raised, even without concrete evidence, I think somebody should stand aside, even as investigations are ongoing.

On registration of children in primary schools, their NINs were issued, but most cards were not collected. We have a heap of them and I think we shall update the public on this subject, and also the subject of helping students who made errors. This is for Hon. Christine.

Lastly, I want to answer Hon. Amero. I never clarified: Citizenship never expires, and evidence of citizenship is the NIN. Even with the tenure for the ID, the citizenship of a person does not expire.

I want to thank you, honourable members.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Bakkabulindi wants some clarification.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Hon. Ssewungu, also mawam, with your permission, wanted to ask.

MR BAKKABULINDI: Thanks very much, Madam Speaker. I am rising out of his question; how do you tell whether the error was made by the staff or the applicant? I escorted a friend to NIRA, claiming that they had made a mistake, so that he could not pay the Shs 200,000. They went into their data, and proved that it was him who had made the mistake. So, they have those features that they capture.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, the question is; how do you determine whether the error was made by the NIRA staff or by the person who filled the forms? If it was made by the NIRA staff, why are you making them pay the money?

GEN. MUHOOZI: Madam Speaker, it depends on the nature of the error. Sometimes it is apparent on the record; on the surface.

THE SPEAKER: It could be a typing error; Masaba not Masabo.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Those are most likely by NIRA staff.

THE SPEAKER: That is what he was saying, that the person was still made to pay the money.

GEN. MUHOOZI: That was unfortunate.

THE SPEAKER: Anyway, it is an agreed position. It is a position of the Government that registration is free. Where there is an error that is made, a district, or wherever the registration is taking place, cannot be able to correct the errors.

All the errors will be corrected at the headquarters because they are the only ones who have the access rights for them to be able to correct them.

Then there is a toll-free number that should be used by the public to ensure that we have a corruption-free system where they cannot extort money from. The public is urged to report any attempts of extortion by either NIRA staff or those who claim to be agents or anybody else and action will be taken.

Next item?

**MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE AND
IMPLEMENTATION ON THE STATUS
OF THE ASSURANCE TO FULLY
OPERATIONALISE NEWLY-CREATED
CITIES.**

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you recall that in April 2020, Parliament approved the creation of 15 new cities, with staggered timelines for commencement of seven cities in July 2020 and others between 2021 and 2023.

To date, only 10 cities out of the 15 cities have been operationalised. The Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation has inquired into this matter, and they are ready to report.

Pursuant to rule 185(4), I will invite the chairperson of the committee to give us his report on this and I am also happy to note that the minister is around to respond to whatever is being raised.

3.26

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE
ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE AND
IMPLEMENTATION (Dr Abed Bwanika):**

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay the report of the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation on the status of the assurance to fully operationalises newly-created cities. I beg to lay the report and the minutes, which are attached.

Madam Speaker, I beg to present the report of the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation on the status of the Government assurance to fully operationalise the newly created cities.

Madam Speaker, the report is available, but I am asking to present a summary. Honourable members, I beg them to read.

THE SPEAKER: Please go ahead and give us a summary.

DR BWANIKA: Madam Speaker, our scope covered 10 areas, which I am going to go through in summary form. We looked at the legal and regulatory framework of these cities. On 28 April 2020, the Minister of Local Government, Hon. Raphael Magyezi, tabled a Motion seeking Parliament's approval of the proposal to create new cities, which Parliament approved on 28 April 2020.

The new cities were to be operationalised in clusters beginning 1 July 2020 to July 2023 with Jinja, Mbarara, Gulu, Mbale, Arua, Fort Portal and Masaka, taking effect with the new Financial Year 2020/2021.

Madam Speaker, I beg to go to the observations and recommendations.

1. The Legal and the Regulatory Framework

The committee observed that despite the fact that the Attorney-General provided his opinion, the minister failed to present regulations to address contradictions between cities and districts. The regulations are intended to streamline the operation of the Local Government Act Section 175(1). Section 175(1) requires the minister to make regulations for effecting the provision of the Act.

2. Whereas the creation of the new cities does not violate any provision of the Constitution of Uganda, their management and administration need to be harmonised.

The committee recommends that the Government should introduce an appropriate

Bill to govern cities in their uniqueness in operation, structure, and service delivery. Alternatively, the Government should amend the Local Government Act to incorporate administrative and governance legal frameworks for cities.

The Ministry of Local Government should come up with regulations on the governance of cities and table them before Parliament within three months from the time this report is adopted.

The physical development plans of these cities

Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Local Government classifies gazetted cities, municipalities, and town councils as urban areas. The Local Government Act Cap. 243 empowers the ministry to declare an area urban if it satisfies the following criteria;

- a. Has a minimum of 25,000 people for a town council, 100,000 people for municipality, and 500,000 people for a city.
- b. Has a master plan for land use.
- c. Has available water sources and can meet the cost of providing services.
- d. Preparation of urban physical plans.

Madam Speaker, again, allow me to go to the observations.

The committee observed that whereas the cities have approved physical plans, developments are not guided by those plans. The ministry has not yet provided funding for new cities to develop physical development plans. For those that have plans, funding was provided by development partners. The majority of the residents in these new cities live in unplanned areas and, as a result, experience development problems that put more strain on the already existing infrastructure.

According to the Building Control Act Section 28(3), the chairperson for the planning and development committee of the district council shall be the chairperson of the district building committee. Subsection (5) provides that the chairperson of the urban planning and development committee of the urban council

shall be the chairperson of the urban building committee.

