**Tuesday, 22 April 2014**

*Parliament met at 2.38 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala*

PRAYERS

*(The Deputy Speaker, Mr Jacob Oulanyah, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to Order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this special sitting. As you already know, we have had a sad occurrence that has made today’s sitting to be a special one to enable you to give your final respects to the late hon. William Okecho who has since been called by the Lord.

Hon. Members, I want to apologise on behalf of Parliament for delaying to pass on this informationto you. This was because we were not able to confirm with the President as to how to handle this situation. We were only able to do that yesterday at around 4.00 p.m. and that is when the communication started and the Clerk started moving to make these things happen and the family was notified.

So, we apologise for that mishap and lack of information flow which kind of caused anxiety. For all those inconveniences that were caused by this, we are truly sorry as Parliament. That will be my communication. Let us proceed.

*(Entrance of the late hon. William Okecho)*

*National Anthem*

*East African Anthem*

*Laying of wreaths*

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT TO PAY TRIBUTE TO THE LATE HON. OKECHO WILLIAM, FORMER MEMBER OF PARLIAMENT, WEST BUDAMA NORTH, TORORO DISTRICT

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, before the motion is moved, let me recognise the distinguished members in the VIP Gallery. I have former members of Parliament: hon. Otekat, hon. Oleny Charles, hon. Omara Atubo, hon. Livingstone Okello-Okello, hon. Alisemera, hon. Tibutwa Grace; Chairperson of the Uganda Land Commission, hon. Baguma Isoke, hon. Kiryapawo, hon. Othieno Akiika and hon. Silver Bahane. Yes, those are the ones I can recognise.

I also have condolence messages addressed to the bereaved family; one is from the Chairperson of the Acholi Parliamentary Group signed by hon. Okumu Reagan, MP for Aswa County. I have one from the Parliamentary Savings and Credit Co-operative Society Limited signed by the chairperson, hon. Kasamba Mathias, and enclosed in a contribution of Shs 1,000,000 for the family. I also have a message from Web Advocates and Solicitors and signed by hon. Lydia Wanyoto Mutende. I will read others when they come. Let us have the mover of the motion.

2.55

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Ms Justine Lumumba):** I am moving this motion under Rule 47 of our Rules of Procedure:

*“WHEREAS Parliament has, with grief, learnt of the death of hon. William Okecho, former Member of Parliament representing West Budama North County from 2006 to 2011 which occurred on 18 April 2014 at Mulago Hospital in Kampala;*

*AND WHEREAS hon. William Okecho was born on 28 May 1949 in Tororo District and attained his formal education from, among others, Bukedi College, St Mary’s College Kisubi and Makerere University, where he graduated with a Bachelor of Commerce Degree in 1974 and later in 1977 pursued his Master’s Degree in Business Administration from Nairobi University and a Postgraduate Diploma in Management at Netherlands Institute of Management in Netherlands;*

*NOTING that the late hon. William Okecho was a brilliant and hardworking scholar; he was retained at both Makerere University and University of Nairobi as a teaching assistant and later on worked in various capacities and organisations like in Uganda Airlines Corporation, World Bank and the Ministry of Finance and Economic Planning;*

*AWARE that due to his excellent performance, the late hon. Okecho was appointed chairman of several boards, including the Cotton Development Organisation, Textile Manufacturers Association, Padhola Rural Savings and Credit Ltd; Cotton Products Uganda Limited and National Water and Sewerage Corporation;*

*FURTHER AWARE that the late hon. William Okecho was in 2006 elected as a Member of Parliament for West Budama County North a constituency he represented with distinction upon which the people of West Budama North elected him as the NRM party chairman in 2011;*

*RECOGNISING that the late hon. William Okecho was an outstanding, modest, hardworking and diligent legislator with a memorable political and managerial carrier, who served his country with dedication and distinction;*

*NOW THEREFORE, be it resolved by Parliament of Uganda dually convened and sitting in Kampala on this 22 day of April, 2014 as follows:*

1. *That Parliament collectively conveys its deep condolence to the bereaved family, the Government of Uganda and to all Ugandans upon the demise of a distinguished son of Uganda;*
2. *That it takes cognisance of the distinguished service the late hon. William Okecho rendered and the contributions he made to the country in different capacities.”* I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Seconded by the Opposition Chief Whip, hon. Sam Otada, the honourable member for Tororo County, Member of Aleptong District, Tororo District**,** Member for Ndorwa, Bukedia; that is enough secondment – even Mbale Municipality. Please speak to your motion.

