

**PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**Tuesday, 12 April 2022**

*Parliament met at 01.58 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I want to welcome you to today's sitting. I would like to welcome you back from Lalogi, Omoro District where we laid our brother to rest. I sincerely thank all of you who managed to be there and supported us during the whole process. You showed unconditional love to the family.

We may not get over the loss now. I know it will remain in our hearts but we need to cope and move with it. However, wherever our brother and friend is, he knows that we loved him and we shall continue with the love through the family. Let us continue praying for the family individually and continue with the whole process of replacement so that we get a good person who will be able to work with us and who will step in Jacob’s shoes. I know *mama* Majegere is here. She will do the needful on our request. You know there is a person we need but we shall leave that to you.

As we continue with the budget process, I draw your attention to the remaining milestones, which is our role as Parliament;

One, there is presentation of the sectoral committee reports on the ministerial policy statements and this should be done by 20 April 2022. That is pursuant to rule 149(1) of the Rules of Procedure.

Two, we have consideration of those sectoral reports, the ministerial policy statements and the budget estimates. We should be done by 30th April, pursuant to rule 149(2) of the Rules of Procedure.

Based on that, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, next week, we shall be looking at the sectoral reports and the ministerial statements. We shall have sittings in the morning and afternoon because we need to finish those reports. We need to give each report ample time, debate in the House and have the reports passed so that we do not have a scenario of copy and paste.

Three, is approval of the national budget by 31st May. We should not go up to May. We should have the budget approved before that time. We should not work in a hurry at the last minute. Remember we have the State-of-Nation Address on 7th June and then, we have the budget day on 14th June. So, we should be able to finish the budget process before 30th May, pursuant to section 14(1) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.

Then, we have consideration of the Tax Bills by 20th May, pursuant to Rule 151 (6) of the Rules of Procedure. We then have the Committee of Supply by 20th May, pursuant to Rule 151 of the Rules of Procedure.

Remember, we are saying the consideration of the budget will be done by 30th May. As I have said, we should be able to do it before that date.

Honourable members, these various stages of the budgeting process are interrelated. Therefore, a delay in one stage affects the other stages. Therefore, Prime Minister, we do not want any delays. We have already had a delay for three weeks because of the problem we had here. Therefore, we request that you help us to avoid other delays so that we pass the budget very fast.

All the chairpersons of sectoral committees should present their reports from Tuesday. I will give you a schedule of who should present on which date and at what time.

I thank all of you very much for coming. In a special way, I thank the Prime Minister for being here today in person. I do not take that for granted. Let us have matters of national importance.

2.05

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** I want to thank you, Madam Speaker. During the Seventh Parliament, hon. Ben Wacha and another MP whose name I have forgotten complained. If the former NRM Secretary-General could remind me, they complained to this Parliament that there was an attempt to poison them in the canteen of Parliament.

The procedural issue I am raising is that the father of our former Speaker, including a former minister, the hon. Godfrey Kiwanda who is also Vice-Chairman of NRM has said that the late Speaker told them that he had been poisoned.

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious matter but the immediate procedure I am raising is whether you, Madam Speaker and the administration of Parliament have taken procedures because we need to be advised as police investigate, on what we should avoid. Do we avoid eating in the canteen? What should we avoid? This matter is under investigation. However, precautions need to be taken by the administration of Parliament now that this matter has been raised by very senior leaders in this country, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, hon. Ssemujju. First of all, the father has not said that Jacob told him that he was poisoned in Parliament. That is not what he said. What we are hearing from the father is just mere hearsay. It is just that we cannot now confirm from the late that this is what he said. However, all that said and done, investigations are going on. Let investigations go on; if it is true he was poisoned - it is also a fact that we have a medical report, which was read to everybody. So, as of now, let the investigations go on. Parliament is a very safe place and I can assure you on that. However, poisoning cannot only come from Parliament. If you live recklessly in your constituency, then do not blame Parliament.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** You see, the former coordinator of intelligence, Gen. Sejusa is also on record as saying even when they would go for high command meetings, everybody would go with his chapatti in his bag.

So, Madam Speaker, I get frightened and that is why I need assurance from you and maybe other colleagues need it.

**THE SPEAKER:** Where does he go for meetings? Does he go for meetings in Parliament? Do the meetings take place in Parliament?

Now, if the meetings do not take place in Parliament, then why would you say that there is insecurity in Parliament in terms of poison? For us in Parliament, there is no poison.

We are safe and the father has not said he was poisoned in Parliament, no. Let the investigations take place and we will get the feedback from the investigating officers. I do not want us to just conclude like people who have not really gone to school - that it is poison. The medical report was read to us here.

2.10

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join you in thanking the House for acting in solidarity when we lost our friend and former Speaker.

Without delving into the sentiments of Hon. Ssemujju, which of course, are scary - but my concern is that whereas investigations are legit, where such matters arise, I am concerned with the sheer shabbiness of the state in the way they are trying to cause an investigation.

Ordinarily, an investigation of that nature is very sensitive. But the first thing the state does is to line up a list of people. We would like to be assured by the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, whether the state is in disarray and they have no capacity because one of the better traits of an investigator is to understand and study the nature, character and demeanour of a candidate for investigation.

When we see statements in the media that an old man smiting from the loss of a son - and the sickly old man - is lined up all over the media, and police is making uncoordinated noise about it, we get concerned whether there is still a coherent state that can properly investigate or they are just politicking. Actually, it is the proper cover up on what they should have done covertly by lining up politicians for investigation.

This is very disturbing and to a sharp mind, it is the most potent cover up that the state is incubating by trying to line up potentially – you know, big time, persons to inquire from. We need to be assured by the Prime Minister whether you are in charge as the state, or actually, you are in disarray and seek help.

Why do you really go and start disturbing an old man of 93 that needs to be counselled, having lost a son at that old age? And you are threatening him with arrest. Are you serious or you are just trying to cover up and, therefore, an investigation will not take place at all when it is supposed to be done?

**THE SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, I am not sure whether Government would need help in investigation because there are institutions that are mandated to do investigations. So, those institutions must do their work and I am also not sure whether Government is in disarray. They have the capacity to investigate.

Maybe what we need to find out from the Prime Minister is whether what you are seeing on social media is exactly what is happening on the ground.

2.13

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Madam Speaker, I thank you for sending off our brother in a decent way.

Government is not in disarray. We have professionals who are doing this work and I believe they will do a professional job. Let us give them time. Let us not politicise our brother’s death. Madam Speaker, I rest my case.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I am not going to allow Oulanyah’s death to be politicised. And I am not allowing any more debate on the issues of the late Rt Hon. Oulanyah. We are still grieving and issues of investigations must go on. If it is true that he was poisoned, let the culprits be found out. Can we go to the next item?

No, matters of national importance.

**MR SILWANY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a procedural matter. About four months ago, you delegated me to go and visit a police officer, who was shot by the UPDF. I went and I have come to this Parliament about now four times.

The former Government Chief Whip - now the Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker - informed us here in this House that the minister will come. Indeed, the minister came and made a statement.

However, as we speak, the family has been looking for me; nothing has been done to the gentleman and these people are completely stuck. They look up to me as a person who was sent by you.

Madam Speaker, what the minister promised here has never been done. The man cannot work, he cannot walk and he cannot do anything; they are completely stuck. Wouldn’t it be procedurally right, Madam Speaker, if you directed the minister to take immediate action on this matter because it has taken a very long time?

I did not want to bring it in the previous period because we were mourning. However, it has dragged for long. Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence.

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, may be just to bring you on board: We had a traffic police officer who was shot while on duty by an army officer. Since that time, his children cannot go to school and he cannot work. Security promised to support and what the honourable member is saying is that no support has been given to the officer. I think the man is about to go back to Kaliro. His leg was even cut off.

2.17

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and honourable colleague.

I am going to follow up this matter with the concerned ministries and I will report back. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we have a report on Tuesday to that effect, Prime Minister?

2.18

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** I would like to thank the Prime Minister for the commitment. May that report come together with the report of promised compensation for the victims of Government shooting of November 2021 that has been pending for now more than a year? This is barely four months and we appreciate. Will that report come together with those victims’ compensations?

**THE SPEAKER:** Was a resolution made that there should be a compensation?

**MR MPUUGA:** There was a commitment by the Government and the Government’s commitments are done variously. This was a presidential commitment.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you bring a substantial motion to that effect so that we know the members and look at how much they should be compensated. We need to look at what happened and how the compensation should take place.

**MR MPUUGA:** With your indulgence, Madam Speaker, we should not block the Prime Minister from providing that report, if she has it in earnest. We can actually forestall the motion and instead debate that presentation.

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, do you have the report? Or does the Ministry of Internal Affairs have it?

**MS NABBANJA**: Madam Speaker, I will follow up the matter together with the other one.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us have the report on Tuesday.

2.20

**MS SHARTSI MUSHERURE (NRM, Mawogola North County, Ssembabule):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of urgent national importance regarding the outbreak of the African Armyworm (Spodoptera Exempta) in the different parts of the country.

The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries informed this country a few days ago that the country had been invaded by the African Armyworm. This worm is known to feed on more than 80 per cent plant species including maize, millet, sorghum, rice as well as legumes, cotton and grass varieties like Rhodes, Lusan, Kikuyu Grass and others that are used as feeds for cattle.

According to the Ministry of Agriculture, this pest has affected largely maize plantations in many parts of the country including Ssembabule District. Maize, which is the most important cereal crop in Uganda, provides over 40 per cent of the calories consumed in both rural and urban areas. There are indicative pointers from the entomologists to the effect that this armyworm spread is linked to climate change.

By 8 April 2022, this deadly pest had been reported in 14 districts which included Luweero, Wakiso, Mukono, Katakwi, Bukedea, Mityana, Bugiri, Serere, Bugweri, Kumi, Namutumba, Kiryandongo, Busia, Ssembabule and Nakaseke.

My Prayer –*(Interruption)*

**MR ANGURA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank my honourable colleague for raising a very important matter of national importance.

The Ministry of Agriculture has highlighted those 14 districts. However, I do not know whether their research has not informed them of other places including Tororo District, in the subcounties of Kalait and Kayoro - the whole of Tororo has equally been affected by this armyworm.

It is, therefore, incumbent that we request the ministry to act very fast. Otherwise, we should start preparing food relief to support our people in these very bad times. Thank you very much.

2.22

**MR FOX ODOI-OYWELEWO (NRM, West Budama North East County, Tororo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank Hon. Musherure for raising this very important issue. I have two points. The first is that the scope of damage is certainly not known to the Government and that should be addressed immediately.

The second one is that remedial measures should be taken. Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the Ministry of Agriculture and Government, immediately activate the district disaster committees with the purpose of investigating the damage and coming up with a cost work plan to address the potential disaster we are about to witness. Thank you.

2.23

**MR GEOFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomansimbi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. The issue in Bukomansimbi is worse. People are in great fear; they think these armyworms might also eat them. Our people, especially the farmers are in panic mode. They are worried. Some had gotten loans yet all their crops are being eaten by this armyworm.

Our prayer is that the Ministry of Agriculture should act immediately. The ministry should get pesticides, if possible today or tomorrow, and spray these armyworms to go away so that our people get hope amidst the low prices of coffee and maize.

2.24

**MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank my colleague, Hon. Musherure, for raising this matter. I would like to register that my district, Kiruhura is also affected, especially in Nyabushozi County in the subcounties of Kikatsi, Rwenshande and Akayanja.

I want to say that the spread of these worms is unprecedented. Apart from eating everything green – shrubs and grass - they also spread very fast. The other information I want to give is that this afternoon, in my district, there has been a demonstration to try to spray against them. The pesticides they were given have instructions that for the next five to seven days, all living animals should be evacuated. Now, what are we going to do in places like my constituency, which predominantly depend on cattle keeping?

Having heard from colleagues, Madam Speaker, isn’t this a national epidemic? Don’t we deserve a response, similar to the response we got when we were attacked by COVID-19 and locusts from the eastern part of Kenya? I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let us have Hon. Tebandeke and then Hon. Shartsi will make her prayers. Are you rising on the same matter, honourable members? [**HON. MEMBERS**: “No”?]

2.26

**MR CHARLES TEBANDEKE (NUP, Bbale County, Kayunga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate my colleagues for raising this crucial matter. In my constituency, almost all the four subcounties are affected. These caterpillars come in big numbers; at times, they even invade and enter into houses – which is a bigger threat.

I have already alerted the ministry; I have written to them. I have received reports from the district disaster preparedness committee and the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). We have already informed the ministry and we are looking forward to seeing their immediate action towards this phenomenon.

I want to request that the ministry comes up to curb this pandemic from our people. Otherwise, it is very late. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** I think all of us will end up submitting on the same because it is also in my district. The Prime Minister may need to go and access the scope of damage throughout the whole country, advice on the remedial measures that can be taken immediately and report back. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, we need immediate, mid-term and long-term measures so that we can act on this.

2.28

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja**): Madam Speaker, yesterday, we got a report in Cabinet from the Ministry of Agriculture about the same. Currently, the minister is in Serere. The African armyworm is a big issue and Cabinet came up with some resolutions. One of them is that the ministry should urgently provide pesticides to those districts that are affected. However, it now looks as if many more districts are getting this problem.

I, therefore, request that you give me tomorrow. On Wednesday, I will come up – together with the minister for agriculture – with a concrete report that will give us a way forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MS KANUSHU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a procedural matter. Hon. Shartsi rose on a point of national importance and someone gave information. After that, other people came in, before she finished. I thought that Members would wait for her to finish and then, come up with other submissions. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Shartsi, your matter is a national issue and the prayers were made by everybody. That is why I made a ruling that they come up with a scope. You were giving us 12 districts, but everybody is talking about their district. We need an action plan and I think that is what you want.

**MS MUSHERURE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Therefore, I do not think there was any procedural matter. The issue was overtaken by events.

