



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 18 JULY 2023



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 13TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Tuesday, 18 July 2023

*Parliament met at 1.59 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. On a special note, I want to thank Hon. Bahati. *(Applause)* Why am I thanking him? He knows why he is here and why he was appointed a minister. He knows he has to be here *-(Applause)-* including Hon. Musasizi. *(Laughter)* I am happy the Government Chief Whip has also come, but that does not take away what we have said.

Hon. Bahati, Government Chief Whip and the Minister of Finance, we are happy that you are here. Whip, we need you to really whip your ministers; we need ministers in the House. Today, we have a very important motion that we are going to pass on thanking the President and a rebuttal from the Opposition. We need people to be here to respond.

Anyway, I would like to welcome you to this afternoon's Sitting. Honourable members, last week, we notified you on the issue of the Road Act, 2019, which did not have attendant regulations to aid enforcement. One of the recommendations that we talked about was

inspection of vehicles to determine whether they are in Dangerous Mechanical Condition (DMC).

In less than a day, there was an accident in Kagadi where 16 people perished. That was very sad; that a vehicle can cram into another because of the dangerous condition it is in.

We are aware that it is the regulations that are integral in operationalisation of the laws we have made in this House. I want information from the Attorney-General, the ministers or the Government on how many regulations we have on all the Bills that we have passed in this House. We need to know which regulation has been made for which Act that has been passed. We want it laid on the Floor tomorrow.

Government Chief Whip, we will continue making laws in this House and we will be excited that we have passed Bills and have these Acts in place. However, without regulations, you cannot operationalise them. So, we need the regulations to be in place and they should be brought in this House. We must have a regulation vis-à-vis the laws that have been passed. What is operationalising them?

Honourable members, I have been informed that we have a problem with the Road Fund. I got a petition on the Road Fund; what happened during the budgeting process is that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development did not allocate sufficient money for the Road Fund. He instead thought it wise that the Shs 1 billion that we allocated to districts was for the Road Fund.

You know very well that on issues of the Road Fund – For instance, if you look at the history of this House on appropriation, in the Financial Year 2022/2023, there was a big reduction on the Fund – that is Vote 118. The big reduction was from Shs 489.3 billion to Shs 487 billion in the Financial Year 2021/2022. In the Financial Year 2022/2023, it was Shs 401 billion only. Instead of increasing, it is reducing.

Because of that, we have got a petition. There was a reduction of Shs 88 billion. We need the Committee on Physical Infrastructure to study this issue and report back. We also need a response from the finance ministry on why they reduced that amount. You can give your response to the committee and that should be reported to the House.

Honourable members, this money goes to our constituencies and helps us to come back to Parliament. If you cannot fight for the Road Fund, then you are a nobody. The roads are bad; they need to be worked on. When people say the money goes to Members of Parliament, it is not our personal money. We are working on the roads; we provide money to work on the roads. Therefore, we must work very hard to ensure that the money that belongs to the Road Fund is put back or even increased.

It has also come to our attention that since 2020, the Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) is unable to collect revenue from outdoor advertising due to the absence of a relevant ordinance. There is no ordinance; KCCA has not made it. All those signposts that you are seeing – I can see the Chairperson of the Committee on Presidential Affairs is nodding her head – are not collecting money. The Non-Tax Revenue (NTR) that is collected from KCCA is limited because of the lack of an ordinance.

Therefore, we want KCCA to have the ordinance in place and ensure that all those outdoor advertisements are paid for. We need money; we cannot continue lamenting all the time that we do not have money, yet we have an avenue to collect it. That should be implemented and reported to this House.

Honourable members, you know very well that it is you and I who are supposed to support the Government to get money.

On Sunday, the Prime Minister represented the country during the Women's Soccer Match in Kigali. I think you all saw her, very excited. She went and watched the National Women's Team, the Crested Cranes, in Kigali, where our team performed very well. We thank the team. *(Applause)*

The team is due to go to Paris for a Women's Olympic Football Tournament qualifiers. In the next phase, they will be going to Cameroon in September 2023. I congratulate the women for that. *(Applause)*

On behalf of the women of Uganda, we will continue supporting our women's football because they are proving to be better than all the others. *(Laughter)* As a House, we will continue ensuring that they get sufficient funding. The funding, this time, must be channelled to the women, not only men.

The 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament will always support sports in this country. We will support whatever kind of sports, for socio-economic transformation.

Honourable members, yesterday, I received information about the unrest in Amolatar District, where some locals were up against non-natives of the area.

We are all Ugandans; we need to co-exist. We should not go into the mentality of the traditional times – that we do not want people who are not from this area. I want the minister to ensure that we avoid this kind of thing.

Finally, on a sad note, again – on top of the 16 accidents – today, we got information of the demise of the Archbishop Emeritus of Mbarara Archdiocese, His Grace Paul Bakyenga. The deceased was a very dedicated servant of God and committed his entire life to fulfilling his priesthood. May we rise and observe a moment of silence in his honour.

*(Members rose and observed a moment of silence.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, I would still like to reiterate the issue of attendance of the House. If you do not attend the House - I saw the *New Vision* showing the best Members of Parliament. I saw Hon. Sarah Opendi – because she grabs the microphone all the time. *(Laughter)* Much as she grabs the microphone all the time, she is here. So, be here and be seen to be here. That is why you were voted – Honourable members, you need to be in the House and I would like to tell you that when you clock in, we print the summary.

Your voters are going to look at whether you are in the House or in the constituency. This is your home when you are in Kampala. So, if you are not here, where are you? Committees sit in the morning and that is why we decided to have House in the afternoon.

Honourable members, I am giving you a simple piece of advice. You know the Rules of Procedure of this House: when you do not attend the House a number of times, you know what happens.

I wish you good luck in today's deliberations. *(Members rose\_)* Honourable members, before you get up, let me introduce my children. In the public gallery this afternoon, we have the Volleyball and Netball teams that have qualified to go to Kigali.

These teams are the girls and boys represented by Rt Hon. Anita Among, Hon. Opolot Isiagi and Hon. John Bosco Ikojo. *(Applause)* These kids are from Bukedea Comprehensive School. *(Applause)* Please, stand up. You are most welcome. That school is for none other than –*(Laughter)* Thank you for coming. Please, have a seat. Enjoy. This is your Parliament. *(Applause)*

2.20

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a procedural matter. You have said that every time a Member comes, they must register their signature to prove that they are in. The Strategic Development Plan says that we should leave no one behind.

We have allowed, legally, for the elderly to be Members of this House. Unfortunately, technology is not taking care of the needs of the elderly. So, every time I come here, I try to put my finger – I put the first one, the second one, the third –*(Laughter)*- The only way I have been able to prove that I am around is, occasionally, to speak if I am allowed to. Otherwise, by virtue of registering through technology, I have been alienated. I am not in a position to register my presence and I believe there are others as well.

Secondly, on the issue of Amolatar – the people who are there and are not supposed to be people from Amolatar – I think that issue has not been properly understood. I am an immediate neighbour to Amolatar. Most of the people who are in Amolatar are not Langi. There have, for generations, been people from different areas. You find the Iteso, the Basoga, the Baruli or the Baganda all mixed up.

So, for anybody to say that the Langi of Amolatar are not allowing other people to be there, that person would be lying. People are bitter because there are people who have come with their goats and cows and they want to dominate that place – and they are protected by arms. This is a very serious matter, which we have to investigate. The Langi will never ever stop anybody from integrating with them. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Imat, first of all, the technology we have is compatible with the elders, the disabled and everybody. We have grandmothers and great-grandmothers like *Imat*. The system is compatible. Actually, we need Jik for her to wash her feet.

In my communication, I did not mention the word “Langi”. I said the people in Amolatar and as you have said, some of them are Iteso, Luo and so forth. What we are saying is that they need to learn to co-exist. We are investigating, but let the investigation go on without killing each other.

Procedure?

**MR NIWAGABA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Last week, the Prime Minister undertook to come back to this House and give Government's position on the fate of the local councils.

There is a law enacted in 2006, the Local Council Courts Act. Those local council courts, particularly at Local Council II, are mandated to handle all disputes related to customary land, which is the biggest land tenure system in this country.

Now that the term of office of the local councils has expired, the effect of judgments passed by those local council courts and entertaining the disputes are all matters of law and one would conveniently say they lack jurisdiction and cannot act.

Therefore, it is a huge crisis because land disputes are all over the country on a daily basis. Can we know from the Prime Minister when Government is availing resources for local council elections to be held since there is no other way other than that?

**THE SPEAKER:** Government, can we hear about the local councils?

2.22

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. That issue was here last week and on Thursday, the Minister of Local Government is coming to this Parliament to inform you about the programme for the local councils. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Government, I need to find out something. Assuming something happens between now and Thursday, that requires a LC1 stamp and an acknowledgement or presence, what happens? We just want to be educated and guided.

**MS NAKADAMA:** Madam Speaker, the Attorney-General will give us clarification on that. He is on his way. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the legal advisor of the Government is the Attorney-General (AG). Can we have the AG in the House to put the issue of LCs to rest? *(Member rose.)* First tell us which party you belong to. *(Laughter)*

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. Rule 50 requires all ministers to attend Parliament and answer questions. You thanked Hon. Bahati and Hon. Musasizi for attending. Their attendance must be of value; it is not a ceremony. If you have a person holding the Office of the Prime Minister and for every question she is looking over her shoulder -

We have UPDF officers who are in this Parliament. You hear Members of Parliament, the most recent being the Member from Njeru; that he has gone to see Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba to develop his constituency, yet we are the ones who pass the Budget. Therefore, I have two procedural issues.

First, can the President publish a list of all his relatives so that we may know who handles which development? The second one, can we -

**THE SPEAKER:** A list of what?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Of his relatives.

**THE SPEAKER:** For what reason?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Because Hon. Njeru went to Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba. I want to know who I can go to if I have another matter.

Madam Speaker, this is a very serious matter; do not take it lightly because I have seen Members of Parliament going to meet Gen. Saleh. If we have two generals who are important, and they can attend Parliament and answer questions, why don't we chase away two from these ones and bring the others who can answer questions in Parliament?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssemujju, I do not see any problem with anybody going to see Gen. Saleh, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba or even the President. First of all, the President is the

President of the Republic of Uganda and he is your President. He is the President of Hon. Ssemujju. If people want to go; if that is where they find solace, what is wrong with anybody going anywhere? How come you come to me and not to your Secretary-General, Hon. Nandala? *(Laughter)*

2.26

**MR ALEX RUHUNDA (NRM, Fort Portal Central City, Fort Portal City):** Thank you, Madam, Speaker. I would like to thank you for your resilience and commitment in ensuring that there is sanity on our roads. In your communication, about the important Road Fund for the districts and the cities, that is-

**THE SPEAKER:** Chairperson, we have already referred that to the committee-

**MR RUHUNDA:** Yes, I wanted to add, Madam Speaker, just one second on-

**THE SPEAKER:** You will go to the committee and take that information.

**MR RUHUNDA:** Madam Speaker, one point -

**THE SPEAKER:** You will go to the committee. That is a very serious matter. It is not something that we should just sweep under the Floor.

**MR RUHUNDA:** Madam, I wanted to add-

**THE SPEAKER:** *Akiiki*, please, have a seat. Hon. Christine? I am going to attend to all of you, including *Hajjat*, Patrick and Christine.

2.27

**MS CHRISTINE KAAAYA (NUP, Woman representative, Kiboga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. We have heard your communication regarding the need for the Prime Minister to share with us the number of Acts and their related regulations.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Attorney-General.

**MS KAAAYA:** The Attorney General. The number of Acts and their related regulations.

Madam Speaker, we passed the Climate Change Act in 2021 and up to-date, there are no regulations pertaining to that Act. The other time we were battling with the Biofuels Act; we were not sure of whether it is 2018 or 2020, just because of regulations - that it had been assented to by the President in 2018, but the coming into force; the commencement was 2020. So, the Act adopted 2020 as its year.

These are the delays that refer to the beginning of the Regulations or Acts in further years, which confuses us. Thank you very much; we shall be waiting for the regulations, especially as far as Climate Change is concerned, because when you look at most disasters that have befallen our country, 70 per cent of them are climate-related. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Government Chief Whip, you need to communicate to the Attorney-General; for all the Acts we passed - we need the regulations. We cannot pass a Bill into an Act in 2019 when there is no regulation; it will not be operationalised; so, what would we be doing? Do you want us to just come here to talk and go? That should not happen.

2.29

**MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Over the weekend, I attended a sports day activity at Katikamu SDA Secondary School in Luwero. They notified me about their failure to facilitate the girls' football team to compete for nationals. You have commented on the girls' football team in your communication.

I rise on that point and request the Ministry of Education and Sports and the concerned stakeholders like the Uganda Secondary School Sports Association, to increase funding to the secondary schools so that they are able to realise more talents from our students. This will prevent demoralisation and demotivation of our students through that failure to facilitate our teams. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you say Katikamu SDA?

**MS KIRABO:** Yes, in Luwero District.

**THE SPEAKER:** The one I said we are going to facilitate is the national team for women. When you see those young girls shining there, I also facilitate them myself as a Director. Government does not have money to facilitate all the schools.

2.31

**MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on the communication you made about sports. It is a culture in this House that whenever we attend the East African Parliamentary Sports, a report is brought to the Floor of Parliament. However, ever since we went to Juba and participated in sports last year, there is no report that has been brought to the Floor. I do not know why because we, the athletes, did well.

**THE SPEAKER:** You actually did very well. It was the best in the East African Community.

**MS OSORU:** I want to seek your advice, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we have the medals, trophies and the report presented on Thursday? If you do not present, I will not send you for the next one.

2.32

**MR MAXIMUS OCHAI (NRM, West Budama County North, Tororo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am glad I caught your eye. I rise to make a statement on your communication regarding the increasing number of road accidents.

At about 8.00 on Saturday, a farmer was transporting trays of eggs to Tororo along Tororo-Nagongera Road. Unfortunately, because of the potholes on the road, he was involved in an accident and lost almost 90 per cent of the eggs.

