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PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

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THIRD SESSION - SECOND MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 11 OCTOBER 2023



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 5TH SITTING - SECOND MEETING

Wednesday, 11 October 2023

Parliament met at 2.10 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, welcome to today's sitting. I have received a letter from the Leader of Opposition drawing my attention to events of yesterday where the Opposition decided to walk out of Plenary because I did not call on the minister to make a statement, regarding their complaints on the arrests of their leaders.

Like I guided them much earlier, I am happy that they have taken a route that is acceptable today; because yesterday, the Minister for Internal Affairs had asked me for permission not to be in the House.

Now, there was no way I could have asked him to stand up and make a statement when he had my permission to go and address other matters.

So, they have made a request that I should invoke my powers to require the Prime Minister to come with the Minister for Internal Affairs and make a statement with regard to the complaints which they raised yesterday.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, tomorrow, I will put you on the Order Paper to make a statement and I will share with you a copy of the letter which the Leader of the Opposition has written to me.

These are things, which we always handle in this House. And it is usually where we want to get more information. So, I found it not plausible for me to call on the minister to come and just give a casual response when serious issues are being raised. I am glad that indeed, they followed this route and we shall have a statement tomorrow.

Honourable members, I have also received a communication signed by the Rt Hon. Speaker of Parliament, Anita Annet Among. And it reads;

“Honourable members, we recall that my office received a letter dated 15 August 2023 from Hon. Nathan Nandala Mafabi, Secretary-General of the Forum for Democratic Change, communicating the decision of the FDC party to remove Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda from the position of FDC Party Whip and replace him with Hon. Yusuf Nsibambi, MP Mawokota North.

No sooner had I received the said letter than I received a petition from some honourable members of Parliament who subscribed to FDC signed by Hon. Mwijukye Francis, among others, MP Buhweju County, which was received in my office challenging the

replacement of Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju Nganda with Hon. Yusuf Nsibambi; on grounds that the author of the letter had not followed the FDC constitution in arriving at the above decision.

I was, as the Speaker of Parliament, constrained by the said petition to effect the replacement of the FDC Party Whip. I, therefore, stayed action on the letter of the FDC Secretary-General pending further action from the party in addressing the grievances raised in the petition.

I communicated my position vide my letter dated 16 August 2023. On 6 October 2023, the court made a ruling to the effect that the FDC National Delegates Conference was free to convene and elect new office bearers.

Following the successful elections within the FDC party, the Secretary-General has vide his letter dated 7 October 2023 written to me communicating the decision of the National Delegates Conference of FDC, appointing Hon. Yusuf Nsibambi as FDC Party Whip in Parliament.

In the circumstances, therefore, I do accept the designation of Hon. Yusuf Nsibambi as FDC Party Whip. I take this opportunity to congratulate Hon. Nsibambi Yusuf upon his appointment to the office of FDC Party Whip in Parliament, Thank you."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, do you have a word?

2.16

MR YUSUF NSIBAMBI (FDC, Mawokota County South, Mpigi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this appointment *-(Interruptions)*

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Who has allowed you?

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The new whip is here whipping us, his people of the NRM are not here. So, is he in order to stand alone to whip us the NRM when the people he is supposed to whip are not yet in?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kibalya, you are out of order for refusing to be whipped *-(Laughter)-* but we have opposition Members here. We have FDC members here. I already see around four of them, even the leaning ones are here. So go on, Hon. Nsibambi-

MR NSIBAMBI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the protection. I take this appointment for my party as a very big challenge. You can tell and see what is going on. So, it is my duty and responsibility to galvanise the party and also to bring some sense of decency in the debates we are making in Parliament as FDC.

I promise to work with all the other members and my whipping is not like being a supervisor, I will try to ensure that we have common positions that meet or address the issues that affect society rather than just playing to the gallery. Thank you, very much *-(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, last time, we talked about the action taken report-
2.19

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Mr Speaker, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate Hon. Nsibambi Yusuf for accepting to take that position and also assuring us that he is going to work with us and the members from his party. So, on behalf of the Government, we pledge that we shall work with you. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Here we work together and this is the only platform where every one of us can have a chance to raise their issues. Honourable members, the other issue I wanted to comment on is concerning the action taken report on digital number plates, on which I had stopped the Committee on Physical Infrastructure. I had a comprehensive meeting and explained the reasons to the Members, some of which I do not need to bring here, but they are within our Rules of Procedure – where the procedural issues had not been properly followed.

Honourable colleagues, since then, I have had a meeting with the Attorney-General and the minister for security, where a formal complaint was made. This was a classified procurement, which we were handling in a manner not provided for under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) on how classified matters are handled.

So, because of that, I will invoke Section 24(2) of the PFMA that handles issues of classified nature, whereby we have a committee. For budget, we have a committee and for accountability, we have a committee that handles classified matters.

The procedure is very clear: even those names are vetted. Some of them are provided for under the law – the Chairperson Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development; the Chairperson Committee on Budget; and the Chairperson for PAC. Those names are provided for, but others are not. Those who are not are even supposed to be taken for vetting because this is about the security of the country, not things which we want spread around.

The procedure is that, once the classified committee handles a matter, the report is handed over to the Speaker of Parliament, who handles it with the head of the Executive. The Speaker has to ensure that the concerns raised in that report are followed up to the letter.

With that, I want to, now, use my prerogative and invoke Section 24(2) of the PFMA that the classified committee, which handles the classified budgets, handles this matter. The minister should appear with other responsible ministers and they report to the Speaker within 45 days.

I also invoke my authority under Rule 7 of the Rules of Procedure to add on the Chairperson of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, because of the great work they have done and the evidence that they have so that they can share it that side.

So, with that, I will have matters of national importance. *(Member rose)* On my communication? Yes, Hon. Macho?

2.23

MR GEOFFREY MACHO (Independent, Busia Municipality, Busia): Mr Speaker, I appreciate your communication. I thank God for using you today that my good friend, Hon. Nsibambi, becomes a whip of FDC. This makes me stand on the Floor of Parliament and say that the God of the National Resistance Movement is working. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, the God of the National Resistance Movement started working when the UPC was put in charge of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

Secondly, the God of NRM, which I belong to, worked when the Democratic Party was put in charge of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. *(Interjections)* Today, on the Floor of Parliament, Hon. Nsibambi, the FDC whip, has just said he is ready to work with NRM, which means he should be ready for a ministry so that we know that the God of NRM works totally.

NRM, come 2026, will be a dancing party in this country and will be in charge of steady progress. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order.

MR OSEKU: Mr Speaker, matters of this House are matters of legislation and that is about the laws. What has just happened followed the rules of this Parliament.

However, the honourable member there rose on his God, which God we do not know – *(Laughter)* – forcing the House to believe him in anticipation, yet our rules do not allow that. So, is he in order to mislead this House to say that it is his God that is turning events in this House, yet for us it is about the laws?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the point of order you have brought – because, you see, we first prayed to God. I do not know whether it is God using him. *(Laughter)* He talked of the God of NRM, who is not recognised here. However, I think the biggest risk I am seeing is Hon. Macho joining Nsibambi rather than

Nsibambi coming here –(Laughter)- because he is feeling more comfortable.

However, honourable colleagues, whips are provided for under Rule 15 of our Rules of Procedure. And, working together is very critical for the smooth running of the House. So, let us not cause problems for our colleague.

You have heard what has been going around. Mr Yusuf Nsibambi was my lecturer at Law School at Makerere University. So, I know him very well. Kindly, let us not put him into our politics.

Let us leave him to do his work as a whip. (*Dr Baryomunsi rose*) Honourable minister, you want to guide the nation?

DR BARYOMUNSI: Yes. (*Laughter*) Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to provide information, especially for the benefit of my brother from Busia, that NRM, ideologically, believes in working with everybody for the good of this country and, even when we are allowed to go into multi-party politics, a political party different from NRM should not make an enemy of NRM.

It is in that context that NRM works with DP and UPC and Members of those parties are part of the Cabinet because we are trying to build national cohesion. So, even for Hon. Nsibambi, as a Member of FDC, there is no problem at all working with NRM –(*Interjections*) - even NUP is a registered political party. So, NRM believes that we work with everybody for the unity and prosperity of this country. In that context, we shall work with Hon. Nsibambi and we welcome him. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I can see you have guided us very well.

Honourable colleagues, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of district and subcounty speakers and council clerks from Pakwach District Local Government, represented by Hon. Emmanuel Ongiertho and Hon. Jane Avur Pacuto. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

Honourable colleagues, we also have pupils and teachers of Joy Dominion Academy from Bunya County West, Mayuge District. They are represented by Hon. Aggrey Bagiire Henry and Rt Hon. Rukia Nakadama Isanga. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. Thank you. (*Applause*)

We also have students and teachers of Fountain of Hope High School from Ntenjeru County South, Kayunga District. They are represented by Hon. Patrick Nsanja and Hon. Idah Nantaba. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. (*Applause*)

Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I have a lot of business to handle today, so, no matters of national importance.

Hon. Nsereko?

2.29

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It has come to my knowledge a few days ago and this afternoon– but conclusively this afternoon – that there is a sweeping arrest and detention of cyclists in the city, who are doing commercial business known as *boda boda*.

While some were passing Jinja Road this morning, we witnessed an accident –I think one of them was trying to evade law enforcement and was carrying a passenger. They ended up crashing into a car and what happened to the passenger was pathetic.

Mr Speaker, we do not say “No” to the role of law enforcement in the performance of its duties. These young motorcyclists have come to us stating that they do not say “No” to acquiring riding licenses for their motorbikes, but the price is extremely high.

To have a *boda boda* cyclist pay the same cost for a riding license like me, who drives a car is unfair and that comes from our legislative arm.

On Saturday, when I was passing through Lyantonde, I was stopped by another cyclist who said, “Honourable, we hear you there, but we have become a firm for law enforcement officers on that side. They take it as an opportunity to stop us at every chance that they come across to extort money from us.”

Mr Speaker, this vice must stop. We owe our people a duty of care. We know there are not many jobs in the country - these young people have gone to school and have failed to find jobs but they have decided to part with their parent’s land to get motorbikes to at least keep themselves – Some of them have become breadwinners for their families.

However, the highhandedness of apprehending them - their usage as a weapon of extortion by some people within the law enforcement department - look at the number of motorbikes at police stations – Mr Speaker, this would be capital for these people.

Mr Speaker, if you look at this circle, it will only create criminality. If we want to educate them, let us do that. Let us educate them on better road safety measures. If we want to pursue them, let us adopt what you are saying; the use of electronic measures so that we know a boda boda cyclist who has not stopped at a traffic light will be fined. Apprehending them has not only caused more chaos but more accidents.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What are your prayers, honourable colleague?

MR NSEREKO: Yes, we need safety on the road - we need trade orders in the cities and even in the villages. We need to protect the lives of our people who are using these motorcycles for their normal business. However, we are also saying that the law enforcement should go slow on them. In any case, this House should review the fees on riding licenses or what we call “drivers’ licenses” *-(Applause)-* so it is easily accessible, affordable and usable for every single cyclist in this country.

Mr Speaker, after taking them through learning, we can then start the other process of fines and apprehension. But keeping motorbikes at police stations is not only dangerous but a security threat. I implore this House to unanimously stand up and stop this vice. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Clerk, usually, we have two minutes for matters of national importance. Honourable colleagues, it is a free sitting so do not squeeze yourselves. Why are you squeezing in this corner?

2.34

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will not tell a lie to this House that the fees for licensing the motorcyclists will reduce overnight. This is because it came into place by an Act of Parliament.

I have noted the concern the honourable colleague has raised on behalf of the concerned citizens, but I request the Member to bring the concern officially.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. This is an official channel, honourable minister. This is not an informal or village meeting. This is Parliament; this is not a *baraza*. *(Laughter)*

MR BYAMUKAMA: Mr Speaker, I have noted his concern and I am going to borrow from it. We shall start with the technicalities as the Ministry of Works and Transport and then at a later stage, we shall come and seek help from Parliament regarding reducing the amount, if there is a need. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, it is beyond the amount. This is about enforcement measures. What the honourable colleague is saying is that there is violence and highhandedness.

MR BYAMUKAMA: I am going to get in touch with the Minister of Internal Affairs because as works’ ministry, we only ensure that the motorcyclists get good motorbikes which are up to standard, give them driving licenses and ensure that they have good roads.

Mr Speaker, enforcement, majorly in Kampala is handled by the ministry in charge of Kampala and the Ministry of Internal Affairs. I am going to get in touch with them because I am a stakeholder - to see that these violent arrests which result in accidents are stopped. We need to find better ways of enforcing the laws. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Also involve the area MP. Honourable colleagues, looking at the time I have; I want us to move very well with our Order Paper.

2.36

MR ACROBERT KIIZA (Independent, Bughendera County, Bundibugyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I am heartbroken as I raise this matter before this august House. The matter is regarding the rampant arrests of Ugandans by the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA).

Information on the ground that still needs to be investigated indicates that many Ugandans living around national parks and game reserves are being lured by some UWA authorities to search for ivory, pangolins and other wildlife species on demand abroad. The same people who lure these Ugandans are the same who arrest them.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, under the Whistle-blowers Protection Act, whistle-blowers are exorbitantly remunerated and this remuneration has been abused by some UWA authorities at the expense of poor Ugandans. As we speak, if you go to any nearby police station like Jinja Road Police Station, Kiira Road Police Station or Luzira Prisons, you will find many Ugandans suffering there at the expense of these people *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable colleague, just sit down. We have order in this House. You had your two minutes but you started rotating by telling us a story.

MR KIIZA: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. I beg you to allow me to say my prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do you want to continue with the story?

MR KIIZA: Not the story - my prayers - it is not always easy to get bail for victims with wildlife charges so I pray that an investigation is carried out by a committee of Parliament about the genuineness of UWA authorities implementing these arrests.

The other prayer is that the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should interest himself in this matter. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: If it is an issue of connivance, defrauding, brutality and all that, the minister can explain and if we are not satisfied, then we can involve our committee. Usually, we want to give the minister a chance.

2.39

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to also thank my honourable colleague, Hon. Acrobert for raising the matter. It is indeed unfortunate if the allegations are true.

What I know for a fact is that as a result of the law that was passed by this Parliament, serious punishments are provided for whoever is involved in wildlife crime, including life imprisonment. I am aware that every individual that we have arrested as Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) using the agencies of the police and the rest, has been put before court and duly prosecuted with evidence, be it ivory or pangolin. Nevertheless, I will take interest in the matter, dig deeper and get more information. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, please, study this matter deeply and give us a comprehensive statement and the status of cases. Indeed, this law was made so that we can protect our national parks. There should be no compromise on that, but in your investigations link up with the Member so that he can give you more information. In two weeks, you will be able to update the House. Thank you. Hon. Josyline Kamateneti.

2.41

MS JOSYLINE KAMATENETI (NRM, Woman Representative, Ntungamo): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. In July 2023, the Ministry of Education and Sports issued a list of secondary and primary schools chosen to be grant-aided for the Financial Year 2023/2024. In Ntungamo District, we were given three schools, that is, Ngoma Secondary School, Nyakyeru Subcounty, Karambi Secondary School in Nyarutuntu and Maama Janet Girls School in Nyakyeru Subcounty, with their proposed budgets of Shs 659 million for each school.

We went to the Ministry of Education and Sports, confirmed with the Commissioner, made the necessary preparations and submitted the list of the requirements.

On 26 September 2023, in a letter written by the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Education and Sports to the Public Service entitled: "Request to grant aid to 38 primary schools, 46 secondary schools in the Financial Year 2023/2024". Ngoma and Karambi Secondary Schools are not mentioned.

Ntungamo District has 34 subcounties and a population of around 580,000 people. We need primary schools. A list of five primary schools was submitted requesting grant-aiding. None of them appears on the list.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prayers.

MS KAMATENETI: Our prayers:

- i. Ngoma and Karambi Secondary Schools should be grant-aided this Financial Year 2023/2024.
- ii. The five primary schools that were submitted should be considered for grant-aiding this Financial Year 2023/2024.
- iii. The Ministry of Education and Sports should have an equitable distribution of resources.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I can see the Members looking at each other but Ntungamo District - sometimes, I know the Members of Parliament - is unique. It has around five to six districts in it if you are to talk of an average Ugandan district.

This is a problem, which the Central Government needs to look at. Service delivery based on administrative units cannot be effective. We should consider other parameters. For example, Ntungamo District getting the same quota as Mitooma District - that is cheating the people of Ntungamo. That is why there is clamour all the time; districts give us this and that. Another example is Wakiso District. As the Government, you need to have a unique way of looking at them.

About the issue of schools, honourable Minister of Education and Sports; you have heard the prayers.

2.44

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank my sister for raising this critical matter because matters of education are a key priority for everybody.

It is true that my ministry, last financial year, budgeted for coding and grant-aiding primary and secondary schools across the country. However, the resources given limited the number from being higher. Despite having been budgeted for in the last financial year, the funds were not released.

This financial year again, we budgeted for 38 primary schools and 46 secondary schools, as my colleague has mentioned, according to the availability of resources in the small envelope that we have. These schools were selected very carefully knowing that there were hundreds of primary schools across the country in need of coding, likewise hundreds of secondary schools across the country.

I must say that what my sister said is true that the Permanent Secretary wrote a letter indicating these 38 community primary schools and 46 secondary schools across the country for grant-aiding. However, that is not the final step.

I would like to request that I get more information. Of course, those are the lists sent to the Ministry of Public Service *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, continue.

DR MORIKU: If that is the final list and in the event that there are more resources; more schools can be added, including the ones my sister has raised. Otherwise, they are few because the funds could not allow us to have more schools for coding and grant-aiding. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Menya?

2.47

MS PASKA MENYA (Independent, Woman Representative, Pader): Thank you, Mr Speaker. While celebrating World Teachers Day in my constituency last week, I was notified by the District Education Officer of my district that some of the teachers who were recruited in July 2023 are not yet deployed.

As we remember, the theme was about the education we need for our children. I believe our children are not given access to half the education they need because the teachers are not yet deployed.

Even the teachers themselves were already laid off by their previous or former employers and were left without any choice with which to meet their family needs.

My prayer is that the Ministry of Education and Sports should with immediate effect ensure that these teachers are deployed. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. A related matter, Hon. Felix Okot?

2.48

MR FELIX OKOT OGONG(NRM, Dokolo South County, Dokolo): Mr Speaker and Members of Parliament, I rise on a matter of national concern. I bring forward the plight of students in my constituency, especially from Kwera Secondary School, Kangai Secondary School and St John Bosco Secondary School.

These students are very concerned about their future. Right now, Kwera Secondary School has only six teachers instead of 32. This will affect their future. In St John Bosco Secondary School, there are seven teachers and Kangai Secondary School has nine teachers.

I do not know whether it is by design or by commission that my people are undermined and marginalised. This is the future of my people, the future of my country. They are paying school fees but have no teachers.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Prayers.

MR OKOT OGONG: My prayers are that the Ministry of Education and Sports urgently deploys adequate teachers to these schools. ; for emphasis, Kwera Senior Secondary School, Kangai Secondary School, and St John Bosco Secondary School, Dokolo, immediately, without fail.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister? Hon. Enos on procedure-

MR ENOS ASIMWE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am rising under rule 8. It is not provided for, but it seems like we all have the same problem as all our colleagues. Through you, Mr Speaker, yesterday, we discussed the electricity sector, can you ask the Ministry of Education and Sports to give us the status of the education sector, so that we can bring out all our problems? This is because we have the same challenges.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

2.51

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Dr Joyce Moriku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank my two colleagues for raising these matters, all relating to teachers.

Mr Speaker, last financial year, my ministry recruited over 5,000 staff, out of which over 3,000 were teaching staff. Out of those, more than half of them were deployed, because the money which was meant for deployment was made available. As of today, we have close to 2,000 staff, teaching and non-teaching, who have not been deployed.

Our budget for deployment was over Shs 50 billion, and out of that, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development released only Shs 15 billion. As I speak, the current finances we have, cannot deploy all the teaching and non-teaching staff that were recruited.

I request my colleague from finance to assure us that my ministry will receive these funds so that we deploy all these teachers. However, allow me to bring a statement on this recruitment because last time, I spoke about it, to see how many we have recruited, how many are deployed, how many are left, and what resources or how much we still need to deploy.

Finally, I was in Dokolo, I visited St John Secondary School, Dokolo, and quite many schools – the ones my colleague was talking about - I also noted the challenges they presented to me. I came back and presented them to my ministry. We were –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Switch on, honourable minister.

DR MORIKU: We were hopeful and I even pledged to the school where I went, we should be in a position to deploy the teachers in the district. I beg to bring the statement, if allowed, about the issue of recruitment and deployment.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, even when you bring a statement,

which concludes that you need money, that statement is not helpful. I need a helpful statement.

Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, what do you have to say about this?

2.53

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I propose that you allow me to sit with the minister and harmonise before I make a statement in the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: [Member rose] Hajj, what is the issue?

2.54

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. We are always here during the budgetary cycle when the Ministers present their ministerial policy statements. We would like to see a Government that has harmony and cohesion.

Here is one minister in charge of education, clearly stating that they presented numbers to you for funding *-(Interjection)-* Listen. Our young generation can only be guaranteed a secure future you talked about in your manifesto, if they are well-educated.

The plea of Hon. Felix Okot-Ogong was that parents were footing a bill for zero services. Heads should be swinging because someone is footing a bill, from their own pockets, to send their children to school, and they are not finding teachers. It means that it is a proper abuse of office, why? Someone comes here and states that this is the money we need to deploy X, Y and Z teachers, but the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has no answers.

The statistics we need here are very simple:

1. How many teachers are required;

2. How many were deployed;

3. And what was the cause of the shortfall?

Then Parliament can address it in appropriation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable. Honourable colleagues, I know what you want the minister to tell us, but I also know what he goes through to make such a commitment. He cannot just do it. He also needs to do wide consultations. So, like you requested, honourable minister, have an inter-ministerial meeting, and on Wednesday, update the House or do you want to make your statement now?

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, this matter is very sensitive, and you know that I am also a Member of Parliament; I receive similar concerns.

What Hon. Nsereko said that what the minister proposed to us, and which I finally presented to you for approval; I would like to refer both of us to the Appropriations Act, and I commit that what we appropriated, Mr Speaker, will be released.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, the minister is now trying to be tactical *-(Laughter)-* but for now, what the minister has said is that he can only release what we gave him. However, we also know that he is bringing proposals for supplementary. So, if you believe this is a critical item and take it seriously that there is a gap, it is an issue he can consider in the supplementary.

Please, let us have a statement on Wednesday, after your inter-ministerial meeting. You have room to discuss and even consult at the Cabinet level, and then give us an update on Wednesday, Okay? - *(Dr Moriku rose)* - No, please, honourable minister, I will not have ministers whispering to each other, one comes after another. I need my Members to submit.

DR MORIKU: I said they released Shs 15 billion but they released Shs 32 billion out of Shs 52 billion. What is remaining is Shs 18 billion. That is the correction I wanted to make.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, Shs 18 billion was appropriated?

DR MORIKU: Shs 50 billion was appropriated, Shs 32 billion was released.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has committed that whatever was appropriated, he will give. However, go back and crosscheck.

Colleagues, please, allow me to do business.

Hon. Emmanuel Otaala-

2.58

MR EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to raise an issue of national importance, concerning the threat posed by the *Cuscuta campestris*, also known as the golden dodder. This is a notorious spaghetti-like weed, with tendrils, which is killing many plants, especially fruit plants like mango trees, and hedge trees, in my constituency.

During my travels across the country, I have seen this notorious weed in other parts of the country. This plant or weed is also notorious in wetlands and is destroying ecosystems, and animal and plant fodder.

Mr Speaker, in my area, which has been designated for fruit trees under the Parish Development Model, we feel this plant is dangerous to our people, who are going to grow fruits like mangoes and other fruit trees. This plant is indigenous to New Zealand and it is categorised as an unwanted species.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your prayer?

DR OTAALA: My prayers are that:

1. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries explains to the country the circumstances under which this plant, which is indigenous to New Zealand, came into Uganda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: From a weed, now you are qualifying it as a plant.

DR OTAALA: It is a plant, but a weed.

- a. The Commissioner responsible for crop protection or any relevant official of the ministry should immediately visit my constituency in West Budama South to assess the threat posed by *Golden dodder* and devise immediate strategies to eradicate it in the area, but also across the country.
- b. The ministry should strengthen regulatory mechanisms to prevent the importation of such dangerous plants and animal species into our country, bearing in mind the example of the hyacinth weed that has become notorious in our waters.

Mr Speaker, I beg to pray.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable. Please, agriculture minister, do as requested and report back within two weeks because it might need time for consultations.

Honourable colleagues, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers of Kinaawa High School, Kawempe South Division Kampala. They are represented by Hon. Kazibwe Bashir Mbazira and Hon. Shamim Malende. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* You can stand up for recognition. Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, the rest of the matters will be handled tomorrow because it is already 3.00 p.m.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF COVID-19 IN THE COUNTRY

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we shall stop handling matters of national importance at 3:00 p.m., so that we go to the substantive Order Paper. That is how we are judged on the business we cover in a day.

Then, every Thursday, we shall have one and a half hours, after the Prime Minister's time, to address Members' issues. *(Applause)* Last

Thursday, we handled, over 80 questions of Members. So, I hope this Thursday, and tomorrow, we can also handle a magnitude of issues regarding your constituencies.

Honourable colleagues, we have free seating, so do not block the way.

3.03

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Ruth Aceng): Mr Speaker and honourable members, at the First Sitting of the Second Meeting of the Third Session of the 11th Parliament, which took place on the 3 October 2023, this august House directed that I update the country on the status of COVID-19; I am here to do it.

It is worth noting that it is now more than three years since Uganda confirmed the first case of COVID-19 on 21 March 2020. As you may recall, Uganda recorded three major waves. The first was caused by the Wuhan virus mainly spread by truck drivers from August 2020 to January 2021, and we recorded 41,930 cases and 341 deaths.

The second wave was caused by the delta variant and lasted from May to August 2021. We recorded 57,767 cases and 2,912 deaths. While the third wave was caused by the omicron variant, which began in November 2021 to February 2022, we recorded 35,845 cases, 334 deaths. From March 2022 to date, we have recorded 45 deaths. Like the first wave that swept across the world in 2022, Uganda averted the fourth wave.

In regards to the current situation of COVID-19, as of September 30 2023, there are 171,869 total confirmed COVID-19 cases; 3,632 deaths in total, and 3,262,447 cumulative tests done. Between January to September 2023, Uganda recorded 1,748 cases with a monthly average of 194 cases.

We have observed a drastic reduction in the number of cases from June to September 2023 with no admissions of severe cases and deaths. This is significantly much lower compared to 2020, 2021 and 2022, where we had three consecutive waves; one, two and three that I alluded to.

Despite this stable transmission pattern, the threat of a potential COVID-19 resurgence remains, given the ongoing and successive mutations being recorded globally. The difference is that as a country, we are much more prepared in terms of oxygen supply, healthcare workforce competence and expertise, and bed capacity, including the high-dependency units and intensive care units.

Mr Speaker, allow me to inform this august House that the top seven districts reporting the highest number of cases above 30 from January 2023 to September 2023 include the following: Kampala, Wakiso, Masaka, Kisoro, Gulu, Mbarara and Luwero, and the numbers are as follows; Kampala – 1,020, Wakiso - 279, Masaka - 50, Kisoro - 46, Gulu - 45, Mbarara - 39, and Luwero - 30 cases.

Uganda launched the COVID-19 vaccination campaign on 10 March 2021 and as of 25 September 2023, a total of 26,471,494 doses of COVID-19 vaccines have been administered to the population across the country. Of this, 19,203,485 was given as the first dose, 6,735,177 as the second dose, and 532,832 as the booster dose.

To date, 59 per cent of the population, 18 years and above, have received at least two doses of the vaccine while only 6 per cent of children aged 12 to 17 years have received two doses of the vaccine. This coverage is below our target of 28.5 million eligible Ugandans; 22 million adults and 6.5 million children who are up to date with their vaccination against COVID-19.

Despite these successes in vaccination, the uptake of the COVID-19 vaccination has stagnated in the past 18 months. This is attributed to a significantly reduced risk perception at the population level, and as a result, by February 2024, 72,567,200 vaccine doses will expire.

In regards to the Global COVID-19 pandemic perspective, on 4 May 2023, the World Health Organisation (WHO), in concurrence with the International Health Regulation (IHR) Committee, downgraded the COVID-19

Pandemic from a public health emergency of International concern to an ongoing and established health issue.

Accordingly, the International Health Regulation Committee (IHR) confirmed that COVID-19 is an ongoing health issue which no longer constitutes a public health emergency of international concern.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, the WHO made the following recommendations to all state parties:

- i. Sustain the National capacity gains and prepare for future events to avoid the occurrence of a cycle of panic and neglect. WHO further encourages State Parties to improve country readiness for future outbreaks. Countries should restore health programs adversely affected by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- ii. Integrate COVID-19 vaccines into routine immunisation programs, maintain efforts to increase coverage for people in the high priority groups and continue to actively address vaccine acceptance. Mr Speaker, we have done this. All Health Facilities that offer vaccination have COVID-19 vaccines.
- iii. Bring together information from diverse respiratory pathogen surveillance data sources to allow for comprehensive situational awareness. State parties should maintain the reporting of mortality and morbidity data as well as variant surveillance information to WHO. And we have continued to do this, likewise, I have just given you the statistics
- iv. Strengthen country regulatory authorities to support long-term authorization and use of vaccines, diagnostics, and therapeutics. Mr Speaker, the NDA Bill is stuck at the First Parliamentary Council but we are following it.

- v. Work with communities and their leaders to achieve strong, resilient, and inclusive risk communication and community engagement. We are doing this.

In regards to the COVID-19 Standard Operating Procedures and containment measures, taking into account, the fact that there remains a potential for the resurgence of infections as guided by WHO, the National Task Force reviewed the COVID-19 situation in the country and made the following recommendations:

- i. Where the risk of potential exposure is likely, especially in enclosed places and public gatherings, the use of masks for all individuals is highly recommended.
- ii. Mandatory COVID-19 testing is recommended for gatherings where the risk of exposure is high, or where there is a mix of individuals with different risk factors.
- iii. The elderly- 50 years and above, and those living with comorbidities are encouraged to get vaccinated and boosted.
- iv. Individuals with symptoms of coronavirus should not go to closed or crowded places and should use face masks in the event that they interact with others
- v. Handshaking and hugging should be done with caution.
- vi. All eligible Ugandans should get vaccinated to avoid the risk of a resurgence and flare-up of infections.

Mr Speaker, as I have highlighted above, the implementation of the above measures is discretionary and applied based on the prevailing circumstances informed by risk assessment at various levels.

In regards to the next steps, Mr Speaker and honourable members, transitioning from the COVID-19 Pandemic to an established ongoing public health issue, the Ministry of Health is undertaking the following:

- a. Uganda had initially developed COVID-19 Case Management Guidelines focusing on the acute phase of COVID-19. However, many patients have continued to experience signs and symptoms of long COVID-19. These are people who got infected and have complications, hence the Ministry of Health is updating the existing COVID-19 guidelines to include long COVID-19 treatment follow-up.
- b. The country developed guidelines on how to integrate COVID-19 vaccination into routine vaccination. These guidelines are currently being implemented as I mentioned earlier.
- c. As I noted above, we have observed slow Progress in the uptake of COVID-19 vaccines, especially after the WHO declaration that COVID-19 is no longer a Public health emergency of international concern.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the worst of COVID-19 seems to be over, but the medium and long-term effects of the previously infected individuals remains a challenge which the Ministry of Health is addressing.

Whereas the possibility of flairs remains, as a country, we are more prepared than we were in March 2022. We hope to sustain all the health system gains attained in the past three years of the pandemic to strengthen access to quality health care for the population.

Lastly, I register sincere appreciation to the Parliament of Uganda for the enormous support to the health sector, not only during the COVID-19 pandemic response but always.

I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Yes, Hon. Linda, Hon. Timuzigu, Hon. Wako and Hon. Simon Wokorach and then, Hon. Mushemeza, Karamoja, the Opposition will be represented by Jonam.

3.17

MS IRENE LINDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Fort Portal City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister of Health for the statement and indeed it is true, that they had increased the oxygen supply in all regional referral hospitals. However, I would like to inform the Minister of Health that at Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital, for the last eight months, our oxygen plant has been out of service.

We have been relying on oxygen from National Medical Stores (NMS), which comes and cannot even take a week. Patients are currently buying oxygen from Pharmacies and for those who cannot afford it, you can guess what happens. It is a real problem.

The hospital Director wrote a letter to the Ministry of Health on 27 March 2023, but up to today, the oxygen plant has not been serviced. The new plant which is being constructed stalled.

I request the Minister of Health to ensure that they service the oxygen plant of Fort Portal Regional Referral Hospital so that the patients can get service.

I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.18

Mr MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister for Health for bringing the report at this moment, when the whole country thought; maybe COVID-19 was no more.

However, I want to understand, which methodology has been used to ascertain the areas of Uganda that have got more COVID-19 prevalence. Because we have discovered that Kampala, Wakiso, Kisoro and Gulu- we might say that Gulu and Kisoro are border districts. But we have border districts in the eastern part of Uganda and they interact like any other districts.

So, should we think that eastern Uganda does not have COVID-19 or testing is not being

done there? This is because in most cases in Uganda, we test when the President is visiting. Eastern Uganda might have not been visited by the President for some good time-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: He was in Tororo recently.

MR TIMUZIGU: - but they might be having COVID-19. So, we would like to know the technique they use to understand the areas which have COVID-19.

Secondly, we would like to know how far we have gone with the preparation of the vaccine. That would be the best preparation we would have, as Uganda. We have beds, oxygen and other things but if we do not have the vaccine, we shall be in trouble because we might need to vaccinate our people again. Thank you.

3.20

MS PEGGY WAAKO (NRM, Female Older Persons Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I thank the Government, especially the Ministry of Health, for the spirited fight against COVID-19.

However, much as the ministry is encouraging old persons to get vaccinated, there are still some people in the villages, especially the old ones, who were not vaccinated against COVID-19.

Measures should be put in place to cater for them since it is difficult to move to the vaccination centres. Thank you.

3.21

MR SIMON WOKORACH (NRM, Aswa County, Gulu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I like to use this time to thank the honourable minister for the comprehensive submission to the country. I only have two quick clarifications from the minister.

- i. Gulu District is mentioned among the top districts still with COVID-19. However, we now have Gulu District and Gulu City. I would like to know from the minister which among the two so that we are at peace.

ii. We would also like to know the level of engagement that the Government has with those who supported the fight against COVID-19. For example, Dr Ogwang and Dr Lamwaka. What is their level of engagement now? Have we left them or we are still using them, as a Government? Thank you.

3.22

MR FRANCIS LORIKA (NRM, Moroto Municipality, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, I also want to inform our Government that there are districts like Moroto, which borders Kenya. If we talk about COVID-19 still being around, then we should also be careful with the influx because there are places that are not controlled, that people move in and out.

Secondly, what long term effect do testing kits like swapping have on people, especially those that are tested all the time? If you say COVID-19 is still around, then why is it that we only do it for particular sessions? Why can't we have routine tests for other communities? Thank you.

3.23

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA (Independent, Sheema County South, Sheema): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the ministry and our Government for fighting COVID-19 and also inculcating the culture of putting on a mask. Yesterday, I had a mild flu and did not find any problem putting on a mask. I think that is a plus.

In your presentation, you indicated that over 26 million people got the first dose, over 6 million got a second dose and over 5 million got a third dose. And your conclusion was, that 59 per cent were immunised.

My calculation is that over 6 million, over 26 million brings 23 per cent. So, how did you come to 59 per cent because I believe for somebody to be fully immunised, you get the first and the second dose.

What is your long-term strategy for the medical personnel who were trained in specialised services and were laid off? Are you bringing them back to the mainstream health sector, to improve our personnel?

Finally, the issue of vaccines has been raised by Hon. Timuzigu. The process of developing a vaccine also has other processes of developing drugs that would deal with elements of a similar nature. What is the progress? Did we abandon the project? This is very important, in terms of our human medicine development. Thank you.

3.25

MS SUSAN AMERO (Independent, Woman Representative, Amuria): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement that she has provided. However, I have a few things that I would like to seek clarification on.

The vaccines, which we have been using are donated to us, as a country. I do not know whether we have anywhere in this country where we check those vaccines to test and find out whether they are good for humans.

I stood here on the issue of vaccines, especially Rubella, which also brought issues to our children. Some elderly people received the COVID-19 vaccines, and many have died.

I do not know whether the Government has taken an interest in checking the cause of these deaths among the elderly people who received the vaccines. From there, we should be able to tell whether these vaccines are good and whether we should continue receiving them or not.

Mr Speaker, another issue with the vaccines that I have is about the HPV vaccine - the one for cervical cancer which was given to our children. Many children have started their periods before the age they are supposed to start.

I would like to know from the minister, whether they have taken a keen interest in finding out

whether these vaccines are very good for us or if some complications come after. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can see one of our Members who is a health practitioner. Hon. Sylvia Bahireira, do you want to give us some information? Honourable ministers, I will give you a chance to respond.

MS BAHIREIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to add more information to what Hon. Susan Amero presented. Still on the minister's paper, the World Health Organisation declared COVID-19 to no longer be a public health emergency issue. That is one of the reasons why there is laxity.

However, the other reason is what she has just mentioned; there are a lot of myths - I do not know whether it is a myth or misconception, but people talk a lot about side effects. So, I do not know what the Ministry of Health has done to inform the public to take away that fear from people. We do not know whether it is real, but it is the second cause of laxity in the uptake of the vaccination. Thank you.

3.28

MR STEPHEN MUGOLE (NRM, Kabweri County, Kibuku): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, minister, for the presentation. There are two things.

The first is related to the vaccine; when COVID-19 was at its height, monies were dispensed by the Government to start vaccine production.

How far have you progressed - and now that you have guidelines regarding including COVID-19 treatment and vaccination in ongoing health processes, are we going to use our vaccine or do we have enough vaccines from outside to use?

Secondly, in the recent past - there should be a study. Some very many people are dying because of lung issues. Last week, I lost two people and I have one in my house, whom we have drained fluids from the lungs twice, so far.

A fortnight ago, three people died almost at the same time because of oxygen-related issues in the lungs. I would like you to make either a study or research within Mulago here and see why this has come up.

We presuppose that it could be the effects of COVID-19- the three people I am talking about all had COVID-19, although they were treated; they were vaccinated too. Are there any related issues - *(Member timed out.)*

3.28

MR JULIUS TUSHIME (Independent, Rwampara East County, Rwampara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement and also unequivocally thank the President because he was at the forefront of risk communication that enabled many of us to uptake the services which were offered during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mr Speaker, the Minister of Health mentioned a challenge to do with vaccine acceptance. I would like to know the strategy we have in strengthening risk communication and community engagement because, with that, we shall be able to allay the myths surrounding the vaccine uptake, which will make it easier for the population to partake of the services.

Two, we had a challenge with the ambulance services during the pandemic situation. Many of us, as Members of Parliament, ended up buying ambulances. It is not tenable for us to manage them throughout a term, especially for us who come from Rwampara which is hilly and has a rugged terrain.

Would you find it prudent to avail us with an ambulance, as a district, to support our services - and even other areas that do not have ambulances?

Access to health facilities in our area is challenging because of the terrain. Even the services at the health centres III are still wanting. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, there are claims that some of the ambulances are not yet distributed – the ones which you procured during the COVID-19 pandemic. That is an issue you need to – Hon. Tom and, then, the Member from Jonam.

3.31

MR TOM EKUDO (FDC, Gweri County, Soroti): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have brought a complaint from my constituency, where three people approached me and said that after the vaccination – “I have been perfectly okay, but my manhood has completely collapsed.” *(Laughter)*

Yes, that is the report I got and I have to bring it here so that the Ministry of Health can carry out research about it. They also asked: is it the reason why the ministry is encouraging older people to go for vaccination? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, these are problems of not coming for repentance on Sunday – *(Laughter)* – when we called all of you to come and repent. Hon. Migadde and, then, Hon. Omara.

3.33

MR ROBERT MIGADDE (NRM, Buvuma Islands County, Buvuma): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for that statement. However, in the past, the minister would update the country with the specific COVID-19 variants – they had names and types – and we would know which one was trending. However, it is a fact that we should accept here that nowadays, the way COVID-19 testing is done is more political: testing is only done when we are going to meet the President.

Even if there is a national function that is going to bring together people from different parts of the country, even where the Speaker is the chief guest, provided the President is not going to be there, there is no testing.

It is important and I want to understand: is the COVID we have now presidential? *(Laughter)* The President is normally many metres away

from these ones who are actually tested. How can we remain suspects and it is only one person whom we know that we are actually trying to see that is COVID-free?

Therefore, I want the minister to assure me whether Uganda is COVID-free or not. Thank you.

3.35

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have two issues to raise. One is related to the statistics we were given on the people infected and the deaths therefrom. I know that the deaths are mainly in hundreds, not in thousands. However, those hundreds are still very important to us.

We also know from what my colleague, Hon. Wokorach, has stated, that there have been two renowned persons – researchers and doctors – in this country that have produced drugs, which are out on the market here.