2.31

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** With your indulgence, Madam Speaker, I listened to the Prime Minister and felt that if I am a farmer out there – observing proceedings of the House – and the most senior Government official rises and says that for the invasion that affected the country over the last one month, she will bring a report next week, on Wednesday.

**THE SPEAKER:** She said Thursday. She had only lost count of days. She said “a day after tomorrow” and I understood it to mean Thursday.

**MR MPUUGA:** Well appreciated, Madam Speaker. The report can detail areas that are affected. We would like to hear from the Prime Minister – because these worms eat acres every day. This, having been discussed at Cabinet – because it is not an invasion of last week, but months – what has so far been done as we wait for a report? Farmers are in distress. They are losing acreages of maize and coffee and a report cannot be the remedy.

Madam Speaker, can we be advised, in the interim, on what has been done? We all know what happened with the locusts and how money was misallocated as people were making reports. This is about livelihood and lives. Can we know what is taking place before the report comes? The experts know what to do.

**THE SPEAKER:** You heard what Hon. Wilson said. They are already spraying and the concern of the people of the area is that the pesticide, which is being used for spaying, is dangerous. So, I think the immediate thing that is being done is spraying of those armyworms. Of course, it also needs to answer what Hon. Kajwengye raised. Can we hear from the Prime Minister?

**MR MPUUGA:** Before she comes, Madam Speaker, maybe the response of the Member that the constituents were complaining – it is different in Bukomansimbi. So, why are they not spraying in Bukomansimbi and other places? Are they pre-testing? What was the criteria used in starting in his constituency and not any other? Is it lack of provision?

**MS NAJJUMA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today morning, I received information from Nakaseke District. We were given pesticides but we received only 200 litres. That means the ministry is doing something. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Before the Prime Minister comes, let me hear from Hon. Dan.

2.35

**MR DAN ATWIJUKIRE (NRM, Kazo County, Kazo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I request for one thing in regard to this issue. I remember I was in one of the committees where we interfaced with the Agriculture Chemical Board. They revealed to us that the lab for testing agrochemicals was dilapidated and had not been worked on to be able to test those chemicals that are supposed to help in fighting some of these issues we are discussing. I beg that the report that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister is bringing updates this House on the status of that board in regard to the lab that is supposed to - and I think I had Hon. Bwanika during the merger committee. That board told us that the lab was not working.

I am wondering whether we are competent enough, as a country, to determine the good chemicals that we can use in eliminating what we are discussing here.

I wish the Rt Hon. Prime Minister updates this House on the status of the lab that is supposed to check the chemicals that we use in our agricultural processes. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Rt Hon. Prime Minister is going to bring that report and, also, report on whether the chemical being used is not dangerous to human lives.

**MS NABBANJA:** Madam Speaker, the country has got functional laboratories. We even have regional laboratories. We only need to equip them with the current equipment and that order has been made. Therefore, I believe – and I implore the minister to come with all the details.

I would like to inform my brother that by the time we got the report from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries yesterday, the districts that were reported as having been affected were 17. As I was seated here, the minister said they now have a report from 47 districts. This means that the problem is growing bigger.

Therefore, all of us, including Members of Parliament, need to come and join the ministry to fight this problem. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members, we really do not need to politicise this because it is a serious matter – Hon. Solomon said that Bukomansimbi has not got, Kiruhura has got. If it is giving the chemical, let us give it out to all the 47 districts that are affected now. So let us do what can be done to make sure we correct this problem.

2.38

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalunug):** Madam Speaker, we are not here to win but to solve problems. Hon. Dr Kimosho has just mentioned a particular laboratory *- (Interjection) –* and I am the one naming them for him - if he doesn't want, I can withdraw it. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, if a member is giving you information that he got from the committee, why don't you pick interest in it other than telling us that all laboratories are functioning?

I can tell you the many that are not functioning, but you will not get time to go there. That is why you need to pick interest in the honourable member’s statement and find out other than telling us - we are not doing politics here but giving facts that can help you find a better remedy and deliver good services as a Prime Minister.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Abed Bwanika, give us a report - which laboratories did you say are not functioning? But maybe you will give it to us later to enable us make follow-ups on that because we need these laboratories.

**MS ADEKE:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Thank you for the indulgence on securing the food security of our people. While we are discussing about their food security, my mind was drawn back to about 2nd March when one honourable member raised in a matter of national importance - and you were the presiding officer - regarding the actual lives of people in the north eastern part of the country, in Karamoja and Teso subregion.

Madam Speaker, you directed that the Committee on Defence and Presidential Affairs should take up the matter. However, it has been more than three weeks since. And now as we talk about food security, I am also concerned about the lives of people, which every passing day, are going to waste.

Therefore, I seek your indulgence if we are proceeding rightly, when we don't know how far the committee has gone yet people are dying every day. Please, I seek your indulgence, as our presiding officer, on that issue. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have never known Ann Adeke as a smuggler. Honourable member, there is a motion tomorrow on the issues in Karamoja, Teso, Lango, Acholi, Sebei and Bugisu. So, you should just be here. Thank you.

2.41

**MR PETER MUGEMA (Independent, Iganga Municipality, Iganga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable colleague, thank you for the vote you gave us as team Anita. We are very grateful; we don't take it for granted.

My matter of national importance is that as the country was mourning the demise of our Speaker last week, the municipal authorities in Iganga, under the leadership of the Senior Assistant Secretary by the name of Hussein Kato, descended on the greenbelt in Iganga and started constructing on it different houses.

They gave away the greenbelt to the so-called rich men in the municipality. And as we talk, while they got a letter from the physical planners’ board instructing them to stop all the developments on it, they misused their powers, they are now constructing.

I raised this matter, under Section 34(6) of the Public Finance Management Act, which states that an accounting officer shall not pledge or otherwise encumber the land or asset of the vote without the permission of Parliament.

Madam Speaker, if we leave this impunity to go on, we are most likely not to have any greenbelt in Iganga. And –*(Interruption)-*

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, this is my first time to address you as the Speaker of the 11th Parliament. Congratulations!

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, my colleague, Hon. Peter Magema “Panadol” has just talked about the greenbelt in Iganga that is being destroyed. This is a trend in almost all municipalities. Moreover, we are in an era of Uganda creating cities.

I believe that Parliament needs to take action on this matter by setting a precedent that greenbelts were set in cities and urban areas for people to relax in and rest during their time of leisure.

I, therefore, sound a warning that even in the new cities, some greenbelts are being taken as a joke. And, therefore, as Parliament, we should really listen to Hon. Mugema and attend to his matter so that we can set a precedent in this country because if we don't do so, City Square will disappear one day. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Hon. Peter Mugema, what are your prayers?

**MR MUGEMA:** Madam Speaker, my prayers are that you direct that all the ongoing developments be halted until the National Physical Planning Board comes out with its own conclusions because it was supposed to go on ground to do some verifications.

Secondly, that you direct the Physical Infrastructure Committee of Parliament to go and ascertain what is there and make a report. I so pray, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Rt Hon. Prime Minister.

2.44

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF THE GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. Thank you, Hon. Peter Magema. Madam Speaker, the fact is, it is not only the greenbelts that have been affected; all public land is in danger.

Therefore, Cabinet set up a Cabinet subcommittee, which I chair and has the Minister for Lands, the Attorney-General and the Minister for Local Government as members. We have set up a technical committee to come up with some guidelines that will help us to tackle this issue; it is not a small issue and the Government is concerned.

And, therefore, I want to give my colleagues hope that we shall handle this issue squarely.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. On that note, since there is a committee in place that is following up on this issue, the illegal construction that is taking place in Iganga must stop immediately -*(Applause)-* until the committee comes up with a report.

2.46

**MR BARNABAS TINKASIIMIRE (NRM, Buyaga West County, Kagadi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I also would like to say, Congratulations! I did not have the opportunity to congratulate you upon winning that powerful seat in this country.

Madam Speaker, while we were mourning our befallen Speaker, the late Rt Hon. Oulanyah, the rains returned to my constituency -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Prime Minister, the constituency -

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** The rains again, returned to my constituency with hailstone. This time a number of subcounties were affected, one of them was Buhumuliro Subcounty where they destroyed 57 acres of *Matooke*, 15 acres of cassava, 20 acres of beans, 38 acres of maize, five churches and two schools.

Also in Rugashari Subcounty, which is in the neighbourhood –*(Interjections)*– hold on because -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, you don't switch on the microphone and ask for information. That is one. Two, allow the Member to present his issue before you ask for permission to give additional information.

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** Madam Speaker, they will largely benefit from the induction, which has not been done.

In Rugashari Subcounty, it destroyed 41 acres of matooke, 23 acres of cassava, 43 acres of maize, seven acres of vanilla, 12 acres of cocoa, two schools, and four churches.

In Mpefu Subcounty, they destroyed 89 acres of matooke, 27 acres of cassava, 17 acres of beans, 31 acres of maize, one school, and three churches.

Madam Speaker, you realise this is a huge damage, if quantified in terms of money. We are now looking towards Shs 100 billion in a local place; this is so much damage.

Whereas we can recover, we are praying to the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM), particularly the Minister for Relief and Disaster Preparedness to provide us with the following:

1. Food to feed our people who have lost much of their food;
2. Planting materials;
3. Roofing materials for these churches and schools, we can raise the structures again, and

1. They sometimes give hoes so they should give us as well to provide means of cultivating.

The last issue again in my constituency, as I told you, Madam Speaker, we were attacked by wild animals - a lion killed around four goats and three sheep and injured a number of people. The villagers organised and killed it.

However, the issue that I am interested in raising is that another lion came - I understand, a lion does not move alone, they move in a pride. When they are moving, hyenas and leopards follow them. Therefore, we are so worried about this place.

We ask the Government to tell us how we are going to live in this place when our hearts are raised up pumping every night. Whereas we are finding some cheap meat; we are not interested in living in uncertainty. It can get you when you are not able to get it and it will kill you. We are not interested in any of our people dying. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:**  Rt Hon. Prime Minister, at least one person fought the lion.

2.51

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Madam Speaker, the Minister for Tourism and Wildlife is here. I will talk about the disaster that befell our people in Kagadi.

Madam Speaker, remember I was a Member of Parliament representing that area. I want to request my brother, Barnabas, through the CAO, to give us those details through a report from the disaster committee of the district. *[Ms Ameede rose\_]*

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Agnes, let him respond to what the Prime Minister is saying. Members, whoever has a disaster issue should put it down in writing or a report from the disaster committee of the district and kindly take it to the Prime Minister.

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** Thank you for your ruling, Madam Speaker. I pray that since we are people's representatives, who have ably brought up this matter to the House, and even in many instances, we have been asked to produce the same in writing, which I have actually done to the minister. They act - because we are not going to start saying we have a Ministry for Disaster Preparedness.

Last month, I raised a similar matter here, the minister who was present then was the Chief Whip. He committed that the Government was going to handle it but up to today, there is nobody from the Ministry for Disaster Preparedness that has gone there. My people are saying is this a ministry for preparedness or something?

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, what the Members are saying is that even when they write -

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** Maybe I lay this letter, which I have written to the minister on the Table, to confirm that actually, these people will even write to them.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, you will take the letter to her office.

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** Much obliged.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we hear from Agnes also then you respond at once?

2.54

**Ms AGNES AMEEDE (Independent, Woman Representative, Butebo):** I beg that you also give me a chance to give clarification.

In 2017, a similar disaster happened in Butebo. The district provided a report but there was no response. Then in 2019, another disaster struck. On all those disasters, as the Member of Parliament, I have written follow-up letters.

Earlier this year, another disaster happened; a storm ravaged the whole parish, and a school block roof was blown off. The district provided a report, and my colleague, the county MP handed over that report. I have been at the OPM following up on this issue.

The staff of the Prime Minister, the officer in charge of Finance and Administration, assured me that this school would receive iron sheets. It has now been a month but the school is still waiting for the iron sheets and nothing has happened.

The other issue I want to pertinently raise is that many of us have issues of disaster or concern that happen in our districts, but we write directly to these line ministers. However, these line ministers have no courtesy to reply.

When I joined public service; I am a retired public servant, it was a rule that when I write to you, you write back to me, whether negative or positive.

Madam Speaker, I implore you to ask the Government to respect letters from the Members of Parliament. They should reply to Members’ letters. When I write to you, you have to write to me for purposes of accountability. I beg to submit. Thank you.

2.57

**MR CHARLES TEBANDEKE (NUP, Bbale County, Kayunga):** Madam Speaker, I thank the colleague for giving way. On the same issue of disasters, in my constituency, two weeks ago, we experienced a strong storm in Gayaza Trading Centre where a Seventh Day Adventist Church was blown down. One of the schools was also blown and a number of buildings and crops were put down. I wrote a report to the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees and copied it to the Prime Minister and your office, too.

Currently, our people are stranded and they do not have any answer - whether Government will respond to them or not. We beg that this issue –

**THE SPEAKER:** When did you write?

**MR TEBANDEKE:** It was on Wednesday last week. Honourable minister –

**THE SPEAKER:** I did not get your copy. Do not put him in that circus that I do not respond. I did not get your copy. You wrote to the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees. Honourable Members, if you do not feel comfortable when you are sending a letter on issues of disaster, give my Office a copy so that I can make a follow up.

Honourable Prime Minister, please, let all the Members who have disaster issues give you a copy and we need a response to that effect.

**MS NABBANJA:** Madam Speaker, in the last season when we got similar problems, the Prime Minister's Office tried to handle. The storm has again come and I think it will be coming every rainy season or towards the beginning of a rainy season. I am going to inform my ministers to be responding to your letters, I promise. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Actually, we do not want a response in writing. We need solutions.

**MS NABBANJA:** Madam Speaker, I was going to tell you that but I know Members are constrained by their constituents and issues. We received some funding last week and we are going to respond to Member’s needs. I promise.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

3.00

**DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance. Before that, allow me to relay information to the honourable colleagues, the pesticide that works against the army worms is called cypermethrin: 100 millilitres in 20 litres of water. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Dr Abed is talking with authority; he is a veterinary doctor. *(Interjection)* Yes.