The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development last financial year released money to UNRA to undertake a

feasibility study to upgrade 44 kilometres of that road. Unfortunately, the financial year ended without a conclusion of that feasibility study. We have had numerous accidents and as long as it remains that way, accidents will continue to occur.

May I request Government to update the people of West Budama County North Constituency and Bukedi Subregion at large, on the status of that feasibility study? Thank you.

2.34

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Since the money has been released to the Ministry of Works and Transport, as the honourable Member of Parliament has said, I am going to call the minister to come and give us an update on the feasibility study that has been carried out on that road. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** First, what we hear about money release is still hearsay. We need confirmation that money was released to UNRA and what is being done at the moment because that was the last financial year. The minister should come here and report.

2.35

**MR PIUS WAKABI (NRM, Bugahya County, Hoima):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You talked about the Road Fund. I am the chairperson for Hoima District Roads Committee. When Parliament passed the Shs 1 billion through the Ministry of Works and Transport, it caused a lot of excitement in our constituencies. However, I was shocked to hear, as I chaired a meeting, that Hoima District in the last financial year got Shs 479 million. We were able to rehabilitate 47 kilometres. With Shs 1 billion, Hoima District plans to rehabilitate 35 kilometres. They are saying it is because of the strict guidelines from the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Therefore, I request that the ministry should table these guidelines if this money is to help our people. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. We need the guidelines laid here tomorrow for each Member of Parliament to be aware of them. As I said earlier on, honourable members, you need to take the lead in this money. If you are going to leave it to the CAOs, you are not going to get anything.

2.37

**MR BARNABAS TINKASIIMIRE (NRM, Buyaga West County, Kagadi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your communication. As we debate this afternoon, my constituency, the entire Kagadi District plus Kyenjojo, was gripped with grief last weekend when an accident happened in Kangombe Forest in a village called Karalike. A trailer, which was carrying fish – I do not know from where - it could have either been to Congo or around Lake Albert – knocked head on a taxi, which had 18 occupants. They were coming from a burial of one of their friends. It crashed the taxi, killing all passengers.

Other than the loss of our people, we had difficulties particularly with police trying to retrieve the bodies in the wreckage. They did not have the means to pull off the trailer. It attracted very many people trying to push to remove the trailer manually. Police sensed chaos because people started rioting. Those of you who watched the news could have seen that people blocked the road because they were dissatisfied - that they could have such a nasty accident and Government was not coming to their rescue.

Madam Speaker, it took an entire day - the accident happened at 8.00 p.m. on Sunday. The whole of yesterday, this truck was still lying on some bodies and Government had not mobilised any minister from Hoima to remove the wreckage from the dead bodies.

My prayer is that in such circumstances, Government should respond quickly.

The area of the accident scene used to have two roads while it was still a murrum road; we used to call it “*Ku-bbiri*”. However, when they tarmacked it, they removed the two roads

and created one road; it still remained with a very sharp corner, to an extent that somebody driving from up the hill cannot see whatever is coming from down the hill. It is in a forest and I did not see any sense why they remained with that corner because this is Government land. If they were worried about compensation, they would sort out themselves by cutting off that corner; unless they have engineering reasons. I pray that corner –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, we have got the information. The corner is going to be removed.

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** If it was the Hon. Ochai, I would take the information because in my constituency, today, they are burying four people. In his constituency, they are also burying more people.

**MR MUSANA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, honourable colleague, for giving way. It is very devastating what happened in my constituency, Buyaga East.

My prayer, without going into details, is for Government to have a better and rapid emergency response system. If it were put in place, we would save lives.

Today, I have again lost another voter who could have probably survived but because there was laxity on the side of Government, we lost this life. This is a disaster. If Government can come in and help us to send them off in a more dignified manner. Sometimes, they give better condolences to the bereaved people.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Tinkasiimire, we have got the message.

**MR TINKASIIMIRE:** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. We have seen in the past similar accidents, like my friend is raising, particularly of buses that cross from Rwanda. Even where fewer people have died, the President runs in with a “handshake” to condole with the families. We would want to see the same hand extended to the 18 families that lost their dear ones.



**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Government? First of all, our condolences to the families that lost their loved ones. While you were away, we even observed a moment of silence for those families. The issue still goes back to the road designs; the issue of the corners.

Prime Minister, you need to communicate to Uganda National Roads Authority. You also need to handle the burial expenses.

2.44

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** It is on a sad note that our relatives lost their beloved in such a nasty accident and we were informed that this was because of over-speeding. I call upon all the leaders to sensitise our people and all road users to control their speed or to behave when they are on the road. Due to that corner, the car failed to brake and rammed into the other vehicle whereby –

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us not zero it down to over-speeding. An accident happened and there are many reasons for it.

**MS NAKADAMA:** There are many reasons but this is one of them. So, I am calling upon the leaders to sensitise whoever is using the road.

The President is concerned about every life –

**THE SPEAKER:** Let us first hear the issue of money.

**MS NAKADAMA:** He has done it willingly without us calling on him to do that. Right now, he is aware of what is happening and I cannot say that the President has to be called upon by Parliament because he has done it before.

Therefore, I am going to inform UNRA –

**THE SPEAKER:** By the way, Parliament is not calling upon the President to do that. It is a request from the Members of Parliament of that area; it is not Parliament. Please, keep us out of this. It is the President that gives handouts.

**MS NAKADAMA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that clarification. Since the request has been made by the area Member of Parliament, we are going to pass on that request to His Excellency the President. I also inform UNRA to take care of that corner. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this is a serious matter and these are our colleagues. Where we can also support, let us do that. Also, to the public out there, we must have road discipline in terms of speed and ensuring that you respect other road users. For instance, you are using a truck and the other person is using a small vehicle and yet, you do not mind whatever happens.

Then, there is the issue of road designs. We have said that we must have an inspection of these vehicles. This vehicle lost control and it could have been a DMC. So, we need to ensure that is put in place.

2.47

**MR STEPHEN KISA (NRM, Luuka South County, Luuka):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank you for your communication on sports. I attended the National Ball Games in Kabale and I take this opportunity to congratulate Bukedea Comprehensive for participating and coming up as very strong winners.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members, can't you clap for my school? (*Applause*)

**MR KISA:** Madam Speaker, while in Kabale, there are very many things I observed; most of the schools that participated, for example, Bukedea, Lugazi and Homeland College, were mainly private schools.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Director of Homeland College is Hon. Kisa.

**MR KISA:** You can hardly find a Government-aided school participating in these National Ball Games. The reason they gave is that the Government, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, does not facilitate sports and games in these schools. Even the budget, through the Capitation Grant, has very little money for

Government schools to have children in these schools participate in the national games.

Madam Speaker, the Minister of Education, my brother, mentor and director, Hon. Muyingo is here -

**THE SPEAKER:** Your father.

**MR KISA:** I wanted to know how much money Government, through the Ministry of Education, provides for sports enhancement in Government schools in Uganda.

Madam Speaker, most of the head teachers in Government schools - because I am a teacher and I am concerned. Government can provide less than Shs 2 million to run sports in the entire year. How much do you provide, honourable minister, to enhance the sports sector in all Government-aided schools, including the seed schools that we are putting up? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

2.50

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (HIGHER EDUCATION) (Dr Chrysostom Muyingo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, it is not true that Government-aided schools do not participate in these games. There is evidence that this year's Volleyball and Basketball National Tournaments were led by public schools.

**THE SPEAKER:** Where?

**DR MUYINGO:** It is true.

**THE SPEAKER:** I am just asking, where? Is Standard High a Government school? You are talking to a person who has an interest in this.

**DR MUYINGO:** I know Standard High School is a privately-owned school by my brother.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is Amus College a Government-aided school?

**MR KISA:** Madam Speaker, in netball, we have St Mary's Kitende. Is it a Government-aided school?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, just come with a statement. If you want us to help you improve sports in secondary schools, then let it be.

**DR MUYINGO:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. I will come up with a statement.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

2.51

**MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In 2019, Parliament passed money to buy road units in the new districts and the Ministry of Finance refused to release the money.

**THE SPEAKER:** The Ministry of Finance did not release the money. The word "refuse" is not Parliamentary for now.

**MR OSHABE:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. Last financial year, this same Parliament passed money and the Ministry of Finance never released the money to buy road units for the new districts.

This financial year, we again pleaded with Parliament to provide money to the new districts. Honourable members, other districts have road units but there are 16 districts without them. With the little money we get, we hire so that we can do the routes and we end up doing very few kilometres. *(Interruption)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, you are giving somebody who has a road unit. Okay, let us have the next person. Can you conclude?

**MR OSHABE:** Let me conclude, Madam Speaker. The Minister of Finance is here; everyone is celebrating the Shs 1 billion. I want to thank Parliament because it is good. However, for us who have no road units, when we are planning for the Shs 1 billion, we are also planning to hire road units, which is very unfair. Can we get confirmation that in this first quarter of the financial year, the new districts are going to be given road units? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Information.

**MR KANKUNDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker and Hon. Patrick Oshabe, for allowing information. It is on the *Hansard* that last year, the Minister for Works and Transport came and committed here that Shs 29 billion was given to them and they were waiting for the balance.

**THE SPEAKER:** And they were in a procurement process.

**MR KANKUNDA:** Yes. I would like to clarify that, that information was given and so, the minister should guide us. Has the balance been given? How far has the procurement process gone and when will it be concluded?

**THE SPEAKER:** No, the person to give the balance is right here. Have you given the balance for the road units?

2.55

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Henry Musasizi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to know whether the issue is giving the balance or whether it is availing the road units.

Madam Speaker, the issue is ensuring that all districts and municipalities in the country have functioning road units. This is a matter we are working on. The President is involved and we shall ensure that all districts in Uganda get road units.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Musasizi, what we need to find out is, on top of the Shs 29 billion, when are you releasing the balance for us to have functioning equipment in those districts?

Secondly, there are districts with non-functioning equipment because there is no money for repairs and maintenance.

**MR MUSASIZI:** That is why, Madam Speaker, I am saying that releasing the balance is no longer an issue. The issue is ensuring that all districts in Uganda are supported with functioning road units.

**THE SPEAKER:** You are not answering us.

**MR MUSASIZI:** And we have put this matter before the President and he is making all the efforts to work with the Government of Japan to ensure that we are supplied with road units.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Musasizi, the answer is very simple; either you appropriated and you have money for the road units or not. It is not whether it is simple or hard. We do not mind whether it is hard or not because Government must do it anyway. The issue is whether there is money for the road units or not. If it is not there, then let us look at plan B - No, he has an answer. I know Hon. Henry.

**MR MUSASIZI:** Madam Speaker, I am constrained to give you a straightforward answer.

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the districts without units -

**MS NAKADAMA:** Madam Speaker, like the honourable member who raised the issue said, some of the money was released and so, these road units are being procured in phases. That is the programme that we are moving with.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, can we have a status report from Works and Finance Ministries on how many road units are being procured, what is the balance and for which districts?

Honourable members, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers of Buckley High School, Iganga District. They are represented by Hon. Peter Mugema *Panadol* and Hon. Sauda Kauma. Where is Hon. *Panadol*? (*Laughter*) Hon. Mugema is one of the best Members of Parliament. Please, join me in welcoming them. (*Applause*)

We also have a delegation of constituents from Ngora District. They are represented by Hon. Stella Isodo, Hon. Juliet Achayo and Hon. Abraham Isamat. Hon. Abraham is there. You have very good Members of Parliament. Please, take care of your Members

of Parliament. Thank you. Next item. (*Member rose*) On the same? Honourable members, are we now going to discuss Communication from the Chair? Kindly, bear with me. Let us first move to other issues. I will give you time in between some items.

**MR KIBALYA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My procedural matter concerns the Crested Cranes that won. They played both games – home and away – from the same stadium, outside the country.

Last time, we observed that the Uganda Cranes also played home and away matches from outside the country. On several occasions, the Head of State has been here bailing out some people; you hear of Abubakar – those ones.

Madam Speaker, to develop talents in this country and for this country to be proud of the teams we have, including the Crested Cranes, people must be in position to watch these games from Uganda. If the question of the Crested Cranes not having a stadium is due to lack of money, the procedural matter is: wouldn't it be procedurally right that as the Ministry of Finance prepares a supplementary request, they put a portion of money to provide for a stadium for the Crested Cranes so that we stop playing home and away matches from outside Uganda?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we gave money to Namboole Stadium and because of the pace at which they were moving, I delegated you, together with the Leader of the Opposition, to go and see what was being done. To date, we have not got a report. So, how do you expect us to continue giving money when we do not know the progress? We will not give them money until we have a progress report. Next item.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Madam Speaker, I rise under rule 7, regarding the powers of the Speaker. An hour ago, you directed the Attorney-General to be in this House and brief us on a very critical matter of the status of the local councils. Most of us are here as a result of an electoral process and we hold and

enjoy the legitimacy because of that. The local council leaders are a big component in the democratisation of this country.

When Government chooses to gloss over this very critical matter, we get concerned and the Speaker's directives cannot be in vain.

I find it very strange that Members, particularly the Leader of Government Business and the Government Chief Whip, are not prevailing on the Attorney-General and even the Minister of Local Government. I wish both of them – the Attorney-General and the Minister of Local Government – could be a product of an election so that they could understand the rigors that an elected person goes through.

**THE SPEAKER:** There is a point of order here.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, Hon. Ssekikubo has been in Parliament for five terms. He has also been here today, since Parliament started. For every matter that has come here, the Prime Minister and ministers are saying: "The President."

Is he in order to demand that ministers, who have no answers, come here when he knows that every matter must be answered by the President? (*Laughter*)

**THE SPEAKER:** If there is anybody who loves President Museveni in Uganda, it is Hon. Ssemujju – and it is good to be loved. He cannot finish a day without mentioning President Museveni. The legal advisor of this country is the Attorney-General and that is why we are referring matters to the Attorney-General. So, Hon. Ssekikubo is in order.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your ruling.