**MS LUMUMBA:** Mr Speaker, this is the justification for the motion.

The late William Okecho Odumu was born on 28 May 1949 in Paya Sub County in Tororo District. He studied at Nagongera Primary School from where he obtained his Junior Leaving Certificate in 1964. He subsequently joined Bukedi College Kachonga in 1965 from where he sat for the then East African Certificate of Education, the current “O”Level in 1968. He then enrolled at St Mary’s College Kisubi for his advanced level.

In 1971, he joined Makerere University for a Bachelor of Commerce Degree which he completed in 1974. The late William Okecho later pursued a Master’s Degree in Business Administration from the University of Nairobi which he completed in 1977.

The late William Okecho pursued a Postgraduate Diploma in Management, majoring in General Management for State Enterprises at the Netherlands Institute of Management from 30 August to December 1991.

Mr Speaker, the late William Okecho, shortly after completing his under graduate degree, was employed as a teaching assistant at Makerere University, and you know very well, it would be the best in class who would be retained as teaching assistants. He also did some moonlighting with the defunct Lint Marketing Board.

The late William Okecho will be remembered as one of the shining stars of the Eighth Parliament. The late William Okecho, was once rated one of the best performing legislators with the Parliamentary Scorecard, rating him averagely at 97 percent and 95 percent in committees and plenary respectively.

He represented West Budama Constituency in Tororo District in the Eighth Parliament. While in Parliament, he chaired the Budget Committee and performed very well to the extent that at one time, he smoothened the budget process and we moved on well.

The late William Okecho was at the centre of the landmark case in which over 70 MPs in the Eighth Parliament lost their seats for taking part in the NRM primaries ahead of the 2011 polls. The late William Oketcho’s woos began after he had been trounced by the current West Budama MP, hon. Fox Odoi, and it led to aconstitutional petition by a one George Owoli and in court, the members lost and 70 percent of our colleagues lost their seats.

Article 83 of the Constitution bars MPs from crossing from their parties midway through their term, with those seeking to do so are obliged to resign their seats. The Supreme Court ruled that the MPs that had changed from representing parties to independents and vice versa before the end of the term were in Parliament illegally after nomination.

The victory of the late William Okecho is that the Supreme Court held that the nomination of the 70 MPs would not be nullified for it would be an infringement on their right to be voted for.

Whereas the late William Okecho was cleared to run as the NRM flag bearer, he lost in the elections because of the uncertainty that the case created in the minds of the voters.

Life outside Parliament

After leaving Parliament, the late William Okecho, was appointed Chairman of the Board of the National Water and Sewerage Corporation, a position in which he served for a short time.

He was also the first head of the Privatisation Unit and also served as a Commissioner in Uganda Revenue Authority. The late William Okecho was also among the 19 survivors of the deadly 1988 Uganda Airlines Crash at Rome, Fiumicino Airport, that claimed 33 lives.

The late William Okecho is one of the individuals in Tororo District who are held in high esteem for bringing national education pride to the Jopadhola.

The late William Oketcho is survived by a wife, Helen Okecho and six children. I wish to extend my sincere heartfelt condolences to the family of the deceased, the people of Tororo District, and the country at large for the loss of this gallant son. May his soul rest in eternal peace!

3.06

**THE OPPOSITION CHIEF WHIP (Mrs Cecilia Ogwal):** Mr Speaker, I stand here to support the motion. I happen to have known the late William Okecho, personally and more specifically, I am very close to one of his sons called Patrick. So I stand together with the family in celebrating the life of our dear friend William Okecho.

It is with profound sadness that we Members of the Opposition and the people of Dokolo learnt of the untimely passing on of hon. William Okecho. He was a dedicated servant of the people and a multi-talented man of integrity. We as a Parliament therefore have assembled here to honour and celebrate his life as an accomplished legislator in the Eighth Parliament in which he served as the Chairperson of the Budget Committee of which I was a member.

The late hon. William Okecho will be remembered for having been a defender of the Independent Members of Parliament at all times especially in the operationalization of the Budget Act. I want to say that if the late was to be allowed to make his last statement on the issue of accountability, particularly his views on the current Public Finance and Accountability Bill, I am sure he would say, “Leave the Budget Act intact”.

We further celebrate his life by reflecting on the good things he did for this country in the different capacities, ranging from being a lecturer at Makerere University Kampala in the mid-1970s, Manager at the defunct Uganda Airlines Corporation, Director of the Privatization Unit at the Ministry of Finance and a Member of Parliament for West Budama North Constituency.

