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OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

TUESDAY, 21 JANUARY 2025



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 2ND SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 21 January 2025

Parliament met at 2.26 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. Happy New Year. I am glad to see that we are still alive in the new year.

On a very sad note, we lost a former district woman representative for Nakasongola, Hon. Margaret Komuhangi, who passed away last week in India. She represented Nakasongola in the Ninth and 10th parliaments. Burial is today and I would like to thank the honourable colleagues who have managed to go to represent us.

When we were in church yesterday, I got a report that over 200 Members managed to go to her home to pay their respects and also to church. That sign of solidarity is very critical. We always stand by each other because as Parliament, we are family. Whether you are a former or current MP, you will always be part of the family. Therefore, standing by each other is very critical.

We also lost a former Member of Parliament for Buyaga County, Hon. Ignatius Besisira, who represented the people of Buyaga in the Seventh and Ninth Parliaments. He has been serving as a member of the Local Government Finance Commission. He was buried on Saturday, and the Government granted him an official burial. We shall, therefore, be expecting the Leader of Government Business to table a motion to pay respect and of course, the same will be accorded to Hon. Baba Diri.

On another sad note, Hon. Pauline Kyaka, Woman Member of Parliament for Lyantonde, has lost her mother, Mrs Leonada Kyaka. Remember, it was just a few weeks ago when she lost her father; it is a double tragedy.

I happened to go to her home two or three months ago to see her sickly parents, and the two were extremely close. When her father died, her mother kept saying, "Release me also to go to find my beloved." I do not know how many of us would qualify for that. The day we die and our spouses say they would like to follow us – don't say – but well, I managed to go to Mengo Hospital early this morning, checked on her and she was thankful for the prayers and support you have always given her. There will be a vigil today at her home in Kira starting at 6.30 p.m. and burial will be on Thursday, the 23rd of January at Kakyenkya in Kiruhura District. I request that we observe a moment of silence for our fallen comrades.

(The House rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we have started a political year — a year of campaigns, yet our mandate still runs. We still have statutory obligations and obligations to our constituents.

This is a year where we wish you all the best because our prayer is to see each one of us back. That is what we pray for. Although, I have had situations where colleagues have come saying, “So-and-so is in my constituency disturbing me” – a colleague disturbing another colleague - campaigning for other people in the constituency.

Some of them use names, especially - colleagues, if you have friends, your name will be associated with many cases: “So and so is standing against me; you are the one funding them.” That will be coming about soon. I request that we maintain cohesion and that when we go – it is an unwritten policy here that when you go to a colleague’s constituency, you support that colleague and then you leave it to the voters. If you cannot support them, do not talk against them either. Just leave it at that because after that, we come here and we are a family.

As the leadership of the House, we are going to design our programme in such a way that we give you time to be able to engage the constituents while at the same time being able to do your work. A very good example is when we have – like in the budgeting period, we will give you enough time to handle committees but then also give you a break.

We will, therefore, be giving you intermittent breaks so that you are able to go back and engage your constituents. Otherwise, you might be here when they are finishing you on the ground yet people will not remember that. We shall ensure that we try to accommodate most of these issues without missing our critical function that we are supposed to be delivering here.

There is a comment I wanted to make when we are receiving the Auditor-General’s report but I would best make it now.

Honourable colleagues, I received the Auditor-General’s report last week, and I am happy that the meeting we had with the Auditor-General has helped us to widen the scope of what we can cover when interrogating the report.

Together with the few chairpersons who managed to join me in the meeting with the Auditor-General sometime back, we agreed that doing only financial audits will not help us or enable us do our work efficiently. That is why you could hear that “I have an unqualified opinion,” but then the report and the details from the public are totally different.

There was always a mismatch between the opinions of the Auditor-General and what we were getting. We agreed that the Auditor-General should do a combined report that has a value-for-money and special audits in one report where we are able to go beyond just financial audits, but to also go for value for money.

Now, he has done that ably well, and I hope that this time, the scope of the accountability committees will be much wider and more detailed so that we do not just look at mischarge and all that, but we also go, especially, value for money. If you said you did one kilometre-per-kilometre lane at Shs 1 billion in Masaka, how come the neighbouring district of Lyantonde is doing it at Shs 500 million with the same landscape and conditions, yet this side is not getting value, and the other side is getting value.

I hope that the accountability committees are now going to squeeze in much deeper. What was worrying, honourable colleagues, is that, according to the Auditor-General, only 31 per cent of the recommendations from Parliament, when adopting the report, were fully implemented in the last financial year. Thirty-five per cent were partially implemented and 34 per cent were not implemented at all. Now, this brings us to how we handle the issue of the treasury memoranda, which we discussed and agreed on here.

The treasury memoranda, which were attached - I request the chairpersons of the sectoral committees that when processing the ministerial policy statements on the budget, please, let the accounting officers explain why they did not implement the recommendations of the Auditor-General. Otherwise, these are recommendations from the Government official who is supposed to be looking at these books. Why should we add you money when you failed to address the issues of accountability, which were found?

It is at the sectoral committee level where we can use our power to bite and squeeze the accounting officers to ensure that, indeed, we have full implementation of the recommendations of the Auditor-General, as adopted by Parliament.

LOP, on my communication? I will allow three people, on my communication, and then we will go to matters of national importance.

2.39

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. In your communication, you mentioned that this is an election year, and rightly so because election is a process. It is not an event, as some people like to think of it: as the day of casting the ballot. It is a process that happens, beginning with the update of the voters' register, all the way to all the other activities – nominations, campaigns, et cetera – and, eventually, voting.

Mr Speaker, yesterday, the update of the voters' register commenced, but with numerous challenges. This is an exercise that is meant to see new voters coming on board and people trying to be sure that their details are on the voters' register – those who want to make transfers, and so on and so forth.

In many places – and I am sure some colleagues, here, can attest – the process did not commence yesterday. We are trying to understand why. Did this just fall on the Electoral Commission and they woke up and realised they needed to start this process? Their officials were not in many places, including many parts of my

constituency, which is just a few kilometres from Kampala. Now, think about colleagues who come from far-flung places.

Mr Speaker, there has not been adequate awareness about this process by the Electoral Commission. Yesterday, I was dumbfounded to watch on the news about a number of LC I chairpersons and LC II – parish – chairpersons who did not know about this exercise, yet the Electoral Commission is meant to do this in tandem with these local officials.

In a couple of places, you find that they have one computer per subcounty, and many of these computers are even faulty – they are not working as they should be.

Mr Speaker, I would like to think that this is a very critical part of the election process. As I have said, an election is a process. I would like the Government to help us to understand whether they are taking this process seriously.

Now that it did not even commence in time, as it should have, will they extend the time? We were actually concerned, thinking that the 30 days were not even adequate. Now, it did not even start in time – *(Interjection)* - 20 days – I beg your pardon. The 20 days, in our view, were not adequate but the process did not even start in time. Will the time be extended?

The other concern that I do have, Mr Speaker, is that the process has been made extremely cumbersome, especially for the new voters. They have to get recommendations from GISO, DISO, HISO, FISO – I do not know what. It would make sense for the LC I chairpersons. That is understandable – they need to know the people in their areas and so on. However, why all these layers? Somebody has got a National ID, they are known by their LC I chairperson: why do they have to go and look for a GISO and, then, DISO? They go to their home or office, the place is locked – all of these, making the process problematic.

Mr Speaker, I would like the Government to address these issues and help us to understand. Can the process be made a little bit longer and better awareness created? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, today I received six Members and the first was Hon. Ethel Naluyima. So, it was one of the matters I had put here to be considered under matters of national importance. There were six Members on that same question. Attorney-General, respond and then I see how best I can guide on this critical question.

2.43

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the question as raised, but it is quite wide and I do not want to answer it off-head.

I request that you give me time and I liaise with the Electoral Commission so that I can formally answer that question.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. (*Members rose*) Honourable colleagues, if a colleague says he does not have a satisfactory answer – okay! – what do you want him to do? Do you want him to give you a half-baked answer? (*Laughter*) So – but, please.

Honourable colleagues, let us have a statement from the Government tomorrow. Is it late, Attorney-General?

MR KAFUUZI: Mr Speaker, I need to get in touch with the Electoral Commission so that I can get a response.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Parliament starts at 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

MR KAFUUZI: But, Mr Speaker – (*Interjection*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us listen to the Attorney-General.

MR KAFUUZI: Mr Speaker, I need to get in touch with the Electoral Commission so that I get information that I will relay to Parliament. I request that I do that next week.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, no, no. Dear Attorney-General –

MR KAFUUZI: Thursday.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable colleagues, this exercise is ongoing. You see – Government Chief Whip, I had guided ministers that for such exercises, Parliament is a big platform where you gain prime time and wide coverage. Therefore, when you bring a statement here, we give you free coverage and you inform the nation. You are addressing the nation when you are here. So, I would do – since the Attorney –

MR KAFUUZI: I am requesting for Thursday, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, on Thursday, at 2.00 p.m., we shall receive a statement from the Attorney-General on the same and I will allow debate of that statement for one hour. Okay? That is so that all your issues are covered.

Honourable Attorney-General, I am sure that with that statement – and even technical officers coming to support you – you will be able to answer all the questions. Okay? Thank you.

On my communication, Hon. Opendi?

4.46

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I really want to appreciate the report of the Auditor-General, as mentioned by you, that now covers the financial and value-for-money audit.

However, I have an issue. Currently, the sectoral committees are sitting and, therefore, the standing committees' businesses have been suspended. Formally, the Speaker communicated and said the standing committees should not meet.

My challenge, Mr Speaker, is that we will start considering these reports of the Auditor-General when we are done with the Budget Framework Paper and even the ministerial policy statements. Then, we will have hardly two months.

Mr Speaker, I have raised this before. The Constitution says the Auditor-General's reports will be considered by this Parliament, debated and appropriate action taken. Now, you find that – I have said this - it is wrong for us to adopt the Auditor-General's reports without scrutiny because – you have even mentioned it: what is in the report is sometimes not what is on the ground.

Therefore, there is a need for us to scrutinise those reports and interface with the accounting officers. Now, when we just adopt reports here without the committees scrutinising them, then we miss the point.

Mr Speaker, I am requesting - the Constitution says we must consider them within six months. Now, if within six months the committee is given only three months to handle these reports and you have about 400 or so entities. How can we effectively handle these reports and conclude business really?

Mr Speaker, it has been done before in previous Parliaments, you were here. We only adopted the Auditor-General's reports at the end of the term of Parliament, not within the years, to allow the committee handle certain businesses. For example, the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) where I belong, had issues that we were handling but we were stopped from proceeding with the business.

Now that those matters remain pending especially the projects, which we could not handle and present reports here, we must be flexible because the whole issue is accountability, not merely receiving reports for the sake of it and a ritual that this House adopts. These reports must be scrutinised. That is what I wanted to state and I hope that as presiding officers, you will guide us and give us time to handle these reports. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, one, indeed, we needed all of you to be in your sectoral committees handling the Budget Framework Paper (BFP). Okay? I think committees have more or less concluded

with the BFP. Otherwise, we would be having a situation where we do not even have sitting space where to meet, and even quorum because you would find that we are in the budgeting process, but a Member is running on accountability questions.