Contrary to the above, the committee established that in most of the cities, building plans were considered and approved by city building committees chaired by the secretary of works. The committee was informed that the above irregularity was a result of fraud and corruption.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development should ensure that all cities are facilitated to develop their respective physical development plans within the next two financial years.

The Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development and the Ministry of Local Government should ensure that all city developments adhere to the approved physical plans. The ministry should play its oversight role to ensure that the building control committees in all cities comply with the provisions of the Act.

Cities that have not gazetted their intended development plans should do so and consider people's concerns or opinions over the same.

The chairperson of the urban planning committee should be the officer to chair the city building control committees instead of the Secretary of Works, as provided by the Building Control Act.

Madam Speaker, the committee considered the staffing and recruitment in these cities. Again, I want to go straight to the observations.

1. The committee observed that the staff structure of cities, which was approved by the Cabinet in January 2022 and adopted by the respective city councils has never filled. This means cities are operating with less than half of the required staff. I beg the Members to refer to table 1 and see the recruitment levels of each city.
2. All affected cities suffered from a shortage of staff due to the ban on recruitment by

Public Service, despite the availability of wage. The current position by the Ministry of Public Service is that the ban applies only to the recruitment on replacement, a situation that has greatly affected staffing levels in all cities and mother districts. The committee recommends that the Government should ensure the implementation of the approved human resource structure for cities and lift the ban on recruitment.

3. The committee recommends that the Government should provide an adequate budget for both the new cities and the parent districts to remedy the shortage of staff in the Financial Year 2024/2025. That was then, when the committee made the report.
4. The committee recommends that the Government should fast-track the salary review commission in local governments.

Madam Speaker, the committee considered asset sharing between the cities and the mother districts.

The committee observed that the Ministry of Local Government has never issued any guidelines to facilitate the smooth operationalization of the new cities in question, including asset sharing.

The committee observed that the absence of guidelines has led to hostilities between the new cities and the parent districts. In some instances, local officials in the parent districts have taken advantage of the vacuum to sell off existing public assets, especially land.

The committee recommends that:

1. The Minister of Local Government should lay before Parliament guidelines for asset sharing between the new cities and parent districts within 30 days.
2. The Inspector General of Government (IGG) should carry out an investigation into all the alleged fraudulent transactions of assets in the newly established cities,

report to Parliament within three months, and prosecute the culprits.

The committee recommends that the sale of public assets, including land, be halted until the Ministry of Local Government lays before Parliament the guidelines on asset sharing between cities and the parent districts.

Madam Speaker, we also considered the road equipment for these new cities.

The committee observed that the lack of road equipment has affected cities' efforts to maintain already dilapidated roads, mainly because they have to incur mechanical repair costs for the road construction equipment, most of which was already grounded when the cities were still under municipal status.

The committee recommends as follows:

One, the Government provides funding for the procurement of durable road equipment and improves on the existing equipment for all the new cities. The equipment, among others, should empower cities to construct paved roads in the Financial Year 2024/2025 –that is, when we wrote the report.

Two, the Ministry of Works and Transport should adequately equip regional mechanical workshops to prevent the high cost of transport and delayed maintenance works.

Madam Speaker, the committee also looked at the statutory bodies and observed that although the Ministry of Local Government enabled cities to establish required statutory bodies, these were not well facilitated to enable them to effectively execute their mandate.

The committee recommends that the Government should provide adequate funding to enable statutory bodies in the cities to execute their mandate.

Madam Speaker, the committee also looked at the relocation of the new district headquarters.

The committee observed that the Government had neither supported the district local governments to relocate to new headquarters, nor facilitated cities to set up their new offices.

Number two, the committee observed that there is no law that requires a district headquarters to be constructed in a place recognised as a town. Paragraph 32 of the Third Schedule of the Local Government Act only requires such a declaration of a town to be made after the construction of the district headquarters.

The committee observed that in some cities visited, the mother districts were constructing premises at the subcounty headquarters, implying that the town council offices needed relocation since the land that housed them had been taken over.

The committee recommended that the Government should implement its early commitment of equal start-up funding for all the mother districts. That was by then.

Number two, the committee recommends that the Ministry of Local Government should gazette the new town council locations that already house the new district headquarters, within 45 days from the date of the adoption of this report by Parliament. Madam Speaker, I know that this recommendation may have been overtaken.

Madam Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government should allocate funds to enable both the new cities and the mother districts to establish new infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, the committee also looked at office space and accommodation for these new cities.

The committee observed that the majority of staff of the new cities still occupy and use the office space for the old municipalities, which is not sufficient for their smooth operation.

The committee recommends that the Government should provide adequate funding to mother districts to construct and furnish

new district headquarters as a priority in the Financial Year 2024/2025.

The Government should introduce a legal framework to streamline and guide both mother districts and the new cities on asset sharing, relocation and infrastructure.

Madam Speaker, the committee also looked at remuneration of political leaders in the new cities.

The committee observed that in Regulation 4 of the First Schedule of the Local Government Act, cities with high local revenue will have more funds to spend on emoluments of their officials as compared to those with less revenue, which not only creates discrepancies in payments to the public servants, but also creates room for abuse of funds in disguise of emoluments.

The committee observed that discrepancies in emoluments and allowances cause a decline in morale and create unnecessary competition for jobs within high revenue generating local governments, and low level generating local governments thus attracting an environment of corruption.

The committee recommends that the Government should introduce a Bill that will govern the operation of cities.

The committee recommends that the Government should amend the Local Government Act and any other relevant laws that govern a city or urban area, to harmonise the salary and emoluments of staff and political leaders, regardless of revenues generated.

