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THIRD SESSION - 32ND SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Friday, 3 May 2024

Parliament met at 10.02 a.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I would like to welcome you to this morning's Sitting. I know it is unusual that we sit on Fridays but because of the timelines, you have to bear with me.

Honourable members, you recall that we had a Malaria Awareness Walk on 20 April 2024, which was graced by the Deputy Speaker. We discussed here the issue of neem trees that was brought by Hon. Christine, who is in charge of the environment on this side. As Parliament, we should be able to encourage our locals – the voters – to plant neem trees. I am happy that we have been able to get some neem trees, which are in the parking compound here. When you leave here – when you are going for recess – take some of those neem trees and be an example to our people. Ensure that you plant them, they are watered and they grow. They can help in reducing the number of mosquitoes.

Honourable members, today is World Press Freedom Day. It is a day that is set aside by the United Nations General Assembly to raise awareness on the importance of freedom of

the press and to remind governments of their duty. They should respect and uphold the right of freedom of expression, which is enshrined under Article 19 of 1948 Universal Declaration of Human Rights. These principles are adequately domesticated in Article 29 of the 1995 Constitution.

The theme for this year is: “Journalism is the Face of Environmental Crisis.” This theme coincides with the various environmental changes that have affected many areas, especially in East Africa – and eastern Uganda – in the recent past.

I take this opportunity to reiterate the commitment of Parliament to protecting the freedom of expression. That is why you see that we have very many journalists in this House. Hon. Ssemujju, ensure that that Article is not abused.

I wish the entire Fourth Estate a pleasant celebration of the World Press Freedom Day. Can't you even clap for the Fourth Estate? *(Applause)*

Honourable members, by now you must be aware that the UK Government, through a media communication - and I am saying “media communication” - dated 30 April 2024, reportedly imposed some sanctions on myself and two former ministers - the ministers who were in court; purportedly on allegations of corruption. The sanctions led to a travel ban and the freezing of assets. I am told I have very many assets and a lot of accounts in the

UK. Unfortunately, I have only been to the UK once. I do not even have a pussy cat in the UK. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, these sanctions are politically motivated. The Bill that you passed in this House – I am carrying a cross for the 48 million Ugandans. The Anti-Homosexuality Act is what is causing all this. This may not be the only ban. Another one will come in the pretext of corruption, theft and whatever.

All those kinds of things will come but we serve a living God and we will always not allow *bum-shafters* in Uganda. If they want to do it, let them do it in their bedrooms not in public. The law is there; it will be implemented. Let whoever feels hurt go ahead. I do not need to go there. I have said I have a permanent passport to Bukedea and Buyende. *(Applause)* I do not need a visa.

Therefore, honourable members, you need to be very firm and fight for your people. Just imagine it is your child being sodomised tomorrow. Regarding those sanctions, I have had an interaction and we have got to know what the sanctions are about.

The Minister of Foreign Affairs is here but at an appropriate time, the Head of State will respond to it because that is an indictment to Parliament of Uganda. Honourable members, you passed the law. I did not even vote. I chaired but you voted. I am not worried. If they think I have property, they should go and freeze them and see if I will complain. Even a pussycat can -

I would like to categorically tell you that, international backlash will continue but one thing we need to do is to respect each other and people's values; and respect for traditions and cultures of countries.

Honourable members, we are a sovereign country. Those writing reports are writing them because they want to do accountability. *(Member spoke off the microphone.)* I have not said National Unity Platform (NUP). I have not said it – One day, I will allow you people to start boxing. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, we need to safeguard the sanctity of this House and this country. If we cannot do that, then we will not be doing what is expected of us and whatever we are doing is for the 48 million Ugandans. On a special note, I would like to thank the Parliament of Uganda for passing that law. *(Applause)* I thank the religious leaders, the Judiciary for upholding the decision and the President for assenting to that law. *(Applause)* That shows how much he upholds family values. I also thank all Ugandans.

Honourable members, there is an outcry. Much as we passed the law on fisheries, people around the waters have continued being mistreated. Yesterday, I received information that a fisherman was killed at Lyingo Landing Site. Government needs to come in and see the enforceability of the law that was passed by this House because the people who are being killed are our people and those are the same people who will vote for us tomorrow. We need a response to that effect.

Honourable members, this is not only happening in one island or one fishing area. You will find that - Hon. Mulimba cannot talk because he is a minister but he is suffering in his place; we need a response from Government to that effect.

Today, we are going to look at the tax Bills and as you are aware, we are at the tail end of the budgeting process. Remember, I told you that we have already gazetted 13 June 2024 for the Budget reading. So, we should be able to look at where we are getting the money from for us to be able to fund the Budget that we are talking about. Let us look at where the money is coming from and then we will appropriate that money effectively.

We would like to get a statement from the Minister of Foreign Affairs who is the chief diplomat. Some of us may not be diplomats but we want a statement from the chief diplomat. We will also hear from the Leader of the Opposition on the World Press Freedom Day. I think he has a message for the press today being World Press Freedom Day. Hon. Akol -

10.18

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Madam Speaker, in your communication, especially on the sanctions, I remember I was in my constituency and I received a call from the press, especially the *New Vision* asking me about it. I thought they were mistaken because to the best of my knowledge, our work as Parliament of Uganda is to allocate resources to ministries, Office of the Prime Minister and to different departments in Government.

The people who should be questioned on this issue of the iron sheets are those who are tasked with the responsibility of implementing the resources that we allocated for this particular issue. First of all, the fact that we allocated the resources is a clear sign that this Parliament is committed to solve the problem of the Karamojong people. Therefore, I wondered how the head of Parliament can be sanctioned and forget the people who are in charge of implementation, in this case, the ministers.

I do not have a problem when they talk about the ministers. I do not have a problem if you talk about the Office of the Prime Minister but of all things, to put sanctions on the head of the institution of Parliament, which has the people concerned and where this issue was raised!

The issue about who is a beneficiary should be the implementing people, not us, who are the concerned in monitoring what was not done rightly yet that is how the issue was brought to the concern of this world.

Therefore, I think it is high time our Minister of Foreign Affairs and the Head of State made sure we got serious as a country so that our sovereignty is protected as a country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The sovereignty of this country is very important. Hon. Kitutu and Hon. Nandutu are in court but the principle of presumption of innocence still stands. The mover -

10.21

MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. You mentioned that the Minister of Foreign Affairs will be making a statement. I think it is important because this is a matter that touches our diplomatic relations and for purposes of avoiding uncoordinated troop movements, it is important that Government states its position early enough to guide the debate and discussion. Otherwise, there is a very big likelihood of creating a diplomatic imbroglio arising out of the statements we may make.

Madam Speaker, at the risk of anticipating what is in the statement, the UK has a right to sanction anybody. It is their right and I do not think anybody should be concerned or bothered. Let them sanction whoever they want. It is their sovereign right. However, what should also happen is that they should respect the sovereign rights of other countries because you run a risk –(Interjection)– I am on a point of procedure. We run a risk of undermining each other.

Madam Speaker, the procedural matter I am raising is whether it would not be procedurally right for the Minister of Foreign Affairs to adumbrate the position of the Government before this matter is debated.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, maybe we first hear from the minister. Hon. Ssekikubo, let us first hear from the minister. Point of procedure?

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. In your communication, you said that we have tax Bills that are very important as you enumerated and that you do not care if they freeze; you do not even have a postcard, they can go ahead. If, Madam Speaker, that is your conclusion, is there - this is the procedural issue - a need for the Government to issue a statement when one of the persons sanctioned has said she does not care; that this matter is not serious? Is there a need for the Government to issue a statement if you have closed the matter in that fashion?

THE SPEAKER: I may be sanctioned today and tomorrow it will be you. It is about your country, not about Anita. I can go back to my village. *(Laughter)*

Honourable minister - no, let us first hear from the honourable minister - because they are going to sanction all of you. Do you think you are immune?

10.25

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS (REGIONAL AFFAIRS) (Mr John Mulimba): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Permit me, pursuant to rule 52, to make a statement to the House and the public.

The Republic of Uganda is a stable democracy that enjoys cordial relations with the vast majority of states in the family of nations.

Our political landscape since 1996 has continued to evolve in peace and stability, bolstered by the faith of its people as the hallmark of the National Resistance Movement (NRM) government. Our standing in the region and internationally has reflected the dividends of this peace and stability.

The Parliament of the Republic of Uganda reflects the legitimate voice and aspirations of the Ugandan people. It is with surprise that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uganda learned of a statement issued on the official website of the United Kingdom Government on 30 April 2024, announcing the imposition of sanctions on “Ugandan politicians charged with corruption”.

The case referred to under the UK’s global and corruption sanctions regime concerning two former ministers, Hon. Gorreti Kitutu and Hon. Agnes Nandutu, represents the first time that this is applied with respect to Uganda. It glosses over the fact that the two cases mentioned had been uncovered by the Government’s own investigative agencies and are currently being handled under Ugandan courts of law. The two on the charge sheet, therefore, remain under a presumption of innocence until proven guilty.

The third person mentioned in the sanctions regime is the Rt Hon. Anita Among, who is none other than the Rt Hon. Speaker of Parliament of Uganda, who has not been charged by the Directorate of Public Prosecutions in the above-mentioned cases. We, therefore, seek to find the rationale for actions taken by the British Government in this sanctions designation.

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs looks forward to engaging with the British High Commission in Uganda and, indeed, the Government of the United Kingdom, with whom we maintain cordial relations on this matter, while mindful that sovereignty remains the cardinal principle in the bilateral relations between the two governments and nations. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

10.28

MR GEOFFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo North County, Tororo): This Parliament is a member of the Commonwealth. Today, as we talk, you are the Chairperson of the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth. The action of the UK Government violates the principle upon which that institution is established.

This Parliament and the Association need to express their displeasure because, Madam Speaker, this sanction that is not based on any ground violates the tradition and the setting up of the institution. It borders on the UK Government violating the principle and the rules of engagement.

We, as citizens of Uganda who contribute to that international organisation, need to express our displeasure. We cannot only allow the Government to express displeasure because the taxpayers of this country contribute to that institution.

You, now, are not only the Speaker of Parliament of Uganda but also the head of the Conference of Speakers and Presiding Officers of the Commonwealth. That is a position, which all the members of the Commonwealth accorded

you, because of your integrity, sincerity and the service you have rendered to this institution.

Therefore, these sanctions question the participation and all Commonwealth parliaments need to raise their voice because it brings the double standards of the UK Government and our participation. Whereas we receive development support, most of this development support alone, which the taxpayers of Uganda pay - this needs to be put on record.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, we request the Minister of Foreign Affairs to engage the UK Government and other Commonwealth members to express our displeasure. If other countries - if it was not that President Museveni sometimes is very diplomatic, we would even consider withdrawing our participation in the Commonwealth Speakers and Presiding Officers' Conference and the institution.

As of now, you coordinate the entire operation. How can they use - in the UK, the Conservative Government does not believe in homosexuality and lesbians. In the US, the Republicans do not believe in it. Therefore, these double standards must be rejected and we need to communicate to the people of this country and the world.

I, therefore, propose that the Minister of Foreign Affairs, without wasting much time, engages at a higher level and expresses our displeasure at the Parliament of Uganda. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association (CPA)?

MR ENOS ASIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Actually, at first when I rose, I wanted to inform Hon. Ssemujju that the Parliament of Uganda is a member of the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association and Madam Speaker is the President of the branch. For that matter, it is very important –

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, in our rules, you can only inform the person holding the Floor. Is the Member in order to descend on my seat where I am comfortably listening and begin informing me, using Parliament?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, he was just mentioning your name. I think he likes your name because you are his Member of Parliament. Honourable members, I am the Chairperson of CPA, Commonwealth Parliamentary Association in Uganda. I am also the Chairperson of the Speakers and Presiding officers of the Commonwealth Parliaments (CSPOC), which is comprised of 72 countries.

When we invited our friends to come for CSPOC, they wrote to us that they were not coming here because of the Anti-Homosexuality law unless we were ready to withdraw it, which was okay with us.

We did not miss anybody, the whole of the Arab world came. I want to thank you for the work you did when you went to the Arab world.

Honourable Minister, we need a more comprehensive statement on this. You will find that some of these people who are signing these documents are conflicted and you know it. It is not a secret. I am not a diplomat, the way you may be but you know it. Yes, Hon. Oshabe.

10.34

MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker. That honourable was giving information and it was done.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Oshabe, let Hon. Enos Asiimwe first speak, then it comes to you.

MR ENOS ASIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I started with information but I was for the House anyway. However, my argument was that the sanctions were in bad faith.

For starters, being that she is the President of the branch, she is the representative of this Parliament in every CPA activity related to the Commonwealth Parliamentary Association,

where we are signatories to the Commonwealth Charter, interestingly, where all the member states made a commitment to development of freedom and democracy. I believe the decision of the Anti-homosexuality Bill was out of the democratic beliefs of our country and the Parliament. It was not an individual decision.

I think it is in bad faith and that is why I am supporting that the minister brings a statement and we look at how best we can address this.

Going forward, for example, we have an Annual General Meeting in August, where she is supposed to be representing this Parliament. We have another engagement in November, the Commonwealth Parliamentary Conference (CPC) in Sydney where she is supposed to represent this Parliament. How is she going to participate with nations that do not believe in our democracy or that are against the principles of the Charter that we all subscribe to?

I believe it is important that the minister brings a statement and we find solutions and how best we can move with countries that are actually breaking the charters that they made commitments to. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ekudo but first Hon. Oshabe.

10.36

MR PATRICK OSHABE NSAMBA (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Alex, I have seen you.

MR OSHABE NSAMBA: The other day, I attended a second African Inter-Parliamentary Conference on family values and sovereignty that is sitting in Entebbe. I am sure they are closing today. I want to assure you that the over 20 countries that attended are very proud of Uganda in terms of legislation on the Anti-homosexuality law.

I am a member of the Pan-African Parliament and most of the African countries are very proud of Uganda about the case of Anti-homosexuality law.

I want all of you to move with your heads high over the decision you took because the rest of Africa is very proud of us. Having said that, we are also doing very badly as a nation on matters to do with corruption.

We all know that the way we are handling our corruption cases cannot be celebrated. This issue of *mabaati* was not well disposed of. It just ended in the corridors, just like that.