Therefore, we said, “no, first concentrate on the BFP”. You have concluded. Either on Thursday or next week we shall conclude it but the Committee on Budget has already started receiving committee reports for the BFP.

On the issue of time, I think it is something we shall go back and discuss administratively. Let me first allow Hon. Ssemujju since he wanted to guide on the same.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I wanted to provide some information. The mistake we have been making is to treat the Auditor-General's report as raw material for committees to do work. In other jurisdictions, if you go to Kenya – I visited them because I chaired an accountability committee before. The report of the Auditor-General is adopted as it comes, and then committees request to do further investigation in specific areas.

I want to ask you, Mr Speaker, for Parliament to adopt a similar approach. So that you do not use the report of the Auditor-General – a lot of work is done by technical people, they sometimes even hire private firms, and then you use it as raw material. In other countries, they just adopt and then request to do investigations in specific areas and then they can do them forever. That is the information I wanted to give.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, I do not want us to start a debate here. We usually improve on such processes by having meetings with chairpersons of committees. We can also discuss it in the business committee meeting in terms of strategy. We come up with a strategy together.

However, most importantly, Hon. Sarah Opendi, the argument was, like Hon. Ssemujju has said, Government will not start taking

actions on the recommendations of the Auditor-General before you adopt. So, if you wait for three, four, five years, how will you process a Treasury Memorandum, which is an action-taken report? Now, I think it is operational.

You can make subcommittees out of a committee, you share and say, “this side, you get projects, this side, get these categories of MDAs and all that”. And in the end, you adopt as a committee, you come here and we debate. We shall be calling a meeting so that we agree on a strategy that can help us work as a team.

Yes, finally, Hon. Ababiku.

2.52

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to comment on one issue that you commented about – the issue of this year being a period of election. We thank you for the wishes, but we need to be empowered to account to our people in relation to key issues we raised on the Floor of Parliament.

As people from West Nile, we have the issue of the non-compensation of our people as a result of the LRA war, the non-expansion of Adjumani Hospital and others. If we do not have these responses, whether in affirmative or not, it makes it very difficult for us to account to our people.

My prayer is, let Government respond to the issues that Members have raised so that we have a package to share with our people. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On land compensation, I remember the Attorney-General was working out something. Do you have any update?

2.54

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the concern raised by my sister, Hon. Ababiku.

Originally, the Government committed itself to do compensation in three sub-regions: Acholi, Lango and Teso. When the exercise started, there was pressure from other sub-regions: West Nile, Bugisu, Bukedi, Busoga, and parts of Rwenzori, which were hit by the Allied Democratic Forces (ADF).

This matter was presented to Cabinet and a decision was taken to wait and first see how the other areas are being compensated because we would be overwhelmed and Government would not be able to appropriately carry that burden. So, the idea was that we first do substantial work on the three sub-regions, then we would seek guidance from Cabinet and be directed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you have power to empower yourself through the budgeting process and sectoral committees. When we are processing ministerial policy statements – this is where we have to be assertive and raise these issues.

I am sure the Government Chief Whip has also taken note. It is in a wide perspective, Hon. Ababiku.

Do you have a point of clarification? Let me start with the one who has raided the microphone without my permission.

DR BWANIKA: I had not switched on. Mr Speaker, when we had the Sitting in Gulu, we had a report from the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation, on the compensation. That report was read and it was not adopted.

We are waiting for that opportunity so that Parliament can fully debate that report and we come up with a resolution. In that report, the issues of West Nile are included. The other parts of the country – they are waiting for our report and that resolution, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Clerk, put it on the Order Paper for tomorrow. We will have it sorted. Hon. Angura and then Hon. Basalirwa.

2.56

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. You have rightly said that we are processing the budget. We have started with the BFP. Very soon we shall go to the ministerial policy statements and that is where we should be assertive. That is a very good statement.

Remember, Mr Speaker, now we are looking at the plans which have come through the BFP. When you look at the column of the unfunded priorities, which will still be translated into the ministerial policy statements and finally the budget we shall pass, many of the needs that these constituents of yours, the Members here, are focusing on to achieve as a way of benefit as they return, are in the unfunded priorities. And that will continue up to the –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, Rule 80 of our Rules of Procedure does not allow me to allow such a debate in anticipation. You can submit without referring to what is in the report of the BFP.

MR ANGURA: Thank you very much. I would like to request - and the Government Chief Whip is here, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is not here - I want to request that when we come to that conclusive situation of approving the figures that we shall supply here, we let those figures be honoured.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we shall give you enough time to scrutinise the Budget. I had allowed Hon. Basalirwa, Hon. Ssewungu and Hon. Dr Nsaba Buturo.

MR BASALIRWA: On the issue of compensation, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs appeared before the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, and as the learned Attorney-General has said, the focus is on three places; Acholi, Lango and Teso. He said that they requested Shs 100 billion for that process. As a matter of fact, the West Nile is not there. That is from the Cabinet.

Even we, from other areas like Busoga, where Lakwena terrorised us, are not there.

Mr Speaker, the focus remains very limited to those areas and from the budget framework paper of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, that is very clear. That is the clarification.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Anything to do with land, we shall discuss it tomorrow. Hon. Bwanika guided us very well. When we debate the report, you will make the submission.

Hon. Ssewungu, is it the same?

2.59

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. From your communication - and it has become common practice for me to remind the Ministry of Education and Sports, that since you said you are going for campaigns, the children should not stay behind. I got numerous calls, as a shadow minister, from a number of schools that they did not get the capitation grant, yet the term starts on the third. This is a very big problem for the children.

Secondly, a number of schools have advertised for senior one positions when the Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE) are not yet out, and the Minister for Education and Sports is comfortably seated listening. How are these students going to join senior one when the results for the PLE are not yet out?

Above all that, Mr Speaker, let us help the Minister for Education and Sports. This money is very little, and yet the teachers must be at school by now preparing for the beginning of the term, as they are at private schools where our children study. The biggest population of children in Uganda is in Universal Primary Education (UPE) and Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools.

Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Education and Sports should take keen attention; USE schools have developed a system of opening up boarding sections – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Peter Ogwang, the minister. He was already off. Please, honourable, you know that when you see me seated here, never switch on a microphone without my permission. This is because we have to stop somewhere when conducting business here.

Honourable minister.

3.00

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang): First of all, Mr Speaker, Happy New Year. On behalf of the Ministry of Education and Sports, I thank my colleague, the Shadow Minister of Education and Sports, for the questions he has asked, and I want to reply to him as follows:

We will be officially releasing the Primary Leaving Examinations on Thursday. Today is Tuesday, tomorrow is Wednesday and Thursday. So, the entire country should be informed of that.

Number two, in line with the question my colleague raised regarding the issue of the capitation grant, permit me to bring the written statement on Thursday to answer whether the capitation grant has been released by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development or not. This is because once they release –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable minister. You are going to burden yourself for nothing and clog the Order Paper. You may have a minute, call the permanent secretary when you are outside and confirm, so that I save you the burden of having to come here and debate for an hour.

MR OGWANG: Most obliged, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Whenever you are ready, signal to me.

Hon. Ssewungu, number one, when you submitted your issue, you referred to my communication. I never communicated anything regarding education, but I kept quiet.

Number two, you want to come back to the same issue. Okay.

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, I hid it under the new year and the forthcoming campaigns, in the interest of the children. However, I thank the Minister of Education and Sports for his response. I always talk from an informed point of view, but there is something very serious that we must address as a Parliament.

Universal Secondary Education (USE) schools have day students because parents cannot afford fees. The culture is growing in a number of rural schools, where schools have opened up boarding sections, and charge fees to parents. It is challenging for parents. The Ministry of Education and Sports has not come out with a proper statement on who is supposed to attend the boarding section.

As I speak, parents pay over Shs 700,000 in USE schools. The Government pays Shs 60,000 or Shs 80,000 per student, in USE schools. It has become a business. You must address all of this because students have run out of school. If you do not have boarding fees for senior four and senior three, you cannot attend, and they are pulling out of school. All that must be addressed by the minister as he looks for his statement that might not be very true, from what I know. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, honourable minister, any good news for us?

MR OGWANG: I confirm that the capitation grant will be given to all schools in the country by Monday next week. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nsaba Buturo.

3.04

DR JAMES NSABA BUTURO (NRM, Bufumbira County East, Kisoro): Mr Speaker, the Committee on East African Community Affairs, was tasked to examine the East African Community Mediation Agreement Bill. We have been proceeding well, but we need a bit more time to be able to conclusively put the matter to an end.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: How much time do you need? I know you have lost time handling the Budget Framework Paper.

MR NSABA BUTURO: Mr Speaker, 30 days would be sufficient.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Twenty one days, can do, okay? Very good. Twenty one days is fair.

Honourable colleagues, on a sad note, I have received information that Hon. Frederick Gume Ngobi, MP for Bulamogi North West County, lost his mother yesterday. It is very important that we observe a minute of silence.

(The House rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have seen that next time I am reading, I will start with the one who has died. This is because I saw some people being shaken right away. But whoever we lose is a valuable life.

Hon. Ssemujju, matters of national importance?

3.06

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise here to register and request the Government to intervene in the way Dr Kiiza Besigye is being treated in Luzira Maximum Prison. We have visited him, at least those of us who belong to the same side as him. We talked to him and took food. Now, that right has been taken away by the prison's authority. When you visit him - last time I was there with Hon. Mwijukye and Hon. Kamara - they have now put a glass, so, he stands behind it, and there is a microphone. You cannot even be sure that you are speaking to him.

We do not know why these conditions – because Dr Besigye is the most imprisoned person under this Government. This is the first time that he is being treated like this.

Mr Speaker, what is worrying us even more is that when you deny people their choice of food

- because food is also medicine. We have had colleagues who leave Luzira Prison, including Dr Besigye's brother, and as soon as they leave, they die; Dr Kiggundu and others. We do not know whether it is deliberate that when Dr Besigye - if he ever leaves - will leave when his life has been really affected.

More worrying, the Chief of Defence Forces, Gen. Muhoozi Kainerugaba, announced that Dr Besigye will be hanged. Mr Speaker, I did not take the statements of Gen. Muhoozi seriously but now I do. Why? He said they will go and attack Kenya; they will be in Nairobi. I actually thought it was a joke. However, Dr Besigye was kidnapped from Nairobi.

We had other colleagues - 36 of them - kidnapped from Kisumu. I do not need any further evidence that they actually attacked Nairobi and took over it long ago.

The other day he called Gen. Elwelu a buffoon and I kept asking myself, did he ever do something buffoonery for Gen. Muhoozi to begin calling him a buffoon? For the Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) officers here, you must be very careful with what you do. I kept asking, what has he done? My memory took me to Kasese, where he commanded the attack on *Lubiri*. I said, is that what Gen. Muhoozi was referring to as buffoonery?

I am using that as an illustration to say I take his statements - because our colleague needs protection. He said that his New Year's resolution includes arresting Gen. Elwelu. I am happy Gen. Elwelu is here and has not yet been arrested.