Madam Speaker, the committee looked at the funding of the cities.

The committee observed that the process of creating cities was done without due consideration of the criteria laid out in the Local Government Act, Cap 243.

The committee observed that in the process of creating these cities, some rural subcounties were annexed to the existing municipalities

without putting into consideration several critical issues about the future growth and development of the cities.

The committee observed that the Government has failed to fund cities as per the status.

The committee recommends that the Government should ensure adequate and sustainable funding to the newly created cities in the subsequent financial years before the remaining five cities take effect, that is Entebbe, Moroto, Nakasongola, Kabale, and Wakiso, to enable them to meet the demands and expectations of a city status.

The committee recommends that the Government should be transparent with Parliament and the public, stating whether it can fully implement this commitment.

General observation

The committee on Government Assurance and Implementation did its assessment and found gaps in the operationalisation of the 10 cities created by the Government and approved by Parliament. The gaps were largely attributed to a lack of an enabling regulatory and legal framework, office space and accommodation, appropriate physical development plans, inadequate staffing, and inadequate funding.

Conclusion

The committee concludes that to a large extent, the Government has not implemented this assurance to fully operationalise the new cities.

I, therefore, pray that the report of this Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation, on the status of implementation of the government assurance to fully operationalise the newly created cities, be considered by this House and the recommendations therein adopted.

Madam Speaker, I beg to report.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, the chairperson of the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation for the good report.

Honourable minister, on the issue of asset-sharing, you talked about having the guidelines, but I picked interest in fraudulent sale of assets for the public. I want you to respond to that in line with the Section 32(6) of the Public Finance Management Act. Yes, Hon. Ssewungu?

3.48

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee who came in after I was the vice chairperson. I also had the time to visit these cities when I was the vice chairperson, carrying out the same job. However, your report is stronger than mine. Thank you very much, Hon. Abed Bwanika.

The issue of land in the new cities, honourable minister, through the Speaker, must be given a lot of attention. In Fort Portal, the old district was in control of the land against the new city, and they were fighting each other. So, who takes control of land? What is the process of taking over assets between the old district and the new city?

Properties in Mbarara - they were complaining. The mother district was in control of the offices within the city, while the administrators of the new city did not have where to sit. Could those assets be taken over by the new city because they are within its jurisdiction now? And what happens to the new districts?

Honourable minister, concerning the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID), you are making very good roads in these new cities, even in Masaka, we have them, but what kind of contract did you sign with USMID? This is because after the construction of these roads, there must be equipment to do the routine maintenance.

As we talk, Madam Speaker, the National Water and Sewerage Corporation is digging out some areas. After digging out parts of those new roads, nobody repairs them; there is no equipment in place to work on those roads after they are handed over to the Government.

Places taken over from different annexed areas - in Kalungu, where I come from - Masaka was in a battle, when it came to taking over some parishes from Kalungu District - Kibisi and Kasanje. But from the time they were taken over by the city, they have not changed. There is still dust. You have put some night lights there, but they are all filled with dust.

People need to see the difference, but what is happening is that you are putting strict laws in these new areas, stopping people from building the type of houses they are used to before they became part of the cities. Could we see that change take place, honourable minister?

Lastly, on governance structures, we need these leaders in those other cities to resemble those in Kampala City. When you talk about the Lord Mayor of Kampala, you notice that he has an official vehicle with the number plates reading "Lord Mayor." Then in Masaka, Mbale and other areas, the mayors are still looking like the LC V chairman of where I came from, with an old double cabin.

As I enter Masaka or Mbale City and any other city, I want to feel that pinch, interest, love, beauty of Kampala and my mayor should also be in that kind of status –

THE SPEAKER: The capital city - Masaka City - I am just looking at the difference between Masaka and Kampala Capital City.

MR SSEWUNGU: Capital city, okay, but at least when you go to Arusha, Dodoma and Dar es Salaam, you see that kind of happiness in their areas. That is what I am trying to bring out. Otherwise, I thank the committee and the honourable minister.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.52

MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Madam Speaker and the committee chairperson, for the report. I think we are to blame for the failure of operationalising some of these cities because only four are in operation.

However, we also need to ask ourselves: is it a necessary expense now to have these cities operational, or we only want to fulfil our political obligations of having more Members of Parliament?

THE SPEAKER: How many have you said are operational?

MS KAAYA: They are five.

THE SPEAKER: No, they are ten cities. They are: Arua, Gulu, Soroti, Mbale, Jinja, Masaka, Mbarara, Fort Portal, Hoima and Lira. Those are operational, out of the 15. Now, five cities are the ones which are not operational.

MS KAAYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the observation. So, I am wondering whether that expense should really be incurred by us now by operationalising everything. When we go for the physical development plans, there are many of our people who have been residents of those areas for a long time, and it is just upon some people to change the way they do things, especially on land use.

Our residents keep telling us - and this is not only to those in the cities, but also to those in the town councils and municipalities, that we do not take them through what they need to do and how they need to change their lifestyles. They have been here with the graves of their grandfather for years and years, but the way they should behave in cities is challenging. The other part of orienting the population to fit in the city needs some special department in this process.

The issue of waste management in cities, we are looking at the structural plans and the operationalisation of the governance, but land for the green zones in the cities, land for abattoirs, land for waste management, as if that one belongs to the Members of Parliament to help their people look out for where to dump their garbage.

Madam Speaker, we would like more -

THE SPEAKER: Did you say the Members of Parliament are the ones allocating people where to take the garbage?