Ugandans do not know who was found guilty and who was not found guilty. It is just lingering. That is why these that wanted to get on the Speaker wanted to use that. Had it been disposed of properly, probably it would not have been an issue. I keep wondering why the *mabaati* group was bigger -

THE SPEAKER: There is information.

MR OSHABE NSAMBA: I will give you information. The *mabaati* group was bigger. Why did they pick only the Speaker and the two? Why not the rest of the group? Prime Minister, there are many ministers here who were involved. Even my friend here Hon. Musasizi was part of those. If the matter was properly disposed of, probably, we would be in a better situation to debate this. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members, first of all, Hon. Patrick, I -

MR OSHABE NSAMBA: Madam Speaker, my friend here has some information to give me.

MR BASALIRWA: Thank you, Hon. Patrick. The Information I want to give relates to the press conference that the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) held, where she said that they had investigated this matter and according to them, the people they took to court are those they found with incriminating evidence. She said that the other cases and files had been closed.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, first of all, if the Karamojong team was here, they would bear me witness. When the issue of

the *mabaati* came up, I said; “I hope that the *mabaati* that was put at my gate...” because it was dropped at the gate of my school- “...was not part of Karamoja *mabaati*.” And I said, “If they were, I would immediately return them.” When the investigation went on, I said, “give the Government schools the *mabaati*.”

After finding out that that was the *mabaati*, I returned them. I was the first person, and I said, “have your iron sheets I don’t need them, because if they are meant for Karamoja, they are meant for them not for my place.”

I have never been to any court of corruption. Who says it is only Karamoja that would need *mabaati*? Even if they went to Teso, Lango or anywhere - Honourable Members, this is a test to us, which we must prove. Hon. Ekudo, Hon. Elakas, Hon. Ssekikubo –

10.42

MR TOM EKUDO (FDC, Gweri County, Soroti): Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: By the way, Hon. Ssekikubo is one of my good friends.

MR EKUDO: Being somebody who comes from Teso and a Member of Parliament from the same region, when I hear about the issues on the TV, talking about the Speaker, I feel bad. This is because she and I come from Teso. If something goes wrong, I think the objectives of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda allow the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to handle this matter. Sincerely, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs is just keeping quiet.

He has made a statement today when social media has already damaged somebody’s name. This is not good. For us as Members of Parliament from Teso, we feel bad about it and we condemn those issues. In case somebody is wrong, why do you leave the people who were taken to court and sanction somebody who was not taken to court? Foreign Affairs, please, wake up.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Edakasi?

10.43

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido): Madam Speaker, thank you for giving me an opportunity to just make a contribution to this issue, which I have not spoken about for a long time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us not attack the Minister of Foreign Affairs. What we need to do – Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, Hon. Ekudo is right. When you heard this, you ought to have responded instantly. That is what we pay you for; to do the diplomacy. Before the undiplomatic people come, you should have done your diplomacy and then you come to this House and tell us, “this is what I have done.” You will get an undiplomatic person who will say that maybe the person who signed this document is himself –

MR EDAKASI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The point you just made is really important. Ever since we passed this law, for me, two things have not happened. One is that we really have not engaged the West diplomatically. I can tell you, the majority of the world is on our side, even in the West, but we are not engaging properly. We are losing markets because of this issue, and we can redeem those markets if we were collaborating with our allies in that other part of the world. Therefore, it is important that the Minister of Foreign Affairs takes his job responsibly and engages the rest of the world.

Secondly, even after we have passed a law, we continue to hear of children being abused in this manner, and yet you never hear of any arrest. Really, what is this law for? If we have a law, we should allow the law to begin to bite. In any case, we are already being beaten somehow. I think it is important that we are acting with our two-edged sword. We should be engaging the West because we do have allies there. Also here at home, we should be seen to activate the law, and not just keep the law shelved. Let me allow – (*Interruption*)

THE SPEAKER: Yes?

MR BASALIRWA: He has given way. I do not know why you are complaining. He has given way. The information I want to give is a point of law that I want to share. The Supreme Court has said that when a law is being challenged before the Constitutional Court, you cannot charge a person under that law. Therefore, the reason people are not being charged under the anti-homosexuality law is because it is still being challenged. Until it is disposed of at the highest level, that is when police and the DPP can actually act. That is the information I wanted to give.

MR EDAKASI: Thank you for that information. That is a good education for me.

Madam Speaker, the other thing I wanted to make remarks on, based on your communication today, is on the issue of malaria. We know that malaria continues to be the largest killer of Ugandans. I know that the Ministry of Health has made significant efforts towards prevention. I can speak for the testimony of Kaberamaido District, where we have had a reduction because of the distribution of nets. As we go forward, I think it is important that the Government continues to employ every effort towards prevention.

The idea of planting neem trees is a highly welcome idea. I congratulate the Government upon that. We are beginning to see that the efforts that are put towards prevention could help us in reducing the impact of malaria on our communities.

The other is the issue of diagnosis of malaria. We continue to see that the items used by the Ministry of Health fall short. Every month in our health facilities, rapid test kits are in short supply. This makes the situation worse for everyone, including those places that are hard to reach.

Therefore, I think it would be important that this House, and indeed the Government, pays attention to one disease that kills majority of Ugandans. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Honourable members, for information, as you go for budgeting, the Executive of this country is very passionate – First of all, thank you for going to watch football the other day. It is an agreed position from this Budget that we are making that the money for the stadia to be built is supposed to be in this Budget without fail.

Hon. Ssekikubo -

10.49

MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (NRM, Lwemiyaga County, Ssembabule): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I share your concerns and the concerns of this House about the sanctions that were imposed on the head of this very institution, the Rt Hon. Speaker, Anita Among and two other former ministers, Hon. Kitutu and Hon. Agnes Nandutu.

I was in this House when we passed that anti-homosexuality law and I can assure you that we as Parliament stand together on issues of morality in this country; there is no doubt about that. I think each and every Member of the House cannot say it is the Speaker – it was a collective effort of the entire House.

Therefore, if there is such an indictment, it is an indictment on all of us. That is important. To that extent, I want us to stand firm. We shall get to know where it ends. We stand by you, Madam Speaker, in as far as enacting of that law is concerned, if that is the *casus belli* of all this that is unfolding.

However, I would hasten to add, that for us to sit by, there are a lot of ramifications, and what our relationship with the Commonwealth shall be. The Speaker is the head. There are those engagements on an annual basis. She is the Chair of the Speakers and Presiding Officers. I think even those in the UK – I saw the Deputy Secretary for Foreign Affairs, Hon. Andrew Mitchell, he ought to know the ramifications and the implications of sanctioning a Speaker of Parliament of a country. She is the head of the third Arm of the Government. As a country, the Government must tell us how we should proceed from here. What are our

bilateral arrangements? What is the fate of our development cooperation that we share with the UK and the Commonwealth? Can we withdraw from the Commonwealth? The answer is no. Then what is the way forward?

The head of the third Arm, who represents all of us here, cannot go to the Commonwealth. In other words, we are decapitated. We must state it. We must take the implications. How are we going to engage with the 56 countries under the umbrella of the Commonwealth? It is a question that we, and the Government must answer. It was peculiar that the President even chose to keep quiet about it at the Labour Day celebrations. It is not as easy as it comes, honourable members. There is some weight on it. I do not think that the UK was not aware of the backlash or fallout in all this.

To me, Madam Speaker, this presents another opportunity –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I hope you are taking note of what Hon. Ssekikubo is raising.

MR SSEKIKUBO: On how the country is proceeding with the question of corruption. To have your Speaker of Parliament sanctioned on account of larceny is such a grave matter. What is the rest of the country now? Probably, they are now touching on the Speaker to tell us as a country, how we are proceeding.

Madam Speaker, when issues of corruption arise, why don't we get the opportunity to discuss them and for the Government to handle the same to its full conclusion? This is the problem. We are stuck; we cannot even present our voices to be heard well because the issue of the iron sheets was greatly mismanaged. Hon. Lugolobi, Hon. Kitutu and Hon. Nandutu were arraigned before court. To have cabinet ministers attend court, then in the afternoon they attend Cabinet, what indicators are we giving to the international community?

Regarding the question of homosexuality, I want us to desegregate it. On that one, we all stand together. However, on the question of

corruption, honourable members, I beg your indulgence that we must tackle it. We cannot let it go. The other day, we had an opportunity to look at ourselves as Parliament. When the issue of the service awards came up, the Speaker has never given us the opportunity to debate it.

THE SPEAKER: I will do that.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Despite me constantly rising here. Can we have a look at ourselves? Or must we hide ourselves in the same cloak? I am not part of that. If the UK is sanctioning and targeting the corrupt of this country, it is because as a country, we have failed. We have let down the people of Uganda. Where everybody knew – some ministers said that the iron sheets came through their windows to their compounds, and they were left scot-free. The unfortunate three were arraigned before court, and others continue to occupy the Front Bench. The President made a very simple promise that he is going to follow them up. Where is the following you were talking about?

Madam Speaker, you better seize the opportunity and say no to corruption; lead the way so that as a country, we can stand by you. However, when this institution is full of loopholes; the allegations of corruption, the service awards are abound, and we cannot debate them, what should we do? It is only seeming that the foreign countries are the ones doing the job we are supposed to do. I do not want Members to hide behind the sovereignty of the country –

THE SPEAKER: Government Chief Whip, you will respond to the issues of the iron sheets. However, I am telling you, we are a sovereign country, and the UK cannot come and run this country. We are going to handle the issue of perceived corruption. Somebody should be proved guilty. For example, the ministers who were in court. There were very many people, about how many? Hon. Obua, would you like to say something?

MR SSEKIKUBO: Before he comes up, let us be open. I am making my humble and honest

request to you, Madam Speaker. Let us start with ourselves. We cannot continue hiding. We are condemning other countries when we have let this country down.

THE SPEAKER: The other day, they said that you were bribed to pass the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) Bills. Were you bribed? Who was bribed in this House? I am not asking you, Hon. Ssekikubo. I am asking Members. *(Laughter)*

Hon. Ssekikubo, people will say whatever they want to but what matters is, have you proved it?

MR EKANYA: Point of information, honourable member. You know, honourable colleagues, it is very important to look at international relations and international law. Whereas we relate and need each other, at the end of the day, every country protects its interests. The information I would like to give you is that in the International Criminal Court (ICC), for example, the US and UK citizens may commit a crime but their countries have not assented to the ICC. They try their citizens in their local legal systems. We need to ensure that we build our systems, support them, and never surrender to international systems that do not meet our interests, to take charge. That is the position.

An American may commit a crime here that warrants ICC or a UK citizen can commit a crime, and they will be tried in the UK. The judicial procedure will be implemented according to the laws of the US or UK. The same should apply to our legal system here. If it is weak, we should build and strengthen it.

MR SSEKIKUBO: I thank you, Hon. Ekanya. *(Member rose_)*

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR AMOS OKOT: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of procedure, under Rule 73 of our Rules of Procedure. Regarding the issue of the iron sheets, Members of Parliament were willing to debate it, but when

the matter went to court, we were debarred. It is not that the MPs did not want to discuss this matter, on the loss or any misappropriation of the iron sheets. For us to engage again on the issue of the iron sheets meant for Karamoja, yet the matter is still in court, it is sub judice. We are breaking our own rules. However, for somebody to write an indictment on one of us in this Parliament, in regard to iron sheets, is as if that person does not follow our rules and the laws.

The Parliament of this country, of which you are the chairperson, has rules. We follow our Constitution. Article 79 prescribes very clearly how Parliament is constituted. We have been mandated to make laws in this country. It is about somebody understanding that if this country, Ugandans, Members of Parliament, have made a law that they feel is right to govern them – and somebody should be referred to – we move according to what our Constitution has agreed upon.

Madam Speaker, the procedural matter I am raising is on those two grounds; Article 79 and rule 73. Is it procedurally right for somebody to come here and start dragging us on the debate of iron sheets, yet we are patiently waiting for that time and we debate it? We are aware of our code of conduct in this House – the issue of integrity and corruption. We are not even pleased about it.

Is it right for us to go back to that debate or we move forward? I thank you.

12.02

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION

(Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As a former journalist for 14 years, I join journalists in celebrating World Press Freedom Day, a very important day on which we remind the Government to protect the rights of journalists as they operate. Sadly, though, many times, they face a lot of brutality from the State, which should be protecting them as they do their work.

Our hope is that we can get a commitment from the Government on this particular issue.

We also call upon the employers of these journalists – because as the State brutalises them, their employers, in one way or another, ill-treat some of them. Poor pay and all of these issues need to be addressed.

Hopefully, this day is a good reminder to all the stakeholders to treat journalists with respect and to empower them as they execute their mandate.

Madam Speaker, on the issue of sanctions, in your communication, you said that you are not bothered and that you do not care about these sanctions. In fact, you mentioned that the only visa you are concerned about is the visa to Bukedea and, so, you do not care about the visas to the US and the UK and so on.

I am now surprised on why, then, you seem very bothered because if you say you only care about a visa to Bukedea, why do you seem very bothered and angry about this issue? I think it should not bother you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition, I am not bothered at all. I am talking for the 48 million Ugandans outside there.

MR SSENYONYI: That is alright.

THE SPEAKER: ... and I am representing and sitting on this seat for the 48 million Ugandans there.

Secondly, I do not get handouts from those countries - There is a point of order.

MR SSENYONYI: I do not know why someone wants to put the Speaker on order. Madam Speaker, no one has said that you get handouts – [Mr Katusabe: “Order!”]- from these countries. (*Interjections*) We are talking about the sanctions, which indicated corruption – *mabaati* theft and all of these different things – and that, which you are talking about, is a different matter. I do not know – if somebody is accusing you of getting handouts from these countries, that has not come up and that is not the issue.

My concern is: if you are saying that you are only bothered about a visa to Bukedea, then, you should not be consumed by this issue, Madam Speaker. You should not be – because you seem to be rallying us to join you in being angry over this matter – (*Interjection*) - because your concern is Bukedea -

THE SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition -

MR SSENYONYI: Finally, Madam Speaker, I want to implore the Government - (*Member timed out.*)

THE SPEAKER: Switch it on.

MR SSENYONYI: Thank you. I want to implore the Government: Government, do not wait for foreign countries to sanction individuals, whether for being involved in *mabaati* theft, corruption and so on. Take action. Why do you wait for that and, then, you begin to complain?

