



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIFTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

TUESDAY, 16 SEPTEMBER 2025



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FIFTH SESSION - 15TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Tuesday, 16 September 2025

Parliament met at 2.14 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. We are glad to host the Chairperson of the Speakers' Bureau of East African Countries, Rt Hon. Moses Wetang'ula, who has been here with the Speaker of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA); the Rt Hon. Speaker is hosting them.

The issues we discussed related to the next EALA games. Honourable colleagues, as you may know, the next edition was supposed to be hosted by Burundi. However, Burundi informed the Bureau that they would not be in a position to do so due to issues beyond their control.

The Speaker of EALA and the Chairperson of the Speaker Bureau, the Rt Hon. Wetang'ula, had to fly here to consult with the Rt Hon. Speaker, the captain of our sports team, and the parliamentary commissioners. Uganda was supposed to host the 2026 edition, so they requested us - the most important consideration is that Uganda, Kenya, and Tanzania, which

are the original members of the East African community, are the pillars.

The meeting was also attended by the Opposition Chief Whip, Hon. "Bishop" Nambeshe - our presiding apostle, from Bududa District, who is also a prophet. *(Laughter)* A prophet of good things.

Anyhow, being the major pillars of the East African Community, and as you well know, Kenya just hosted the 2024 edition, Tanzania also said they are in elections, like Uganda, and they hosted the previous one.

Since Uganda was next in line, they requested that we host. We said that with our role within the Community, and because we are the next in line after Burundi, we agreed to that proposal. So, the next East African Parliamentary Games will be hosted in Uganda, from the 5th to the 17th of December.

As already communicated by the Rt Hon. Speaker, we urge you, honourable colleagues, to start training. This training is not only about games but also about our health; it is good for us. I hope Hon. Ssemujju will represent us very well.

If we can - we refused to include boxing because we knew some Members would not face any competition. So, I am very sure we are going to do very well.

Honourable colleagues, yesterday I watched a very disturbing story on the BBC television,

which also formed part of today's lead story in *The New Vision*, which said that someone has been trading certain Ugandans. I do not know whether he holds Ugandan citizenship; I cannot be sure. Though we know he is Ugandan-born, he has allegedly been trading in human beings, especially girls. Some of them, I am told, died under mysterious circumstances.

I know most of us interact with our people who are working in some of these countries. One of the things they told me is that some of the countries negotiate on their behalf. You find people working in the same environment and job, but the starting amount for country A is \$2,000.

For Ugandans, they leave you to negotiate on your own. I think we need to reopen that debate to look into the issues; the plight of our Ugandan workers, especially the girls who need much more protection, and the Ugandan migrant workers in the Middle East.

I know some colleagues had also told me that they wanted to react to that point, but we need to find a way. I do not know whether you will say that the minister should come and make a statement here, but what we need is more of action taken. When they are to report, they should be reporting on action taken. It was very disturbing. You see, someone talking about - what girls are told to do was so disturbing.

I urge the Government to take a keen interest in this matter and follow it up, especially on those young girls who died, whose parents could not afford to repatriate the bodies, and they were buried in what is marked as an unknown person's cemetery. A family would never settle.

I urge the Government to take a keen interest. Honourable colleagues, we can agree on how best we can get a report after that, but I would urge the Government to take a keen interest in this matter to comfort Ugandans. Yes, Hon. Sarah Opendi.

2.23

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to welcome you back

and congratulate you on winning the NRM primaries. I do not think you have presided over this House since then.

Anyway, the EALA Games aside, I want to propose the introduction of football for women because women are now playing football.

Mr Speaker, on the most serious issue of these unfortunate girls who were taken abroad, a lady got to me from Western Uganda. Actually, it is partly the reason I was calling you.

This lady narrated her story. She said that she was taken to Dubai. When she reached there, she thought she was going to work in a supermarket or something. Only to find herself in a sex brothel, and finally, she escaped and found her way back. She came and reported the case to the police.

Mr Speaker, it was extremely sad to know that the police mishandled this lady's case to the point of actually calling her a mentally ill person. She even went and met the Prime Minister. Fortunately, she intervened. They had even confiscated her phone, which had evidence, though later, the police returned the phone, only for the Director of Public Prosecution to close her case.

Mr Speaker, where should somebody seek justice if, when they report such a case, the police instead turn against them? I have this woman's contacts, and I have been in touch with her. This implicates one of us here, a Member of Parliament, because she went out using this person's company.

Mr Speaker, it is actually - (*Mr Ssasaga rose*) - no, I am not going to mention their name, but it is a fact. The issue I am trying to raise is that many girls actually go abroad -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a point of order.

MR SSASAGA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Sarah Opendi, in her submission, said one of the honourable members of this House is implicated in that scandal. She has been talking while facing many of us on this side.

(Laughter) Isn't it in order, Mr Speaker, for her to name the honourable member, for purposes of the record? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable members, there are issues that are in the public domain. There is an honourable member who was accused - and that might be the case - please, just wait.

When I saw the story, and the lady reached out to me, I reached out to her; I talked to her. I want this on record. I made a teleconferencing call to the honourable member and the lady and asked him what had happened. I asked the lady how she wanted the honourable member to help her, and she said she wanted to return. She said those people had denied her that because they needed a certain amount of money, which was about Shs 3 million.

The honourable member said he offered to pay that money so that she could come back, but she did not respond. The lady said that she did not know the place he was telling her about and did not want to get lost. In fact, the lady asked him who told him she needed his money, and that all she wanted was to be allowed to return home. She had contested for a political position in a certain district; I did not know the deeper story.

I offered to help. I told them I was going to Dubai, and that while there, I would call her and take her to that exact place where they would clear her, but I was going to work with the embassy. When I called the embassy, it was ready to take the lady. The honourable member said that even if she did not need his money, the embassy would need it, and he sent it to her.

When I reached Dubai, I called the lady and she told me to give her money. I reminded her that she said she did not need money, and asked what she had done with the money that had been given to her. She said she was staying on the street. I asked why she was arrogant when she needed the money, and told her to be very open. I was with the deputy ambassador, and we wanted to help her. I told her that I was going to put her on a flight and bring her back

if she was stuck, but she gave me bills. I told her that she did not need anything but a stamp in her passport to return. I also told her that that is not how I do things and that I work with honest people.

After two weeks, I saw a story that I was also involved in human trafficking. *(Laughter)* I wondered how we judge honest people. I had only offered to help, and I did not want to be involved in this matter anymore.

When you talk about the honourable member - I guess that is the case - it needs to be looked into very well before we condemn any Member on the Floor. I went deep into it, and I wanted to help, but that is how I left her in Dubai. Otherwise, I wanted to come back with her because I had offered to buy her a ticket.

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am glad that confirms –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I was supposed to give my ruling. We should keep it at that. I can confirm that I know about a case where a Member was accused, and I intervened, but I was not helped by the person who was accusing him, though later I discovered that the politics of the area had come in, and the issues were beyond Shs 3 million, which was needed.

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for confirming that. However, the point I was trying to make is that the issue of sexual exploitation or taking girls abroad for such things is actually known, and it is a reality.

Mr Speaker, we had come up with the Employment (Amendment) Bill, with the hope that it would help us address how these people are taken out, and where they are taken to. However, the Bill is still with us here. We have not yet processed it. It was sent to the President and returned. How I wish that Bill would be concluded.

Secondly, the Sexual Offences Bill equally touches the issue of sexual exploitation. We even have the same problem, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, these are crimes committed outside Uganda. On the Employment (Amendment) Bill, I remember someone proposed that we need a special law to address the issue of migrant workers -

MS OPENDI: Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. We tried to tackle the issue of the migrant workers in the Employment (Amendment) Bill. But since those are laws, the urgent thing to do - if this House has time - is for the minister to come and update us on this issue regarding - *(Interjections)* - no, it is just like the Bible, we keep going to church and we are told every other time.

Mr Speaker, this is a story that has featured on the BBC News and on social media. The man has actually been saying he is untouchable; that he is the police, the embassy, and everything. This is a Ugandan who has been doing this.

Mr Speaker, I propose that the minister comes here with a statement, and thereafter, we can map a way forward on how to deal with the matter. Otherwise, the issue of people leaving this country to go abroad to work, and when they arrive there, they call MPs to save them, is actually big; I have handled some of these cases.

Mr Speaker, that is my proposal. As I conclude, this was a reaction to your communication. Maybe you will allow me to raise something else, since we are still in communication.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is it related to my communication?

MS OPENDI: No. *(Hon. Byakatonda rose)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Workers.

2.33

DR ABDULHU BYAKATONDA (Independent, Workers Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I associate myself with your communication, and equally congratulate you upon the victory in the party primaries.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of labour externalisation, I came up with a Bill, the Labour Externalisation and Management Bill, 2024, and we have done rigorous research with a number of economies, including the Philippines. The Bill requires us to move so that at least you can grant us leave. We even went to the Attorney-General, and he okayed it, and then we went to the line ministry.

We have had discussions with several stakeholders, Mr Speaker. I would treat it as a privilege if it is granted.

Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, this chair cannot grant leave; it is the House.

DR BYAKATONDA: It is the House; I beg your pardon. Mr Speaker, currently, nationwide schools -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, please, can you limit yourself to my communication? If you have a matter of national importance, there is a procedure for raising that.

DR BYAKATONDA: Much obliged.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Ssemujju had a procedural matter. Honourable colleagues, I will give you two minutes each.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, we raised here the issue of human rights violations within the area of our jurisdiction. One of the National Unity Platform (NUP) supporters, called Eddie Mutwe, was locked up in a basement and tortured. Someone who tortured him was on social media celebrating.

Mr Speaker, the procedural issue that I would like to raise - we have pleaded with this Parliament to allow us to have that matter debated over the torture within our own country.

Mr Sam Mugumya, you were with him as the young people in the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC) – but up to now, we do not know where he is.

Mr Speaker, the procedural issue is whether we should elevate cases of torture that have happened beyond our borders and not deal with torture that has happened within our jurisdiction. This is because you have a number of our people being abducted by the military, headed by Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, who tortures people and goes on social media to celebrate.

This Parliament is very angry that our girl – *(Interruption)*

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, I am raising a point of order on an honourable member. He was once with us, joined the National Resistance Movement, but now he has crossed to squeeze me here.

Is he in order to come and place me in my comfortable seat, well knowing – I mean the honourable member from Soroti, Hon. Ariko, who was in the FDC but joined the NRM; he has crossed the Floor.

Mr Speaker, is it really in order? I know you are very passionate about the seating system and the order of sitting here. Otherwise, you can see that he is even talking when House proceedings are going on.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I saw the opposition chief whip call Hon. Ariko to come over. I do not know whether he is trying to make him defect from here. Please, I request you do this after here.

Honourable members, the rules do not allow us to cross the Floor unless we have free seating. Thank you.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I am raising this procedural issue for your help. We have raised this matter to date - I even attempted to move a motion of adjournment and have all the other matters stayed, and have that matter debated.

Before we go to - and I am not saying that this is not a serious matter. Issues of our people outside Uganda is a serious matter.

You even heard a criminal in America who said, “Do not take me to Uganda where people are tortured”.

Mr Speaker, the procedural issue is whether the debate that we have requested should not precede this particular matter that has come as a result of reports in the newspapers and on the BBC in the last two days.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, Hon. Ssemujju, we take all matters here, especially those of human rights, seriously. That is why you have always brought them up. We have the Committee on Human Rights, which has done several reports. The problem is how the law is structured, which is where we stop, as the Parliament of Uganda.

We have made several recommendations on several issues. It does not mean that because we have a matter that some of the Members consider very serious, when other serious matters come, we do not consider them. You have matters whereby two lives were lost. One of them, the family, has not even had closure. A child was buried in the cemetery of the unknown. Isn't that a very serious matter that we should look at as the Parliament of Uganda?

To me, it is a matter of ensuring that we always give you time and space to raise these issues so that we can debate to make recommendations. We have done it on several occasions.

Therefore, all matters are critical, and I think we are doing the right thing in allowing colleagues here to talk about this critical issue. You may never know this family, which does not even have those to speak for it. This is because we, the politicians, have a lot of people who can speak for us. But some do not have those to speak for them. Maybe it can be an opportunity for their issues to be raised, and the Government takes action.