Is it in order, therefore, Madam Speaker, for the Government to keep quiet and allow business to proceed as if it is normal, yet there is a standing directive from the Speaker that has not been answered? I am seeing that they are ready to proceed to other business without due consideration of your powers in this House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Government -

3.08

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Madam Speaker, I thank Hon. Ssekikubo for raising such an important matter. Other people might think that we do not want to answer or that we have no answers, yet we have them.

I raised the Attorney-General –

**THE SPEAKER:** It is not “other people”, but Ugandans. Ugandans are the ones who want the local council elections.

**MS NAKADAMA:** Yes. I raised the Attorney-General and he was still far but he is coming. He replied that he was coming and I can even show you the time when I called him. He is on his way, coming to report on the issue concerning the local councils. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, let us wait; time will come. The Leader of the Opposition had something to say.

3.07

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. I rise on two brief issues.

First, on the Namboole Stadium matter, I humbly ask you to reconstitute that committee because, at all times, we did not get quorum. So, probably, I will formally return and then, you reconstitute it for action.

Secondly, I had desired that I would raise this matter in a statement but after seeing the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs in Plenary – which is rare – I thought I should bring it to the attention of the House. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, the minister for defence is always in the House. If he is not physically here, he is on Zoom.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, that is true. I have seen him severally in committees, answering questions of his entity. He is a rare human in the Plenary but I am glad he is here and he raises my curiosity on his physical presence.

Notably, it is on the fact that he has informed the country that part of the UPDF is going to be hireable and constituted into private guards, just like Wagner in Russia. If you have money, you can hire and take them to your farm. You can hire the UPDF to go and guard your poultry and cattle.

Now that the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs is here, would you like to explain to the House, under what law is it denigrating the sanctity and dignity of the National Army into a force hireable?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Oboth, there is space here.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, together with his deputy hobbling in *–(Laughter)–* we are aware that the UPDF is a reputable force and there have been concerns about its deployment severally in Central Africa, Guinea Bissau, Equatorial Guinea and other undeclared places.

Madam Speaker, will the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs come clean on a matter that really sounded very ugly, coming on the backdrop of constituting the UPDF into a fishing brigade – because they now have a fishing brigade – away from what we know of the UPDF? So, will the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs explain what has become of the UPDF, for our attention and the understanding of the population as to what they are up to?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister - Let us first hear from the UPDF. He is giving information. I am the Speaker. *(Laughter)*

**LT GEN. MUGIRA:** The microphone is as neutral as the UPDF in this House, I believe. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me this opportunity to clarify this hullabaloo that has come out of yet another subsidiary of the National Enterprise Corporation, the NEC Security Services Limited, to provide security services.

I have some information here –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, do you have a report to that effect?

**LT GEN. MUGIRA:** I have my bullet points which I believe I can share with you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I look at it or is it simply notes that you have?

**LT GEN. MUGIRA:** Some of it is handwritten; some of it is –

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you give that information to the minister, and then he will come and make a presentation tomorrow?

**LT GEN. MUGIRA:** I wanted to provide this information because we are not talking about the UPDF. We are talking about the National Enterprise Corporation, which is the commercial and business arm of the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs. However, I oblige.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, this is very simple. We understand what you are talking about but let the minister come and make a presentation to the House. He is the political head.

3.13

**THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Mr Vincent Bamulangaki):** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. However, I want to assure Members that the mighty UPDF is still a very respectable force, admired by the whole world. *(Interruption)*

**MR OKUPA:** Madam Speaker, you have made a ruling that the minister comes tomorrow with a statement on this serious matter. Is it

procedurally right for the minister to continue giving wrong information, instead of adhering to the ruling to wait until tomorrow, such that he comes when he is organised, to present on this matter, which is very serious?

Is he procedurally right to continue, when you made a ruling that he comes back tomorrow with a statement, after Gen. Mugira beefed him up with information?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, next item. *(Laughter)*

#### LAYING OF PAPERS

#### REPORTS OF THE COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS ON:

- A. AN OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE EMBASSY OF UGANDA IN RIYADH-SAUDI ARABIA
- B. THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO THE UGANDAN MISSION IN ABU DHABI AND THE CONSULATE IN DUBAI (UNITED ARAB EMIRATES)
- C. OVERSIGHT VISITS TO THE EMBASSIES OF THE REPUBLIC OF UGANDA IN ALGIERS (ALGERIA), CAIRO (EGYPT) AND ADDIS ABABA (ETHIOPIA)

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this is pursuant to Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure, where we require the key points and recommendations to be presented, and the persons who are presenting should be as brief as possible.

3.14

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Ms Norah Bigirwa):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am here to present a report of the Committee on Foreign Affairs on the oversight visit to the Embassy of Uganda in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

In accordance with Rule 33(1) of the Rules of Procedure, I beg to lay a report of the

Committee on Foreign Affairs on its oversight visit to the Embassy of Uganda in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Please lay.

**MS BIGIRWA:** Madam Speaker, in accordance with Rule 33(2) of our Rules of Procedure, I beg to present a brief summary of the recommendations contained in the report on the oversight visit to the Uganda Mission in Riyadh, Saudi Arabia.

1. The Government of Uganda should ensure that products leaving Uganda, and destined for Saudi Arabia and any other export destination should meet internationally recognised standards.
2. The Ministry of Foreign Affairs and concerned Missions should consider budgeting for external labour development challenges.
3. The committee recommended that the Government of Uganda should regulate the activities of organisations that organise the travel of Ugandan Muslim pilgrims who perform *Hajji* and *Umrah*.
4. The Government of Uganda should appoint members to the Joint Technical Committee for Bilateral Cooperation with immediate effect.
5. All our standing memoranda between Uganda and Saudi Arabia must be concluded.
6. Efforts should be made to establish consulates in countries that are accredited to this Mission, in order to enhance accessibility to consular services.
7. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should leave the budget ceilings upwards or leave the budget open to enable ministries, departments and agencies of Government to responsibly make adequate budget provisions for the planned activities.

8. Lastly, the Government of Uganda should, with immediate effect, raise allowances for Foreign Service officers to make them commensurate with the cost of living index in the countries where they are posted. This is on Riyadh, as a Mission.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. All this will be deposited in the Library so you get the time and peruse through.

3.17

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON FOREIGN AFFAIRS (Ms Norah Bigirwa):** Madam Speaker, with your permission, I beg to lay on the Table the committee report on the oversight visit to the Uganda mission in Abu Dhabi and the consulate in Dubai, the United Arab Emirates

Furthermore, in accordance with Rule 33(2) of the Rules of Procedure, I beg to present a summary of the recommendations by the committee on the report of the oversight visit of Abu Dhabi and the consulate in Dubai.

We recommend:

- i) increased facilitation to the Ugandan Mission in UAE to cover the wage and non-wage deficit;
- ii) funding for travel abroad for missions abroad must be reinstated to enable them to pursue the promotion of economic and commercial diplomacy;
- iii) increase the capital development budget, and this relates to the need for our own properties at every mission of Uganda abroad;
- iv) provide a transition budget to facilitate and cover urgent mission financial needs between the end of a financial year and the beginning of a new one;
- v) the mission should be accorded immediate authorisation to issue emergency travel certificates to enable the emergency repatriation of Ugandans who are in distress;

- vi) give special consideration to the Ugandan mission in UAE for purposes of promotion of economic and political diplomacy;
- vii) the purchase of a decent representation vehicle for the head of mission;
- viii) that the committee pays special attention to the issue of labour personalisation of Uganda workers in UAE and the stand-alone report will be presented in due course. I beg to report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Chairperson. This is not for debate. We are depositing this to the library and all of you will have access to it.

3.20

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. What I am raising is connected to this. It is good our committee went to the UAE. Last financial year, we not passed money for the purchase of a vehicle for our ambassador in Washington. To date, finance has not released the money, and the ambassador has no vehicle. Even the one which was there has broken down. Yet, this is one of the main missions.

Madam Speaker, it is not only the UAE where the head of the mission does not have transport. Can we hear from the finance ministry and the Leader of Government Business why they did not release the money? This is embarrassing? The ambassador cannot keep on hiring; using Uber or Bolt. This embarrasses us, as a country. We did our part; we passed the money to Washington, but the finance ministry has not send the money.

**THE SPEAKER:** We will need to get a report of all the embassies, not only Washington. All the other embassies are equally important. So, the committee will give us information to that effect and then we make a follow-up with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

**MS BIGIRWA:** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay a report of the Committee

on Foreign Affairs on the oversight visit to the embassies of Uganda to Algiers (Algeria), Cairo (Egypt), and Addis Ababa (Ethiopia). I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Please lay.

**MS BIGIRWA:** Allow me to proceed with the recommendations for these very important missions, and I will start with our mission in Algiers.

The committee recommends:

- i) the procurement of appropriate chancery premises in an affluent location;
- ii) a capital development budget to enable the embassy to capture both the presentation vehicle and utility van which is lacking in most of our missions;
- iii) the recruitment of an education attaché to this mission since many of the student scholarships come from that mission;
- iv) The Ministry of Education and Sports should explain why only 40 out of the 120 scholarships offered have been utilised. Annually, we receive 120 scholarships but surprisingly only 40 are utilised;
- v) The Government, should with immediate effect second or nominate a person of high calibre with the requisite qualification to deputise Algeria as the Afri-Pole. This position fell vacant in 2020 when one of the officers that was in that position retired. So, the post has been held in absentia. We recommend that action be taken immediately;
- vi) The ministries of finance and foreign affairs should submit a request to Parliament to facilitate the change of the erroneously placed Shs 2 billion that was meant for economic and commercial diplomacy and was taken for the development budget. Madam Speaker as you are aware, one of the few things that our foreign missions are engaged in is economic and political



diplomacy. When we do not fund them, we curtail their work.

- vii) Reinstating the facilitation of travel abroad. These are foreign missions, and most of them have got many kinds of accreditation. Therefore, they cannot be able to traverse between different countries if they do not have travel abroad budgets;
- viii) Update the new MOUs, sign the pending ones, and ratify the signed treaties and protocols. Our missions operate through MOUs, and if we do not sign and update them, we curtail the operations of our mission, because this is one of our requirements;
- ix) Given plans by the Government of Algiers to import powdered milk from Uganda, the Government of Uganda should explore possibilities of signing bilateral air service agreements with a view of enabling both countries to operate cargo flights to and from Entebbe and Algiers.

Mission in Cairo

Recommendations of the committee

- i) Government should urgently allocate funds for Uganda's Mission in Addis Ababa to facilitate relocation to a more secure place. We were guided by the host Government that our mission was very insecure. therefore, we pray that the ministry takes fast action to ensure that our mission is relocated;
- ii) Government of Uganda should allocate sufficient funds to enable the construction of a new single complex that would accommodate both the chancellery and the official residence.

**MR SILWANY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson for the remarks she is giving, which are very timely and good. However, the Minister of Foreign Affairs is not in the House. We are noting very key issues about our embassies.

**THE SPEAKER:** What about -

**MR SILWANY:** I am talking about the Minister of Foreign Affairs. Would it not be procedurally right –

**THE SPEAKER:** What is his name?

**MR SILWANY:** I do not know all the ministers - *(Laughter)* - but, let me raise my matter. Would it not be procedurally right for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to be here and listen to this so that we take care of the issue of our embassies?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the papers being laid, are laid under rule 33. We are going to deposit them in the library. The minister will have access to the information that is being provided by the committee. This is why it is not subject to debate. However, we have the minister in the House. Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, assure him that you are the Minister of Foreign Affairs.

3.28

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (REGIONAL AFFAIRS) (Mr John Mulimba):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Silwany may not know the nomenclature of the various ministries we have. However, let me take the opportunity to remind him that in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, we have the Minister of State in charge of International Affairs and the Minister of State in charge of Regional Affairs – and I am here present. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Yes, chairperson, can you finish? Yes, procedure?

**MR ENOS ASIIMWE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rules 33 and 34 talk about laying of reports of parliamentary delegations abroad and committee field reports. Specifically rule 33(3) says: *“The Speaker shall appoint time, not exceeding forty five minutes for debate.”* I do not know whether it will be in the future or today.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we first have the papers laid?

**MS BIGIRWA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that guidance. One of the recommendations by the committee was that we review and categorise all missions, taking into consideration the prevailing circumstances and locations of particular missions, among other factors.

The last recommendation on this mission is to motivate the head of mission and mission staff through enhanced remuneration packages, taking into account the volume of work at the mission.

Finally, Madam Speaker, the recommendations for our mission in Cairo are as follows:

- i) The Government of Uganda should urgently take a decision on whether to buy or rent premises in the new capital city of Egypt;
- ii) The Government should board the premises of the chancery and use the proceeds from the sale of one to acquire new premises in the new administrative district to act as the ambassador's official residence;
- iii) The mission should recruit an education attaché to manage affairs of the community in Egypt and countries of accreditation;
- iv) The mission in collaboration with National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) should take deliberate steps to conduct registration and issuance of national identity cards to Ugandan citizens living and working in Cairo;
- v) The Government of Uganda should engage and lobby the Egyptian Government to sign a memorandum of understanding to regularise and grant legal status to Ugandan citizens living in Egypt;
- vi) The Government of Uganda should negotiate a labour agreement between Uganda and Egypt.

In summary, this is what we have been able to present. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. As we have already said, much as rule 33 requires that we debate in 45 minutes, we want a comprehensive report for all the embassies, not only the three you presented. So give us a whole report, we discuss and see how to handle it early enough before we go into the budgeting process because most of these issues have financial implications. Yes, procedural matter?

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Two procedural issues: Number one, as she was presenting, she said they were informed that Cairo is in a very secure place, but to say Cairo should be relocated - I think she meant to say "insecure," but instead she said "secure". It may please you that she corrects that record because she said it is in a very secure place.

**THE SPEAKER:** Insecure.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** That is what she meant to say, but said a different thing.

**MS BIGIRWA:** Thank you, colleague for that information. Madam Speaker, I meant our mission is in an insecure location.

**THE SPEAKER:** ...in an insecure place. Yes.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is corrected. The other procedural issue I have been battling to bring to your attention since the House started is: you rightly said, we many times, often than not actually, some of us meet on Zoom for some reasons.