**DR BWANIKA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am in possession of a copy of a deed of amendment and restatement between the Government of the Republic of Uganda represented by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economy Development and a company called Uganda Vinci Coffee Company Limited.

This document has provisions that seek to alienate the people of Uganda that are involved in coffee production out of business. This document has provisions that seek to give monopoly of purchase and export of coffee from Uganda to one company called Uganda VinciCoffee Company Limited. This document has provisions, which are going to exempt that same company from paying all the taxes in this country, including Income Tax, Pay As You Earn, Excise Duty and National Social Security Fund. This document has provisions that seek to subsidise this company, giving them a special tariff in terms of electricity.

This document has provisions that are going to provide for this company money that is going to build the infrastructure for water and roads, yet, this company is going to pay zero tax to the Government of Uganda.

Madam Speaker, the provisions of this document violate the laws of the Republic of Uganda. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda is contravened. The Coffee Act, the laws and policies in regard to liberalisation are all violated by the provisions of this document.

The provisions of this document seek to render the people of Uganda, who survive on coffee production and trade, out of the economy, out of business and they are going to be rendered slaves in their own country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Dr Abed, did you say they have exclusive monopoly of purchase of coffee?

**DR BWANIKA:** Yes, this document gives them power that nobody will export coffee unless this company gets the quota that they want. That gives them power –

**THE SPEAKER:** Who determines the price?

**DR BWANIKA:** The provision of the Coffee Act, Section 52 says that the coffee authority should be the one to come up with auction avenues, where our coffee should be traded. However, this agreement gives power to this company that they can – You know, when you determine when to buy and how much to buy, you also determine the price.

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you also say that it has a tax exemption?

**DR BWANIKA:** Yes, it exempts this company from all taxes for 10 years *– (Interruption)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Members -

**MR ATWIJUKIRE:** Thank you, Dr Abed, for giving way. Madam Speaker, the information I want to give Dr Abed is that in regard to that specific arrangement, the information available - unless Government comforts us - is that the same person benefiting from that arrangement is the person we gave money for Lubowa and there is nothing on the ground.

It has been very difficult for even this Parliament to supervise works going on at Lubowa. We have been crying of medical tourism and I was shocked when I saw the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development handing over the same kind of arrangement and entering in that same agreement with the same person that we are failing to supervise after guaranteeing her with a lot of money that has not been put to use. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR SSEMWANGA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank Hon. Abed Bwanika for the information he has given us. However, the issue of tax exemption is not only in coffee, like you have said. Members, you are aware that we are finalising the budget process. We passed here the National Budget Framework Paper estimating to spend about Shs 45 trillion. Uganda Revenue Authority is projecting to collect Shs 25 trillion, meaning we have a deficit of Shs 20 trillion.

Madam Speaker, what does that mean? How are we going to send services to the grassroots? Our revenue to GDP ratio is reducing every day to 12, yet, the debt to GDP ratio is going up. We still have companies that are exempted from paying taxes. Where are we taking this country?

I want to pray that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development clearly informs this House, with timelines, the cost and benefits of each of these exemptions on our economy.

Secondly, the House needs to know the amount of revenue forgone on these exemptions, and their positive impact on this economy. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I have your prayers?

**DR BWANIKA:** Madam Speaker, this document is a concessional agreement, which cannot go – nobody can commit Uganda without the Parliament of Uganda.

My prayer, therefore, is –*(Interjections)*– that this issue should be referred to an appropriate committee and thoroughly investigated in the interest of the people of Uganda. We are representatives of people -

**THE SPEAKER:** Members, we are spending a lot of time yet we have a very important matter coming. Honourable members, can you listen? On the issue of that agreement – Minister of Finance, you are busy talking when you are the one signing agreements.

Honourable members, on the issue of the agreement, I want the Committee on Trade, Tourism and Industry to study that agreement very well and make analysis. He cannot lay it because I do not know the source of his agreement. The committee will get that agreement from the Ministry of Finance. The Committee on Trade, Tourism and Industry should go and look at that agreement.

On the issue of tax exemption, there are many people who have been given tax exemption. So we want to understand the cost-benefit analysis that we are getting. *(Applause)* We want to understand the persons who are being given tax exemption? Who are these institutions? What criteria are being used to give tax exemptions? Otherwise, if it is a matter of giving, let us give it to everyone.

The Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development must get the list of these people, institutions and companies that have tax exemptions and report back to this House. *(Applause)*

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE SKYROCKETING PRICES OF ESSENTIAL COMMODITIES AND ATTENDANT ACTIONS TAKEN TO AMELIORATE THE SITUATION

3.11

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (TRADE) (Ms Harriet Ntabazi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would also like to take this opportunity to congratulate you, Madam Speaker, since it is my first time to speak when you are in that seat. I am happy to be here again to talk about this issue of escalating –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, just a minute. Committee on Trade, Tourism and Industry, when you are looking at this issue, start with the agreement, which was before 2015 because there was an addendum that was made. Doctor, can you lay this on the Table?

**MR MPUUGA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Certainly, I have no attempt to overrule the Speaker.

The document in the possession of Dr Abed Bwanika is a deed of amendment; implying that there is an original document, which this particular deed is amending. And there is no denial from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that indeed this arrangement does exist. Madam Speaker, with your indulgence the best people to actually be asked to surrender whatever is in their possession are the ministers of finance. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** We shall compare what is being laid with what will be brought by the Ministry of Finance and we will get all the other agreements before the addendum.

**MR MPUUGA:** Thank you for your guidance, Madam Speaker. In the same breath, the Attorney-General too, should be asked not just finance, to appear before this committee to explain circumstances under what kind -

**THE SPEAKER:** That is what the committee will decide – who to work with and who to question. Please lay on the Table.

**DR BWANIKA:** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay a copy of the deed of amendment and reinstatement between the Government of the Republic of Uganda represented by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Uganda Vinci Coffee Company Limited. I beg to lay. *(Applause)*

**MS NTABAZI:** Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity to share with you the escalating commodity prices and measures taken by the Government to ameliorate the situation.

On March 15 2022, my senior minister read a brief statement on this subject and requested to be allowed up to 23 March 2022 to deliver a comprehensive statement. Unfortunately, the events that followed could not allow the House to proceed in a good session.

You will recall that since the beginning of 2020, the world has experienced several unprecedented events starting with the COVID-19 pandemic and the attendant containment measures; and now, the Russian-Ukraine war.

Within a period of these events globally, there is also an increase in costs of commodities and services such as the shipping costs, which have gone high –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, listen to the report.

**MS NTABAZI:** - and Uganda has not been an exception to these events. Indeed, we are currently experiencing some price increases for some products, especially those whose value chains are intertwined with international value chains.

Today, I am here to address the House on this topic/subject including the measures that the Government is putting in place to address the concerns.

On the rising commodity prices, there are both domestic and international perspectives.

When we were here on the subject, we informed the House that Government had put in place an inter-ministerial committee to study the matter and advise accordingly.

Madam Speaker, in the course of the technical analysis, the following has been established:

1. Cooking oil has registered the highest increment in price, rising by 21 per cent between December 2021 and February 2022 and by 77.6 per cent over the past one year – this is from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).
2. Secondly, the laundry bar soap registered a price increment of 20 per cent between December 2021 and February 2020 and by 47.8 per cent over the past one year.
3. Fuel prices rose by 15.3 per cent over the past three months and 34 per cent over the past one year.
4. Lastly, the rise in prices in Uganda is much lower compared to the current global trends, including in advanced economies and even our neighbours. For example, in the United States, inflation rose to 7.9 per cent in February, in the United Kingdom, it rose to 5.5 per cent, in Brazil, it rose to 11 per cent, in India, it rose to 6.1 per cent and in Ethiopia, inflation rose to 33.6 per cent. In Kenya, it rose to 5.4 per cent and in Rwanda, it rose to 5.8 per cent.

For Uganda, the consumer price index increased by 2.7 per cent in January 2022 and to 3.2 per cent in February – well within the target of five per cent.

Drivers of rise in prices

1. Madam Speaker, there are drivers of the rise in commodity prices and one of them is the increased fuel prices, starting mid-January.
2. The other one is the increased demand for palm oil, driven by the growing importation by China and India, which are the two largest buyers of crude oil.
3. The other is the Russia-Ukraine crisis, which has created shortage in supply of inputs, especially raw materials of some of the goods that are produced.
4. Speculation among the business community who are hoarding their products to create shortage because they are waiting for the prices to go up and they do the needful.
5. The 10 per cent import duty which was levied on the crude palm oil – a raw material for cooking oil and soap – last financial year, which increased the factory prices by 6 per cent for palm oil and 38 per cent for soap in the country.
6. Madam Speaker, Indonesia imposed an export limit for palm oil product – leaving 80 per cent only for the export market – and this is where we were getting the raw material.
7. Malaysian crude palm oil production is also very low because of the shortage of labour arising out of the COVID-19 effects because they could not recruit people to work in their gardens.

The ongoing Government initiatives to address this matter

Madam Speaker, with this thorough diagnosis, we are confident that we will have the right prescription to immediately stem the situation, as Government.

We note that the increases that have been registered in a few commodities will give us confidence that even for those where prices have started to rise, we will be able to drive them down again.

For fuel prices, under the Petroleum Supply Act, 2003, the minister responsible for energy can intervene in case of unfair prices. However, when compared to our neighbours – in Kenya, a litre of fuel has gone up to Shs 6,800, in Tanzania it has gone to Shs 6,000 and we are at Shs 5,800. So, there is a struggle –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Harriet, the cost of living in the other country vis-à-vis the cost of living here - stop comparing -

**MS NTABAZI:** Madam Speaker, I have taken the advice. The Government has put in place measures -

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Nsereko, you are in the House.

**MS NTABAZI:** Thank you, for bringing order. The Government is not seated but has put in place measures of expansion of production of palm oil because initially -

**THE SPEAKER:** I have never seen a government standing either. So, when you say it is not seated, I do not understand. *(Laughter)*

**MS NTABAZI:** The Government is putting in a lot of effort to expand the production of palm oil with the support of BIDCO and other companies to areas of Buvuma, Kalangala, Bundibugyo, the Greater Masaka and other areas, where we shall find land.

With this effort, crude oil will not be imported again but we shall locally produce it. Thank you and I am grateful for the opportunity.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, as you realise, this issue has been on the Floor for a long time. As Members of Parliament, we are the ones responsible to explain to our constituents why the prices are high.

You and I may not appreciate that the prices are high because of what we earn but a person down in Bukedea is feeling it so much. So, it is our responsibility to know, explain and get a solution to that. And the solution that we should get, since you said the Government is not seated, should be an immediate, midterm and a long-term solution.

The long-term solution you are telling us is about palm production. What is the immediate solution that we have? What is the mid-term solution that we have? I know we are in a liberalised economy, where forces of demand and supply determine the prices, inclusive of prices for essential goods like fuel and soap. However, if we had a consumer protection law, our people would not be exploited.

When you say that the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development is supposed to take action, we were in this House and agreed to give warning letters or close some petrol stations but nothing has happened, yet, our people are being exploited.

3.28

**MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The appointing authority called these colleagues of ours “fishermen” but they are not fishermen. You are brilliant people but you only do not have a touch of reality.

You cannot talk about Tanzania’s situation; most of these countries have reduced taxes on fuel to let prices remain within a reasonable range. What we want you to do is to be honest with ourselves. As the Speaker put it, I want to know what my old mother can get to know from this.

The Minister of Finance is here. Instead of looking at the whole economy - we are not after doing very many things at ago *-(Interjections)-* yes, but you are the person behind giving an Italian woman everything in this country –*(Interjections)*– no, you are selling our country –*(Interjections)–* I am addressing the Speaker. Let us be genuine. Let us have a touch of telling this country that we can cut short on the expenditure and have something. We are relying on fuel, of course. That is the cash cow; even passports also – this is a lot of money. We have a big economy but with little resources and the tax base is very small - we would rather set priorities among priorities because like for soap, Mukwano Industries does not pay taxes, yet, you have allowed him to sell soap the way he wants. *(Interjections)* Yes, he does not pay taxes. He brings in materials that are not taxed. It is this Parliament that gave him that opportunity and when hon. Musumba raised it, he was almost crucified.

It is true and better that members of the Cabinet sit and see what they can do for our people. Some of us were here before and during Amin’s time, there was no salt. I buy fuel from Tanzania and it is cheaper.

Let us have our country at heart. Stop being *–(Interruption)* – yes, hon. Kangwagye.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Tanzanians are speaking. Honourable members, before the Tanzanians speak, allow me to recognise the presence of our East African Members of Parliament in the gallery. I wish they had a chance to speak, they would also speak and tell you something. However, just rise up – yes, there is hon. Rose Akol, hon. James Kakooza, hon. Odong, hon. Namara, hon. Mary and hon. Paul Musamali. You are most welcome and thank you for coming. *(Applause)* Just to remind you, we are going to have elections for EALA in September.

**MR KANGWANGYE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to take this opportunity to thank my brother hon. Byanyima, for giving way. Indeed, we are at the border of Uganda and Tanzania. And when you talk about Tanzania, some of us are in a better position to explain how things are running the other side.

Yes, it is true there is a war between Russia and Ukraine and that may be the reason we are suffering and experiencing all these challenges. However, as the prices of some commodities go up, remember, there are those people who have been earning from selling milk, bananas and whatever, yet, prices for those commodities are not going up. These are the people one would expect to go to the shop and buy soap and sugar but prices have gone up. Now how do you expect such people to live with those people who cannot be in a position to buy at least a kilo of sugar?

In Tanzania - when the minister talked about prices of fuel there - and I can tell you that fuel prices there are much lower, let me tell you the truth. And so, there is need for us, as leaders, to know the reasons why in Uganda once prices go up, we do not have a base and reasons for such increments.