The Government is responsible for its citizens, wherever they are.

Even if they are under a certain law in a different country, the Government should come in, in case Ugandans, anywhere - the other day, the honourable shadow minister of minister foreign affairs raised the issue of our children in Myanmar, and the Government took action and they were brought back.

Therefore, this House uses that opportunity to fight for anyone who needs support. Honourable, let me first allow the shadow minister of foreign affairs, and then Hon. Amero.

2.40

MR MUWADA NKUNYINGI (NUP, Kyadondo County East, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker and colleagues, for amplifying this matter. As a shadow minister, I have had the experience and opportunity to interact with Ugandans in the diaspora. It is true that Ugandans, mostly in the Middle East, face unending challenges. Many are several times found in distress, and indeed, we receive so many distress calls but specifically from the United Arab Emirates.

I have also had the opportunity to look at the story that was aired by the BBC, which speaks to what we have been seeking: that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs must come out and explain where the delay in negotiating enforceable bilateral agreements is. This is one of the critical areas we need to address. With enforceable bilateral agreements, like other countries have done, for example, the Philippines, our nationals would be protected while abroad.

It is also a double-edged sword. We need an explanation from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, because largely, many of these are trafficked. We need to interrogate why trafficking is on the increase. Trafficking is at our borders. This has to be addressed locally when we are to speak about trafficking and how people exit, especially under questionable circumstances.

For those in the Middle East - we still have Ugandans who are still distressed in Myanmar

and Cambodia. I have had distress calls from Ugandans, especially women in India. We watched the BBC story. The work conditions can only be improved by the Government, through our Ministry of Foreign Affairs and our embassies, negotiating, and we support them in the enforcement of bilateral labour agreements. That will safeguard the rights of our workers wherever they are deployed abroad.

Otherwise, when it comes to how they exit the country, we also need a response from Internal Affairs. What is their take on human trafficking? We need to interrogate where those cases are that the Government has prosecuted traffickers locally here.

We must deal with both the trafficking through our borders and also the welfare of our nationals when they travel to foreign countries. This is not only in the UAE, but also largely in the Middle East.

Let us deal with negotiating bilateral labour agreements, and let Parliament support the enforcement of these bilateral labour agreements. This is because some of them may even have financial implications. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from the Greater Nebbi Development Forum (GNDF). They are represented by Hon. Phiona Nyamutoro, Hon. Esther Afoyochan, Hon. Catherine Mavunjina, Hon. Isaac Otimgiw, Hon. Hashim Sulaiman, Hon. Agnes Acibu, Hon. Jane Avur Pacuto, Hon. Emmanuel Ongeirtho, Hon. Lawrence Songa, and Hon. Gabriel Okumu. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* You can stand up for recognition. Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, also in the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers of Mbale Secondary School, Mbale City. They are represented by Hon. Masaba Karim and Hon. Nakayenze Connie Galiwango. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Further, in the public gallery, I had been informed earlier by the Leader of Opposition that he has a team from the National Unity Platform (NUP) - Western Uganda, who are being vetted to see who can contest against some of us. *(Laughter)* They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Let us give them a warm welcome. *(Applause)* Thank you.

I had allowed Hon. Susan Amero - honourable colleagues, let us just do two minutes, quickly.

2.45

MS SUSAN AMERO (Independent, Woman Representative, Amuria): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in appreciating your efforts to raise these issues and, passionately, the way you have.

Mr Speaker, there is one thing that we need to look at very carefully: the issue of the recruitment of these people who are left in the hands of individuals. The Government has always taken over some things and performed well. Why doesn't it take over the issue of recruitment of these workers so that it is fully responsible, so that we, as a House, can appropriate resources to take care of those issues?

When these people get problems there, the Government should know where they sent certain groups of people and should be able to repatriate them. In other countries, it is the Government that takes charge of such issues, but because we have individuals doing this, they take anybody and they confiscate their documents - Mr Speaker, you and I faced a challenge in Bahrain. You remember when we found people whose passports had been taken, others had passports that had expired, and they could not renew them. Others were sick and needed treatment. So, if such people were sent there by Government, then it would have records.

Otherwise, this business of just about participating in issuing operational licences to companies or individuals - there is no way we can vet the right people to go there, and there is no way we can begin following this.

I request that we take up this issue seriously and let the Government take the lead every quarter, sending out whoever we are sending out. This way, we will know the number of people who have gone where because they will be registered, and so, we can follow up with them wherever they are. Also, let the Government negotiate for better deals; we cannot be going out to do prostitution, or shoddy jobs and yet other governments are negotiating for better contracts. Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I think it is also important to know whether these people went through labour recruitment firms. This will help us to know who can be held responsible. There is a procedural matter from Hon. Odur.

MR ODUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The procedural matter I am raising is: you communicated to us, and the point I picked from your communication is that there is an international criminal running what would be equivalent to the modern slave trade, picking girls and selling them to be dehumanised in ways that cannot be described here.

The procedural matter I am raising is about how we have veered off the matter on the slave trade, to debating as if we are suggesting that the Government should take up the responsibility of selling Ugandans abroad for such things, and mixing it with the issue of labour externalisation.

The procedural matter I want you to guide us on is whether we could restrict ourselves to this criminality that cannot be justified, whether by an individual, an institution or by the Government; it does not have a place. We should not even be debating and suggesting that there is a better way if the Government is the one that does it. Of course, if the NRM government wants to do it, no problem, but on our side, I do not think it is something that can be accepted

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. What Hon. Jonathan Odur is saying is very clear, but it also shows that what is coming

from Members. It shows that this matter is way beyond what we are even discussing here. With our rules, we have to remain within the framework of what has been suggested.

Honourable colleagues, don't you think it would be prudent for the minister to bring a statement because even if this is an international criminal, there are Ugandan girls, Uganda features everywhere. So, the minister – oh, yes, I had allowed the LOP earlier.

2.49

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, it is good we are discussing this very critical matter. I did watch that documentary. Very grotesque images and stories of our young people who leave this place to go and seek employment but eventually, they are hoodwinked because many of them are taken and told that you are going to work as a security guard, you are going to work in a restaurant, in whatever the case might be and they end up in an illegal, coercive prostitution ring where they are sexually abused.

It is the responsibility of Government to care for Ugandans here and abroad. I am actually surprised that the Government has not come out to communicate to the country about this situation and what they are doing. We had expected that that should have happened with immediacy, so that we know that you are in charge, so that we know you are concerned about these young Ugandans. The Government has not done that yet, and I do not know why.

Many of our young people who go for these jobs come back in body bags. We see them crying out, saying, "Government, help us", at the very least, to transport the body back. Government does not do that. We do not understand why.

Mr Speaker, as we demand a statement from the Government, we want to be a lot more action-oriented. Even before the statement, can we see the Government begin to take steps to protect these Ugandan citizens? A number of them go through these firms that are registered by you, the government. They export them, externalise

them to wherever, and then they end up in this confusion. We want to see action.

However, most importantly, Mr Speaker, the bigger issue we need to resolve as a country, that we need to work hard towards, is finding a remedy to youth unemployment.

The 2024 National Population and Housing Census results showed that between the ages of 18 and 30, 16.1 per cent of those young people were unemployed. What is even more bothersome is that those who are employed are either underemployed or they are doing very odd work, work that only enables them to transport. What they earn is simply enough for transport and does not include feeding, they cannot get where to stay, and that is a challenge we have on our hands. Any young person is desperate to go and work wherever. So, when they hear of an opportunity, they will run quickly to go and board the plane, and unfortunately for them, to come back in body bags. That is something we need to resolve and remedy as a country.

Now that we have this at hand, we want to see action from the Government, taking quick steps, so that a few months down the road, we are not hearing stories of other girls being brought in body bags. Thank you.

2.53

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, when this documentary came out, the Prime Minister directed the Minister for Labour to investigate the matter and actually even update the Cabinet in the coming days, but also take some action. So, Government is already in action in terms of investigating the matter and making sure that we prevent this from happening to even other Ugandans.

Regarding whether the Government should take over the process of externalisation of labour, I think we are doing it better with private companies, as long as the Government has a hand in sieving out who is going and who is doing this.

On the issue of the Bill, the Minister, as he makes a statement, will also be able to update the House on how far the Bill has gone. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, let us have a statement next week, especially focusing on those cases of Ugandans who died. We really need to know how you followed it up. We also need to know whether these people indeed went through firms, which are licensed by the Government, or whether they went on their own. Thank you. [*Hon. Nambeshe rose*]

Honourable colleagues, matters of national importance. Honourable, do you want to re-open this matter?

MR NAMBESHE: No, just a quick procedural issue, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I love your new style of beard, Hon. Nambeshe. It is better than the old one. That is for the prophets. (*Laughter*)

MR NAMBESHE: Thank you for the compliment, Mr Speaker. However, on a serious note, I come with a procedural issue about the statement that you require from the line ministry.

Mr Speaker, you are aware that the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009, providing even penalties and prevention measures, is implemented by the line Ministry of Internal Affairs.

However, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, which the acting Prime Minister or the Leader of Government Business is alluding to, is even in charge of having some of these unlicensed companies, which have degenerated into exploiting our girls and boys who are trafficked to the Middle East.

Therefore, is it not procedurally right Mr Speaker, to have a comprehensive report; to have both ministries furnish this House with the two statements?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, let us have a statement from the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, who will consult with the rest of the Government agencies, including the Ministry of Internal Affairs, on those parts, because this is the one in charge of licensing.

The minister can consult the Minister of Internal Affairs or any other Government entity that does not fall under their ministry to give us a full statement. Hon. Oseku?

2.56

MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I agree with your guidance that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development takes the lead.

However, I would like to point out something specific, that we are very concerned about the element of crime. In the report by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), there was something disturbing: the authorities in Dubai seemed not to have treated this matter very well.

Therefore, I observe that this is not limited to the authorities in Dubai, because we have an International Police (Interpol). As the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development moves in to act and furnish us with a report, as Parliament, I thought that it would be good that we observe and provide the guidance that in the immediate, we interest very keenly the Government of Uganda through the Ministry of Internal Affairs, specifically, through the Interpol as an organ to ensure that they pick up this matter.

This is because quite good leads were provided in that report by the BBC, and so, they can swing into action to start on the investigations about those very gruesome deaths that were reported. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I can now see you submitting as a retired security officer; you have already swung into action.

This is what we expect the minister to include in the statement: what they would have done as part of the action. We cannot do much about that now. I have also been informed by a colleague that we need to know the companies that are licensed to take people abroad. When one goes to the ministry to ask which companies are licensed, we receive many calls. I was taken by this and that company, and you find that we do not know.

I also think that they should be published so that they are clearly known. Colleagues, let us move on. Please, Leader of the Opposition (LOP)?

2.59

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, thank you for granting this indulgence. Firstly, to join you in welcoming my colleagues, some of our leaders from Western Uganda, led by the National Unity Platform (NUP) Deputy President in charge of Western Uganda, Madam Julie Jackline Tukamushaba. Thank you for welcoming them. *(Applause)*

One of those people is going to contest against the Rt Hon. Thomas Tayebwa - *(Laughter)* - such is democracy. The indulgence I was seeking, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that why you asked for space? *(Laughter)*

MR SSENYONYI: No, that was just a quick preamble. What I am seeking is your indulgence on a matter that is very urgent. Schools have opened this very week, and we have a challenge. Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) has called for a sit-down strike.

They are concerned about salary disparities, commitments made to them by the Government over the years that have not been fulfilled. These teachers are saying, "Let us lay down our tools because our engagements with the Government have not borne any fruit." A few teachers have gone to school saying, "Let us teach because it is the end of the term and we should not disorganise the students."

Others are saying, "It does not make sense to go and teach other people's children, yet mine cannot go to school because I cannot afford it. These are very critical concerns. This is the closing term where assessments are made, people get promoted, or otherwise. Can the Government help us to understand what they are doing about this? In the past, when there have been such strikes, the Government has come and intimidated these teachers.

Today, I saw the acting Resident District Commissioner (RDC) of Kumi District, a one James Kyomya, has threatened to arrest all teachers in Kumi District, who are on strike. That is completely unacceptable. The Government normally tells teachers to be patriotic to go and teach. Will you be patriotic first by fulfilling the commitments you made to these teachers?