He served on many boards including being the Chairman of the Uganda Manufacturers Association; Chairman Board of Directors, Cotton Products Uganda Ltd; and Chairman of the African Parliament Poverty Reduction Network, trying to fight poverty in Africa, to mention but just a few.

He believed in transparency and as Chairman of the Board of Directors, National Water and Sewerage Corporation, he disagreed, in principle, with the Minister of Water and Environment, on the handy method and micromanagement of the recruitment exercise of the Managing Director for that corporation. It is believed and it is alleged that it was for that reason that he was suspended from being the chairperson of that board.

It is known that the late decided to adhere to the recommendations of the IGG on the recruitment process of the managing director of the corporation, and that was the sharp divergence from the position of the minister.

His suspension, therefore, was ostensibly to pave way for investigation on the late hon. William Okecho’s behavior. However, up to the time of his death, there had never been any investigation done. Stand in his shoes – up to the time of his death, there has never been any investigation conducted.

To me, this implies there was nothing to investigate anyway since his decision was in total compliance with the ruling of the IGG. So, I found it strange that the board chairperson would be investigated for deciding to comply with the ruling of the head of an anti-corruption institution in the country; a statutory body of Government!

It is important that this Parliament honours the late hon. William Okecho whose body is now here before us by ensuring that Government pronounces itself on this issue of suspension in order to clear the image of the late.

I further wish to demand that the Government looks into the issue of the late’s suspension in order to establish whether the person who was later appointed managing director went through the transparent process, and in accordance to the laid down rules and regulations pertaining to that recruitment.

Mr Speaker, you are all aware that stress has been discovered as one of the factors that have tremendous impact on our health. The suspension of a star performer in his profession and as a politician at a doorstep on his life – you can imagine how such a thing impacted on his health! A person who had served the country with distinction and integrity shouldn’t have been subjected to humiliation in the manner the late suffered during his last days.

I strongly believe that the late lived an exemplary and purposive life worth of emulation by the young generation. I believe he has left a legacy for the youths of Tororo to be inspired in advocating for transparency and clean leadership. I also believe his family is very proud of his performance.

Let this moment of paying tribute to the late hon. William Okecho be one of soul searching of what exactly we shall leave behind. Whenever we are given the opportunity of leadership, we should bear in mind that we are doing so in service of our people and the country and not solely for our personal benefits or to please those that supervise us.

May the family of the late be comforted because I believe the life he lived has been appreciated by the Lord. May his soul rest in peace.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, let the record show that the person who has been speaking, hon. Cecilia Barbara Atim Ogwal, is not the Leader of Opposition; she is the Opposition Chief Whip and Woman Representative for Dokolo. The seconder of the motion should have been the Leader of the Opposition but I am now advised that she is not the one to second it.

3.16

**MR SAM OTADA (Independent, Kibanda County, Kiryandongo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to support the motion and thank the mover of the motion. I also want to thank the hon. Cecilia Ogwal for ably speaking to this motion.

May I, on behalf of my colleagues, the Independent Members of Parliament, send my heartfelt condolences to the family of the late hon. William Okecho, the people of West Budama County North and all Members of Parliament and the government for the unfortunate demise of our colleague whose background you have heard about in the motion that has been moved this afternoon.

I got to know the late William Okecho in the Eighth Parliament. He was famous for sitting just over there like where hon. Lugoloobi is sitting and every time he rose to speak, Mr Speaker, the House would be silent to listen to him for he spoke with authority and he spoke from a point of information which is not very common these days.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The honourable member shall maintain the dignity of the House.

**MR SAM OTADA:** Most obliged, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, I want you to see how saddened I am by the demise of this gallant brainy son of Uganda who worked diligently for his country. And in the last parliament as most of you might remember, the Parliamentary Scorecard was not a very famous thing, many people especially Members of Parliament had our own issues to do with it and on the negative side. But for the Parliamentary Scorecard to have pointed out that his star performance was rated in the 90s, I believe that that assessment was fair and just and it cannot be disputed.

I also want to applaud him for having been one of those Members of Parliament in the Eighth Parliament who tested the provision of the Constitution that allowed Independent Members of Parliament to exist in Parliament and in other elective offices. As you know, the issue of independents was a controversial thing, but when it was constitutionalised, he and about 37 in the last Parliament proved to Ugandans that whereas we are in a multiparty dispensation, you can come by way of choosing not to belong to either side and get elected. And not only get elected but get to the House and be a star performer. I think that is incredible.