However, reading through the Rules of Procedure, they do not provide very well how a Member on Zoom would be able to participate. It even becomes extremely very difficult if the matter involves taking a decision – when a question is put forward for people to pronounce themselves as in "Ayes" or "Nays".

Sometimes, even on ascertaining quorum, the Speaker says "There is quorum; Members are

here and others are on Zoom.” And there is no way we ascertain the number of people on Zoom to actually be sure that we have quorum.

Madam Speaker, wouldn't it please your Chair that you defer this matter to the rules committee to define to us exactly how Members on Zoom could participate? I was on Zoom last week, of course, the procedure of Zoom is that I put up a hand throughout – from the beginning to the end. I knew, of course, I wouldn't be noticed, but I was trying to check the system.

I even tried to make a statement - which I am not going to say here – to check whether we were being followed. And I noticed that we are not being followed.

**THE SPEAKER:** But you can mention the statement you wanted to make. Otherwise, there is no problem. Anyway, *Hajjati*, we do not do guesswork on ascertaining quorum. It is on record. We can print for you whenever you want it. Our IT people ascertain for us what is on quorum. If you want to debate on Zoom - the person who can tell you he debates on Zoom is just behind you. Hon. Patrick, don't you? Hon. Patrick, switch on the mic.

**MR OSHABE:** Madam Speaker, whenever I am out of the country, I have been given a chance to debate here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Next item?

**MS BIGIRWA:** Madam Speaker, I would like to inform you and the House that these reports - the summaries I have just read - were deposited with the Clerk. The reports are there.

Secondly, we have other reports that are ready for oversight missions. We just request you to give us space on the Order Paper. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Another procedure. *Hajjati*, stop harassing Hon. Patrick.

**MROKUPA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You have asked the chairperson of the committee to

bring a comprehensive report when all this is done. I think it would be procedurally right for us to give the committee time within which to bring the comprehensive statement. Why am I saying this? The issue the chairperson raised then the freeze on travel abroad -

Madam Speaker, I think the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development did a blanket ban. We were in Mozambique with the Deputy Speaker - our High Commissioner to South Africa that covers that region, Hon. Amoru, could not come to receive the Speaker in Maputo. Why? Because finance did not give them money to go and present their credentials to all the neighbouring countries that they cover.

Therefore, it creates a challenge and so finance should not have given a blanket ban on travel abroad because it also covers where they are supposed to present their credentials. This is why I am saying time should be given within which the committee should bring a report such that we are able to address these issues and our ambassadors, especially the new ones, are able to present their credentials. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** We cannot have a Ministry of Foreign Affairs that does not travel. We really need money in foreign affairs. You can cut for the rest, but foreign affairs people need to travel. Next item? Yes, Hon. Enos?

**MR ENOS ASIMWE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. As much as you said they will bring a report for all the embassies, there is an important issue she raised on visas. Embassies - specifically I will talk about our embassy in Cairo - they receive applications for visas but they cannot issue visas. This at times delays people coming into the country.

Therefore, can the honourable minister take it upon himself to check with the embassies? The system is that they are required to use the system but at times, the system takes very long to approve the visas. Can we look into this so we are able to come up with a certain limit for these embassies to approve visas for travellers who come mostly for tourism?

**THE SPEAKER:** That is okay. Honourable minister, take it up and include Saudi Arabia.

3.38

**MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to request the chairperson and probably the minister to pick interest in commercial diplomacy.

When every mission comes here to report, we should know the volumes of trade that comes with those missions. What are we benefiting from those missions being there? It must come to Parliament and every mission should be proud of what they are bringing into the country. Otherwise, when we just report on the cars they are driving or how they are living in a bad environment, we may not have value for money.

Therefore, next time, I want to plead with the chairperson –

**THE SPEAKER:** We need to know the contribution of the missions to the economy

**MR OSHABE:** Every mission should tell us their contribution every time they are reporting here. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, we are going to debate those reports – *Hajjati*, check on your Zoom App, you will see all the people. I can see Hon. Esther Mbayo, Hon. Gabriel Okumu, Member for Nwoya - I see very many here. I wish you had access to it.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. If I could say a word –

**THE SPEAKER:** No. The Leader of the Opposition wants to clarify on that.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** My Leader of the Opposition, I pray you give me a minute. If a question, for example, is raised and people are going to say, “Aye” and “Nay”, I seek guidance –

**THE SPEAKER:** I want to refer you to the Rules of Procedure of Parliament. “Members virtually present in the House” refers to a Member participating in the proceedings of Parliament outside the Chambers of Parliament through designated digital platforms having obtained leave of the Speaker and registered with the Clerk to appear at least 12 hours before commencing the sitting.

That is exactly what Hon. Oshabe and Hon. Tim do. You need to inform us that you will be on Zoom. It is in the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. My question relates to the time of voting. We have passed laws here - First of all, on ascertainment of quorum, we look around and say, “Plus Zoom, we have quorum.” The question is put and we decide the matter by “Aye” and “Nay”. How do we pick the voices of people who are on Zoom, where they have said “Nay” and “Aye”?

In most cases, you might find that the number of the people who are in the House is very small and needs to be complemented by those on Zoom to be considered to be quorum. In such circumstances, how are you going to avoid litigation? Thank you, my Leader of the Opposition for giving me space.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we had orientation on our rules at the beginning and one of the people who were orienting you is here. Give her information on what you told her. Remind her.

**MR OBOTH:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. During orientation, unfortunately, some colleagues either attended but did not pay attention or the excitement of the victory could have overwhelmed them. This is the truth. When you have just won, you will all get overwhelmed and it is natural.

We did that with Hon. Niwagaba and Hon. Medard Ssegona. Most times, Madam Speaker, I sympathise with you when matters

that were obviously discussed during the training come out here –(Interjections) – I am continuing with the lecture on the rules.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, what Hon. Oboth is saying is: let us pay attention whenever we have an induction. There are rules; let us revise them whenever we have the time. Can we go to the next item?

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF  
PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT  
TO PRIORITISE INTERVENTIONS TO  
ADDRESS THE CHALLENGES OF  
MICROTOXIN CONTAMINATION IN  
NORTHERN UGANDA

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, food safety is a vital precondition for good health. The motion seeks to address salient challenges facing grain farmers, not only in Northern Uganda but in the whole country. We will give Hon. Ojara only five minutes, then we will refer this to the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. Honourable members, listen to Hon. Mapenduzi; he knows where he belongs –(Laughter)

3.44

**MR OJARA MAPENDUZI (Independent, Bardege-Layibi Division, Gulu City):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to table this motion for a resolution of Parliament urging the Government to prioritise interventions to address the challenges of mycotoxin contamination in Northern Uganda. I move this motion under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda.

*“WHEREAS the Food and Agriculture Organisation and World Health Organisation recognise the worldwide occurrence of mycotoxins in human foods and animal feeds;*

*AND WHEREAS mycotoxins are secondary fungal metabolites with toxic effects to humans and animals and in terms of exposure to chronic diseases, mycotoxins pose a high risk of infections;*

*AWARE THAT mycotoxins, such as aflatoxin compromise the quality of grains produced and affects Uganda’s competitiveness in the regional and global market;*

*NOTING THAT staple foods produced in Uganda are highly susceptible to infection by toxigenic fungi and several environmental factors and are in favour of developing toxigenic fungi during the field period, the time of harvest, or during storage;*

*NOTING FURTHER THAT research conducted by Gulu University indicates that mycotoxin contamination is a large food safety issue in Northern Uganda and about 90 per cent of grain produced from Northern Uganda are contaminated and partly responsible for the high prevalence rate of Hepatitis B and liver cancer in the region, and the situation has been made worse due to limited surveillance;*

*AWARE THAT the food grains produced in Northern Uganda are mainly sorghum, maize, millet and rice and also groundnuts, which are legumes, are also widely grown in the region but highly susceptible to mycotoxin contamination;*

*APPREHENSIVE THAT there is limited public awareness on mycotoxin contamination of foods and its toxicity burden among farmers in Northern Uganda; poor pre and post-harvest agricultural practices are common among the local farmers in the region that expose the grains to high mycotoxin contamination;*

*APPREHENSIVE FURTHER THAT heavy dietary reliance by the people of Northern Uganda on locally produced staple food that is highly susceptible to mycotoxin contamination exacerbates the problem of mycotoxin contamination for many small-scale farmers in the community;*

*APPRECIATING THAT with funding from VLIRUOS Belgium Government programme, Gulu University has established a mycotoxin testing lab with GC, HPLC, PCRs and ELISA tools to support surveillance of mycotoxin*

contamination in the Northern Region of Uganda, and the country at large;

*HOPEFUL THAT the control and prevention of mycotoxin contamination shall encourage farmers to practice crop rotation, proper drying of grains before storage, avoid grain storage in damp or moist areas, timely harvest of crops, avoid pest infestation and damage of grains during storage, use of fungicides and planting of improved variety of seeds;*

*CONFIDENT THAT the prevention of mycotoxin contamination shall address the four pillars of integrated mycotoxin contamination management that involves knowledge on 1) prevention, 2) avoiding (cultural and breeding for resistance), 3) monitoring and predicting (biological, mechanical, physiological) and 4) Interventions and suppression using chemicals;*

*COGNISANT THAT in order to address the challenges of mycotoxin contamination experienced in northern Uganda, there is a need for collective will and commitment from different stakeholders, including government agencies, politicians, religious and cultural leaders, farmers, small- and large-scale traders, health and agricultural and extension services, as well as development partners;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by this Parliament that the Government:*

1. *Prioritises support towards post-harvest handling and management.*
2. *Provides support to farmers in northern Uganda and the country at large to exercise good agricultural practices, especially to practice prevention of mycotoxins at pre- and post-harvest level.*
3. *Provides support to Gulu University Multifunctional Research Laboratory to scale up mycotoxin testing, surveillance, dissemination and measures to reduce the burden of mycotoxins and associated implications.*

4. *Strengthens the regulatory framework on the quality of food in line with safety and health standards.”*

I beg to move, Madam Speaker. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Is it seconded? *(Members rose)* It is seconded by Dr Abed, *Afande*, the Member from Dokolo, Hon. Akol, Hon. Oboth – and the whole House. Would you like to speak to your motion?

**MR OJARA MAPENDUZI:** Madam Speaker, I am grateful that this Parliament is in full recognition of the dangers of mycotoxin contamination. Recently, in this same House, there were discussions on goods that had been impounded in South Sudan, when our traders went to conduct business. These impounded goods were majorly because of mycotoxin contamination.

As the scientists have indicated, the contamination leads to several very harmful effects. Part of the reason we have a very high prevalence rate of Hepatitis B in Northern Uganda and the country - and just to give a breakdown - scientists are indicating that, currently, Northern Uganda alone has Hepatitis B prevalence rate of between six and 12 per cent. Acholi subregion alone stands at between 18.5 and 23.9 per cent. Uganda, as a country generally, stands at about 4.3 per cent. This is serious and so we need to take immediate intervention.

We are also aware that, globally, 78 per cent of liver cancer cases are majorly secondary or related to Hepatitis B. I, therefore, plead with this House that the Government takes this matter very seriously, especially for the farmers who are struggling.

We are talking about scaling up productivity and production and fighting poverty, but we cannot do much unless we begin to put in place the things that would enhance the farmers to productively get involved in these agricultural activities.

I thank you for recognising that this is a matter that needs urgent attention. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Akol?

3.52

**DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City):** Madam Speaker, I appreciate -

**THE SPEAKER:** Are you seconding the motion? If you are seconding it, just say so. You will second the motion after Hon. Akol's submission.

3.52

**MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru):** Madam Speaker, I rise to second the motion with an amendment that it should cover the whole country. This problem involves what we eat. Just yesterday, but one - if we have been reading - there were trucks that Uganda Bureau of Standards was tracking and that they were going to South Sudan.

Obviously, this food that has been contaminated - that we are talking about - does not majorly come from Northern Uganda. Some of it comes from Eastern Uganda, Central Uganda and Western Uganda.

We are generally talking about cancer, not only liver cancer. If you look at the problem of cancer in Uganda now, there is a high possibility that we need to increase the implementation to ensure we control it.

Even in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, we had a problem with our neighbour, Kenya; they stopped grains from Uganda from crossing into Kenya. Look at what has happened recently, especially the one of South Sudan, and compare South Sudan to Uganda - the standard we have come from. This is a young nation, trying to control food consumption in their country. If we cannot do that as Uganda - all of us eat grains on a daily basis and the effect is on all of us. I think this is the right time for the Government to take serious action over what we eat.

This does not only affect human beings, but also animals. We eat animals that eat the same grains which are affected. Therefore, I request Members to support this motion. We need to work hard, as Parliament and country, to solve this particular problem. Thank you very much.

3.54

**DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to second the motion. The issue of mycotoxins in the foods in this country is serious. There are many types of mycotoxins; aflatoxin is one of them. These aflatoxins, apart from damaging the liver and many other organs of the body, also curtail the synthesis of proteins. They also affect the immunity of the receivers.

They are very dangerous not only to the humans but also to the animals - and human beings end up consuming the animal products and becoming very susceptible. I support the motion that the Government of Uganda pays attention to mycotoxins. *(Applause)*

As we talk about the food safety issues, I want to remind this Parliament that in the last planting season, under your able leadership, you guided this Parliament and we directed the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to provide Shs 4 billion for seeds for the farmers.

Now that the agriculture minister is here and the rains have come, this Parliament should be assured whether the seeds are ready for our constituencies or not. That is one way through which this Parliament and the Government can secure food security for our people. Our people are waiting and they are very proud of you, Madam Speaker. They always listen; even last season, they listened. They said: "Our Speaker is always concerned about the issues that affect us." *(Applause)*

I implore you, Madam Speaker, that since the agriculture and finance ministers are here, they should appraise this Parliament whether the seeds are ready for this season or not.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Dr Abed. Honourable members, we are not going to take time on this motion. Dr Bhoka? Is it Dr Bhoka or Dr Aabuka?