It is an alarming issue. The Government needs to tell us what they are doing about that right now. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, when I saw this issue, sometimes as a leadership of Parliament, we reach out to the Government to ask if they can comment on certain issues before we update the House. I reached out to the Minister of Education and Sports personally, and she told me there are consultations that are being made, and they are going to update us, but all of them are aimed at resolving the impasse.

I am going to again cross-check because we shall need this House to be updated. I totally agree with you. Matters of national importance, Hon. Kwizera Wa-Gahungu?

3.02

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. There is an issue that has attracted national attention regarding rural electrification in this country.

When we rationalised the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), we expected better performance. When there was Umeme buyout, we also expected a better performance, but we are seeing things going to the contrary.

I am a member of the Committee on Natural Resources. We appropriated through this House, Shs 36 billion for rural electrification. We also provided for arrears of Shs 40 billion, which is about Shs 80 billion. This running quarter, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development released only Shs 200 million, which is only for administrative expenses.

There is nowhere in the whole country where rural electrification projects are underway, and the contractors have also stopped due to the government's indebtedness. The Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development is responsible for releasing funds. Instead of releasing money, say Shs 20 billion per quarter, you released only Shs 200 million. I do not think that the energy ministry wanted it, because even the energy ministry itself is complaining; they are stuck.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, your prayers?

MR KWIZERA: My prayer is that you direct both the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to explain to this country why we expected better performance after rationalisation and even after the Umeme buyout. I thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Energy, this is your docket. If the minister for finance is to supplement, he will.

3.04

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Energy) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Mr Speaker, he has stated a fact that while we have the funds, and we thank you for budgeting appropriately, the releases are poor. We are actually not able to go to where we promised to deliver electricity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Have you engaged the finance ministry?

MR OKAASAI: The Minister for Finance is here, but I recall that the finance ministry had made a commitment to provide the money, so I ask my colleague to come and clear the air.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, would you like to add anything?

3.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (General Duties) Hon. Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is not under the Ministry of Energy alone. If you realise, all our entities that spend on the development budget did not receive money this quarter.

However, in quarter two, we are working out the numbers, and we shall be releasing 50 per cent of the development expenditure. This will take care of rural electrification, roads and other areas of spending, which are critical. I kindly appeal to the House to be patient with us. The next quarter is not far from now; funds will be available.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. If the ministry is to release 50 per cent, it means that they would have covered money for the first and second quarters, which would be up to date. (*Hon. Ssekikubo rose-*) Honourable colleague, I do not like it when a member shifts from their seat and comes towards the microphone. You should always, in fact, coming towards me with a more than serious face - Hon. Ssekikubo, when you are coming towards the Speaker, come smiling so that I know there is no problem. (*Laughter*)

3.07

MS MARGARET RWABUSHAIJA (Independent, Workers' Representative): Mr Speaker, the issue that we are talking about is so disheartening because in Kabale, where the minister who has just been talking comes from, since August of last year up to today, the teachers in primary who are on the Government payroll have not received their salary. It is the same with those in secondary schools and other institutions.

I brought it on this Floor of Parliament, and our Leader of Government Business, the Prime Minister, gave me a piece of paper without an answer, which was put in the pigeon hole, saying that she had written a letter to the Minister for Education and Sports and that she would be telling me where it is.

However, it is very bad that these people working for the Government have been brought down. I talked to the minister himself, and he asked me why I talked about it when he was around.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, a salary is a statutory obligation. It is not a matter of release. Okay? Therefore, we need to know whether this is a matter of a release or beyond a release. Honourable minister, do you have anything - Hon. Sarah Opendi had an issue to do with salaries. She can raise it so that -

3.09

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Rt. Hon Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate you because you gave me an opportunity to raise the issue of the police officers who had missed salary, some for one year, some for nine months yet, yet they were working.

Some of them got back to me after we raised this matter, saying that the police authority took action. Yes, they thanked me because a good number were paid. Maybe some have yet to be paid, but most of them have reached out again.

Secondly, I have equally received a complaint from the civil servants in my district in Tororo, and teachers in some other districts.

When I tried to follow up on the issue with the responsible Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) and the Ministry of Public Service, the excuse they gave was that the Government is migrating from IPPS to HCM.

Mr Speaker, if the Government is integrating, how come some of these people received

salaries earlier, then for four months they did not, and then received it, but then now for two to three months, they have not received their salaries again.

Therefore, it is not an issue, but rather, I believe this is just being used as an excuse. It seems some people within the Government may be doing something, either by creating loopholes so that you see me, and then I reinstate your name. It could be, and it is possible.

So, can the minister for finance, I know the Minister for Public Service is not here - come and explain to us how somebody can be on the payroll today but next month they are off and the other month they are on.

And if I am working, why should I be on and off? Is there something that is being done between finance and these local governments that is creating this? We are frustrating these civil servants. They earn very little. You can imagine children are going back to school now. How does somebody who has taken two to three months without salary take the children back to school?

Can the minister explain and also tell us what action they are taking on these CAOs, because you actually always bring a list of accounting officers here? Why is this happening in local governments? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister for finance, you can answer what you feel you can and is relevant to you, then those which are not, we can ask the Minister for Public Service to explain them too.

MR MUSASIZI: Madam Speaker - sorry, Mr Speaker, through the Chair -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Musasizi, Hon. Ssekikubo is at last smiling. So, since he is smiling, let us take the opportunity.

3.12

MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (NRM, Lwemiyaga, Ssembabule): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is in response to the

minister's assertion that money for the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) can only be released in the second quarter at 50 per cent.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, you are aware that the question of the budget is under the Public Finance and Management Act. We know that in each financial year we have four quarters. Now, failure to release money during the first quarter, you are skipping a lot of work plans that ought to be done, meaning that by the time you release the 50 per cent in the second quarter, you are clogging the system, the plans and activities. That is why you have the quarterly releases.

Unless it is in the nature of front-loading, you can say we gave you the money. But for you to withhold development budget, and this is cutting across the entire economy, then you promise to do so in the second quarter - Mr Speaker, we act according to the timelines. It therefore means that the Government is failing the entities, which are the users of these budgets, and consequently, as a country, we will have money released but not spent. The questions of accountability will arise and lead to systemic failures.

Can the minister confirm that it was not their intention and promise to do so immediately because the activities are all at a standstill? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, honourable minister.

3.14

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I would like to start with the issue of salaries. From the finance side, we know, as you said, that salary is a statutory obligation, which must be paid by the 28th Day of every month. Payment of salaries is decentralised, meaning that accounting officers at every level are in charge of their wage bills. Perhaps there are issues of ins and outs, skipping one month or the other, but from our side, we know that the

Government wage bill is fully financed and all obligations are paid monthly as they fall due.

On the one of Kabale, there is an issue, which we are dealing with. I was supposed to have dealt with it during the budget process, but I did not get proper – there was miscommunication. There were two requests; one was picked and the other was not picked at that time, but I am handling it.

Hon. Ssekikubo, yes, you are correct. The budget is split into four quarters. At the beginning of each quarter, by the 10th Day of the first month, we release funds as and when they are available. Mr. Speaker, yes - *(Interruption)*

MR SSEMURU: Thank you very much, finance minister, for yielding the Floor and Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. As you respond to Hon. Ssekikubo, the clarification I am seeking is whether this was done deliberately or if you did not have the money to release.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, honourable minister, for giving way. Mr Speaker, if there are any civil servants who are required to fill forms almost every month, it is the lower civil servants, including teachers. Whenever they are asked to fill out forms, they fill them.

The clarification I am seeking from you - we had a similar challenge in Kalungu – is: how often do you supervise Chief Administrative Officers (CAOs) to know how they are carrying out their work? The problem is not with teachers; they fill whatever you want, spending money every day, with their meagre resources. When you ask the CAO, he says the challenge is in the finance ministry and that they have directives.

Secondly, when do you communicate to our civil servants to let them know that there will be a delay of a particular time so that they can be patient while waiting? Civil servants at the lower levels have filled forms as and when they have been required to do so, but they are always frustrated. When do you supervise CAOs? Monthly returns can be a cause for failure to send money if you know that. At the end of the

day, teachers suffer, yet the challenge is not on them. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, as a Member of Parliament, I share the concerns that the Hon. Ssewungu is raising: the endless filling of forms, especially at the district level. I beg the indulgence of the House that we sit with our colleagues in public service and come up with a harmonised response to this matter because it involves finance, public service and the districts.

Honourable *PPF*, Ssemujju, is asking if we have the money or not. We have the money, but the priorities - the money we have is less than the needs. What we do is to prioritise what to pay first in quarters one, two, three and four. At the end of the day, we strive to finance the budget fully by the end of June.

In the first quarter, our main priority is debt settlement. We make sure that all our debt obligations are cleared. In quarter two, we cover development and quarter three onwards, not forgetting that statutory obligations must be paid as and when they fall due and also the protected votes. The funds for these must be released on a quarterly basis as and when they are needed. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. For the record, Hon. Ssemujju belongs to the People's Front for Freedom (PFF), not PPF. *(Laughter)* We who used to fall sick know the pain that PPF used to inflict on us.

Honourable minister, how much time do you think you need to bring the statement? Should we say - is public service here? I do not see the Minister of Public Service. Honourable minister, is a week enough for us to have a comprehensive statement?

MR MUSASIZI: Yes, Mr Speaker. I think a week is adequate for us to jointly work on this statement and inform the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us do it on Wednesday next week. Yes, Hon. Milton Muwuma.

3.21

MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I raise on a matter of national importance, and this is to do with the stalled construction works at the Busoga University site in Iganga.

On Sunday, I paid a visit to register the progress made by the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) Engineering Brigade, which was contracted to do the rehabilitation and reconstruction of the existing infrastructure.

However, what is on the ground is that the works are at 70 per cent of what is expected, yet they had committed to complete it by June this year. The commitment from the Government was that in August this year, the university was due to open.

Mr Speaker, as we talk, the site is abandoned; there is no work going on. There was a lot of excitement and commitment from the Minister of Education and Sports, who came to hand over the site to the UPDF Engineering Brigade. The commitment was that by August this year, the university would be starting. There was a lot of excitement and anxiety.

Mr Speaker, I have two prayers. The first is that since over Shs 3.8 billion was already paid out to the construction team, let them embark on the 30 per cent that is outstanding, such that the university can start. Secondly, we want an update from the Minister of Education and Sports on how far they have gone, as far as establishing a public university is concerned.

The commitment was for last month, August, yet we are in September. Some students had expected to enroll last month. They would like to know what is happening. We request the Minister of Education and Sports to come and update the country and the stakeholders on that matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a direct matter. The ministry can update us tomorrow.

Hon. Ephraim Biraaro -

3.23

MR EPHRAIM BIRAARO (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju) Thank you, Mr Speaker. I raise this matter of national importance, as a Member of Parliament from Buhweju West – a coffee-growing area – and, two, as a member of the parliamentary coffee forum.

Mr Speaker, in July this year, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries circulated a form, which I am holding here – and I will later lay it on the Table – requesting the willing and needy farmers to ask for coffee plantlets for this season, which is September and October, for planting. A few days ago, we talked to some of the people in the agriculture ministry, and they said there are no coffee seedlings because the policy has changed.

We wonder: if the policy changed and the people need coffee, did the agriculture ministry circulate the forms for requests to create anxiety and expectations?

My prayers are that:

1. The Ministry for Agriculture responds and fulfils the promise it made through this advert and publication requesting applications.
2. The ministry sets a standard on how farmers throughout the country will receive coffee plantlets.

Mr Speaker, I request to lay the form, which was circulated by the Ministry for Agriculture, on the Table for reference.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kindly lay it. (*Lt Col (Rtd) Rwamirama rose*) Hold on, honourable minister. He has to mention the document that he is laying.

Hon. Biraaro?

MR BIRAARO: Mr Speaker, I am laying on the Table a form circulated by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries requesting farmers in Uganda to apply for coffee seedlings. This was done in July. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is the source? Where did you get the form from – for record purposes?