When you are going to beg for aid, you do not complain. When they say, “now that we give you aid, that aid should not be stolen-“

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order from Hon. Ogwang.

MR SSENYONYI: He is asking for clarification; I will get it shortly.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members -

MR SSENYONYI: Do not wait. As the Government, take action against corruption. (*Member timed out.*)

THE SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition – okay.

MR OGWANG: First of all, I would like to thank the Leader of the Opposition for the submission he is making, Madam Speaker. The clarification I want to seek from LOP is that for purposes of the Speaker, is there any record by any competent court of law in Uganda that she has been involved in any corruption matter?

Two, as far as we are all aware, the two former colleagues, who are our colleague Members of Parliament, are before the courts of law. Have the cases been adjudicated on and it is confirmed that they are guilty?

So, if we are talking about the rule of law, was it in order for that respectable country to impose sanctions on such individuals?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Okiror has something to say.

MR SSENKYONYI: Madam Speaker, he sought clarification from me. I thought that in a minute, I should -

THE SPEAKER: No, I have given him. I am the Speaker.

MR SSENKYONYI: Okay, I can take that -

MR OKIROR: Most obliged. Madam Speaker, the LOP, perhaps, should be concentrating on more important things. I want to - (*Interjections*) - this is my -

MR SSENKYONYI: That means, Madam Speaker, you are concentrating on non-issues, according to Hon. Okiror.

MR OKIROR: I am raising my point of order. I am on a point of order -

MR SSENKYONYI: You are the one who raised the issue, Madam Speaker.

MR OKIROR: I am on a point of order.

THE SPEAKER: What the LOP is talking about -

MR SSENKYONYI: He is saying you are discussing non-issues, Madam Speaker. I do not know if it is in order.

THE SPEAKER: What the LOP is talking about is important but what I am also telling the LOP is that: do not even deceive yourself that I am hurt. For me, the Anita that I know, to be hurt over those sanctions! Forget it.

MR SSENKYONYI: That is okay, Madam Speaker. Hon. Peter Ogwang was seeking clarification from me, regarding the rule of law. I will educate you a little bit because I am a lawyer. Article 28(3)(a) of our Constitution talks about the presumption of innocence.

The way sanctions operate - and I do not know whether we should even be discussing sanctions issued by a country that has the prerogative to issue their sanctions. Sanctions are not subject -

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR SSENKYONYI: I was clarifying. Sanctions are not subject to your local jurisprudence here.

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR SSENKYONYI: It is a diplomatic tool, which -

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter. Hon. Nathan, we have not started. (*Laughter*)

MR KATESHUMBWA: Madam Speaker, we have spent about an hour talking -

THE SPEAKER: Give us one hour.

MR KATESHUMBWA: Madam Speaker, in one of your statements, you guided that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs should come up with a comprehensive statement. On a matter like this, the first expectation, in diplomacy, would be for the ministry to summon the ambassador of the UK government and state the position of the Government of Uganda on this matter and, then, be able to report to Parliament, so that we can have a debate.

Is it procedurally right for us to continue discussing this matter when we have not heard comprehensively about the steps that the Government has taken to engage the other country?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Foreign Affairs, I will expect a comprehensive response on the action that you have taken

on this and I do not want anybody to think I am bothered about whatever is happening. I am doing this for – anything on me touches everybody in this House. I am the leader of this House.

So, when I say – some of you have property – I have not said Hon. Sseki. *(Laughter)* Stop putting “Hon. Sseki” in my mouth. *(Laughter)* I have not said it. I am saying “some people have”. *(Laughter)* You leave Hon. Sseki.

I am saying there are people who get their earnings, who sustain their living in Uganda and do accountability using other people’s names; using the names of the Anitas so that they account for the work they are doing in this country.

That said, I want a comprehensive report from the Minister of Foreign Affairs stating the actions that have been taken.

The Government Chief Whip, I had talked about fisheries *-(Member rose_)* No, I have already ruled. Check the rules. Can I hear about the people who are being killed in the fishing areas? Actually, someone was killed in Iyingo and another was killed in - Hon. Fortunate, do you have something to say on fisheries? Let him first give us the Government position.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Madam Speaker, you had indicated that we were going to discuss the service awards and you said, yes.

THE SPEAKER: We will do it.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Can we use this opportunity to know so that we prepare ourselves over the same? Madam Speaker, in a way, it shows that we are now committed to fighting corruption.

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter.

MR SSEKIKUBO: In your Chair, you had guided that you were going to give a day and here we are -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssekikubo, even when you know you have all the favours from me, as a friend, to speak any time, when the Government Chief Whip is standing to handle something that is concerning so many people, give him space. *(Applause)* Hon. Ssekikubo, I know you have that favour from a friend and that is the problem. Hon. Obua, on the issue of fisheries?

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, on a lighter note, Hon. Ssekikubo knows that the Government Chief Whip is a German-trained commando so next time, please *-(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: When you touch the Government Chief Whip, Hon. Odur will act on this side, Hon. Okwir will bring -

MR OBUA: I do not want to inform him of the other – Madam Speaker, I have equally seen – *(Hon. Nandala-Mafabi rose_)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nandala-Mafabi, we have not started on taxes; we are talking about lakes and you do not have one. You are the Chairman of Bugisu Cooperative Union (BCU).

MR OBUA: Madam Speaker, I have equally seen on social media, including in Amolatar District, where one resident was reportedly shot dead by a member of the Fisheries Protection Unit, among others.

May I request, Madam Speaker, that you give the minister in charge of fisheries an opportunity to come and present a comprehensive statement covering all the fishing communities and what is transpiring within the country generally with specific regard to the incidents that we have read and seen in the media.

I request for that time so that the minister comes and briefs the House.

THE SPEAKER: As the minister comes, Hon. Joan.

11.16

MS JOAN NAMUTAWE (Independent, Woman Representative, Masaka): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. The military on lakes no longer want people to fish and trade in silver fish. In March this year, in Lambu Landing Site in Masaka District, military police confiscated fishing gears and silver fish from fishing communities.

I am requesting the minister in charge of fisheries to address this House on this ban and inform us of the plans the Government has for the people affected because of this ban. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. The Government Chief Whip, I can see you are trying to practise. Honourable minister, you can hear that many people still have issues. Let us have the Member for Masaka.

11.18

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Madam Speaker, it is not only in Masaka. The entire nation is suffering from these issues of fisheries and the military. I have heard from the honourable colleagues from Ntoroko who have serious issues there. We enacted a law here that removed the military from the waters in terms of protecting the fisheries.

We want to hear from the minister whether this law came to effect. Otherwise, we have continued to see the military everywhere and it has affected our people's livelihoods. They have been banned from the lakes. Their fishing gears have been burnt. We are losing lives.

Madam Speaker, it is important – *(Interruption)*

MR EKUDO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The information I want to give to my honourable colleague is that it is not only Masaka. If you went even where the Minister of State for Fisheries comes from, it is still affected; Serere is affected. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The one I talked about was in Buyende. Honourable members, let us get a statement from the minister as guided by the

Government Chief Whip. We want the report in the next sitting. Otherwise, the people who are being killed deserve to live. You can take away the fish but leave the person. *(Applause)*

MR OBUA: Madam Speaker, I humbly request, through your Chair, that there could be Members with issues that are very specific –

MR OSHABE: Madam Speaker, you gave me to speak and the –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, can we have all the Members whose areas are affected bring the complaints in writing? We will handle them one by one and case by case. Let us have that and let it be filed in the Government Chief Whip's office and give me a copy.

MR OSHABE: Madam Speaker, you had given me an opportunity on a procedural matter. You communicated that we may break off. You also communicated that it is a matter of death. We have a full day and these ministers are there in this country. Can't we create time today since this is a matter of death so that that minister comes and gives us a notice about what is happening?

The minister – and there are several ministers within the ministry – can come and at least instruct the UPDF, like he has said, to stop at least in the immediate-term, so that Ugandans are saved on the lakes. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Government?

MR OBUA: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you because what you guided on is what I wanted to bring to the House. I have requested for time, honourable colleagues, because these incidents are not isolated to only one area. The fact that we are raising this from different areas implies that the minister also needs time to interrogate it, such that she can be able to respond to specific incidents in specific areas.

In the interest of that or having that in mind, I still think that with the way you have guided, Madam Speaker, honourable colleagues

with specific incidences in their respective areas should report, such that the minister can investigate and respond to them, but also generally respond to issues surrounding the law that was passed by this Parliament. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us get a report.

MS AMERO: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Those with the big water bodies are talking about silver fish, but for us with small swamps in our districts, these swamps have been a source of livelihood.

I see when people go planting rice, it is cut down. What about other areas where the Chinese and so-called investors have gone to plant rice in wetlands? For us, that rice keeps the small fish, which we keep picking from the water, but we also want the rice. We would like to know what some of us who are surrounded by swamps are going to do.

THE SPEAKER: I used to think that there was no smuggling border in our area in Amuria. The way Hon. Susan Amero has smuggled this in. *(Laughter)* That is on the wetlands. Yes?

MR KAFUZI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You made a ruling and I would like to seek clarification. I have just learned that Hon. Susan Amero has a small swamp. *(Laughter)* She made reference to those with big water bodies and then –

Madam Speaker, I would like to make a request. You have ruled that people who have concerns relating to fishing should put it in writing. Others have brought up issues of rice; in other areas, we have issues of disappearing forests. There are many environmental issues.

I humbly pray that instead of limiting ourselves to fish, you allocate time for us to discuss environmental matters. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Let me tell you, honourable members, when you put your questions in writing, you will find that the Prime Minister

will take her time to get responses from each and every ministry on the questions. However, when you raise them here, you may not get all that you need. So, let us put them down in writing and they will respond to them, one by one, and what action has been taken.

Honourable members, in the public gallery this morning, we have a delegation of the executive of Bugiri Municipality, led by the Mayor, Mr Ayub Kisubi. You are welcome. *(Applause)* They are represented by Hon. Agnes Taaka and Hon. Asuman Basalirwa. Hon. Basalirwa, stand up and come here. First greet them. *(Laughter)* You are most welcome; you have a very good Member of Parliament. If it is even possible, he should come back unopposed. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, you will allow me to invoke my powers, under rule 25, to amend the Order Paper and we get a motion from the Minister of Education and Sports. It will be moved by the minister, under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure, to establish the National Institute for Teacher Education.

While we are doing all this, if we finish the tax Bills today, the next sitting will be on appropriation. How I wish the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development could declare early in case they will have a corrigendum, so that this House allows us to refer it administratively, other than calling you back from your villages. We will refer to it and ratify on the day when we are sitting.

So, honourable minister, do you have something – *(Hon. Odur rose)* Is it on the same?

MR ODUR: No, it is slightly something else. Madam Speaker, my procedural matter relates to the statement that you had required from the Ministry of Foreign Affairs.

I would like to beg your indulgence that there are a number of other Ugandans that have been sanctioned from different countries. That statement should be comprehensive enough, not only on the three; all the lists of Government officials, the reasons and the sanctioning authorities, so that when it comes, we do not then go backwards on the same.

I thought that if it comes on the Floor, then the ministry will take it more seriously.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. You have heard. There is also credibility of the people who are doing it. (*Hon. Namugga rose*) I know what I am saying, Hon. Gorreth Namugga. By the time I say that - If you are a lesbian, I will tell you that you are a lesbian. If you are a homosexual, I will tell you that you are homosexual.

So, if you are sanctioning, first check yourself. (*Laughter*) Hon. Christine Kaaya has a neem tree for us.

11.30

MS CHRISTINE KAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Madam Speaker, thank you very much. Dear honourable members, today we are commemorating the fight against malaria and the national celebrations are in Kibuku.

Madam Speaker, allow me to thank you for allowing us to come with this tree seedling to demonstrate to the Members, and to share with them some of the tree seedlings as well.

Like earlier mentioned, the neem tree is a repellent to mosquitoes. Just plant at least two in your compound and mosquitoes will greatly reduce in numbers or if not, completely leave your compound. The tree may take one and a half to two years but I request that the malaria supplies in our hospitals need to be thought of. It is very shameful that whoever has a malaria patient requests for support from the Members of Parliament. Thank you for the opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

11.31

MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other day, you talked about the floods and the minister said that he would be coming here with a statement. I am not seeing the minister here but maybe the Government Chief Whip will do that because we addressed it as a matter of urgency.

More importantly, this Parliament appropriated and we have received the Shs 1 billion for the districts and municipalities; Bugiri Municipality equally received it.

However, there is information from the ministry that that money is specifically for murrum roads and has nothing to do with tarmac. Some municipalities were prepared to use that money to do tarmacking - (*Interruption*)

We seek clarification from the Government specifically on the *modus operandi* in as far as that Shs 1 billion is concerned, especially where a road committee sits and takes a decision.

THE SPEAKER: Government -

11.33

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, the money in question is called the Road Maintenance Fund; we changed it from Road Rehabilitation. I want to believe that since the money is going to the districts, cities and municipalities, maintenance in my humble opinion, is not only limited to murrum; that is my literal interpretation.

The roads committees of the different districts, cities and municipalities will take a decision but the fund is a Road Maintenance Fund. As long as you are maintaining any road within your district, city or municipality -

THE SPEAKER: And if you are in a municipality or city where you have potholes, you have to maintain them; that is the Hon. Nsereko's area.

11.34

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is why I want to rally Honourable colleagues. The good thing is that the issue of infrastructure is so bipartisan and cross-cutting.

The only fund where a line is drawn between the legislative role, and the executive roles-a merger is created whereby you legislate and

appropriate the funds and also take part, having full participation in decision making of those funds is the Road Fund.

Therefore, the strengthening of that fund is one of the cardinal duties we have to do here if we are to see a revolution in our infrastructure both here and in our constituencies. We at least take part in effecting these decisions because we constitute part of the districts, municipality and constituencies' road funds

As we draw closer to the appropriation and Tax Bills, I request that we exchange ideas in enhancing the money that should be ring-fenced directly towards the Road Fund. I know that our colleagues from the Government have another argument because they want to pool all the money in one basket.

That is the reason people do not realise their taxes appropriately because they say, "When we are paying this at the fuel station, we are told there is a levy that is charged from us but on return, we do not see it reflected."