We need to know the basis and criteria people use to raise prices so that we can go on the ground and explain to the people.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, can I direct this debate? Can I direct? Let us not go into lamentations. Let us look at the way forward. How do we help our Government? How do we help? We know the prices are high but what is the way forward?

**MR BYANYIMA:** Let me cut my presentation short. This is the right time, since we are doing the budget. I know as a country, we have a long wishful list of things to be done. However, let us sit soberly and see what we can do for this financial year and ensure that whatever we are doing is aimed at the prices of essential commodities of our poor people. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. We need to set priorities and see what we can do in the short run, for us to be able to reduce the prices. We have short, medium and long term. So, we need to look at all of that.

3.35

**MR MOHAMMAD NSERERKO (Independent, Central Division, Kampala):**Thank you, Madam Speaker. We should all agree to disagree that prices all over the world have increased. I am glad that you have guided the House into that direction. It is factual. We cannot run away from those facts. However, you have posed the most important question: what is essential to our people? Soap, salt, sugar, kerosene or paraffin - we can look at what is essential, as an august House, and sit here and work out something because the solution lies with this august House.

What tools do we have at our exposure? Is it taxation? After realising that inflation in the UK and other countries is driven by the increase in the cost of gas and fuel, they directly went for that. Now, what tools do we have at our exposure? The minister has pointed out the tax increment on the basic raw materials for things like palm oil, as regards soap manufacturing and the fat that is used in the soap manufacturing process.

Therefore, as an august House, what solutions do we have? Do we remove the taxes on that to reduce the cost of soap manufacturing without necessarily injuring the growth of our local players here?

In the short run, do we think they are those that can provide us with soap at a lower price? What do you do, as Ministry of Trade or Finance? You open up? You suspend the tax and waive it, then you open up imports to fill in the quarter, if there is scarcity so that we can close the gap.

We know there is high demand, but there is less supply, pushing the prices up; you said we are in a free market economy. So, let us open up to encourage more - that is another tool.

The same will happen to salt and fuel. If we have been taking about Shs 1000, can we reduce it to about Shs 400 in the short-term, which gets us back to about Shs 4,000 at the moment, which would be okay; Shs 4300, Shs 4500 would be sustainable.

However, that does not mean that we can predict the future. With fuel, every close of the day cannot be predictable because the price of a barrel is volatile. For as long as the war between Russia and Ukraine is still ensuing, no one in the world will tell you the fuel price tomorrow.

However, what can you do as a Government? The tool you are left with is about taxes. If you reduce by a few pennies, probably you will be saving for your own people and probably cutting the costs that will come with fuel inflation on basic commodities.

Finally, Madam Speaker, if we can talk about products like beans; they have skyrocketed and the issue there is not fuel. The issue there is low production. As a country, we need to box ourselves in the corner, at the moment; we must rely on rice and beans from Tanzania, why? We have the pressure of South Sudan.

We are lucky that it is a source of income for us to feed the people of South Sudan; it is a good market, but we are not producing enough -*(Interjection)*- no, you cannot say we have nowhere to put it. The second thing that we would press the Government on would be the storage facilities that they promised at every subcounty - the silos, then we can purchase from the people like what is done in Malawi, and Zambia, and then we hold it for the harder times.

Because we have no buffer stock - you all remember the buffer stocks, because we have no buffer stocks to help us in hard times. We have no buffer fuel, you remember the reserves, the Committee on Trade came here and clearly stated that the reserves are empty, so we have no buffer fuel. In case we get into a crisis, we cannot even move on for five days.

Now with the political arena, that is in Kenya, we should be bracing for these. The Kenyans are rounding up all the food in East Africa and they are wise. I have been with my traders that import products, and they are telling me you can no longer compete with them because as a Government, they have aggressively gone to pick food or maize stock and cereals from as far as Mozambique, Malawi, and Zambia.

Now, automatically from all of you that have had our maize growers, now, the price of maize has shot up to 1300 now, which means the price of flour will definitely shoot up and that has nothing to do with fuel. This has a lot to do with scarcity and low production.

Now, the Minister of Agriculture, this is not about the Ministry of Trade, let us go back to the basics and inspire people to produce more. I know we always have bumper harvest but let us have that new buffer stock fund where we can purchase this from the people, and hold it for tougher times.

Now we have opened up to DRC, you are going to see the pressure on food that is unprecedented. I can tell you in the near future, we are all going to face pressure on wheat-

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you finish, everybody wants to speak.

**MR NSEREKO:** Madam Speaker, 60 percent of ammonium that is used to make fertilisers is coming from Russia and Russia has halted the exportation of ammonium nitrate for the next three months. I can tell you production in the world is going to go down for basic consumable commodities and Uganda should brace for this. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

3.42

**MR DICKSONS KATESHUMBWA (NRM, Sheema Municipality, Sheema):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I must say that having listened to the minister, the statement falls short of our expectations. First, if you are looking at the issue of the rising commodity prices, you have to examine the supply chain, especially for imported products, and look at the cost drivers that are pushing these prices. Then, you come to the House and tell us the mitigation measures you are going to put in place.

We all know that the crude oil prices in 2020 were at about $70 per barrel. In 2022, it has risen to $133 per barrel; that is a fact.

The second factor is that the shipping costs have increased. In 2020, from about $2800 to $7500, those are international cost factors that are external to our economy.

Therefore, when we are here looking at the prices. For example, if you look at the cost of fuel, the average world price of fuel is Shs 4817. Our pump prices here are Shs 5100. So why is Uganda's price above the global average and what can the Government do?

Number one, can we look at the inland transportation factors from the port of Mombasa to here and look at the future. We know that Kenya operates an open tender system and very soon, they are going into elections, you are going to find that they are going to prioritise the importation of fuel for their economy.

We should be looking at the alternative route of Dar-es-Salaam. If you go to these pump stations, the companies, which are importing fuel through the port of Dar-es-Salaam, their prices are slightly lower than those that import through Mombasa.

I would have expected the Minister of Trade to actually do research. Look at the essential commodities for example; I have looked at the cooking oil. The cooking oil prices in the region, if you look at Kenya, the price on average has increased by 33 per cent; in Tanzania 39 per cent. But in Uganda 73 per cent. What is the reason? Is it because of the excise duty we have put on palm stearin? Therefore, the ministry should have looked at the factors from importation to taxation to the local trade practices and come up with a comprehensive statement that can give us assurance. The statement does not give us assurance.

You have not talked about cement; a bag of cement now has gone Shs 40,000. What impact does it have on the housing sector? Before we look at the issue of taxation, if we look at it without facts, we are also likely to distort the budgeting process because this House approved the budgeting framework paper.

Therefore, my submission, Madam Speaker, is that we should ask the minister to go back, look at the cost drivers of the essential products, and come up with a researched statement and factors that can be done to mitigate the prices.

We all know that steel prices have risen globally from $450 per metric tonne to 1200. So, what can we do? Maybe it is also a lesson for us to start looking inward. If you go to the northern region, you will find that all the factories that were producing oil from sunflowers are down. What can the Government do to revive those factories as we go into the budget?

We have talked of Kalangala, we have done a lot; but what needs to be done? So, I think the Government can look inward and look at the budget that we are going through and look at what we need to do to stimulate internal production on some of the products we are importing so that we save ourselves from the pressure of the growing prices. I submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members, now that we have agreed that all the countries have the same problem, we need to know the specific cause of the skyrocketing prices in Uganda. As you have heard him talk about the inland transportation of fuel, could maybe mitigate a little bit.

So, we need short term action as government to reduce the prices, the medium term, and then the long term. How do you want Parliament to help? You also need to get the drivers: What is causing all these increase in prices? What can we do for especially the essential goods? How can we reduce the prices for the essential goods? What can government do on that?

Of course, we talked about setting the priorities and then you come back and report to the House. Next item?

LAYING OF PAPERS

**THE SPEAKER:** He wants to add to what you should come back with. I thought we agreed we need something that –

3.49

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I do appreciate the effort of my friend, the honourable minister hazarding to explain the challenges of domestic prices.

I want to speak briefly on an issue raised by Hon. Kateshumbwa relating to a possible distortion of the planning framework, should there be an intervention to try and curtail a possible situation of runaway inflation. The Budget Framework Paper is a short term planning tool whereas the charter of fiscal responsibility is a long-term tool.

From basic planning and economic modelling, if you have short term disequilibria in the economy, you adjust and if you are facing potential long term disequilibria, you reform. From the statement of the minister, you read neither whether her statement is to get government into an adjustment nor to take long term winding reforms to address – Potentially it returns to the same problem.

Madam Speaker, it is not the first time this Parliament is addressing this matter and the causes actually point to the same factors. I do not know what happened to the planning function of government because we are net importers of petroleum products. We can easily predict the kind of price oscillations that can be occasioned by any change in international prices of crude.

I would have expected the minister to address the House on, for example, how in the short term as a way of adjustment, they are going to address the matter of fuel marking, which adds Shs 30 per litre of imported petroleum in the country. This Shs 30 is not government revenue. It is money to private pockets –

**THE SPEAKER:** Are you still telling the minister what you rose on?

**MR MPUUGA:** Yes, Madam Speaker. I am addressing the minister on how to deal with short term disequilibria, and what our expectations would be, for example, on petroleum that is facing an additional Shs 30 at the border for marking. We are noting that we are the only country in the world that charges citizens money for marking petroleum.

That used to be the case 15 years ago before government computerised the movement of petroleum products. So, we are granting private people money and asking citizens to pay Shs 30 per litre, which is not government revenue. In the short term, can we get a response on how that can be, for example, addressed in the short term?

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR MPUUGA:** Lastly, Madam Speaker, the minister ably talked about the effects of COVID-19 and how it ravaged the economy and brought to a standstill key fiddle into the economy. However, we are also alive to the fact that in May 2020, government received emergency lending of US$ 491 million approximately Shs 1.76 trillion and again in June 2021, the approval by the IMF of the US$ 1 billion lending. Part of it was supposed to go into BOP stabilisation.

May we be informed, as part of perspective planning, how this money has been utilised to stabilise the economy because part of it directly was supposed to go to Bank of Uganda to leverage on our export challenges and bring back the BOP into equilibrium. Because we are talking about accounting for this money, Madam Speaker, and where it was channelled so that we can track whether it was channelled into sectors that have a backward and forward linkage to the economy.

Otherwise, on another day, I would have a devised the House to consider the report of the minister rejected because it seriously falls short of expectations. I would like to encourage the minister to be courageous: Have the courage to come and address the House on the real issues. We know them. You are not making any input on the issues. We are the leaders of our people, let us face each other and address these matters without hiding anything. Then we shall find the solutions to the problem of the prices.

Otherwise, for me, the statement does not address the issues we are talking about. Probably, the honourable minister is addressing another matter in another economy. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Minister, you have heard what is on the Floor and you need to come with the Consumer Protection Law so that we avoid our people being exploited. Point of procedure?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, I had thought that you would allow us under rule 52 to make proposals because after a long wait, this is what this minister has brought.

Now, you are telling her to go back, I do not know what she will bring. *(Laughter)*

I think this is the right time to be a minister because there are no obligations on the shoulders of ministers. The minister has said, one of the solutions is to go and procure land. The prices are in Masaka – And we have been waiting here. Madam Speaker, you had actually promised that we would have quite some time to make proposals.

So, the procedural issue I am raising is whether this Parliament should entrust the same minister to go and improve? You see, if you asked an average student even at O’level to go and download all the information you have given on Google, it would be ready in 30 minutes.

These drivers of inflation and the problems that are happening in the world - we wanted the minister to come and make proposals starting at midnight today, not proposals of procuring land in Masaka and begin planting palm oil. *(Laughter)*

My fear, as we allow the same minister to go and look for solutions, is whether this Parliament is not risking to assign the same person to do the work that they have failed.

**THE SPEAKER:** I was addressing the leader of all the ministers; Leader of Government Business who is also here. The Leader of Government Business is going to take it up. The House has told you what it wants. It is actually good for the country. It is nothing political. We want prices to be reduced for our people. We are acting on behalf of our people outside there. Otherwise, this is not good. Actually, the whole world is waiting when we shall be discussing that.

The reason I have cut this discussion short is because it is not answering what we want. It is not curing what we want, just like the Leader of the Opposition said. Let us have a better discussion on Thursday. Please, come up with a paper on Thursday and address what the House and the country wants to hear from you.

3.58

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Madam Speaker, I am not contradicting your ruling but I would like to register the concern of the people of Dokolo, having read this statement because I normally relay some of the important issues to my constituents.

Today, the minister has told us that she actually read the statement on the 13th and agreed to give us a comprehensive report on the 23rd. Unfortunately, because of the events we have gone through, which was rudely interrupted by hurricane Lalogi, we have all been shattered in different directions.  However, can the minister justify why at the height of the crisis of COVID-19, the prices of commodities did not go this bad. Otherwise, the global phenomenon cannot be blamed entirely for what is happening.

I am really surprised when you talk about palm oil to justify the rising price of oil. Honourable minister, you have some knowledge of elementary economics. Madam Speaker, we grow cotton, simsim, soya, and we make oil from them. We are now growing sunflowers massively in the north and in the east. So, I am wondering why we are putting the push factor on palm oil. Is this because land is needed?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Cecilia, can you reserve that for Thursday? Shadow minister, please, come with an alternative policy and present it on Thursday so that we see how we can put it together and what can be done. All the concerns of Ugandans must be captured. Next item.