MR BIRAARO: The form was circulated on the forum for the parliamentary committee on agriculture. It was circulated by a commissioner from the Ministry for Agriculture.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the commissioner on your forum?

MR BIRAARO: Yes, please.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: A government official is on your forum! Chairperson of the agriculture committee – who is in charge of the forum? The source of the document is important.

3.26

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Ms Linda Auma): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is true that the application form was on our forum, but it was not put in by a commissioner. A commissioner is not a member of our forum. Our forum has members of the committee and the technical team.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister - (*Members rose*) - let us first know whether the minister knows about this.

3.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (ANIMAL INDUSTRY) (Lt Col (Rtd) Bright Rwamirama): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, the person raising the matter is a member of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries – and we have appeared before them. They know that the policy shifted: the money for seedlings and planting materials was taken to the Parish Development Model (PDM). We have also ably circulated lists of certified farmers who can give genuine planting and stocking materials.

However, there has been increasing demand for coffee seedlings, especially in areas which

were traditionally not coffee-growing, but are suitable, such as northern Uganda – Zombo – and some new areas. We are still under consideration.

I beg to be given time to give a comprehensive statement on coffee in a week's time. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Therefore, honourable minister, for now, there are no seedlings being distributed by the Government?

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: There are no seedlings being distributed –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: ... or, to be...

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: What is available for us, now, is to support the already existing farmers with fertilisers, to make sure that we, the existing coffee, and it is going to be done through the district and extension workers.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson of the agriculture committee?

MS LINDA AUMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is true that the policy shifted. However, in our plea as a committee – even when we were rationalising government agencies, we complained to His Excellency the President on the need for more seedlings and the amount that a farmer needs to incur for him or her to plant coffee.

In the corrigenda we received during the last budget processes, the Government allocated funds for procuring coffee seedlings. As I am aware, there is a release for coffee seedlings this quarter. However, there is tension. On the ground, farmers want coffee seedlings. In northern and eastern Uganda, gardens are ready for coffee seedlings. The budget was passed, and funds were released in the last quarter, but they were diverted to arrears.

I am concerned – and this is something that the House needs to help the nation with. There were appropriated funds for coffee seedlings, but we

are now talking about fertilisers, chemicals, and inputs. Are we really fair or equitable?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu?

3.31

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Mr Speaker, I pray that Lt Col Kanyontore can listen to me as I raise this matter. There is a challenge in the running of Government institutions. The form is from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, but when you go to PDM, it is under the Ministry of Local Government.

So, the questions they are asking you, my good friend, are supposed to be answered by the Ministry of Local Government, which is supervising and managing PDM. However, the form for coffee seedlings is from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry, and Fisheries. So, how do you organise your house?

The committee chairperson is saying that they passed the money, but you brought PDM under the local government ministry and are running away from your document. Therefore, how do you appear here, Lt Col Bright Rwamirama?

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Mr Speaker, I was very clear. I said that I will bring a comprehensive report in a week's time. I have also given you the circumstances prevailing now. We can only – also, you must be aware that the Government, in this regard, will respond to demand. There is demand, which exists in the areas I have mentioned – mainly areas which were traditionally not coffee-growing areas, but which are suitable for coffee growing. We also have demand from the central and other regions.

I will come with a comprehensive statement on the subject matter, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, let us get a comprehensive statement on Tuesday next week. I was only concerned - when I was talking to Hon. Biraaro, I thought it was an advert, but when it is like a form, which has

no source – who owns it? That is why I was asking: what is the source?

You can see the confusion we are in. (*Hon. Ssasaga rose*) No, honourable colleague, you know the procedure for raising matters of national importance.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On this particular issue, honourable member?

3.33

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is that the Government has to take Ugandans seriously. You know that you have a mandate to deliver services, you are the same Government that Parliament has provided money for, and then you issue a call, which is in July this financial year, coming from the same Government. When you reach here, one minister disowns the whole process.

I have always questioned whether these ministers are actually serious about the money that is provided to them to run Uganda and provide the services that people need, and we are always dealing with that confusion here every time. Can they go back and organise themselves? I know we have six or seven months to entertain the Government - we have no option - but they should be serious because we cannot be wasting time, and then we entertain these sorts of things. It is really disheartening.

It actually wastes the time of Members of Parliament when you come and ask questions, and then there is no plausible answer from the Government. Are they in charge? Have they been demoralised? Are they tired? What is the issue?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Bright, let us also pick Hon. Namugga and you respond at once.

MS NAMUGGA: Mr Speaker, I do thank you for giving me this opportunity but also to seek clarification from the honourable minister. He said that fertilisers are in more demand than the seedlings –

LT COL. (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: I did not say that.

MS NAMUGGA: You will clarify. As he comes with a statement, let him also update us on how far he has gone on payment for the seedlings that our people supplied the previous season. Yes, the fertilizers are on demand but you have domestic arrears of close to Shs 60 billion. When do you intend to pay our farmers, honourable minister? You need to also give a statement to that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister.

LT COL. (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are serious, and I am, for that matter, because whatever I said is a statement of fact. I responded that I would bring a comprehensive report on the matter in a week's time.

Two, I never said on the *Hansard* that fertilisers are more important than seedlings, and Members will bail me out. I talked about what is available now, which we are distributing to existing farmers to ensure that the already planted coffee does not suffer because of drought or failed weather conditions. Therefore, like I said earlier, I will bring a comprehensive report on the matter next Tuesday, to be specific.

For the arrears, we have already paid some, and we are working with the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development to address the issue. We receive money on a quarterly basis. When they gave us the quarterly release, we paid whatever it could sweep from the arrears. We are also going to address it in the next quarter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. You will go a bit deeper and tell us the procedure of how one accesses the fertiliser, for example, because it sounded as if you have already started distributing. My constituency, which survives on coffee, has not received a single bag. We do not know where to apply. In your statement, you could guide, say that, for farmers who want fertiliser, apply

through this way, and all of us will be able. Also, tell us whether it will be for free or cost-sharing.

3.37

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance pertaining to a road connecting Obongi to Moyo District, which is a national road serving both host and refugee communities. This road belongs to the Ministry of Works and Transport. A company called Jetcom was given a contract to work on it. What they did basically was grading.

The road is in bad terrain that requires improving the drainage, offshoots, and culverts. Unfortunately, for about four or five months now, the company has abandoned the site. Apparently, when it rains, Obongi is cut off.

My prayer is that the Ministry of Works and Transport, which supervises that work, ensures that Jetcom does good work. In the event that Jetcom has abandoned the site and is not ready and willing to do work, the ministry for works under force account responds to that road as a matter of urgency because Obongi is getting cut off from Moyo. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let the minister respond on Thursday. Finally, Hon. Kato Mohammed.

3.39

MR MUHAMMED KATO (NRM, Katerera County, Rubirizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand here to raise a matter of national importance, especially regarding the electricity supply in my constituency. I have about three sub counties, which have not had electricity for almost three months. Those sub counties have schools and health centres III. The good thing is that I have the minister here for Energy. I humbly request that he come and explain to the people of Katerera why they have been in a blackout for all this time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister for Energy.

3.40

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY)

(Mr Okaasai Opolot): Mr Speaker, a blackout means they already have infrastructure. If so, I will send a technical team to find out what the problem is. They have had a blackout for three months. It is a case that can be investigated and rectified.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you and please get in touch with the honourable colleague. It will be very helpful. Next item.

LAYING OF PAPERS

(I) A PROPOSAL TO BORROW UP TO UNITED STATES DOLLARS (USD) 20 MILLION FROM THE ARAB BANK FOR DEVELOPMENT IN AFRICA (BADEA) FOR THE UPGRADING OF NEBBI-GOLI ROAD (16KM)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister.

3.41

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay a proposal to borrow up to United States dollars 20 million from the Arab Bank for Development in Africa (BADEA) for the upgrading of Nebbi-Goli Road (16 kilometres).

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The proposal is referred to the Committee on National Economy. Please, work closely with the relevant Committee on Physical Infrastructure – I can see the honourable commissioner seems to have an urgent issue.

3.42

MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I know the procedure, but I only want to let you know that this road is 120 kilometres. However, today the minister has presented a request to borrow money to work

on only 16 kilometres. I think this is an insult to the greater Nebbi. We have sat in this House and approved loans for hundreds of kilometres for other districts. At the last moment, greater Nebbi gets to a loan of 16 kilometres out of the 120 –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us have the procedural matter, and you will come after.

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister has laid the proposal to borrow, and I am sure it will go to the committee for scrutiny. I appreciate the issue being raised by the commissioner, but would it not be procedurally right that this matter be taken to the committee so that the committee can *-(Interruption)-* I am raising a procedural issue for the Rt Hon. Speaker to rule upon. Would it not be procedurally right that this matter goes to the committee, and the committee will interface with all the stakeholders? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Afoyochan, please take your seat. Hon. Opendi, I appreciate the procedural matter, but what the honourable colleague is raising is that the committee will limit itself to only what has been sent there, which is the 15 or 16 kilometres, which will not go beyond that. It is not an error because when you look at only \$20 million, on Thursday, it would be important for the minister to come because we have been talking about this road for a long time; a road which is just 120 kilometres, and only 16 kilometres have been done. I remember when I was hosted by Hon. Afoyochan, Hon. Gabriel and Hon. Mavenjina in Paidha, I was still the Government Chief Whip; that road is a gateway to the Democratic Republic of Congo. It is one of the roads which would contribute to this economy.

Therefore, let the minister come and tell us why he chose to do only 16 kilometres and when he will work on the rest. You never know; tomorrow, they might bring another portion. Hon. Afoyochan, have you completed your submission?

MS AFOYOCHAN: Mr Speaker, you have ruled very well. I am grateful, and we are

looking forward to receiving his response. Our people would like to know. This road does not even cover the entire Nebbi. That means that the whole of Zombo, which I represent, is completely left out. It is very painful for me to stand a million times behind this microphone singing the same song, and the Government that I serve diligently is not listening.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Otimgiw?

3.46

MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My sister, Hon. Afoyochan is right. Member after member have stood up to speak about the entire stretch, but we appreciate the effort of the Government to make sure that we have at least Nebbi-Goli Road done. Therefore, as we push to get the entire stretch of the 116 kilometres, it does not mean that we are not ready to accept the 16 kilometres for now.

Let us take the 16 kilometres, but continue to push for the entire stretch *-(Interruptions)-* I am not being selfish. What I am saying is that the entire stretch up to Zombo is a very important road, and we have continued to talk about it because if we totally send this away, it means we have no starting point for the moment.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Afoyochan did not say that you refuse the 16 kilometres; she recognised it, but where is the rest of the road? We might have a misrepresentation that the honourable colleague did not want this small stretch done. Let us be clear; the honourable colleague only said you have brought 16 kilometres instead of the whole stretch. So, can you explain to us why you are not bringing the whole stretch?

Let me allow another affected honourable colleague from that area, and we can conclude on it.

3.48

MR GABRIEL OKUMU (NRM, Okoro County, Zombo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Government for the 16

kilometres initiative and Hon. Afoyochan, the Commissioner, for bringing the voice of the people that the road is actually 120 kilometres. This road is very economical; we have coffee, two border points in the proximity, which are Goli and the district.

The initiative of creating districts is to bring services closer to people. Now, if we cannot extend the national road to reach the district headquarters, it is a disservice to the people. I would propose that we appreciate the 16 kilometres; however, as Parliament does appropriation, we can still stretch to at least 30 or 40 kilometres. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, the minister will come here to update us and give assurance to the honourable colleagues from the affected area—next item.

(II) PROPOSAL TO BORROW UP TO UA
91,700,000 EQUIVALENT TO \$121,961,000
FROM AFRICAN DEVELOPMENT
FUND FOR THE CONSTRUCTION OF
THE SOUTH SUDAN-UGANDA POWER
INTERCONNECTION PROJECT (SUPIP)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

3.50

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table a proposal to borrow up to UA 91,700,000, equivalent to \$121,961,000, from the African Development Fund for the construction of the South Sudan-Uganda Power Interconnection Project. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Proposal referred to the Committee on National Economy in consultation with the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources. Hon. Ssewungu, you have a procedural issue?