MS KAAYA: They are intervening a lot. People keep requesting them: the abattoirs, the garbage collectors and the leaders.

THE SPEAKER: Don't these local governments have that land?

MS KAAYA: The issue is with the land. As if -

THE SPEAKER: I am saying: don't they have the land? It is just a matter of allocation.

MS KAAYA: Many do not have, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: We will hear from the minister.

MS KAAYA: The negotiations are not thorough.

THE SPEAKER: I do not want the Members of Parliament to be seen to be the ones doing Government work; it is not correct.

MS KAAYA: Madam Speaker, the negotiations are not always thorough. The land owners keep complaining as if the compensations are mean, and then, land titles are -

THE SPEAKER: For compensation to be done, the Government valuer does the valuation. The compensation is not just done after seeing that this is your land, and I think I should give you five shillings. No, there should be a valuation from a Government valuer.

MS KAAYA: Madam Speaker, thank you so much. I thank the committee for the report. Those are some of the observations.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Allan, Hon. Tonny and Hon. Edakasi?

3.56

MR ALLAN SSEWANYANA (NUP, Makindye Division West, Kampala City): Madam Speaker, I thank the committee for that elaborate report about our cities. However, going forward, we should think about making a law separately to govern and oversee the operationalisation -

THE SPEAKER: Which law is that?

MR SSEWANYANA: Like it is with the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA), because as a former councillor at KCCA, this helped us so much, and it is still helping others there to manage the city better.

The Ministry of Local Government seems to be overwhelmed by too much work in supervising all the local governments in this country. These are cities, and we need to see a change. We need to see something looking better like how Hon. Ssewungu said that when we go to other cities in other countries, not necessarily capital cities - when you go to Cape Town and Mombasa, you see at least some change in management, rather than when we go our cities like Masaka; it still looks like a local council or as a district.

THE SPEAKER: What is LC?

MR SSEWANYANA: Local council or local government of Masaka -

THE SPEAKER: Why are you trying to demean Masaka? Masaka is a city.

MR SSEWANYANA: By name -

THE SPEAKER: No, Member of Parliament from Masaka -

MR SSEWANYANA: He is the one who made the report. *(Hon. Bwanika rose)*

THE SPEAKER: Let me first hear from Hon. Oboth.

3.58

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Mr Jacob Oboth): Madam Speaker, for the record and for others who are going to read these proceedings after

us, when this matter of the cities came up, this Parliament was unanimous, and Hon. Ssewanyana was there -

THE SPEAKER: In the 10th Parliament -

MR OBOTH: I can forgive the MP for Kiboga because she was not in Parliament at the time, but I cannot forgive Hon. Ssewungu and Hon. Ssewanyana. For us to start debating cities means we are not appreciating the urbanisation policy of the Government.

And for you to say that every city must look like Kampala or Mombasa, you are not recognising the growth trend for any urban centre. Kampala in 1923 was not the Kampala you see now. Are you in order, Hon. Ssewungu? *(Laughter)*

MR SSEWANYANA: Madam Speaker, I was still driving my point home.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I like it when we ask questions like, "Is it necessary to have these cities?" I remember in the 10th Parliament, the Government had not brought all these cities. It was a give-and-take; it was a negotiation in the House.

People said, "If you want us to allow your cities, give us also in this area." It was not the Government's fault; it was Parliament that added cities - I am telling because I was there; you are new.

4.00

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Madam Speaker, I would like to invite Hon. Ssewanyana to Masaka City. Ever since it was awarded city status, Masaka has grown into a growth centre for the entire region. *(Applause)* You need to come and see the road network and the businesses there.

This Parliament gave us money for a new stadium, and we are constructing it. *(Applause)* It is not true that Masaka has not changed; it is growing. I invite you - I will even pay for your accommodation, honourable member - *(Laughter)* - so that you enjoy Masaka.

THE SPEAKER: The last time Hon. Ssewanyana was in Masaka, he was in – *(Laughter)* – so, he did not see how beautiful the city is.

4.01

MR TONNY AYOO (NRM, Kwanja County, Kwanja): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the committee for the report, and I support the recommendations. Most importantly, urbanisation is very significant in the development of a community and any area. We would like to support Government and this Parliament.

I was in the last Parliament, and we supported the creation of these cities. When you now look at most of these towns, which are being supported because they have become cities and municipalities under the Uganda Support to Municipal Infrastructure Development (USMID) programme, for example, you notice that they have changed in terms of the structures and lives of people. The economic activities increase and social services in terms of education, health, innovations, and business get better than before.

I would like to give you an example of Apac Town. After the support from USMID, the whole town has changed; it is beautiful, and businesses have increased. It is the same when you get to Masindi and Gulu.

The main issue here is that this will require a lot of support from the Government and Parliament, in terms of guidelines, resources, and budget, so that where there are gaps and challenges in urbanisation, we are able to put in resources and support them to grow.

So, the general principle here is that we should support the urbanisation process that the Government has undertaken, supported by Parliament. Resources are now needed, and that should be the centre of our discussion. How do we prioritise the support, as per the report of the chairperson and the committee, to push these centres, cities, municipalities, and even the rural growth centres? Employment has increased as a result of having these cities, which Parliament must support.

I would like to thank the committee, and we should concentrate on what we need to do, going forward, because we know that there are challenges. Thank you, Madam Speaker. *(Applause)*

4.03

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. Let me also thank the chairman for the report and maybe comment on two or three things.