3.57

**DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi):** I am Dr Bhoka –

**THE SPEAKER:** I know all your names. I am saying we start with Dr Bhoka and then have Dr Aabuka.

**DR BHOKA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity to support the motion. I want to start by clarifying between aflatoxin, mycotoxin and Hepatitis B. Hepatitis B is a viral infection so the record should be corrected. It is not a mycotoxin.

Having mentioned that, this issue has come to the august House because of trade but the matter at hand has a public health connotation. This is why the World Health Organisation is concerned about it. It is an issue that affects the health and well-being of our citizens.

I pray that the Ministry of Health be brought on board in this. We need, as a country, to look into our legal and regulatory framework related to drugs and food toxicity assessment and surveillance.

Secondly, we need to create awareness in our communities about the health dangers of mycotoxins and aflatoxins, how to prevent and detect them and how to provide appropriate treatment and care. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, Dr Bhoka. Honourable members, we will bring the Ministry of Health into this. We are going to refer this motion to the committee because the issues that are being raised are very important. We will not only limit it to Northern Uganda.

4.00

**DR ANTHONY OKULLO (NRM, Lamwo County, Lamwo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to support the motion with amendments. The agricultural sector engages

almost all Ugandans in profitable activities. So, this is a very important topic.

The motion addresses just a small part of a very big problem; the problem of poor storage which results in mycotoxins. What we need as a country is what other rival countries like Kenya and Tanzania are doing. They have a whole board or authority on cereals-

**THE SPEAKER:** Government Chief Whip, can we have some order around there?

**DR OKULLO:** We need a national cereals and other produce board and authority where issues of aflatoxins, grading of produce and standards can be handled in a department.

Tanzania and Kenya have boards; they have silos all over the regions for storing and grading produce. We had a Produce Marketing Board in this country; I no longer see it. This is part of the problem. So, let us not just zero on aflatoxins which is a small portion of a big problem of agricultural produce which is not handled properly.

My prayer is that we wait and listen to my proposal in my Private Member's Bill, that the country takes into account forming a board or a cereals' board just like the other countries which we are rivalling with.

I am in the process of doing that. Therefore, I beg the House to give me an opportunity to-

**THE SPEAKER:** Doctor, we shall not wait for your Bill. The motion is seeking to prioritise the intervention. Even when you have the Bill, we shall always seek the Government to priorities what is being said. So, come with your Bill - that is okay.

**DR OKULLO:** Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the issue being raised is very important. It affects health; much as they say it affects business, most importantly, it affects health of our people.



We need to carry out a national evaluation together with the stakeholders, on food safety. We also need to see the post-harvest handling.

We also need to look at the existing safeguards we have and see how best we can improve them and what needs to be done.

Based on that, I do not think this House can get for us all that within a minute. We will hear from the minister. Honourable minister, give us information on this, the seeds and the plan you have for the hoes.

4.04

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Mr Frank Tumwebaze):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank Hon. Mapenduzi for the motion. I support it 100 per cent.

Madam Speaker, you have guided that you want the relevant committee to study it; we shall fully participate. The only information I want to give to the House, already the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is aware.

The National Agriculture Research Organization (NARO) did an innovation. Madam Speaker, mycotoxins produce aflatoxins, which affect our food. The good news is that NARO produced a solution called Aflasafe for aflatoxins but they have suffered inadequate funding to multiply and produce it.

I pray that when you go to interact with the committee, invite us and we lead NARO to come with this solution to explain how it will cure the problem. Otherwise, I would like to thank our scientists because they are working.

on the seeds, Madam Speaker, when we work together, we all win. I am ready to work with you; the way we did to get the seeds.

On the hoes, we can still work together the way we work together, and we can all win. *(Laughter)* Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the minister is ready to work with the House to get seeds and the hoes.

I am referring this motion to the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, and the Committee on Health and report back in two months' time. Yes?

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have a serious matter. The point of order I am raising is: I have been here with Hon. Frank Tumwebaze as an honourable member and now as a minister. He is known for dressing decently but recently, people have degenerated - I know there is Mandela attire, but the smart Frank Tumwebaze is not the one here appearing casually; he is dressed in evening wear and some of us cannot even see him.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, Hon. Frank Tumwebaze is dressed in a Mandela shirt; a multi-million Mandela shirt. He is actually smarter than you. *(Laughter)*.

Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, you were noncommittal. Much as we are defending you on being smart - the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has come back - you were noncommittal yet it is time for planting so we want seeds in our constituencies. Actually, the people in the minister's constituency in Kabale need seeds more than any one.

The Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries together with the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, we need seeds. If you tell us that you are coming back to report in two days, we can wait. Otherwise, what we want is seeds.

Hon. Henry Musasizi, have you seen how important you are? We had to wait for you to come back.

4.08

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES)**

**(Mr Henry Musasizi):** Madam Speaker, we are going to sit with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, look into the matter and report back to the House.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Report back on Thursday. *(Applause)* Next item. Yes, procedure.

**MR MAYANJA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Some time back, I raised a matter concerning fake agricultural inputs and you directed Minister Rwamirama to bring a statement concerning the agricultural inputs.

My farmers in Nakaseke are suffering with fake fertilisers and pesticides. Wouldn't it be procedurally right, as the minister of –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ababiku, I want you to contribute to the next item. Come back because that is an issues of presidential affairs.

**MR MAYANJA:** Madam Speaker, wouldn't it be procedurally right for the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries who is here to bring a statement concerning these fake agricultural inputs? You directed some time back that he should bring this report in two months, but it is almost six months and this report has not been brought to the Floor of Parliament. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Your Excellency, the Vice President, you are welcome. You have come at the right time when we are going to discuss your issues of thanking the President. Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries?

4.12

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES**

**(Mr Frank Tumwebaze):** Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, we can bring a paper on the efforts we are making in trying to control

the fake acaricides and the challenges we are facing. It is largely an issue of sensitisation and enforcement.

However, we can present a statement in about a week's time, with your permission. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let us get a statement to that effect. Can we go to the next item?

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF  
PARLIAMENT TO APPRECIATE HIS  
EXCELLENCY THE PRESIDENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA FOR THE  
CLEAR AND PRECISE EXPOSITION OF  
GOVERNMENT POLICY CONTAINED  
IN THE STATE OF THE NATION  
ADDRESS TO THE PARLIAMENT OF THE  
REPUBLIC OF UGANDA ON  
WEDNESDAY, 7 JUNE 2023.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this motion was debated from 4 – 6 July 2023. In the debate, we had salient issues. These are: the need to boost household productivity for the greater self-sustainability and commercialisation of agriculture, value addition in agriculture to boost market competitiveness, progressive growth of the service sector and the SMEs, the national unity as a catalyst for national development, the need for a more robust and infrastructure development, the need to continue attracting foreign direct investment, the fight against terrorism through building internal security capacity and regional and multilateral collaboration, the need to devote more resources to scale up the Parish Development Model, the need to improve on the social service delivery, the need to pacify Democratic Republic of Congo and the need for climate change.

In furtherance to Rule 53(1) of the Rules of Procedure, the Leader of the Opposition is supposed to give a rebuttal on what was discussed. Now, we are going to get a rebuttal from the Leader of the Opposition. If any of you is willing to respond or not agree with what the Leader of the Opposition will say, you will still be given some little time and then

we put the question. Today, we must finish that motion. Leader of the Opposition?

We have been able to wait because the Leader of the Opposition requested for more time. This is why we had to come in today.

4.14

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Much obliged. Madam Speaker, protect me from the menacing eyes of Hon. Oboth. He is looking at me and trying to intimidate me this afternoon. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Order!

**MR OBOTH:** Madam Speaker, is it in order for the Leader of the Opposition to oppose the way God created me handsomely? *(Laughter)* I know he opposes everything, but must he oppose the wonderful handsome face of Hon. Oboth? *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Of course, the most handsome person in the whole of Eastern Uganda is Hon. Oboth. So, everybody will always admire him. He is not in order.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, I actually concede. I was looking at him admirably and then he menacingly looked at me. This is why I raised it to your attention. I thank you for your kind indulgence.

This particular response –

**MR ENOS ASHIMWE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, your report is not uploaded. So, we do not know how we are going to follow you without a soft copy of the report.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, this document was received in the Office of the Clerk on the 13<sup>th</sup> of this month so it should have been uploaded a generation ago. *(Laughter)* If it is not uploaded, then we need to find out why. It was long received and I apologise to the Member if it is not there, but it was really brought to the attention of officialdom for uploading.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, as we wait to confirm, there is a network problem. The Leader of the Opposition can continue reading his report.

**MR MPUUGA:** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. Allow me to share a copy with the Rt Hon. Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Also share with the Vice President.

**MR MPUUGA:** ... and the Rt Hon. the Vice President.

**THE SPEAKER:** She is not the Rt Hon. Vice President; she is Her Excellency.

**MR MPUUGA:** I beg your pardon, Madam Speaker. Your Excellency, I apologise. Do not pick the insinuations of Hon. Oboth again. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, LOP. - No, he is going to make a summary of whatever he is presenting. Just like I made a summary of what you presented, he is also going to make a summary.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, the President of the Republic spoke for half a day; I do not need half an hour *-(Laughter)-* to make my response. So, I invite Members to exercise patience and restraint to give the views of five million voters that voted with me.

On the 7<sup>th</sup> of June this year, the President delivered the 2023 State-of-the-Nation Address, to which I am enjoined to respond, under Rule 53 of our Rules of Procedure.

While the State-of-the-Nation Address is a constitutional obligation and yearly tradition detailing the status of the country, and unveiling the Government's agenda for the coming year, it is rather unfortunate that in many respects, we refer to it as a ritual of sorts.

We, therefore, indisputably express our disappointment that for a country that has been hollowed out by gross abuse of human rights

over the last couple of years, engrossed in runaway corruption, a general decline in the standard of living and malfeasance, no concrete policy direction to address the pressing needs of the citizenry, was presented. A crisis of this nature demands urgent action, and sound leadership and direction.

On 31 March 2023, we presented at the Opposition Budget Conference themed: “Rethinking Uganda’s Economy: A Human Rights Approach”, in which we outlined our key budget priorities and policy alternatives.

I wish to appraise this House that I have since been on the trail of a countrywide oversight, monitoring the extent of implementation of key Government programmes, as mandated of me by the Constitution and our Rules of Procedure. I will, at an opportune moment, exhaustively report to this House on my key findings.

In the same light, Madam Speaker, more in doing right than departing from the arbitrary norm, this year, the Opposition in Parliament opts to respond by highlighting the prevailing state of affairs, vis-à-vis what the President presented. Therefore, the LOP’s response has taken a human rights-based approach to the nation’s state of affairs and development.

We are guided by the unquestionable truth that human rights embody the key values of freedom, fairness, dignity, equality and respect. They are valid, as they guarantee freedom of choice and expression, and the rights to basic needs necessary for full development and enjoyment of rights, including education, water, sanitation, food, health and housing. They are an important means of protection for us all, especially those who may face abuse, neglect and isolation by people or entities that are more powerful.

Furthermore, human rights inform the relationship that exists between individuals and their governments, distinguishing between every human being, and governmental and non-governmental actors obligated to respect, protect and fulfill these rights.

Sadly, Madam Speaker, the sitting Government has failed to address the pressing needs of our society, which ultimately tantamount to the abuse of human rights and fundamental freedoms which include the right to decide who shall govern the people of Uganda and how they should be governed - That is through regular, free and fair elections of their representatives.

On a valid and current note, the ugly reality of malpractice in the recent by-election in Oyam North is still fresh in our minds, as it is disturbing. This is in light of the fact that our kin in the neighbourhood in Omoro, just a year ago, are still aghast of how the military could shamelessly visit violence on the unarmed voters at Lalogi, just to ensure that a candidate with sympathy from the powers that be wins an election to replace a noble man –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, please check. It is uploaded under statements. You can continue.

**MR MPUUGA:** ...that a man favoured wins to replace a noble man, the Rt Hon. Speaker. The script that the Government has recurrently read from has formed the cast to cast a grim theatre in Kayunga and recently in Bukedea.

The ghastly stain on the state of democracy undermines the principle that holding regular, free and fair elections is the hallmark of building a democratic society, especially that we feature very embarrassingly on this front as a country. It is concrete proof of the failure by the Government to offer and manage the basics of an election and a vote of no confidence in the Government and its rhetoric that democracy can be a principle of reference in Uganda.

The wanton electoral irregularities like ballot stuffing, voter bribery and use of force, and intimidation by security operatives and other government officials exhibit a high degree of primitivism. We, therefore, re-emphasise the need for constitutional and electoral reforms targeted at enhancing democracy, rule of law and constitutionalism in the country.

It is, therefore, our considered belief and conviction that the policy platform of the nation, at any single moment, should aspire to uphold stellar standards of conformity to globally acceptable levels of human rights. This is if we are to be true to the fact that we are a signatory to a plethora of international instruments on human rights, where we should be seen to walk the talk.

Madam Speaker, I will briefly outline, in the next moment, our key observations and departures, including concurrences on a few issues obtaining to the state of the nation.

#### The right to life

Madam Speaker, the right to life is a fundamental right, whereby without it, the enjoyment of other rights is not possible. As a minimum, the right to life imposes upon states the duty to abstain from arbitrarily killing individuals under their jurisdiction. The paradigm violations of the right to life are the extra-judicial executions understood as killings that are committed, condoned or acquiesced by governments.

We are disheartened by the number of people who have been killed under the watch of the State. I will list some of the killings that have remained unaccounted for and uninvestigated, yet the government operatives had a direct link to these atrocities.

We shall not relent in reminding ourselves and demanding a report on the infamous November 2020 shootings, where over 54 people lost their lives, scores were maimed and are still nursing grave injuries without any support from the Government. Even the promised selective compensation to the victims and their families has never materialised.

Madam Speaker, we remember the President saying the victims have classifications. There are those that are innocent who will be compensated. There are those that were directly involved; he gave them a description that does not require to be on our record. Nothing like compensation has ever materialised, meaning that it was political rhetoric.