It also went to another extent when his stand was litigated in the famous case of George Owor v. William Okecho and the Attorney-General. That was litigated and Article 83 was basically litigated and not only is that article just a provision of the Constitution, but it is also an article that has been litigated and that goes a long way in democratising a country because in democracies that people admire in the world, like the US, their constitutions exist but are also thoroughly litigated and I think he has helped us to take us through that step which is very important towards democratisation of this country.

I also want to put on record that before the hon. William Okecho came to this House, the Budget Act came into being in 2001 and the hon. Beatrice Kiraso I remember at the time was the pioneer Chairperson of the Budget Committee. And since the Budget Act really is praised by many people, as a good instrument that was structured by this House, I also want to pay tribute to her and later alone the hon. William Okecho who took over from her the responsibility of running that important committee.

So, I want to say here that colleagues even as we go into debating the Public Finance Bill which, among others, seeks to repeal the Budget Act, I want us to do it while paying tribute to the late William Okecho who stood firmly on this Budget Act and followed it to the latter, and in this way, it strengthened accountability, separation of powers and also strengthened good governance to a great degree. So as we pay tribute to him, let us bear in mind that the Finance Bill is up for debate, and we should debate it in that spirit.

The hon. Cecilia Ogwal has made a point about the famous Mugisha Gisagala saga in the National Water and Sewerage Corporation appointment of the managing director. I just want to add one thing; when I spoke with the late William Okecho after all this saga, he had one thing that he told me and he said, “This is an indictment to the power of my clear conscience which is my greatest asset”. This is what he told me and this speaks volumes because not only does his academic background speak for transparency and accountability, not only does his performance in this House speak for the same, and not only does his chairmanship of the committee speak for the same. That was just him. He couldn’t bow to whims and fancies of any body, and that was just him. And I thought that people who were dealing with him at that level ought to have known him to that degree that they couldn’t just arm-twist him. So this is very sad, and I want to join the hon. Cecilia Ogwal who calls for a logical conclusion of this case because I was made aware that this is a matter that actually was taken to court and naturally with a demise of a litigant, the case falls by the way side but that shouldn’t let government take exception in concluding this matter logically. This thing highly stressed him and that is why we are calling for this.

I want to remind this House that the late being one of those people that tested the Constitution by coming here as an Independent Member of Parliament, he also did not survive what continues to elude my brothers on this side of the isle, in the NRM, free and fair elections in the primaries. He was not a survivor of this. In the Eighth Parliament, I remember it was the hon. Henry Obbo who was then minister who did certain things that were written in the papers and I don’t want to walk through them but which brought shame to the primaries of the NRM. And as we mourn him and speak to this motion, I want to challenge the NRM to continue reflecting on these primary elections of yours which continue to elude you for a very long time.

I also want to remind this House that certain constituencies need very special attention probably - because imagine West Budama County North which the late represented in the Seventh Parliament had the following Members of Parliament from the NRC days: Victor Kobel in NRC; in the CA it was Odoi Asoka; in the Sixth Parliament, it was Tezra Jamwa; in the Seventh Parliament it was Henry Obbo; in the Eighth Parliament the late hon. William Okecho; and in the Ninth Parliament hon. Fox Odoi. This is the trend of events and the state of affairs in as far as voting pattern for the Members of Parliament from West Budama County is concerned. It also has a nexus with how their neighbours of West Budama County South also vote. So this is a special needs constituency that needs some bit of attention by honourable members of Parliament. That is just a joke.

But, as I conclude, I want to say that this was a fine gentleman who I was told had decided to start establishing a business for himself, a factory to help his people back in his constituency. And I think he again comes off as somebody who wanted to serve the public first, and at his age he was retreating to try and serve himself by establishing this business. So my heart goes out to his family and to all those who are bereaved. I pray that the Almighty God rests his soul in eternal peace and may He sustain the bereaved. I second the motion.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable member, for seconding the motion.

In the gallery, we have the hon. James Kubeketerya, who was a former Member of Parliament for Bunya East. We also have hon. Rose Munyira Wabwire, former Member for Busia. (*Applause*)

Honourable members, debate starts now and ends at 5.00 O’clock. Let us see how we proceed. That means we need to manage the time. So, we will be speaking for three minutes each and we see how far we can go till 5.00 O’clock.