However, no mention is made anywhere on whether these drugs are working or not. If they are working, wouldn't they have been used to control the number of people who died?

Number two, West Nile is one of the regions with the longest border lines with our neighbours, DR Congo and South Sudan. We know that, as a country, we are very good at disease control, but our neighbours, unfortunately, may not be as good as we are.

Even if in West Nile no district is mentioned amongst the seven, I am worried. Therefore, what is happening to make sure that the West Nile region – not only the West Nile region, but I am bringing it as an example of a region that has a long borderline with the neighbours that may not have the kind of control that we have.

What is going to happen, Madam Minister, in those regions? Otherwise, thank you so much for your report.

3.36

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It brings chills into my blood when I hear about drugs or vaccines getting spoiled. It has become a normal thing in the Ministry of Health to see drugs get spoiled. Can we understand how we can make good use of our drugs before they get spoiled?

Lastly, we had a lot of beds, bedside drawers and other things. When I went to Namboole to pick beds for Terego, I almost wept. A lot of beds and other things under the Ministry of Health were dumped and wasted.

However, when we requested to pick more, we were not allowed. I want a clear message from the minister on how they intend, to keep Government property, especially after the whole situation has calmed down. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Omara and, then, Hon Teira.

MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the detailed submission by the honourable minister. I have two or three observations to make.

One, when COVID-19 struck, this country spent a substantial amount of money to deal with the COVID-19 problem, including us accessing our funds at the IMF. I thank the minister and the team for really dealing with the matter and now we have a near-normalised situation.

My concern, though, is that money has been spent on buying vaccines and, according to the report by the minister, these vaccines are scheduled to expire in 2024. At the same time, the acceptance rate of vaccinations has gone down.

Mr Speaker, this is on account of the suspicions around the side effects of the vaccines.

European Parliament as well as the USA and the subject matter experts have indicated that

these vaccines have problems. This information is on Youtube. In fact, the European Union is now asking its nationals and medics to remove the vaccines from shelves. Yet, here the minister is saying we should continue with vaccination.

Mr Speaker, can the minister give us assurance that they fully understand the side effects of these vaccines and that as a country, we are safe?

The second issue - *(Member timed out.)*

3.40

MR JOHN TEIRA (NRM, Bugabula County North, Kamuli) Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the honourable minister for the report. It is the policy of Government under the Ministry of Health to have a health centre IV at constituency level.

One of the challenges we experienced during COVID-19 was the ambulance services. There are many constituencies that have not yet benefited from this policy because of the usual financial constraints. What is the status of the ambulance service to the already existing health centres III, which support these constituencies? In particular, Bugabula North Constituency should be one of the areas of priority because it is a hard-to-reach area due to its terrain. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, do not squeeze yourselves. It is a free sitting. I do not know why you are squeezing yourselves yet they have told you we still have COVID-19 with us.

3.41

MS CONNIE NAKAYENZE (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join honourable colleagues in thanking the minister for her presentation. I just have a few concerns.

The first one is: in the minister's statement, there is a need for further vaccination. Mr Speaker, this is a foreign vaccine and the President was very stern and said we must have our

own vaccine. I would like to know how far they have gone with these vaccines. This is because in my village, all the elderly men and women who were vaccinated died including my father.

If we are all to get vaccinated - it is unfortunate - I do not know whether they died because of the vaccine or their time had come. But all the elderly in my village died.

They are encouraging us to go for vaccination but many people are saying unless Uganda has its own vaccine - they can only trust their own because what we have received from other countries have questions just like a Member has indicated that impotence is also detected.

Mr Speaker, I would like to find out what incentives - (*Member timed out.*)

3.43

MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabu-la County South, Kamuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When COVID-19 had been detected in this country, the then Prime Minister, *ndugu* Ruhakana Rugunda and the Minister of Health had a lot as far as improving the health sector in this country was concerned. Regional referral hospitals were mentioned. A lot had been promised.

Remember, Mr Speaker, COVID-19 struck and took us by surprise. As COVID-19 goes, can we take advantage of the situation and prepare further so that in case of any other calamity or disaster, we are prepared?

Mr Speaker, I would like to take advantage of this and seek your office to guide us through. I request that as the minister reports on the status of COVID-19, she should equally update the House and this nation on how far they have fulfilled whatever they promised as far as the health sector is concerned. Otherwise, they were going to equip most of these hospitals as they promised. Thank you.

3.44

MS FLAVIA KABAHEMBA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyegegwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Gulf Cooperation Council

together with the Ministry of Health accredits hospitals in this country that do pre-boarding health checks for domestic workers travelling abroad, especially to the Middle East. Even when the employers have paid money for these health checks, when they arrive at their destinations of work, there is a pre-arrival check to confirm whether the checks done from the country of origin are thorough.

I wonder why the Ministry of Health takes a very passive role in checking these people when they return from those countries. This would ensure disease surveillance so that they do not come with another outbreak. We do not even know how COVID-19 came. Maybe, it came with those Saudis and workers who were returning to Uganda.

Mr Speaker, we never care to find out whether they are as intact as they went. Therefore, I would like to recommend that every domestic worker coming back and other workers returning from abroad take a pre-arrival check for us to make sure they do not come here and introduce or reintroduce epidemics and pandemics. Thank you.

3.46

MS JUDITH ACHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the statement. However, I want to inform the House and the minister that most of these COVID-19 vehicles that were distributed to the districts were withdrawn, yet we still have some cases that need to be monitored at the health centres.

Mr Speaker, there is a tendency at the hospitals where they switch off power - they say they do not have enough funds to pay electricity bills. This is affecting hospitals, especially my hospital in Anaka. They switch off power and say they do not have enough funds to pay the bills. Yet, we are supposed to use some of these cylinders and machines that require power. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On that, finance minister, we made a proposal the other day. Ministries, Departments and Agencies

(MDAs) receive money for utilities but divert it. This is the money they reallocate internally because they know, if it is a hospital and you cut off power, there will be an outcry. If you cut off water – even when they are given money to prioritise during budgeting, sometimes they under-budget.

One of the solutions we talked about, honourable minister, is deducting this money for utilities at source. Deduct it at source and right away, pay the utility companies so these people stop complaining – the barracks and everywhere else. Otherwise, we budget for money, but then you hear barracks, Mulago -

3.48

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My submission is different. COVID-19 came and we were able to handle it through the Minister of Health and H.E. the President; it is no longer a threat to us. I can tell you the Ministry of Health has become a bottomless pit. People are misusing the money. I would like to know: who can be vaccinated now?

The issue at stake is cancer. People are dying of cancer. People are being rushed to Nairobi to have a Positron Emission Tomography (PET) scan and malaria. The boda bodas are killing 12 persons a day. I think the Minister of Health has not yet done her homework to know what is happening in our constituencies. Otherwise, that is where things start from.

Mr Speaker, I would like to see a health centre III equipped with facilities because they do not have. Instead, we have devoted to the press people who are saying “I have 10 health centres” when they are not there. Money goes to people who are non-existent.

That would be the work of the Ministry of Health. Do not come here to bring a flowery statement, and think some of us will accept it. No. Enough is enough. When you talk of COVID-19, ask these members of Parliament. They are our disciples all over the country and they can tell you what is killing people, is it COVID-19?

What the people contributed, you “ate”. It disappeared. Everything disappeared. Mr Speaker, let us have a touch of reality. It is no longer a story to tell here. Let us be realistic and tell people that money - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you will respond. Kanungu representative?

3.50

MS PATIENCE KINSHABA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kanungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the honourable minister for the statement but the Food and Drug Administration (FDA) has advised that COVID-19 boosters and COVID-19 shots are not safe for young people. Personally, I got COVID-19 three times after taking COVID-19 vaccines.

Honourable minister, you are telling us that people should keep getting vaccinated. When you look at how many people are getting colds, what we call “flu” I think you should be looking for flu vaccines so that we do not get the same.

When you listen to radio announcements and see how many people we are burying every day in our villages, we should make research to see whether the COVID-19 vaccine is contributing to our people’s death. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Tingey County -

MR FADIL TWALLA (NRM, Tingey County, Kapchorwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for her presentation.

There are areas - in the Sebei Subregion, we have Kapchorwa General Hospital but it cannot even handle a COVID-19 patient. When the minister was presenting her report, she did not mention those district hospitals that cannot handle COVID-19 patients; that do not have ambulances.

During the time of COVID--19, we in Sebei Subregion suffered a lot. So, we would like to

know from the minister what plan she has for those districts.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, Parliament appropriated money for COVID-19 vaccines through the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. I want to ascertain from the minister whether she has been checking from the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation how far they have gone with our vaccines.

We cannot just keep on giving money - they say they want money but we cannot give money forever, Mr Speaker. We want the Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation to brief the Minister of Health or if the Minister of Health has something, we need to know today. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.53

MS JOSEPHINE BEBONA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bundibugyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Honourable minister, thank you for the statement, but I want to inform you that the awareness you are talking of, I think is only in Kampala or at the ministry alone.

In our constituencies, the awareness stopped a long time ago. We no longer hear those messages concerning COVID-19. It is like it ended in the whole country. So, if you are telling us that we have to continue with the awareness campaigns, you better work with other stakeholders in our constituencies and in all the regions to make sure it continues.

As a country we shall be very relieved, Mr Speaker, if we start manufacturing our own vaccines like other colleagues have contributed.

In terms of quality, quantity and cost, there are videos circulating by one *Mzungu* that all those people who got vaccinated will be dead by 2030. This is so scary, including us, honourable minister; we are scared of this information. You have not come out clearly to refute it.

Secondly, Hon. Connie has raised a very important issue. I almost lost my mother, whom I brought here to Parliament - *(Member timed out)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nsereko because someone has said you are going to die by 2030 - *(Laughter)* - Point of order -

MR NSEREKO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. A statement of such magnitude is huge. This is the August House and the whole country is watching. For an honourable colleague to stand up and state, quoting a *Mzungu* who is not known, that "By 2030, everyone who is vaccinated shall be dead" is a huge scary statement that comes from a national leader.

I can tell you, do not take this statement as a joke. We stand here to represent our people and we are national leaders. There may be rumours that are unconfirmed but for us, basing on hearsay in the August House, to put those rumours on the Floor of Parliament, could lead people to commit suicide because they are scared of the unknown.

The point of order I would like to raise is whether my colleague is in order to base on allegations and hearsays to state that everyone that is vaccinated might die by 2030.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Firstly, all of you should go and write your wills because each one of us will eventually die.

Honourable colleagues, Parliament is a platform on which statements that are made are taken extremely seriously. Statements that are not backed up by credible, acceptable and approved research, do scare. However, I do not think the Member's intention was really to scare; she wanted to get clarification but such a statement can cause unnecessary anxiety. So, honourable, please, withdraw that part.

MS BEBONE: Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity once again. I withdraw the statement that by 2030, people who were vaccinated may die.

I was also seeking clarification from the minister as to whether she had read it on social media like most of us have, so that she can clear the air.

Lastly, Mr Speaker-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, your time was already up. Thank you.

Hon. Baryomunsi, there is information you wanted to give to the House.

3.58

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Byaryomunsi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Allow me briefly to give this information. As a professional medical doctor, there is a rigorous process through which scientists through to arrive at a vaccine, which is accepted.

The process usually involves the preclinical trials where a candidate vaccine is tried on animal models to test for safety and efficacy. Once it passes, then it goes to the second stage of clinical trials, where the vaccine is tested on human beings. And usually, there are three phases, phase one, phase two and phase three.

The phases are distinguished by the number of people who are tested and subjected to this vaccine. This is so that they look at safety, efficacy and cost.

I would like to assure the honourable members that these COVID-19 Vaccines, which we are using went through all these processes - *(Interruption)* - Just hold on. And once they have passed through these stages -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order from Hon. Okot Ogong.

MR OKOT-OGONG: Mr Speaker, we have heard a lot of information about COVID-19. At the advent of the virus, they fast-tracked the production, and the analysis and they did not follow the normal procedure and time that is

required. Because of the urgency of the matter, they had to fast-track and these vaccines did not go through the normal procedure - *(Interjections)* - that is very clear. *(Laughter)*

Is it in order for the minister who has clear information about COVID-19 to mislead Parliament that the vaccine went through all the necessary procedures, and yet he is informed that the vaccine was fast-tracked?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Baryomunsi, I have to rule as it is a point of order. Honourable colleagues, the little that I know is that a vaccine must meet certain standards especially to do with safety. The process depending on the emergency can either be fast-tracked or it can take on the normal procedure but what is important is safety standards.

Prof. Mushemeza is here - for example, in academics promotion, there is what they call accelerated promotion, but there is also what they call normal track - fast-track and normal track. However, in the end, you must meet the requirements of a professor if you are to be one, whether you are fast-tracked or not.

Even in some marriages, the normal procedure of courtship should be around five years, but some of you fast-track and in three months, you are marrying someone you just met. *(Laughter)* What is important is that you went to Church and got wedded.

What the country follows is that the vaccines used to vaccinate our people must meet the WHO standards. And so, if they met the WHO standards, yes - But also what Hon. Okot Ogong has raised is a point of concern in the general community to some who feared to take the vaccines.

In the end, I took three shots and I have a relative who was found with COVID-19 and when we did extensive tests, we were told - I do not know how true that is -that if it was not for the vaccine that that relative had got, COVID-19 would have killed him. To us who are for humanities, we leave the scientists to lead us and prevail on this.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you, Hon. Okot Ogong for raising your fears. Mr Speaker, if I can explain “fast-tracking” - when COVID-19 was discovered in Wuhan China, the scientists extracted the genome, the genetic material and shared it virtually in the scientific community. That helped the process of making the vaccine faster.

It is not true that the process skipped any step. What helped were the supercomputing techniques because of the available technology; different from the past processes where technology was not advanced. Also, because researchers had been doing a lot of work on HIV/AIDS, they used techniques like on messenger RNA vaccine to use that experience to fast-track.

I told you I am speaking as a scientist *-(Laughter)-* and all this research, the study and the clinical trials are all published and appear reviewed; some of us participate in reviews of some of these studies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can give him copies.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Absolutely. The equivalent of the National Drug Authority of Uganda, in the USA, we have the FDA, in Europe, we have the European Medicines Agency. These go through all the processes and make recommendations to WHO, which approves; all these things are documented. Therefore, Hon. Ogong, just be comforted. That is why even we doctors accepted to be vaccinated using these vaccines.

Secondly, there are people in the world who are against vaccination, whether it is for polio or hepatitis or any other thing. They circulate a lot of false information, especially through social media. Therefore, be careful with your sources of information.

It is, therefore, not true that by 2030 or 2040, people will die. Those are just falsehoods spread through social media that scare people. We are very confident that the vaccines against COVID-19 are safe and Ugandans and the

whole world should embrace it. That is why the COVID-19 infection rates have come down. Through vaccination, there was hard immunity developed across the world.

However, WHO has now downgraded COVID-19 from being a disease of public health emergency but this does not mean it has been eliminated. It is still circulating, and like the minister said, the virus still undergoes mutations. We just have to be careful until the time when WHO has declared the world COVID-19 free. I thought I should give this information for the benefit of the Members.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Minister for Health, you do not have to answer one by one. In five minutes, we should be done.

DR ACENG: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to appreciate the honourable members for their questions and first clearly state that this statement was a directive from this august House. The Member who complained that I brought a statement should have heard my introduction when I quoted the date when this august House demanded for this report.

Mr Speaker, regarding the issue of the vaccine, which has come out from many Members, I request that this august House calls upon the Minister, Office of the President (Science, Technology and Innovation) to make a statement because the research is under that ministry and not the Ministry of Health.

In regards to how we get these statistics, there are two on-going activities that I would like to bring to the attention of this august House. The first one is what we call “sentinel surveillance”, which is carried out in all hospitals; it is on-going as a routine. For anybody who comes with an upper respiratory tract infection, we take samples because we want to be cognizant of what is going on, whether it is just any other coronavirus. After all, there are many types of COVID-19.

And then, we do what we call “periodic tests.” The District Health Officers carry out rapid

tests on people who come in and we collect the statistics. However, we also encourage any person who has cough, flu and symptoms of respiratory tract infection to go for testing. That is why testing has been decentralised up to the lower levels, so that we have statistics on what is happening, on a routine basis.

There was a request on the vaccination of elderly people and I clearly said in my statement that we have decentralised vaccines up to the lowest level, including health Centres II that have refrigerators. These vaccines are widely available. Please, take your people to get vaccinated.

I would like to respond to the issue on whether the testing is political and why we test on occasions. In my statement, I clearly said what WHO and our national taskforce recommended in regards to crowds. When we gather together, we do not know who is carrying the virus and who is not. Some people come with cough. So, it is advisable to test and to even wear masks. There is nothing like political testing here. We are just being cautious and ensuring that we protect ourselves.

I will no longer talk about the safety of vaccines and pharmacovigilance, which was well explained by yourself and Hon. Chris Baryomunsi. Thank you very much.

Let me talk a little bit about the anti-vaxxers who are not only talking about COVID-19 vaccines but also all vaccines. Even before the malaria vaccine has been introduced in the country, I have already seen a lot of unhealthy information from anti-vaxxers.

Whenever you see any information on social media, please, consult published research and verify, rather than running with your WhatsApp messages and you take it as Gospel truth. This is circulating all over the world. However, there are many other countries that vaccinated their populations much more than Uganda. There are those at 100 per cent. Are they dead? They are alive and still reporting cases of COVID-19. So, let us be careful with running to social media information.

There is one particular person, a former candidate that is a very big anti-vaxxer in this country. I do not know how we can reach out to him to stop discouraging our people.

One of the reasons our infant mortality rate has gone down - and you have seen from our recently released Uganda demographics survey - is because of vaccines. We need to take that very seriously. We have made good progress. In spite of having COVID-19, the health sector scored very well in all our statistics. Perhaps, you will give me time to come and share the statistics with the Members, so that they get to know where we are in regards to health.

Mr Speaker, there were many researchers during the COVID-19 period but none of them has carried out proper acceptable clinical research on the items that they discovered. So, I cannot, as a scientist, confidently stand up and speak about that; unless they have finished their clinical trials and are published, that is when I can refer to it.

MR NSEREKO: Thank you, honourable minister. Two honourable colleagues raised two issues about readiness because I think there is less appetite -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, please, take a seat.

MR NSEREKO: There is less appetite for this House to continue funding vaccines. We definitely approve of the gains that this country achieved during the COVID-19 pandemic and the role you played, including His Excellency, the President, and the Ministry of Health; no one is down-playing that. There is also the contribution of the Ugandan community in general from those that privately contributed, etcetera.

One of our honourable colleagues talked about the vehicles that were withdrawn. Now, we are talking about the COVID-19 response vehicles that were sent to different districts.

Secondly, on awareness - there is data that we need from you. In your conclusion, you talked

about the report from the WHO on the issue of preparation for other epidemics or any other outbreaks to come. Can you categorically tell this nation how many high dependence unit beds we have? How many ICU beds do we have, mainly in the Government facilities, like the honourable Member of Parliament from Fort Portal indicated? Tell us the status of their performance at the moment.

One of the problems we found out during the COVID-19 pandemic is that people had to sell their property in order to have their loved ones attended to in private ICUs.

If there is still COVID-19, admission rates will continue to go up. Maybe, not at the same rate like the others, but we also have other ailments. So, how many hospital beds offer ICU facilities in the Government hospitals where we expect them to be free?

In diagnosis, can you tell us about the availability of CT-scan facilities in this country because every single person that runs to the hospital with chest pains, tumours or whatsoever is sent to produce CT-scan results. I have seen people moving from Fort Portal to Kampala looking for Kampala Imaging Centre for CT-scans. Tell this country how many facilities in public hospitals have CT-scans or MRIs and their cost. This is one of the hugest costs that our people cannot afford. Do public hospitals charge money for CT-scans or MRIs? Can we continue to say that we provide free health services for our people?

DR ACENG: Mr Speaker, allow me to thank hon. Nsereko for his question, which I was going to answer, anyway, because it had already been asked. Since he wants the answer urgently, let me respond.

His Excellency, the President mobilised resources and procured pick-up vehicles for all districts, hospitals, municipalities and cities. None of these pick-ups has been withdrawn. To the contrary, many districts have misused the pick-ups. Some of them have been written off; some are used for whatever they want while others are taken over by politicians. We

have not withdrawn any, but we have noted the misuse.

The Government of Uganda procured oxygen plants –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable minister, you have noted the misuse.

DR ACENG: Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What are you doing about it?

DR ACENG: We have been following up and engaging the CAOs, removing the vehicles from the politicians and giving them back to the district health offices but even then, it is difficult. They do not do the right job.