I thank the Speaker because not until this House and she put her foot down, that is when the Shs 1 billion was released. *(Applause)*

Otherwise, people are sick and tired of carrying the burden of paying taxes and pooling it into one basket without it not being reflected in the form of returns on what they invest in this Government.

I would like us to carry on a serious debate between ourselves and the honourable minister who still thinks that people should pay their taxes and be pooled into a single basket without being reflected in the form of infrastructure.

We want that debate on whether the people from your constituency and this country believe that they should pay for a fuel levy and not see it in return in their constituency.

THE SPEAKER: Are you pre-empting the fuel debate?

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO: I would be very comfortable with that.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable members, that money is for road maintenance and if you are living in a city like Hon. Asuman, you should use your money to maintain the tarmac while we, with village constituencies use it on murram. The money is yours and there is no discussion; there is a Road Fund Committee. Procedure from Hon. Atkins.

11.38

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First, I thank the Government Chief Whip for being responsive to members' demands. My pigeonhole is full of the Government Chief Whip's communication and responses to what I put or submit in this very Parliament.

My only challenge is that, despite his multiple responses to my submissions, no action has been taken by the relevant ministries.

In the interest of time, I will have to assemble the submissions that I have made on the Floor. One is about the closed Teachers' Training College; Bwera Teachers' College, in my community.

We have no other teaching institution in Kasese except the one that was closed by the Government. You directed the minister to come and give a response but that has never been done.

Two -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Atkins, that is the paper that I was calling for. Just cool down.

MR KATUSABE: Thank you, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: That is the document coming next.

MR KATUSABE: I appreciate it, Madam Speaker. Can I now have just this cocktail put together before the Government Chief Whip for his ease of follow-up?

Another thing is clean, safe drinking water. Your in-laws from Kasese continue to draw drinking water from dirty sources.

The closed border - Government Chief Whip, all borders in Uganda are open except the Kasese border. The Kasese Airport, the public university that was promised by the President to the people of Kasese, the mortality rates and finally, this Parliament – *(Interjection)* – Excuse me –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Atkins, we have got your issues.

MR KATUSABE: This last one, Madam Speaker, with all due respect.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Atkins, we have got your issues. If you feel some of them need to be addressed, you can write to me and I will write to the ministry on how we can address them. Hon. Ogwang?

MR KATUSABE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I will put all of them together and submit them to your office.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF
PARLIAMENT TO ESTABLISH THE
UGANDA NATIONAL INSTITUTE FOR
TEACHER EDUCATION

11.41

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR
EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS)**

(Mr Peter Ogwang): Madam Speaker, I beg to move a motion for a resolution of Parliament to establish the Uganda National Institute for Teachers Education under the University and other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001.

MR OSHABE: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I hope you are not picking something from the Pan African Parliament (PAP).

MR OSHABE NSAMBA: Madam Speaker, I am not raising a procedure for PAP interest, but I am raising a point of procedure for

the Republic of Uganda's interest. We are experiencing a coffee boom currently. I am a coffee farmer and prices have skyrocketed. We

–

THE SPEAKER: How did that come in?

MR OSHABE NSAMBA: I am raising a procedural matter. Madam Speaker, you have consistently reminded the ministry to pay the coffee nursery operators in this country, but they have not been paid up to now. The Government, at the time when- currently because of the coffee boom, the farmers are running to get coffee, they have nowhere to get it from because there are no operating nurseries in this country.

Having noticed, we do not know when the boom is going to end, but every other day the prices are going up. The nursery operators' business is down. I want to know whether the Government is picking interest in what is going on to find a way to pay the nursery operators so that they can run back to business and see whether –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable vice chairperson, you do not switch on before you are allowed to speak, but at the same time, we are on tax laws today. That is why you need to support the Government to get money for those people to be paid and you must make sure that it is in the budget. Government, we need these people paid.

Do you remember what we said, we have so many traders outside there who do not have money to continue doing business because the Government is holding on to their money so you must take that as a serious matter. Go on the microphone and commit. We had a discussion yesterday.

11.44

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, the good news is that we are in the budgeting period and the budget will come here and subject to the availability of funds appropriated, we will meet all the obligations on the side of the Government. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ogwang? That will be handled, Hon. Patrick.

11.45

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to move a motion for a Resolution of Parliament to establish the Uganda National Institute for Higher Education under the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001.

Madam Speaker, I move under Rule 82(a)(i) of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001, Act 7 of 2001, and Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure 2021.

“WHEREAS Section 82(1) of the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001 empowers the minister responsible for education, by statutory instrument, on the recommendation of the National Council for Higher Education and by resolution of Parliament to establish any other degree awarding institution as a public institution;

AND WHEREAS Section 24, 25, 82(c) and Schedule 2 require the minister to include in the statutory instrument the objects, function, and location of the other degree awarding institutions respectively;

AND WHEREAS the National Council for Higher Education, on 1 September 2023, recommended that the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education be established as a public other degree awarding institution;

WHEREAS Objective 18(2) of the Constitution provides that the state shall take appropriate measures to afford every citizen equal opportunity to attain the highest education standard possible;

AND WHEREAS Article 30 of the Constitution provides that all persons have a right to education;

AND WHEREAS the minister responsible for education causes the universities and other

tertiary institutions to establish the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education, Instrument, 2023.

NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by Parliament that the Uganda National Institute for Teacher Education be established with the following objects, function, and location as set out in the University and other Tertiary Institutions Act.”

I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, seconded by Minister of Finance, chairperson finance, Government Chief Whip, Hon. Frank, Hon. Ssolo, Hon. Edakasi, Hon. Okiror, Hon. Alex, Hon. Achan, Hon. Maggie, Hon. Olanya, Hon. Ricky, Hon. Okwir, Hon. Katenya, Hon. Alayo, Hon. AconObua, honourable member for Aruu, Agriculture, Gweri, Workers, honourable member for Mbale, Hon. Okot, Hon. Goli, Hon. Sylvia. Speak to it. Procedure?

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, allow me as I raise this point of procedure to ask Hon. Peter Ogwang and others to take Parliament seriously. The motion that Hon. Ogwang is moving is a very serious motion that should not have come in a way that he is bringing it. A motion that he comes here and pleads with you that although it is not on the Order Paper, please help us using your power and put it there. This is a very serious motion.

The procedural issue I am raising is whether you should not guide Hon. Ogwang to lay this motion so that it is sent to the Committee on Education, is brought back after processing and we debate it to inform a policy shift or policy change without having to rush it the way the Hon. Ogwang wants this Parliament to do. That is the procedural issue, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Let us first get the justification of why he is bringing the motion, understand it then we will decide from there.

MR PETER OGWANG: Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank Members for the support you have accorded to this very important motion.

Secondly, I would like to address myself to the objects of the motion:

- i) To provide a niche-based pre-service and in-service teacher education programmes for all levels of education.
- ii) To provide education training and development programme for career development of our teachers in their pathway.
- iii) To collaborate with the regulator responsible for teacher education training development in implementing continuous professional development programmes for teachers, education administrators and inspectors of schools.
- iv) To provide professional guidance and technical advice to the ministry responsible for education on the development of the teaching profession in Uganda.
- v) To collaborate with other institutions and development partners for the purpose of teaching education, training and development, and
- vi) To promote research, innovation, transformative education through vocationalisation of teaching and community engagement in educational practice.

Madam Speaker, these are the main objectives as to why I have come here to seek your indulgence as Parliament, to allow us to move this motion. I thank you very much.

MR OJARA P.P OKIN: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Considering what the minister has just presented, this is a very serious motion. In the sector of education in which we have had a lot of changes of recent, we do not need to take it very lightly the way he has been presenting.

Therefore, I would like to concur with my colleague that this motion be referred to the Committee on Education and Sports for serious examination and consultation so that

when it is brought here, we are able to discuss it. We are discussing about the education of the country, which is not a simple matter. With your guidance, Madam Speaker, it would be wise to advise the mover of the motion to refer it to the Committee on Education and Sports for serious consideration. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I want to refer you to the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, 2001:

“Section 82A: Establishment of Other Degree Awarding Institutions

- 1) *The minister may, by statutory instrument, on the recommendation of the National Council and by resolution of Parliament, establish any Other Degree Awarding Institution as a public Tertiary Institution.*
- 2) *The National Council shall, within thirty days of the publication of the statutory in the Gazette, register any Other Degree Awarding Institution established under subsection (1).”*

Therefore, Hon. Ogwang is moving under Section 82(a)(1), where there should be a statutory instrument, which is attached and was gazetted. Hon. Odur –

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, you are asking Hon. Odur who is not interested. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR SSEMUJJU: I have no problem with the proposals; I am only asking you, Madam Speaker, as the head of this institution to have this matter processed in the way we have processed other matters. He is asking us to make a resolution. First, usually on matters like this, they would write to you and that particular motion would be on the Order Paper. This has come as a way of amendment. We need to internalise and reflect on what he is proposing. I do not want to regret tomorrow. I do not know why the minister behaves as if there is something that is chasing him.

Madam Speaker, I seek your indulgence. Can this matter be referred to the committee for it to be processed and brought back? The roof will not come down.

MR PETER OGWANG: Madam Speaker, let me beg the indulgence of honourable colleagues. I implore you that this motion is time-bound because *–(Interjection)–* Madam Speaker, can I be protected?

On the issues which have been raised, I confirm that the entire teacher profession was consulted as far as this specific formulation of the teacher university is concerned. Number two, in line with that *–(Interruption)*

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, the minister is actually making the situation worse by saying that they consulted but he does not want Parliament even to spend one day consulting. He says, “For you, pass it very quickly. This is time-bound.”

Is he in order to say that Parliament must not consult yet they have brought a motion as a result of a consultation?

THE SPEAKER: Depending on what was consulted on. Can we first hear from the Attorney-General? Would you like to speak before the Attorney-General? Let him first speak. Do not go far.

11.57

MR PATRICK OSHABE (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think such a motion requires the input of the Committee on Education and Sports.

Secondly, we have been handling the process of rationalisation in this House, where we said that although some institutions were created, they may not be very relevant.

We are living in a country where all universities are training teachers and teacher education institutions have been erased; the Teacher Training Colleges (TTCs). We are living in a country, where National Teachers’ Colleges

(NTCs) are weakened, yet those would have been better in training institutions because they are regionally based.

Now, we are here with a minister who wants us to process a motion coming as though – I think he may say at one point in time that it was Parliament that passed it. We will lose nothing if this motion goes to the Committee on Education and Sports so that there is a report. The committee will pronounce itself on it because it would have consulted with the other stakeholders. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

11.59

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County West, Sironko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Article 90 of our constitution, Parliament forms committees to assist them in doing work. That is a constitutional matter.

On Tuesday when we were leaving, the outstanding issue which would make us start at 10.00 a.m. was the Tax Bills. It was not said that there was something urgent, which was missing.

Madam Speaker, I do not want people to use your office –

THE SPEAKER: Actually, I know they are wasting your time.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: No, it does not matter. I do not want them to use your office. I know Hon. Ogwang is my own but it is very dangerous for our institution. On a Friday when we have come for another issue, but something is quickly smuggled in so that it is passed immediately. This Parliament belongs to all of us.

Madam Speaker, I would like to beg that despite the fact that Hon. Ogwang is my own, he should allow this to take time. Since he has presented it, let it go to the committee, they process it and we all follow it. This is because those who never had an opportunity to be

engaged, as he said, will have an opportunity to go to the committee.

It is very dangerous for this Parliament, as it is seated now, to do what he wants us to do. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Jonathan? (*Mr Odur rose*) You are “Jona”, not “Jonathan”.

12.01

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (Independent, Soroti West Division, Soroti): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The minister has just informed Parliament that they carried out consultations and they have a report. I request that the minister shares with us the report, as Parliament, before we hurry into this motion. Have you done your diligence?

Therefore, kindly, allow the minister to share the report with us before we hurry. We are not going to gamble with the future of education of our country, where we just walk from any door and want change here and there. Kindly, share with us the report before we take a position.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you gave powers to the minister and you said the minister shall have a statutory instrument and that this should be brought within 30 days and that it should be supported by a resolution of Parliament – you did not lay the statutory instrument on the Table. Go and lay it on the Table.

MR OGWANG: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the statutory instrument, as required by law.

I also beg to lay Schedule 1, which talks about the location and the land size of the institute, as a requirement of the law.

I also beg to lay on the Table Schedule 2, which talks about the vision and the mission of the institute, which is a requirement of the law.

I also beg to lay Schedule 3 of the modified provision of the Act applicable to the institute.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Can I hear from the Attorney-General?

12.04

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The concern of Hon. Ssemujju and the other Members is that this matter should not, outrightly, be heard by the Committee of the whole House and that it should be taken to the Committee on Education and Sports. (*Interjection*) The Committee of the whole House is Parliament – the House. That is what I mean.

Madam Speaker, they are backing their reasoning with the claim that there was no notice. However, they also know that the Speaker is the custodian of the rules, and that the requirement for notice can be suspended. It does no harm for this House to consider the motion as presented by Hon. Peter Ogwang, other than taking it to the committee.

So my submission is: it breaks no rule and we would be within our rights, as the House, to consider this motion as presented, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us have Hon. Xavier and Hon. Akello.

12.05

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am among those who have supported the minister’s motion. However, issues of education should not be handled haphazardly. At one time -

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, I think Members of Parliament need to take Parliament seriously.

They brought a motion, you rushed into seconding it and, now, you are saying “however” -

THE SPEAKER: You people –

MR SSEMUJJU: Is he in order to support and second something that he does not know?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Hon. Xavier is very right. He is supporting the motion, but he has issues that he needs to raise. Is this the first motion that you are bringing here and it is being passed?

The other day we brought a motion on the Auditor-General. Did you refer it to the committee?

First wait, Hon. Ibrahim. I know you and Hon. Ogwang have your own - *(Laughter)* Hon. Xavier?

MR KYOOMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: However, as he said, it is time-bound and you are acting under a law which is existent and says you must have a gazette and that, within 30 days, there should be an approval.

MR KYOOMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On this matter, I will submit as an educationist. Issues of education should not be handled haphazardly. *(Applause)* I would like to appreciate that the minister took time and consulted those other stakeholders.