Mr Speaker, I am saying I take his statements - The other day he said he will arrest the Committee on Defence and Veteran Affairs. He said, "Those clowns cannot summon me," and I saw them seated comfortably. The guy has refused to come. I now take his statements seriously.

When he says he wants to hang Dr Kiiza Besigye in May - he said he has actually now shifted it. I do not know whether starving him

in Luzira becomes part of the process but I ask the Government to tell us. Dr Besigye was generous. He treated President Museveni and his family when they were fighting in Luwero. Why are they paying him by starving him, Mr Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Internal Affairs?

3.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): Mr Speaker, I am not a clown but I want to respond to Hon. Ssemujju's concerns, especially food, which is a basic right. The family of Dr Besigye accredited six people and it is only those that are allowed to bring food. We cannot extend beyond that for security reasons.

Number two, the place where Dr Besigye meets visitors is the accredited place for other people to meet visitors. You speak from a handset by intercom and that is a universal practice. That is what I wanted to tell you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Zumura Maneno?

MR SSEMUJJU: I respect Gen. Muhoozi but it is not right to lie. Hon. Mwijukye is here. We went and met Dr Besigye and even spoke to him. This speaking behind glass is a new thing. Maybe you do not go to prisons. We keep visiting the people you have arrested. I was both in Kitalya and Kigo and I have never spoken to anyone behind glasses, Gen. Muhoozi. Maybe you live in heaven.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: General, is it a new practice? I have not been to Luzira, so I cannot speak for -

GEN. MUHOOZI: Mr Speaker, what I would like to bring out is that it is not targeting and discriminating against Dr Besigye; it applies to all the inmates.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So now that is the practice? Therefore, honourable colleagues,

the people in charge of prisons, if they have a new way of handling prisoners, and it is for all prisoners now here, what should I do on the Floor?

I really - honourable colleagues, please - I avoid a situation where we just continue to rotate on something. Now, the honourable minister in charge of prisons has told you that this is how they are treating all prisoners. If there are prisoners who are being treated differently, it is a matter we should come and handle.

However, for now, this is not a matter you can resolve on this Floor. The honourable minister's submission has been very clear and I do not think I can go beyond that.

Yes, Hon. Zumura.

3.12

MS ZUMURA MANENO (NRM, Woman Representative, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance concerning the hippopotamus that has been attacking the people and destroying crops of the community in Obongi.

Last year, in October, a hippopotamus attacked a man called Sunday Dudu in Yakinemiji Ward, a Kenyan village. The gentleman was in his field harvesting his crops and a hippopotamus came out of the river to attack him and broke his leg. The man was hospitalised in Moyo General Hospital for one month and up to now, he is still undergoing treatment.

This year, on 17 January 2025, a man by the name of Modesta from Ewafa Subcounty, Achimari East Village, Ewafa Parish, was again attacked by a hippo that came from the water at the landing site after fishing since he was a fisherman. The young people of Obongi have an association called "Obongi Vegetable Growers", where they plant greens, watermelon, cabbages, and all their crops were destroyed by the hippo.

My prayers are:

1. For the young people who have been growing vegetables and whose crops were

destroyed, the ministries in charge of disaster and agriculture should help them with seeds so they can also plant again; and

2. The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) should intervene in that matter. We do not have a field office for UWA in Obongi; the field office we have is in Adjumani. Whenever such matters happen, we call UWA officials and they do not respond.

So far, this Modesta man is in Yumbe General Referral Hospital undergoing treatment, but one leg has been chopped by the hippo. This means he has become a disabled man who can no longer be resourceful to his family.

3. The Uganda Wildlife Authority should come to the rescue of these people who have been affected by the hippo because they are going for treatment and they also have other things to do. The UWA people are not responding to – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Are the hippos from the national parks? Which ministry do they belong to?

3.15

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, we would like to say sorry to the people who have been affected by the conflicts between human beings and animals. Just to inform this House that the minister of tourism will be informed, if they have not been informed, in a short time, so that they can follow up on that matter and see what can be addressed.

Regarding the disaster, the minister in charge of disaster is here. I do not know whether that is within your jurisdiction but we also know that there are some resources for compensation under the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for people who are affected by a conflict like that. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, but honourable minister for internal affairs also pick interest with security to see how best because if Uganda Wildlife Authority has not been responding, maybe the Police should be able to help coordinate. Honourable minister for disaster preparedness, we need seedlings.

3.16

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DISASTER PREPAREDNESS, RELIEF AND REFUGEES (Ms Lillian Aber): Mr Speaker, the ministry of disaster preparedness does not supply seedlings. However, I will coordinate with my counterpart, the minister for agriculture; maybe they will be able to address that. What we can do as, ministry of disaster preparedness, is that, if we have a big number of people in that community affected, the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) can provide a report and request for relief food items and non-food items, and we will be able to provide. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Hon. Nathan Byanyima?

3.18

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have one important case but I would want to advise that much as you are talking about the budget, I am at a loss; none of these Members has a copy of the Budget Framework Paper - (*Interjection*) - they do not have it; you cannot read that book on the iPad. You are supposed to have a copy so that if I am in works, I can look at water; I look at electricity, and we compare notes. Those copies should be available to each Member.

Two, since rationalisation, our roads are in a bad state and not because of the minister or the ministry, but because of money. If we are to have any little money, let us have emergency funds for the roads.

If you still need these Members to come back here, the roads must be worked on and the ministry must be given money. We cannot have a stop-over, relax – you can relax on anything

but not on the roads. I have always said here that, for example, people are looking for places for their children in private schools, and people will go to school.

As for health, you can go to any centres - private ones, but for roads, it is a mandate of the Government. Money must be availed to the minister. I am happy the minister is here, but *bambi* he is helpless; he does not have the money. Money must be availed for the roads. You have seen a number of roads, for example, people who come from Ibanda; a road was done a few years ago, but because of a lack of maintenance, it is now no more. The moment you do not repair a road; it requires full rehabilitation. I think this Parliament, must get money and have these roads done.

There was a road from Gayaza to Kalagi – some of us here never knew about Kalagi, but that road was very important in travelling to Jinja. Currently, there is no maintenance on the road; even people who used to take a shortcut can no longer go there because of the bad road. Even Mabira itself needs reconstruction because of lack of maintenance.

I pray to you, Mr Speaker, that we resolve that money should be availed to the Ministry of Works and Transport because there is no machine in this country now on Ugandan roads.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BYANYIMA: I appeal to you that we should do something in order to save Members of Parliament and save the country. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister - the General is here himself.

3.21

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (Gen. Edward Katumba Wamala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank Hon. Byanyima for raising this matter. Unfortunately, on the bench, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is not here but this is a matter which is on his desk. We have raised the red flag and I have

also appealed that we should not start new projects because even the ones we are running are not being properly funded. I think it is a matter which the ministry of finance will have to talk to, but as of now I have the energy, I have the drive, but I do not have the means. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, do you think if we complete the process of transferring the funds under RAPEX, is it what is delaying them, from what they are telling you or even now they can give you money?

GEN. KATUMBA WAMALA: Mr Speaker, if I may say, as Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) comes to the ministry, we are inheriting a debt of about Shs 1.3 trillion alone. If we do not retire that debt, then all the contracts which we are running, most of the contractors have actually laid down their tools now and that debt - it is not the first time we are talking about it; I have raised this even in the Committee on Infrastructure – attracts on average about Shs 280 million every day, as interest.

Two things must be done:

- (i) retire that debt for the contractors to continue working; and
- (ii) move the money of the votes of UNRA and Uganda Road Fund into the ministry. If we do that, then work will continue as usual.

I just wanted to respond to Hon. Byanyima that, with Kalagi, we have a unit which worked in Mabira that is now working on the Gayaza-Kalagi Road. We are doing something; we are not rehabilitating the whole road, but we are addressing the bad spots between Gayaza and Kalagi, just like we did in Mabira.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we expect that on Thursday we should complete the process of transfer of money which was for entities affected by RAPEX into – No, I mean the report, because the motion is very clear; those that are under the motion. On Thursday, I hope we can complete that process and continue.

General, have you proposed to maybe the ministry to consider an infrastructure bond because it is much cheaper and that is what other countries are doing? For example, in Kenya, the infrastructure bond is exempted from tax. It is very attractive, and they are getting much cheaper money.

It is painful to have contractors who are not paid. You are suffocating the banks; you are killing our own – and then after killing this contractor, you call a new contractor, because this one can no longer do any work. You also refuse to pay that one; you attract another one, and in the end we are blamed as Parliament, that “You are not appropriating money to the sector.” We are going to work with you, honourable minister, to ensure that this issue is settled.

3.26

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on the issue of the Senior Education Officers in this country.

In February 2020, there was an advert placed by the Education Service Commission inviting teachers to apply for the position of Senior Education Officer. A number of teachers applied, the shortlist was made, the interviews – both oral and written – were done, and the successful candidates were issued letters of appointment.

After issuing these teachers with letters of appointment by the Ministry of Education and Sports, they were actually posted to various schools and some of the schools are in my district. What is shocking is that to date – these teachers were Education Officers at U4, and as Senior Education Officers, they are supposed to earn U3 salary but to date, these teachers have been moving in the corridors of the Ministry of Education and Sports, Public Service, and their salaries have never been changed from the U4 to U3.

Mr Speaker, I want to find out from the minister of education; what exactly is going on. Why do you advertise, appoint, post and then fail to

give these teachers the salary that they actually deserve?

I need answers, Mr Speaker, from the Minister of Education and Sports over this matter. They have even written - I saw one of the letters – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

3.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS)

(Mr Peter Ogwang): Well, first of all, Mr Speaker, thank you so much. I would like to begin by thanking my colleague for asking such a good question.

I want to confirm that in 2022, in terms of the implementation of the scheme of service, the Education Service Commission did recruit 154 education officers.

Mr Speaker, after the recruitment of those teachers, they were meant to automatically qualify to earn a U3 scale salary.

I also want to confirm that we are working with the Ministry of Public Service in terms of availability of funds for us to pay those teachers in line with the appointment letters that we issued to them.

So, I want to confirm to my colleague that the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of Public Service are following up on this matter urgently to resolve it and have these teachers paid.

Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yeah, but, honourable minister, you know, it is against the law to commit the Government without funds. By issuing appointment letters, you committed the Government that these people – and this is a statutory obligation. It is not something for negotiating, lobbying and all that. So, are you going to pay the arrears?

MR OGWANG: Mr Speaker, I want to say the following: the officers were issued with appointment letters and posting instructions, but there was no salary increment for the promoted staff.

This arose due to the salary staffing structure, which had not been included. However, the Education Service Commission did include this in terms of the structure and that is now where we are – discussing with the Ministry of Public Service.

I want to confirm the following – Mr Speaker, you asked the question of arrears - (*Mr Ssewungu rose*) -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, let us allow the minister to submit.

MR OGWANG: Mr Speaker, you asked the question of arrears and we all know it is an entitlement for all staff, as long as you have been issued with an appointment letter. So, if you have worked and you have the appointment letter, why shouldn't you be paid these arrears? That is money which these teachers are entitled to.