I was talking about the oxygen plants. High-capacity PSA plants were procured for all specialised and regional hospitals. Some are already within the country awaiting installation and some are yet to come. There is only one challenge; the power that is connected to the facilities cannot run them. All the hospitals are connected to one-phase and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development is aware that they need a three-phase but all the hospitals are on a single-phase. The energy ministry is committed to addressing that issue. So far, five have already been installed, others are undergoing installation and others are coming.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, a regional referral hospital is connected to a single-phase?

DR ACENG: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Wow!

DR ACENG: Mr Speaker, while I am still on that issue, I am going to talk about the Intensive Care Units. Sixteen regional referral hospitals received 10 ICUs. Some did not have adequate space and I thank this august House for providing resources. We have been putting up ICUs in these regional referral hospitals, but again, there is a challenge of power to

run them, similar to the CT scans. All the regional referral hospitals received except two; Kayunga and Yumbe.

Power is a challenge and radiologists are a challenge, which is known. To address the issue of radiologists –(Members rose_)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I told the minister to conclude. No more clarifications, please.

DR ACENG: To address the issue of radiologists, the Government directed that we revise the structures, as we wait for money for recruitment. The structures were revised, approved by the Ministry of Public Service, and taken on record by the Finance Ministry. As soon as money is available, we shall recruit –(Interjections)– you even have power challenges here, Hon. Nsereko. (Laughter)

Mr Speaker, allow me to talk about the post-COVID 19 effects. My sister said that all the elderly men and women in her village died. I was wondering why others in other villages have not died– but perhaps, she has made an observation.

Mr Speaker, let me inform this august House, that there is what we call long COVID-19, which I alluded to in the statement. It is a post-CPVID effect. Once you get severe COVID-19, the effect continues for a while. If you do not continuously go for medical check-ups, we are losing people due to long COVID-19. That is why I said, we have revised our guidelines to ensure that all those who got severe COVID, routinely go back for medical check-ups, check the capacity of their lungs, and ensure that they are functioning well.

Regarding the vaccines, the honourable who wondered why we bought vaccines and spent a lot of money; the majority of the vaccines we received in the country were donations. However, yes, we also bought some, but you cannot force people to get vaccinated. We only counsel them, and we are continuing to do that.

Mr Speaker, allow me to appreciate the honourable members for their concern, but

again to clearly state that health is wealth. I continue to appeal to all of you to support us. We need power.

As I conclude, Mr Speaker, my humble appeal, is that our health facilities should be connected to the industrial lines. If we continue to pay at the rate at which social services are being charged, we cannot afford it. The money that finance gives us can only pay for half the power. We need to go on the industrial line, or they need to exempt us from paying for power. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you have heard. We have white elephants. We have ICU beds and facilities, which are not functional because there is no power. All these CT scans have no power. Please, call an inter-ministerial meeting including Health, Energy and Finance. A transformer for three-phase – I know many homes, which have three-phase.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, do this and in 30 days, update the House, and do it with the view of addressing it. Why do you spend billions, and then refuse to spend a few millions to activate?

Let us have a match; I thought we could have a turn-key installation with power and everything. Clerk, I do not want this to go beyond 30 days. Next item -

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE IMPLEMENTATION OF THE PHYSICAL PLANNING ACT BY LOCAL GOVERNMENTS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development - As the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development prepares herself, honourable Minister of Health, yesterday we talked about the issue of the Insurance Bill. Do you have any updates for the House?

DRACENG: Mr Speaker, the Bill is ready for presentation to Cabinet. Mr Speaker, I thought I would have a one-on-one with His Excellency the President before I bring the Bill here for laying on the Table.

Therefore, I am waiting for him to set a date for me to have a one-on-one with him, on one or two contentious issues. Thank you. However, it is ready and we are done with the Attorney-General and all his teams. It is ready for laying on the Table.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you; we are waiting, honourable minister. Lands -

4.26

THE MINISTER OF LANDS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT (Ms Judith Nabakooba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a statement on the implementation of the Physical Planning Act by local governments.

The Government of Uganda is committed to ensuring orderly, sustainable and organised urban and rural development as part of the national agenda.

It has been observed, the world over, that urban areas are engines of growth. This is also true for Uganda, where over 70 per cent of GDP is generated from urban areas. Currently, Uganda has one Capital City, 10 secondary cities, 31 municipalities and 585 town councils.

Many of these are planned but unfortunately, many more are not. This situation is aggravated by low levels of compliance with physical plans, even where they are. This has impacted the country's growth negatively.

This statement presents a brief status report on the implementation of the Physical Planning Act, the principal law on physical planning in Uganda and offers an explanation for observed inadequacies, plus recommendations for improvement.

Mr Speaker, physical planning in Uganda is rooted in the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, under Article 242, namely; *“Government may, under laws made by Parliament and policies made from time to time, regulate the use of land.”*

Land use in Uganda was regulated by the Town and Country Planning Act of 1951. As a

result of the evolving and competing demands on land use, the Physical Planning Act, 2010 was enacted to address the emerging issues, replacing the Town and Country Planning Act.

The Physical Planning Act of 2010 was subsequently amended in 2020 to address the gaps in the institutional arrangements and compliance to physical development plans, among others.

The Physical Planning Act, in compliance with the decentralisation policy, devolved physical planning at the district level and below to the respective local governments.

The Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development, however, provides technical leadership while the National Physical Planning Board provides the oversight role.

We are now looking at the implementation status of the physical planning. For institutional framework, the ministry plays an oversight role, policy formulation, guidelines and capacity building.

The National Physical Planning Board, as the highest body responsible for physical planning in Uganda, was established to provide the much-needed strategic oversight, guidance, coordination and approval of physical development plans.

Physical planning committees have been established at the district, urban, city, municipalities and town councils plus Subcounty levels to guide the physical planning function at the local government levels.

Development of the physical planning regulations to guide the implementation of the Physical Planning Act, 2010, as amended.

The guidelines for preparation and implementation of the physical development plans are also in place.

We have also physical planning (planning conditions for location of fuel stations) regulations in place, national physical planning standards and guidelines are on-going.

Enactment of the Physical Planners Registration Act, 2022 was also done and we are now in the process of looking at the regulations.

The Permanent Secretary requested the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the National Planning Authority to ensure that all infrastructure developments by MDAs with a special component comply with the fiscal planning.

Mr Speaker, the ministry with the support from World Bank - that is Competitiveness and Enterprise Development Project (CEDP) - prepared the first National Fiscal Development Plan and Cabinet approved it in November last year.

Regional plans have also been prepared for the Albertine Region and the Northern Uganda Economic Corridor. Districts of Wakiso, Moroto, Nwoya, Kikuube, Kabarole, Bududa, Bunyangabu, Nakaseke and Budaka have physical development plans.

There are a number of physical development plans still under preparation, which include the Bwebajja Physical Development Plan, the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area Physical Development Plan, and the Jinja/Kampala and Mpigi Infrastructure Corridor Plan.

A number of urban councils have prepared physical development plans and it is noteworthy that many of these have attained high levels of implementation. They include Gulu, Arua Cities, Pader, Kagadi, Bulisa Town Councils, among others.

The table below summarises the status of physical development plans in the country and the details of the specific local government are also attached as Annex 1.

We have one National Physical Development Plan, two regional physical development plans, then out of the 135 districts, we have nine that have complied.

Out of the 11 cities, we have three; out of the 31 municipalities, we have 17. Out of the 1,488

subcounties, we have 198; for town councils, we have 47 out of 585.

Challenges

While Government has made effort to support physical planning in the country, a lot still remains undone. The number of planned local governments above speak for themselves. Even where physical development plans have been prepared, their implementation still remains a challenge.

A lot of the challenges are faced in the implementation of the Physical Planning Act can be attributed to the increasing land use pressures, occasioned by the country's quest for economic development, high rate of population growth and inadequacies in physical planning. The latter is mostly attributed to inadequate funding levels and governance gaps.

The following are the specific challenges that the country has to deal with in the implementation of the Physical Planning Act;

1. Most of the planning that should result in visible results is done at the local government level. Unfortunately, these local governments are grossly underfunded, resulting into low prioritisation exhibited through low budget allocations to develop, review and implement the physical development plans, especially at subcounty and district level.
2. Capacity gaps, human resource, equipment and training.

Inadequate awareness creation on physical planning, hence low levels of appreciation of physical planning and development control.

4. Ineffective coordination at central and local government levels.
5. Weak enforcement mechanisms.
6. Failure to formulate ordinances; for cities and bylaws for municipalities and town

councils to support physical planning and land use compliance.

7. Inadequate socio-economic data and information for planning purposes. Then, generally, low appreciation of the role of physical planning in the development agenda among many key decision makers.

Recommendations

1. Establishment of a conditional grant for the physical planning function for all local governments. We cannot expect a planned country when we are not providing for the planning to happen.
2. Enhance the budget for the Ministry of Land, Housing and Urban Development to establish and operationalise the physical planning unit, responsible for compliance and enforcement, monitoring of physical development plans in line with the Cabinet's directive, minute 237 CT 2022.
3. Directive to ministries, agencies and departments to seek physical planning guidance on all projects, with a special component.
4. Amendment of the Physical Planning Act to include more aspects of urban development.
5. Issuance of certificates of compliance to strengthen the implementation of the physical development plans.
6. Resources under the Parish Development Model should also cater for preparation and implementation of Parish Level Development Plans.
7. Local governments should prioritise recruitment of appropriate key technical officers, to improve on their performance and also undertake deliberate skilling of key officials to be able to review and prepare detailed plans, GIS and research.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. I am concerned because you have brought for us recommendations. What do we do with recommendations? What you should be giving us are interventions. *(Laughter)* All these that you have recommended here are within your power, as Government. So, now, should I put the question that we adopt your recommendations? *(Laughter)*

Honourable minister, you wanted to - maybe this was a Cabinet paper. *(Laughter)*

MS NABAKOوبا: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I decided to put the recommendations because I wanted Members to understand the task of physical planning and what we as Government need.

Mr Speaker, we have been to your office and several offices and before the Budget Committee, but you realise that the resources you appropriate, as Members, for physical planning cannot even do a quarter of what is required.

That is why I tried to put that huge list of what is recommended to be done. However, our hands are tied, right from the Centre up to the lower local government units. So, Mr Speaker, what we need are the resources from this House. We need to prioritise physical planning.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, honourable minister, however much you try to package it, this is wrong. For example, on the amendment of the Physical Planning Act, have you brought it and we have refused? It has not yet come.

On directive to Ministries, Departments and Agencies to seek physical planning guidance – do we need Parliament? You direct ministries because you have the powers.

Resources under Parish Development Model should also include money for physical preparation and implementation – these are your guidelines, as Cabinet. Local governments should prioritise recruitment of appropriate

key technical officers – this is yours, as the Government. Undertake deliberate skilling of key officials to be able to review and prepare - these are yours.

So, what we are saying, honourable minister, is very simple. These are very good recommendations but go and turn them into interventions because they are within your powers, as the Government.

For us, as the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, when you are looking at issues of financing and appropriation, that is when we will come in and see how we work together. However, for this issue of appropriation, I would want us to change it. It should not start from Parliament but rather, it should always start with you, inside the Government.

In the Cabinet, when a budget is tabled, what do you discuss? Isn't physical planning a priority? We want that when you come here, you say: "I tabled it to my colleagues in Cabinet. They did not look at it as a priority, but it is a priority to me. Can you intervene, as Parliament?" Otherwise, Parliament will not take over the planning aspect. The planning aspect of Government should remain with the Executive. We come in to fill a few gaps, during appropriation. We do not want to be seen to be interfering with the budget.

I will start with Hon. Oguzu Lee, Hon. Kaberuka, Hon. Silas *-(Members rose)-* whoever has already spoken should first sit. I request you. I am trying to get - I will pick Doctor, Engineer, Chairperson Karamojong Parliamentary Group, and vice-chairperson – for which committee? I am going to pick a few honourable colleagues.

Honourable colleagues, I need to finish this item in the next 30 minutes. Of course, the one who hosts us in the city should have a say on this matter because I have a very big concern, honourable minister: Kampala is just a big slum. *(Applause)*

It is just a very huge slum: you start building here; next, they approve a Church next to you; next to a Church, they approve a warehouse;

next, they approve a bar; and next, they put apartments. You ask yourself: where do I go?

All these are approved by the people we gave powers, within the law, to either accept or refuse. That is why, recently, honourable colleagues, the Attorney-General took Kampala Capital City Authority to Court and he won. Yes! If your Attorney-General is going to Court over poor planning, what do we do?

4.44

MR DENIS OGUZU LEE (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Mr Speaker, I thank you for your grasp of the physical planning matters. I brought this issue up because I noticed that Government, headed by the minister has failed. They have failed because they are failing to exercise oversight. For example, Section 47B of the Physical Planning Act, as amended, obliges the minister to issue compliance certificates to local governments and she is here recommending to us that this needs to be done. So, who is failing in their task?

They are the responsible people for the implementation of physical planning and approved physical development plans. These people are not doing their work and we have people in charge - the minister is supposed to superintend over them and they have failed in doing that. Instead, they are making it as a recommendation to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, it is always wrong for the Executive to blame us on low resource allocation to their departments because by the time it comes here, the budget would have been prepared on the basis of indicative planning figures issued by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. So, how does Parliament become responsible, yet you are the ones who make those proposals?

This means that Government is not speaking within itself. The people of physical planning are not talking to Finance and Finance is not talking to the other departments.

Mr Speaker, the Physical Planning Act requires that the law must be implemented in collaboration with other departments and

ministries. And, who is the lead coordinator? It is supposed to be this ministry but they are not coordinating with the ministries. So, how effectively shall we implement this law?

Mr Speaker, going forward, this Parliament must exercise its oversight role on these people and direct that these actions she has proposed must be taken within a period of time. I know there are things she can implement, even without the budget. She must implement the law *—(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The good thing is that the Chairperson of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure is here. When he reads these recommendations, he will know what to follow up on. Hon. Kaberuka?

4.46

MR JAMES KABERUKA (NRM, Kinkizi County West, Kanungu): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the presentation.

She has alluded to the fact that 70 per cent of the local revenue comes from the urban areas but they are the most confused areas. They are the ones – taking an example, Mr Speaker, of what you have mentioned: Kampala, which is the heart of Uganda, is the most disorganised district. We have many cities that have come on board. There is no plan for the physical plans of these cities to be different from Kampala. That is very unfortunate, Mr Speaker.

I am passionate about tourism because I am from a tourism area. We have Bwindi Impenetrable Forest, which has generated urban areas such as Buhoma Town Council. We have requested for a physical plan from the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in vain.

Mr Speaker, UNESCO declared Buhoma a world tourism destination. However, as we speak, there is no deliberate action by the ministry concerned to have it designed in a way to capture the world view. I would like to implore the minister to move faster to secure these areas that are strategic and make sure they are planned very well.

The National Housing and Construction Corporation is a Government agency that is supposed to save us from this mess but all the time, it is underfunded. Mr Speaker, I would seek your indulgence on this matter.

Every time we have problems, ministers come here to pin Parliament. Article 93 of the Constitution refrains Parliament from touching any money - we are not supposed to charge money. These people in Cabinet sit with the constitutional Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, who is the President, to allocate money to their areas of interest. How do you say, “We do not have money and have not appropriated?”

Mr Speaker, going forward, I propose that the *—(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude. I have allowed you.

MR KABERUKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I propose that the National Housing and Construction Corporation be empowered to address the issue of low cost housing and land in these urban areas. I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, part of what the minister has told you is that Parliament has powers for appropriation. However, what I do not want is for Parliament to have originating powers because these come with detailed planning - We then come in. This is why we cannot appropriate outside the priorities; either funded or unfunded priorities. So, we remain within priority areas.

The issue is: why isn't the Cabinet finding it important to finance physical planning? Do we love the slums we are in? The committee is going to take that matter seriously. It is one of the issues it is going to look at.

We urge the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to provide money for this. Honourable minister, make a stronger case for this within Cabinet. Everyone wants to live in a planned area. *(Applause)*

4.51

MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi): Mr Speaker, recently, we saw what happened when it rained heavily. At Forest Mall, water almost unlocked padlocks on doors of shops *-(Interjection)-* Yes, it happened.

The owner of Forest Mall comes from my constituency. He kept on writing to relevant authorities to help him construct a drainage channel to divert the water but there was no response from Government.

Mr Speaker *-(Interruption)*

MR BYANYIMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Silas Aogon, please, take your seat.

MR BYANYIMA: This morning, the Committee on Physical Infrastructure visited Forest Mall to find out what happened. The owner of that building built in the channel and he has been arrested by the committee today. We could not help it. So, is it in order for Hon. Aogon *-(Laughter)-* to defend the man who caused the mess of his own building? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think I understood what Hon. Silas Aogon meant. He meant that the owner of the mall built in the existing channel; he now wants you to create another channel for him. *(Laughter)* He blocked that channel but he now wants the Government to build him another channel.

MR AOGON: Mr Speaker, I always go by your guidance. I know the House is agitated but it is not only Forest Mall, which is suffering this mayhem.

Two, the owner of that place does not approve the plans. He did not authorise himself to construct there; there were people. Now, I am speaking like a lawyer, though I am an accountant. *(Interjections)* Mr Speaker, it is not proper for people to keep standing up on points of orders and nonsense orders yet we are discussing serious issues.

I have a right *-(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a point of order, Hon. Aogon.

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we are here, whatever we say is in the interest of this country, so we must bury our interests elsewhere and serve this nation. Much as the owner of Forest Mall is Hon. Aogon's voter and comes from his place, he must accept what is wrong.

Hon. Aogon Silas has just heard from Hon. Byanyima about the owner of Forest Mall. However, he has still got back on the microphone to defend the owner, claiming that he did not give himself the licence to construct.

Mr Speaker, when went there, KCCA was there and we found out that none of them gave him a licence. We were with the whole team and they all denied. He did not have approved papers for construction. That is why they even allowed us to arrest him.

So, when Hon. Aogon comes to begin telling the public that the person who constructed got a licence, as if he participated in issuing it - is he in order to insinuate and tell the public that he participated with KCCA to give a licence to the person who illegally constructed on a channel?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I do not know why your minds boil over a small thing. Hon. Aogon, who is saying they boil over nothing said people are raising nonsense orders. In Parliament, we do not deal with "nonsense".

So, honourable member, first go on the Floor and clear that, then I make my ruling.

MR AOGON: Mr Speaker, I sincerely withdraw that. You know, sometimes, we get over our heads.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you can be privy to information, which another Member is not

privity to. Hon. Aogon is not a member of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure. So, he has not been with you; he does not know what you found out. He is presenting here as a genuine Member of Parliament and it is a concern raised by a Ugandan.

Also, as the committee, I hope you will not bring us a report, which you have not yet completed. So, to start bringing issues of the report is against rule 80, which is on anticipation. You have not made recommendations and concluded everything. So, let us listen to one another but stop provoking each other. *(Laughter)* Please, move on to other matters.

MR AOGON: Mr Speaker, I will leave those matters. However, I only request committees to act in time. Do not act after floods because this is a very serious matter.

To me *—(Interjections)—* There are people who get agitated with points of order. Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whom are you talking to, Hon. Aogon?

MR AOGON: Mr Speaker, I have left those matters alone. Let me continue with the real points. I request the ministry to handle the issue of physical planning in a phased way.

Mr Speaker, I come from an urban constituency. Can you start with the municipalities? You can start with 10, help them move and finish, then get the next lot. When you start with municipalities, remember to start with Kumi because that is where I come from. That is very important; I must speak for my constituents.

It is also very important for you to note, as the ministry, that you are the ones who bring these priorities to Parliament. Our people think there is nowhere they are going to eat from when it comes to physical planning; they put that under the list of unfunded priorities.

It is not this House, but ministry officials and they should be held culpable. Parliament is not the enforcer, the Government enforces and implements but there is a failed lot of action

from our ministries. It is not only the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development but across the board.

Supervision is kneeling on the floor. How many times has the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development come to Kumi Municipality, for instance, on matters of physical planning? I am not attacking the minister; I am now talking about the entire ministry. I do not want to spoil the debate. *(Member timed out)*

4.59

MR JULIUS EMIGU (FDC, Ochero County, Kaberamaido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When I listen to the minister talking on the Floor and especially when the Speaker interjected and said you should have brought only recommendations here, I think the faster the minister implements the recommendations the better.

I see that the recommendations are really good but everybody knows that for every city, town and county, the beauty comes with planning. Somebody one time even joked that when you are in the plane, you do not need to be informed that you are in Uganda.

When you see the so-called cities or towns, which are really crowded or just slums, you do not need to be informed. The pain, which comes with the lack of planning is this - one time, I was in this Parliament and I was called from home by my children - a neighbour's house had caught fire. I quickly dashed to try to inform the police using the roaming line. When the fire brigade responded, they could not access the home. They stopped at a distance. They tried to extend their pipes or nozzles, but they could not even reach and the house had been consumed completely without any help.