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me. I thank the minister for laying all these loan proposals. However, we raise

eyebrows on these loans and complaints from honourable members because there are several new districts, including mine, which do not have a single tarmac road, but when it comes to paying back the loans, we are always part of the payment scheme.

One time, Mr Tortoise visited heaven and borrowed feathers from the birds. He told them that when we reach and they bring food, we should ask whose food it is. The birds that gave him feathers never ate because whenever they asked whose food, the response was “All of you.” Mr Tortoise had named himself, “All of you,” and all the food was his!

Therefore, my procedural matter is: Why don’t we give priority to some of these new districts whenever we borrow so that three or five of them will have some money, through these loans, for tarmac every financial year?

In Kalungu, we only have one tarmac road from the church to the Nuns, which was given during the celebration of 100 years. I have been to Kalangala and visited several districts; many loans are brought, but no consideration. Lwemiyanga-Sembabule have some small tarmac these days. Isingiro District has.

Mr Speaker, why don’t you help us - when these loans come, even people from Kalungu and Mitooma are paying, but there is no benefit - not a single tarmac road for new districts - apart from those leading us from the main road that we have made. *(Hon. Musasizi rose)* -

Honourable minister, that is my prayer. So, I am tired of having all of you, and yet when it comes to eating, I do not get anything - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, that is for noting. Next.

MR MUSASIZI: However, Mr Speaker, I want to take note of Hon. Ssewungu’s desire to have a tarmac road going to every district. It is important to recognise that we do not have the money, and we cannot have it in the medium term to build all these roads.

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform the House –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu, the person you are saying should be kind enough to consider you, is the same person you are putting on order.

MR MUSASIZI: When he was speaking, I carefully listened.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order.

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, you asked the minister to take note of what I said. I am well aware that you cannot have all the funds, but I said, “Why don’t you at least pick some of those districts?” I am telling you, Kalungu, where I come from, the district main road is only 35 kilometres, and when you look at the traffic, it is even higher than the one in your district.

Therefore, is it in order, Mr Speaker, for the honourable minister not to respect what you have taken from my plea? *(Laughter)*- at least to please me for the day - that he has noted it, and you shall take interest in what I am saying. Because he might also be a beneficiary of what I am saying. Is he in order?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister is not in order for not taking note. *(Laughter)* - Is it clarification or procedure?

However, honourable colleagues, we are opening up a debate on something which is just laying of papers.

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, thank you for your indulgence.

I think when I listen to submissions from the honourable colleagues, the cry from Nebbi and all over the country - The leader of Government business could do us a very good service if they can sit as the Government and come to this House and say, “Now we have a term of five years which is coming to an end” to show every Member of Parliament here - either in their district, what the Government has delivered tangibly as a project in these five years. *(Applause)*

Many of us here, - and I sympathise with those who sit on the NRM, you have nothing to go and tell your people. In five years, there has been no road, no school, and no high-impact project, nothing. And the Government has been in place for five years.

Every term, the Government has a specific set of promises that it has made to the country. And that should be done. Therefore, if it pleases you, Mr Speaker – and to calm all this, the Leader of Government Business with this well-composed team of ministers, come and tell us what you have delivered in every area of this country.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. But now, colleagues, we have - *(Hon. Rwamirama rose)* - just wait a bit, honourable, I will allow you, Hon. Bright. But we have a committee in charge of Government Assurances and Implementation.

And Government Assurances include what was in the manifesto - what the Government promised to do. Therefore, is it the Opposition failing to point out the issues? Hon. Rwamirama.

3.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (ANIMAL INDUSTRY) (Lt Col (Rtd) Bright Rwamirama): Mr Speaker, it is not true, and it should not be left unchallenged, that in five years the Government has done nothing to show, and yet we have been commissioning facilities all over the country.

If you have not done your work to understand where the budget you appropriate goes, you should go and find out. We can bring a list here because we are always here for appraisals.

And things have been done. For instance, in my constituency, I have two new primary schools built, running water, and electricity -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, what I pick from what Hon. Jonathan was saying is that the Prime Minister should bring a report of what they have done

in the past five years. However, every year, we receive a budget performance report, showing clearly where the money has gone and what has been achieved and we budget against work plans.

Therefore, when we say that there is nothing - maybe in Hon. Jonathan's area there might be nothing, but what I picked was simple, that the Prime Minister should be given an opportunity to come and show off what you have been able to achieve. That is for the Prime Minister to decide on. Hon. Musasizi, please conclude.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, to supplement your point, we have nothing to show, yet we have the National Development Plan, the NRM manifesto, the Cabinet and presidential directives from time to time, which have all been supported by this House through the budget. We also have the budget monitoring, whose reports come here.

If we go to the countryside and within Kampala - I can start from Kampala, by the way. Not long ago, together with the President, we commissioned the Kampala flyover project. The roads in the Greater Kampala Metropolitan Area are under construction. The list is endless.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, the assertion that we have nothing to show is really not correct. On the Parish Development Model (PDM) - every parish in this country has received at least Shs 300 million. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, Hon. Jonathan Odur has made a request that you compile whatever you have achieved and lay it on the Table, period.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you. Lastly, on the issue of roads, Mr Speaker, even when we are not able to put tarmac in every district, at least we are able to release and budget money for road maintenance in the districts.

One billion shillings goes to the districts every year, and in the new term, the President has already guided that we increase this to Shs 2 billion and also buy new road units per district.

I would therefore like to plead with Hon. Ssewungu, where we cannot get tarmac, let me give you an assurance that we will provide money for routine road maintenance, so that we have motorable roads across the country. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bahati, would you like to add on something?

4.01

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (Industry) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, I just wanted to say that we take positively what the Hon. Jonathan has requested the Government to do. It is a great opportunity for us to showcase our achievements — which are actually abundant.

If you can give us space in two weeks, we can come and demonstrate the NRM Government's capacity and what we can achieve. I am sure that by then, the Hon. Jonathan will remove the last part of his statement, which said, "We have done nothing." Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bahati, Government business takes priority on the Order Paper. We will give you space whenever you are ready to inform us.

Next. Hon. Bhoka, what is your procedure matter?

DR BHOKA: Mr Speaker, early last year, when you were presiding over this House on the matter of connection of electricity in the districts in West Nile, I did raise a concern about an island of darkness in the West Nile called Obongi District that has not had a single pole of electricity since time immemorial. You directed that the Minister of State for Energy and Mineral Development, in collaboration with the Members of Parliament –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, point of clarification; I never direct ministers. I cannot direct someone I do not appoint and supervise. I do not. I can guide, I can request; I never direct

DR BHOKA: Sorry, you guided. Thank you. You guided, Mr Speaker, that the Minister of State for Energy and Mineral Development liaise with the Members of Parliament from Madi Sub region to come on the ground to have a first-hand assessment of the situation of connection of electricity to Obongi District.

While West Nile was being connected to the National Grid, the people of Obongi wanted to boycott coming to participate in the connection of West Nile to the National Grid. There was an assurance made by the President that before the end of this year, Obongi would be connected to the national grid.

To date, there is no evidence of action being taken for three consecutive years. The connection of Obongi has appeared on the budget, but no action has been taken. Is it procedurally right that you guide the minister, and no action is taken to first track the connection of Obongi to the National Grid? I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable for clarification. That is not a point of procedure. I just wanted to first clarify to you, but I was patient enough because I have not been here for some days. I cannot, you know, come and start reprimanding colleagues.

Honourable minister, did you visit Obongi, and what plans do you have? I remember you committed here, and it is in your neighbourhood. It should be near.

4.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Mr Speaker, I have continuously engaged with him. The last time was just immediately after the primaries.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: With whom, honourable?

MR OKAASAI: With the honourable Member from Obongi.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is better language.

MR OKAASAI: Yes, we actually committed that they are going to be a priority on the Electricity Access Scale-up Project, and we are doing the evaluation now. I would request that he come to the office, and we go through what plans we have for Obongi and also the date when we expect to reach Obongi.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Dr Bhoka, please follow up. Yes, next.

(III) REPORTS AND OPINION OF
THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE
FOLLOWING FOR THE YEAR ENDED
30TH JUNE 2024:

A) UGANDA CONSULATE, MOMBASA,
KENYA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Commissioner, Ms Afoyochoan?

4.06

MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo): Mr Speaker, allow me to lay a report entitled: "Reports and opinion of the Auditor-General on the Financial Statements of the Uganda Consulate in Mombasa, Kenya for the year ended 30th June 2024." I beg to lay. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The report is referred to the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) for consideration and reporting.

B) THE UGANDA EMBASSY IN CAIRO,
EGYPT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Commissioner?

4.07

MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the report entitled "Report and opinion of the Auditor-General on the Financial Statements of the Uganda Embassy in Cairo, Egypt for the Financial Year ended 30 June 2024."

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The report is referred to the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) for consideration and reporting back.

(IV) REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE UGANDA HIGH COMMISSION IN ABUJA, NIGERIA, FOR THE AUDIT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2024

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable commissioner?

4.08

MS ESTHER AFOYOCHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Zombo): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the report entitled: "Report of the Auditor-General on the Uganda High Commission in Abuja, Nigeria for the audit year ended December 2024." I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that is the one we had considered. Is it a repetition? Let me consult with the Clerk. Thank you.

The report is referred to the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) for consideration and reporting back.

(V) GUIDELINES FOR SAFE CONDUCT OF ENTERTAINMENT FOR CURRICULAR ACTIVITIES AND ELECTION OF STUDENT LEADERS IN THE PRE-PRIMARY, PRIMARY AND POST-PRIMARY SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTIONS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, Hon. Bahati?

4.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): On behalf of the honourable minister, Hon. Peter Ogwang, I beg to lay the guidelines to address the concern of increasing exposure of learners to inappropriate, exploitative and unsafe entertainment and co-curricular activities in pre-primary, primary and post-primary schools and institutions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. These are for information purposes. They are already uploaded to our system, Alfresco, and they should also be put in the library for Members to easily access. Point of procedure, Hon. Sarah?

MS OPENDI: Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance. Last week in this House, the Committee on Public Accounts presented its reports. I recall appealing to the presiding officer that the Constitution, and I have raised this before, Mr Speaker, obligates this House to receive the Auditor-General's reports, consider them and debate them. We adopted the reports of the Auditor-General for the Financial Year 2023/2024 omnibus.

Today, we have received the Auditor-General's reports for those Missions. Mr Speaker, the procedural issue I am raising is that we already adopted reports that we did not even debate in this House. They were omnibus, implying that even this, which has come in my interpretation, is already adopted.

Would it not be procedurally right for you to guide us as a committee and give us the way forward so that we do not go and consider these reports and interface with the accounting officers, only to find no work done? Would it not be procedurally right for you to guide us? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Vice chairperson, would you like to say something on the same before I guide?

4.12

MS GORRETH NAMUGGA (NUP, Mawogola County South, Ssembabule): Mr Speaker, sorry to interject before you guide. I remember during the presentation of all the reports of the Committee on Public Accounts (PAC), we requested the Rt Hon. Speaker to allow the committee more time for interaction and interrogation of the reports for Missions Abroad, and these were stayed. So, I believe we should have more time to consider these because permission was granted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Namugga has brought it out very well. Also, just know Article 163, clause 5 is very clear: “Parliament shall, within six months, after the submission of the report referred to, in clause 4 of this article, debate and consider the report and take appropriate action.” So, I think it is after submission, because they have just laid it here, so you have six months to process and consider the report. Thank you. Next.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF
PARLIAMENT TO AUTHORISE
GOVERNMENT TO BORROW EURO
183,309,947.16 FROM STANDARD
CHARTERED BANK AND SHS
120,395,249,259 FROM THE DOMESTIC
MARKET (6-MONTH TREASURY BILL)
FOR FINANCING THE STRATEGIC
TOWNS, WATER SUPPLY AND
SANITATION PROJECT-PHASE II
(STWSSP II)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

4.14

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Article 159 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Section 34 of the Public Finance Management Act (as amended), and Rule 162 of the Parliamentary Rules of Procedure, I beg to move a motion for a resolution of Parliament to authorise the Government to borrow up to Euro 183,309,947.16 from Standard Chartered Bank and Shs 120,395,249,259 from the domestic market to finance the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project-Phase II (STWSSPII). I beg to move, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? It is seconded by Hon. Rukia Nakadama, Hon. Gabriel – *(Member rose)* - They are seconding and you are standing on procedure. Hon. Kwizera. Those are enough. Hon. Tom, Hon. Isingoma, Hon. Koluo. Hon. Esenu and Hon. Byakatonda.