What we are now following up on is for us and the Ministry of Public Service to have this money properly budgeted for and these teachers paid. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson of the Committee on Education and Sports, I know you are handling the issue of recruitment of teachers under your committee – I do not think you have concluded on it. Pick this component and let the technical officers – the accounting officers – in the Ministry of Public Service appear, and you make a sub-report to be part of the main report on this same matter.

MR KUBEKETERYA: Most obliged, Mr Speaker. We have scheduled all of them to come. So, there is no cause for alarm. (*Member: "Order!"*] Order against me? (*Laughter*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. James, whom are you talking to?

MR KUBEKETERYA: I was talking to you, but - (*Laughter*)

Mr Speaker, I was informing the House that we have already scheduled. We are beginning on the 27th with the petitioners, then the Ministry of Education and Sports, the Ministry of Public Service -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I have added another issue for you.

MR KUBEKETERYA: Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is the issue of teachers who were given appointment letters, but their salary was not adjusted to reflect the appointment they got.

MR KUBEKETERYA: Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, Clerk, help and extract it very well for the committee chairperson and ensure that he addresses that issue very well. Yes, Hon. Nsegumire.

3.32

MR MUHAMAD NSEGUMIRE (NRM, Mityana County North, Mityana): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of escalating garbage management in the city. If you move around the city, there is a lot of garbage heaps, which are even blocking some roads.

I would like the minister for Kampala Capital City to come and address this issue. Otherwise - (*Interjections*) - please, I take it -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not on matters of national importance. You know our practice, honourable colleagues, on matters of national importance.

MR NSEGUMIRE: Mr Speaker, allow me to read my prayers -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, that has to be a submitted statement and we upload it on the system. You have them in your head.

MR NSEGUMIRE: Most obliged, Mr Speaker. I would like the Minister of Kampala to come and address this issue because it is escalating. Garbage is everywhere; you find it on the roads and in markets. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Naluyima?

3.33

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I already brought up this matter earlier. This matter is not only in Kampala but also affects the people of Wakiso and the neighbourhood.

When you look around - the tenders that were given to those in Kampala. Right now, they have contracted some officers or local councils in Wakiso, and whoever has a small portion can dispose of garbage there. So, it is really a very big problem.

To make matters worse, local governments in Wakiso are no longer being consulted.

Two, Mr Speaker, when we are talking about garbage, we cannot also forget that compensation for the Kiteezi people is still pending. That is also a matter that needs to be followed up.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I will ask the minister for Kampala to come and update this House next week. Yes, Hon. Kwizera.

3.34

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I want to raise an issue of national importance. There is a Government policy that in every sub-county, there should be a Government-aided secondary school. In Bukimbiri, we have four sub-counties, but we do not have Government-aided secondary schools.

Secondly, yesterday, they released a list of Seed Secondary Schools. People in Bukimbiri are asking: what is the criteria and what is the

qualification for one school to become a seed school? In some districts, you find one district having about two or five seed schools, while in other areas, we do not.

I wish for the minister to make it clear on when the Government will implement the policy of a secondary school in each subcounty and the qualifications for one to qualify or not qualify for a seed school – because it has become either politics or who knows who. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I saw the list in *New Vision*. I do not know whether, number one, it is accurate, and number two, how one district can have five schools when another has zero. What are the criteria for choosing?

MR OGWANG: Mr Speaker, first of all, I entirely concur with the submission of Hon. Kwizera on one part. It is true that it is the policy of the Government to have a seed secondary school per subcounty across the country.

It is also true that as the Ministry of Education and Sports, we are undertaking the construction of a number of secondary schools across the country. Some of you, colleagues, can attest because these constructions occur in your respective sub-counties.

In terms of the list, which appeared in the newspaper yesterday, I want to say the following: I cannot deny nor confirm. However, permit me to bring the official list to this House so that it is a list that I can own as a minister responsible for education and sports. Thereafter, I will answer questions, specifically on how I went to Kachumbala, Rukiga, Moyo or Kassanda. I will answer when I have the list with me once my statement is ready.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, when do you want to bring that list?

MR OGWANG: I will bring it on Thursday.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Thursday is granted.

MR OGWANG: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Next item.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENTS

I) STATEMENT ON EXPIRED UGANDA NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Minister of Internal Affairs.

3.36

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): Mr Speaker and honourable members, this is a statement regarding the expiry of Ugandan National Identification Cards.

Mr Speaker, I present this statement in relation to the expired Uganda National Identification Cards to provide clarity on the measures taken by the ministry to address this issue.

Section 69(4) of the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332, provides that a national identification card shall be valid for such a period as the minister may prescribe by regulations. Previously, under Regulation 19 of the Registration of Persons Regulations, Statutory Instrument No.67 of 2015, the validity of national IDs was prescribed as 10 years.

However, in recognition of the need for immediate intervention, in August last year, the ministry issued the Registration of Persons (Amendment) Regulations, No.67 of 2024, which extended the validity period of all National Identification Cards issued by the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) by one additional year. This was in light of the planned mass enrolment which has been delayed. So, we wanted a stopgap measure.

Mr Speaker and Members, consequently, all identification cards initially issued with

a validity period of 10 years are now valid for 11 years from the date of issuance. The inclusion of expiry dates on Uganda's national identification cards serves practical, legal, and security purposes, as justified below.

1. Updating security features

Technology and security measures evolve rapidly. An expiry date ensures that identification cards can be periodically updated to incorporate advanced security features, making them less susceptible to forgery or misuse. Regular renewal cycles are a proactive measure to maintain the integrity of the National Identification System;

2. Data accuracy and currency

Over time, personal details such as physical appearance, addresses, and contact information may change. An expiry date encourages citizens to update their information periodically, ensuring that NIRA maintains an accurate and up-to-date database;

3. Wear and tear

Physical identification cards are subject to wear and tear over time due to regular use. An expiry date allows for the timely replacement of cards to ensure their functionality and readability, which is critical for verifying identity, remains valid;

4. International standards and compliance

Section 5(2) of the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332 –(Interruption) -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure?

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I thought these changes were meant to protect the Speaker. The way Hon. Ogwang has run and even jumped barricades - (Laughter)

The procedural issue I am raising, Mr Speaker, is whether colleagues must not be educated about what the new changes mean - you cannot simply go and begin interacting with

the Speaker, like the Minister of State for Education and Sports was doing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I can see you are very attentive, Hon. Ssemujju. They were, of course, meant for the wrong people, and Hon. Peter Ogwang is not one of them. *(Laughter)* He made a sign for me that he needed to share something with me.

So, when you need to come here, first make a sign and then I judge you and see - *(Laughter)* - because some of you look at me with threatening eyes - *(Laughter)* - so I can know whether you are dangerous or not. For example, the chances of allowing Hon. Ssemujju, when he wants to come here are very minimal. *(Laughter)*

GEN. MUHOOZI: Mr Speaker, I was actually worried when Hon. Akol kept standing, but I think he has left. *(Laughter)* That said, Mr Speaker and honourable members, we had reached data accuracy and currency.

1. Data accuracy and currency

Over time, personal details such as physical appearance, addresses and contact information may change. An expiry date encourages citizens to update their information periodically, ensuring that NIRA maintains an accurate and up-to-date database;

2. Wear and tear

Physical identification cards are subject to wear and tear over time due to regular use. An expiry date allows for the timely replacement of cards to ensure their functionality and readability, which is critical for verifying identity;

3. International standards compliance

Section 5(2) of the Registration of Persons Act, Cap 332 provides that NIRA shall observe generally accepted information security practices and procedures, and specific industry or professional rules and regulations. Document 9303-International Civil Aviation Organisation (ICAO) Machine Readable Travel Documents (MRTD) 8th Edition, 2021, Part 9 provides that

deployment of biometric identification and electronic storage of data in MRTDs.

Section 2.2 provides for the validity period of these documents under which identification cards fall, which is 10 years. This, therefore, aligns Uganda with international standards and facilitates the use of the National Identification Card for cross-border travel and other international purposes.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, Section 69(5) of the Registration of Persons Act imposes a duty on NIRA to renew expired IDs upon application by the holders. In addition to Regulation 23 of the Registration of Persons Regulations, it requires that holders of national IDs apply to NIRA for renewal at least two months before the expiry.

The expiry of a National Identification Card does not, under any circumstances, amount to the expiry of a person's citizenship. This has been a repeated worry, so we need to amplify it for the public to know.

Section 69(5) of the Registration of Persons Act makes this clear and Section 68(2) affirms that an individual's National Identification Number (NIN) is *prima facie* evidence of citizenship. The NIN is a lifetime number, which remains valid until the demise of the holder of a card.

Mr Speaker, the ministry is aware of the challenges faced by citizens holding these expired IDs, particularly while using them as travel documents within the region. These challenges are despite the extension of the validity period here in Uganda.

To address this challenge, the ministry engaged with the sister Ministry of East African Community Affairs and that of Foreign Affairs to signal the other EAC member states about this provisional, time-bound measure. Our aim is to secure acceptance of this interlude measure of extended IDs for travel purposes within the region.

Nonetheless, we are also soon starting the mass enrolment and renewal exercise, albeit slightly

later than earlier planned, but nevertheless, still within the stipulated time to renew all the expired national identity cards and also enlist fresh eligible entrants on the national identity information register.

I wish to inform this House that NIRA is actively developing new technological advancements to enhance the National Security Information System and improve the security features of our National Identification Card before the commencement of the mass enrolment exercise.

The long-term plan - because this has also been a query by the public - is to introduce e-IDs with no expiry, a measure that will save costs and reduce the inconvenience associated with mass physical card renewals.

Mr Speaker, the extension of the validity period by an extra period of one year provides the necessary time frame to integrate these upgrades into the renewal process, as well as mitigating any of the arising inconveniences to service delivery before renewal, thus improving the overall functionality and security of the system and the cards. The extension, therefore, is a provision of a stopgap measure and not a substitute for new national identification cards.

Mr Speaker, I assure you that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is committed to ensuring that the identity and rights of Ugandan citizens are protected and upheld. The ministry shall continue working tirelessly to ensure a smooth mass renewal and mass enrolment exercise of the National Identification Cards.

I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, this is a straightforward statement. I will pick two from the National Resistance Movement (NRM), one from the opposition, and one for the Independents. Hon. Miggade, Hon. Basil, and the shadow minister - yes, a shadow minister is not a minister. I am looking for an independent, Hon. Roland is an independent. Hon. Obigah Rose, you are not an independent. Let us do two minutes each. I also will pick one party President, Hon. Basalirwa.

MR MIGGADE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You rise on procedure or are you debating?

MR MIGADDE: Point of procedure.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, you are already on the microphone, I thought you –

MR MIGADDE: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your understanding. It is a rare occasion, to have three sector ministers, attending a plenary but last week, on this same Floor, I raised a matter of national importance. It had to do with the piracy on the lake where some of our people were killed, and boat engines stolen daily.

From the time I raised that matter, it happened yesterday and last week, and the State Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs undertook to send a team on the ground to assess this. I raised the same matter with the Minister for Defence and Veteran Affairs, who is in attendance. I raised the same matter with the Minister of Internal Affairs, and since then, no officer has appeared in Buvuma to assess this.