Additionally, many citizens were killed and others injured while on the campaign trail for the NUP Party President, as we recollect, who was contesting for the presidency in 2021. I have listed those who were killed, starting with his bodyguard, Senteza Kalibbala, who was buried in my constituency. He was killed in broad daylight at Busega.

We actually have, on record, a military vehicle that knocked him deliberately. No investigation, no report. He is somebody's son and somebody's father. Michael Kalinda, Ritah Nabukenya, Daniel Kyeyune, Ibrahim Mutaasa, Willy Kayondo, Sophie Kusasira, Baker Kato, Shot from Namulanda, Martin Uwekiche, Tsubira Elijah, Mukiibi Elijah of Luweero, Umaru Ssemakula of Entebbe, Katweli Kimuli of Seeta, Musisi Allan of Mukono, Peter Mwanje of Nansana, Mugerwa William of Wankulukuku, Sophie of Obongi, Alioni Nobert of Obongi, Fungaroo Moro of Obongi, Shabba Shafiq of Obongi, Akim Abile of Obongi, deliberately drowned by the army on 15 January 2021. No investigation, no report. Does the family have information on the participants? Nothing. These are records on our faces. The President ought to have spoken about these violations and offered the nation hope. He was mute. Is he an accomplice or not aware?

Madam Speaker, under a human rights compliant state, the obligation to respect the right to life goes beyond straining and refraining from intentional and unlawful deprivation of life. The State must take appropriate steps to safeguard the lives of those within its jurisdiction. This includes measures aimed at controlling and limiting the circumstances in which State agents may use firearms to, in some cases, the provision of some commodities to keep one alive.

It was last year that thousands starved to death in Karamoja. The relief purportedly advanced to them was nothing but dummies and superficial. Up to now, families in Karamoja are still starving. That is a denial of a right to life. The State has a duty to the people of Karamoja to have food.

In another dimension, it should be noted that enforced disappearances have no place in countries where the State upholds the right to life. It is hard to discern that for three years now, the Government has failed to account for citizens abducted by security operatives moving in drones on different dates between 2019 and 2021. We have made statements here, as you recollect, at your permission and elsewhere.

We have secured reads of *habeas corpus* against security agencies. I have repeatedly followed this matter with the Prime Minister, the Minister for Security and the Minister Defence and Veteran Affairs but regrettably, their responses are just explanations but of no consequence.

Under normal circumstances, speedy investigations would have been conducted into these disappearances but alas! we are fed on hollow undertakings by the Executive while our people continue disappearing mysteriously.

On record again, the following are missing persons under this regime: Kibalama John Bosco was abducted from Kanyanya on 3 June 2021. The Prime Minister of the Republic informed the country that she knows where Kibalama is. It is four years since his disappearance. With your permission, we played a record of her speech in Parliament here, committing knowledge of the whereabouts of Kibalama.

I want to inform this House that the Prime Minister of the Republic has knowledge of the whereabouts of Mr Kibalama. The family and three children want to see their father and the wife wants to see her husband. I hope the Prime Minister, from Kigali, will come and take us where Kibalama is. It was her commitment that she knows where Kibalama is.

Two, Ssemuddu Micheal was abducted from Kasubi on 28 November 2020, Damulira John from Kisekka Market on 21 December 2020. Mbabazi Moses from Kisekka Market on 26 November 2020, Nalumoso Vincent from Bugolobi on 1 December 2020, Lukwago Martin from Bugolobi on 3 November 2020,

Kanatta Mohammed from Mukono on 23 December 2020.

For the record, Kanatta Mohammed was one of the personal assistants of the Hon. Kiwanuka Abdullah. He is taking care of the family and educating the children of Kanatta since 2020. He disappeared up to now.

Ssempijja Yuda was abducted from Mukono on 19 December 2020, Musisi Mbowa from Kisenyi on 18 December 2020, Kirya Peter from Nansana on 1 December 2020, Wangolo Shafiq from Nansana on 3 December 2020, Zimula Dennis from Nansana on 25 November 2020, Luwemba Mustafa from Nansana on 19 November 2020, Mubiru Hassan from Kawaala on 20 November 2020, Ssesaazi Isma from Makindye on 19 November 2020, Kisembo Godfrey from Mubende town on 12 February 2021, George Kasumba from Kyotera on 19 January 2021, Baguma Joseph from Kyebando in December 2020.

I was in Kyotera three weeks ago and the family raised this matter of the disappearance of their son with me. Nobody has ever visited them from the Government for an explanation, neither the police for information. These are very harrowing situations. You expect the Head of State in this kind of - because the Head of State on the State-of-the-Nation Address has space for assurance of victims and assurance of investigation - at least to have an investigation.

The right to freedom from torture, inhumane and degrading treatment

Article 24 of the Constitution of Uganda prohibits torture, cruel, inhumane, degrading treatment, and punishment. This is one of the rights that are absolute and may not be subject to any exemption even in times of war or emergency.

Article 44(a) of the Constitution provides for non-derogable delegation of the right of freedom from torture and cruel, inhumane or degrading treatment or punishment thus making this fundamental right absolute. The absolute prohibition of torture is set out in several international human rights treaties, for

instance, the UN Convention against Torture which Uganda ratified in 1986.

The African Centre for Treatment and Rehabilitation of Torture Victims issued a report in 2021 indicating that they registered more than 1,000 cases of torture and violence in Uganda, out of which 371 were committed by the Uganda People's Defence Forces and 126 by the police.

Acts of torture and degrading treatment have continued to surface, mostly perpetrated by security machinery. Police and the military repeatedly employ torture against political opponents of the Government in power. Ordinary citizens are accused of supporting rebel groups as well as suspected common criminals. Victims are usually severely beaten with rifle butts, sticks, electrical cables, and other objects.

According to the Uganda Human Rights Commission, in their 25<sup>th</sup> annual report, violation of freedom from torture topped human rights abuses across the country at 36 per cent of all complaints received. I would like to draw our attention to the horrid incident that happened at Sheikh Kamoga's residence, which we all saw in early June 2023. Police officers were captured on video indiscriminately beating up and torturing teenagers who were suspected to be attending radicalisation classes. They were suspects beaten, dehumanised, and tortured. Somehow life goes on in Uganda.

Comrades, women and Members of Parliament were unimaginably manhandled outside this building while they peacefully marched towards the Ministry of Internal Affairs following the brutal foiling of Women's Day celebrations.

Madam Speaker, we thank you for the way you handled that and I hope it was a lesson to all, and sundry in dealing with basic rights of citizens, especially leaders.

iii) The right to due process – and I will quote Psalms 82: 3-4: “3 *Defend the poor and the fatherless. Do justice to the poor and afflicted*

*and needy...deliver the poor and the needy. Free them from the hands of the wicked.*”

I will comment on the Judiciary's role in advancing social justice in that area or other causes for public good. Courts of law, being the last bastion of human rights, have a task to make basic human rights meaningful to the deprived and vulnerable sections of the community.

I will quote the words of Prof. Joe Oloka-Onyango in his book titled: “When *Courts Do Politics: Public Interest Law and Litigation in East Africa*” where he stated thus: “*In matters regarding social justice, courts must decide whether to pursue a cause known as judicial activism or hold themselves back in a posture of its opposite, otherwise known as judicial restraint.*”

In most cases, Madam Speaker, our courts of law have opted for restraint by either denying the citizens the right to a fair trial or the right to an effective remedy. We have witnessed situations where citizens are unjustifiably denied bail, have had prolonged pre-trial detentions and case backlogs. In worst-case scenarios, some cases are dismissed on technicalities.

Wholesomely, the conduct of the Judiciary has essentially rendered justice of little use. In my view, a citizen whose constitutional rights are rigidly trampled upon must not be turned away from the court by procedural hiccups. Once a complaint is arguable, a way must be found to accommodate him or her so that other citizens become knowledgeable of their rights. We need a bold and courageous Judiciary to take the challenges of public interest litigation and, through judicial activism, give vitality to the Constitution and meaning to human rights.

Last year, Madam Speaker, I brought to the attention of the House, the internal bickering and controversies in the Judiciary, which have disfigured the expectations of the quality of justice. The situation has not changed for the better. To date, there are still apparent mistreatments of some judicial officers and staff.

These controversies have not only violated victims' rights, but also preoccupied the Judiciary and deflected it from attending to its core mandate. My clarion call to the Judiciary is to rise to the occasion and uphold the right to due process in its full sense.

#### Freedom of expression and media freedom

Madam Speaker, I would like to quote the former and late UN Secretary-General, Kofi Annan, who in 1999, recognised the role of free media in development by stating thus: *"Press freedom is a cornerstone of human rights. It holds governments responsible for their acts, and serves as a warning to all, that impunity is an illusion. It advances knowledge and understanding, within and between countries. It helps peoples everywhere appreciate what unites us, and not what divides us."*

Madam Speaker, it is our observation that in Uganda, there are various legal and extra-legal mechanisms that restrict media freedom against national, regional and international protocols on the freedom of expression. Uganda's legal and policy framework springs from Article 29(1)(a) of the Constitution, which says, *"(1) Every person shall have the right to—*

*(a) freedom of speech and expression, which shall include freedom of the press and other media."*

The textual framework of the said constitutional provision was drawn from the international legal instruments to which Uganda is a signatory, vide: The Universal Declaration of Human Rights; The International Covenant on Civil and Political Rights; The Convention against Torture and other forms of Cruel, Inhumane and Degrading Treatment; as well as the African Charter on Human and People's Rights.

The practical application of the right of expression and media freedoms has been subjected to restrictions and limitations.

Madam Speaker, that said, we, as the opposition, in this Session, will continue defending and

promoting freedom of expression and media freedom through advocacy on different fora, legal reforms that we intend to propose and capacity building of stakeholders to uphold media freedom as a tenet of our civilisation.

#### The rights relating to labour

Article 23 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights sets out the right to work, the right to equal pay for equal work and just and favourable enumeration. Article 24 provides that everyone has the right to rest and leisure, reasonable limitations of working hours as well as periodic holidays with pay.

Articles 6(a) and (a) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights developed these rights further with regard to the right to work and its essential crucially, just favourable conditions of work.

I will be specific on more pressing issues to our citizens, Madam Speaker. The issue of minimum wage has remained on the fence for a long time. The Government, particularly, the President, has quite vocally expressed hesitancy and even aversion towards the call for a minimum wage.

Madam Speaker, it is imperative for us to take the lead in awakening the debate on the minimum wage to address the plight of workers in this country. Let us not go down in history as the Parliament that remained oblivious and aloof to this critical challenge facing the country's labour force.

Secondly, it is imprudent for us to pass laws just for record purposes. Our citizens are not working in safe and healthy conditions as envisaged under the Occupational Safety and Health Act, 2006. The Government has abdicated its role of inspecting workplaces on matters concerning occupational safety and health, welfare and working environment.

The citizens are working under horrible conditions and beyond reasonable working hours, which has significantly undermined their right to a quality life. It is not *Uhuru* even



for those who work beyond our borders – like we have witnessed in the various statements by people working abroad.

#### Tight to a clean and healthy environment

Madam Speaker, the United Nations recognises access to a safe, clean, healthy and sustainable environment as a fundamental human right. Unfortunately, in Uganda, poor sanitation and hygiene as well as unequal access to safe drinking water, have put millions of people at the risk of exposure to waterborne diseases and death. Over-exploitation of our natural resources is increasingly leading to environmental degradation and contributing to reduced ecosystem services and disasters.

The 2020 World Bank Climate Risk Profile for Uganda indicates that an average of 200,000 Ugandans is affected each year, by environmental-related disasters. The country has continued to experience destructive floods whose effects have been visible in low-lying areas, especially in degraded wetland areas; we all saw what happened in Katonga and other places.

The Government has formulated a number of policies to regulate land use and the impact of human activities on the environment. However, the alarming rate at which natural resources are being depleted shows that these laws and policies are not enforced effectively. It is regrettable that the Government continues to selectively apply the said laws against the poor people and those without connections, while sparing and protecting the rich who encroach on tracts of wetlands and forests across the country with impunity.

We have had debates about rice growers – the rich freely growing rice, while the poor must leave the wetlands. So, the laws are being applied inequitably and eventually affecting the environment.

#### Right to health

Madam Speaker, health is both a human right in itself and an essential means for the realisation of other human rights.

Unfortunately, in Uganda the rot in our healthcare system deteriorates every day. It is characterised by very low wages for health workers, shortage of health workers, inadequate supplies of medicines, sundries and essential equipment in Government facilities; insufficient hospital beds and poor accessibility to health facilities.

Madam Speaker, I could have spoken more about this; I have a big report on my oversight visits to Government health facilities. We have had the warning by health workers of an impending strike in 15 days. I actually thought that a serious Government would have made a report to Parliament about this warning. But, of course, Government is dozing on duty. The poor will suffer when the strike, announced 15 days ahead, happens.

#### The right to education

Article 30 of the Constitution of Uganda guarantees all persons the right to education and Article 34(2) of the same law enshrines the child's right to basic education.

The National Objective and Directive Principles of State Policy, especially Policy XXVIII, obligates the State to provide free and compulsory basic education and to take measures to ensure that every citizen can attain the highest standard of education possible.

Despite this mandate, the country continues to be plagued with a myriad of challenges. The education sector grapples with high levels of teacher and pupil student absenteeism, weak school level management structures, inadequate learning materials, understaffing, overcrowded classrooms and the lack of accommodation for teachers.

Madam Speaker, I have made an inquest with my team on this sector. We are going to provide an independent report on the education sector. I do not know whether my constituency is unlucky, and the honourable Members come from privileged constituencies; if we do not wake up about education, I want to assure the House, we are in dire straits.

In this century, you find pupils sitting on logs and huge stones in classrooms! Schools without toilets. Teachers without toilets. Schools in mud-and-wattle yet they are Government-aided schools. Government-aided schools without teachers. I was in Buvuma; a Government-aided primary school there has one teacher.

The right to property

You can now see why I listened to the President but never heard him –

**THE SPEAKER:** I am aware that you listened on radio because you were not at Kololo.

**MR MPUUGA:** Yes, I listened but never heard –

**THE SPEAKER:** Maybe the Leader of the Opposition's ears had problems because if you did not hear yet you listened; it may be negative but at least you heard. Yes, Hon. Stephen Mugole?