One is the issue of access to water. There are new cities that were approved, but with difficulties. If I use the example of Soroti City, we still have the same access point of water from Awoja, supplying the city and supplying Kalaki and Kaberamaido districts and a fleet of all those.

So, it would be good for the ministry to now plan the source of water for only Soroti City and also plan other sources for the fleet of the other town councils in all those districts. In Kaberamaido Town Council, we face water challenges, and it is because we are dependent on Soroti City to extend the water to Kaberamaido. It would be important for the ministry to pay attention to that.

The other thing is about the emoluments of local councils, which I will tell you, is the same issue, probably in the cities as it is in the rural areas. The work for most of the LCIs has increased beyond what it used to be because of the growth in our economy.

Today, in the city, most LCIs would get paid a percentile out of sales of land and other things like that. They continue to look for ways to be rewarded. The chairman and committee were right to point out that for local councils, whether they are councilors or LCIs chairpersons, they need better – the Government needs to plan better for them, as their level of involvement has increased.

Finally, generally, the role of what we call a “parish” or “ward” has also increased. Ever since the coming of the Parish Development

Model (PDM), we now see large populations around wards and parishes, and that population requires better planning.

As I speak, whereas our policy seems to say that healthcare services should go to the subcounty, in terms of health centres III, there is a lot that is happening in the parish. The transfer of the health centre II services to the health centre IIIs is leaving a gap that is not being filled by the policy. That kind of policy needs to be rethought. In the rural areas, some parishes are too large to even provide for the resources. Thank you.

4.06

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to salute the committee for the work well done. I am from Terego, but occasionally, I come to Arua City, which is one of the new cities. The areas he alluded to, especially garbage collection, are crucial for the new cities.

So, it is imperative upon the nation to specifically allocate money to the new cities for their operationalisation because the influx of the population is at a very high rate.

We used to run up to Kampala, but now the number of buses that travel to Kampala every other day has reduced because we have a city called Arua. We share Arua with the Democratic Republic of Congo and South Sudan. They are lucky to have a city in Uganda, and in Arua.

There is also the issue of water challenges. Whatever the National Water and Sewerage Corporation had planned is so small now for the cities. There is a need to plan for water, especially by the National Water and Sewerage Corporation. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you need to take note of the issue of garbage; it is a very serious matter. That is why one time somebody brought a motion on retention of Non-Tax Revenue.

4.08

MR GABRIEL OKUMU (NRM, Okoro County, Zombo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee for a very elaborate report. Since the window for operationalisation of cities has opened, I would like to bring in the aspect of our town councils.

In Zombo, we have two town councils, which were created but have not been operationalised. These are Padea Town Council and the Warr Town Council. The services or the money they used to get through the subcounties - I mean the support they used to get from the Government, since their creation five years ago, they do not have the resources to run the town councils.

Secondly, I would also like to ask the Minister of Local Government, since he has come - the policy of urbanisation is good. In Zombo, we have Paida Town Council. For the last 15 years, it has been requesting and it has been qualifying to be elevated to a municipality. To date, if you see the reports, chronologically they have been qualifying, but up to now -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Okumu, let us first operationalise what was created before we create others, because Hon. Oboth-Oboth is going to stand up, and Hon. Angura will also stand up on Tororo. Let us first operationalise what was created, and create others when we have the money. Yes, honourable member for Youths?

4.09

MR EDSON RUGUMAYO (NRM, Youth Representative, Western): Madam Speaker, I would like to extend gratitude to the committee for a comprehensive report. As the chairman read the report, I noted one thing that really made me think twice. He noted that some cities have development plans, but others do not adhere to those development plans.

Madam Speaker, as planning professionals, we are often reminded that failing to plan, we plan to fail. Secondly, these cities that we shape in the beginning, shape our lives in the end. For example, if you build a city and provide

more spacious streets, you invite more cars. If you build a city and create more walking space, you are providing a comfortable space for pedestrians. If you build a city and create more space for cyclists, you are encouraging cyclists.

Our forefathers here, by 1945, found it very important to invite a German architect to come here and plan Kampala. But when you look at it now, most of the suburbs of Kampala are growing as grand slums. Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Actually, when you are coming from Entebbe, that is a welcome for you. The buildings you see when you are coming from Entebbe -

MR RUGUMAYO: Madam Speaker, I need to emphasise: it is imperative that we emphasise the aspect of development planning. I believe strongly that these cities were created to alleviate pressure from Kampala City. Now, if we make the mistake of not planning for them properly, and if we make the mistake of not emphasising strict adherence to development plans, we are planning to fail as a country.

It will be absurd for the young people who will come after us in 40 years from now to be raised in Uganda, which is one grand slam. It will be unfortunate. I would like to urge this House to emphasise strict adherence to physical development planning for this country's development.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Yes, Hon. Eddie Kwizera.

4.12

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you very much. I would like to thank the committee for a good report. Honourable members, yes, we have the Ministry of Local Government, but it is not in charge of the urban policy. The urban policy is housed in the Ministry of Lands, Housing, and Urban Development. It means that there is a constitutional conflict, which the Government needs to take into consideration and say that, if we are developing Uganda, the purpose of

having cities and other urban areas is to have a well-planned country. This means that there should be coordination and a good relationship between the ministry responsible for urban policy and the one implementing or urbanising the country. That is very important, Madam Speaker.

Another issue that is very important is that when the Ministry of Local Government was creating the cities and urban centres, like municipalities and town councils, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development issued a Certificate of Financial Implications. This means that what was presented by the Ministry of Local Government and the Government had a corresponding financial implication.