Like you took time, I think we also need to take time, as Parliament, through the committee and, then, at the plenary. *(Applause)* I would like to recall that at one time we had Institute of Teacher Education, Kyambogo. So, we need to know why it was removed and why we are creating a similar institute. All these can be analysed through the committee and, then, finally brought to the House.

As a result, I think it is prudent that the matter be referred to the committee so that we get the findings of the committee and base on them to make a resolution, as Parliament. *(Applause)* I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Let me hear from the Government.

12.10

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I wish to start from the point raised by the Attorney-General that what we are doing does not offend any provision of our rules. I would like to add that we are complying with the law as was passed by this Parliament.

I am saying this because we established, as a Parliament, under the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, the Uganda National Institute of Teacher Education (UNITE), we empowered the minister to effect that under a statutory instrument, which has been laid on the Floor.

In addition to the statutory instrument, it requires a resolution of Parliament. The law is specific on the requirements as laid in Schedule 1, Schedule 2, and Schedule 3 by the minister. Therefore, what we are doing in a nutshell is to operationalise the provision of the law, first of all.

Secondly, we are also giving an opportunity to the UNITE because UNITE is set to advertise programmes for the pioneer intake for the Academic Year 2024/2025.

In my humble opinion, our hands are tied by the law because the resolution is a resolution of Parliament and the law is interpreted as it is, not as it ought to be or wish it to be. The law as read by you, Madam Speaker, section 82, is clear.

In the circumstances, I beg to persuade the House to comply with the law as is. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the National Theatre is just next to Parliament. I have given everybody who wants to talk to talk, and do it in a decent way, so when you start behaving like that - There is a procedural matter.

MR ODUR: Madam Speaker - *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Why are you laughing at Hon. Jonathan?

MR ODUR: Madam Speaker. I think for all the intentions, good as it is by the minister, he has not done himself justice. First of all, he approached you and said that there was something very urgent and you exercised your prerogative and said, “Yes, it is urgent you bring it”. However, the minister has not addressed this House on the urgency itself. I think that is why you see a number of Members rising up. I know the Government Chief Whip has attempted to justify it by saying there is an advert going to come, but that is not enough.

THE SPEAKER: And the budgetary -

MR ODUR: Yes. The second point is that when the matter is not sent to the committee and the intention is that this House handles it, then all information that the committee should have received must be brought to this House. For example, the minister would have taken us through all the documents and said the land is located here because that is what the committee was going to inquire so that at least you may – I am not saying the House - but at least you give the House a benefit to see whether we can actually approve.

Therefore, the procedural matter I would like to raise is that if it pleases you, Madam Speaker, this minister should be given time to make a proper justification, including even going through the documents he has laid here. He is talking about the acreage of land being here, so that at the end, the House may actually proceed and say, we can entertain it, since now we have all the information provided. So -

THE SPEAKER: Yes. Hon. Obua and Hon. Jonathan –*(Laughter)* What Hon. Jonathan said is, when you look at schedule 1, you are looking at the location and land size of the institute and the institute here - You have Kabale located on land in that size. You have Kaliro located at that place, you have Mubende, Muni, Bunyama - Basically, those kinds of things.

The issue of why the urgency, the budgetary aspects, the advertisement - If you do not have the documents, I can give you mine and you read from them.

Let us first answer one thing at ago. Hon. Ibrahim, you are the one who asked about that issue and we are saying we are answering what you asked for. No, I have not read everything. Why are you talking about Kasese? I have not read everything for you.

12.17

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang): Madam Speaker, I would like to say the following in line with the motion I moved here earlier on. First of all, I did give a justification in line with our Rules of Procedure.

Secondly, I would like to address myself to the motion in terms of the functions of the institute – *(Interruption)*

MR SSEMUJJU: One of the Members who seconded this motion has withdrawn.

THE SPEAKER: Which one?

MR SSEMUJJU: Hon. Kyooma has withdrawn and he gave very serious reasons.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as Hon. Nathan-Mafabi said, we have issues to handle and we are running out of time. I am telling you we are acting within the law. The law says a minister “shall”, not “may”; the minister shall and there will be a resolution by motion of Parliament and this is a resolution that has been brought. Why are you disturbing the young man? Hon. Okiror -

12.18

MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to appreciate the concerns that we have. What we have before us is an Act of Parliament. We have raised arguments for rationalisation; why are we rationalising, or why are we doing this? This is not one such legislation that is a subject of rationalisation.

We have an Act of Parliament that in sections 82A(1) and (2) is quite elaborate. Three conditionalities should be met and these are:

1. Statutory instrument.
2. The recommendation.
3. The resolution of Parliament.

The two have been satisfied. There is a statutory instrument, there is a recommendation from the council. What is left is for us to have this resolution. If you read 82A and you go to (2), that is where my brother Hon. Peter gets in a bit – Already, there is a time in the Gazette which is running and there are budgetary issues.

Maybe what the minister ought to inform the House with certainty and clarity is how much time we have because that is the time-bound that the minister is talking about. After gazetting, how much time do we have? Can we be able to consider that?

The arguments we are raising should entirely say whether we are moving within the confines of the law or not. If the motion has been brought and it is in consonance with the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I find no illegality in the motion.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, what the honourable counsel has said is exactly what the law requires of the ministry. I put the question that the motion for the resolution of Parliament to establish Uganda National Institute of Teacher Education be adopted by this House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Motion, adopted.

**BILLS
SECOND READING**

**THE VALUE-ADDED TAX
(AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024**

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, can you move the motion?

12.21

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Madam Speaker, I beg to move a motion that the Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the first time.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are now handling the Value-Added Tax (Amendment) Bill. Yes -

12.21

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Madam Speaker, I know we are now moving to the tax Bills -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, there is free sitting today.

12.22

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Madam Speaker, even free sitting requires that you call for the suspension of a particular rule that establishes sides in this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: I thought Hon. Odur was -

MR SSEMUJJU: Under another rule, Members of Parliament are barred from walking around like they are herding cattle.

THE SPEAKER: I thought Hon. Jonathan Odur was raising something.

MR SSEMUJJU: This particular junior Minister of Education and Sports jumped from his chair - he almost knocked me. I do not know what he wants from our side. Is he in order?

THE SPEAKER: You know, at times I like this young man, Hon. Jonathan Odur, the neighbour because he talks about very serious issues. He does not get involved in those -

12.23

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Madam Speaker, thank you very much. You have rightly observed

that I raise serious matters. The serious matter I want to raise is that now we are going to process the tax Bills. I am going to be here and I know many colleagues will be here.

Reading from the previous item we have handled, I want an assurance from you, Madam Speaker, that you are going to give us time and when you put the question, it will be a vote by this House and not a vote by the presiding officer. That is the big motivation that makes me sit in this House.

THE SPEAKER: This one is by the House.

MR ODUR: No, I also sit in the House and I know the urgency but at that time, we wanted the details but you know what it is now when we come to -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Jonathan Odur, I want to tell you one thing: it is not in our interest to hurt Ugandans, especially when it comes to taxation. That is why the other time we were telling the minister - and I am happy the minister we have is a Member of Parliament. We have so many people looking at us outside there.

When you start taxing my people who use kerosene when you have failed to take electricity to my village, then will I come back? So, maybe I am more concerned than you are because the people in my village do not have electricity. They cannot even afford solar power. So, even if we are going to handle one today and one the next day, we will do it.

MR ODUR: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That is the assurance that I really wanted so that when we vote on a particular clause of these tax Bills, the vote reflects the debate in Parliament, the spirit in Parliament, and what the members of Parliament – and if I may plead, in this case, Madam Speaker, I wanted to persuade you that we can even vote by other means provided in our Rules of Procedure.

THE SPEAKER: Let me tell you, even when people wanted to smuggle in more taxes here, the minister refused. The minister said, “We

shall not make people suffer.” Let the minister first move a motion and we reach that level. Minister, move a motion.

MR ODUR: The last one, before we go to the tax Bills, is: one of the proposals which is the increase in the price of fuel - before the minister can address us, when the Bill was laid here, all the pump prices at the fuel stations went up by Shs.300 before even Parliament has approved. Would the Government first address us on that matter; that even before Parliament pronounced itself, the pump prices were already up by Shs 300 or Shs400? Have they started? –(Interjection)– I am on procedure.

THE SPEAKER: He is on procedure. The honourable minister will address the House. You are also rising on a point of procedure? Honourable minister -

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, can we cross when we get there?

THE SPEAKER: No, but he is raising something.

MR MUSASIZI: No, but he is anticipating.

THE SPEAKER: That is outside - we did not pronounce ourselves, as Parliament, on those taxes. Now, those who are culpable should be brought to book.

MR ODUR: I thank you so much, Madam Speaker. I think Parliament had not envisaged a situation where I, as a Member of Parliament, would debate with the Speaker. The question I ask is for the Executive. I just implore you to pass on it to them, and let them answer; this is not for you.

THE SPEAKER: What I am saying, I am also telling him that we did not pronounce ourselves as Parliament. What Hon. Odur is saying is that these people increased fuel prices by how much? You know they started speculating.

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, we run an open economy where prices are determined by forces of demand and supply. The government has no role in determining pump prices.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Aisha Kabanda -

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, honourable member, but that is not good.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you so much, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: You know Members; these tax Bills are another procedure for us to close those gaps. Once we pronounce ourselves today that we do not want taxes on kerosene, there is no way we should see somebody charging more for kerosene. Minister, let us finish this and our position will be very clear. You cannot increase fuel prices when we have not passed a Bill here.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Madam Speaker, you allowed me to raise a procedural matter –(*Mr Nsereko rose*) Is it procedurally right that I am pushed off the microphone? Thank you, Madam Speaker. With due respect to the senior members of Parliament, the procedural issue I raise is to seek your guidance on how to debate. The previous discussion -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members on the front bench, please listen.

MS AISHA KABANDA: I am seeking your guidance on the debate in the House. The matter that we have just concluded was concluded only on preliminary discussions because we had not gone into the real gist of the matter; whether or not.

I recall when we were – yes, I am seeking guidance on debate. On Tuesday, when we were discussing a loan here, there was a debate on whether we would wait for the committee to bring us a report or not. That debate carried on and after that, a question was put on the substantive matter and not on the preliminary discussion.

So, what is coming up - and I seriously seek your guidance, even when Hon. Musasizi is trying to disturb your Chair - as to whether

preliminary questions can be enough to determine a matter on the Floor?

In the two previous issues, the question was put only after a discussion of preliminary questions on whether the matter should be sent to the committee or not.

I recall when the Attorney-General gave us guidance here, he said that the import of the matter in the law on loans is to give members of Parliament a say on whether the loan should take place or not. But even before we spoke about it, a question was asked.

Madam Speaker, may I seek guidance from you on whether preliminary discussions shall be enough for the chairperson to put the question to decide on the real matter or whether Members of Parliament will consider as having pronounced themselves on those particular issues? Or even on the matter we have just concluded; on whether we needed the institute or not or on whether we needed the loan or not. This is because the only debate we had here was the debate on preliminary questions. I beg your guidance.

THE SPEAKER: Can you bring your motion?

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to move a motion -

THE SPEAKER: You know; Hon. Jonathan has brought up a very serious thing; that we must exhaustively look at all these laws. Let us give it time. Hon. Nathan, we must look at these laws. Let the minister first move the law. I know you as one of –

12.33

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri West County, Sironko): I am one of those who deal in fuel, and I want us to be careful.

THE SPEAKER: Are you still on fuel?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Yes, because it is one of the things that Hon. Jonathan Odur raised. It needed to be – They were about to

“kill” my brother, Hon. Musasizi on allegations that he had already imposed a tax. When you are looking at taxation -

THE SPEAKER: Aren't we starting with the fuel? Let us first go to the law on fuel.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: No, we are losing a point.

THE SPEAKER: You people are debating what has not been presented. No.

12.34

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I remember when we were discussing the matter of traders - and I would like to borrow – Hon. Ogwang, I remember having listened to your motion very well. So, please, lend us your ears, now that you are looking for money to operationalise your issue.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members - and Hon. Musasizi knows the issue of fuel - it is not only people who can afford fuel that are going to buy fuel. What about the local person who will board a taxi? It increases the cost of goods and services. Do you get it?

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO: Madam Speaker, before you pre-empt it, the issue -I do not know what order you want to bring but let us just proceed, because I will also rise and say “order” and “order” continuously.

THE SPEAKER: You people are making this House unruly. Hon. Nsereko, can you first sit? [*Mr Nsereko rose*] Which man? What has he done?

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before you hear from me, you cannot presume what I am going to say. The Government presented the framework papers and the ministerial policy statements. You heard chorus by chorus from every minister saying, “My department needs more funding”. The minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development intends to bring sources of raising revenue.

Therefore, what Hon. Odur is saying is that any law that is being presented is to cure something. If we remove this, how do we broaden the tax base? That is the most important thing we talked about while we discussed the issue of ‘milking’ traders.

Yes, I am telling you, because, at the end of the day, we will walk back to this House when a particular section of people are the ones being squeezed if we do not devise solutions from here.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are debating in anticipation. Can I ask you: do we need to pass tax Bills, yes or no? Do we need tax Bills? How do you debate before it is moved?

12.37

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): I am on the Committee on Finance. All the issues that colleagues are raising are part of the Bills.

THE SPEAKER: Exactly.

MR SSEMUJJU: I do not know what sort of Parliament we are going to be. All the issues on fuel and everything are in the Bill. Why don't we allow the minister to move the motions and then we deal with the Bills themselves? (*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Please clap for Hon. Ssemujju for the first time.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, when you ask, “Do we need to pass the Bills?”

THE SPEAKER: No. Hon. Nathan Nandala-Mafabi, MP for Budadiri West and Chairman of Bugisu Cooperative Society, please sit down. The law is there. Can you move -

12.39

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) Mr Henry Musasizi: Madam Speaker, I beg to move a motion that the Value Added Tax

(Amendment) Bill, 2024 be read for the second time. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Is the Bill seconded? Okay, it is seconded by Hon. Connie Galiwango, Hon. Susan, Hon. Margaret, Hon. Koluo, Hon. Jane, Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Nancy Acora, Gen. Jennifer Alanyo, Hon. Acon, Hon. Hamson Obua, Hon. Kateshumbwa, Hon. Ogwang, Attorney-General, Hon. Bahati and the entire NRM side. Please speak to your Bill.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Bill is intended to amend the Value Added Tax Cap. 349:

- i) to classify the supply of goods or services by an employer to an employee at no consideration as a taxable supply;
- ii) to increase the threshold for the offset in the case of the overpaid tax from Shs 5 million to Shs 10 million;
- iii) to amend the First Schedule to include the African Reinsurance Corporation, the International Regulatory Board of the East African Power Pool, and the Islamic Corporation for the development of the private sector as listed institutions; and
- iv) to amend the Second Schedule on exempt supplies for purposes of reinforcing the Value Added Tax (VAT) exemption regime and other related matters.