**MR MUGOLE:** Point of order. Respectfully, the Leader of the Opposition - I wonder whether you would be in order to say you did not hear, yet you are here responding. What are you responding to? Why would you respond to what you did not hear? So, Madam Speaker, is he in order to even respond to what he did not hear?

**THE SPEAKER:** That is why I am asking my Clerk, maybe, to send my Leader of the Opposition to an ENT for check-up. At least I am aware he responded and has written a very good report, and I believe he has been able to do that after understanding what was said.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, I went to Kyamagana Boys Primary School in Masaka. My language teacher was Mr Lubowa Ssebowa. I blame him for my nature of expression, and I apologise to the honourable colleague on behalf of my teacher. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we move on?

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, I was talking about the right to property, and you know, at the beginning I said that I am basing my response on human rights, education, health and property. So, I am trying to make a difference the way we present this, not as cram work, but as a real response to the issues that are obtained.

Madam Speaker, Article 26 of the Constitution of Uganda guarantees the right of every person to own property, either individually or in association with others. Unfortunately, for the past two decades, land grabbing disputes apparent in mass and violent evictions, ceaseless and long-court cases have occasioned land-conflict-related murders, leading to devastating consequences for our country.

Madam Speaker, without reading verbatim my entire text on this subject, one of the issues we have demanded here severally is for Government to table the Justice Bamugemereire Report on the Land Inquiry Commission, that really exposed a very worrying relationship between Government officials, security personnel, politicians and the general public. The failure to make this report public, for some of us, is very telling. The evictions and land grabbing go on unencumbered yet there is a Government.

Madam Speaker, if you gave each Member 10 minutes to speak about land grabbing and who is doing it in their constituencies, the country would understand the gravity of the problem. Somehow, we the powerful have descended on the poor, grabbing everything at their disposal.

I was in Luweero. I had visited a sub-county and a military officer had terrorised a village and the entire community was fleeing for their lives. For the record, the village is called Manyama in Luweero. I hope when I reported that, there was a follow-up.

The women reported that this military officer had brought rascals that were raping them and their children –*(Interjections)*- yes, they were on record on television. They even mentioned names. He only wanted one thing: they must

leave the village for him and his cattle. He had let his cattle feed on their crops and there was uproar in the entire community. That community is represented by Hon. Ssekitoleko –

**THE SPEAKER:** Did they give you the name of the military officer?

**MR MPUUGA:** Yes.

**THE SPEAKER:** Did you present it? If you do not bring out the person, they will think that it is Gen. Kavuma yet he is a very good person.; or Gen. Elweru *-(Laughter)-* yes, so, you need to put this on record that it was so and so and not the whole army.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, I am presenting a full statement to Parliament on land grabbing and who is doing it - on notice. You will hear what is in Mukono. A military officer again bought land, sold to citizens and then evicted them; it is really despicable. I am going to make a full presentation on that, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please do. At least for now, it is not our generals who are here.

**MR MPUUGA:** No! If it were one of them, I would have mentioned them. I know each one of them.

#### 9. Protection of the vulnerable groups

Madam Speaker, there is need to urgently strengthen the capacity of the most vulnerable people to access justice and claim their rights as well as ensuring that the State is obliged to perform its attendant duties and obligations in human rights protection, gender equality, rule of law, and a just society for everyone.

The Government is mandated, under Chapter 4, Articles 31 to 40, and Chapter 16, Article 246 of the Constitution, to protect and promote the rights of the vulnerable population, to address gender inequalities, to ensure cultural growth, labour and employment, as well as community mobilisation and empowerment.

It is imperative for the State to strengthen human capital development, community mobilisation, and improve governance through promoting the rights of vulnerable persons. The acknowledgement of this role has, however, not been supported by adequate Government priorities in resource allocation over the years. The gender sector remains among the least funded.

Without proper resources for this sector, the country runs the risk of achieving superficial development that increases existing inequalities and excludes the most vulnerable and marginalised citizens.

It is essential that no citizen is left behind as the country realises this vision. This should be done through ensuring a significant proportion of the labour force transitioning into gainful employment and enterprise development.

The Government has issued a budget call circular and has banned any entity from recruiting yet in the meantime, the President said that the economy will grow between 4 and 6 per cent, but it cannot create any single job. What a contradiction! A growing economy cannot create a single job. So, are we speaking the truth or simply bluffing the population?

I have briefly titled the rights of refugees. The members will read that. I will also skip the right to adequate standard of living and ask Members to go through it. There is also slum growth and homelessness.

The capacity of Local Governments to respond to disasters

Madam Speaker, this is one of the major challenges. Numerous disaster occurrences have been recorded across the country over the past years. The response only speaks volumes on Uganda's capacity to contain disasters on even basic magnitudes without huge losses and fatalities.

Massive damage to both public and private property has been witnessed with such obvious responses such as relief taking ages to get to the

victims. Shamelessly, Government ministers have brought statements indicating that the situation was under control when it was not. Instead, it has been UNICEF and Uganda Red Cross making critical interventions. The Government is either late or feeding the population on propaganda.

While the National Policy for Disaster Preparedness and Management presents holistic institutional structure for disaster preparedness, therein practice exists gaps in coordination that hinder successful disaster preparedness and response. The disconnect is visible between OPM and the local Government.

Madam Speaker, I did ask this House last week that we operationalise the provisions of Section 26 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 (as amended) to operationalise the emergency fund, which does not expire, and expect the Government, in the next financial year, to make provision for it so that we do not run to the Prime Minister all the time for small things - blankets, cassava, firewood, cups. That should be for local governments. Just imagine my sister from Katakwi looking for the Prime Minister to give mugs to mothers to feed their children. Local governments must be empowered to handle those small things and make the Government functional. *(Applause)* For instance, when people want basins or tarpaulins, they have to look for the Prime Minister? No, that is not the way governments are run.

The collapse of decentralisation as we know it

Madam Speaker, the impetus for fostering decentralisation service delivery ensues from the perceived inefficiencies associated with centralisation.

Our concern is that the Government has stripped this provision under the carpet in favour of recentralisation. The current recentralisation of revenue collection has derailed service delivery in local governments such as garbage collection, waste disposal and management, road maintenance, among others. This stance has stripped local governments of authority

over their resources leading to poor service delivery.

Madam Speaker, we have spoken about this; I am waiting for a Government minister or the Prime Minister to come and explain to Parliament why the NRM government is recentralising in violation of the Constitution. Why are they recalling local government powers so that the Minister of Local Government attempts to go to Nyendo to collect garbage on behalf of Government? The taxpayers in Nyendo remit their taxes to Kampala and the Hon. Musasizi holds on to their money awaiting for the city to decay and then send some small trinkets to them. So, what are we up to?

I know most of the Members here and their local governments are suffering silently. On this side, we are going to suffer while crying out and making noise until the constitutional obligation of running Government under decentralisation is restored. Why is the NRM government recentralising? Is the President the one who sapped the constitutional powers of local governance and is now the local government?

General impediments to the enjoyment of rights

The general performance of the economy as we know it

The economy is projected to grow at 6.5 per cent in 2023 and 6.7 per cent in 2024. On the face of it, that should send us to a party at the biggest hotel in Kampala.

Given the global growth slowdown and the fragile border trade in East Africa, Uganda obviously, is likely to suffer the consequences. This project is incredulous because more than 41 per cent of the 44.3 million Ugandans continue to grapple with abject poverty yet the latest poverty figures are pointing in an upward direction, which is scary.

Madam Speaker, if I may be brief on this: one of the reasons why poverty is growing is because the Government failed to implement

the post-COVID economic interventions; they failed to implement them. They supplied the country with lip service. Businesses did not recover. People closed businesses, others lost jobs, and the recovery is non-existent; it is a paper tiger.

#### Corruption

It is appalling that Uganda ranks 26<sup>th</sup> in terms of global corruption. This level of corruption has a significant impact on economic, social and cultural rights, including the right to access basic necessities like education, health care and employment. It is clear that income inequality, poverty and direct consequences of this corruption in turn hinders economic growth and restricts access to economic rights. Furthermore, mismanagement of public resources only serves to further undermine the effectiveness of Government.

On corruption, our concern is how Government, especially the Presidency, has elected to put in place pyro institutions to fight corruption. The main institutions - the IGG and the prosecution in the DPP's office are underfunded yet we are creating pyro structures and funding them. So, is the Presidency frustrated? If frustrated, do you answer by creating pyro structures to rival - in our view, those new structures are hiding places for corruption? That is why we are concerned that the Presidency, and the President in particular, decreed that army officers should not declare their wealth. For us, this side, it is part of the tall grass in which the corrupt are hiding.

#### Inequitable distribution of public resources

The National Budget in Uganda is important for resource allocation and economic activity. However, it often neglects important sectors such as health and education.

Madam Speaker, our invitation in this area is to figure out critical sectors that really balance the needs of the population to avoid situations where there is skewed development and allocations of resources. I have given figures of these skewed developments and allocations.

#### The unbearable debt burden

The figures are given. They are sickening, they are worrying, and before we know it, the weight of the debt will collapse on our backs. I hope no one would be found abroad when the debt crisis sinks on us. All of us shall carry it as Parliament and as leaders, and bear it on behalf of the people for and on whose behalf we have acquired it.

#### The Parish Development Model (PDM)

The PDM was launched to lift households from subsistence to monetary economy. However, there are concerns regarding the selection of beneficiaries, the unstable market and fluctuating prices for agricultural goods, disjointed financing interventions, inadequate infrastructural capacity, and mismanagement of group funds. The allocation of resources did not take into account the unique needs of each district or each parish.

Additionally, the PDM committees have been either dormant or non-existent. There also have been cases of misappropriation of these funds as well as a biased selection criterion and gross underfunding with limited enterprise selection.

Madam Speaker, the emphasis of the PDM has serious selection challenges that we have discussed here for a one size-fits-all approach, which for me, is really a stone age approach to poverty alleviation.

Most of your constituencies are farmer constituencies. As we speak, Government did not make a provision for suppliers of seeds, coffee seedlings and tea seedlings. But besides, they are demanding Shs 46 billion from the Government and there is no allocation.

What is happening, these Members will tell you that they are losing their property to moneylenders. They borrowed to set up nursery beds, but there is no provision and so they are losing property.

Probably, in her response, H.E. the Vice President will respond whether these are

sacrificial lambs for the PDM; that the project has sacrifices to make in terms of people's businesses and homes.

#### Road infrastructure

Madam Speaker, this afternoon we discussed the inadequate provision and we concur; probably somebody looked at my statement. The road infrastructure is sick as we know it. I have a problem, with the way the resources for road infrastructure are distributed.

In our conversation, we need to make provisions. For example, it is very okay, to have oil roads because it is a key sector. However, where are coffee roads? Where are gold roads? Where are the banana roads?

I was in Kassanda three weeks ago - Kassanda gives the country a billion worth of gold every day. It does not have a single tarmac road; it is like a graveyard, Madam Speaker. I hope somebody takes note.

Remember, Madam Speaker, up to now, the gold miners, exporters and the gold merchants do not pay any tax to the Government. When you go to Kassanda, it is very scary. Actually, I told them that if they look like this when they have gold, please keep your gold, I will keep my coffee in Masaka. I do not need gold in Masaka. If having gold means looking like that, I would rather keep the coffee and no gold at all.

I have broadly written about the Defense and Internal Affairs sectors. Our concern mainly relates to our defense missions abroad; there are very serious challenges and complaints.

I received a petition yesterday, from part of our mission of police in Somalia, deployed in 2020 to work for one year and one month. They returned one and a half years ago but were only paid for three months. Their money was - I have a list of these men and women. Their money was leased by AU, somebody has it on his or her account. So the concerns over these deployments are very serious. When you see -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, listen. If you want to make noise, the National Theatre is just next here.

**MR MPUUGA:** When you see officers in distress - these are some of the challenges. I will formally relay their petition, and an investigation should ensue on what happened to their money.

The last component, from me, is mafia-run sectors on page 27. One of them is mining. The largely unregulated mining industry is costing Uganda heavily in terms of lost revenue, environmental damage, and exploitation of vulnerable communities.

There is massive criminality around Uganda's vast reserves of sand, an invaluable non-renewable commodity by cartels, with support from influential people within the Government and other connections.

The cost of sand mining to the environment is steep and has destabilised the sensitive ecology around Lake Victoria and other water-catchment areas.

The mining is also labour-intensive, employing men and many youths, many of whom are underage children.

Illegal gold mining has occasioned illicit financial flows in Uganda's mining ecosystem. It is estimated that the economy loses about Shs 2 trillion every single year in illegal gold exports. Gold exports from illegal artisanal mines in Uganda amount to 2.8 tons a year with the children constituting 30 per cent of the miners. This can be verified in the mines of Kassanda; I was there. It is very scary.

The Auditor-General noted in his report, on the performance of URA for the Financial Year 2021/2022 that URA failed to collect Shs 340 billion in taxes from gold exports in one financial, which was estimated to be recovered after the 5-per cent levy was implemented. These are gold exporters, but the poor people in the market stalls are paying taxes. The mercenary and mafia groups in mining do not pay any taxes.

Secondly, fisheries. Much as the Ugandan fisheries sector is vital for the economy, the army, under the guise of curbing illegal fishing practices, has caused the depletion of resources and has justifiably restricted fishing activities.

The UPDF has, out of impunity, continued to terrorise and blatantly torture fishermen in various water bodies of Uganda. Fish is being impounded from fishermen by the military, who in turn make a killing out of it. Harassment and death, at the hands of armed personnel, have been reported on the lakes.

Fishermen are terrorised and their nets seized. They are accused of using particular nets, now deemed illegal yet they are manufactured in Uganda and cleared for import. Ironically, the government knows about the trade in such gear because taxes are paid on them.

Parliament has passed numerous resolutions suspending UPDF activities on water bodies as far as regulation of fisheries is concerned, but all in vain.