I know it is the duty of the Minister of Internal Affairs and the police to keep law and order, but also of the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs to ensure that the national borders are safe. Byabaana subcounty, where these issues are happening, borders Uganda and Tanzania.

Our prayer remains the same: we want the relevant ministers and agencies to go on the ground and assess the situation and see how our people are assisted now that they are here, I want commitment from them that, effective tomorrow, such occurrences will not occur.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Commander, Oboth Oboth, our honourable colleague. I was reminded you are a private –*(Laughter)*- there he stands up once you call him a private.

MR OBOTH: I am a private, but I want to let my sister, who has been having the conduct of this matter, come and give more details –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Oboth is a private but he gives orders to commanders. Hon. Oleru Huda? Hon. Kabuusu do you want to open up this matter? Honourable minister, a minute, let me allow the two Members from the fishing community to speak first.

3.50

MR MOSES KABUUSU (FDC, Kyamuswa County, Kalangala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was saying it is not only a Buvuma issue, but the fishing communities suffer the same problem. I would suggest that the three or four ministries, the one of East African Community Affairs, the one for Security, and the one for Defence and Internal Affairs have a joint task force to address this. All of us who represent constituencies that border other countries in the lake, are insecure.

For them on their side, they have means to protect their people but in these waters of our communities, we do not have security for our people. They take engines and boats and our people cannot chase them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Okeyoh.

3.51

MR PETER OKEYOH (NRM, Bukooli Island County, Namayingo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Piracy on the water is a serious issue, and sometimes, when we ask the commanders down there, they raise the question of fuel. Our people on this side are a little facilitated as compared to the other and sometimes, we find that the pirates have got bigger engines, they move faster, and when our people go in to intercept, they do not have the capacity.

Therefore, it is a serious issue that should be addressed squarely by the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, and the Ministry of East African Affairs because it is an issue and it is affecting the economy of our people; the fishing community.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, the honourable member for Kalangala.

MS NAKIMULI: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I want to give information that when we ask our fishermen who exactly they think is doing this, some of them tell us it is the men in uniform. As he said, they have bigger engines, fuel and big boats, but they are always clad in army uniform, and they also have guns and machetes *-(Interjections)-* yes.

We would want the minister to explain to us the Uganda Peoples Defence Force (UPDF) uniform and also the police uniform. It is happening between Mazinga subcounty, Bubeke, Kyamuswa, and Bufumira. All these islands are in Ssesse or Kalangala.

Mr Speaker, we all know that we have the UPDF on the lake to guard or man the lake in the fishing sector. If they can have guns to man the lake or the fish, why not secure the people who make money to pay them? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Pacuto, on the same? I know you have a lake on your side. Do you still have problems?

3.53

MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and happy new year. About three of my subcounties border the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and we have the same problem with the fishing communities because there is no clear cut where the border is on the water. You find that there are people who come from Congo and confiscate their nets and engines.

However, in my case, it is not about the men in the uniform. The people from Congo come and confiscate and charge them a lot of money. Our Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) have tried to go into Congo to negotiate with the people on the other side, but the support from the Central Government is limited, and this continues to occur.

I am very happy with my colleague who has brought this to the Floor, and the ministers are here. I think there is now need for an inter-ministerial and regional meeting because the local leadership - like RDCs - have tried, but this continues to resurface.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the honourable minister comes, I remember I made a joke on Hon. Ssemujju, but I did not qualify it - so it can - once you read the *Hansard* plainly, I was saying he cannot come near me here. So, it should be recorded by the *Hansard* team that it was a light note. Otherwise, it can remain on the official record of Parliament that Hon. Ssemujju cannot come near the Speaker; he is a dangerous character. Honourable minister?

3.55

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Ms Huda Oleru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Indeed, the Members of Parliament from the lake regions raised the issue and I had committed in this House that our security officers would act. I have informed them, and they are prepared to act – (*Interjections*) – soon, I will call and give you a day for us to meet with them at their site. However, I am more impressed by the proposal that has been brought by Hon. Kabuusu that this issue needs an inter-ministerial committee.

Mr Speaker, I am now committing that I will relay it to the Prime Minister of this country so that she co-ordinates all these ministries and we handle the issue holistically. Thank you. (*Applause*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us resume. I had allowed Hon. Migadde thinking he was going to debate. So, I will pick another one on the National Resistance Movement (NRM) side. Let me allow someone who represents the young people. Hon. Edakasi, I will also pick you. Hon. Bataringaya?

3.57

MR BASIL BATARINGAYA (NRM, Kashari North County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the Minister of Internal Affairs for the elaborate statement about the National Identity Card.

Yesterday, while attending a funeral, this question was posed to me, especially for people who take loans now that these national identity cards have expired. It is good that at least this

identity card is still very operational internally, but when you go to scan it for purposes of other travel documents, the scanner detects the expiry, and, therefore, it cannot be scanned. I want to plead to the House that what the minister has proposed, a non-expiring identity card, is taken up.

In the same vein, the same ministry is charged with birth certificates. In the past, these used to be issued at sub-counties. Now, people have to travel to districts, to the offices of National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA). They travel and sometimes the documents are not ready. Some of them are students who do not have this money to travel back and forth. As a result, it becomes too costly to obtain a birth certificate. Therefore, I pray that one of the issues that is handled is how to decentralise, again, how birth certificates are obtained with little investment by our local people. Thank you.

3.59

MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement about the national identity cards. We all know that national identity cards are essential for accessing services and also conducting business, as well as establishing identity and credibility.

Many young people and millions of Ugandans are being affected by this issue of the expiration of national identity cards. I am also a victim. Many parents have been denied birth certificates for their children because their National Identification Numbers (NINs) are expired.

My request is that this issue should be prioritised for renewal and issuance of new national identity cards.

Also, the process of renewal should be decentralised, at least to the parish level, because our people face challenges in moving to NIRA offices. They are very distant, and it is costly for them. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, as you come, I want to know something. When you said you extended, did you also take advantage of the software you have to adjust the dates online so that if I am scanning, it does not just show “expired”? Otherwise, with the original identity card, you read from the chip. It should be connected to the software such that I just go and adjust the date to allow up to such and such a period.

Otherwise, I do not understand when people say that when they try to scan, it shows that it is expired. That is a software issue, which should easily be handled.

4.01

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We appreciate the statement of the minister. You remember very well that this Parliament appropriated money for purposes of NIRA carrying out mass enrolment or renewal. The minister’s statement is lacking on how far they have gone and when we should expect that mass enrolment or renewal. I remember it was first scheduled for July then extended to this January. As we talk, there is no clear programme.

As you know, the Electoral Commission and NIRA are working hand in hand. That is one of the issues, which have been complained about by Members. NIRA has been distributed one kit per subcounty; so, it is hard to handle the registration of people, which is ongoing right now.

What is the clear deadline in which we expect the mass renewal or mass registration of the people since the money was long released? Thank you.

4.02

MR ROLAND NDYOMUGYENYI (Independent, Rukiga County, Rukiga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity also to add my voice in thanking the minister for his statement. Number one, as a Parliament, I think we owe our people a duty to guide this country on so many matters.

The issue I would like to raise is the different government agencies’ failure to work together to develop solutions for our people. For example, we have just had a census conducted by the Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS). Now, we have registration being done by NIRA. Then the Electoral Commission is also updating the voters’ register. If those agencies could come together – and we have the same information because we are talking about the same Ugandans - we would not have many challenges.

As raised by Hon. Basil, I do not know if the registration of births, and deaths is being done. If it were being done, then that information would be readily available. Mr Speaker, imagine an era where we were in analogue, and our people were registered in the books at the subcounty. Even today, an old person of 60 years can go to the subcounty and find their details there - the date of birth or if someone died, they would register them.

Why wouldn’t we do e-registration and have things online so that I do not have to come to Kampala or move from Rukiga to Kabale District to look for a NIRA office to put my details?

Finally, the matter I would like to raise is about the expiry. The minister says it is a long-term objective. Why don’t we do it right now? Is the software to do that lacking? We should understand if, during this budget process, we can give you money to procure software from which all the people can be registered, and then the data is captured so that it is seamless. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Edakasi, finally. I chose the people already. I had allowed the president.

4.05

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement. For us in Kaberamaido, and I guess the whole country, the identity card has become the key for access to all government programmes.

In Kaberamaido, the older persons are the ones facing the greatest challenges. First, because of distance, they cannot access the services even when they are available, but there is also a lot of competition for just the service. Every time that machine is available for registration, young people take advantage, and older people cannot access it; some of them cannot even move.

Therefore, let the machine be availed the parish, or during registration days, like now when we are going for mass registration - avail a day for the older people to come for their Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment (SAGE) allowances, they should be registered as older people.

The same applies right now - the Electoral Commission has made a great effort to try and map out the disabled in every parish. Those disabled people cannot move to look for where the machines are. Let there be affirmative action from the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) to make sure that the older people and the weak are helped, because they cannot access all the other services.

The other is that I do not know what is wrong, sometimes, either by change of age, the biometrics seem to be affected. I have people who have the right identity card, but they cannot register a SIM card because their fingerprints do not match what is there. I do not know how to answer that. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is the same issue the honourable member for Kiboga was raising here with me. He said especially women who are digging - no, washing clothes cannot. Can't you have another method beyond thumbprints captured on the ID? Please, I mentioned honourable members who are going to speak from this side. In Parliament, we do not deal with peculiar matters— *(Laughter)*

4.07

MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You banned peculiar gadgets around-

MR BASALRWA: I thank the minister for the statement. I have three issues:

Number one; on the issue of expiry, we are finding ourselves in this situation because of the minister - Expiry dates are set by the minister. Section 69, which you quoted, is the one that gives you the mandate to set expiry dates. I do not know your justification for setting 10 years.

You talked about wear and tear. NIRA, by nature, should be in a position to provide continuous registration services without necessarily setting expiry dates. We are now in a very big dilemma, Mr Speaker. Even the one-year extension was gazetted; there was a Statutory Instrument. Even with the one-year extension, there is a very big likelihood that mass registration will not commence within that period.

What that means is that the minister will, again give another extension. I would like to propose, minister, that instead of setting your deadlines at 10 years, you could consider extending or setting a deadline that will not be problematic in terms of implementation. This Parliament gave you authority under the Registration of Persons Act (ROPA) regulations that you are quoting.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, there is another challenge; we will come to mass registration and the like. The minister issued regulations making it an offense not to register, yet he did not take into consideration the fact that sometimes failure to register is on their part. I request that this fine of Shs 40,000 you put in the regulations be scrapped.

As we have seen with the Electoral Commission, also with NIRA, challenges can sometimes come from your part, your machines become faulty, and in some places, there is no human resource. This burden should not be visited on the *Wanainchi*.

Therefore, I propose that under Regulation 23 of the ROPA, where you are putting a fine of Shs 40,000, you still have the mandate, that the fine should be scrapped to give people an opportunity to register, and as a matter of policy, registration should be a continuous process. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you had promised to - I remember last time when we were talking about recruitment of officers, to help in this exercise. Many people who applied are waiting. What is going on, and when are you registering the aliens? I am told there is an issue of the aliens.