What happened when you came to Parliament and said that you had money to operationalise town councils, cities and other urban centres? Is it that those certificates for financial implications, if audited, were false or correct? Secondly, we are talking about resource allocation for implementing and operationalisation of the cities -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Oboth-Oboth, I would like you to take note of what he is raising - that when they brought a certificate of financial implications, that was meant to create -

MR KWIZERA EDDIE: Madam Speaker, Hon Oboth-Oboth, as the senior minister should be sitting here, because we do not see the minister of finance, we do not see the minister of - we do not even see the Prime Minister.

THE SPEAKER: The Attorney-General is also seated there.

MR KWIZERA EDDIE: I would think that at least - the other day, the minister in charge of works was actually lamenting. Madam Speaker, you remember how Gen. Katumba Wamala was lamenting and suspending *-(Interjections)-* I thought you were in defence. Hon. Katumba Wamala, the Minister of Works and Transport, did come here and suspended national roads because of finance. Now, we are talking about

operationalisation of cities. That is money but we do not see the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Hon. Magezi himself -

THE SPEAKER: How do we know that it is about money? Bring your issue.

MR KWIZERA EDDIE: As I conclude, we talk about resources, we talk about harmonisation of who manages the policy, and actually, to make sure that this Parliament does not create other urban centres without proving that there are sufficient resources to operationalise those centres. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Dr Ayume.

4.15

DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko): Thank you, Madam Speaker, and I thank the Chairman, for presenting a good report.

Madam Speaker, I would like to draw your attention to the issue of the regional maintenance workshops for road equipment. In West Nile, like the chairman had alluded to, the issue of equipment maintenance, our regional equipment workshop is 300 kilometres away, that is in Gulu. Therefore, the turnaround time of the caterpillars, the bulldozers, the tractors is as long as six months. We have to wait for up to six months for the technical team to come all the way from Gulu to repair our equipment.

Finally, I did not hear anything about the issue of sewerage. Most cities have now resorted to septic tanks and soak pits, but I think what the colonial government left here, in terms of the sewerage grid, has not been improved over the last 50 years. If you look at what they left in Kasolo, Naguru, Bogolobi, and Nakasero, it is still the same sewerage grid.

I hope that in the new cities, national water can also improve the sewerage network as opposed to septic tanks and soak pits. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from Hon. Akiiki and then Hon. Angura.

4.17

MS FLORENCE ASIIMWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Masindi): Thank you so much, Madam Speaker, and I thank the committee for the good report. For your information, I also studied urban planning, so whatever has been said here is important and dear to me.

My question is, what is the relationship between the mayors, the town clerks, and the MPs in charge of these municipalities and cities? Technical people and politicians - there is always a disjointed effort. I do not know whether MPs who come from municipalities and cities are listening to all this, how many times they go and meet in the councils to find out what is happening in their cities.

Honourable colleagues, there is also a -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Florence, it is not only in cities or municipalities. All Members of Parliament are ex-officials of the councils.

MS ASIIMWE FLORENCE: Yes, but for this case, we have MPs specifically for municipalities and cities. As a woman MP, I can go to the district council and the municipal council. Therefore, there is a need for these three arms of government: the mayors, town clerks and the MPs in charge of these municipalities because that is why we created them -

THE SPEAKER: They are not the three Arms of Government. The three Arms of Government are: Executive, Legislature and Judiciary.

MS ASIIMWE FLORENCE: Madam Speaker, I do understand that, but these three sectors, whatever we call them, it is important that they link together. If they do not work together, you will find that the mayors will be doing their own things.

Madam Speaker, we give the municipalities Shs 1 billion, and what they do with it, we may not know, but it is easier for the MP in charge of a municipality to follow the nitty-gritty of that municipality.

Madam Speaker, urban planning and management are under the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, and there is also the local government. What is the link between these two? We, therefore, need to have some sort of multi-sectoral planning to come up with proper physical planning. I do not know how the Ministry of Local Government and the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development work together. Otherwise, we used to have – when I was a district urban officer in Luweero, we used to have master plans for all these urban centres. I do not know whether we still have those urban centres because planning takes place after the development.

This is actually why we have slums. We do not plan early. By the time you plan, there are already slums and breaking some of these structures becomes difficult. You may have to compensate them. Therefore, if we are shifting, we have these peri-urban areas that should be better planned than the CBD - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Angura and then Hon. Jesca.

4.20

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also thank the chairperson and his committee members for a good report.

You will recall that the whole country was declared a planning area. It is unfortunate that we are not following this to the dot. It is, therefore, high time we emphasised and supported planning, starting with the cities, and urbanisation in general.

The rate of urbanisation growth is so high, and this will be good for us shortly, such that we release the pressure on land for production, among others.

Madam Speaker, as I support the chairperson and all that has been raised, it is prudent that I re-echo the statement that you said. As Tororo and Bukedi in general, we are among those who are expecting a city. This city is coming

with relief from the problems that Tororo has been having. We are now privileged that when that time comes, we shall be seeing another two or three districts. How I wish we fast track this such that we can see how to bring development nearer to the people by getting Tororo City, which will be in Tororo County. And it should come with the proper planning and provisions, as has been raised by the chairperson and the committee, such that we see that rolled out in the districts.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, as Parliament, we heard a rumour that Tororo is supposed to become a city. So, I want to hear from the minister on how far they have gone with the issues of Tororo? As Parliament, we are ready to grant Tororo city status.