I submit, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson of the committee, does it have a minority report?

12.41

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Amos Kankunda): Madam Speaker, the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024, was at the 18th Sitting of the Third Meeting of the Third Session of the 11th Parliament of Uganda, held on Thursday 28 March 2024, presented for the First Reading. It was referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development, for further scrutiny.

I would like to report that the committee handled the Bill and hereby presents its report. I also report that this Bill has a minority report

from one member, Hon. Ssemujju. I hope he will be given an opportunity.

Madam Speaker –(Hon. Nandala-Mafabi rose_) I thought yours was on income tax.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, I also attached a minority report. If there are two different ones, there is a minority.

THE SPEAKER: You attached it to which committee report?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: On clause 10.

MR KANKUNDA: I beg your pardon - Yes, on clause 10 - I thought the honourable member had submitted one, but I later found out those two were received by the committee. I would like to submit, Madam Speaker, that the information that was given by the entities, people who we interacted with, and the minutes thereof. Allow me to also lay the original reports. I beg to lay, Madam Speaker.

Allow me to go straight to the report of the committee.

Madam Speaker, the committee considered the Bill through consultation with different stakeholders and hereby reports.

The object of the Bill

The object of this Bill is to amend the Value Added Tax Act, Cap 349; herein referred to as the Act:

- i) to expand the definition of electronic services;
- ii) to provide for a limit on input tax to activities related to output tax being accounted for;
- iii) to disallow input tax credit to a registered foreign supplier;
- iv) to provide for the declaration of Value-Added Tax on imported services by large unregistered persons and unregistered government entities; and
- v) to provide for ZEP-RE (PTA Reinsurance

Company), as a listed institution and for related matters.	While the committee received briefs on the proposed tax amendments to the Bill, there were no research reports given to the committee. The committee received briefs, but they do not highlight the cost of implication, the yield in terms of revenue, and the general impact on the economy.
Methodology	The committee also noted with concern, as reported in the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy Annual Monitoring Plan for the Financial Year 2022/2023 that:
The committee held meetings and received memoranda from the following:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Majority of the tax law amendments are not informed by tax-related analytical briefs; and b) Weak partnerships between the Tax Policy Department and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Uganda Revenue Authority (URA). This undermines evidence-based tax development mechanisms.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; ii) The Attorney-General; iii) Uganda Revenue Authority; iv) Uganda Law Society; v) Southern and Eastern Africa Trade Information and Negotiations Institution, (SEATINI-Uganda); vi) The Private Sector Foundation Uganda; vii) Uganda Manufacturers Association; and viii) PricewaterhouseCoopers. 	The committee further notes that the ministry responsible for finance failed to adhere to the previous recommendations of the Parliament while considering Bills for the Financial Year 2023/2024, that every Bill should be accompanied by a stand-alone evaluation or a regulatory impact assessment report.
All the communications were attached in what I have laid, Madam Speaker.	Stability of the tax regime
Observations and recommendations of the committee	The committee observed that the frequent amendments of tax laws have caused challenges for both the taxpayer and URA while administering the taxes. The committee attributed this to the absence of a comprehensive tax policy.
Madam Speaker, the committee made the following observations and recommendations based on the minister's proposals and the stakeholders' views:	Therefore, we recommend that the finance ministry establishes a comprehensive taxation policy to address, among others, the stability of the tax regimes.
General observations and recommendations	Silence on the new international tax measures
Revenue and certificates of financial implication	The committee observed that whereas the minister presented new tax policy measures in the 2024 tax Bills, with the exception of the levy on petroleum products, there was a notable absence of measures covering the international
Section 76(2) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 requires that the Certificate of Financial Implications of a given Bill should indicate the estimate of revenue expenditure over a period of no less than two years after coming into effect.	
The committee noted that the Certificate of Financial Implication issued for the Bill, was inadequate as far as detailing the estimates of revenue for each of the next two financial years.	
Generation of tax proposals	

trade taxes. At the same time, the projected tax collections under international taxes were projected to decline slightly on a year-on-year basis.

The committee further established the tax policy on international trade is agreed upon jointly by the Council of East African Community (EAC) ministers responsible for finance. Accordingly, Parliament is never given its constitutional duty to scrutinize tax policies under this category.

Recommendation

The committee, therefore, recommends that the minister should always report to Parliament, at the earliest opportunity, after the meeting of the EAC finance ministers, in order to afford this House an opportunity for an input into all the new tax measures, Madam Speaker.

Clause 2 and 4: Amendment of sections 5 and 10 of the Principal Act

Section 5 of the Act provides for persons who are liable to pay tax, and these include in the case of a taxable person, the person making the supply in the case of an input of goods, the importer, and in the case of a supply of imported services other than imported services, the person receiving the supply.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ogwang, we still need your input. Whips and Ugandans out there, this is the most important legislation that we are doing. If people are charged high taxes, it is because you have not been here to represent your people. So, when people stay out there and leave few others to be here, then the mistake is not on anybody, it is on the people that you voted for. Afterwards, you start blaming URA, who is just executing what has been passed here. So, all the whips; you need to have your Members in the House. This is a very important sitting.

MR KANKUNDA: Section 10 of the Act provides for the supply of goods by auction, and was amended in 2023 to treat a supply of goods made by the auctioneer as the supplier in the course of auctioning goods.

The committee, therefore, noted that the proposed amendment is intended to clarify that the recipient of the proceeds of the auctioned goods is responsible for accounting for VAT on the sale of goods under Section 5.

The committee further noted that the amendment of sections 5 and 10 of the Principal Act is intended to clarify that where a debtor's property is disposed of through a sale, then the supply is treated as made by the debtor and not the auctioneer/creditor.

Further, the auctioneer/creditor is not entitled to a credit for any input tax incurred against the output tax and shall be liable to pay the output tax payable on the supply.

The committee, therefore, recommends that the proposal be maintained in the Bill since it provides clarity and eliminates ambiguity in the treatment of the auctioned goods.

Clause 3: Amendment of Section 7 of the principal Act

Clause 3 proposes to amend Section 7 of the principal Act (4a), by repealing paragraph (c) Section 7(4a)(c) of the principal Act states that a person supplying goods or services for consideration as part of his or her business activities, but who is not required by subsections (1) or (5) to supply for registration, may apply to the Commissioner-General to be registered in accordance with Section 8.

The committee observed that section 7(4a) (c) of the VAT Act allows persons engaged in commercial farming to register for VAT despite the fact that their supplies are exempt from VAT. They are, therefore, allowed to claim input VAT without charging output VAT on their supplies.

The committee further observed that removing commercial farmers from the list of persons who may apply to the Commissioner-General to be registered in accordance with Section 8 of the Act denies them the opportunity to claim input credit.

The committee also observed that the removal of commercial farmers from the list of persons who may apply to the Commissioner-General to be registered for VAT undermines the contribution of the commercial farmer to the Ugandan economy.

The committee recommends as follows:

- i) URA should strengthen its tax education; and
- ii) The proposed amendments should be rejected and Section 7(4a)(C) be maintained in the Act.

Clause 5: Amendment of Section 18 of the principal Act

Section 18 of the Act provides for taxable supply.

Clause 5 of the Bill seeks to amend Section 18 of the Act by inserting paragraph 18(9) to include that the supply of goods or services by an employer to an employee for no consideration is considered a taxable supply except where the employer was not entitled to input tax credit.

The committee was informed that the employers are using this avenue to give free taxable goods to the employees without consideration, but claim input credit for the goods supplied. This is an abuse of the law since URA, on the other hand, cannot recover the output tax.

Through the proposed amendment, the taxable supply should be treated as having been made for a consideration equal to the fair market value of the supply and should only apply to employees' benefits, which are taxable supplies under the law.

Therefore, the committee recommends that clause 5 of the Bill be passed.

Clause 6: Amendment of Section 42 of the Act

Section 42 of the Act provides for a refund of overpaid tax. The proposed amendment seeks to amend the provisions by increasing the threshold for claiming the refund of overpaid tax from Shs 5 million to Shs 10 million.

Whereas the committee received a proposal for the increment of the threshold to Shs 50 million, we observed that increasing the threshold will have the effect of incapacitating small and medium enterprises (SMEs) from claiming for the overpaid tax, which will negatively affect their business.

The committee observed that this is intended to reduce the number of taxpayers claiming refunds. Refunds below Shs10 million shall be automatically carried forward to offset the output of the next financial year.

Therefore, the committee recommends that clause 6 of the Bill be passed.

Clause 7: Insertion of Section 66A into the principal Act

Clause 7 seeks to introduce a new provision to the Act by imposing a penalty for failure to withhold tax. Accordingly, a withholding agent who fails to withhold tax in accordance with the Act shall be personally liable to pay to the Commissioner-General the amount of tax that has not been withheld, but the withholding agent is entitled to recover this amount from the person. Furthermore, the provision will apply to the liability imposed as if it were a penalty for non-payment of tax.

The Minister informed the committee that currently there is no law compelling designated withholding tax agents to withhold VAT. Therefore, this amendment seeks to compel the withholding agents to withhold or face the inconvenience of paying for the taxpayers and pursue a reimbursement.

The committee observed that the proposed provision has the implications of compelling a withholding tax agent to remit 6 percent of the withheld VAT. As a consequence, this is not accounted for in the VAT input returns. It also has an implication of ensuring URA of a minimum of 6 percent of any VAT received or withheld by an agent. This is not accounted for in the VAT input returns and disadvantages the supplier.

The proposal shifts URA's mandate to the taxpayer on account of failure to withhold tax. In addition, all URA-registered taxpayers are required to issue EFRIS or invoices and this gives URA visibility of transactions by such taxpayers.

Recommendation

The committee finds no merit in the proposed amendment and recommends as follows:

- i) The proposal should not be adopted; and
- ii) The imposition of a 6 percent withholding tax on the VAT is inconsistent with the VAT Act and therefore, the ministry should harmonise the regulations. *(Applause)*

Clause 8: Amendment of the First Schedule to the Act

Clause 8 seeks to amend the First Schedule to the Act to include African Reinsurance Corporation (Africa Re); the International Regulatory Board of the East African Power Pool and Islamic Cooperation for the Development of the Private Sector.

The committee notes that Africa Re is an African Union institution established in 1976, by the AU member states and the African Development Bank. Uganda was among the founder signatory states, with 22 shares and, thus, receives dividends.

Article 51 of the establishment agreement states thus: *"Each member state shall undertake to waive and refrain from imposing any administrative, practical and financial restrictions that would hinder, in any manner, the smooth functioning of the activities of the corporation."* It also provides that each member state shall exempt the corporation from all duties and taxes arising from the corporation's activities in the member state's national territory.

The committee further noted that Islamic Cooperation for the Development of the Private Sector is part of the Islamic Development Bank (IsDB) Group, which is already exempt

in the First Schedule of the VAT Act. It is a multilateral development financial institution that supports the economic development of its member countries by providing financing to private sector projects, promoting competition and entrepreneurship and encouraging cross-border investments.

The proposed amendment is intended to clarify that the Islamic Cooperation for the Development of the Private Sector, as an arm of the Islamic Development Bank, is also entitled to a VAT exemption to avoid disruption of its services to the private sector in Uganda.

The committee further noted that under the International Regulatory Board of the East African Power Pool, the Government has committed to promoting investment in the power sector and facilitating smooth cross-border energy initiatives within the East African Community Region.

The committee observed that the effect of the proposed amendment is to expand the refund of tax to international organisations under section 45 of the Act to include African Reinsurance Corporation (Africa Re), the International Regulatory Board of the East African Power Pool and Islamic Cooperation for the Development of the Private Sector.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that clause 8 be passed.

Clause 9: Amendment of Second Schedule of the Act

The proposed amendment seeks to amend the list of exempted supplies under the Second Schedule of the Act by:

A. Repealing

- i) postage stamps; and
- ii) software and equipment installation services to manufacturers;

The committee observed that the repeal of postage stamps and software and equipment

installation services to manufacturers from the list of exempted supplies is intended to broaden the tax base.

B. Including the following items:

- i) “seed cake” that does not include cat or dog food;
- ii) hoes;
- iii) the supply of electric vehicles locally manufactured or the supply of frame and body of electric vehicles locally fabricated;
- iv) the supply of electric vehicle charging equipment or supply of charging services of an electric vehicle;
- v) the supply of pesticides;
- vi) the definition of pesticides;
- vii) the supply of fertilisers, seeds and seedlings;
- viii) the supply of cooking stoves that use fuel ethanol, assembled in Uganda, up to 30 June 2028;
- ix) the supply of safety headgear; and
- x) manufacturers of an electric vehicle, electric battery or electric vehicle charging equipment or the fabrication of the frame and body of an electric vehicle.

The committee observed that the proposed amendments are intended to boost local production, public safety and environmental sustainability.

C. Excluding goods and services used for personal and domestic use by contractors and sub-contractors of hydroelectric power, solar power, geothermal power or biogas and wind energy.

The committee observed that the proposed amendment is intended to limit abuse of the exemption regime.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that clause 9 be passed.

Clause 10: Amendment of the Third Schedule of the Act

The proposed amendment seeks to amend the Third Schedule, which provides for zero-rated supplies by repealing the supply of seeds, fertilisers, hoes and pesticides.

The committee observed that this proposal is intended to achieve consistent treatment of all agricultural inputs, which have been exempted in the Second Schedule.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that clause 10 be passed.

I hereby submit, Madam Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, committee chairperson. Can we have the shadow minister? We have two reports.

1.05

THE SHADOW MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Ibrahim Ssemujju): Madam Speaker, the Value Added Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2024 -

THE SPEAKER: You can actually even give the shadow minister to read it.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, the background was given by the main report. The agencies that we interacted with – I do not have to go through that.