I hear the minister was trying to say something like the high rate of growth in population. If I may remember, I think Britain, Ghana and Uganda are almost about the same size but in population, they are different. Is Britain, because of the large population, really disorganised like we are? I think it gets back to

planning and, indeed, we should plan. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I had already picked the Members to speak.

5.00

MR REMIGIO ACHIA (NRM, Pian County, Nabilatuk): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank *Afande* for this statement. Now the question is, *Afande*, you know how the rules are handled, we implement them. You were a senior police officer, I used to see you on television; now, you are here and lamenting. Can't you talk to your colleagues? *(Laughter)*

In 2001, I was part of the team that planned Nakapiripirit District. I did not see Nakapiripirit District on the list of districts in the physical plan.

We developed that town; to-date, if you go there, churches are in one place, residential areas are clear, gardens – when you go where we call Lorengdwat, Katanga, they are clear. It is a plan that guides what is done in every town. If we do not plan this country, we are planning for disaster. My colleague talked about the fire.

Now, honourable minister, what is your flagship project as the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development? What did you do with the money we gave you this year? Every time I hear the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development, they are only thinking about buying absentee land. Probably, it is good with the long term fruits there.

Can you make a plan next year that all the money you need will go to organising the physical planning in this country? You told us that northern Uganda now has a regional plan as well as western Uganda.

Karamoja does not have a physical land plan and in 2008, I wrote to the ministry in this Parliament to ask for a regional plan for Karamoja. This is my fourth time here, but there is no response.

Karamoja is home to about 2.4 million cows. We cattle keepers are the ones saving you from importing meat. We contribute 19.8 per cent to the economy of Uganda. You have enough milk and meat. However, we must plan our policies to protect grazing areas.

Madam minister, we need a regional physical plan for Karamoja. Maybe I will get the other letter and attach a new one to remind the ministry about the need for a Karamoja Regional Physical Plan so that people do not cultivate where the cows are supposed to graze. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr Emely Kugonza.

5.04

DR EMELY KUGONZA (NRM, Buyanja East County, Kibaale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report, which has prompted this debate but I think if we have to benefit the country, we need to take planning to the basics because we have been gazetting town councils when towns have already started developing.

I think we need to come up with a mechanism, some guidelines from the ministry to guide the country where a town should be established. Otherwise, we risk having the entire country become a slum.

I will give you a case of my constituency, Buyanja East in Kibaale District. I do not have any town council but I have more than 70 upcoming towns that are not planned and nobody is paying attention to them.

When you look at what has been gazetted as town councils in other areas, actually I have towns, which are in excess of 10 that should have already been town councils but there is no plan.

We have encountered a very serious challenge when we are developing infrastructure like roads, electricity and water. In some of these that have been gazetted for piped water, we have got serious challenges, sometimes finding

that where the pipe is supposed to pass, there is already a building. The ministry should actually help us to come up with guidelines.

How many towns should we have in a parish? For example, for every half a kilometre, there is an upcoming town. [*Mr Nsereko: "Order"*] Are you bribing me? (*Laughter*)

No, not on the Floor of Parliament and one thing that you must know, I am quite facilitated and empowered economically and financially, I do not need any –

Mr Speaker, the ministry should actually live to the expectations of the public by doing what is right and –(*Member timed out*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Switch on and conclude because you were interrupted.

MR KUGONZA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Failing to plan is planning to fail. Let us go to the basics and start from the basics to save this country so that we can have organised urban planning. You cannot talk about modernisation without urbanisation. Thank you.

5.06

MS DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, from the statement you have presented, if you look at the table where you have indicated where we have plans, we all know because we can all see that we cannot just say that we are way below average but we are doing extremely badly.

Except for the municipalities, if you look at the districts, subcounties and town councils, we are ranging between eight to 12 or about 13 per cent.

You will agree with me that within Kampala, if you are moving on the roads, you might not have anything to appreciate if you are moving around the city centre but if you are using air transport and you look at Kampala, I do not know how we would compare with what we see in other places.

If you get the aerial view of Kampala, whatever we see, it is not a capital city. I think you will agree with me. If we do not plan for other cities, we are going to raise the same kind of cities like Kampala.

This is the right time to fast track the operationalisation of the physical planning unit responsible for compliance and enforcement. Do not just look at the plans because we know that in Kampala and Uganda, we have individualism; people who think about what benefit will accrue to them. Those are the people that my brother talked about; those constructing big buildings in wetlands instead of thinking about the country.

I implore you and I know you have what it takes; you are not there by mistake. You have the expertise to ensure that –(*Member timed out.*)

5.08

MR ENOCK NYONGORE (NRM, Nakaseke North County, Nakaseke): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the statement from the minister. I also happen to come from a district that has planning in place. However, honourable minister, even where there are physical plans, we still need a one-stop centre to guide the utilisation of our land.

Whenever a customer comes to buy, he does not consider the planning. Tomorrow, you will find him erecting something that is in contravention of the physical planning. This is not in your recommendations. However, where there are plans, we must recommend physical planning or a one-stop centre.

The surveyors, Government valuer, legal officers, the people involved in titling and mapping should all be there to guide those who are going to use the land. Thank you so much.

5.10

MR LUKE KYOBE (NRM, Luuka North County, Luuka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, I thank you for the statement. Among the challenges and the recommendations that you presented, you

talked about finances. However, some of the things we see happening in the municipalities and cities do not require finances since we have physical planners on the ground and they are paid.

However, every other day, we see factories, bars and disco halls constructed in residential areas. Where schools exist, people are constructing factories nearby. I do not think this requires money because the people who approve plans and supervise are paid. However, whoever comes with money will have their plans approved.

We also see so many buildings being constructed on road reserves. Later, when the Government gets money, we start looking for finances to compensate the owners of such buildings. I implore you, honourable minister, to encourage these people who are on the Government payroll to do their work instead of “sleeping” on the job. I thank you.

5.11

MS ROSEMARY NYAKIKONGORO (NRM, Woman Representative, Sheema): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report. I seek clarification from the minister about the national physical plan; is it limited to cities and towns or it extends to the country at large? When you look at our areas - I want to thank the President for insisting that we should not scatter families everywhere. You find that toilets are built in the compounds and the house is facing the other way.

However, my concern is on planning for agriculture. For instance, where I come from, *matooke*, coffee, and *lumonde* are in the same compound. How can we ably guide our population in terms of utilising the land resources that we have and growing the required plants in specific areas?

When we go to other countries, we find farms, plantations, and forests well organised but for us, they are all mixed up. You find a forest mixed with banana plantations. How do we guide the nation?

Additionally, the minister should also clarify on the role of physical planners in districts. Why are we paying them? You have said that implementation is by the National Planning Board. It is as if you are throwing everything to the National Planning Board. Who supervises planners at different levels?

They are paid and when these constructions are happening, they are in their offices. In one of the municipalities where I come from; Sheema Municipality, the plan is completed and readily available -(Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, how is development going on in areas with no physical plans? The law requires that every construction and development should be planned by every district. How is it going on? Hon. Yeri -

5.14

MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I represent a municipality but you find that there are no plot numbers. Sometimes there is no road name. If we decide to use couriers, how does one receive letters and so on? When you invite fire fighters, where do they go? To which plot number? The situation is miserable and physical planners have a lot to do.

How do you collect revenue when you do not know how many plots are on such and such a road? Proper planning would assist us get more revenue and it is a pity that we have to do - (Interruption)

MR OSEKU: Thank you very much, Hon. Apollo Yeri, for yielding the floor. He has spoken about demarcation and plotting of the areas. Honourable minister, I would like to bring it to your attention that when a person buys a plot, they create road access and name it after themselves. You will find Oseku Close, Apollo's Road - (Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I was chatting with a very big entrepreneur who told me one reason why our credit rating is low, as individuals.

He asked, “Where can I get you?” In Uganda, when we are directing people to our homes, we say, “When you reach the transformer, there is a *fene* tree. Proceed to the house with a blue gate, go beyond that one and then across there is a boda boda stage but if you use the other route, you will find a sharp junction.”

I see banks asking for this information or sometimes, when you are asking for a visa to the UK, they ask if you are renting and for how long have you rented at this place. This means that they need traceability. If I cannot trace you, how will I trust you with my money? Even if you say you are going to move house, neighbours should know you. If I cannot trace where you are staying, how will I trust you? It is bothersome.

5.17

MR EDSON RUGUMAYO (NRM, Youth Representative, Western): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable colleagues, as we all know, physical fitness is important to any lifestyle as food is, or access to healthcare.

In this country, it is very disheartening when you read all the reports in the health sector and the leading causes of death are non-communicable diseases such as hypertension and diabetes. It is also very disheartening when you move around Kampala and find a young person of 26 or 28 years - at such an age - beginning to battle with hypertension and diabetes.

Why is this so? It is because we do not have recreational facilities and nature walking spaces. Sometimes when you are taking a walk around the streets in Kampala, you find a minister fidgeting with a motor vehicle. One wonders, “Is this a country with a future?”

Mr Speaker, I implore this House and the Government to take decisive steps in ensuring proper planning – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ameede? After that, I will pick Hon. Acan to speak about issues of the disabled.

5.19

MS AGNES AMEEDE (Independent, Woman Representative, Butebo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to underscore the minister’s assertion of lack of resources for implementing the Physical Planning Act.

Before I came to Parliament, I was in enforcement and one of our encumbrances was political interference. However, in your docket, I know there is no political interference. We have leaders at all levels. For instance, in Kampala, have you synchronised the planning system with the LC1? I will give you an example. Just opposite the Criminal Investigation Department headquarters, a hotel has been built on the road reserve. Imagine how it is going to interfere with the traffic. Haven’t the ministers been passing there?

These days, technology has made work easy; we have animated software of what a physical plan should be. I think people have no will, no creativity and no passion to work.

I therefore implore the minister that you do not need a lot of money to implement this Act. You just need the will and the people to work. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

5.21

MS JOYCE ACAN (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are talking about implementation of the Physical Planning Act. Looking at the Act of 2015, I do not know whether it has been amended since then.

Physical planning is done at the district council and approval is also done by the district. However, when it comes to implementation, it is the technocrats who do it. That is the reason why you see buildings mushrooming everywhere without involvement of the district leadership.

The reason I talked of an amendment is that I do not know whether this Physical Planning Act is in agreement with other Acts like the Building Control Act, so that they are harmonised. I am also surprised to hear from the minister that the

guidelines for the Physical Planning Act are not yet in place. Honourable minister, we want you to come out. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nsereko, I am giving you special consideration because of Kampala where we are. I do not see any Member of Parliament from Kampala. Strictly use two minutes. What is going on in this city?

5.23

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Mr Speaker, the city has taken the biggest punches from this but allow me to commend Hon. Yeri Ofwono. I do not know what I will give you in my life. What you have stated is the gist of the matter; planning starts with the basics of address and postcode system, which is what the honourable colleague stated as demarcation because it gives basic data of individual traceability vis-a-vis what they are going to put physically on the ground.

When you know where I am, you know who I reside with, you know how many people are in that locality and you can then integrate it in the digital cycle that we use in the modern planning system, which becomes cheaper. This correlates with what Hon. Amede said.

A proposal was made in 2019 and I have seen the draft national policy that was presented by the then Minister of ICT, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze. The issue is, wherever he would go, they would tell him, “Your country is a big slum because in a slum no one is traceable.”

Relating to your proposal, Mr Speaker, we should start with traceability of individuals that are going to use the land; whether in urban or rural areas, like Hon. Nyakikongoro alluded. Only then can we talk about exhaustive land use in the country; whether it is for rural purposes, commercial, industrial, schools, or health –(Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude, honourable.

MR NSEREKO: Whether it is for livestock, like the honourable said - but what you see is a big jumble. The problem is endemic. Before 1962, every area was plotted and had an address. That is why you have Plot No. 1, Kampala Road. After the introduction of the postcode system for mailing, whether it is for business or for the Uganda Revenue Authority to tax you, it should know where you are. Whether it is for banking facilities, insurance or fire services, traceability is important.

Finally, there is huge growth in urban areas. There is more urbanisation, sub-urbanisation and re-urbanisation in areas that were ordinarily abandoned. What should we plan for? As the population increases, there is of course a strain on health services.

We should also look at what we call “pro bono real estate dealers”. Everyone comes up with an estate, demarcates it, makes roads and gives out plot numbers. That is fine but how will we address that? For example, on a square mile, if you use 100 by 50 feet and say that there will be about five or 10 people residing on a plot, you have created a community of 30,000 people. There will be need for sewage and garbage disposal.

There is only one landfill and waste disposal unit in the entire Kampala Metropolitan Area; the so called Kiteezi which services Kampala, Wakiso and Mukono and is now filled up. It is only about 12 hectares or so - (Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable. Chairperson of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, what are you doing about these issues?

5.27

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTRE (Mr Dan Kimosho): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Most of the issues have been highlighted by the Members but before we go to the issue of availability of funds and resources, there are issues that we must address as a country and they include people’s mentality and corruption.

For example, in Kampala, the current practice is that when people apply for plans, the Physical Planning Department neither denies nor allows them. These people give money under the table and they are allowed to construct at night. We are planning to do a survey per division to highlight 50 buildings that were built without a plan on the watch of physical planners. Those that are shaming are the buildings that are less than two kilometres from the physical planner's offices.

Resources are unavailable but we must address the issue of corruption and criminalising the people who embrace corruption. Even if we say the garden is supposed to be here and the toilet there, if people are still behaving the way they are behaving, Mr Speaker, we shall come back here to discuss the same thing.

As I conclude, this is putting a very high cost on the national economy - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, conclude.

MR KIMOSHO: Because of our poor planning, you find institution X constructing a road and the cost that goes into relocation of utilities alone, because of the poor planning, could construct two to four other roads. That is why you see us grappling with the average cost of a kilometre of road; between Shs 8 to Shs 14 billion and this is a single carriage, that is one car coming and one car going with drainage. This is not comparable to any road in the region but when you dive deep into the matter, they will tell you that they did not know that there were utilities there.

If there was proper planning, if physical planners were giving permits, if we were anticipating 20-30 years ahead, maybe we could have avoided what we are seeing.

Therefore, I encourage Parliament to do everything possible to avail these people money so that we do away with the excuse. We will also come back here and hold them accountable on firm ground. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister has made very good recommendations which I think Parliament should adopt. We will then ask her for an action-taken report on the recommendations that she proposed. Honourable minister - No, a Member will have to move that, not the Speaker.

MS NABAKOوبا: Thank you, Mr Speaker and honourable colleagues, for those comments. The responses are too many -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You do not need to answer everything; some were observations.

MS NABAKOوبا: But I am going to try and see how I can respond to the questions raised by Members.

As I earlier said, the work of the ministry is policy and strategic guidance. According to the law that was amended by Parliament in 2020, most of the work is supposed to be done by the local governments and I would request that after my response, the Minister for Local Government is given one or two minutes to respond on how far they have gone.

On our part as a ministry, you have helped us to amend that law but you also helped us to have the Physical Planners' Registration Act. It is now a requirement that each local government must have a registered professional physical planner which was not the case before.

We believe that the law, which you passed last financial year will help us uproot the people who have not been doing their work or were not qualified to be physical planners because that is where the problems begin.

We also want to let you know that the National Physical Development Plan, the first of its kind to be approved by Cabinet, will help us with zoning and spatial planning. Prior, we never had a National Physical Development Plan. We now expect to go at the regional level, to town councils, municipalities and other urban centres including parishes because the law you amended declared the entire country a planned area.

Much as the emphasis is now on municipalities and cities, each area within Uganda is supposed to be a planned area and that cannot be done at only the ministerial level. Local governments have to be very active to see that, that is realised.

In the ministry, we realised that there was a gap because we have the law and we have some policies and regulations. On identifying the gaps, we recommended that the Cabinet should allow us to create an enforcement and compliance unit to put in place laws, regulations, and guidelines like the ones we have for fuel stations. You will realise that the local governments that are supposed to oversee the implementation are doing things to the contrary.

Mr Speaker, for any activity to take place in any community, there are units or committees at the district level that are supposed to oversee implementation. These units are replicated even at subcounty levels.

We have a physical planning committee, which has a physical planner; the Chief Administrative Officer is supposed to be the chairperson, there is somebody responsible for buildings, an engineer, an environmental officer and also a land officer. They are supposed to work together, harmonise and at the end of the day, come out with a report that can guide on building or planning of a specific area.

However, when you go on the ground, things are to the contrary. That is why you are raising complaints that the plans are there, technical officers are in their offices but still, things are being done to the contrary.

Mr Speaker, there is an honourable member who talked about urban areas not being planned well; that we have cities but only a few have approved plans. What I want to tell this House is that the plans that the cities have could have expired. They make plans that can cover 10 to 25 years, depending on how they sit and agree, as a local government unit. Some of the plans could have been there but because of certain events, they have expired or are about

to expire. We are looking at making those plans realistic but also to cover more years for particular areas.

An honourable member was talking about Karamoja. Our technical teams went to Karamoja when they were evaluating the entire country and they realised that Karamoja is one of the grey areas that if planned properly and the plan is followed by the implementers, it would be one of the best areas in Uganda and we are not keeping quiet about it. We are looking at planning the entire Karamoja region because we know that it is an area that we can look up to.

Kampala is a bit difficult because the disorganisation has been on for some years. We cannot say that it is work that can be done overnight. What we are trying to do is damage control; to see how we can stop further escalation of poor planning.

The minister and her executive are responsible for planning the Kampala Metropolitan area. We only come in to guide them and because of that, in our national physical development plan, we decided to see that Government focuses on the regional or secondary cities because we believe that once the secondary cities get the services that are in Kampala, decongestion will be automatic because there will be growth created in the regional cities that are set up. In addition, we shall not only have balanced but well-planned developments in the regional cities.

We are going to place more emphasis on the regional cities and we are looking at it as a way of decongesting Kampala Metropolitan area and also having an opportunity for proper planning to guide the development in those areas since they are new and have space.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude, honourable minister.

MS NABAKOoba: We pledge that we shall prioritise that in the budget. We did prioritisation and engaged all the different stakeholders that are supposed to help us; the Speaker, the Deputy

Speaker and the parliamentary committees although our requests were not prioritised. We realised that funding was inadequate for physical planning across the board from the ministry to the local governments. However, we hope that in the course of discussing these matters, we shall make a plan which we shall present to the Cabinet. Thereafter, we shall come to this House to ensure that -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, conclude.

MS NABAKOOBA: To ensure that what we require to implement the Physical Development Plan is given the priority it deserves.

I would like to thank you once again for all the guidance and information given. I have been taking note and we shall come back to you.

The tourism areas, agricultural zoning and infrastructure development are all part of the National Physical Development Plan. We are supposed to work with the respective ministries to have their input on how we can service their areas, specifically zones, according to the plan. This is work in progress. I have told you that the plan was approved last November and we are here to see the implementation strategies on how to move forward. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister for Local Government, two minutes, please.

5.41

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Victoria Rusoke): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will zero down on two issues since we are time bound. One is how far the Ministry of Local Government has gone in emphasising physical planning and abiding by the rules related to construction, protection of nature and all that.

Planning starts at every level so every local government is supposed to have a plan. That is the reason why we abolished the District Development Equalisation Grant (DDEG). We argued our hearts out in Parliament but you

restored it. However, we guide them to start by making plans.

Two, on illegal constructions, we zeroed in on the most dangerous ones and these are the petrol stations. Members, you will agree with me that even in your constituencies, there is illegal construction of petrol stations. The Ministry of Local Government came out with a circular stopping the construction of petrol stations and we referred the matter to the supervisory body; the Physical Planning Authority. When you see an illegal petrol station, run to the Physical Planning Authority. We have done our work.

Thirdly, as the Ministry of Local Government, we have observed that we, including you, are the worst destroyers of nature in our regions. I was driving through Mbarara and I saw how River Rwizi -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, switch on and conclude.

MS RUSOKE: We compel everyone to join hands and not point fingers. As we do our oversight, if we come across such things, we should compel the district, city and municipality authorities to exercise their powers and stop destruction.

I would like to offer wisdom – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure.

MR KABERUKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. The honourable Minister of Local Government has said that they issued a circular halting the construction of petrol stations. I thought the circular would address the problem because we need the petrol stations, only that they should be planned and well-designed.

If you halt construction of petrol stations, where do you want them to be located? Why not guide on how to establish them rather than just stopping them? Are you abolishing them?

The point of procedure is, are we no longer in need of petrol stations or do we need well-designed and planned petrol stations? I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I think it should have been more of a point of clarification than a point of procedure. Honourable minister, can you clarify on that?