LAYING OF PAPERS

1. THE BANK OF UGANDA ANNUAL REPORT 2021

4.01

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the Bank of Uganda Annual Report 2021. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. The report is referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** I am afraid because the report of the Bank of Uganda is supposed to be signed by the Governor. Unfortunately, we lost the Governor, Bank of Uganda. I do not know whether Hon. Musasizi signed it. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Under the Bank of Uganda Act, there shall be a Governor and a Deputy Governor. The report that is being laid on the Table is the Bank of Uganda Annual Report 2021. By then, the Governor was still alive. This is what was signed by the late Governor. At the moment, there is the Acting Governor of the Bank of Uganda, which is provided under the Bank of Uganda Act.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, the Governor, Bank of Uganda is also the Chairman of the Board of Bank of Uganda. We are talking about matters of prices going up and our shilling experiencing instability. Part of the solution is supposed to come from the Bank of Uganda, where there is no Governor. And, of course, the document has been signed by the one who died. This Government - I do not know -

How long does it take for the Government to sort out problems of appointing a Governor? You are putting us in positions, where we are supposed to ask very obvious questions. The Bank does not have a Governor and the Board cannot function because the chairman of that board is the Governor and the Ministry of Finance is fine with it.

**THE SPEAKER:** In the absence of the Governor of Bank of Uganda, the Deputy Governor is the Acting Governor and Acting Chairman of the Board. The only issue I know you want to raise is: how can the Governor be the Chairman of the Board? That was in the COSASE report. You were supposed to bring a memorandum, which even elapsed six months ago. Otherwise, it is provided for and if you want to change that, first amend the Bank of Uganda Act. If you can bring an amendment to the Bank of Uganda Act, it is well and good.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** The Leader of Government Business should tell us when they are appointing the Governor. These two positions are provided for a reason.

**THE SPEAKER:** The appointing authority is not the Leader of Government Business. The Governor shall be appointed by the President of the country and the President of the country is not in this House. Just be patient. You will have a Governor in the Bank of Uganda.

1. THE NATIONAL PLANNING AUTHORITY ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORT 2020/2021

4.05

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the National Planning Authority Annual Performance Report for Financial Year 2020/2021. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. It is referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

**MR MAYANJA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Rule 32 (1) - on Mode of Laying Papers says “*The Clerk shall ensure that a Paper to be laid on Table is distributed to all Members before it is laid.”*

It is becoming a norm whereby before laying those papers, they are not uploaded on our Ipads or placed in our pigeon holes. So, I do not know whether we are proceeding well. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER**: Are you a member of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development? It is a report referred to the committee for scrutiny and not a paper that you think it is.

LAYING OF PAPERS

C) THE NATIONAL SOCIAL SECURITY FUND (MIDTERM ACCESS TO BENEFITS) REGULATIONS, 2022

4.07

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT: (Ms Betty Amongi):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on Table the National Social Security Fund (Midterm Access to Benefits) Regulations, 2022, Statutory Instrument No.18 of 2022.

**THE SPEAKER**: Thank you. Honourable members, as you may be aware, the National Social Security Fund already commenced the disbursement of money to eligible savers and this is a matter of interest to all of you.

We require that the minister tables the regulations for information purpose and scrutiny. It is going to the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development.

**MS OPENDI**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am glad that the minister has laid the regulations. However, in such an institution there is supposed to be a board. Last time I stood here twice and raised the issue of an irregularity that had been done by the then minister responsible for National Social Security Fund.

They appointed a board with complete disregard of the constitutional provision where the gender issues were supposed to be taken care of.

Madam Speaker, I would like to congratulate you – we have just elected you as the Speaker and remember we were mourning. When we were saying, “Can we first bury?” They said: “No, this is a constitutional matter.” Can I know why the issue of representation on the board by women is not looked at as serious? Why is it not a constitutional matter but others are? If we are to abide by the provisions of the Constitution, let it not be selective. When I raised it last time, we had given them one week within which we were going to act as Uganda Women Parliamentary Association.

The Attorney-General then told me that since we were considering the new Bill – National Social Security Fund (Amendment) Bill – we should conclude the Bill and that once it was assented to we would have a new board appointed.

Minister, I wrote to you in January and this is April, but you have not responded to my letter on this gender issue and neither have you come to tell us what actions the Cabinet has taken in including at least a third of women on this board. There are very many qualified women.

Madam Speaker, is it not procedurally right for the minister to update this House on the action that has been taken in regard to the issue that I raised last year?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, there was an issue of gender on the board and I do not know how you addressed it – that is if you have.

**MS AMONGI:** Madam Speaker, I have two instruments. Let me lay the second one, which is the Statutory Instrument No.19 – which is on commencement of Section 20A (1) & (2) of the National Social Security Fund (Amendment) Act, 2022. The ACT provides that a statuary instrument be issued for the date of commencement. I beg to lay.

On the issue of gender, I would like to confirm that I got -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, interest yourselves in those regulations.

**MS AMONGI:** I would like to confirm that when I received the letter, I acted and withdrew two male members and substituted them with female members. It has been addressed. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we have names of the people who were removed and copies of the letters that you used to substitute them so that we are sure?

**MS AMONGI:** I can confirm that representatives – one for the workers and one for the employers – were withdrawn and subsequently substituted with one representative for the workers and one representative for the employers. I will submit the names tomorrow. Thank you.

**MR NSEREKO:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister in charge of gender but she is the same minister in charge of the welfare of children in this country. There is a despicable scene that we all witness at the traffic lights.

Whenever we move with our children, they ask us why those children are not going to school. It is appalling to see these young street children moving in masses in the morning and evening and we pretend everything is right. Where is child protection?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable, is it in relation to the regulations?

**MR NSEREKO:** Now we have the minister here –

**THE SPEAKER:** No, you will have the minister when you want her. Do not dilute this. Hon. Nakut brought a motion on those street children and what we need is implementation of the resolutions of that motion. Let it come on the Order Paper. I know you are concerned about it but we are more concerned, as mothers.

**MR NSEREKO:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. Let the mothers take the lead in this matter. It is shaming to this country.

**MS CECILIA OGWAL:** Madam Speaker, I would like to inform the Member, who is very concerned about street children, that there is a pending motion on children and I would want full support. I am very happy that a man of his calibre would raise this as a serious concern.

This motion has been pending and I am urging Hon. Sarah Opendi, who is responsible for that motion, to find a way of bringing it to the Floor of Parliament so that we can rest that matter. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you so much. We need to have the street children out of the streets and we need to bring a motion on that.

Allow me to amend the Order Paper - Panadol, don't make my officers talk. Allow me to amend the Order Paper; the MP of Omoro is here and she has a paper to present. She wants to go back to Omoro for campaigns.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TRADE AND INDUSTRY ON BUSHFIRES AND HUMAN WILDLIFE CONFLICTS IN QUEEN ELIZABETH NATIONAL PARK

4.18

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Ms Catherine Lamwaka):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the following documents: The report of the sectoral committee of tourism, trade and industry on bushfires and human wildlife conflict in Queen Elizabeth Park.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please lay.

**MS LAMWAKA:** And I lay on the Table the minutes for the meetings, report on cost per kilometre electric fence and procurement methods used for acquisition of fence materials, the management of bushfires report in the protected areas, the Uganda police report on Rubirizi bushfires, the UWA executive or private investigator report, the report on fires at the affected lodges, the report on Parkview Safari Lodge and the UWA report on fires at Mazike Lodge. I beg to lay, as I proceed to present.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please lay.

**MS CATHERINE LAMWAKA:** Madam Speaker and honourable colleagues, the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry has the honour to present its report findings from the 16th to the 17th of February 2020 field visit in the districts of Rubirizi, Kyambura and Kasese; specifically Queen Elizabeth National Park.

This was in pursuance of the directive by the Speaker to the Tourism, Trade and Industry committee to take on a fact finding field activity, regarding the allegation of occasioned bushfires that have been mismanaged and turned out hazardous to the neighbouring communities and their properties on the human wildlife conflicts as presented on the Floor of Parliament in a matter of national importance on the 8th of February 2022 and as agreed to report on the following.

Background to the report

If there is time, I will go into the details. You have the background to the report. Uganda is endowed with a high diversity and rich diversity of both animals and plant species. It is estimated that Uganda has over 18,383 species of fauna and flora. The high density and diversity for species is found both inside and outside protected areas.

The Government of Uganda, through the Uganda Wildlife Authority, is responsible for the conservation of the country’s natural heritage, which includes animals, plants, natural features and the ecosystem in general. The Uganda Wildlife Authority currently manages a total of 10 national parks, 12 wildlife reserves, 13 wildlife sanctuaries and five community wildlife management areas. Its principal mission is to conserve, economically develop and sustainably manage the wildlife and protected areas of Uganda. It is estimated that over 50 per cent of Uganda’s Wildlife Resources reside outside formerly gazetted parks.

Section 9(A) of the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019 mandates the UWA Board to be the trustee for wildlife inside and outside wildlife protected areas in Uganda. Further still section 6(K) provides for the mandate of the Uganda Wildlife Authority, in consultation with other lead agencies to control, develop or license the development of tourist facilities in wildlife protected areas.

Despite this recent enactment of 2019, flora and fauna is under threat from poaching, encroachment, habitat degradation and loss, human-wildlife conflicts and climate change among others. For example, over the years, there have been a series of rampant fires in the protected areas of the country’s national park.

On 8 February 2022, fire gutted Mazike lodge in Queen Elizabeth National Park and on 23 July 2022, fire gutted Park View Hotel, also in the Queen Elizabeth National Park. Several fire incidents have been reported. And to date, the causes of these fires have not been established.

Rationale for the committee oversight visit

The sectoral Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry derives its mandate from Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and accordingly from rules 156, 159, 187 and 189 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

These provisions enjoin the committee with authority and power to, among others, research, investigate and carry out oversight functions with respect to the many ministries, departments and agencies under its purview.

On 8 February 2022, Hon. Solomon Silwany rose on a matter of national importance in regard to the many fires that have gutted forests and properties belonging to Ugandans. In his submission, he informed the House that the fires are believed to have been started from national parks that are managed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority and have ended up destroying properties worth millions of shillings, including crops and animals that they protect, businesses and lodges, among others.

Following the directive of the Rt Hon. Speaker on 8 February 2022, the committee embarked on an oversight field visit in a bid to ascertain the causes, impact and management of these fires.

Objectives

Madam Speaker, during the investigation, the objectives were:

1. To investigate the causes and impact of fires in national parks.
2. To ascertain the measures being employed by the Uganda Wildlife Authority in the management of park fires and rampant human wildlife conflicts.
3. To explore the various mitigation measures that will address the challenges of occasion bush burning, and the unending human wildlife conflicts.
4. To propose recommendations that are all encompassing, protecting the tourism industry, people and wildlife.

The scope of our research

This report concerns itself with Queen Elizabeth National Park, which is located in the western part of Uganda. The report investigated the fires that have recently been reported at the park gutting park facilities such as lodges and property therein, causing financial losses to the owners of these facilities.

Methodology

The committee employed the following methods of work;

Field Visits

The committee visited Queen Elizabeth National Park; Rubirizi and Kasese districts. During the visits, the committee made several observations regarding the causes and management of park fires, especially the occasioned bush burning.

Meeting with stakeholders

The committee held meetings and received a number of verbal testimonies from key witnesses, several of whom presented written briefs. Witnesses included leaders and officials from the following institutions:

1. The Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities;
2. Uganda Wildlife Authority
3. Queen Elizabeth National Park Warden
4. Members of the community
5. Area in charge, Uganda Police Force
6. Brigade commander, Rubirizi District
7. Resident District Commissioner Rubirizi District
8. Chairman LC5 Rubirizi District
9. Chairman LCV Kasese District
10. Chairman LC III Kichwamba subcounty, Rubirizi District
11. Chairman LC I Kyambura (A) (where the burnt lodges are)
12. Manager Park View Lodge
13. Manager Mazike Lodge
14. NRM Chairman Rubirizi District
15. District Internal Security Officer
16. Aggrieved victims of human-wildlife conflicts

Desk Research

The committee carried out desk research in order to back up some of the findings with facts and obtain statistics in regards to budgeting and underlying issues in the national parks.

Committee Observations and Analysis

National park fires, according to section 3 of the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019 vests the ownership of all wild animals and wild plants existing in the wild habitat in Uganda in the Government on behalf of, and for the benefit of, the people of Uganda.

Under section 4 of the Act, the role of the ministry responsible for wildlife is, among others, to supervise the sector through an overall sector plan and policy development.

Section 7 of the Uganda Wildlife Authority Act, 2019 allows the Authority, in the performance of its functions under the Act, to delegate, in writing, any of its functions to a lead agency, a committee, or public officer and where the Authority delegates any of its functions it makes the necessary arrangements with the lead agency to facilitate the performance of the delegated functions.

Under section 2 of the Uganda Wildlife Act 2019, the purpose of the Act includes providing for public participation in wildlife management. Section 2(2) provides that for the better achievement of the purpose of the Act, the Authority and every person responsible for the administration of the Act shall ensure that measures taken are instituted under the Act and are based on scientific –*(Interruption)*

**COL (RTD) TOM BUTIME:** Madam Speaker, this report was uploaded sometime back and we have gone through it. Is it procedurally right for the chairperson to summarise so that we come to the recommendations? We still have many issues on the Order Paper.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the Member is saying that we have had this report for over two weeks. Can it be summarised? If that is okay with the Members, then summarise.

**MS LAMWAKA:** Madam Speaker, let me go to the observations of the committee.

The committee observed that fires are used as a tool for managing rangeland ecology. Whereas UWA is mandated to use fire as a tool for the management of rangeland ecology, when not properly managed, it can cause massive destruction not only to the vegetation but also the infrastructure that exist within and outside the protected areas.

Environment Social Impact Assessment

Whereas the committee was informed that all facilities within and around the protected areas are supposed to go through an Environmental Social Impact Assessment (ESIA), it was noted that UWA's mandate in the enforcement of ESIA is within the protected areas only, while NEMA is responsible for the enforcement of ESIA for facilities outside and around the protected areas.

The committee discovered that it is only the facilities around and outside the protected areas that have frequently reported destruction caused by bushfires.

Firefighting Capacity

There are no firefighting stations near national parks. For instance, the nearest firefighting station from Park View Lodge located in Rubirizi District is in Bushenyi, which is 74 k away from Parkview lodge, and in Kasese 72 Km away. This means that in case of a fire outbreak, fire cannot be fought efficiently and effectively.