MR ANGURA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Leader of the Opposition (LOP). Hon. Jesca, you do not come from a city.

4.23

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee for a very good report. I support the rest in saying that we need to ensure that all these cities are well facilitated. We committed ourselves, as a House and as Government. Therefore, we need to ensure that all of them are operationalised.

Secondly, it would have been better if we had that component, reflecting what we need to ensure the implementation of all that we have planned -

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. When you talk about planning, remember that you are the same people who did appropriation. You will need to check whether you appropriated money for these remaining cities.

MS ABABIKU: Lastly, Madam Speaker, I feel that we need to put more emphasis on equipping and sustaining our regional mechanical workshops. This will provide a

bridge between our districts and the ministries. For example, the one in Gulu - I am in touch with the workshop, but the maintenance is so poor.

I, therefore, recommend that the ministry responsible for the workshops should come up with a comprehensive report so that we get to know the challenges that are always causing our equipment to be down, and we see how to address them.

Lastly, the town councils are not operational. Can we have a report? I have the Pakelle Town Council – *(Interruption)*

4.25

MR KARIM MASABA (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the chairperson for the wonderful report. As a Member of Parliament from Mbale City, most of the challenges we are facing surround funds, and as the minister stated, issues concerning garbage.

Madam Speaker, I think we need to address it as soon as possible because, for example, we only have two trucks that have to ferry garbage in the entire city. We have dedicated one to the central market, meaning only one truck has to collect garbage in the entire city, which is not realistic.

Madam Speaker, you look at the money that was sent to Mbale Municipality, it is the same money being sent to Mbale City, yet the scope of work has significantly increased. For example, roads. You will see we are covering about 150 kilometres within the municipality. Now we have over 500 kilometres to deal with, but the money does not reciprocate the amount of work that has increased.

The last one concerns the assets that were shared. When you look at Mbale City - the district has taken almost all the assets. Even the land in the city, Mbale District, owns everything. We also do not have any road equipment. That is why we are facing challenges. We have to go to Jinja to bring equipment, and it is very

expensive because the employees who come with the equipment from Jinja have to be paid per diem. You find that we are spending about Shs 70 million in a quarter to pay staff who come from Jinja with their equipment to help in Mbale. Look at the roller, we depend on the mercy of Bukedea District because Bukedea has come several times to help with rollers to do most of our roads –

THE SPEAKER: Therefore, Bukedea is a very friendly district.

MR MASABA: Bukedea is a good neighbour, and it has been helping us. However, it is sad that Mbale City has to look at Bukedea District to help with some of these services.

Lastly, is the issue of garbage. Madam Speaker, we need to look at how we can relocate –

THE SPEAKER: Where we have equipment in a nearby district -these are all government properties, so we should be able to share as we plan for others.

MR MASABA: The challenge of sharing is that we do barter trade. What happens is that they will tell us that their equipment needs new tyres, new batteries, and we have to go through that cost. Recently, we had to go through the same cost, and you know the cost of this equipment, tyres and machines –

THE SPEAKER: Yes, the cost of wear and tear.

MR MASABA: Yes, which is very expensive. The last thing concerns the site where we dump garbage in Mbale City. I do not know what plan you have, but the current site at Doko is at the entrance of the city. When you are coming to Mbale, you are welcomed by heaps of garbage, which is not a good picture. I think it is high time we got somewhere else, far away from the centre of the city, where we can dump our garbage. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

4.28

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me join honourable colleagues to appreciate the committee leadership for a very good report. I am only dismayed by something that was missed, which is relevant and applicable to the subject matter; the audit concerns of 2023.

In December 2023, the then Auditor-General, Mr Muwanga John, raised a very serious concern about the operationalisation of these cities. Funds, to the tune of Shs 427 billion plus, were dispatched as a start-up fund. However, in the report, to one's dismay, a whopping over Shs 41 billion was swept back to the Consolidated Fund. Of course, that is a justification for the lack of absorption capacity by those new cities, even when they were grappling with the challenge of constraints on finances.

Three-quarters of the challenges that the cities are grappling with are compounded by insufficient funding. How on earth would they fail to utilise funds that had been dispatched for the operationalisation of the cities?

Madam Speaker, there are also issues of non-disclosure of liabilities by these cities amounting to Shs 1.763 billion. This, of course, has resulted from mergers, which I know the minister is aware of. I also concur with the report that the experts are urging the Government against functionalisation or operationalisation or both, of the other five cities until the 10 have taken off.

The ministry - I do not know whether it is in the report, but I think it is in one of the interactions I have had with the managers of some of these local governments, including Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA). I may not concur with my good friend, Hon. Allan Ssewanyana, who was proposing that all these cities should be under a similar Act like that of Kampala Capital City Authority. That Authority, if you read the Act, is a mashed potato. In fact, the Lord Mayor and elected leaders, particularly, are up in arms to have it overhauled, not even amending it.

When you read sections of the Act, just like in the Local Government Act - I have just been looking for this. Section 4, paragraph (a) says that the city shall be equivalent to a district. Can you imagine? This means that the city council shall exercise the same functions and powers that are conferred on a district within its area of jurisdiction.

So, you realise that these cities would better remain as local government councils rather than being Authorities. An authority gives latitude to the powers that be to make appointments, which, in a way, infringes on the rights of the powers that are given to the people to elect their leaders. That is why you see conflicts and rifts without number within the KCCA.

Madam Speaker, the issue of guidance by the ministry on asset sharing is taking too long –

THE SPEAKER: Actually, asset management.