The main issues in this Bill are that one, if your employer, mainly a manufacturer, donates items to you, the Bill requires him or her to pay VAT on them. I want to give examples because we are not legislating for ourselves only. So, if you work in *Coca-Cola* and they give you 100 crates of soda for your wedding, the Bill now says they must tax them –

THE SPEAKER: Tax a donation?

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes, that is what the Bill says. It is because companies and manufacturers -

THE SPEAKER: Who pays the one who is donating? So, the companies now - Where is the minister?

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, can I read the report? (*Laughter*)

THE SPEAKER: Start.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, we have picked issues – those of us who are opposed to part of the Bill – that we think we need to pay attention to.

The first issue is that the Bill says that if your employer, say, a manufacturer, donates an item to you, he is now required to pay VAT on it. For example, if you have a wedding, as a colleague said here, and *Coca-Cola* -

THE SPEAKER: Like when Parliament gives you a car, Parliament should pay VAT?

MR SSEMUJJU: That is different because they are looking at the -

THE SPEAKER: For trading?

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: Okay, for trading – taxable goods.

MR SSEMUJJU: If they give you 100 crates of soda – if you have a wedding or function or you have lost someone – now, the Bill says the Government will tax your employer who is giving you those items.

The amendment is also introducing a penalty. I am - I think the committee now -

THE SPEAKER: Exempt?

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes, I think here we agree with the committee. The second point – but I simply wanted to draw your attention to it. The third -

THE SPEAKER: (*Mr Enos Asimwe rose*) Hon. Enos, I want you to bring your clarification after he has read the minority report.

MR SSEMUJJU: He is on the committee.

THE SPEAKER: Even if we cover only this one Bill – let us go slow on this.

MR SSEMUJJU: Hon. Enos is a member of the committee. He has signed a majority report, which means we disagree. I do not know why he is restless.

THE SPEAKER: We are looking at areas of dissent.

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes. So, Madam Speaker, the third issue is the amendment moving agricultural inputs such as hoes and pesticides. I simply wanted to draw the attention of Parliament to these issues. Let me now go to the issues of disagreement.

THE SPEAKER: What is wrong with those items?

MR SSEMUJJU: No, there is nothing wrong with them but we thought we needed to draw Parliament's attention to them, that they are in this Bill. Let me go to the substantial issues of disagreement.

The areas of dissent are:

- i) Non-compliance with the law;
- ii) Absence of a comprehensive tax policy and the timing of these amendments;
- iii) No study, no research; and
- iv) Penalty for not withholding tax.

Non-compliance

The Public Finance Management Act makes it a requirement that every Bill presented to Parliament shall be accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Implications. This certificate, under Section 76 of the Act states, "...shall indicate the estimates of revenue and expenditure over a period of not less than two years after the coming into effect of the Bill, when passed".

The certificate shall indicate the impact of the Bill on the economy. This, in simple terms, means the total amount to be spent on the implementation of the law and expected revenue. In this case, the cost of collecting the new taxes, *vis-à-vis* the amount realised. The Government committed itself to balancing the need for revenue collection and economic growth. You do not just close down businesses or threaten to close them over failure to pay taxes without looking at the other factors. That is what the Government committed itself to.

For example, you can close a company and lose 100 jobs. So, you will have lost the tax you want to recover, but you will also have lost a job. Game Store, for example, was closed because it did not pay Shs 23 billion. They did not pay the money after they closed but we also lost the jobs. That is why the law requires that you look at the implications of every proposal to the economy.

The Certificate of Financial Implications that Hon. Matia Kasaija issued dated March 27th, just one day before running to Parliament does not meet these requirements. It reads - and I have attached the certificates for you to read - "Since this is an amendment to existing tax provisions, there is no expenditure plan specifically different from the overall allocation of Shs 619 billion for Financial Year 2024/2025 and Shs 534 billion, for Financial Year 2025/2026, to Uganda Revenue Authority."

This is the certificate the minister issued for all five tax Bills. I do not want to invite you to debate in anticipation. I am only inviting your alertness that you will find the same certificate. They were just changing names and dates. The only change is the name of the Bill. No wonder all five certificates were signed on the same day and in one hour.

The minister does not know how much it will cost to collect the new tax proposals. If he knows, then he does not want to tell Parliament, as is required in the law. He, without any study, concludes that the new measure in this amendment will yield an estimated Shs

74 billion. That is what the minister says; no study. He says he wants to raise Shs 74 billion through these amendments to the VAT Act.

The Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy Annual Monitoring Plan for Financial Year 2022/2023 observed, like the committee said, that the majority of the tax law amendments are not informed by tax-related analytical briefs - this is what this Kasaija certificate confirms yet the same minister, in his letter introducing the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy for Uganda 2019-2024, committed to end arbitrariness. I would like to quote the minister; please listen. He said, "To achieve our revenue potential, we will move away from ad hoc annual tax policy changes. These piecemeal adjustments, with little alignment to an overarching strategy, have created a high degree of unpredictability and uncertainty in our tax policy direction. The Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy will address this, as well as ensure that our future tax policy embodies the principles of simplicity, fairness, citizen welfare and sustainability." This is what the minister said. They will no longer run the way they are running.

This is the commitment the minister made to the country in writing. This Parliament must hold this minister to his commitment that they will no longer run with small amendments here; they will now, after comprehensive policy review and study, come here because of the reason he said this causes to the economy.

The certificate does not show the overall impact of the tax proposals on the economy. Moreover, Parliament, as our honourable colleagues in the majority observed, recommended that in addition to all these commitments and the law, every Bill should be accompanied by a stand-alone evaluation or regulatory impact assessment.

There is no comprehensive taxation policy in Uganda

Madam Speaker, on 5 May 2022, concerns were raised by Hon. Gyaviira Ssemwanga, MP Buyamba, regarding the absence of a

comprehensive taxation policy in Uganda. This concern stemmed from the realisation that the Domestic Revenue Mobilisation Strategy formulated by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in 2020 lacked a well-documented taxation policy.

Consequently, Parliament on the same day, 5 May 2020, passed a motion, urging the Government to develop a comprehensive policy on taxation. Unfortunately, up to now, this Government, every financial year, introduces tax Bills without a taxation policy in place. This approach grants this Government unchecked discretion in determining which taxes to impose, which amounts, timing and targets. Often, this leads to unfair taxation that disproportionately burdens the impoverished citizenry.

During the debate, one of the Members who has now signed the majority report, Hon. Dickson Kateshumbwa, former Commissioner for Domestic Taxes, stated - and I want to quote here what he stated – that “we need to base our tax decisions on a structured policy rather than relying on ad hoc negotiations. This approach will enable us to uphold the principles we aim for and foster investment within our country.” That is what Hon. Kateshumbwa said here. I do not know which Kateshumbwa has now signed the majority report. *(Laughter)*

Hon. Asuman Basalirwa, President of JEEMA and MP for Bugiri Municipality, echoed similar sentiments, emphasising that effective legislation on taxation is typically preceded by a well-established policy framework. He highlighted the existence of numerous taxation laws that lack proper policy guidelines.

Madam Speaker, in the absence of such a comprehensive taxation policy, the hands of this Parliament are tied. The solution is to ask the Government to withdraw their Bills and return them when they are ready. I do not know how long you want to continue babysitting adults like Hon. Kasaija, Hon. Musasizi and company because you made a proposal and told them “Go and do these things”. They have now returned without doing them; they are

saying, “Go ahead –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Gorreth Namugga, you are clapping on babysitting Hon. Kasaija, your grandfather! *(Laughter)*

MR SSEMUJJU: I said you are babysitting adults. That is why –

THE SPEAKER: No, I am asking Hon. Gorreth Namugga.

MRSSEMURJU: The minority is complaining.

Timing of new tax proposals

Madam Speaker, there is already instability in the tax sector as the main report has reported. Traders have just re-opened their shops. There is a general feeling of over-taxation with very little to show for it, in terms of social services.

Roads in Kampala City, Kampala metropolitan districts of Wakiso, Mukono, Mpigi and other areas in the country have completely broken down. There is a general outcry that leaders are swimming in luxury at the expense of taxpayers.

The other day Parliament approved a supplementary budget of Shs 1.1 trillion, including Shs 576 billion that was gifted to Mr Mathias Magoola. What do you think citizens will feel about this; that you are collecting to give away?

This needs to be addressed before any new tax measure is proposed. We need to restore confidence; stability is a key principle in taxation. Taxes should be introduced at least every five years. That is what the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development committed himself to do - not annually like it is with this Government.

If the country is still crying with the implementation of existing taxes, is your answer to impose new ones? Why don't we first deal with the leakage; corruption, and use the savings to finance the budget rather than thinking of new tax measures? *(Applause)*

You, Parliament, are going to be blamed for new taxes as you are blamed for the old ones. For once, you can say no to them. I can skip the penalty for not withholding - later we reached a consensus - *(Interruption)*- this is my report; you are asking why - did I ask you why you included that? *(Laughter)*

Tax on donated items

I have referred to this. I think here we are being inhuman. How do you impose a tax on items that have not been sold? We are in a way stopping companies and manufacturers from incentivising their workers. If an employee of Coca-Cola has a wedding or a funeral and the company donates 100 crates, why charge the company VAT? This, I am asking the Parliament to reject.

Madam Speaker, we have attached the Certificate of Financial Implications. Members may not have picked a copy for you to see that this is not better than a cheat. We have also attached a letter from Hon. Matia Kasaija and highlighted the specific paragraph in which he said the Government will no longer now come to Parliament with piecemeal amendments like this; this is a letter from the minister.

I hope you can go up where we have highlighted; the third paragraph but you can read it because we made sure - I think that is it. This Parliament has no option but to tell the minister to follow the law. When he does, I will gladly come here and we will begin debating and supporting. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon Nathan -

1.22

MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County West, Sironko): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I tackle the issue, which is under clauses 9 and 10, there are just three small things I want to put ahead.

First, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is looking more at income but not looking at expenditure. That is the reason why now and then they are bringing more tax proposals to collect more.

Number two, you asked a question, "If we don't pass this Bill, is there any problem?" There is no problem. There is an existing law and it will continue to be in force; you do not need to worry. *(Applause)*

Number three, is about the changes in prices, especially in fuel. I think we should also address the issue of other costs - *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: Please go ahead.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: The third one is the increase in prices of commodities. I think we are looking at only taxation but also there are other issues like exchange rates. For example, if the exchange rate at which you bought fuel was Shs 3,700 per dollar and now the cost is Shs 3,900 that means that change in the exchange rate will be put on the fuel.

We import all our fuel and even the clothes we put on. That is the reason when you go to the market you will discover the price is going high, but basically it is not the tax but the change in the exchange rate is upward. Therefore, you better get your fuel.

The fourth one I will concentrate on is to help Members debate while knowing that in taxation, donations are not allowed unless it is categorically put in the law that this is a donation that will be allowed maybe to a charity or some institutions which are known. Therefore, if a donation is not allowed, that means that if you donate, you should be taking care of everything, which goes with it. For example, if I want to make - I do not want to talk about Coca-Cola; let me talk about beer. Supposing I am going to wed and I work for Uganda Breweries and they give me 100 crates of beer, I only take 20 and sell the 80 - in the same market - that means that you have to be very careful when dealing with donations and exemptions.

Madam Speaker, having said that, I descend on two clauses; 9 and 10. Clause 9 proposes to move hoes, pesticides, seeds and fertilisers from zero-rated under Schedule 3 to Schedule 2, as exempt. The moment you make it that

way, it means the cost of hoes is going to increase. How?

Some people will lie to you that to these people of Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) and finance ministry, exemption means zero; it means that all the costs related to that hoe if they are not allowed for Value-Added Tax (VAT) purposes, will be added on the price of the hoe. The reason I am coming here is to tell you that under clause 9, we should not accept hoes to be exempted, and clause 10 should be deleted; simple. I have finished my case.

Let me give you a simple example; I am selling hoes and I rent a shop on which I am paying VAT. If I am not allowed VAT on the shop I have paid as a rental, then that price will be added to the price of the hoe.

This is an agricultural country and we have not reached there; we need these items to be supported. If some items in Schedule 2 are related to agriculture and we have forgotten to deal with them, it is now high time we moved them from Schedule 2 to Schedule 3. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Next time, let us have one minority report; we can combine them and have one. That will be with respect to our Shadow Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Honourable members, this is a committee report and the minister has heard it; he may want to simplify things where he wants to concede so that it makes the debate easier.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to thank the committee for coming up with a good analysis and also appreciate our minority colleagues for taking the time to analyse our Bills very well.

Indeed, I would like to simplify things; there is where we agree and at times disagree and I want to go point by point.

I begin with the Hon. Nandala-Mafabi, the proposal not to move hoes and other

agricultural items from Schedule 3 to Schedule 2, I strongly agree. (*Applause*) Since you have accepted, I do not have to labour justifying it. Hon. Ssemujju –

THE SPEAKER: Is that okay with you?

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Madam Speaker, that is fine. That is what should –

THE SPEAKER: Shadow minister, Hon. Jonathan, I do not want us to continue debating on things, let us go straight.

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, on the proposal by Hon. Ssemujju not to tax offers given by employers to employees, I strongly disagree on account of the following and I want to use an example.

Assuming you work with a company, say; involved in the production of soda and this company, every Friday, decides to give you one crate of soda to take home for the kids to enjoy over the weekend. It will give you this crate of soda on cost plus Value Added Tax (VAT).

We, therefore, expect you to receive this soda on the cost plus, assuming you decide not to use it for your personal use, even if you use it for your personal use, you become the last person whom we call the last consumer, and you should pay the VAT. Even if you decide to sell it, you should also sell it plus VAT.

Therefore, I would like to invite Hon. Ssemujju and the House to appreciate the whole idea, the whole supply chain of VAT. These are not goods of a specific nature. They are goods for consumption. You are not donating Shs 1 million for my wedding. You are just foregoing to sell this item at a price.

In other words, this product can be exchanged for a price and here, we strongly disagree and the committee, good enough, also disagreed with him. I therefore support the committee's position.

On withholding, why I agree with the committee is that we regularly appoint withholding tax

agents. To say, Hon. Nsereko and Company Limited, dealing in a particular business, we appoint you as our withholding tax agent for VAT purposes and then you start collecting on our behalf and remitting to the Government.