3.26

**MR HILARY ONEK (NRM, Lamwo County, Lamwo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Honourable colleagues, I want to testify about the bereaved, my friend the late hon. William Okecho. He was my classmate from senior five to six. He joined us at St Mary’s College Kisubi from Bukedi College Kachonga. We used to refer to him as a son of a chief; I think his father must have been a chief in Budama.

I can only state a few words because the time is short. One thing I can say is that the late was a professional man. It was stated here that he would speak from a position of knowledge; he would not just speak *wolokoso.* He would speak from a position of information.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, what was that word you said? (*Laughter)*

**MR ONEK:** He would never propagate rumours. He was a person of very high moral values. He was a very honest man; he was upright in whatever he did. What he did in the night and during the day was the same. He was a principled man.

Hon. Okecho was a reserved man. He never beat his drum around. He never advertised himself. He was very firm in his beliefs. Whatever he believed in as the truth, he would stick by it. He stuck by his convictions. Most often, people like that fall victim when they are faced with a situation where they are being coerced to compromise their values but he never compromised his values.

The circumstances under which he lost his seat have been described here. I think it was most unfortunate but the court is now exonerating them. So, I would urge for full compensation of those who were affected by this wrong decision. The losses he incurred because of this uncalled-for decision created challenges, among which perhaps could have affected his health. There are other colleagues like hon. Omara Atubo and others who also lost their seats perhaps because of the circumstances surrounding this ruling.

Finally, I urge the family to be strong. He has been exemplary and you must be proud of his achievements. May his rest in peace.

3.30

**MR JOHN KEN-LUKYAMUZI (CP, Rubaga Division South, Kampala):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I got the news about the demise of our honourable member late that I could not generate a poem. However, I bring messages of condolence from the people of Rubaga South and the Conservative Party of Uganda. I also send condolences to His Highness the Adhola who has lost a very prominent and hardworking man.

I knew hon. Okecho as a man of substance. He was a man of dignity and he looked dignified. He was a man of passion and conviction. This is a very rare occurrence among people who are all the time pursuing goods in terms of wealth. So, hon. Okecho is a person we should all emulate for the record he has left.

He loved me as a politician. When I met him during the time we were struggling to defend the Uganda Commercial Bank from being sold, I got to know him even more. I wondered how such a respectable person could glorify a small man like the “Man”. It was because the views I gave excited him to the extent of paying some tribute to what I had done. I had won the struggle for the bank to be saved but someone went behind the back of Parliament and disposed of the bank.

I cannot leave the point of the loss of this great man without drawing the attention of Parliament to words of wisdom, which I think even the late hon. Okecho would admire, and these are the words of William Shakespeare. William Shakespeare wrote greatly about the phenomenon of death and in one of his poems of greatness he says the following: “If I must die, I will encounter darkness as a bride and hug it in mine arms…wait for the clouds to clear, to join the best of times.”

These are words well-articulated in the Bible but in very simple words to avoid a burden of hope and expectation and a talk about the realities of man and these other issues. If we politicians cared to read the words of William Shakespeare as I have quoted, society would be a better society to live in.

Many of us, when we climb high on the ladders, we think everything is possible, we command even where there is no command and deceive man to the extent where we pose as if we were talking like providence. That is a big error we make –(*Member timed out.)*

3.38

**MR JACOB OBOTH (Independent, West Budama County South, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the motion.

As a Member of Parliament from Tororo and as a Jopadhola, this is a huge loss for us. It is as unbelievable as it is true. There is a saying that when one person is absent, it appears as if the whole world is de-populated. This statement is very true for the people from Tororo; we feel already de-populated by the passing of our giant and great man.

I knew hon. Okecho much earlier before becoming a Member of Parliament because his son, Patrick Okecho, who is here, was in the law school with me. He was just a few years ahead of me but we were in the same hall of residence.

One thing I remember about him is that on 2 August 2010, we had what looked like an election of NRM structures in Tororo, which never occurred and hon. Okecho was there –*(Interjections)–* There was no election, I know, although some people said they were in the structure. Hon. Okecho was very calm and that attracted me to move towards him and he said, “Do not bother because this is a sham.” When he told me that, – I had been nominated for the post of vice chairperson of NRM Tororo District - I went and turned down the nomination.

I found hon. Okecho a man who was above petty politics. Nobody in Tororo can say that hon. Okecho belonged to a certain clique or a certain camp. He never belonged to any pseudo-camps in Tororo. To me, he was a gentleman; he was very decent. Even when we came to Parliament after elections, he knew that we were in Parliament and many times I met him, especially on the matter of the National Water and Sewerage Corporation board chairperson.