4.10

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): Mr Speaker, let me run through the members' questions, starting with the Hon. Bataringaya. I concur with him. His idea is that we decentralise further than the district for ease of people getting birth certificates.

However, I would like to say that many institutions, especially hospitals, register because they are the first call centres for people who deliver and then inform NIRA. Point taken, Hon. Bataringaya, our idea is to be reachable and I take your point and concern.

Hon. Kirabo talked about the same issue, more or less, decentralisation, but I would like to correct her that NINs do not expire. She mentioned that identification numbers expire, but they do not. What expires is the physical card.

Mr Speaker talked about whether we adjusted the software or only did the legal aspect of the extension. Unfortunately, we did the latter. We did not adjust the software to synchronise it with the adjustment in the time-frame legally. That is the problem this is causing us as the honourable members are complaining.

Hon. Kiwanuka; mass enrolment and renewal, when is it starting? Indeed, this House appropriated money for the exercise. I want to report that the processes are ongoing; the

equipment is now in the country, and training is taking place on that new equipment. People were recruited.

We used them a little bit in the mop-up exercise for the people we thought would make 18 by 2026. In schools, you had honourable members saying, "What is NIRA doing in schools?" We wanted to catch up so that we do not lose that time waiting for mass enrolment.

Hon. Kiwanuka, for now, we do not want to confuse the public. For you to do updates and then start enrolment, the Electoral Commission (EC) said, first hold your exercise, we finish the updates and then start on mass enrolment. We are going to begin as promised. You gave us the money and we must deliver.

Hon. Ndyomugenyi; why don't we work concertedly as a government? The Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS), Electoral Commission (EC), and the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA)?

These are different outputs. UBOS does not take fingerprints. They just count people; the EC is fed by NIRA. I want honourable members to understand the functions of each of these institutions, and how they complement each other. The transition from physical to digital ID also depends on many factors. *(Interruption)*

MR SSEMUJJU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The information I want to give is that we are spending a lot of money on different deployments. For example, I am picking a point from Hon. Kiwanuka, if you train people to go and do enumeration, they can still be the same for registration.

People doing registration right now are not from the Electoral Commission; it is NIRA helping the Electoral Commission. I have asked them and they have told me that. You are going to pay them and then recall them. You are going to recall the people but the equipment. Then tomorrow, use the same people and money to redeploy them. I thought that was the point that Hon. Kiwanuka was making. Just do one

deployment, train people to do work for all the institutions, and then they do it at once.

GEN. MUHOOZI: Thank you, Hon. Ssemujju. I agree with you that some of the resources, like people, can be shared. Actually, the people who are doing the updates are NIRA officials who are residents in the districts – using the old kit, not the new one, because the new one needs training on them.

We, therefore, thought it wise to use the old kit, using NIRA people to help the EC. Indeed, I think some of these costs can be rationalised and shared, as Hon. Ndyomugenyi and Hon. Kiwanuka said, and it was later complimented by Hon. Ssemujju.

Transition when? Why not now? Why not later? Now, of course, we are going to, hopefully, do what will be the last physical ID mass enrolment. Money is already spent and the processes are ongoing. So, we certainly cannot transition to the e-system.

However, there are also other factors. The country is mainly still - many people do not have smartphones and internet access is limited. So, all those factors, I think, need to be taken care of before we finally shift to the digital ID. However, I hope and believe that this will be the last physical card renewal and enrolment exercise this country undertakes.

Hon. Edakasi talked about fingerprints. It is true that fingerprints diminish. Most people - the rounded fellows who do manual labour are affected, but we are going to introduce new features in the ID, which will take care of this, especially the iris. That one will take care of this worry of only relying on fingerprints.

Hon. Asuman talked about this being our creation - the problem we are facing: why not more than 10 years? Ten years is international practice and we do not want to be the deviant in the room. Also, we think that this will be the last time that this is happening.

I would also like to allay the fears of Members: we shall start mass enrolment before the one-year extension expires.

The failure to register is an administrative issue, which we can review. It is not cast in stone and, I think, we can look at it and take action. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Next item.

II) STATEMENT ON THE PROGRESS OF THE PREPAYMENT METER (YAKA) UPGRADE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister for energy?

4.20

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Mr Speaker, I am going to give progress on the prepaid meter (*Yaka*) upgrade in the country.

Mr Speaker, on 5 January 2024, I informed the nation of the upcoming mandatory software upgrade of the prepayment electricity meters we use in our homes, industries, and all those businesses that we own.

The notification issued at the media centre followed a global announcement by the Global Standard Transfer Specification (STS) Association that all STS prepayment meters would be affected by the token identifier rollout on 24 November 2024 and, therefore, would stop accepting new tokens on 24 November 2024 unless upgraded.

This issue stemmed from the expiry of the current token identifier, which had been issued in 1993. Any meters that were not upgraded would reject tokens generated after the deadline and, therefore, users would not be able to upload tokens in their meters.

Since then, the electricity distribution companies in Uganda, Umeme and Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL), have embarked on upgrading electricity meters using key change tokens on every meter to extend their vending life to 2045.

I am pleased to provide an update on the progress of this exercise and to inform the House that electricity distribution companies have achieved a significant progress, as I will highlight.

- a) About 2.2 million customers have successfully upgraded their meters, representing 95.5 per cent of the connected businesses or households for both Umeme and UEDCL customers combined.

However, there are some service providers that have attained 100 per cent. Such companies are Kalangala Infrastructure Services and West Nile Rural Electrification Company (WENRECO), which is supplying West Nile.

- b) As of early January, 2025, 108,758 Umeme customers and 17,122 UEDCL customers had not yet completed the upgrade of their meters. So, that is where there is a problem. There are those who have not actually heeded the advice.

The reason for noncompliance could be in one of these unique categories:

- (i) Unoccupied rental properties;
- (ii) Unoccupied homes upcountry;
- (iii) Homeowners currently abroad or in urban areas/towns;
- (iv) Customers bypassing meters to steal power – so, those could actually not be benefiting from this; and
- (v) Other circumstances such as deceased property owners, properties under sale, or legal dispute.

Efforts to ensure 100 per cent token identifier rollover

To assist customers in the upgrade, electricity distribution companies took the following steps:

- (i) Deployment of technicians to help those who cannot actually upgrade their meters, possibly because of illiteracy or something like that; and
- (ii) Enhanced communication efforts. We have repeatedly made announcements on

social media, radios, and even SMS are being sent to notify the customers and some of them are heeding the advice.

How to check if your prepayment meter is upgraded or not

Customers were also guided on how to check if their meters were upgraded, and this is how to do it:

1. For customers using INHEMETER prepayment meters, you press “873” and press “enter”. If you get “01” as a response, it means your meter is not upgraded. If it is “02”, it means your meter is upgraded.
2. For customers who are using CONLOG, you press “#005#”. And in case r1:t2 appears, it means you are not upgraded. And if it is r1:t2 or r2:t10, it means you are upgraded.
3. For HEXING, ITRON, and CHINT Prepaid Meters, you press 873 and press ‘Enter.’ 01 means not upgraded and 02 means you are upgraded.
4. For SAMSUNG and SUNRISE prepaid users, press 005 and press ‘Enter.’ 01 means not upgraded and 02 means you are upgraded.
5. For REA prepaid users, you press 011 and press ‘Enter.’ 01 means not upgraded and 02 means upgraded.

A sample of the adverts run by the Electricity Regulatory Authority (ERA) complements the distribution company’s effort in showing how you can access and test whether your meters are upgraded or are not upgraded. These have been published in the media, but you can also get to the website of ERA, and you will get it but it is in a picture form here, and this report is available. You can actually get guidance from that publication.

Status of the newly acquired prepaid meters

There are those meters that were issued recently. It is also important to note that all

meters installed beginning May 2024 are already compliant with the new prepayment vending system. Umeme and UEDCL issue guidelines to customers on how to check the status of these new meters.

Installation of the new Umeme Billing System

Mr Speaker, allow me to update you on the new billing system being installed by Umeme to enable us to prepare for the additional one million new customers. You know that our target is to get one million customers on board. We are actually going to provide guidelines on how to do it.

My ministry, through the Electricity Regulatory Authority, approved the investment towards the installation of a new National Electricity Distribution Billing System for both prepaid and postpaid vending environments at a budget estimate of \$4.281 million.

The installation, commissioning, and testing of the new National Electricity Distribution Billing System are complete, and we are now in the rollover period. The roll-out had earlier caused some intermittencies in the subscriber timely issuance of tokens and these are happening even now. Even yesterday, one of the honourable ministers, the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs, asked what was happening. This has since been overcome.

However, we still, occasionally, like the Minister of Defense and Veteran Affairs, actually spend a weekend in darkness because the system did not comply. Since the new billing system is still under warranty, any identified anomalies and all losses are borne by Indra through Minsait, its implementing arm as the service provider. So, there is no –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But, honourable minister, I would like to understand this. The statement you gave me is different from what you are reading. When you submit a statement to my office and we approve it, it is the one you should read. The moment you update it, including new things, you should share those new things with me so that I do not look *angazi* here.

MR OKAASAI: The extra is not with you?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable minister, read the content from the Annex as part of the statement. I kept quiet. I thought maybe you were reading - now you have more details, which I do not. That means you have withdrawn the statement you submitted to us, which we have on our system yet you came with a new one.

MR OKAASAI: I am very sorry, Mr Speaker, I actually insisted on bringing out, especially the new installments –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you are reading, honourable minister –

MR OKAASAI: I am actually reading –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I saw you reading the statement – okay, conclude – let us just conclude. If you have a new statement, I will need it so that we can capture it on the *Hansard* very well and on record, okay? Yes, Commissioner.

MRSILWANY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. When you look at the statement that is uploaded, you notice that it is partially uploaded. Actually, what the minister is reading, half is uploaded and half is not. Therefore, we do not have most of the parts. Is it procedurally right for the statement to continue because we cannot follow it?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, who signed the statement you have?

MR OKAASAI: I actually signed it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, but your ministry submitted a statement signed by the senior minister, and with a letter requesting me to put it on the Order Paper. This confusion is what I am trying to - what we are doing - okay, I am going to allow you so that on record, we have the statement you are reading, and we upload it later. However, kindly conclude. Let me just be flexible, but it is –

MR OKAASAI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The updated one was actually sent today, and unfortunately, the earlier one had been uploaded. But allow me to complete and then we can submit a full statement.

The new billing system, the Utility Customer Information System, consolidates many systems, which shall further optimise operations. This system caters for both prepaid and postpaid customers and went live on 9 December 2024. All the system modules have been operationalised by Umeme (U) Limited.

Finally, I want to thank all electricity sector players for their diligence in executing this exercise and ensuring that nobody is left out. I also want to appreciate the cooperation of the customers who completed the update.

I am issuing this statement on behalf of the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Honourable colleagues, I am going to open up. Hon. Muloni, Hon. Onzima, former chairperson, and then here, I will pick Hon. Nabagabe of Kassanda – no, Hon. Roland, take your seat – Hon. Eng. Balimwezo, Hon. Sekabira, and Hon. Ssewanyana.