Honourable minister, do you want to brief us?

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The project objective is to support the Government of Uganda’s effort to achieve sustainable provision of safe water and hygienic sanitation for the urban population by the year 2030. The project will improve the quality of service and the supply of water and sanitation facilities, as well as enhance the management and functioning of water supply and sanitation systems in the targeted towns in Uganda.

The primary beneficiaries of the project would be residents of four selected cluster project areas in different regions of the country. The identified clusters are: Nakasongola Phase II cluster (Nakasongola District), Kamuli-Kasambira Phase II cluster (Kamuli District), Mayuge-Bugadde (Mayuge District) - Idudi-Busesa (Bugweri District) cluster, and Alebtong cluster (Alebtong District).

The project comprises three major components, namely,

- i) Urban water supply infrastructure development;
- ii) Urban sanitation infrastructure development; and
- iii) Project management.

The project will cost Euro 221.682 million and will be financed by;

- i) Sinosure Backed Term loan facility from Standard Chartered Bank of up to Euros 183,309,947, Domestic borrowing of 120.395 billion (six-month Treasury Bill), an equivalent of Euros 29.572; and
- ii) Government counterpart funding of Euros 8.8 million, which will be spread over five years of implementation.

The counterpart funding will cover the project’s running costs (recurrent costs), land acquisition for infrastructure development, programme coordination, and joint monitoring and evaluation.

Therefore, it will be budgeted for in the Ministry of Water and Environment's mid-term expenditure framework, and the resources will be made available starting Financial Year 2025/2026. The Certificate of Financial Implications has been attached to the detailed brief.

The right of way for all the infrastructure was concluded under Phase I of the project in Nakasongola, Kamuli-Kasambira, and Alebtong. The process is still ongoing in Bugadde-Mayuge-Idudi-Busesa, with the district local government's involvement. The progress of acquiring the right of way for the entire project is estimated at 75 per cent.

What are the terms? The loan amount I stated earlier is 183.309 million. The tenure is 14 years with a four-year grace period.

The interest rate is six months euribor plus margin, and the commitment fee is 30 per cent of the margin per annum, which is 0.63 per cent. The margin is 2.10 per cent. The sinosure premium is 7 per cent of principal and interest.

The agency fee is \$20,000 per year, the arrangement fee is 1.4 per cent paid up front, and the default interest is 2 per cent. The six-month Treasury bill issuance to cater for 15 per cent of the contract sum loan amount is 120.395 billion, which is an equivalent of Euro 29.572. The loan period is a six-month Treasury bill to be determined at the time of issuance.

However, it stood at 14 per cent per year as of 12 February 2025.

The justification, Mr Speaker, is that the project will contribute to the water and sanitation sector target of 85 per cent by 2030 and 100 per cent by 2040. The project will provide additional access to at least 0.74 million people by 2030 and over one million people in the projected design period by 2050.

The project will train 150 people in appropriate urban sanitation, masonry, mechanical artisanry, and waste management.

Through this project, the sector is targeting rolling out water and sanitation services to the four future cities and the surrounding satellite town councils within selected districts to cover wider and unserved areas, bringing piped water closer to the town populations and progressively reducing the common sight of women and children carrying water on their heads for long distances from unsafe wells.

The water supply services will extend to 51 towns, covering 115 parishes. The project will contribute to improved health and productivity by providing safe water and sanitation services to the target population of approximately 1 million people by 2050.

The infrastructure also serves industrial areas in the region, including the cassava processing plant in Nakasongola and the proposed industrial park in Kakooze.

In addition, the project will include abstract infrastructure for water for irrigation purposes and support designs for extending water for irrigation within the project areas.

The envisaged direct impact of the project includes:

- i) Access to safe, adequate and reliable water supply to town populations,
- ii) Reduction in the average walking distances to the nearest public water point, and
- iii) Reduction in the time spent fetching water at congested water points.

The water infrastructure designed for the identified cities and surrounding small towns is a direct response to Uganda's current urbanisation rate of 5.2 per cent.

Sanitation interventions in schools, institutions, and other settings, and the accompanying faecal sludge plants with dislodging units, will have a tremendous impact on the existing challenge of emptying toilets and septic tanks in schools and informal settlements.

The project will also provide employment opportunities during construction and

economically empower women and youth through support groups and skills development.

Catchment restoration through tree planting will be an integral aspect of the intervention.

The project will address the unequal power relations and the different roles, capabilities and needs of women, men, girls, boys, and other vulnerable groups.

The long-term impact of the proposed operations will not only result in a healthy workforce but also improve opportunities for meaningful education and enrolment for the future mothers of the nation.

The implementation arrangements are as follows:

The Ministry of Water and Environment will implement the project over five years within the human capital development programme.

The programme working group will play the overall policy oversight role, including reviewing and approving annual work plans, quarterly progress reports, and strategic guidance for the project.

With this justification, I beg to move that the House considers the proposal and allows us to proceed with the borrowing. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable chairperson, present the report. The minister has already given us some information.

4.26

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON NATIONAL ECONOMY (Mr John Bosco Ikojo): Thank you. Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the report of the Committee on National Economy, on the proposal to borrow Euros 183,309,947.16 from the Standard Chartered Bank, UK and Shs 120,395,249,259 (approximately Euros 29,572,292) from the domestic market (Six-month treasury bill) for financing the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase II.

I beg to lay the committee report, the minority report, and the committee minutes. Allow me to summarise the report. The minister has already given an overview of it.

The Committee on National Economy held a meeting with the technical teams from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Ministry of Water and Environment technical teams.

The committee also reviewed the documents that were submitted, that is:

- i) The ministerial brief to the proposal, the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation - Phase 2 Feasibility Study Report,
- ii) The draft loan agreement between the Republic of Uganda and the Standard Chartered Bank for financing the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2,
- iii) Environmental and Social Management Plan for Kamuli Town Water Supply and Sanitation Project, Kamuli District, dated 20 June 2022,
- iv) The National Environment Management Authority (NEMA) Certificate of Approval of the Environmental and Social Impact Assessment dated 18 July 2024, for the project investments in the beneficiary areas of Kamuli, Mayuge, Nakasongola and Alebtong.
- v) The conditions of approval of the Environmental and Social Impact Statement for Kamuli-Kasambira Piped Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2, located in Bugondha Village.
- vi) A document from the National Planning Authority, clearing the Strategic Towns Water Supply and the Sanitation Project - Phase 2,
- vii) The Procurement Plan of the Strategic Water Towns Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2

- viii) Strategic Water Towns Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2 Implementation Plan,
- ix) The Resettlement Action Plan,
- x) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development letter dated 14 January 2025; confirming Government's will and availability of counterpart funding for the Strategic Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2, and
- xi) The Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 1, physical and financial project progress reports, as of January 2025,
- xii) The Strategic Water Supply and Sanitation Project - Phase 2, Project Management Structure.

The committee also conducted a field visit to Kayunga District and assessed the performance of the project. The committee visited the Kayunga-Busaana Town Water Supply System. The construction of the main works had been completed and the scheme had been handed over to the Central Umbrella of Water and Sanitation for operation and maintenance.

The committee visited the Kamuli Town Water Supply System. The construction of the main works had been completed, and the system had been handed over to the National Water and Sewerage Corporation.

The committee looked at the performance of loans in the water sector. The Ministry of Water and Environment had about 14 donor-funded projects, with a total loan portfolio of about \$1,346.98 million to finance them. As of the end of June 2025, 53.62 per cent of this money had been released—that is, about \$722.23 million had been disbursed to the 14 projects.

However, projects that were not performing well included irrigation scheme development in Unyama, Namalu, and Sipi regions; irrigation for climate resilience; supply and installation of solar-powered water supply systems in rural areas; construction of water and sanitation

infrastructure; and associated activities in Isingiro District.

Mr Speaker, phase two is taking over from phase one.

Mr Speaker, this House, around December 2018, passed a loan of 44 million units of account, equivalent to Shs 59.4 million, to implement phase one of the project. Phase one covered substantially 96 per cent of the \$59.4 million for the loan from the African Development Bank that had been released. The Government of Uganda, in totality, had released all the counterpart funding to 100 per cent. That was \$6.6 million.

Mr Speaker, the systems that were constructed under phase one included: Dokolo Town water supply system, improvement works in Kapchorwa Town water supply system, maintenance of Nakasongola Water supply system, Kyenjojo- Katooke Town water supply system, Buikwe Town water supply system, Bundibugyo water supply system, Kayunga - Busana water supply system and Kamuli water supply system.

A total of about 40 institutional and public toilets were constructed, and detailed designs for an additional 10 water supply systems in the Upper Nile and the Kyoga catchment areas were done. Additionally, skilled training of women and youth in the water and sanitation business and the development of regulatory tools and review of the water and sanitation services tariff regime were completed under phase one.

Mr Speaker, we also assessed that phase one had the following challenges:

Phase one was affected by COVID-19, which led to an escalation in the prices of construction materials. Land acquisition was also a challenge for major installations, changes in the scope of works, and extreme weather conditions had an effect on phase one.

Mr Speaker, the minister has already informed this House of the objectives of phase two of the strategic town water supply and sanitation

project. I would like to inform this House that this is linked to the country's strategies.

The minister already talked about the components and construction of this project. The project has three components: component one included the construction of the water supply systems. It took the largest amount of funds, costing about 81 per cent of the total project cost, which is €179.27 million. This was to be invested in building on the achievements of phase one to enhance infrastructure capacity in Kamuli Municipal Council and Nakasongola districts, and construction of new water supply infrastructure in Mayuge and Alebtong districts. The provision of the piped water supply and approved sanitation in these strategic towns will trigger socio-economic transformation through stimulation of business/commercial activities and support to end user social services.

Component two takes about €20.66 million which is 9 per cent of the total project cost. It will be conducted in line with the urban improved sanitation and hygiene strategy to finance activities of sanitation and hygiene awareness creation, construction of public sanitation infrastructure, including the on-site and off-site regional faecal sludge or sewerage management facilities. Faecal sludge, haulage and service equipment will also be provided to serve the cluster towns.

Component three takes a total of €21.75 million, which is 10 per cent of the project cost, and will invest in supporting the Ministry of Water and Environment towards effective implementation of the Strategic Towns Water Supply Project phase two.

Mr Speaker, allow me to go direct to the committee's observations and recommendations.

The terms and conditions of the loan and the physical modalities: the committee observed that this loan, financed from external sources with the Standard Chartered Bank UK being the agent and the arranger, is being offered at a high commercial rate for a project that has no immediate revenue generation stream.

However, this is being mitigated by the socio-economic returns over the medium to long term that lead to high economic returns of 19 per cent over the opportunity cost of capital of 11 per cent.

Additionally, the financial modality through issuance of six-month treasury securities in the domestic market is equally commercial with the current cost of 182 treasury bill rate of 12.5 per cent. While this is an option available to the Government in mobilising resources to finance its programmes, its suitability for such projects is a major concern. Such concerns involve whether such options are part of the treasury security insurance calendar of the central bank/ Government.

Furthermore, the cost of insurance premium for Sinasure of €15.7 million is nine per cent of the credit, which is considerably higher given that the risk assessment framework for the project indicates low financial and political risks.

The committee recommends the following:

- i) The Government should ensure that high commercial loans are used to finance projects whose revenue generation capacity is in the short term;
- ii) Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should ensure that domestic borrowing to finance specific projects form part of the government insurance calendar to improve coordination between the monetary policy and the physical policy authorities. Efforts to mitigate the rising interest costs for the private sector due to increased Government borrowing from the banking sector should further be explored by the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development as well.
- iii) The Government should consider negotiating the insurance premium cost, given the minimum risk the project faces and other costs to bring them to levels that are compatible to the Standard Chartered Bank, UK terms used for Kabalega airport in Hoima that were non-concessional.