MR NAMBESHE: Asset management! Even staff restructuring is taking rather too long. It is also causing lots of conflicts and disputes within the cities. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us first hear from the minister, then we can have a rejoinder, if any. Yes, honourable minister.

4.33

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Raphael Magyezi):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, committee chairperson and your members. Honourable colleagues, the reactions given are quite informative and we appreciate them.

Madam Speaker, I have noted 14 issues, which I would need to react to, but my immediate comment would be that we agree with the committee report - (*Applause*) - and fully embrace their recommendations. Since most of the recommendations were giving us 30 days for implementation, it is my considered opinion that, Madam Speaker, you allow us to go and focus on implementing these, and we come back to the House in 30 days.

The Members have raised very serious issues, which require adequate attention; the urban policy, governance structures and the statutory bodies. Are they performing? The staff structures, do we have adequate staff for the cities? The financing of the cities. I will be able to show that actually Government has increased financing. Even the local revenue has improved, but that needs a bit of time for me to organise.

The asset sharing, where are we? The relocation of district headquarters, I should be able to lay on the Table the gazette gazetting the new town councils of those district headquarters. Honourable colleagues, it is the law that requires that the district headquarters be located in a town, either a municipality or the town council. Just cast your eye, there is no district headquarters which are not in a town. Already, we have secured that. Cabinet approved it, we gazetted but I need to lay it on the Table for the information of the Honourable members.

The legislation, where are we with a separate law for the towns? On the physical planning, which towns have developed their physical plans, and where are the others for the other towns? The area of the road equipment is very important. I need, again, to link up with the Ministry of Works and Transport so that we can present the correct response.

On the remuneration of local government leaders, there is something I should be able to present in one month. That is moving in the right direction to improve the remuneration of our local leaders from Local Council One (LC I) up to Local Council IV. The President has already directed, and we have a Cabinet Paper. I would wish that you give me that one month so that when I come back, I come with something substantial to the House.

The remaining five cities, should they be operationalised or be left out? The rural city matters, where are we? The waste management - I will brief the House at that time on the strides we have made in developing the solid waste management policy for the country. Answering the issue, are we going to keep on depositing

waste in the neighbouring rural areas or are we moving towards recycling, improving, and turning waste into resources; allow me to come back to the House.

The issue of the sale of public assets, and where are we when we put a ban on those sales? Therefore, Madam Speaker, it is my humble request that since I have bought into all the recommendations of the committee and taken note of the recommendations of the House, allow me to take that extra information and give me one month to report back to the House. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I would also like to have an audit of all assets that have been disposed of in all cities, in accordance with Section 32(6) of the Public Finance Management Act. You did not talk about Hon. Angura's question?

MR MAGYEZI: Madam Speaker, the issue of Tororo City and the other proposed districts outside Tororo is currently before the Cabinet. We have already drafted the necessary paper for consideration, and as honourable members know, the creation of a city and district is the function of Parliament. Therefore, when approved by the Cabinet, I will have to come back to Parliament for the necessary way forward.

4.39

MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi): Madam Speaker, there is one thing that I thought was worth mentioning: the issue of water in the urban councils. There is a policy by the Government that you cannot construct a borehole in a city, town council, or municipality.

However, we are in a crisis because they are saying we should not put boreholes there; the pipes for extending water in the urban centres are not there. The National Water and Sewerage Corporation has not yet been given money to extend water to cities and municipalities. The same challenge he is facing right now in the municipality -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Silas, you are quoting it badly. The provision is that you seek authorisation where National Water is. That is the position. It is not that you cannot drill a borehole. It is about seeking authorisation.

MRAOGON: Much obliged, Madam Speaker, but it is a problem, and they are saying that once water is contaminated because you are using a borehole, there will be a problem. We are lucky that the minister for water is here. I chair the Water, Sanitation, and Hygiene (WASH) forum, so I speak from an informed point of view. There is a crisis. You need to help municipalities and cities. We need money for extending water and WASH, as WASH is suffering in these urban centres.

Honourable minister, you need to speak tall so that we know where you are coming from. Tell us where the water, the extension, and the pipes are. What is happening? What are you doing? What are you about to do? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, it all comes back to what you were saying. You have said we should give you one month to come up with an action-taken report, as per rule 229. Therefore, we need an action-taken report on that.

MR MAGYEZI: Most obliged, Madam Speaker. As I explained, some of the issues raised refer to other sectors like water, roads, health units, and sewage management. That is why I believe that we manage local governments together with others.

The minister for lands may be in charge of physical planning, but implementation is with the local governments. In the meantime, as we come back, I beg the honourable colleagues, within the law, each Member of Parliament is a member of the local council in the district. Honourable colleagues, help us work together to improve some of these matters down there. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the next item is for Hon. Abed Bwanika. The report requires the Minister of Health - acting Leader

of Government Business - I am told you are acting, honourable minister for ICT. Can we have the minister inside?

Senior ministers, we get frustrated as a House when we come here to transact business and you are not here. We have a Bill on works. We have been waiting for the Attorney-General, and he is here but the minister to move the motion is not here. We have this report of Hon. Abed Bwanika, but the minister is not here. We cannot sit here and wait for ministers; it is very disappointing.

MR OBOTH: Madam Speaker, I hear you very well. The disappointment you demonstrate - I believe that the acting Government Chief Whip - but as a minister on this side, we are going to mobilise ourselves and be here tomorrow as we wait for the feedback from the acting Government Chief Whip, who could have been briefed.

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

(The House rose at 4.44 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 6 August 2025, at 2.00 p.m.)