Honourable members, first take your seats. I will first pick those who have not spoken.

4.35

MS IRENE MULONI (NRM, Woman Representative, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the report presented. While the minister is updating us on the upgrade of the prepayment system, he has indicated the effort to ensure that over a million people are connected.

I am wondering whether the meters being in stock is an issue or not. A case in point, I have my people in Bulambuli who applied for electricity connection in May last year, but up to now, they are not yet connected. I am wondering, is it the case for the free-connection policy, which

is not being implemented, or the stocking of the prepaid meters? I would appreciate if the minister could give us information regarding issues of prepaid metering.

And maybe for him to comment – with all this that is happening, I hope we are well prepared for the transfer from Umeme to UEDCL so that issues of metering – people are connected - and there is a smooth transition of the service. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Onzima.

4.37

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to raise an issue about the statement and I also want to thank the minister for the statement.

He has mentioned that the target is over a million people. In some of our constituencies, poles and wires have been extended but for the last six years, they have not been connected. We are under massive pressure from the voters. If you tell them that the Government has extended power to them, they will tell you that they have not seen the power you are talking about because they only see the polls.

I want to inquire whether the over a million people to be connected, and whom he is talking about, will include those in places where poles have not been connected because these wires are just there. It does not make any sense to people when they are there and not connected. Thank you.

4.38

DR EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I would like to begin by thanking the minister for the statement presented. I have two clarifications that I would like to seek from the minister. One is in regard to the free connection, which has been going on. I have received several complaints from my area.

Those who applied for the free connection and have not been connected yet, right now, whenever they go to Umeme, they are turned down. The reason for this is that Umeme is soon exiting.

Therefore, I am wondering whether Umeme will continue to execute its duties until the last day when it leaves the scene or it has already been handed over to UEDCL. This is because whenever people go to Umeme, they are told that they will follow up on their issues with UEDCL.

My next issue is that now that the minister is talking about an upgrade, while I was chairperson, I came to learn that the previous connections of Umeme were not done properly, according to the technical people in the electricity sector. We also learned that Umeme was, through their connection, actually fleecing Ugandans of a lot of money. This is one of the issues that I left pending for the incoming leadership, to investigate and come up with a report on whether indeed Umeme did a connection that was fleecing Ugandans.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, did you give out assignments on behalf of Parliament as you were leaving? *(Laughter)* Please go on.

DR OTAALA: No, that was in my handover report to my successor.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well done.

DR OTAALA: Thank you. That was one of the pending issues that the new leadership needed to investigate to find out whether it was true that Umeme was fleecing Ugandans of a lot of money in the way they connected the earth wires so that before they leave the scene, they make good and pay the Ugandans all the money that they have fleeced.

However, I did not hear the minister talk about that connection *vis-à-vis* the new connection. If Umeme is still connecting the new meters, then this means Ugandans will continue to suffer through that same irregular connection.

I needed the minister to clarify whether he had taken the trouble to investigate whether there was an irregularity in the way the earth wires were connected, which according to information, reflected as if one had consumed more units than one actually did. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Nabagabe.

4.42

MS FLAVIA NABAGABE (NUP, Woman Representative, Kassanda): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and Happy New Year everyone.

I have two questions or pertinent issues. The very first that I want to pose to the minister is about the upgrade. By the time the deadline for the upgrade passed, we had about 90,000 households that had never been upgraded. We are wondering what their fate is right now. What is the deadline, especially now that the Umeme contract is ending?

This brings me to part (b) of that question, which is about the transitioning of Umeme to Government. In Kassanda, we are already struggling with the transition of REA to Umeme. That has caused us problems of not getting electricity. Now Umeme to the UEDCL, what is the process of upgrading these meters and then the transition process?

Finally, my last question is about the grey cone log meters, the old ones, like the ones that some of us still have in our homes, that were reported inaccurate, causing both users and Umeme a power loss. These very old meters have been prone to hacking. I hope that you are aware of that. They are a one-way tracker, whereas the new ones are a two-way, which are simply easier to audit.

I am wondering why the Government, especially Umeme, has not yet enforced the upgrading to avoid these power losses to both the Government and Ugandans who are paying these taxes. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Engineer Balimwezo?

4.43

MR RONALD BALIMWEZO (NUP, Nakawa Division East, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. One of my questions has been asked by Hon. Irene Muloni about the stock; and the availability of the meters.

My other question is: there are quite a number of complaints from our people that there is a high cost of the upgrade.

Then, they also complained of the limited awareness and robbers have taken advantage of this, particularly during the upgrade. How are you going to handle that?

4.45

MR DENES SEKABIRA (NUP, Katikamu County North, Luweero): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I have two questions. One, I have noted with concern that the prices of the units for *Yaka* vary from time to time depending on when you are loading. I would also want the minister to clarify on that issue because the price is different, at the beginning of the month, in the middle, and at the end of the month. That is number one.

Number two, now that the opportunity has presented itself, Mr Speaker, I asked this question here almost a year ago. The question is about the distribution of power following the loan that we passed and the launch, by the minister in your constituency, on the distribution of power.

In Katikamu North County, which is only 40 miles away from Kampala, we have so many villages that are not yet connected to the national grid. I would also want the minister to explain that issue because we need power to better our lives. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us hear from Hon. Koluo and later, Hon. Ssewanyana.

4.46

MR JOSEPH KOLUO (Independent, Toroma County, Katakwi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. My question to the minister is: is it

because of this upgrade that there are blackouts everywhere? My people in Toroma have complained about the total blackout.

Two, similar to what the honourable member has asked, the officials from the ministry came to Katakwi District, and we mapped all the places without power. However, up to now, nothing has been done to take power to those places. Thank you.

4.46

MR ALLAN SSEWANYANA (NUP, Makindye Division West, Kampala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just to be clear to the honourable minister about what Hon. Sekabira hinted at, it is about the service fee at every start of the month.

Mr Speaker, I see cheating here, and people have complained about it for some time. Someone pays for units and then you tell him or her that there is a service fee. What type of service are they paying for when these are metres in their homes? You do not come to do any service on them, but you call it a service fee, yet they pay for units each time the power goes off. Honourable minister, you should clarify that and see whether we can get a solution as a country for the people to at least be encouraged to use Umeme services. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

4.48

MR JULIUS EMIGU (FDC, Ocherro County, Kaberamaido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You have called me the MP from Soroti, but I am from Ocherro in Kaberamaido -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Teso.

MR EMIGU: Thank you very much. Two questions: honourable minister, I do not know how they do their connections. There are two ways. There is a normal way of doing it, and there is an abnormal one - a private one. They

even tell you openly that if you want to wait for the normal way of doing it, you will wait for years, but if you can cough this amount of money, which is almost ten times the normal price, they will connect you. There are people who have waited for years but they have not been connected. I do not know whether you are aware of those other categories; the two categories.

Two, while Hon. Onzima complained about the poles and the wires hanging in his constituency, mine is even more painful in Ochero. I have a wire, which is just 100 meters from my compound. It has had power for three years. I have applied for a step-down transformer to help us get power there, but they have never responded to us.

Mr Minister, the letter even reached your office. I do not know whether you can check your files and then see. Three years and power is on the line, but there is nothing. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us hear from Hon. Dr Lulume, then Hon. Sowedi.

4.49

DR LULUME BAYIGGA (DP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Most of the concerns to the minister now are in respect to connections. I have heard Members of Parliament mention their respective constituencies and the processes that have been undertaken in surveying and coming up with maps, which are going to be followed to ensure people in the villages are connected to the grid.

The minister needs to tell us what he has been doing with all the finances that this Parliament has passed and whether he needs more money, even if it means a loan. When I came here, Mr Speaker, we approached the Prime Minister who sat with the minister for energy and directed that we, who come from Buikwe, where we have the biggest dam, should have power prior to any other area.

However, up to today, we have not seen anything. Since the minister is being bombarded

from every constituency, wouldn't it be right, that he comes out with another statement on the connection of power to the various areas where mapping and surveying have been done? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure, that is very important. Okay, let us hear from Hon. Sowedi, Hon. Musana, and Hon. Feta. Point of procedure, Hon. Aisha Kabanda?

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you. Mr Speaker, I looked at the Order of Business severally and noticed that it talks about a statement on the upgrade of *Yaka* meters, which was very specific. However, several submissions are about connections, transitioning from Umeme to another, and all different electricity connections. Are we proceeding well with submissions in other areas? Some of us restrained ourselves because we thought we needed to be very specific about the matter on the Floor of Parliament.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I usually become flexible, and you bring me to order, and you are right. So, can we get back in line? That means, honourable minister, that you will capture the other questions under the statement that Dr Lulume Bayigga has proposed for you to bring on connectivity.

So, let us limit our submissions to meters. I wish all of you were like Hon. Aisha. It would be very easy for me. All those who are not speaking, it is because they are following - no, Hon. Roland, if it is on these meters, not connectivity. Yes, Hon. Feta, is it exactly on the statement, as vice chairperson of the committee?

4.52

MR GEOFFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East, Arua): Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. I begin by thanking the honourable minister for the report.

I, largely, have one issue concerning the awareness question. This is because there are communities that do not have access to the

information that the minister has given us. The Electricity Regulatory Authority has not done adequate sensitisation amongst people. The consumers are largely ignorant of this report that the minister has given us. The minister should convince us how this information has been spread to the last electricity user.

Mr Speaker, I wish to appeal to Members, if you can permit me - because Members have moved to the issue of connectivity and scale-up, but we have a challenge of counterpart funding -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you have diverted. We have said that we shall only stop at this.

MR FETA: I made an appeal but you were taken up.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I did not allow the appeal.

MR FETA: Okay, thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: When the chairperson handles it at the committee level, he should be able to address all those issues. Kindly, colleagues, you need my permission to come to this Table; you do not just walk here. *(Laughter)* Yes, Hon. Timuzigu.

4.54

MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I guided that you need to signal me so that I wink at you, but do not make political signs. Make a signal and then you can find your way here through another sign that calls you. Yes, Hon. Timuzigu.

MR TIMUZIGU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are so happy that the ministry is upgrading the meters. However, there is something the minister has ignored. When we put in our meter numbers to buy units, we have to wait for a token number that is too long and then use it to get power. Yet at the beginning, we

used our meter numbers, Umeme recognised the money, but later we had to use the token numbers. Why didn't you consider also upgrading the system to the extent of removing that long token number? Thank you so much, honourable minister.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Acon.

4.56

MR JULIUS ACON (NRM, Otake East County, Otake): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My few concerns, honourable minister are: I would like to know whether there is a difference when one loads this meter during daytime. They say that when one loads at night, they get more units yet during the daytime, one gets less.

Secondly, they say that when one pays in advance like Shs 50,000, they get less units and that when one pays in instalments of Shs 10,000, they get more units. Why do they discriminate? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Mugole and then Hon. Obigah.

MR STEPHEN MUGOLE (NRM, Kabweeri County, Kibuku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Today I received around five emails regarding Umeme metres that are not mine. It says; "issue method system two, system offline mode." I have received five different emails from the domestic taxes department. I do not know how this has come about.