In addition, if for one reason or the other, you fail to withhold knowingly or unknowingly, this is a voluntary service you are providing to the Government. We should not penalise you for failure to do something, which you have an option not to do.

As Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) we should strengthen ourselves when we talk about efficiency in tax administration. These are some of the things we should look at instead of bothering our taxpayers. So, here I agree with the committee.

On the Certificate of Financial Implications –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the only thing that we will now debate is what we are not in agreement with. He is moving very well. It is not talking for the gallery.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. There are also other matters that the minority report by Hon. Ssemujju brought out. One of them is non-compliance with public finance.

THE SPEAKER: Even the major report.

MR MUSASIZI: You will agree with me that the judgment is highly subjective. It depends on how we and Parliament would like to look at it.

Therefore, I pray that we allow time to cure this expectation gap. The two of us going forward can agree, that is the law but how do we interpret the law that is what I am saying. How we and Parliament are interpreting leaves some expectation gap.

What Parliament would like to see and what we exactly know is supposed to be done. Therefore, I pray that we give some time in the future, maybe next year when I come back here to report, we shall have closed this gap.

What was the basis of our proposals? All our proposals are anchored on our domestic revenue mobilisation strategy, which we are implementing from 2012 to 2017.

I invite colleagues to support us; we committed in this strategy that we shall raise the tax-to-GDP ratio from 13 to 18 and 20 per cent in the long-term.

All efforts we are making are geared towards that direction. I thank you, and I invite *-(Interjection)-* the tax policy is before Cabinet for consideration and once Cabinet takes a decision, I will inform the House accordingly.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Goretti, do not heckle.

MR MUSASIZI: Hon. Goretti, when I am speaking about these matters, it is in your interest.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us reconcile what we have agreed and what is left outstanding. Hon. Jonathan Odur you have not been following. Honourable members, we have agreed that the issue of –

MR ODUR: I was on the point of order, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MR ODUR: Last year and many other years before, the honourable minister has consistently told us that this policy is before the Cabinet, even last year. We allowed him to proceed on the understanding that he would bring it thereafter. It is now two years plus. Is he in order to come and –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, we presume that the Cabinet sits every Monday. You have kept on telling us it is still in Cabinet.

MR ODUR: What I am saying is that when they sit Cabinet - last time you communicated - they go idling around and yet there is a serious matter of policy to discuss *-(Laughter)-* that is what I wanted to draw your attention to; idle talk in Cabinet.

THE SPEAKER: When he talks about idle talk in Cabinet, I said and I will repeat it. When you go to Cabinet and start idling, talking about issues of how Parliament has been corrupted not to pass RAPEX Bills, how Parliament is not doing its work and you forget to do your job; that is the idling we are talking about – *(Applause)* - we are not talking about you as Hon. Musasizi. We are talking about those people who were having idle talk.

However, you need to tell us what the position is. You are not an idler. You are a very good minister – honourable members, hold on.

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, it is not true that last year I told this Parliament that the policy was before Cabinet – *(Interjections)* - it is not true. I am sure you know I am a Mukiga. I do not tell lies. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker –*(Interruption)*

MR SSEMURUJU: Madam Speaker, sometimes we allow our colleagues space but they must not misuse it. Earlier when you were asked about the prices of fuel, you said the law of supply and demand is what applies. Last year, you wanted the law changed so you could become a monopoly and import petroleum. Have you forgotten that the law of supply should apply there too? Therefore, is the minister in order to come here and deny that sometimes he tells lies to Parliament?

THE SPEAKER: Maybe I am just fortunate that I have never heard his lie because he is a Mukiga. *(Laughter)*

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, to cut the long story short –

THE SPEAKER: The Attorney-General is standing.

1.43

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): I am a Ugandan. Madam Speaker, on the issue of policy, we all know that the Cabinet is the policy-making organ of Government. However, we also know

that the National Planning Authority plans, incubates, researches and helps us formulate policy as a Government.

Therefore, there is a process and that takes time. It is unfortunate if that incubation is haphazardly done and what is presented before you as you demand is riddled with insufficiency and holes.

I wanted to say that indeed, there is a process for making this policy. When the time is right, the Cabinet will pass that policy and bring it to the House. It would be wrong for this House to push the Cabinet to present a policy that is still under incubation. The policy can only be presented when it is ready and proper. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we are almost there. We have almost resolved all the legal issues in the Bill. The outstanding issue is the compliance of the law, which you just need to explain to this House. Hon. Kateshumbwa, do you have something to say?

MR KATESHUMBWA: Madam Speaker, I just wanted to give information so that the Members can debate from a proper technical point of view on the issue, which Hon. Ssemurju raised about the donations –

THE SPEAKER: That has been sorted.

MR KATESHUMBWA: We agree.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you will bear with me. Even if there are people who are members of the committee like Hon. Nathan, when it comes to taxation, I will allow him to speak. When it comes to value added tax (VAT), it is Hon. Kateshumbwa or Hon. Elijah of Kasilo. Those are people who were managing it; then, of course, the shadow minister.

1.46

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Madam Speaker, I do hear the Deputy Attorney-General when he says that we, for now, should accept what is half-baked.

THE SPEAKER: Half-baked?

MR SSENYONYI: He said that we are dissatisfied –(*Interjections*)- actually, the words he used are that what you bring here has got holes and so on –(*Interjections*)- I am actually re-echoing the words that the Deputy Attorney-General used.

THE SPEAKER: Let us use the real words that have been used.

MR SSENYONYI: Let me use the real words that he used.

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR KAFUZI: Madam Speaker, this is Parliament, a national Legislature. I do understand that at times we have our own banter but there is a cropping consistency of disrespect. I do respect the Leader of the Opposition. Last week, he responded to me and said, “You should compose yourself.” He said it. It is on record. I do not know where it came from. Now, he is saying something similar to that.

Madam Speaker, I know the words I used and they are on record. I said Parliament should not push the Cabinet to present a haphazard policy. I said the policy is still under incubation.

Is it in order for the Leader of the Opposition to regularly want to put words in my mouth; impute words that I have not spoken. Is it in order?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we need to appreciate what the Deputy Attorney-General is saying. He says that we need a policy here. In addition, that the policy they want to bring should be one that has been completely done and will meet the test of time, not bringing something that is incomplete. That is what he meant.

However, when you say that he said half-cooked or half-baked is not correct. Leader of the Opposition, you are wrong.

MR SSENYONYI: Madam Speaker, when I use the word half-baked, I am wrong. This one is not even baked because there is no policy at all. Therefore, I am wrong when I say half-baked because this one is not baked at all. What I wanted to drive to –

THE SPEAKER: Anyway, it depends because I cannot say that it is baked, half-baked or it is in the process, because we do not sit in Cabinet.

Maybe, the Leader of the Opposition sits in that Cabinet. (*Laughter*)

MR SSENYONYI: Madam Speaker, to get to the issue, I wanted to drive Government to commit. When will we have the comprehensive taxation policy, so that we stop this back and forth, half-baked, not baked at all and so on? We need to have proper –

THE SPEAKER: Now, you are talking as the Leader of the Opposition.

MR SSENYONYI: No, even the other time I was talking as the Leader of the Opposition so that we can hold them accountable. Hon. Musaasizi has just denied that last year he did not promise us this. So, we want –(*Interjections*)- whether it be him, the Prime Minister is not around, we need a proper commitment. When does this come?

THE SPEAKER: We need a commitment and –

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker, this year, I have made a commitment that we shall bring a comprehensive tax policy before this House. By the end of this year, we shall have presented this policy to this House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you are still here. If he does not bring it by the end of this year, it is just six months away. If he does not, we will hold him accountable.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: I thank the Leader of the Opposition for insisting because we have got something from my brother, Hon. Musasizi.

The reason we are asking for a tax policy is because taxes must be predictable. If they are not predictable, you can see why people are striking. It is because they are not so sure. Even if it is a good tax, but if you have not told people, they will not understand.

THE SPEAKER: And then the administration of it matters.

MR NANDALA-MAFABI: Yes, and world over, when you are going to change a tax, it takes five years. But for us here, because of lack of the tax policy, you wake up at night, bring it to Parliament and in a few minutes, it has been passed. That is why we have a problem with tax exemption and we are creating inefficiencies in Uganda Revenue Authority.

Whenever they discover that something is becoming hard for them to collect, they just bring here a law for us to pass it so that they go and sit back instead of enforcing it and we are paying them salaries.

If the minister is saying that he will bring a tax policy before the end of the year, there is a problem. You should be putting something across. For purpose of a tax policy to be out very well, it needs wild consultation.

Now, if you have done that, why don't you say that within one week, I will bring a draft to the House to see how far we have gone and it will help.

Hon. Maxwell is here and he will agree with me. That is the best way to move. Before this budget, say, this is how we have gone, and that is how we believe that within six months, there will be a tax policy out, but this is the draft. It will help.

MR SSENYONYI: Madam Speaker, as I go to the final issue, which is legal, I just want to emphasise to the Government the reason we are insisting on this, is because a policy gives you direction. Last year, you brought an amendment to this same act. This year, you brought another one. Which direction do you move in? Once there is no clear policy, then

we shall be operating using the word that I was using earlier on in a half-hazard manner and so on.

That is why we are insisting on this policy. It will help you also, because when we are asking you where does that come from? You say, "Here is a taxation policy from which it is emanating". Now, this is coming out of the blue.

Lastly, the legal issue regards the Certificate of Financial Implication (CFI). Both reports are in consonance to say that this Certificate of Financial Implication, a copy of which I have here is defective. They only disagree on the resolution.

Madam Speaker, with your indulgence, let me just read the two subsections of the Public Finance Management Act, verbatim so that we know that it is a serious issue. This is Section 76(2). "The Certificate of Financial Implication issued under subsection (1) shall indicate the estimates of revenue and expenditure over not less than two years after the coming into effect of the Bill when passed." That is missing. We are here talking about the law, not politics.

Section 76(3) of the Public Finance Management Act reads: "In addition to the requirements under subsection (2), the Certificate of Financial Implication shall indicate the impact of the Bill on the economy". That is not here in this Certificate of Financial Implications. I am quoting for you the law. *(Applause)*

In essence, this is defective and both reports agree. We have got a precedent that was set last week. Some Bills had to be thrown out.

Hon. Kasolo was here and we told him that the Certificate of Financial Implications that he had was defective. He had to go back and sort himself out. We need to be smart and organised, even legally.

The minister should withdraw this Bill, go back, put his house in order, and comply with the law. *(Applause)* We are not going to suspend this particular provision of the law; Section 76 of the Public Finance Management Act.

We do not have the mandate to suspend, but we can only suspend our rules. However, Acts of Parliament are Acts of Parliament; they are law. I implore the minister who is not listening; maybe I give him a minute.

I am glad the gentlemen are letting go of the Speaker so that this point is delivered home. Attorney-General and Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, this is for you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, there are things we need to hear from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. On the first part, he did very well; he complied and made his commitment, although I have told him to reduce the time of his commitment.

MR SSENKYONYI: Madam Speaker, while the gentlemen were consulting with you, there was an issue that I raised, which if you allow me in a minute to raise it again so that it is drawn to their attention and to you as well. The defectiveness of the Certificate of Financial Implications –

THE SPEAKER: I was communicating to the minister, that he has to come on the Floor and clarify on the issue of the Certificate of Financial Implication. He is the one to respond not me.

MR SSENKYONYI: Finally, I was quoting a precedent, which we set last week. We had to throw out Hon. Kasolo's Bill until he went and reorganised the certificate of financial implications so that we could follow the process smoothly, as the law prescribes. Otherwise, people are going to take us to court.

You know, we have law students who are in law schools, studying how Acts of Parliament come into effect and how legislation is done. Therefore, when we have precedents that are not in consonance with the law, it is not good for us.

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, this House is being broadcast live –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Musasizi?

MR SSEMUJJU: Madam Speaker, allow me a second. What you have just witnessed here is exactly what happened when the committee was processing these Bills. I sympathise with my colleagues that you assigned to chair the committees – you on the NRM side.

In fact, they made the same observation and one Member of Parliament – I will not say the name; these are in-house – he was saying: “But, with that observation, the Bill has collapsed.” He asked: “How could we improve the observation?”

Even the observation was edited. *(Laughter)* Let them deny it – if they did not edit the – *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker – and, I beg the indulgence of colleagues – there is a difference between the Bills of last week and these Bills that we are considering now. These Bills are supposed to facilitate the budget for the Financial Year 2024/2025. It is for just one year. You cannot ask me about the projected revenues for two years when the Bill is for one year. *(Interjection)*

This is why I said that because we have experienced an expectation gap between what Parliament wants us to put in the Bill and what we think should be there – Parliament or the law – *(Interjection)* - putting me on order does not give you anything. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members!

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO: Madam Speaker, the reason why not every person presents a policy on taxation or proposes a tax on the Floor of Parliament is based on – *(Interjections)*- pardon?

MR SSEMUJJU: The motion, Madam Speaker, is that we adjourn –

THE SPEAKER: *(Members rose_)* Honourable members, please, first wait. You are the ones who are saying that we must handle these things systematically. Honourable members, can I have *—(Members rose_)* What have you resolved?

Honourable members, I ask the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the shadow finance minister, both attorneys-general, the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs and the Shadow Minister of Justice Constitutional Affairs, the Government Chief Whip plus Hon. Nathan, to go and harmonise. Honourable members, go, harmonise and come and report back to the House.

Hon. Jonathan, you are the shadow Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, I said it. Even the committee chairperson.

I am giving you people 30 minutes to go and harmonise as we go for lunch. Hon. Nathan, did you hear that I am giving you people 30 minutes? I am suspending the House for 30 minutes.

(The House was suspended at 2.06 p.m.)

(On resumption at 3.00 p.m., the Speaker presiding.)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we have had a meeting but first of all, I want to thank the Leader of the Opposition so much for bringing that legal issue on the Certificate of Financial Implication on the tax Bills.

On the issue of the policy, we can be flexible and say we will bring it but there are matters we cannot be flexible on, especially issues of the law.

Based on that, we will need the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to bring an addendum to the Certificate of Financial Implication.

ADJOURNMENT

I now adjourn the House to Monday at 10.00 a.m. Minister, come with the addendum.

(The House rose at 3.01 p.m. and adjourned until Monday, 6 May 2021 at 10.00 a.m.)