MS RUSOKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The circular is not a one-sentence document. It is lengthy and explains where you can consult so that you establish a petrol station in a proper place. It is halting construction as you consult.

I would wish to -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, this is done and we are closing it here because the minister is causing more trouble than helping me solve the problems. In the time I gave you, you have gone into things which are so -

MS RUSOKE: Mr Speaker, just a sentence. Members, let us share this wisdom. I would like to share with you how Fort Portal City has overcome some of these challenges. It has created innovations, for example, rubbish has been recycled to get manure which is giving a lot of money.

Secondly, we are recycling the plastics. In the interest of time, I beg to stop here. I request that I make a statement here with some guidelines on how we can overcome these challenges.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, the Committee on Physical Infrastructure should take up this matter seriously. As we go into budgeting, this should be one of the assignments that you look at that to inform you. There is no need of bringing a report to the House. Have a comprehensive engagement which will inform your decisions for budget proposals, especially when you are processing the BFP. Thank you. Motion -

5.46

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Mr Speaker, having listened to the minister's submission and the recommendations of the various Members of Parliament on this particular matter, I would like to move that the House adopts those recommendations and any other suggestions

that have been made with amendments. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, I think we can. Honourable colleagues, motions without notice are provided for under Rule 59 of our Rules of Procedure. Specifically under (1)(k), the Speaker has the prerogative of weighing and saying, I believe this one should come, even if it is not among the listed.

However, under Rule 59(2), there is a very clear procedure and I have helped you by bringing out the rule because it is properly captured in (2).

I believe that these are interesting recommendations and since they have come from the minister, they should be very easy for her to implement. Therefore, I will put the question on the motion so that we can - I need to get it properly. We need to know and state it properly. If the Member could get a copy of the statement, maybe it would help him so that it is well captured for the record.

5.46

MR DENIS OGUZU LEE (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Mr Speaker, the minister was required to make a statement on the extent to which local governments were complying with the Physical Planning Act. Having listened to the minister's submissions and recommendations herein, I would like to move that the recommendations and statement of the minister -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us focus on the recommendations.

MR OGUZU: Okay. Mr Speaker, I move that the recommendations of the minister and those of the Members made in relation to the statement of the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development on the implementation of the National Physical Planning Act, 2010, as amended, by local governments, be adopted by this House, with amendments. I beg to move.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, is the motion seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by the Minister

of State for Lands, Hon. Persis Namuganza, Minister for Local Government, Minister for Defence, Minister for Physical Infrastructure, Maj. Gen. Masiko, Prof. Mushemeza, Hon. Wanzala, Member for Busia, Hon. Fadil and many honourable colleagues.

I now put the question that the recommendations be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, we are giving you three months to bring an action-taken report with regard to your recommendations. *(Laughter)* I am looking at November, December and January because that is the period we shall be having the Budget Framework Paper (BFP), which is coming by the end of December.

If we have the BFP and these are incorporated – not captured, but listed as priorities – it will make it very easy for the committee. That is also enough time for you to consider them within your ministerial policy statement. These are cross-cutting so the same applies to the Ministry of Local Government. Moreover, you seconded it.

MS RUSOKE: Most obliged, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let it be a joint statement spearheaded by the lands minister.

Thank you, honourable colleagues. You have done a great job on this and the minister has made it very easy for us. Next item?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON TAXES PAID TO URA BY SICPA

5.51

THE DEPUTY-ATTORNEY GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The announcer said “statement”. I already presented a statement on this matter on the Floor of the House. What I was left with was laying on the Table the contract between Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and SICPA SA.

Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the framework contract for the supply, implementation, training, commissioning, support and maintenance of a digital stamp solution between URA and M/S SICPA SA.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Attorney-General.

MR KAFUUZI: Mr Speaker, this contract has seven addenda. I beg to lay them at once.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure. They are all part of the contract. Thank you, Attorney-General. It is still captured as that item because this arose out of the debate and the requirement. So, to make it complete, we still capture the item as it was, to show that the Attorney-General has done his job. Next item?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE POORLY FUNDED AND ILL-EQUIPPED MECHANICAL WORKSHOPS OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT COUNTRYWIDE

5.53

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Mr Speaker, I am here to present a statement to this Parliament regarding the status of road equipment units and regional workshops and other information related to that.

Mr Speaker, in 2010, the Government reviewed the districts and urban roads management and maintenance framework and re-introduced the direct labour (Force Account) mode of operation with the provision of road equipment from China in 2012 and subsequently, additional road equipment from Japan in 2017.

From 2017 to 2021, the road equipment from Japan was exclusively maintained through framework contracts that were signed with road equipment local dealers. During this period, equipment availability averaged about 90 per cent. It should, however, be noted that while this high equipment availability was quiet impressive, it left the ministry perpetually indebted to the service providers.

Mr Speaker, in 2021, the ministry made a strategic decision to shift routine maintenance of road equipment to an in-house arrangement. Routine maintenance mainly entails servicing of the road equipment, that is, change of filters and oils, carrying out minor repairs and undertaking other preventive steps like greasing.

The reason for the above shift in maintenance approach was to curtail the overall equipment maintenance cost while strengthening the capacity of our regional mechanical workshops with the ability to carry out minor repairs and residual capacity to remotely monitor the Komatsu road equipment using the KOMTRAX system.

Major repairs like system overhauls and complicated diagnosis continued to be handled by the road equipment dealers. While this new hybrid approach to road equipment maintenance is working and, to some extent, has reduced the cost of maintenance, it has experienced a number of teething problems mostly due to financial constraints which, resultantly, has reduced equipment availability to about 30 per cent.

The ministry operates four regional mechanical workshops; Central Mechanical Workshop at Kampala for the Central Region, at Bugembe in Jinja for the eastern region, at Gulu for Northern region and at Mbarara for western region.

While the regional mechanical workshops are equipped with mobile capacity to carry out routine maintenance, the number of mobile workshops is insufficient to cover the entire country.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the statement uploaded, Clerk?

MR BYAMUKAMA: Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, haven't you learnt the rules? Honourable minister, did you share it with the Clerk? I have also asked for a copy and I am waiting for it; I do not have it.

Honourable colleagues, in the interest of time, let us listen attentively while they upload. Let us allow the minister to conclude.

MR BYAMUKAMA: The regional mechanical workshops also act as regional hubs where road equipment can be referred in case of complex repairs, although they are not adequately equipped with requisite tools.

Regarding the status of regional mechanical workshops, I would like to furnish you with the following information:

Infrastructure and tools

Apart from Bugembe Regional Mechanical Workshop which was built with the assistance of JICA in 1996, the other three do not have the appropriate infrastructure in place. For example, Gulu and Mbarara Regional Mechanical Workshops can best be described as parking yards while one at Central Mechanical Workshop has dilapidated structures.

- i. The ministry has continually engaged with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development but due to resource constraints, we have not been able to get funds for equipping/retooling the workshops. Conversely, the ministry has also engaged with development partners such as JICA for project support but this is yet to be realised. It is an area that we continue to explore and advance.

A feasibility study carried out on refurbishment and retooling/equipping the region and mechanical workshops estimated the requirement is to be Shs 100 billion.

Funding of maintenance for the road equipment In 2017, when the road equipment was procured, it was computed and estimated that its annual routine/predicted maintenance cost would be Shs 22 billion. In the Financial Year 2017/2018, the Government allocated Shs 10 billion for road equipment maintenance with an addition of Shs 6 billion in the Financial Year 2018/2019 and finally, Shs 6 billion in the Financial Year 2018/2019.

However, during the Financial Year 2019/2020, the national budget was rationalised in order to cater for special requirements under Operation Wealth Creation which affected the number of budget lines in the ministry, including road equipment maintenance.

Consequently, budget allocation for the maintenance of road equipment was reduced from Shs 22 billion to Shs 12 billion, resulting in the ministry's inability to provide tyres and batteries, let alone settling accumulated debts with service providers on account of routine maintenance. The resultant effect was increased downtime and the available equipment reduced to about 30 per cent as earlier stated.

In Financial Year 2021/2022, only Shs 12 billion was provided for equipment maintenance and yet, as pointed out earlier, routine maintenance alone requires Shs 22 billion. The road equipment from Japan is over six years old and has, on average, each clocked about 8,000 hours. The road equipment is due for corrective maintenance, which entails repairs of undercarriages, transmission and hydraulic systems of excavators, bulldozers, wheel loaders and motor graders. These repairs are estimated to cost Shs 23 billion annually. The table below shows the funding gap and is titled, "Routine and corrective maintenance for the road equipment".

Mr Speaker, you can see the amount required for maintenance and the funds provided in the -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, just a minute. I have it on record from my Clerk that you never submitted the statement. You came with a statement and just started reading it. We have allowed you to proceed but you are referring us to a table, which we cannot see. *(Laughter)* Honourable minister, I am waiting for you to quickly finish your statement and then we pick your copy since you did not even have the courtesy of giving me a copy. We shall pick your copy and upload it. I am doing this for you because you are a very humble minister and I want us to support you. Next time *-(Members rose)* Please, let us support each other.

MR BYAMUKAMA: I am sorry, Mr Speaker. I thought the uploading faced a technical error because I saw the officer who had it immediately ran out. I thought maybe he went to rectify it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We do not have any copy and the Clerk has not received it. A statement is submitted to the Clerk formally and if you insist, I will ask you to table here a received copy, which you do not have. Just conclude and then we shall use your copy to upload and debate.

MR BYAMUKAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I apologise for that.

The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, through various correspondences in Financial Year 2022/2023, was informed about the above funding gap but the ministry was advised to prioritise services and maintenance of road equipment within the available budget ceiling. This funding gap, if not addressed through the provision of additional funds, is bound to negatively affect the Shs 1 billion road development grant that each district is receiving since there will be no road equipment to implement the road works. This will also delay the attainment of targets set forth under the NDP III and the Parish Development Model.

Mr Speaker, regarding road equipment for the new districts, the ministry completed the procurement process and the contracts were signed. However, the finance ministry only provided Shs 28 billion leaving a balance of Shs 27 billion under the budget allocation for Financial Year 2022/2023. The supply contracts were signed with M/s Victoria Equipment Limited for the supply of Komatsu Motor graders while the wheel loaders still require a top-up of about Shs 6 billion to enable delivery of equipment by July 2024.

The supply contract signed with M/s Spear Motors Ltd for supply of Mitsubishi Tippers and Water Bowers is still in abeyance due to unavailability of funds. The rollers for the new districts will be procured in future

through a separate contract. I have brought this up because this equipment will help ease the heavy load which the regional mechanical workshops have.

As I conclude, Mr Speaker, due to the funding gaps we have, we have so far noted that about 19 districts have received some funds out of the Shs 1 billion grant but cannot use the funds because their machines are completely down. *(Interjections)* Yes, it is our obligation to help them.

For the 16 new districts, I have clearly put it that when we get the remaining money from finance; by January 2024, we shall be able to supply the equipment. I beg to submit. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Kindly pass on that copy to the Clerk. I hope it is signed on both pages.

Honourable colleagues, I am of the view that this is a statement that needs to be uploaded before we debate. You have heard there is information where there are saying, "I refer you to this table" but you have not seen it. I am of the view that we handle item four; of Hon. Yeri Ofwono as we upload the minister's statement. Is that okay? Clerk, upload that statement as we handle item four.

MOTION SEEKING LEAVE OF
PARLIAMENT TO INTRODUCE A
PRIVATE MEMBER'S BILL ENTITLED,
"THE RAINWATER (HARVESTING AND
STORAGE) BILL"

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Yeri? Hon. Yeri has been on the Order Paper five times or beyond and we could not reach him. That is why I wanted to get it sorted today.

6.07

MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): I thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity so that I can bring this motion seeking leave of Parliament to introduce a Private Member's Bill entitled, "The Rainwater (Harvesting and

Storage) Bill, 2023". It is moved under Article 94(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and Rules 121 and 122 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

"WHEREAS Article 79 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda empowers Parliament to make laws for the peace, order, development and good governance of Uganda and;

WHEREAS Article 94(14)(b) of the Constitution and Rules 121 and 122 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament recognise the right of a Member of Parliament to move a Private Member's Bill;

NOTING THAT there is no legal framework providing for and regulating the compulsory harvesting and storage of rainwater in Uganda despite the abundance of this natural resource;

FURTHER NOTING THAT the world is experiencing variability in precipitation, increased temperature, drought frequencies and intensities and globally, approximately four billion individuals experience water scarcity due to drought;

AWARE THAT Uganda's climate is largely tropical with two rainy seasons in a year while the Northern region, which forms one-quarter of the country lies outside the tropical belt and hence experiences only one rainy season and is more prone to drought;

FURTHER AWARE THAT in Uganda, water scarcity due to drought poses a great threat to the rural population and according to World Bank, approximately 4.57 million people (or 10 per cent of the population) are affected by water scarcity each year, mainly in the south-eastern and North-eastern regions of Uganda;

CONCERNED THAT droughts in Uganda are a recurrent hazard and the country experienced notable drought events in the years 1967, 1979, 1987, 1999, 2002, 2005, 2008, 2010 and 2017;

FURTHER CONCERNED THAT climate projections indicate that conditions will become even more severe in the future and will continue to pose threats to Uganda amidst the

growing population, economy and increasing urbanisation;

ALARMED THAT during the rainy season, rainwater causes flooding, especially in urban areas where the drainage systems are not well maintained;

CONVINCED THAT there is need for putting in place appropriate mechanisms to address the issue of drought and flooding, especially by taking advantage of the rainy seasons when rainwater is in plenty, by harvesting and storing rainwater so as to harness the resource and optimally utilise it to augment the water needs of the people of Uganda while at the same time minimising flooding;

NOW THEREFORE be it resolved that:

- (i) *Parliament grants me leave to introduce a Private Member's Bill entitled, "The Rainwater (Harvesting and Storage) Bill, 2023", a draft of which is hereto attached and do order the publication of the said Bill in preparation for its first reading." I beg to move.*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Yeri. Please, you can take your seat. Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose)* Yes, it is seconded by Hon. Juliet Bashiisha, Hon. Mpindi, Member from Ntungamo, Busia representative, Hon. Rugumayo and by majority Members in the House. Honourable, do you want to justify your motion?

MR YERI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Water is a scarce commodity. For instance, it has just rained, but instead of harvesting the water, you see families moving to collect water from the well. That is really a waste of time. If they had harvested the water, it would – *(Interruption)* - Protect me, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Yeri, you have written a very good justification, which you uploaded. If you could read it, it would make it very easy. Also, avoid looking into the eyes of the Member from Terego and Hon. Kibalya. You can look at the Speaker.

MR YERI: I want to summarise. *(Laughter)*

MR YERI: It is really a scarce commodity and we and everybody should believe that the next world wars, it may not be – *(Interjections)* Yes, world wars to come – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Do not listen to voices from aside.

MR YERI: One of the causes of these world wars may be water -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, listen to the Member. By the way, that is bullying. You are bullying a colleague. Please, allow him to submit.

MR YERI: I am just summarising. We should sensitise the population and make it mandatory for everybody to harvest rainwater. It will work. *(Applause)* I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Yeri, in his draft Bill, is saying that for every development, there should be a requirement for water harvesting and storage. He has also told you that it is a shame to find that it is raining and people are walking in the rain to collect water instead of collecting the one, which is falling. In summary, that is what I picked.

I will allow the seconder, Hon. Juliet Bashiisha. You should know she is from Mitooma so you better listen to her properly. She is an extension of the Speaker. *(Laughter)*

6.16

MS JULIET BASHIISHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My colleagues, I know you are all aware that water is one of the most valuable natural resources that God gave us. That is the reason why I stand here to second the motion, based on the fact that when we have this Bill, we will protect the rights and wellbeing of the more marginalised gender, that is women and young girls from exposure to sexual harassment. You know that they usually trek long distances in search of water.

In addition, I second this Bill because it seeks to address the presidential agenda on solar-powered irrigation pumps, as stated in the State of the Nation Addresses of 2022 and 2023. When rainwater is well trapped and harvested, it will help in easing the irrigation process, thus helping people in rural areas, which are a greater portion of Uganda's population.

Lastly, I second this Bill because we are currently facing the dangers of climate change. As a result, this Bill answers the issue of water wastage in most institutions and households. Rainwater is wasted in trenches instead of being trapped to help in irrigating our crops. You find that in most homes, we have plants in the gardens so when we have this water harvested, it will save us that burden. I beg to submit, thank you. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, when you are processing such a Bill - I have read through it; it is a small and clear Bill. It is a draft - Of course, I cannot comment much about it because the colleague will be allowed to go and refine it.

However, in case we get a certificate and end up processing it, I would like the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to liaise with the Committee on Physical Infrastructure to see if aspects of this Bill can be incorporated into the Building Control Act. In the end, it can come as an amendment from Hon. Ofwono instead of a stand-alone Bill. I am just proposing.

Once it comes for first reading and in case it is cleared, these are issues we should look at. Sometimes, it is not that you always need a new law; you can strengthen the existing laws through amendments. However, his case is a very strong one.

Honourable colleagues, you know how we usually do things; a Member is given an opportunity. Therefore, allow me to put the question that the motion seeking leave of Parliament to introduce a private member's Bill entitled, "The Rain Water Harvesting and Storage Bill" be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Congratulations, Hon. Yeri. Would you like to thank colleagues? *(Laughter)*

6.21

MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): First of all, I would like to thank the Rt Hon. Speaker for giving me space. I also thank the Members who were positive towards the Bill. *(Laughter)* Thank you very much, we have carried the day.

I am allowing Members to come and give me more ideas so that we can draft a strong legislation. Thank you very much. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Yeri. Visit Hon. Remigio Achia and have an interaction; he is a very good planner. Congratulations, honourable member and thank you, honourable colleagues, for supporting him. *(Applause)*

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE POORLY FUNDED AND ILL-EQUIPPED MECHANICAL WORKSHOPS OF THE MINISTRY OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT COUNTRYWIDE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am informed that the statement from the minister has been uploaded so you have it now. We can have a debate, based on very clear information.

I will start with Hon. Itungo, Hon. Katalihwa, Hon. Muzaale, who knows these matters and Hon. Mutumba, our *Imam*. Hon. Byanyima, on such matters we always allow you to speak so you can take heart. I will choose the Member from Karamoja.

Sorry, colleagues, sometimes your names escape my mind. If you have spoken, first take a seat. I will have Hon. Dr Bukenya, Hon. Dr Opio, the Member from Mbale, the Member from Maruzi, Hon. Mutembuli and then Hon. Pacuto.

Honourable members, I am going to give you a chance. Let us speak for two minutes each. I will be open here, again. When we are debating, we should depict a national picture. Okay, I have one group that sits only on this side. Now, if I were to pick only from here, I would pick only Banyankore –(Interjections) - No, westerners. I am telling you.

Hon. Acen, you have already spoken. I told you that I know what I am talking about. Listen, honourable colleagues. When I am advising you, I know why I am doing it. I saw people who stood up here.

When you spread yourselves out, you make it very easy for me. When I pick one colleague, I see the other looking at me badly and annoyed. However, I cannot pick people from - I must have a national outlook in the debate. So, I will be picking you while balancing. Let us start right away.

When I talked about Banyankore, I meant western Uganda. I did not mean just Ankole but western Uganda.

6.25

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will talk about the Ankole region, specifically the Mbarara Regional Mechanical Workshop. Whenever we have District Road Committee meetings, we invite the engineer from the workshop so that at the end of the meeting, he can assure us whether he can service these graders or not.

There have been two concerns. Whenever the Uganda Road Fund releases money for district and community access roads, the Mbarara Regional Mechanical Workshop is not given funds to repair the graders. You find money on the accounts of subcounties and the district, but the roads cannot be worked on because the graders are normally down.

I have a letter here on the breakdown of the grader, and it was written on 22 July 2022. However, up to now, our grader is still in the mechanical workshop and the workshop is

saying they do not have money to service this grader.

Therefore, the biggest challenge is funding. The engineer gave us information that their bill was Shs 30 billion, but it was reduced to Shs 11 billion. They are not able to service these graders because they do not have the money -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: For the record, it is millions.

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE: Again, even with the little money that these workshops are given, Mr Speaker, I think we need to do some investigation on the money they receive because there is basically no work at the district. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I have a two-minute rule and how I apply points of information. You have to speak on the same microphone because when you switch on your own microphone, you get another two minutes and end up getting four instead of - Therefore, I will only allow points of information when you are sharing a microphone.

6.27

MR DONALD KATALIHWA (NRM, Mwenge County South, Kyenjojo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the elaborate statement –(Interjection)– this man is confusing me.

I thank the minister for the elaborate statement that he has given. From the statement and the fears he expressed, we, in the districts, are already scared. He said that even the Shs 1 billion that we have got for the roads will not be enough.