Observation 5.2, the budgetary implications of the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project II

The committee observed that while a budget provision of Shs 6.93 billion had been provided for on-going activities under the project in the Financial Year 2025/2026, the Strategic Towns Water Supply Systems Project phase two first year requirement of over Shs 150 billion is not provided for in the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Further, the project is not part of the medium-term commitments statement for the Financial Year 2025/2026 as presented to Parliament.

The domestic debt acquisition to finance part of phase two increases the financing requirement of the Government in terms of short-term interest rate payments that should be planned in the Government's fiscal operations for the Financial Year 2025/2026 and over the medium term.

The committee recommends that the Government should expedite the process of including the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project Phase II to form part of the multi-year commitment for Financial Year 2025/2026 and the medium term. As a result, the Government should adjust its fiscal framework to include any costs associated with the financing modalities of the project for the Financial Year 2025/2026 and the medium term.

5.3 Government counterpart funding

The committee noted that among the lessons learned from the implementation of projects, especially those financed by externally-borrowed funds, is the untimely release of Government counterpart funding and the low absorption capacity of the project-executing agencies.

The committee recommends that the Government ensures that adequate counterpart funds for these projects are timely integrated into the national budget during the implementation period.

Fulfillment of the loan conditions

The committee also observed that the Government has been slow in the fulfilment of the loan's effective conditions upon the signing of the loan agreements in order to trigger the disbursement of committed funds for the implementation of the debt-funded projects.

The committee recommends that the Government ensures the speedy fulfilment of the effective conditions of the financing agreements for this loan in order for the committed funds to be released by Standard Chartered Bank, UK on time, to guarantee the timely implementation of the project.

High dependence on consultancy

The committee observed the high dependency of the project on consultancy services. According to the project procurement plan, a total of €8,070,513 will be spent on consultancy services. The majority of the consultancy costs will finance consultancy services for construction supervision of Alebtong, Kamuli-Kasambira Phase II, Bugadde-Mayuge-Idudi-Busesa and Nakasongola Phase II Water Supply and Sanitation Project.

The committee recommends that the Government scales up plans for deliberately building the capacities of MDAs in conducting studies, designing and the supervision of projects in order to cut down on the exorbitant amounts of project funds spent on consultancy services towards conducting studies, designs and the supervision of debt-funded projects.

5.6. Performance of debt-funded projects in the water and sanitation sector

The committee noted that there has been an improvement in the utilisation of loans in the water and sanitation sector. Despite the improvement, some projects did not perform well. Examples are the irrigation scheme development in Unyama, Namalu, and Sipi projects -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Chairman, you know the critical issues, which we consider here.

Just allow me to recognise our visitors. In the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers of Katiyi Primary School, Uleppi Subcounty in Madi-Okollo District. They are represented by Hon. Isaac Etuka and Hon. Joanne Aniku Okia. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. You can stand up for recognition. *(Applause)* Thank you. We are glad to have you here.

Mr Chairman, conclude.

MR IKOJO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Let me conclude – I am trying to look at the most critical items and I am looking at item 5.10 – inconsistency of the borrowing with the 2023 Public Debt Management Framework.

The 2023 Public Debt Management Framework outlines a comprehensive strategy for managing public debt over the five years, starting in Financial Year 2023/2024 to Financial Year 2027/2028. This framework articulates principles, Government commitments, strategies and benchmarks crucial for shaping public debt decisions during this period. The primary aim of this framework is to highlight the financing solutions that address the Government's fiscal deficit, carefully weighing the balance between cost and risk to ensure sustainable funding for economic growth and development.

Under the extended debt framework, there have been eight principles of external debt, which are provided under Annex 1 of the report, and the proposed project fails the first principle, which states that:

“The Government shall continue to pursue concessional and non-concessional borrowing to meet the external financing requirements through the underlying guidelines:

a) *Social and Human Capital Development Projects shall be funded at concessional*

terms, with a grant element of at least 35 per cent.

- b) *Consideration for non-concessional loans (direct and/or export credit agencies (ECAs) lending with a grant element of less than 35 per cent shall be contracted on conditions that:*
 - i. *The projects provide an economic rate of return greater than the interest rate charged.*
 - ii. *The project Economic Net Present Value (ENPV) and the internal rate of return is greater than 12 per cent.*
 - iii. *The effective interest rate on the cost of the financing at any given time should be less than or equal to the applicable benchmark rate (SOFR & EURIBOR) plus 250 basis points.”*

The committee observed that the Government is proposing to finance this social project on commercial terms with a grant element of seven per cent, which is highly non-concessional, as it falls below the 10 per cent threshold for semi-concessional loans. This sets a precedent of acquiring social sector loans on expensive terms yet, usually, these projects are not financially viable, which is the basis for the framework requiring such loans to be obtained on concessional terms.

The project has a financial internal rate of return of 4.7 per cent and a negative net present value of – of that – and a low benefit-to-cost ratio of 0.73, indicating that the proposed project is not financially viable on its own and requires the Government's support to be viable.

Further, the committee noted that while the economic rate of return for the proposed project is higher than the interest rate, with the economic rate of return of 19 per cent complying with the first and second condition for non-concessional loans, the effective interest rate associated with the proposed borrowing is 4.96 per cent, which is higher than the six month Euribor plus 250 basis point of 4.58, implying that the cost of the proposed loan is higher than the recommended cost of non-concessional loans, making the proposed

loan fail to comply with the third condition of contracting non-concessional loans.

The committee recommends that the Government, through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, renegotiate the loan terms with the proposed creditor or identify another creditor whose terms are consistent with the 2023 Public Debt Management Framework.

Elimination of Ugandan and East African contractors during implementation

The committee noted that during the implementation of phase one of the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project, several contractors were awarded contracts for the different clusters. For example, in Kamuli, the contractor was Vidas Engineering Services Co. Limited, with a supervision consultant: Jos Hansen and Sohene (East Africa) Limited and in Kayunga-Busana, one of the contractors was Vambeco Enterprises Limited, Supervised by Alliance Consultants Ltd. The ministry did not communicate any concerns on the ability of the various contractors to deliver similar outputs under phase two.

The committee recommends that as a commitment to the African Continental Free Trade Area (AfCFTA), Government, through the Ministry of Water and Environment, reviews its contract of awarding all the clusters to one company, CHEC and open up implementation of the project to include East African companies in order to maximise local content, since their ability in construction and supervision was observed in phase one.

Need to review the project cost

The committee observed that the total investment cost under the project is Shs 802.22 billion, which is the contract sum. The committee was concerned that some of the project's planned investment items should be implemented using Government revenues, not borrowing. For example, Shs 34 billion under the project is to construct public toilets

observed in the table below. Members can read through the table.

The committee, using information from the respective feasibility studies, observed variances in the unit costs. For example:

1. The diesel storage shed, whose price range was between an equivalent of Shs 72.9 million in Nakasongola and Shs 252.7 million in Mayuge-Idudi cluster;
2. Generator house that ranged between an equivalent of Shs 333 million in Alebtong to Shs 1.319 billion in Kamuli-Kasambira cluster;
3. The operation and administration building ranged from an equivalent of Shs 755.38 million in Alebtong to Shs 1.433 billion in the other cluster.

The committee recommends that the cost of the project be reviewed in view of bringing down the unit costs and reducing the cost of designs and scaling down expenditure on public toilets and guard houses, among others.

Madam Speaker, in conclusion, the committee appreciates that the proposed project is consistent with the objectives of NDP IV, specifically natural resources, environment, climate change, land and water programme and human capital development programme. The project has social ramifications and builds on phase one projects.

The committee recommends that the proposal by the Government to borrow €183,309,947.16 from Standard Chartered Bank and Shs 120,395,249,259, approximately €29,572,296, from the domestic market-Six-month Treasury Bill for financing the Strategic Towns Water Supply and Sanitation Project — Phase II(STWSSP II) be approved, subject to the above committee observations and recommendations.

Mr Speaker, I beg to report. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Mr Chairperson. Like you said earlier, there is a minority report. Hon. Tebandeke.

4.56

MR CHARLES TEBANDEKE (NUP, Bbale County, Kayunga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate my chairperson and the Committee on National Economy for the well-presented report. I am going to be very brief.

Mr Speaker, allow me to address this House to the two fundamental dissenting matters. Our dissenting matters are on two issues. One is the high cost on the loan, which subjects a taxpayer to a burden repayment. Two is non-compliance with the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

Mr Speaker, my dissenting observation is that we acknowledge the Government's goal for 2024, especially on improving access to safe water and sanitation services to our country. Towns like Nakasongola, Kamuli, Kasambira, Alebtong, Bugade, Mayuge, Idudi, Busesa, amongst many other towns in Uganda, still lack safe water. Any good external borrowing for such social development would be much welcome. For this special request, Mr Speaker, we are completely opposed to committing taxpayers to this loan for the following reasons.

The high cost on the loan

Mr Speaker, the loan is purely commercial from Standard Chartered Bank (SINASURE Backed Term) with an interest rate of 6 months per cent Euribor plus a margin of 2.1 per cent - a commitment fee of 0.63 per cent of the margin per annum; an agency fee of \$20,000 payable annually; an arrangement fee of 1.4 per cent; a default interest fee of 2 per cent and tentative interest of 5 per cent.

Mr Speaker, 7 per cent interest fee on the premium and a 7 per cent interest fee on interest is almost double interest.

Mr Speaker, Strategic Town Water Supply and Sanitation Project, phase 1 of the same project, was financed by the African Development Bank, whose terms were semi-concessional with a grace period of eight years and a maturity of 25 years. For this particular request, it is a four-year grace period against a 14-year maturity period.

We also need to note that in the report of public debt grants and other financial liabilities of Financial Year 2024/2025, on page 42, there is a loan request of €214 million from the United Kingdom Export Financing, pending the Cabinet's approval by March 2025. Any immediate approval of this loan by the Cabinet can save a taxpayer from a commercial loan from Standard Chartered Bank for this particular project.

In addition, as highlighted on non-compliance with the parliamentary provisions, our hands as Parliament are tied by Rule 162(5)(b) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, which states that, "*Any loan request before Parliament for approval will need a list of financing options considered when identifying the creditor.*"

Mr Speaker, on the presentation of this loan, there is no financial option on request that were laid before the committee by the minister for consideration. The committee, while scrutinising this request, was not provided with any list of financing options. We were left green over the criteria used to arrive at Standard Chartered Bank as a lender of this particular loan.

If other options were provided, maybe we would scrutinise this loan further. Without this information being provided to the committee and this House, Parliament shall be working contrary to their constitutional mandate as enshrined in Article 159. Therefore, this is working against the rule of law.

Mr Speaker, we urge this House to adopt our dissenting opinion in the spirit of saving taxpayers from this costly loan. As I promised this House to be brief, allow me to draw your attention to the following recommendations:

- i. The minister responsible for finance should clarify why the African Development Bank, which financed this same loan in phase one, was not able to fund the same loan in phase two.
- ii. We recommend that the minister present to us a list of financing options considered when selecting Standard Chartered Bank

- for parliamentary review. Why would the minister come with a loan with only one option, with the exception of any other would-be options for consideration of this House?
- iii. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should clarify the double SINOCURE Premium payment of seven per cent on principal and seven per cent on interest, which, in my view, is a double interest over the same loan, hence a big burden on the taxpayers' money and a waste.
- iv. Additionally, I request that this House:
- Defer approval pending Cabinet update on the United Kingdom Export Financing of the €214 million option and explore a hybrid financing. I think this would be to our advantage and to sanitise the name of this Parliament and save Ugandans from the would-be costly loan repayment.
 - Refer the matter of this loan request back to the committee for supplemental scrutiny. The committee can bring back a report within 14 days so that we exercise the liberties of this House.
 - The House should debate both majority and minority reports together under rule 115, prioritising taxpayer protection and the debt-to-GDP threshold breach.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the minority report under rule 115 highlights valid concerns about cost and procedure while protecting the public interest in a high-debt environment. Approving this loan without addressing these issues, as highlighted, could be a burden and make us vulnerable as a country.