To date, Madam Speaker, the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2022 has not been operationalised and implemented. While the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, 2022 deems UPDF's presence on the lakes unlawful, they still disrupt fishing activities and profit from confiscated fish and gear.

In my report on the fishing sector, out of my excursion, there is a unit that operates fishing activities on the lakes with boats labelled *wacha waseme*; it is a fishing entity of the UPDF. While they tell people that it is illegal to fish there, they are wantonly fishing and they do not care. The locals know who owns these boats and which officers are fishing. Where they export and pay taxes, Heaven knows. That is how I called it "a mafia run sector" causing and visiting uncalled-for-harm to the population though somehow, life goes on in Uganda.

Madam Speaker, on notice to the House, my shadow Minister for Fisheries has a ready motion. With your permission, it should be on

the Order Paper this or next week, depending on your kind indulgence, for an inquest into these violations in the fishing communities. I know, across the aisle, that Members are representing suffering communities without a voice and the House must come clean on where we stand on these violations.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I believe this account will create unease and discomfort for the perpetrators of State-sponsored violations, and I am not here actually to cause comfort. I pray that they find humility to change for the better.

Of course, I am not oblivious of the fact that they do not feel any sense of responsibility and recourse for their atrocities. Although we have embraced a human rights-based approach to the state of the nation and the budget, previously, we were not motivated by unreasoned expectations that things will change overnight.

We are aware that there are powerful structural, political, economic and embodied constraints against alternative approaches. Thus, our efforts are to rally the change seekers across the aisle to the common cause and offer direction to our relentless efforts.

That said, the strong and overwhelming evidence that supports changes of human rights violations against the State apparatus and their charges of human rights violations against the State apparatus and their accomplices, including reports from various human rights organisations and personal accounts from victims of State-sponsored violence and torture.

Despite this evidence, individual perpetrators of these heinous crimes are not being brought to justice due to the pervasive impunity in the country. I detest a situation where both the Legislative and Judicial Arms of Government would be completely emasculated by the sitting Government to the extent of rendering no redress to these violations.

I do not want to sound alarmist, but we must intervene and act now in order to prevent a

catastrophic outcome for our nation. Thus, in order to investigate the illegal and gross human rights violations meted out against the people of Uganda over the years, a commission of inquiry should be established in due course for various violations to bring justice and offer hope to the victims.

Madam Speaker, I have attached an indication of legislative interventions we intend to make across the year and to inform the House that while the House gave leave to a number of your Members to bring particular legislations to bear, we are facing resistance from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Tomorrow, I will visit your Office together with the Members that Finance is giving hell to bring their Bills to the House for your intervention as per the rules.

I thank you, Madam Speaker and honourable Members, for your patience and listening to me. For God and my country.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Leader of the Opposition. (*Applause*) He is responding under Rule 53. Thank you, for the exhaustive report. I have listened to a 30-page report addressing the issues that were raised by the President. I observed that in the 21 out of the 30 pages, the Leader of the Opposition is talking about human rights of persons in Uganda, human rights development in Uganda, of course cognizant of the fact that the President also covered other issues. Of course, human rights has been an issue in this House. It has been raised a number of times and the Government has tried to respond.

Apart from the human rights violations, the President talked about agricultural productivity, industrialisation and social services. On the issue of human rights; the missing persons, this House has, from time to time, discussed issues of missing persons. If you look at the *Hansard*, it is there.

On the issue of several cases of arrests in cities, these have been subject to a process in various courts of law. The Leader of the Opposition has been kind enough to be one of the people

representing those persons in court. At least they have been given that freedom. Much as they are arrested, of course – for the sake of those arrested, their right to legal representation has been respected by the Executive, including some Members of Parliament; that must be on record. Yes, things may not be well, but something is being done.

The right of freedom of expression exists in this country except those who think that they have the impunity to abuse people using social media. I like the President for one thing; signing the Computer Misuse Act because people think it is about them and that kind of thing; let it be there. Today, they are abusing me, tomorrow they are abusing the Leader of the Opposition and another day the Vice President.

On the issue of education, Leader of the Opposition, it remains universal in both primary and secondary levels. I am talking to the Leader of the Opposition because he seemed to say that we are in a country without anything. It remains universal, both in primary and secondary. Yes, we have challenges. I studied in a school where we would sit on a log. We have a lot of challenges and of course, all these are budgetary in nature. We need to work together, as a House, to make sure we improve these issues. Money has been put in education but something is being done.

Regarding the right to property, we are expecting your paper on the issue of land grabbing. The persons who grab land must be brought to book. We will not have a blank statement that there is land grabbing, no. We want to name and shame the persons so that we have a clean Government - let us say “it is so and so who grabbed land”, not make a blanket statement.

If you recall, this House debated the issues of property under the Departed Asians’ Property Custodian Board. We had a report in this House. The Indians were given back their land; it was from the Government and the issue was legislated in this House. So, it is not that nothing is being done. Something is being done and that is why we have the laws in place.



When you look at the issue of refugees, we remain one of the biggest hosts of refugees. We are next after Turkey, Iran and Columbia. We still host refugees in this country, despite the numerous challenges that we have. We have tried, as a country, and we should also be given some appreciation.

On the right to adequate standard of living, that is the function of productivity. On the opportunity and enabling environment, there is an enabling environment; you would not be speaking here. *(Laughter)* We have challenges, but we have an enabling environment – where we can quarrel, abuse everybody and disagree.

The Parish Development Model is a national development strategy to try and reduce poverty. The issue is: will it reduce the poverty? It has challenges, which we all need to come in and ensure that we handle them so that we reduce poverty among our people.

As leaders, we should come up and ensure that PDM works out well. If we sit back and say we are waiting for the Government, we will wait until the cows come home. Let us put in all our energy and ensure that PDM works. We put a lot of money in PDM; let us not go into lamentations.

The other issue is on infrastructural development. The problem we have with infrastructural development is that when you look at our appropriation, as Parliament, infrastructure takes the biggest amount of money. We talked about the issue of having no regulations, lack of discipline and people not knowing what they are doing, yet a lot of money is being allocated to the sector.

So, Leader of the Opposition, we have put a lot of money there. We now need to work together. As the minister for works said, they will come with regulations in one month – I think one month is even too much. We need the regulations to operationalise most of the laws that have been presented in this House. You cannot pass a law and fail to operationalise it.

On Defence and security, of course, despite the threats of terrorism, Uganda remains the most peaceful country, as of now. *(Applause)* I thank the Government for one thing. Two days ago, NUP had a very successful procession in Jinja – uninterrupted. Leave these people to have their processions, uninterrupted. So, the issue of oppression – and I also congratulate UPC on winning in Oyam. That shows democracy. The MP-elect is going to be sworn in on Thursday.

Honourable members, the LoP has given a report. Where we see weaknesses, we will correct them – we will get a comprehensive report to that effect. However, where we see that it is not what is being said *per se* and is a blanket statement; Government should also be appreciated where it has done something.

Can I now hear from Members on this side? I will choose five people only. The Leader of the Opposition has said it all. If you are on this side, sit. That is how much I respect the Leader of the Opposition.

5.32

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (DEFENCE) (Mr Jacob Oboth):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank Hon –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, you sit. It is just good manners. *(Laughter)* With the freedom of expression in this House, everybody speaks the way they want. However, when the Leader of the Opposition or Vice-President speaks, we close.

**MR OBOTH:** I thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I also thank the Leader of the Opposition for opposing the presidential address to the nation – [*Ms Aisha Kabanda: "Procedure."*]-

**THE SPEAKER:** Under what rule?

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is the rule under which the LoP presented *-(Laughter)-* rule 44. The Leader of the Opposition has a right of response, but not to oppose.

Is the honourable member in order to stand and say that the Leader of the Opposition simply gave a statement to oppose, yet he was exercising his role, as the Leader of the Opposition, to give a statement?

**THE SPEAKER:** Rule 44 is on conditions for admissibility of questions. So, you have raised it under a wrong rule.

**MR OBOTH:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the wise ruling. That goes back to taking orientation very seriously.

The response by the LoP was largely, as you have already observed, on matters of human rights and he adopted that deliberately. They are matters that have been here for a while. He is my friend until probably today, when he will disown me.

On matters of human rights in this country, the NRM Government, where I belong, together with the LoP –(Interjections)- we all belong to one Government –

**THE SPEAKER:** The Government is led by the NRM and the Leader of the Opposition is a citizen of this country. (Applause) It is not a matter of debate. Listen, honourable members.

**MR OBOTH:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We have to agree that human rights are universal, two-way traffic and have obligations.

Part of what the LoP said are matters that I have not heard from him in a short while. However, I can give you a guarantee that the Government cannot abduct any citizen of Uganda. (Interjections) The abduction that we are referring to here are matters that we handled with the Leader of the Opposition (LOP), Prime Minister and now - this is the tolerance that we need to accord each other.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, when the Leader of the Opposition was speaking, however hard it was, people listened. Let us be tolerant of each other. No, let him finish. Hon. Patrick, let him finish first, then you will give your deliberation.

**MR OBOTH:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity to proceed. I may not say what you do not want to hear, but it is also my right. Just as it is your right when you get up to speak in this House, to say what you think you are convicted to say and you have passion for it.

I will begin with the scripture that the LoP quoted, Psalm 82:3-4 - maybe, let me also quote Ephesians 4:29, “*Let no corrupting talk come out of your mouths, but only such as is good for building up, as it fits the occasion, that it may give grace to those who hear,*” (ESV) thus says the Lord.

It is easy to point out the wrong. The way I see the LoP - and he knows for many years - when you have a mirror that reflects you, you cannot destroy that mirror. That is how I see if there is any opposition - the mirror must tell me whether my barber did a good job or not, not to put other things, which are not there. If a mirror gives me other images, which are not correct, then I have a problem.

A world without opposition is a dead one. We are here every day struggling to be better than what we were yesterday because we have opposing forces.

Madam Speaker, you indicated that this is a matter that we talked about. Probably you will make further rulings. To hear the narrative that the Government of Uganda abducted its citizens, is very unfortunate. We have those names; we have accounted for those that are in prison. It is only in Uganda where people are arrested and they are considered abducted.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the issues of human rights were brought to this House and referred to the Committee on Human Rights. They were debated and closed. Can you go to the next item?

**MR OBOTH:** Perfectly so. I want to summarise that we should look at criminality versus political activism. We should defend the rights of every Ugandan, including those we do

not agree with, and that is the Government I know and belong to.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, the right to governance that the LoP talked about; elections - there are probably about four types of democracies: direct, indirect, which we call also representative; constitutional, and a dictatorship.

To say that in this country, when we have a few isolated cases of malpractice by people who are either selfish or misled, and we get the Head of State condemning such acts in this country, we would applaud such a President.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, if we did not have that kind of transparency, we would not have Dr Apio getting ready to sworn-in on Thursday. We have a number of Members of Parliament who are opposition in this House. They went through the same system – okay, you survived and you are in Government. Go to the next item.

**MR OBOOTH:** The issue of military officers being mentioned; we want to set the record correct. It is not a Government policy nor is it a Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs or UPDF policy for any military officer to grab land. But also, those military officers have rights to own land and they can own it anywhere. It would be wrong to paint a UPDF officer who is somewhere struggling over his rights over land -

**THE SPEAKER:** Which he owned legally.

**MR OBOOTH:** Which he either got legally, or there is a dispute to -

**THE SPEAKER:** But where he is getting it illegally, there is a problem.

**MR OBOOTH:** Where he gets it illegally, he should be condemned strictly. We do not condone those illegal or unlawful practices. I want that to be on record. We have gallant men and women in uniform, some of whom are here. It is not a crime for them to be in that uniform. It takes sacrifice to be in that uniform.

Having a blanket blame on the military is akin to shooting ourselves down. I would be glad to receive the name of those particular officers who are illegally grabbing land from people so that we work on them according to the law. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, how I wish you would be patient with each other. In my culture, when you are in pain, you do not talk like that. You start throwing yourself down. Yes, procedure.

**MR OSHABE NSAMBA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The Leader of the Opposition presented a response to the State-of-the-Nation Address following our previous debate where we responded to the same motion. I am seeing ourselves going into a situation where we are debating the Leader of Opposition's statement. Yet anybody who stands up to say, "Leader of Opposition, yes, the President missed this; he never mentioned this, or he said it this way." The Leader of the Opposition has used a human rights approach to his issues. It is as simple as that. Madam Speaker, are we proceeding well?

**THE SPEAKER:** He is on procedure.

**MR OSHABE NSAMBA:** Are we proceeding well, Madam Speaker, when members start giving a response to the Leader of the Opposition's statement, while forgetting the main debate, which we started weeks ago; we are losing it.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, nobody is debating the Leader of Opposition's submission. Actually, I responded to all that the Leader of Opposition raised. The State-of-the-Nation address was passed, honourable Members, this side equally has a right to give a rebuttal. However, the fact that the side has a right to give a rebuttal - I made a rebuttal. I gave a rebuttal to all issues that were raised.

I now put a question that this House records a vote of thanks to His Excellency the President for a clear and concise exposition of Government Policy contained in his address on the State of Nation, delivered on 7 June 2023.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, yes there is a procedure there, there is one here, yes, Hon. Elijah Okupa.

**MR OKUPA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I previously wanted to raise this during the debate, but the procedural matter I wanted to raise relates to PDM. Can we hear from Government on whether it is procedurally right for the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO), to write to members asking for money for the launch of PDM in their districts? We have been receiving - at least I can quote for Serere - the CAO wrote to us -

**THE SPEAKER:** Can we have a copy of that letter?

**MR OKUPA:** I will get it.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, bring and we see it. We want to see it because we do not want our CAOs to be seen to be soliciting money. Solicitation is criminal.

**MR OKUPA:** Madam Speaker, I will deliver it tomorrow.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please, do it.

**MR OKUPA:** I will deliver it tomorrow. Because this being a Government program, we should be seen to be the one funding for the launch of the PDM. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Members of Parliament of Uganda, I adjourn the House to 2pm tomorrow.

*(The House rose at 5.48 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 19 July 2023, at 2.00 p.m.)*