Mr Speaker, when you go to the districts, we have very many graders which are down and not repaired. We have put eyes on only the graders that were donated recently yet, as a ministry, I would think they would have some money reserved for the graders which are to be repaired.

Secondly, I have a district with 31 subcounties. We have only one grader working on subcounty roads, district roads and town council roads in one financial year. The fear now is to think it has Shs 500 million under the 1 billion grant, which we have not yet touched and yet the financial year is running out very fast.

Can I request the Ministry of Works and Transport to give districts a chance, if possible, to also hire out graders to have these roads worked on? Otherwise, we are going to have a challenge when the financial year ends and all the money goes back to the Consolidated Fund. Thank you.

6.29

MR ABDUL MUTUMBA (NRM, Kiboga West County, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for his statement.

I represent Kiboga West constituency which happens to be in the central region and we are always served by the Central Mechanical Workshop. I appreciate the ministry because the technical team has been coming to the districts to service these machines. However, they always take long to come and service the machine when a request is advanced to them.

Mr Speaker, in a way, we lose time because when the service is over, the machines have got to be parked waiting for the technical team to come from the Centre to service them. Looking at the absorption of the Shs 1 billion, you will find that at the end of the financial year, we shall not have completed the work that we planned to do.

Secondly, I do not know whether the minister is aware that Kiboga District Local Government secured some money for major repairs of some machines that were grounded. We agreed with the ministry that the mechanical workshop team should come to Kiboga and repair these machines, including overhauling one of the graders.

About Shs 300 million was used by the mechanical workshop, but the three machines that were repaired recently; about two months

ago - Much as they told us that they did their work and completed, when these machines were taken for testing, all the three failed to work - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, to have the debate move very well, if you have opened your iPads, the minister was very honest. He said that apart from Bugembe Regional Mechanical Workshop, which was built with the assistance of JICA in 1996, the other three do not have appropriate infrastructure in place.

He said Gulu and Mbarara Regional Mechanical Workshops can best be described as parking yards. The minister is being honest and he told you that the issue is money. The debate should be on how this can be sorted. Even if we list how our graders are not being worked on, the minister has no capacity.

It is a workshop without workshop capacity. If a minister can tell you it is a parking yard, what else - And this is an official statement. It is not off the cuff and it has gone through the structures. Therefore, can we focus our debate on seeing how we can build capacity here?

6.32

MR MARTIN MUZAALÉ (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we talk about roads, there is a key machine that is actually lacking in the district; an excavator. Our biggest challenge on the roads that we have in our communities is the swamps, especially in the eastern region. The only way you can work on them is when you have an excavator.

When you go to our regional workshop, we only have one functional excavator. We received money as a district and so far, we have almost received almost Shs 500 million. What we need right now is that machine. If we do not have it, the work that we are going to produce may not be of help.

The minister has just said it well; that the key problem he is facing, as a ministry, is money. Ideally, colleagues, you know very well that

issues of roads are very key in our communities. When we talk about development, it begins with roads in our communities. Without roads, there is no development. What we need to do is to help our minister since he has been very clear that there is no money. Most of these workshops are just parking areas.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, we have machines that we received from the Chinese government; the Jang-Lin. All those machines are down but you *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Members, let us limit the debate to: “Statement to Parliament by the Minister of State of Works and Transport regarding the status of the regional mechanical workshops”.

6.35

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I must thank the minister because for the first time, he has been very frank. You are a very good minister; humble, but this time you have been frank.

On the regional workshops he is talking about, take a walk to Jinja. It is not a workshop; it had even been abandoned. We do not have genuine workshops. They used to get a budget of Shs 30 billion for the four regional workshops. Now, they are talking of Shs 11.8 billion for the four.

One tire for a grader costs Shs 3.2 million. If they are 16 graders, multiply that. You know how many graders we have. The issue of the Ministry of Works and Transport and why they have not helped these Members of Parliament – They need to harmonise with station engineers at the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA).

We have 23 stations. So that in case they have an excavator, which the district does not have, they can rent because at times they do not use them at the same time.

Therefore, to cut a long story short, the way we are handling roads, we are going back to 1986. The money that used to go to roads is no

longer going there. That minister, for example, can tell you they have just got a third of their budget for the second quarter.

Last quarter they never got any money. The Uganda Road Fund, where we used to get money for maintenance from, its money has been slashed to almost zero because the whole Government is pushing to have the Uganda Road Fund mainstreamed- *(Member timed out.)*

6.37

MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for his frank report. Roads lead us to the market, work, health facilities, and schools, to mention them but a few. Without us budgeting appropriately for the maintenance of our roads and maintenance of our road equipment, we shall be frustrating this economy.

I think the onus is now on this Parliament, to ensure that at the time of budget appropriation, we make sure that the budget for maintenance of the road equipment is commensurate with the number of roads that are supposed to be worked on.

As we sit here, given the amount of rain that we have received here today, I am not sure whether some of us, including myself, will be able to access our homes today. *(Interjection)*

I do not sleep in a swamp. I am telling this House that where I live in Sonde, we have mobilised as a community; we went to the district mayor of Goma to try to see whether we could get road equipment to work on our roads. But we were told all the equipment is *kaput*.

They were waiting to get graders and excavators from the centre. But for over a month now, we cannot access that. For the new subcounties, the amount of money that they get to work on their road *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That is why Hon. Yeri Ofwono has said you harvest the water. Hon. Lokoru Albert?

6.38

MR ALBERT LOKORU (NRM, Tepeth County, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join other Members to thank the minister for the good statement regarding the road network in this country. Our people need good roads to facilitate -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The road network is not the issue honourable; we are on the mechanical facilities.

MR LOKORU: Most obliged. Now, the challenge of equipment cuts across the whole country. I am from Karamoja - and Moroto District in particular - where most equipment is grounded and there is no way this equipment can be repaired because our service station is in Gulu. Honourable minister, who is responsible for transporting this equipment, say, from Moroto to Gulu, where there is a service facility?

Then the other one is the good news from our dear President. He directed for allocation of Shs 1 billion to improve the roads in this country. But when we get in touch with our local governments, they say that the guidelines are not yet clear and they are fearing to touch this money.

Honourable minister, when will the guidelines reach the district local governments so that the roads are rehabilitated? We are already in the second quarter- *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, honourable colleagues, the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Local Government has written to all CAOs and attached the guidelines as stipulated by the Parliament- the revised guidelines on how to use that money. All of them.

Therefore, tomorrow, Clerk, ensure that the letter is uploaded so that MPs who have not seen this, can download it and share it with their districts and say, "No, here you were directed and guided." Clerk, ensure - no those are points I do not want to be taken advantage of. Hon. Bukenya?

6.42

DR MICHAEL BUKENYA (NRM, Bukuya County, Kassanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. As I informed you, I will start with my new vocation. The Bible says in Ephesians 4:32, "*Be kind to one another; tender-hearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you.*" Now, I want to first say that we have forgiven the minister with his team at the ministry. In Kassanda, we do not have equipment; we borrow equipment from the Ministry of Works.

Whenever they see that their machines are broken down at the ministry - they have no tyres; they say "Come for the equipment." And we go, we take the equipment, we repair, work for two weeks, then they come for their equipment. So, every time, we first have to repair. I did not know that they did not have money, and that is why they were doing that.

Today, because he was straight, we have forgiven him because he does not have money. I would like to urge this Parliament that we find a way of raising money through the Ministry of Finance to give to the Ministry of Works to improve the maintenance of this equipment. Thank you very much.

6.43

MR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister for the statement that was given about the regional workshops. We see this, not as an issue in the Ministry of Work, but even in the health sector, there are regional workshops and they are significantly underfunded.

However, having said that, as the chairperson of the District Roads Committee in my district, I did a survey and found that 50 per cent of the time, my graders are down.

Secondly, even after they have been maintained, the road maintenance that it carries out, instead of lasting six months, only lasts about three months, emphasising the need for proper road maintenance of the equipment itself. We, therefore, need to find the funds.

I want to propose that if the ministry cannot provide, in the Shs 1 billion we had allocated, about five per cent for maintenance of equipment, which is to the district, perhaps a percentage of it could be taken up.

If not, then the Ministry of Finance needs to provide the resources. Otherwise, we are not efficient in our road maintenance because of poorly maintained equipment. Roads of six months are lasting only 30 or half the time. Work that should have been done in 30 days is taking 60 days. So we need to improve the efficiency by supporting these regional workshops by financing them. Thank you.

6.45

MS MIRIAM MUKHAYE (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister for the statement that he has given and thank you for being honest.

Recently, when we were in the roads committee meeting at Mbale District, our engineer informed us that some of the machines like the wheel loader, were down and were required to take those machines to the regional office to be repaired in Bugembe.

Then we asked, how much fuel would be required to bring those machines to Bugembe. Because of that dilemma, the machines are in the district, not repaired. Therefore, the work at the district is down.

And based on your statement today, we know why some of the challenges are still happening in our districts.

Just like the other speakers have said, the Shs 1 billion that we have, will just be like a big elephant because most of the funds will be allocated to repairing of the machines because even the tyres are down. Nothing will be done as required when we do not increase the funding to our workshops.

As you openly said, “These workshops have to be mobile.” They are supposed to go to

our districts to repair the machines right there instead of the district team transporting them to the regional office.

So, if that is the directive, then speak to them to do the same because we cannot spend again on fuel to transport the machines to the regional office... *(Member timed out.)*

6.47

MR DENNIS NYANGWESO (Independent, Samia Bugwe Central County, Busia): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for that statement. I am the chairman of the Roads Committee in my district, Busia.

We have a challenge because the district engineer told us that despite the availability of money to repair some of the road equipment for use, the workshop in Bugembe has failed to provide the technical expertise to repair some of the road equipment we have.

We have the money for repair; we are guided that the repair must be undertaken by the workshop at the regional level, whereby they should come and help us utilise the money we have for the repair, but the workshop in Jinja, has declined because they do not have that expertise.

We have asked the CAO to write to the ministry to allow us to contract out a service provider to repair the equipment, and this is very challenging.

So, I would like to appreciate the minister’s honesty here that they lack the money in terms of even building the capacity to provide for the repairs as mandated by the ministry.

Honourable members, as we start the budget process for this financial year, more money should be allocated to the ministry.

I would like the minister to come up with an honest budget of how much should be funded to make these workshops help our people. Thank you very much.

6.49

MR YUSUF MUTEMBULI (NRM, Bunyole East County, Butaleja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the minister for the statement. In 2019, Butaleja district took a tipper lorry to Bugembe for repair but until now, it has not been repaired.

Last year, the engineer wrote to the management of this workshop to get back the lorry so that the district would repair it. They refused. And they said that until they get authority from the ministry, they cannot release it for repair.

My humble request to the minister is to direct the management of Bugembe Mechanical Workshop to release our tipper so that the district can have it repaired.

The last time I visited the workshop, I described it as a motor vehicle mortuary, because you find very many vehicles, people who pretend to be so busy when they are actually doing nothing.

I do not entirely agree that the problem is about money; I think there is also something beyond money. Because if we ask them to release ours to repair, they say that; "We are not releasing it, because it is under warranty." And that, "We cannot release this vehicle until we have instructions from the ministry."

Honourable Minister, now that you are here, I request you to direct that they release our tipper so that we can have it repaired. Information please-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. - No, his time is up.

MR NELSON OKELLO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister for his statement. I am also the chairperson of the District Roads Committee in my district of Apac.

The main challenges as far as the regional workshop is concerned are:

1. The coverage is too wide to the extent that the scope of maintenance and repair works is very big. For example, Gulu Regional

Workshop is serving West Nile, Lango, Acholi and Karamoja. How many districts are there, and how many machines and equipment can break down at a go and need repair?

I request, through you, that the Ministry of Works and Transport create some maintenance branch; say in Lira and Arua to assist the western Nile districts and NIRA to assist the district in the Lango Subregion.

2. Through you, my colleagues have talked about the issue of funds. And I - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ogwal.

6.53

MR MOSES OGWAL MOSES (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, Honourable Minister. I agree entirely with the issue of the workshop; this Shs 1 billion kindly your statement gives a scare on using it.

Please, The Shs 1 billion does not make it hard to be used under the Uganda Road Fund. It says clearly that you can use up to five per cent for the issues of repair and so on.

Let us concentrate on that and then separate it from the issue related to the workshops. I do not know whether Hon. Okot - maybe you would want to add because we sat in our meeting and agreed that we have allowed Shs 50 million to support the issue of servicing the equipment.

So, that is how we are trying to handle it and I beg please do not mess up with the Shs 1 billion. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Rwemulikya.

6.54.

MR RWEMULIKYA IBANDA (Independent, Ntoroko County, Ntoroko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the honourable minister for his statement and honesty; the issue is about maintenance.

These regional workshops in the country - we have one in Mbarara that takes Kigezi, Ankole, the entire Rwenzori or Toro; it is huge.

So, I agreed with my colleagues that at least we should have sub-stations because getting a wheel loader from Mbarara is very difficult.

When you go to Mbarara, they will tell you it has gone to Kisoro. When you are in Kisoro, it is in Kanungu. It becomes a very big problem. So, Mr Speaker, it is better for us to have sub-branches to help us.

Again, on maintenance, districts are suffering. You go for a machine from the district, the district tells you “We do not have tyres.”

So, subcounties end up using money for maintenance to buy these tyres and it becomes a very big problem. They say: “This machine has broken down; you have to buy before we release these machines.” So, the money that is meant to do work ends up repairing machines.

I can see here that they made a study of Shs 100 billion. Even if you have not gone at once, at Shs 100 billion, can't this Parliament really provide this money? We are the people who appropriate. We can appropriate and say Shs 50 billion should begin the works so that our regional workshops are well equipped.

Lastly, it is about – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Finance committee chairperson?

6.56

MR AMOS KANKUNDA (NRM, Rwampara County, Rwampara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, I appreciate the truthfulness in the report of the honourable minister – the fact that these, actually, are white elephants in the regions and, therefore, need support. I also recognise the fact that you have been getting money before, but we seem not to see the difference in the performance even when you had a bigger budget. That is an issue, in my opinion.

I would recommend that the rightful sub-committee looks at even investigating to find out what the actual problem is so that we can make informed decisions in this House.

I would also like to appreciate the information that he has given about us. I come from Rwampara, which is a new district and has no road unit. We had thought that we would get this money earlier. *(Mr Tusiime rose)* I have a colleague here – we even have bigger problems. You can submit on the rest of the minutes. *(Laughter)*

6.57

MR JULIUS TUSIIME (Independent, Rwampara East County, Rwampara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The need for road equipment in new districts is not only a necessity, but now an emergency. We have money, but we are stuck. The paralysis of the regional workshops has made the works unbearable for us. All our roads are impassable. When it rains, in the valleys, they become swimming pools. The culverts have been washed away; we are totally stuck.

We appeal that in the next supplementary budget, we make this a priority.

Mr Speaker, we have seen you move mountains; we have seen you commit and we get money for the loan schemes. *(Applause)* We pray that we get the Shs 28 billion required for us to have the road equipment in our new districts, including Kazo and many other districts. *(Laughter)* I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, if I remember very well that, last Thursday, the Prime Minister said that they have provided for it; so, they will get for the new districts. I remember she also said that after they have given the new districts, they will also look at the big districts. She gave the examples of Wakiso, Ntungamo, Kasese – you know, districts of that size.

However, let us, indeed, keep pushing for it and the minister is going to update us.

Hon. Kibalya and then the Member for Buhweju. After Buhweju, Max Ochai.

6.59

MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli): Mr Speaker, as we address the issue of equipment – and the ministry is always blaming Parliament – we equally need to interface with the finance ministry.

The committee is always faced with a challenge of appropriating money or earmarking funds because we do know the challenges in the ministry, but the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will not be ready to allocate that money.

So, Mr Speaker, through your office – this is a very touching issue. We need to take advantage of your office. We have seen you, as colleagues have said – there are things that you have moved. This one has come at the right time when you are in office. We know you will push for it.

Secondly, is the issue of regional workshops – these regional workshops do not have staff. Some of the people that have been there have been there for ages. We need trained staff in these workshops. That is why you hear Hon. Mutembuli saying the equipment came and it could not be repaired. Secondly, these regional workshops do not have money to do any repair; we have visited the one of Bugembe. I am advantaged that I normally visit it and I am friendly to most of those people. However, they are crying. We get regional equipment to use in our areas, but for whoever has used the regional equipment from Bugembe, when there is any challenge, they have to dig into their pockets and repair. The challenge is money.

We need to be clear that as we budget, some money must be earmarked for the regional workshops so that it is not touched. Otherwise, if it is just put together in a basket – *(Member timed out.)*

7.01

MS OLIVER KOYEKYENGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Buhweju): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister

for being honest. However, before I go to the regional workshops, I want to remind the Minister of Works that even for the road units that we put in the districts, we took them there without a plan for maintaining them.

Most of them are covered by the bush because they are not doing anything. I suggest that when we are in this House budgeting, we should look at the priorities.

I want to assume that road units – and the machines and the workshops – are one of the priorities because we cannot do anything when we do not have roads. So, I suggest that we also look at the money to maintain the road units that we put in the districts.

Mr Speaker, you know my district of Buhweju. The roads are very poor and, considering the terrain, it is really very bad. We need strong machines; we need excavators that we do not have.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that when we are doing budgeting here, let us give the Ministry of Works more money so that they can be able to work on those.

7.03

MR MAXIMUS OCHAI (NRM, West Budama County North, Tororo): Mr Speaker, I take this chance to thank the minister for the statement made. However, I do not believe that money should be an issue, particularly when we know that we have been implementing the medium-term expenditure framework process since 1992.

What, to me, is of concern should rather be the failure to link the planning process, together with the policy-making process, and the budgeting process. It is at the prioritisation point that the rubber hits the road.

So, in improving the performance of the mechanical workshops, we need to get our priorities right. Short of getting the priorities right, we shall keep on asking for more and more money, yet that money is scarce.

7.04

MR STEPHEN KAGWERA (NRM, Burahya County, Kabarole): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Concerning the parking yard and regional mechanical workshops, we need, really, to give the ministry money and be mindful of the corruption.

I see the money for transporting equipment from Fort Portal to Mbarara very inflated. It discourages us and it is very dangerous.

There is an issue of suppressing budgets. I need to be got clearly that the honourable minister talked about wealth creation. We need to put money where we shall look back and see the money. If we put the money in road equipment, in making good roads – wealth creation, you may look back and – I do not now know where it is now.

On the quality of procurement, we talked about the Chinese – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude, honourable member.

MR KAGWERA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. In the Ninth Parliament, we had a very hot debate – the Members who were here remember that. We said we should not import equipment from there, but the ministry went ahead and imported it. Even if you put billions of shillings on these machines that you imported from China, we cannot have value for money. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: In business, we call it throwing good money at bad money. *(Laughter)* It all becomes bad money. Hon. Atima.

7.05

MR JACKSON ATIMA (NRM, Arua Central Division, Arua City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I join others in thanking the minister for the statement. While honourable colleagues from other districts are talking about the difficulties of taking their equipment to be serviced at the regional workshops, Arua City has no equipment to be taken to Gulu, the regional centre.

Arua City was formed by joining Ayivu County, which is now Ayivu Division with the former Arua Municipality. Ayivu County formerly, under Arua District has lost all the equipment. It has three road equipment units. Since Arua City does not have any equipment, what do we taken to Gulu for repair in the regional workshop?

I would like to ask the Minister of Works and Transport and the Minister of Local Government to think about these cities that were created; otherwise, the money allocated ends up lying idle.

The Uganda Road Fund budget for the Financial Year 2021/2022 – which the city received – Shs 600 million – was not utilised because there was no equipment to do the work. In fact, we are still investing where the money went.

Mr Speaker, we hired equipment to work on roads in the Financial Year 2022/2023. I would like to implore the ministries concerned to see to it that the cities which were created have equipment. Thank you.

7.07

MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii (Kadam), Nakapiripirit): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to look at the study that the ministry carried out. When you start giving districts Shs 140-plus billion yet the workshops require Shs 100 billion – a see-saw. Is it this very money that caused the study to come to that figure?

What I am saying is that while we are trying to improve things on one side, things go down on the other side. Most importantly, I would like to implore the Government on the effect when these workshops are not functional. The effect is that it will affect the productive sector in the country because the roads and the equipment are not worked on. This, therefore, undermines – the fact that we want to create economic growth and productivity in this country – That is what we definitely have to look out for.

The Government must look into this matter seriously if we are to talk about economic growth, job creation, improving agricultural

productivity and value chain in this country. That is where the effect goes and that is the bottom line. That is where the impact is.

Mr Speaker, it is imperative for the Government to look for funding such that the workshops and equipment are operational so that the roads are maintained. Thank you.