I urge the House to reject or defer the proposal until clarifications are provided, seeking more favourable terms to ensure a suitable financing for the project over the same loan and uphold parliamentary sovereignty and fiscal procedure. Mr Speaker, I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister for finance, there are things which need quick clarification before we open up on anything. One, the issue of a

list of financing options which the minority report has raised. Also the Member is saying that there is a loan for the same project - UKEF loan proposal - I do not know how they access details of Cabinet. It is direct. Is Cabinet considering a proposal from UKEF for the same project? That would be cheaper.

Hon. Byanyima, there are things that I usually want the minister to clarify to help me when I am guiding debate. Hon. Byanyima, it seems -

5.07

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are slowly going into something that is not proper. Whenever a loan request comes in, it concerns a certain sector. We cannot allow the Committee on National Economy to which I belong - I am sorry to say - to continue dominating yet there is a particular sector that should be sitting with the Committee on National Economy because they know more about what the loans have got. If you are talking about roads, the Committee on Physical Infrastructure should sit with the Committee on National Economy and move together.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nathan, as a member of the Committee on National Economy, for example, you should have signed the minority report and give -

MR BYANYIMA: No, no, I cannot sign the minority report -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Listen, to me.

MR BYANYIMA: I cannot stoop so low.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No. Members who sign the minority report are not stooping low. These are procedural matters. You should have - I want it to go on record that a minority report is provided for under our rules. Members who sign the minority report are not stooping so low. Hon. Byanyima, you can make that good. Members who signed are feeling insulted.

MR BYANYIMA: I withdraw. However, when we were reviewing the Rules of Procedure, we said the beneficiary - the sectoral committee should first go through the loan request then come and report to the Committee on National Economy and harmonise. Now we are doing things single-handedly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Byanyima, I refer you to rule 214(11); you are collectively responsible since you did not express your opinion. So, you signed the minority report indirectly by keeping quiet. Honourable minister?

5.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson for the good report and also the Member who came up with the minority report with several observations and questions that require my response. I wish to respond to the minority report as follows:

One, on list of financing options, Mr Speaker, this is an EPC+F arrangement and in these arrangements, the list of financing options is not applicable.

Two, why did we not go to African Development Bank -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, if you can state in detail what EPC+F is, because you know the country is watching.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, the contractor is already determined. We are looking for money to finance a certain contractor who is going to handle this project.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, EPC+F stands for Engineering Procurement and Construction plus Financing, for the record.

MR MUSASIZI: The second issue, why didn't we go to the African Development

Bank (ADB), which financed phase one of the project? Mr Speaker, the arrangement we have with these banks is that every year, they give us a pot where we put an allocation for each country, like Uganda - *(Member rose)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, I asked the minister to clarify issues, please. You will have a chance to raise your issues but allow the minister to do what I told him to do.

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you for your wise guidance. The pot for Uganda this year under ADB has all been utilised by the Standard Gauge Railway (SGR), so the money is not available under UDB to finance any other project this year.

There is another question - why are we not looking at the concessional options? We would wish to finance all projects of the Government under concessional arrangements. However, over time, the concessional windows have been declining. We still have some under the World Bank, ADB and the Islamic Development Bank (BADEA), but minimal. If you note, this is where we go for roads and electricity, among others, so sometimes it gets exhausted when we still have many pressing needs.

This is water that is going to support urban areas. The need is really immense and when you - *(Interjections)* - yes, there is a need. When I do not consider water, you will come here and say, we have not provided money for water. When we provide, you will say this is expensive. Let me explain; the effective interest rate, as per your report, is 4.5 per cent.

Mr Speaker, if we were to go fully commercial - *(Interjection)* - you had a chance to seek clarification from me when I appeared before the committee; you know the rules - this would take us to seven per cent, compared to the 4.5 per cent which we are going to borrow at.

Lastly, the Cabinet- the project he is referring to - I do not know where this information is coming from; the Leader of Government Business is here. We have not seen any project like this on the agenda of the Cabinet. That

notwithstanding, we are designing a project called Solar Powered Irrigation Scheme by Nexus Green. This will be financed - *(Interjections)* - sorry, what! *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, this feedback is important. I will discuss with the colleague off record.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, what is important - I recognised the children - from the murmurs we hear, a loan of \$110 million for Nexus Green was approved here, and Members need to be updated on how far the funds have been used. The moment - that will be more helpful. When you talk of a new project before they see the other one working - Honourable minister, please continue.

MR MUSASIZI: This is where the €214 million will apply under that new project, which is still under design. Mr Speaker, this is what I can respond to briefly in the minority report. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ayume. No - members of the committee, please take your seats. Rule 214(11) of our rules do not allow you to contribute. Hon. Ayume, Hon. Godfrey Onzima, and then Hon. Isingoma and Hon. Tom.

5.17

DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the spirit in which the loan is being procured. However, I would like to re-echo the committee chairman's observation of the €8 million for consultancy services; that is about Shs 32 billion. This is half the cost of building a new general referral hospital. I would request that in future, we build the in-house capacity of most of these Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) so that consultancy services - we have been carrying out these projects for the last 20 years and by now we should have built enough in-house capacity for consultancy services so that this money goes to Ugandans. Thank you.

Mr Speaker, I am also taken a bit aback that a six-stance pit latrine would cost Shs 142 million. That is food for thought. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes Hon. Onzima.

5.18

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My first point has already been spoken to by Hon. Ayume, particularly the cost of consultancy. I stand to support the loan because any money that goes to supply water to our people is very crucial. When you travel across the country, most areas are still lagging behind in terms of national water levels.

I would also like to say that some of the projects that were brought earlier and stalled because of a lack of money should have also been taken into consideration. There was an integrated rural water project, which was undertaken by the World Bank, funding that was supposed to be a five-year project.

In my constituency, Rodo, Awoba, and Koka are water sources that were drilled, but along the way, the Government said no, due to depreciation, we cannot go ahead and pipe all these. They have all been abandoned. These sources were identified because the water problems in these areas were very acute. For example, in Awoba, we have secondary schools, a market, and a primary school. In Kei, we have Health Centre III and a market. All these are the same case with Koka.

As we think of starting new projects, we should first finish what we started. We start projects and leave them on the way. We abandon them and jump to another project. I do not know how we are really operating. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Tom Bright.

5.20

MR TOM BRIGHT (NRM, Kyaka Central County, Kyegegwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Although I support the loan, I concur with my colleague that there are earlier projects. For example, Kyegegwa District has no water at all. I remember three years back, including last year, it was one of the projects to be considered. Evaluation was done and the consultants

were paid, although what we are waiting for is the money for implementation, which is not reflected in the report up to now. I am a bit disappointed because I was expecting it to be part of the projects to be worked on. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Muwuma.

5.21

MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am a little confused about the conclusion of the committee's report because they helped us raise red flags at different points, recommending reviews. They need to review the cost of the toilets, they need to do this and that. Then all of a sudden, they are saying we approve. I am imagining, after approving, at what point we shall review.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: They told you, subject. They should go back and renegotiate this. Finish your part and let the Government go back and negotiate. That is what they said. *(Laughter)*

MR MUWUMA: Mr Speaker, I am very positive about the purpose of the loan because when I look at the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, when they talk of Bugade, she is saying that of all people. Hon. Muwuma is hesitant for Bugade. The people of Bugweri need water supply but the issues highlighted in the body of the report need to be addressed before we approve. That is my -

5.22

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Hon. Milton has addressed my concerns, but I want to bring it from a legal perspective. I kindly draw your attention to the minister and the chairperson of the committee.

The motion requires us to approve a resolution of Parliament. The constitutional standard is that you either approve or you reject because this request comes with specific terms and conditions. Therefore, if Parliament says you

go and do A, B, C, D, which is not defined, from which unit cost to which one? From which financing model to which one? For us here, we are saying, "approve subject to". It has pricked my mind that maybe, when Parliament does these resolutions, they should be laid back in this Parliament and we see.

We can easily fall in a trap where you approve a motion and then the resolution that is extracted does not reflect what Parliament has decided. I support and I kindly request that you give due consideration to the issue raised by Hon. Muwuma because it is a legal requirement that we must approve with certainty, and that certainty can only be when the committee has said, yes or no.

In other words, the chairperson of the committee should help us. It appears the committee rejected. That is the interpretation. They said, do not approve, let them first go back, and once they have the new terms and conditions with the financing and the unit cost review, then they can come back. The chairperson should help us clarify that.

In addition, I would like to know from the minister whether practically, should we approve the subject, what happens? Are you going to go to them? You said that you have already agreed with the contractor in an EPC+F. Is it possible for you to go to them and renegotiate the terms? And when you renegotiate the terms, is that the term that Parliament has approved without Parliament looking at it? That is the issue I have with this. Therefore -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Odur, I thought that for us, the terms we approve are with the lender and the issues of reducing the cost of toilets, the cost of the pump house, and some such are with the contractor. That is what I think. Isn't that possible, honourable minister?

MR ODUR: That is correct, but when you look at the observation and recommendation, it touches the rate, the terms of borrowing, and the interest rate. That is what the committee said. In fact, they said, renegotiate the terms of the loan somewhere.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Leader of the Opposition (LOP) -

5.25

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Mr Speaker, we have done a lot of borrowing lately and that keeps spiking our debt burden; very problematically, it keeps soaring. Again, I do not want to pour cold water on the justification for the loan. Water, sanitation and so on are good projects but these deep-seated issues have got to be addressed as well.

I have mentioned severally here the challenge with some of the loans that we approve. Projects fail to kick off, they are riddled with corruption, and you do not get quality value for money.

Two, we approve many loans and they remain undisbursed. According to the Auditor-General's report, as of December last year, Shs 16.4 trillion is what we had on our financial records worth of undisbursed loans. This is money we borrow and we are just not ready. Meanwhile, the lender is going to charge you commitment fees, and again, according to the Auditor-General's report, which I encourage Members to read, we paid over Shs 70 billion as of the end of last year. Why are we doing that? It does not make sense at all.

Mr Speaker, let me point to two technical issues after having mentioned those general ones. The minister is denying what we have in our rules; rule 162(5)(B), the list of financing options to be considered when identifying a creditor. It does not matter that the project is ongoing. You are now on phase two. There was an earlier creditor, ADB. You have moved away from ADB. Why? What are the new options? Now that you are moving away from ADB, you need to avail those options. You cannot run away from it by saying, this project is already ongoing, there is already a contractor and so on. You have moved away from your earlier creditor. That has got to be explained, you cannot run away from it.

Two, and I am sorry I might sound a bit pedantic but it is important. You have been quoting rule 214, Mr Speaker. Part of the provision of that rule is a requirement that one-third of all members of the committee have signed the reports. That threshold has not been met by both the majority report and the minority because you have 16 and two. The total members of the committee are 56. Therefore, the one-third, in proper math, is supposed to be 19. That is 18, it is less by one, but I am saying we need to tick those little boxes too. They might be little but those are our rules. Here is -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssenyonyi, when they were uploading, they had not yet reached, but the report they gave to me has the signatures, and I can give you my copy, and you will verify that Members signed.

MR SSENYONYI: Maybe if you can help us so that it is not just me, how many, because the report that we -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have 17 members on the main report and two on the minority, making it 19 members.

MR SSENYONYI: Then we need to see, with your guidance, how this gets sorted. At what point do we get to know the members who have signed? Because what is uploaded, what we do have has less - but then, along the way, they forward to the Speaker another one but here, away from that -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let me make it easy. We will upload the one where you have all the signatures so that it goes on record.

MR SSENYONYI: I am glad you have clarified that. Here is what is even more bothersome regarding this quorum thing. Rule 25 provides that for us to take a vote on any question, like we are about to, we should have a third of all the Members who are entitled to vote. That is a number of 177 Members. Mr Speaker, I doubt we have got that number here. Again, I was saying, sometimes they say online. Maybe we can be guided by how many people are online,

so that we see how many are online, but also to access online, there is a procedure of how somebody gets to be ticked that you attended online, so that we tick all these boxes.

You are running away from the boxes we must tick and the procedural issues to do with this loan. You also want to run away from our House procedures. Why? What exactly are we in a hurry to try and do? Why don't we follow the law if you want to get these loans approved? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I can see the numbers that I have online and here because I had also checked and they are not sufficient. Therefore, I will not put the question on this, but that will not stop us from debating and all that. Therefore, House is adjourned until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 5.25 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 17 September 2025, at 2.00 p.m.)