Compensation policy; the compensation policy established under Section 83 of the Uganda Wildlife Act, 2019, does not include damage occasioned as a result of fire. The Wildlife Compensation Scheme under Section 83 is to be used for financing compensation claims for human death, injuries or damage to property caused by wild animals outside a protected area.

Section 84 of the Act only provides for compensation where a person is injured, killed or suffers damage to his or her property by a specific wild animal listed in the fourth schedule of the Act. Whereas the current law does not provide for compensation of losses as a result of fire, the committee observed that UWA has done compensation before when Mazike Lodge was burnt in 2012.

Causes of fire at the different lodges

During the investigations, the committee interfaced with the managers of the affected lodges (Park View and Mazike Lodge).

Park View Safari Lodge burned on 23 July 2021. According to the lodge manager, on this fateful day, the lodge had a workshop of about 24 people and four foreign tourists that had just checked out and other guests had a workshop in another part of the lodge.

The manager of the lodge informed the committee that he first saw the smoke a distance away from the lodge as he was inspecting a facility that was being renovated at around 3 p.m.

He then moved closer to check what could be happening and then, realised that the fire was about 30 metres from the lodge perimeter wall. The manager contacted nearby lodges, UWA, fire brigade, UPDF, and police for assistance but little could be done to save the cottages.

Police from Rubirizi responded but could not help because they did not have firefighting equipment. Finally, the UPDF rescued the situation.

According to the police report dated 26 July 2021, the lodge had substantial fire extinguishing gadgets that they used to fight the fire. However, the lodge manager informed the committee that these extinguishers were not efficient enough in fighting fires given the nature of the structures.

Furthermore, a report by the Special Investigations Division of the Uganda Police Force (UPF) states that the fire outbreak in Park View Safari Lodge was classified as accidental, occasioned by a fire that could have originated from the outer side of the perimeter wall, facing the park.

On the other hand, according to an investigation done by UWA, it was established that the fires started from the community outside the park. This conclusion was arrived at using National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) for resource management system, which distributes near real-time, active fire data based on NASA’s infrared imaging, radiometer suite Terra and Aqua satellite. This tool by NASA points the source of the fire to a piece of land owned by Dr Benson Tumwesigye, where it is alleged that there is a bee farming activity.

However, Dr Tumwesigye, the owner of the land, in a letter to the committee, denied having knowledge of any activity of bee farming in his land.

Committee observations

1. Fire gutted a total of 18 structures at Parkview Safari Lodge; 15 cottages and one main restaurant, one washroom, the swimming pool and one sentry box.

2. The lodge did not have any CCTV cameras, which is a very important tool for monitoring unauthorised access into the lodge, theft and many other crimes that are likely to happen.

3. The structures at the lodge were majorly constructed out of wood material and roofed with grass material. These are materials that fuel fire very fast.

4. The lodge did not have any proper waste management and disposal mechanisms.

5. During the site visit, the committee observed that the fire came from the protected areas of the park to the lodge. The committee could not exactly establish whether the fire started from within the park or from the communities outside the park.

6. For all the fires that happen in Rubirizi District, the office of the RDC, which is accountable for all security-related matters of the district, was not in charge and could not provide the committee with a report about the fires in that area.

7. The committee observed that the DISO did not carry out any investigations.

8. The committee accessed the online tool by NASA and indeed observed a fire alert that was flagged by NASA on 23rd of July at specified coordinates. The committee could not however use the tool to trace if the coordinates were within the park or not and if it was this same fire that crossed to the national park gutting Parkview Safari Lodge or not.

9. The investigations done by police only covered areas within the park and did not explore the possibility that the fire could have started from outside the park (community land) and entered the park to the facility that got burnt.

10. Whereas Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) and police did independent investigations into the cause and source of the fire, both parties admit that to some extent their findings are subject to certain margins of error.

11. Whereas UWA informed the committee that fire started from Dr Tumwesigye’s land through the park and later burnt Parkview Safari Lodge, the committee has discovered that UWA has never opened a case at any police station regarding bushfires destroying the eco-system and yet they are in charge of the eco-system.

12. The committee observed that there were barely any buffer zones between the park, the burnt lodges and the community despite all the stakeholders’ meetings that recommended for a 50-metre buffer zone to be implemented by the stakeholders, which could have prevented the spread of the fire into the facility.

13. Whereas all parties may be denying having started the fire, according to the UWA fire management plan, burning is done between January, February and July/August, which is about the same time fire gutted Parkview Safari Lodge.

14. The committee observed that no one has the authority to enter, reside or start a fire in a wildlife conservation area without authorisation by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. This implies that all developments, establishments, fires or any other activity in the wildlife conservation areas in Uganda are authorised by the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

Madam Speaker, on Mazike Lodge, the committee was informed by UWA that it had scheduled to carry out controlled bush-burning on the 8th of February. Prior to that, UWA informed the committee that they alerted hotel owners; Mazike, Volcanos, Elephant Hub and Pumba. Additionally, they mobilised security by reporting the activity to police and brigade barracks.

So, everyone was aware of the controlled bush-burning. The committee was informed that the bush-burning exercise was completed at 1.00 p.m. on that fateful day and that at that time the fire was no longer burning next to the lodge, but burning 800 metres away up on a hill adjacent to Mazike Lodge. UWA staff informed the committee that by around 2.30 p.m. - that was one and a half hour later, he saw fire gutting one of the dining halls of Mazike Lodge.

In effect, he went back to assist the lodge owners and staff. The operational officer of UWA equally noted that he requested the staff and the neighbourhood to help put off the fire. The committee was shocked to learn that despite that fact, fire was gutting one of the dining halls and Mazike management had not even called police or fire brigade to help.

The committee was informed that efforts to locate a water source from within the lodge to help put off fire was in vain. The manager did not know the source of water within the hotel.

Furthermore, the committee was informed that a second fire gutted Mazike on 14 February 2022 when the park fire of 8th of February was no more. This fire was not known to police or to the district leadership. In fact, the stakeholders that attended the meeting got to know about this fire incident from this committee of Parliament on the day we visited the field.

Mazike manager informed the committee that the fire came from within and alleges that it was an act of malice by unknown people.

The committee was further informed that Mazike staff were told not to sign on the police statements that they themselves provided to police. It was revealed that the Mazike proprietor claimed that his staff were tired and yet they were able to record their statements but too tired to sign the statement and left until the following day.

The committee also found out that Mazike Lodge has so far burnt four times; compensated once, while another case is still in court. Additionally, every time a fire happens at Mazike, the management is changed. The committee was further informed by the LCI chairperson that it is suspected that the previous fires could have happened as a result of staff strikes due to poor working conditions that they face.

These are the observations in regard to that:

1. Mazike Lodge is the only lodge within the park, which has had four incidences of fire since 20l2, 2018, February 2022 and 14th February 2022 and yet it is in the vicinity of other lodges such as Elephant Hub, Pumba and Volcano Lodges, which have not experienced any fire.

2. The management of Mazike kept making contradictory statements to the committee and yet accepted all accounts of the incidences as narrated by the UWA staff, who carried out the controlled burning. For example, he denies that he was contacted by UWA for the controlled burning exercise, and yet he agrees to have participated by providing staff for the bush-burning exercise.

He further denies that UWA staff were present during the firefighting exercise and yet later agrees that UWA staff actually helped them in putting out the fire. Additionally, the community members who were involved in putting out the fire confirmed that they worked together with the Mazike staff to put out the first fire of 8 February 2022.

3. Madam Speaker, whereas the restaurant, kitchen and two cottages on the southern side got burnt on 8 February 2022, an additional two bandas caught fire a week later on 14 February 2022, when the park fire was no more.

The bandas that got burnt later are far away from the first site of the fire with a swimming pool structure in the middle. It is also clear that these two additional bandas were torched independently as there seems to be no fire trail connecting the burning of the two structures. This is a clear indication of planned burning of the bandas.

Madam Speaker, these two additional bandas that burnt on 14 February 2022 did not seem to have had any property therein at the time of the burning. There was no evidence of remains of burnt items and yet the manager of the lodge claims the buildings contained property therein at the time the fire struck.

Just like Park View Safari Lodge, Mazike did not have any CCTV cameras installed anywhere around or inside Mazike lodge.

Despite several attempts by the committee to get a formal report from the management of Mazike lodge, the committee, until the time of writing this report, has not received any submission from the proprietor of Mazike lodge in regards to the fires.

The committee also notes that the police has never provided any formal report on Mazike by the time of compiling this report. The committee has reason to believe that the burning of Mazike lodge was planned and should not be linked to the controlled burning exercise of the park, Madam Speaker.

3.3 Other emerging issues

3.3.1 Human Wildlife conflicts

The committee was informed that the major cause of human-wildlife conflict in and around the protected areas is the competition between the ever-increasing human populations and wildlife for the same declining living space and resources. The diverse assemblage of wildlife, some large-bodied, living in groups and wide-ranging such as buffaloes, elephants, baboons, chimpanzees, bush pigs and mountain gorillas, concentrated in the protected areas surrounded by densely settled agricultural human landscapes is a recipe for conflict between humans and wild animals.

This condition poses a serious risk to wildlife survival and human livelihoods in the landscape and ultimately makes the achievement of the balance between biodiversity conservation and human development increasingly difficult.

Observations

The committee makes the following observations under human-wildlife conflict.

Even with these measures that UWA has put on the ground, human-wildlife conflict still remains a big issue. Animals have raided and destroyed properties belonging to communities living near the parks. Poachers have also entered the parks and killed some of the wild animals.

On the electric fence project, in the case of Queen Elizabeth conservation area, since 2018 when this project was piloted and commissioned by the President in 20l9, out of the l34.4km of the Queen Elizabeth conservation area, only 52.5km, which is just 39.1 per cent of the total area has been fenced off.

The committee notes that whereas this project has taken about four years since the pilot, UWA has not acknowledged any budgetary challenges as an issue to the cause of the delay of the fencing.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that the UWA Act, 2019 be amended to incorporate the current dynamics in the various conservation areas including compensation for damages caused by fires originating from the protected areas.

The committee recommends that UWA fast-tracks the review of the compensation regulations and policy in order to operationalise the compensation scheme. Otherwise, they are failing to compensate because of that gap.

The committee also recommends that NEMA fast-tracks the implementation of Environment Social Impact Assessment (ESIA) for all investments inside and around the protected areas and also enforce adherence especially on facilities outside and around the protected areas.

The committee recommends that no facility should be constructed within or around the protected areas without NEMA carrying out ESIA and certifying it.

The committee recommends that funds be provided to UWA to procure fire-fighting equipment and have them within the vicinity of every national park in order to mitigate the risks associated with fires.

The committee recommends that NEMA conducts regular inspections and enforce compliance to the environmental management plan related to protected areas including but not limited to waste management and fires.

The tourism police, in conjunction with UWA, should regularly conduct security and safety sensitisation of the neighbouring communities of the lodge/hotel owners and inspections of the tourism facilities and sites to ensure that standards are maintained.

The management of all tourism facilities within and around the protected areas should install CCTV cameras, facing the park to record activities and occurrences in and around the facility.

All facilities nearing the park should have a 200 metres fire buffer, provided by UWA and jointly maintained by UWA and the investors. This would deter fire ingress into these facilities that are near the park in case of a fire outbreak or other such casualties.

Furthermore, materials used in the construction of facilities near the park should be treated or laced with other fire-resistant materials.

All facilities should have a well maintained access roads from the main road for safety management and sufficient separation of facilities to allow for fire engines to manoeuvre within the facility

We recommend that all proprietors of the tourism facilities within and around the protected areas must have all their facilities comprehensively insured at any given time without which they should not operate.

The Government should plan ahead on the growing population to avoid having a negative impact on the protected areas to avoid human-wildlife conflict.

UWA should complete the construction of the electric fence in the shortest time possible within the next financial year.

Madam Speaker, after a critical analysis of the observations and findings from the reports presented to the committee by the various stakeholders including UWA, the Uganda Police force, the aggrieved parties and the verbal testimonies from witnesses on the ground, the committee, therefore, recommends that the Government assesses the total loss value incurred by Parkview Safari Lodge, and that the losses be shared between UWA and Park View Safari Lodge equally.

Regarding the bushfires and human-wildlife conflicts in Queen Elizabeth National Park, the committee has made a thorough investigation and established that UWA, as a body in charge, needs to go an extra mile in executing its mandate in regard to offering protection to human and wildlife, neighbouring communities, and investments within and around the protected areas.

In the same spirit, the property owners around and within the protected areas need to comply with the Standard Operating Procedures and embrace their responsibility of protecting their investments within the protected areas. Madam Speaker, I beg to report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable chairperson. As you may realise, recently, we have had concerns raised by Members and some section of the public on bush burning around wildlife conservation areas and the attendant destructions caused by the fire. Similarly, this concern was raised by a Member, which must be addressed. I would like to thank you very much. Honourable minister, do you have something to say? Okay.

4.56

**MR GIDEON THEMBO (NRM, Busongora County South, Kasese):** Madam Speaker, this is my maiden speech. *(Applause)* I represent the people of Busongora South and Queen Elizabeth National Park – about 50 per cent of it – lies in Busongora South.

I would like to appreciate the report of the committee. They did a good job but at the same time, allow me sympathise with the proprietors of the property that were destroyed by fire. I can see Hon. Kateshumbwa is a victim.

I address myself not particularly to the fire but other problems. Maybe before I leave the fire issue, I have listened to the report carefully and I did not see them recommending that these facilities should have fire insurance. If I missed it, I am sorry but these structures around the national parks should insure against fire.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, there is where they say all the facilities should comprehensively be insured and “comprehensively” would include -

**MR THEMBO**: Okay. The people of Queen Elizabeth have two major problems in addition to the fires. For the communities living along Lake George and Kazinga Channel, the law defines these areas as sanctuaries and goes ahead to say that if a wild animal attacked or destroyed anything or killed a person in these sanctuaries, they are not entitled to compensation. I would like to bring this to the attention of the minister that it is unfair to the people living along the national park.