I suppose it is due to the upgrade. They are asking for 9,000; 8,000; and 19. I have five of them, various, like that. I do not have all those meters and so, I need to understand how this comes. Mr Speaker, I suppose that it should be from - because we have never got such a thing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Obigah, did you have an issue?

4.57

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Speaker. On this Floor, we have risen to talk about Obongi severally. Now, if you restrict us to

only speak about meters, Obongi does not have a single pole. What should Obongi talk about? We are asking the minister to respond to Obongi -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable, we are discussing a statement under Rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure. Yes, Hon. Musana Eric.

4.58

MR ERIC MUSANA (Independent, Buyaga East, Kagadi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to submit specifically on connectivity. In my constituency, there are several people who paid for meters. However, UEDCL, as a service provider, has not delivered. They paid in the bank and the UEDCL manager says they do not have metres. Honourable minister, what could be the problem? Payments were made, power is there but the people are not connected to it - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable, we are talking about the upgrade of meters. Beyond that, please – yes, Hon. Roland.

4.58

MR ROLAND NDYOMUGENYI (Independent, Rukiga County, Rukiga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When customers try to pay using mobile money – this is related to what Hon. Ssewanyana was saying - there is a lot of money charged. When I pay Shs 100,000, I am charged around Shs 6,000. Is that money for the ministry or Umeme? Is it for the telecom service provider? Where does that money go?

Secondly, is that money taxed by URA because it is a lot of money? When you consider the number of customers that are being served, that is a lot of money.

Further, Mr Speaker, I think the issue of connectivity cannot be ignored at this time - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nyakato Asinasi, was your issue covered?

Was it about the upgrade of meters?

4.59

MS ASINASI NYAKATO (FDC, Woman Representative, Hoima City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We cannot avoid talking about connectivity - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Sowedi. Colleagues, you know I control the microphone here. If you cannot control yourself, I will control you. If you come and say, “We cannot avoid doing this...” then I will help you. Yes, Hon. Acrobert Kiiza.

4.59

MR ACROBERT KIIZA (NRM, Bughendera County, Bundibugyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. It is a little bit tricky. In my area where I do not have poles, I still have stranded projects by - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Nakimwero.

4.59

MS CHRISTINE KAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Those who cannot recharge their meters now, get contacts from Umeme. There are Umeme staff who are doing it. They send you a token number but at a cost. This encourages corruption because others even hide after sending the money; some hide and do not send the token.

In the meantime, as we upgrade, how should these households who should be approached for accessing power as they upgrade their meters be helped? Otherwise, that direct linkage with the Umeme staff is a corruption tendency.

5.00

MR RICHARD GAFABUSA (NRM, Bwamba County, Bundibugyo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just connected to what the honourable member from Kiboga has said, in the process of upgrading, I have had many cases where someone pays for *Yaka* but the token does not come. Then you call several

times, then they tell you, “What you do, you pay again and when the other one comes, you will load.” However, that never comes. So, you find one paying twice to get another token, for them to be able to load. Is that part of the arrangement?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, please only respond to matters to do with the upgrade of metres. You will cover the rest in the statement, which you will bring here.

5.01

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): I would like to thank Hajjat, for listening to the questions. Many times questions are asked out of context. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was talking about Umeme -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, the moment the Speaker allows any member to speak, it is not out of context. I want you to have that on record. For as long as you have the permission of the Speaker, it is not out of context. I request you withdraw that.

MR OKAASAI: I withdraw it. I am most obliged.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the Speaker; the custodian of rules, I will be ensuring that we follow what is in the statement.

MR OKAASAI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Many questions were new and not in line with what I presented. I will not answer those, but I will submit papers.

The meters that are not installed, and those which are going to be installed - I talked about them here. Any meters that were brought as of May last year are already put in place to work directly to accept; they have been upgraded. All the new meters - even if you got a meter today, it does not require an upgrade.

The meters that are being upgraded are those, which were bought before 24th November last year.

I am not going to talk about project funding. Hon. Dr Otaala, those issues of investigation, we shall make clarifications at an appropriate time.

The fate of those who did not upgrade: the upgrading is continuous, and I highlighted the most likely households or businesses that were not upgraded; either the owners are deceased or many of them may have been ignorant of it.

This now takes me to the question of awareness, which is not adequate. We have continued sending SMS, and I am also using this opportunity. That is why I went through how one can check whether their metre is upgraded or not. I am actually using the MPs to help me to reach those who have not; who cannot, maybe they do not even have the means to reach us.

Otherwise, we are continuing to use various media to tell the population to check their meters, and this is how one can know whether they are either upgraded or not. If your meter is not, we guide you on how to get it upgraded.

It is an online process and many of our users may not be able to go into their phones to get the upgrade. That is why I also said that our technical people – in case there is such a person, and if we get to know about it, - we send our technical people to help those who have not been upgraded. The exercise is continuous.

Varying costs of - no, I will answer that one later. But Hon. Koluo – that is an extension of electricity and we can talk about it later, at an appropriate time.

Expensive private - I take note of this one, with a lot of concern. Previously, before we came to free connections, there were many efforts that we had put in place to reduce the cost of connections. There was a time I came here and said that people only needed to pay Shs 200,000 instead of Shs 720,000.

There was one where we said you pay Shs 400,000 instead of – now, I need to come out clearly on this. The private sector, like Umeme, preferred to use the previous

approaches and they would try to get money from the population, but we have been creating awareness about this. We have been educating the population that there is now a Government programme of free connections and it is being implemented - *(Interjections)* - I will take your information – *(Interruption)*

MS NYAKATO: Thank you very much, honourable minister, for giving way. On the free connections that you are talking about, you did ask Members here to go and mobilise their communities to do the wiring of their houses. However, just two weeks after you pronounced yourself, they said the programme was no more. Up to now, if you ask most of these Members - personally, in Hoima City, that project is not there. They say they do not have poles, they do not have wires, and that they do not have meters.

So, honourable minister, you need to give more clarification on that project. I submit, Mr Speaker.

MR OKAASAI: Mr Speaker, the programme on the free connection is ongoing. There are only a few challenges. For Umeme, it is coming to the end of its concession and they had committed to the Government that they could absorb up to 300,000 meters, but considering where they are now, they have said: “No, we are not able to.” So, the programme is still ongoing and whatever happens, it will continue.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you are listening to many people. Please, continue.

MR OKAASAI: I have answered the issues of the meters. We shall continue upgrading the meters and we are going to continue creating awareness, and we are committed to having everybody – *(Interjection)*- no, not connected, but for those with meters, who are not connected, we are committed to getting the meters upgraded. It is a continuous process, and it has not ended. We only said that by that time – the numbers, which were given. However, when the customers come to houses, which are not upgraded, we shall upgrade them.

Otherwise, the system for upgrading has not changed, it is still the same.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item.

LAYING OF PAPERS

I) THE ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL FOR THE AUDIT YEAR ENDED 31 DECEMBER, 2024

5.09

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the annual report of the Auditor-General to Parliament for the audit year ended 31 December 2024.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The report is referred to the accountability committees: Committee on Public Accounts (COSASE), Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government), and Committee on Public Accounts (Local Governments).

MR NDYOMUGENYI: Mr Speaker, the audit report is for 30 June 2024, not 31 December, as said by the commissioner. That needs to be clarified.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you looking at the performance report? Let me look at the report. Commissioner, you can share with me and the Clerk. I think the commissioner is right because the Auditor-General reported on the audit year, not the financial year – because he said he wanted to include other reports like value-for-money audit reports and the rest. However, if there is any issue to handle later, that will be easy. Otherwise, the Commissioner read the report the way it is; it is for the audit year.

II) THE PERFORMANCE REPORT OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL, DECEMBER 2024

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Maybe I just need to re-emphasize what Hon. Sarah Opendi had raised. Article 163(5) of the Constitution gives us a strict timeline of six months. It says:

“... shall within six months...” So, we cannot start moving around doing what, no! Within six months, we must have finished our work and the six months start today when the report has been referred to the committees.

The committees can even start processing it tomorrow if they are ready. I now allow them to start, because we have finished the Budget Framework Paper, at the sectoral committees’ level. However, I think what we will do – Clerk, arrange a meeting with the chairpersons of accountability committees. We can meet on Thursday; Government Chief Whip and Leader of the Opposition, you attend and we agree on the modus operandi, on how we can maximize on the little time that we have.

Hon. Ssewungu, do you want to say something about that?

5.13

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Mr Speaker, I was a member of the public accounts committee for 10 years, and I would like to say that it is about the Clerk of the committee and the chairperson to programme members. Where we would have such heavy work, we used to work even on Mondays up to the afternoon.

I do not want to attack Members on the Floor of Parliament, but the Clerks attached to those committees must - you said it before: we can divide ourselves into subcommittees because there are more than 40 Members on each committee – we get a section of the report and you handle it.

Otherwise, the clerks attached to these committees must drive Members to run the report. We should not have any excuse for delays and latches.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us have a meeting with the chairpersons of accountability committees. In fact, let us do it tomorrow. Fix it for me tomorrow at midday. Leader of the Opposition, I hope that works. Do it tomorrow at midday; we shall agree on how best we can move forward. Next item.

(III) THE PERFORMANCE REPORT
OF THE OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-
GENERAL, DECEMBER 2024

5.15

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the Performance Report of the Office of the Auditor-General for the audit year ended 31 December 2024. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: There has been a practice of this report being referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development but the Auditor-General is part of Parliament. In fact, the Auditor-General’s budget is even statutory. We should not be - something where he is looking for funds to audit and all that, he should be submitting his budget as part of Parliament and we adopt it.

The practice has been to refer the report to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development but this time, I am going to refer it to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs because I want Parliament to start owning the Auditor-General, the way it should be, and to support him the way it should be.

The Auditor-General is not part of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; he is part of Parliament. So, I am referring the report to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. It will be the first time, but that is how it should be.

(IV) REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
HEALTH ON THE OVERSIGHT VISIT TO
ASSESS THE STATUS OF ABATTOIRS/
SLAUGHTER FACILITIES IN UGANDA

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Any Member from the committee? Okay, next item.

(V) REPORT ON TAX EXPENDITURE FOR
THE PERIOD JULY TO DECEMBER 2024

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, the Attorney-General, on behalf of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

5.17

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL

(Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Mr Speaker, on behalf of the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, I have a short letter. Permit me to read it.

It is headed “*Tax Expenditure Report for the Period of July to December 2024, Financial Year 2024/2025.*”

And it reads: “*Mr Speaker, Article 152(2) of the Constitution requires the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to periodically report to Parliament on the exercise of powers conferred upon him by the law to waive or to vary tax imposed by law.*”

Also, Section 77(1) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 requires a person or an authority granted power to exempt the payment or to vary any tax under the Act of Parliament to report on the matter to Parliament in each financial year.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of this letter is to report to Parliament that for the period of July 2024 to December 2024, Financial Year 2024/2025, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has not exercised these powers granted to him under Section 43 of the Tax Procedures Code (Amendment) Act, Cap. 343, to waive any or vary tax.”

I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.
House adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 5.19 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 22 January 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)