7.09

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the honest report. When you read the minister's report, he has made a very good analysis.

First, they carried out a feasibility study which needed Shs 100 billion. Although he did not state the financial year it was carried out, I believe it still stands.

Secondly, when the money was not provided, they resorted to framework contracts which worked out 90 per cent availability of equipment. That was very good, but they never paid the suppliers for lack of money. Thereafter, they resorted to a hybrid – where they had framework contracts for local dealers and in-house for minor repairs. With that, the equipment availability was only at 30 per cent, meaning that it cannot work.

Mr Speaker, I would like to propose that as we did for the students' loan scheme, why can't we have this Shs 100 billion provided for under the three per cent provision so that we can have these regional workshops operational? Otherwise, it is very embarrassing.

When you are working on roads in my constituency – Ibanda County North – you are in Nyamarebe. Nyamarebe is a very hard-to-reach subcounty and so, when you get a mechanical fault, they will tell you they are going to the district. The people at the district will tell you, "We are going to the workshop". Mr Speaker, there is no solution. I think if we do that, maybe we can get –(*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kyooma, do you think the problem is just money? It is beyond money. We have other entities which have equipment. The agriculture ministry has equipment, but where are they working and being maintained?

I instruct the Committee on Physical Infrastructure to visit and make an on-spot assessment of the facilities we are talking about. Make an analysis and do whatever can be done to know what the problem is, before we make conclusions on money. Hon. Aogon has just told me that their grader –

MR SILAS AOGON: Mr Speaker, since 2014 to date, one of our caterpillars has been in Bugembe. They cannot return and repair it. It is parked; it is redundant. That is the situation we are talking about.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Wanzala, what were you saying?

7.12

MR NOAH MUTEBI (NRM, Nakasongola County, Nakasongola): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. When our machines are taken to Bugembe Mechanical Workshop, they can spend several years. Nakasongola –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Does Nakasongola take theirs to Bugembe?

MR MUTEBI: There was a time we were taking the machines to Bugembe, but even if we bring it to Kampala here – you will call Eng. Kavuma, the Chief Mechanical Engineer and ask him when he is returning our machines to Nakasongola. Eng. Kavuma will tell you to give him two weeks but when you go there after the two weeks, he will say "The machine has not been worked upon; please, check on us after six months".

My humble appeal is that we equip the mechanical workshops – let us upgrade them from parking yards to mechanical workshops so that our machines can be worked on and then we have better roads. Otherwise, to have

better roads, we must have sound machines in this country. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: If we have pre-qualified garages to work on other complicated machines – Ministry of Works and Transport, I will ask some of these.

Recently, my official car had a problem and it was grounded because I heard that the Ministry of Works and Transport must first assess and approve the repair. Honourable ministers, who gave you that power and under what law? – No, no, they have hijacked some of these things. I asked, but no one gave me an answer – some of them are under the law but they have hijacked some.

Parliament has an engineer who assesses the car and then it is taken to a junior officer in the Ministry of Works and Transport to approve the work of an engineer. How? What is going to kill this country is the bureaucracy; decision-making is derailed. Anyway, I had fixed some Members; so, let us continue. Prof. Mushemeza, what is the issue? Honourable colleagues, I did not mean to provoke you into a fresh –

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA: Mr Speaker, I would like to improve on the terms given to the committee –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will work on the terms of reference, but I will consult you, professor and any other professor, if any.

Hon. Obigah, what is the issue because it looks like you are burning?

7.15

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Indeed, I am burning with an issue here: I do not know whether we have anything called Gulu equipment centre. We do not have. In Terego, the roads have closed.

Mr Speaker, I invite you to Terego. You will have to fly and remain there. We do not have anything –*(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You said good things come from Terego; so, I am happy to remain in Terego. *(Laughter)*

MS OBIGAH: You are going to miss them. *(Laughter)*

I really beg that we should get serious with these centres, especially the one of northern Uganda. There are many new districts, and we are suffering. If you want the equipment at the regional centres, you cannot get them. My district chairman has invited the entire Ministry of Works and Transport to see how bad Terego is. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Auma?

7.16

MS HELLEN AUMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Busia): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is not about poor maintenance, but it is about negligence of work.

One time, I was moving in my constituency and I found a grader, stuck on the roadside – it was after one or two months. When I asked for the cause of the grader being stuck, they told me that they were in the middle of work when fuel ran low and it got stuck. Imagine, they were at work and they left it on the roadside for over two months. Later, when I was going for burial somewhere, I found it there and I had to follow up. I called the district, went there, and they told me that they did not have fuel for the grader. *(Interjections)*

It is very true. People started stealing some parts from the grader.

Mr Speaker, as a member of the Committee on Climate Change, I am concerned. The minister said that there is a plan to procure new equipment. We have equipment that has been parked in some districts for many years. We are looking at a green country, Uganda. These machines that have been parked for many years damage our environment. Honourable minister, we should find a way of disposing of the equipment that is no longer in use. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, you need to be steady and not fall into a trap. Some of the technical people at the districts will tell you equipment is down, so that they can give out contracts, and grab the other Shs 1 billion. They will divert the money. The contractors are no longer accountable.

You need to be on the look-out and utilise your powers under the district road committees. They may even defeat the guidelines which Parliament issued. That is a target and you need to be very cautious.

However, whichever Chief Administrative Officer defies the guidelines – we might be forced to give you more time to go back to the districts and follow up on the utilisation of this money. Honourable colleagues, ensure that the money is used as per the guidelines.

For clarification, tomorrow, Clerk, upload the letter and the guidelines from the Ministry of Local Government, on our Alfresco website. Also, print copies and put them in the Members' pigeon holes, so that each Member has a copy of the letter and guidelines, once again. I do not want an excuse. Hon. Oseku.

7.20

MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We appreciate your guidance over this matter.

Mr Speaker, like it or not, as far as Government business is concerned, issues of monies will always arise.

When we specifically talk about these regional workshops, the fact is that they do not have capacity. They were constructed a long time ago when the districts were few. Now, we have many districts, and so much equipment. The capacity in terms of equipment in those workshops, and even the personnel, is lacking.

On the point of funding, this country is known to make good laws and policies but implementation is the biggest problem. We have the Uganda Road Fund Act, which provides – and we have talked about this issue several

times – for the funding of road maintenance. Section 21 is very clear on this. This comes back to Parliament; what do we do with this Act which was enacted? It is redundant and we cannot implement it. Why can't we put money in the Uganda Road Fund to solve the issues of funding, and focus on building the capacities of these workshops to maintain these roads?

All the programmes of the Government – especially as far as the Parish Development Model is concerned, if we do not have good community access roads, we shall not go far. The communities will keep complaining, we will not access markets, and we will not have processing plants in the countryside. *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Oseku, we have made good progress. Colleagues, when we make progress, appreciate it. Do not think that the Shs 1 billion came out of nothing. It came out of the pressure which was mounted by Hon. Byanyima and Hon. Opendi, regarding implementation of the Road Fund Act. We then allowed an extensive debate, and out of that, each district got Shs 1 billion.

To me, that is good progress. When you say that, "Parliament is stuck, what shall we do with Section 21 and with the Road Fund?" The progress we have made is commensurate – for now – with the resource envelope the country has. We cannot discount our efforts. Slowly, we shall demand for more. However, we have to be cautious of our resource envelope as a country.

Honourable colleagues, I am picking Members who have not spoken today. There is a colleague who has not yet spoken, but I am punishing him because he has a case. He went to a colleague's constituency and caused havoc. So, before I meet you with your colleague, Hon. Wanzala, on how you went to his constituency, I am constrained.

I heard another colleague on audio, calling a fellow colleague a fool, and calling another one a prostitute. I also have a minister who invited Members from a colleague's constituency to

his place, to address them on matters regarding a colleague's constituency.

For me, here, colleagues – (*Applause*) – if you are raiding a colleague's constituency to go and undermine, stop it. If you belong to another political party, you may say that, “As a party, his submissions in Parliament are not in line with the vision of our party,” that is okay; that is politics. Some of them even come from the same area.

I need to meet the two of you tomorrow, but I was not happy. I was given evidence. Colleagues, please focus on your constituency. Stop going to other people's constituencies. Whether you consider yourself very popular, stop it. If it comes to my attention that you confronted a colleague, I will ignore you here. I will not give you an opportunity. That will be my policy. So, once it is sorted tomorrow, I will allow the honourable colleague to speak.

7.25

MS CATHELIN NDAMIRA (NRM, Woman representative, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister because for once, he has spoken the truth. However, I want to let you know that much as we have lamented on money issues, it is also not enough.

Mr Speaker, the architect of this should also revise his brain. If you consider the Kigezi Subregion, the emergencies that have been happening – it rains like thrice a month and the moment it rains, the whole of Kigezi gets affected and the communities get disconnected. Is it, therefore, right for the equipment to be kept in Mbarara while Kabale and the whole of Kigezi are suffering for the same? This should be revised and there should be a priority.

In Mbarara, there is a stable kind of soil, but in Kabale, it goes year in and year out, and we have been bringing issues here in Parliament. We need to revise this and have equipment kept in Kabale, not in Mbarara; we need ours. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, they have told you that Mbarara is just

a parking yard; it is not helpful – (*Laughter*)
Let us ask the one of Isingiro who is next to Mbarara.

7.27

MS CLARE MUGUMYA (NRM, Woman Representative, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to also comment on the minister's statement. I would like to join my colleagues to thank the minister for the good statement, more specifically the honesty with which he presented it.

I come from Isingiro, which is one of the biggest districts. Therefore, accessing road equipment is very difficult. Even the one we had at the district is now very old and almost obsolete; it is in a dangerous mechanical condition. Whenever you consult the district about a certain emergency – like recently, the last few days, we experienced heavy rains. Some two villages of Kyakabindi A and Kyakabindi B are cut-off now for over a week because whenever I request a machine, I find it has been down and is also located at another end of the district.

I am of the view that we could wait until we collect enough money and get road equipment. I have not seen the guidelines but for sure the district should be allowed to buy the equipment with some of this money instead of concentrating on maintaining the old one – (*Interjection*) - I said we wait until we get enough to buy equipment; I am not saying Shs 1 billion is enough to buy road equipment.

Secondly, my colleague from Kabale said that the equipment centre should shift to Kabale, but I think we are near Mbarara where the road equipment is – but the road equipment is also not enough. Many times we have gone to Mbarara as neighbours to borrow that road equipment, but it is never available. Whenever you ask for it, it is either in Kisoro or in Kabale – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let me allow Hon. Sekyanzi then tomorrow we shall sort our cases.

7.29

MR BENARD SEKYANZI (NRM, Budyabo County, Nakasongola): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You are a very good presiding officer – (*Applause*) – because it is not good to base on allegations, but as you have ruled, you are a good man.

Mr Speaker, I request my colleague, the Minister of Works and Transport – you know he is my OB – I request that at least every five districts should be allocated experts to work on the machines because even at regional centres, you find overcrowding of the machines, which by the way, call for a long stay of machines at the regional workshops.

However, if we allocate five human resource experts per five districts, everything can be handled very well. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What Hon. Sekyanzi is proposing, is that if for example, we had mobile workshops per subregion – Lango, West Nile, Ankole, Kigezi and Bukedi – We look at mobile workshops and then we have the main station at the regional level. So, only critical cases are brought at the regional level. That would help.

7.31

MR GEOFFREY MUTIWA (NRM, Bunyole West County, Butaleja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister; He has been very honest in his statement. Honourable colleagues have talked about road equipment; I am the chairperson of the roads committee in my district of Butaleja.

I request the minister to look at regional workshops in terms of maintaining all district vehicles. Time and again, districts or the Government procure vehicles, but you find that these vehicles are used for one or two years and they break down and because there is not sufficient budget for repairing these vehicles, they go and request the Government to procure new vehicles.

You find that districts have very many vehicles that are not in operation. Yet if there is a budget

that can do an overhaul – like His Excellency the President supported us with the Shs 1 billion – I would request that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development also look for money and support districts to repair all district vehicles; I believe this can help not only vehicles that handle roads but also all departments in the districts.

Additionally, I would like the honourable minister to look at the issue of the remuneration of the drivers. For you to hire a grader for a day, you need at least not less than Shs 1 million. However, its driver for the whole day – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Stella Atyang. - No, please, that is not how we behave here.

7.33

MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for emphasising the issue of guidelines on the utilisation of Shs 1 billion. Districts have that money now in their accounts, but they do not have approval for the utilisation of this money, and they are waiting for those guidelines.

Mr Speaker -(*Interjection*)- yes, that is it; they are waiting for those guidelines. My district engineer told me that they had a budget conference, whereby they told them they had to wait for the final guidelines that would come this month.

Therefore, I am of the view that we harmonise the issues of these guidelines – What was resolved in Parliament and what the ministries are thinking; so that we have this money utilised because we are now in the second quarter and the money is not yet utilised and at the end of the year, you will find that the money will not be utilised because of issues of guidelines. So, I request that we harmonise that.

Secondly, as much as the districts are given funds to do minor repairs, those funds are not enough to help these districts do those minor repairs. The money that is allocated for tyres is

so small to the extent that it only buys one tyre in the whole year, yet there is much equipment in the district and a machine needs all four tyres replaced to balance well.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that the ministry, in the next financial year, takes into consideration at least to give enough money for these minor repairs, especially the tyres.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. We are still going on but honourable minister, on only one item, have you stopped these districts from utilising the money, as they wait for new guidelines from you? I have received a letter from the Minister of Local Government and they were told to work. So, who else?

MR BYAMUKAMA: Mr Speaker, we followed the guidance from Parliament. We sat with the Ministry of Local Government and they came up with guidelines, which were circulated to the districts. Even our permanent secretary got those very guidelines and wrote to various Chief Administrative Officers to follow the same guidance.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you are members of the district road committees. You are decision-makers at that level. We gave you a tool; you cannot come here to lament. That is why I have said that, tomorrow, you will again receive the guidelines; in both physical and soft copy, together with the letter. If you want, our ICT or Hansard Department can even extract for you the video of the minister so that you send it and play it.

However, there are clear guidelines. The ministry has done its work; so, let us go and stand our ground. I know districts where Members have stood their ground, and they are implementing. Those ones where Members have been shaken are going to play around with this money. So, now the ball is in your quarters, honourable colleagues.

We are not handling issues of terrain; I also have the worst terrain. Let us hear from Hon. Nambozo, the Member from Kiruhura and the

Hon. Phyllis. They are the final ones for today. I am picking those who have not spoken today.

7.37

MS FLORENCE NAMBOZO (Independent, Woman Representative, Sironko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the honourable minister for being very honest. When you look at the Bugisu Subregion, which is part of the East, it is characterised by a very difficult terrain, especially this time when it is raining. We are on our knees praying so that we do not get landslides to kill our people and boulders coming down to finish them off.

In the last term, we got boulders breaking off from the mountain and they killed our people, but before they rolled to kill villagers, as people were running, we looked for excavators to hold the boulders and get all of them off the track that they were using; Bugembe is very far from Sironko or Bugisu.

My prayer is that we have an excavator, especially in these regions that have got such disasters. Before they happen, if we have a Ministry of Disaster Preparedness and they are not working in tandem with the Ministry of Works and Transport, it is a little difficult for us.

Lastly, as we are getting into the budgeting process; I think, this time, we are informed that the Ministry of Works and Transport needs to plan better. However big their budget may be, we need to understand, as Members of Parliament – because when a Member of Parliament starts fueling those road units, it is absurd.

Mr Speaker, you see where part of our salary goes – We have to fill this equipment with fuel sometimes for the work to be done *-(Member timed out.)*

7.39

MR POLYCARP OGWARI (Independent, Agule County, Pallisa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, there are only a few things that are here. First of all, these workshops that you are talking about are not

actually workshops, like many other Members mentioned. These are mechanical parking yards.

I went to Bugembe, where honourable members talked about, to interact with those guys. The tools that are there are not tools for the workshop. They are tools that demoralise somebody who is an engineer to completely do the job. I asked them, "Where is the problem?" They told me the problem is that even if they made the requisition, it would take years for them to get the tool. So, they sometimes end up getting their own personal tools to do the Government job.

When they make a requisition of the spare parts that they want, they never get them. So, at the end of the day, they blame them.

However, when you also look at the workshop, the morale of the staff is completely not there; you have killed it. So, we need to work hard to make sure the morale of the staff comes back.

When you go to the district, it is another big issue. You have gone into stealing the Shs 1 million by saying you use five per cent for repairing the equipment. It is okay, but you have already deducted the money that is supposed to be used for road maintenance. Even if you look at this five per cent – like when Pallisa is trying to fidget around and see how this money is used – the five per cent still cannot repair all the equipment in the district, and yet, in actual sense, these roads are supposed to be worked upon. So, at the end of the day, we end up saying, "Let us just work on what we can, and then we shall see the rest later." What does that really mean? We are not going to do a good quality job on the roads, as far as the equipment is concerned.

Now, my - (*Member timed out.*)

7.41

MR ANDREW OJOK (NRM, Omoro County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to join my colleagues in thanking the honourable minister, mostly for his humility, but I also know, from his office, he executes tasks expeditiously.

I implore the House to think outside the box. I think we need to go back to the drawing board and see what works best for us. Yes, I know the ministry tried a bit of outsourcing the maintenance of the equipment and the stations, but I think we can still go back and look at it from a concessional angle.

How else can we negotiate this; from the equipment to the human resource? Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kapchorwa's terrain is like the one of Bundibugyo.

7.42

MS JOVANICE TWINOBUSINGYE (NRM, Woman Representative, Kiruhura): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues to thank the minister for the good statement. It is a fact that we need to equip our regional workshops because that is where the major repairs are done for the machines of our district. Allow me to also mention that poor maintenance of machines is a problem. It is the main cause of the breakdown. We need to make sure that the machines are well maintained.

I have another point on the newly created town councils and subcounties. Those ones are not receiving the usual grants; the road fund grants. They are in a crisis. We need to look at that. Thank you.

7.43

MS PHYLLIS CHEMUTAI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kapchorwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the report. I come from a district which has a unique terrain – like it has been said. The roads are very steep at some points and the soils are very loose. When it rains, they are just swept down to the valleys. There is also a lot of meandering along as you climb up. All this causes a lot of tear and wears out the roads very fast, and this calls for functional equipment all the time so that repairs are made anytime.

I buy the idea of mobile workshops. I am saying so because in Kapchorwa, we have a tractor which was given to us by the Ministry

of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and it is serviced by the same ministry. The engineers come there at the time of service – at the time of repairs – right to the place where the tractor is. They repair and come back. You have to call them all the time and when the service is needed, they come. They are very efficient.

I am seeing the staff of these regional workshops being very redundant. They are using up Government money for nothing, because they are earning a salary, and yet they are not doing the work. So, why can't we deploy them to go out and service our equipment from our districts? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, Committee on Physical Infrastructure?

7.45

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE (Mr Dan Kimosho): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable minister; he has attempted to be honest in this report.

This report needs to include the human resource capacity at the mechanical workshops. It does not, at all, talk about the human resource in these workshops. Even if we have the equipment, they will not operate themselves. They will still be redundant.

I was listening in – of course, I fall within the Mbarara Mechanical Workshop Region. The cries are the same from Kabale, Ntoroko to Kazo. He needed to tell us about the corporate governance structures in these workshops because the challenge is even in communication. Even when they cannot do something, you will never get the answer. Those mechanical workshops are kingdoms in themselves.

I will give you an example: In Mbarara, there are three excavators. They said they got Shs 12 billion. That would mean that out of four, each got Shs 3 billion but all the three excavators are completely down. I attempted to check recently but all the machines are completely down. You

now wonder: Even if it was poor resourcing, what does the Shs 3 billion even do, if not to at least service one excavator to be on standby?

Finally, on this one, allow me to comment as a Member of Parliament. Kazo was split from Kiruhura in 2019. We got a grader which was supposed to be worked on; it needed Shs 150 billion. It is now 2023; it has been at the mechanical workshop and has never been worked on.

Even with meagre resources, would it be impossible, in five years, for someone to prioritise and overhaul a grader? Mr Speaker, as you guided, I do not want to sound – Because I am conflicted in this matter since you have already referred it to my committee; I am personally touched because of the – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. I am referring the statement on the whole matter to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure. I believe two weeks are enough, isn't it, honourable colleagues? – The chairperson is asking for three weeks because I need you to visit – Chairperson I am giving you four weeks because I want you to work between Friday and Monday.

Colleagues, I have told the Clerk that there will be no retreats and field work during plenary. I want your members to be given a chance to come to plenary. If you go out and process a report, when you do not attend plenary and support other committees when they present their reports, who will support yours? What if they also go for retreats because each committee has that capacity?

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

(The House rose at 7.49 p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 12 October 2023 at 2.00 p.m.)