Secondly, up to now, Uganda Wildlife Authority has not marked the boundaries between the land belonging to the communities and the national park and this matter has been on for a long time.

I take this opportunity to appeal to the minister to address himself to this matter so that the land for the communities along Lake George and Kazinga Channel is delineated.

Secondly, I thank Uganda Wildlife Authority for erecting an electric fence. However, as you heard from the report, the fence is incomplete and the elephant is such a clever animal that it will sense the fence and migrate to areas that are not fenced.

As I speak now, most elephants have migrated from Lake Katwe and Muhokya, which are fenced off, and are now terrorising the people of a subcounty called Karusandara. They have killed people, destroyed crops and this is a huge menace. The other day I approached the -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable, can you summarise?

**MR THEMBO:** The other day I approached the Rt Hon. Prime Minister and my view was that, as we wait for Uganda Wildlife Authority to provide a long-lasting fence, she provide us with some emergency funds so that the community can put up a fence. Up to now, I have not got a response.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

5.02

**MR PATRICK ISIAGI (NRM,   Kachumbala County, Bukedea):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable Colleagues, we have had such matters occur in this country. The private sector is the way to go and it is the duty of Government to protect the assets of our people.

Today, Government is committed to compensating cattle lost to the cattle rustlers in the areas of Teso, Acholi, Lango and others like Bugisu and Sebei will have to follow suit. That is a precedence set. So, if such property got destroyed within the precincts, which is supposed to be protected by Government, there is a duty for Government to take responsibility by compensating.

We have compensated businessmen who do trade in South Sudan and Congo; how about the ones doing business here and employing our people?

My submission is that Government should follow suit – since a precedence has already been set – and compensate these private investors. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** There is a recommendation from the committee that it compensates 50 per cent after evaluation. Is that what you are saying?

**MR ISIAGI:** I am saying compensate 100 per cent.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay.

5.04

**MR ENOS ASIIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the team on the committee for the report. My question goes to the minister seated right here to tell us why the electric fence project has not been completed since 2018 when it started?

I believe that if the project was done, it would have saved these issues of, one, the conflict between the animals and the settlers outside the park and, two, possibly in fencing, they would have created the buffer zone that would help protect the areas around the park from fires that originate from the park.

Can the minister help us understand what could have gone wrong? The report clearly tells us that it is not a budgetary issue. They have never come to the Floor of Parliament, asking for money. So, what could have gone wrong? Thank you.

5.06

**Mr Karim Masaba (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City):**  Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am the Shadow Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. I would like to thank the Vice-Chairperson of the committee plus all the Members of the committee for the tremendous work done in coming up with this really wonderful report.

However, there are some about two or three points, which I think we need to keenly highlight. The first issue concerns the Uganda Wildlife Act, Article 84 that provides for compensation of persons that suffer bodily injuries, get killed or suffer damage to their property.

However, the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities has neither a compensation policy nor guidelines to effect the law, and therefore, the compensation fund cannot be operationalised. This has increased the suffering of victims and promoted resistance to the wildlife and tourism by the communities leading to acts such as poisoning of the lions - I remember some time back this happened in Queen Elizabeth National Park; it was in March 2021. So, this is something that we really need to take keen interest in.

Furthermore, the wildlife committees and compensation verification committee’s composition, as per the Uganda Wildlife Act, sections 20, and 82 respectively disempower communities and tourism investors, because MDAs set the terms and conditions on top of having more representatives. So, some of the alternatives I am looking at is to develop and implement a human wildlife compensation policy. This is urgently needed to help put the criteria and guidelines under which people should be compensated.

Today morning, I happened to be with the minister while we got to know about one of the victims who was killed by one of the UWA staff. The minister proposed to compensate these people with two million shillings. This family turned down this money because they really saw it as very little money. And honestly speaking, this is very little money compared to a life lost.

Therefore, we need to have proper ways and, methods and criteria, which we should follow if we are to compensate some of these victims. They actually asked for, I think about Shs 10 million, which is still very little but the ministry is still afraid of giving them this money because they believe they will set a bad precedent. Therefore, why do we have to go all this way yet we can come up with a proper compensation policy that will guide us on how to compensate our people.

The other one is about amending the UWA Act to include the composition of community resource boards, composed of community members. This is captured from the Zambian Wildlife Act, Sections 32 and 35 - and I think our minister can go and do some research on it – but it is about involving more community members in the board affairs. This will help solve community issues that they are having with animals and wildlife. People will feel more empowered to take part in the levy.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, if permitted, I believe the ministry should take it upon itself to process land titles for all protected zones and wildlife conservation areas. We have people encroaching on most of this property because some of it is not marked well in the land titles.

This can be evidently seen - about two weeks ago the Executive Director of UWA wrote to the CAO stopping him from issuing land titles because they have issues. It is called Kaiso-Tonya community conservative area and you see people are getting land titles.

Madam Speaker, when you move to Mburo National Park right now, you will notice that most of the land has been taken up by the people. You will find people’s cattle grazing together with wildlife, and the same community live with Zebras, which I believe is not proper. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

5.11

**MS SANDRA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for the job well done. As members representing areas surrounding the wildlife or national parks, we have a lot of problems that we have been putting before this Parliament.

I would like to thank the Government for the effort they have done by fencing part of the wildlife conflict area. However, I would like to request the Government to fence off the remaining bit urgently.

Secondly, the Act of 2019 needs to be amended urgently because as far as I can remember, there was a compensation, which was supposed to cater for such issues – and I want to think that compensation is compensation. Let the Government compensate these people 100 percent.

Madam Speaker, the pain that the local communities go through, when the fires gut or when the animals attack them, is really too much; these people need to be compensated.

I would like to ask the minister when he will bring back that Act for amendment.

Thirdly, there is a lack of coordination. When you read the reports, you notice the management of the lodges and the human wildlife management, were giving contradictory statements.

I want to urge the minister to strengthen coordination, even with the communities because while the committee's report is saying maybe the fire started from outside the park, some people said that it started from inside.

Therefore, the minister must know that the first buffer zone is the community. When the community is on board, they will become the first buffer zone. And with all stakeholders on board, you need a serious meeting so that you address the issue of fires and wildlife-human conflict.

Then finally, it puzzles me to know that some of the hotels that accommodate the tourists, our visitors who bring a lot of revenue to this country, do not have CCTV cameras. This is a very serious issue. This concerns the security of not only our visitors, but all those who go to visit the national parks.

Therefore, I think we need to pronounce ourselves on that and the minister should make sure all these lodges and hotels in the park and the surrounding areas have CCTV cameras. I thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Sandra Alum. Honourable minister, the issue of the amendment of the law must be worked on. Supervision of your officers who are manning those areas is lacking. So, you need to ensure supervision is done.

The issue of CCTV cameras should be mandatory for you to allow anybody to be there.

5.14

**MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I know that the Government cannot have establishments in every place, like in these national parks. However, when individuals take it upon themselves, and put these establishments to enhance the work of these other sectors like tourism, I think the onus is on Government to protect some of these investments.

I am here to say that while the committee recommends half of compensation, what happens to the rest during this period? In my view, compensation should be done fully to enable these tourism sites pick up again and do their business as usual.

Of course, while we wait for the Bills and other institutions to come in, and make these relevant amendments.

**THE SPEAKER:** Whereas we recommend 100 per cent compensation, no more compensation should take place before we have firefighting equipment around there and before we have CCTVs in these hotels.

If we are making that recommendation, it should be strictly for this report because you will find owners of the hotels burning their hotels. Therefore, we should make sure all the hotels have CCTVs with immediate effect but should not be at the Government’s cost but the investors.

5.16

**MR ROBERT SSEKITOLEEKO (NUP, Bamunanika County, Luwero):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for a job well done. My humble prayer to this honourable House is based on rule 59 (F). We should come up with an alternative and give a hand to institutions, which have experienced the same disasters like schools and other entities. This would create an avenue to give a hand to other Ugandans, in case of fire, and other related matters using this as a benchmark. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER**: No, we cannot use this as a benchmark.

5.17

**MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Among the recommendations of the committee, this says all facilities should have a well-maintained access road from the main road for safety management and sufficient separation of facilities to allow fire engineers to manoeuvre within the facility.

This means that these facilities do not have good roads. I urge the Government; these facilities generate a lot of income and taxes for the country. Let it be an obligation to the Government so that these facilities have good and accessible roads for them to generate more taxes for our country. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

**THE SPEAKER:** The other day, I was asking why Chobe Road is not tarmacked. Somebody gave me a response and said to avoid speed because you will end up killing the animals. I do not know whether that is correct; honourable minister, could that be the reason that these roads are not tarmacked? They are murram so that you drive slowly and be able to see the animals. However, I enjoyed driving slowly because I was able to see the animals.

5.19

**MR NABOTH NAMANYA (FDC, Rubabo County, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for the report presented. The Government is mandated to protect its people and their property.

We understand that we collect a lot of revenue from tourism. Therefore, it should now come up with guidelines that a certain percentage of the revenue that is collected from wildlife should be put aside to provide fire fighting equipment so that the property and the lives of Ugandans as well as foreigners who are always there is protected, because they bring in foreign exchange.

It is very true that fire fighting equipment is scarce. We heard that in Kikuubo, three days ago, a building was put down by fire because the police took a long time to come to their rescue. Therefore, it should be the Government this time to take this seriously.

Finally, for the business to flourish, Hon. Kateshumbwa who is an investor in the same, it is very important that the relationship between the community, UWA staff and the staff of the business is clear for the business to take an upward direction.

In this regard, from the report, I want to suggest that there is a poor relationship between UWA and the police because I have seen contradicting statements and that some of the staff did not sign the report.

Therefore, the minister should provide a guideline that would enhance and provide a working relationship between the community and all the stakeholders around the parking and gazetted areas. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

5.21

**MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join everyone to congratulate you on becoming the Speaker of this House.

On the matter we are discussing, I wish to inquire from the ministry whether as the Government of Uganda, we have already sent a condolence message to the Colombian Government over its citizen who was killed by a lone elephant in the national park. We cannot leave that unnoticed when we are seeing our wild destroying and affecting humanity.

That aside, we also now need to be helped. On top of the recommendations, can we please have a toll-free number? As one who represents Bussi Island, one of the islands in Wakiso District, you find that several people have lost lives just because of the connection between where they are and UWA. They are not in position to access and given the hardships, many of them are unable to have that money to call and yet they need help; they are attacked by wild animals.

We shall not only talk about fire, but we see several wild animals coming from national parks and lakes and attacking several villages. I request that we have a toll-free number whereby one does not have to have airtime in order to reach these people.

**MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, and congratulations on having taken that post. I rise on the issue regarding fires.

Madam Speaker, with the increasing temperatures of up to 32 degrees, we are going to experience wildfires more than we have experienced before and this is because of global warming yet currently, we do not have a provision for climate risk insurance. This was a suggestion in the planned Disaster Management Bill.

On this note, therefore, I am requesting that we fast-track this Bill because it is the one going to provide for such disasters, other than forecasting floods and drought. The fire must be part of it because of its occurrence.

We would like to encourage this phenomenon in compensating farmers as well. For example, if I apply fertilisers, use nice and quality seeds but still get armyworm, I must be compensated because this is a climate-directed disaster.

Therefore, this is an important issue that we need to think about and fast-track the Disaster Management Bill to plan appropriately as far as these risks are concerned. Thank you very much for the opportunity, Madam Speaker.

5.25

**MR TOM EKUDO (FDC, Gweri County, Soroti):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Congratulations upon the elections. This is a very important issue.

I would not say we should hurry to compensate these people. First of all, we have to know the cause of this fire. The person who gave us the report said the investigations were not done. Why can’t we, first of all, ask for the investigations to be done? After they have done the investigations, then, we get to know the cause.

Government will then come in, upon getting to know the cause. Yes, we can say 50 or 100 per cent compensation. Why do I say this, Madam Speaker?

One, the appropriators were also negligent. They were not even bothered of their business. How do you have a multimillion business without putting a CCTV camera?

**THE SPEAKER:** Would the CCTV camera stop the fire from burning?

**MR EKUDO:** No, it would not stop the fire but it would tell that so-and-so has done this, Madam Speaker. Also, the other thing I would like to say is that –

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I also remind you of one thing? That the role of Government is to protect the lives and property of persons. Even these people who have arcades in town here, they do not carry their arcades to their bedrooms, but Government is supposed to protect them.

**MR EKUDO:** Madam Speaker, I am also talking on behalf of Government - like community policing was lacking in that area. Similarly, the local leaders were not doing their work. It is more than two times. That is why I am saying we need to know that there is competition in business in that area and it might be the cause of that. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** What is there?

**MR EKUDO:** Competition.

**MR SSEMWANGA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The information I would like to give the honourable colleague is that as the chairperson has been reading the report, he laid a forensic report from the Uganda Police Force. I think the issue that he has been talking about of first investigating has been presented in the forensic report. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** The investigation was done and the issue was raised here. We also sent our committee to do its oversight role and we are relying on the report from our committee members who have done a very good job.

So, the question I would also ask you; did the burning take place yesterday?

Two, if it were you, maybe the investor got a loan from the bank. What would happen?

Three, you need to be mindful of these people who are living with the animals. This is what Hon. Santa was saying. There are some things that are inevitable. That is why we are telling the minister to bring the law as soon as yesterday. Members, let us use two minutes each so that we do not spend the whole day here.

5.29

**MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC**, **Bukonzo County West, Kasese):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join colleagues in congratulating you upon succession to that very important office and to let you know that on behalf of Kasese, we have a lot of hopes in you in terms of putting our country first.

As you are aware, I represent a community that has seen the worst in terms of crop- and life-destruction, originating from the wild animals, specifically the lions and the elephants.

The people that we represent get money from banks and hope that they will go to their gardens, plant crops, harvest or get good yields, and then get the market and get money to pay back the loans. Right now, in my community, you find a lot of houses written on “This house is on sale by the bank”.

We have received petitions and you have quite a number of them on your desk. I would implore my elder brother, Hon. Tom Butime to ensure that these citizens who are losing their houses and property to banks should be compensated. *(Interjections)* You have them on your desk, honourable minister and also, the Speaker’s office in terms of petitions and if you need more, we can still bring them to your office.

Two, Parliament should pronounce itself very clearly - that human life is far better than animals. This idea of shoot-to-kill just because somebody has – the wardens find the citizens in the parks - must stop. My community has lost many people that have been shot just because they went to the national park either to collect firewood or - This has to stop.

Lastly, honourable minister, I am interested in knowing how far you have gone with the roads, especially the tourism roads linking the mountains or the forests together or off the tarmac. I have a feeling that if we worked on those tourism roads, we would be in position to have a lot of foreign exchange that comes along with a boost in the tourism industry.

Madam Speaker, concerning the electric fence, you are fully aware and I really appreciate your office; this Parliament passed a budget for the electric fence. I request the minister that the wiring of the electric fence should be fast-tracked so that we have the conservation community electrically fenced so that our people are protected. I appreciate you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I hope the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities included the electric fence in their budget because we have been talking about it for some time.

5.34

**MS DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also congratulate you. Just to reiterate on some of the things that some of my colleagues have already pointed out, especially on the compensation. I think it would be prudent that we ensure from the side of the proprietors - they are very ready and have done all they can so that by the time Government is coming in to compensate, they have done their part.

I pick on the contradicting information whereby the police report was indicating that the lodge had substantial fire extinguishing gadgets and yet, the manager himself was the one stating the truth that the gadgets they had were not sufficient to put out the fire. Yes, we know that the CCTV cameras will not help to put out the fire but if we have fire hydrants in place, it would help the fire fighters to do a good job. I think it would also help from the side of Government, that if we are moving in to do compensation, it should be done in the right manner, when the proprietors have done all that they can to save the situation. Thank you.

5.35

**MR GERALD NANGOLI (NRM, Elgon North County, Bulambuli):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I would also like to thank the chairperson of the committee for that great report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Chairperson, of which committee?

**MR NANGOLI:** Tourism.

**THE SPEAKER:** If you are the chairperson, then do not debate.

**MR NANGOLI:** No, I am saying “thank you”. I am just appreciating the chairperson.

**THE SPEAKER:** No. Once you are a member of a committee, you are not supposed to –

**MR NANGOLI:** I am not a member.

**THE SPEAKER:** Are you just thanking the chairperson of the committee?

**MR NANGOLI:** I am appreciating the chairperson.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay.

**MR NANGOLI:** Madam Speaker, I have analysed the report and there are two things I have noted. One is that it should be the responsibility of UWA to control fire in all these conservation areas and to protect people's properties and investments. It should be entirely their responsibility. Otherwise, bush burning, without proper control measures, puts the investment of investors at risk.

When the report was being read, they recommended that the investors be compensated 50 per cent of the total loss, which is unfair. I propose that they should be compensated 100 per cent like any other investors.

Secondly, UWA should come up with proper standard operating procedures in regard to bush fires. The reason I am insisting on this, is because I worked with Uganda Wildlife Authority for over 10 years so I have some experience about this.

Another thing is that park/conservation rangers are poorly remunerated. This is why in most cases it is hard for them to respond to such emergencies. They earn very little money to the best of my knowledge, having worked with them especially on allowances.

Normally, some of these fires happen at night, yet they are given less than Shs 7,000 per diem, for foot patrols. So they earn very little money. We, therefore, need to see how we can improve their allowances.

My final submission is that the Uganda Wildlife Authority should come up with a clear policy on how to manage bushfires in all the conservation areas, not only in Queen Elizabeth National Park. Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity.

5.38

**MR JOHN MAGOLO (NRM, Bungokho County North, Mbale):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to add my voice to thank the committee for the report. One of the things that exacerbate the human-wildlife conflict is the lack of clarity of the boundaries. In 2018, the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development conducted a survey and they surveyed all these places in collaboration with the communities. That report is there.

I want to thank the ministry because they presented this report to all stakeholders. They had an elaborate programme to meet the communities that relate and border the national parks. However, that programme did not go very far. Down the road – when challenges of population pressure come up, at the end of the day, people forget what they committed themselves to.

One of the solutions, therefore, is that the ministry should ensure that the boundaries they agreed upon with the people and the Government are established, so that they create a buffer zone. This way, there will be a corporate responsibility to ensure that some of these conflicts are minimised. I submit.

5.40

**MR ISAAC MODOI (NRM,** **Lutseshe County, Bududa):** Madam Speaker, all the issues have been raised, but what is fundamentally true is that the ministry or the Government has to sensitise people. They should know that there must be a very good relationship between UWA and the people.

As colleagues have always said, there is a problem with lack of a clear programme on sensitising our masses, let alone telling them the benefits they accrue from wildlife.

Secondly, on the issue of the bushfires, I think there is a problem of laxity within the authority itself. This is because it takes so long to go and report or even put out the fires and so, sometimes they end up beating the residents and at times, they assume that they are the ones responsible.

In brief, I would say that we need to sensitise our masses to appreciate the wildlife and know the rules of how they can relate with wildlife. Thank you very much.

5.41

**MS AGNES ACIBU (NRM, Woman Representative, Nebbi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for having given me this opportunity to say “thank God” for giving you this office.

**THE SPEAKER:** Amen.

**MS ACIBU:** I want to add my voice to the rest of my colleagues in regard to the conflict between our community and UWA. I am going to talk from experience regarding the poor relationship between our communities and UWA.

It is unfortunate that the high rate of poverty forces some people to go to these national parks to hunt. What is so painful is that the game rangers shoot to kill. There are some communities in Nebbi District, especially in two subcounties. When you go to these villages, the number of men has reduced because of poaching. They shoot to kill - Sometimes you find some of these escapees at home. When they come back – We have Penji-oryang and Acana villages in Parombo Subcounty. Sometimes, these escapees run to their homes and they are followed, arrested, while others end up losing their lives.

It is my appeal that when such people are arrested, their lives should be spared but be given deterrent punishments. Otherwise, these animals are being kept for the good of –*(Member timed out.)*

5.43

**MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro):** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I also wish to congratulate you. I am one of the members who come from the park community of Bwindi. I thank the committee for the report.

Madam Speaker, there are some fires that originate from the national parks and that should entirely be squared on the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

The relationship between the communities and the Uganda Wildlife Authority is worrying. This is because at times, UWA or the Government invites those challenges to themselves. An example is in Bukimbiri County, where there is Bwindi Forest. To enter into the forest, one pays US$40 and to track a Mountain Gorilla, one pays US$600. The community only gets a percentage of the US$40 not on the US$600. That alone attracts conflict in the community.

Secondly, when they are recruiting people, you cannot find any Mukimbiri or someone neighbouring the forest being employed. They bring people that do not come from our area. They even do not know the local language to communicate with the people. Therefore, I appeal to the minister to allow these national parks to be managed locally. The local content is not there and when there is no local content, people see these forests as foreign and do not look at them as natural resources, which belong to them. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, so much. Honourable Minister, the recommendations that are coming are; fast-tracking of the Bill, the CCTV installation be done with immediate effect and by the owners of the investment.

Full compensation to the affected persons or institution but after a survey from the Government valuer, and then fire extinguishers should be installed in all these places by the owners of the business. Those are part of the standard operating procedures.

5.45

**THE MINISTER OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Col (Rtd) Tom Butime):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me make some few observations. In the first place, it cannot be true that from Erusi County to Parombo and going through up to Pakwach - that somebody should go hunting from Erusi to Parombo to Pakwach; you have to cross the river.

Those are so many kilometres and that would not be the type of poacher to come from Erusi and end up poaching in the Murchison Falls Game Park. Anyway, we can discuss because I know that area very well.

On condolences, there was a PhD student from Columbia but from a University in the United States, who was doing research at one of our research stations in Kibale National Park.

The elephants in that area are quite aggressive and usually, people doing research are warned to take precaution when walking through that area but this unfortunate student got into a problem and he was charged by an elephant, trampled upon and died.

We have informed the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs will inform the university and eventually inform the Government of Columbia. We extend our condolences, as a ministry.

The electric fence does not stop fire, it stops animals – elephants, for that matter - and may not help as far as fire is concerned because it will just cross and leave the electric fence there. So, that should not be an issue for us to discuss in this House.

Before I came here, I was defending the ministry budget before the committee of Parliament since morning and we agreed that in the 2022/2023 budget, there is an allocation of about Shs 42 billion for the electric wire for fencing.

This is a World Bank project and that money will be availed. There will be an advertisement in the papers companies can apply and be given that work to do and it will be open.

Madam Speaker, there is a difference between compassion and compensation. When the 2019 Uganda Wildlife Authority Act and regulations are finally out, it will be very clear that if unfortunately, you are caught in the national park poaching and you become aggressive with a weapon to a ranger, that ranger, in self-defence, can shoot you.

In that particular case, there can be compassion; in other words, the Uganda Wildlife Authority can buy a coffin, and look for some funds for burial.

Compensation is different and when the regulations are clear and done, in that particular case, you cannot be compensated because you were poaching. You wanted to fight with arms and the ranger shot you.

Compensation will be when wildlife comes to your garden, destroys your crops, and that will be stipulated in the regulations, which I am going to sign as soon as they ready.

**MR BASALIRWA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very conversant with matters of self-defence as a senior lawyer in this country. You cannot talk about compassion in self-defence because self-defence in itself is a defence. If you are charged of an offence and you raise self-defence, itself, can lead to an acquittal.

How do you talk about buying a coffin, compassion or whatever you want to call it even in the regulations that you proposed and you are talking about extending support to a person who was undertaking an illegal activity; in this case poaching?

How does that arise? If somebody is poaching, which is an illegality, and is using arms and the rangers put him out of action, even in the rules governing self-defence; the act must be proportional to the threat the other side.

Somebody cannot be holding a stone and then you are putting them out of action using a gun; that cannot be self-defence. So, in trying to think about the rules and regulations and compassion in self-defence. So, in trying to think about the rules, regulations and compassion instead of defense, you must be very careful. Otherwise, you may be abating poaching unknowingly.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister. Let me hope you are not resisting clarification because it is useful for you. And being senior, it is not bad to seek clarification.

I would like the honourable minister to be very specific on the issue of electric fencing. He talked about the money but he is not assuring Parliament that he is embarking on this project. A number of MPs here from Nwoya District have been complaining a lot about elephants and other animals killing people and eating up their crops.

Can we be assured that Shs 22 billion that the Ministry of Tourism, under the hon. Maj. Butime is going to embark on doing electric fencing for the sake of the people whose relatives have been killed by these elephants and other animals in the districts like Nwoya and other areas I won’t mention? Let us be assured on this because we are not generating the budget. This is because it is the ministry that generates the budget. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the Members want an assurance that the money that they are giving you for doing electronic fencing is going to be put to proper use and no such circumstances like those that occurred in hon. Tinkasiimire’s area will happen again.

**COL (RTD) BUTIME**: First of all, I am not a Major; I am a retired Colonel.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Yes, Col (Rtd) Butime, retired soldier.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, I know him as hon. Butime. Yes, honourable minister.

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** Madam Speaker, number two, regarding the electric fence, these funds are mainly for the areas in Murchison Falls protected area. So, we are talking about Nwoya, Oyam and those areas, that is where these funds will go towards the construction of that electric fence. I think we are clear there.

**THE SPEAKER:** So, will that be in the next financial year?

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** This financial year.

**THE SPEAKER:** This one? So, have you made a budget for the next financial year?

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** This coming financial year.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, it is called the next financial year?

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** Yes, next financial year.

**MR ENOSI ASIIMWE:** Madam Speaker, when we talk about the electric fence, we are not necessarily looking at a few parks but even I who comes from Lyantonde, we have had the problem of animals coming from Lake Mburo National Park and destroying people’s crops.

The question is: is the minister planning to fence off all the national parks to protect the people around these parks because they have settled there? I mean, at the time they were being deserted these communities were there. So, we are asking what you are planning to do for them to stop this intrusion of animals from the parks to the plantations.

5.58

**MS JANE AVUR (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach)**: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Picking from where hon. Enosi has just stopped, I know that wild animals do not only live on land. I come from a district where there is a water body. That is the Albert Nile and we have several instances where crocodiles have killed over 14 people and destroyed crops and animals in the neighborhood far off from the landing site and the water.

I will give a scenario of what happened in Panyimuru Subcounty, Pakwach where I was called and I called the warden who told me you know he had talked to the people that they should fence off the place. It is impossible for the local community to fence. I would like to know from the Minister, whether this activity includes fencing areas close to the water bodies to prevent hippos, and crocodiles, from crossing right from the water to the community. I thank you.

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** Madam Speaker, as far as Panyimuru is concerned, which I know very well, systematically Panyimuru, Mburo and other areas, we shall find a method *–(Interjections)-* yeah, rollout shall find a way -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the powers are in our hands to provide the money. So, ensure you provide money for all those areas.

**COL (RTD) BUTIME:** Precisely, Madam Speaker. Finally, the question on tourism roads, the Ministry of Works and Transport is one with the budget for them. And it is very clear that I have no doubt that the minister and the ministry officials know which roads are ready for the program. And such roads will be done.

I have a special interest in that because that is part of my ministry where the tourists must find their way to the conservation areas and to assist the tourists to come and not get stuck on the way before they reach the road somewhere around Bunyonyi and other areas. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable members. You have heard from the minister. I now put the question that the report of the Committee of Tourism, Trade and Industry on Bushfires and Human life Conflict in Queen Elizabeth National Game Park be adopted with amendments.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Report adopted.*

**THE SPEAKER:** I now adjourn the House to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 6.02 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 13 April 2022 at 2.00 p.m.)*