If hon. Okecho was punished, he was punished wrongly. I sit on the Committee of Natural Resources and I looked at all the documents. This was a gentleman who was sticking to the truth and there was no reason to suspend him. I will still plead with Government to clear this matter posthumously; we need to know that hon. Okecho was cleared. How could he defy an IGG directive? All his other board members signed against him within two or three months and he was suspended. This is very unfortunate because we lost greatly. Whoever is responsible owes us, the Jopadhola and the people of Tororo, an apology for tainting a name that is above reproach. *(Applause)* The Jopadhola are known, especially hon. Okecho who was a very intelligent man –*(Member timed out.)*

3.40

**MR STEPHEN MUKITALE (NRM, Buliisa County, Buliisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I support the motion to pay tribute to the late hon. William Okecho, who was fondly called “Chairman, Budget” in our last Parliament because he was chairman for most of the time he was here.

First of all, I mourn our in-law – We are in-laws there in the neighbourhood, in the Othieno family. Also, we have hon. Hillary Onek and my uncle, John Karundu, who were OBs. As we mourn hon. Okecho, we are talking about the usefulness of experts and professionals in Parliament. We are aware that we decided – I do not know whether out of omission or selfishness - to require experts to resign before they can come to Parliament. I would like to appeal that this Parliament opens its gates for professionals to come to this Parliament even if it means some people leaving their seats. Also, if possible, at Cabinet level we should have experts like Kenya is doing. In my opinion, we would pay good tribute to hon. William Okecho.

Secondly, one of the debates I had with the late hon. Okecho was on the way we carried out privatisation. We discussed it from the beginning up to the end. We discussed and reviewed the role of the state - Did we have to privatise everything? Wouldn’t Government have retained shares and possibly, outsourced management? Wouldn’t we have had our own citizens in management buyouts? Was what we did finally the correct thing – listing to the public? These were the kinds of debate we fondly had.

We also had debates on UDC – the revitalisation of UDC. That is a debate we never concluded with the late hon. Okecho. I hope this Parliament will take it on to another level.

As we remember the contribution of the late hon. Okecho as the chairman of the Budget Committee in operationalising the Budget Act – *(Member timed out.)*

3.45

**MS ROSE AKOL (NRM, Woman Representative, Bukedea):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand in support of this motion to pay tribute to the late hon. Okecho.

I got to know hon. Okecho in the Eighth Parliament when I came in through a by-election. I immediately joined the Budget Committee where he was a chairperson. In 2008, I was made his deputy on the same committee and he trained me on how to handle the Budget. Today, I speak with authority on matters to do with the Budget because of the training that he gave me. *(Applause)*

As chairperson of the Budget Committee, hon. Okecho popularised the Budget Act not only here in Parliament but also in other parliaments within Africa. At the African Parliamentary Centre, they often called him to speak about the importance of the Budget Act and the Budget office to other Members of Parliament. Today, I can say that it is through his efforts that the Parliament of Kenya has also established a Budget Act, the Parliament of Tanzania has also established a Budget Act as well as the parliaments of Ghana and Zambia.

While at the African Parliamentary Centre, he contested and was elected the President of the Africa Poverty Reduction Network and it was not by mistake. It was because of the kind of person he was whenever he went there to represent this Parliament on issues to do with the Budget process.

The late hon. Okecho loved the people of West Budama. He lobbied for electricity through Paya and other areas of Budama. Also, while he was a Member of Parliament, he lobbied for water for his people. As chairman he also lobbied for cash to the tune of Shs 500 million of which Shs 250 million was allocated to the Jopadhola Institution. That money has today built that institution. Shs 250 million was allocated to the Emorimori but up to now, we have not received anything yet. I do not know that the Minister of Gender has to say *–(Member timed out.)*

3.50

**DR MICHAEL LULUME BAYIGGA (DP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I convey my condolences and those of the people of Buikwe South to the bereaved family. Buikwe South Constituency is host to many people from Adhola land where the late hon. William Okecho came from.

I got to know the late William Okecho in 2008 in the Budget Committee, which hon. Akol was chairing at the time. He was very knowledgeable. As a new Member of Parliament, I would want to listen to his opinion, to listen to hon. Akol and to hon. Byanyima before falling in synch. Therefore, he was very important in enabling me to learn budget scrutiny and taking decisions in the budget process as a member of the Budget Committee.

I also had an opportunity to talk with him while we were seated in the canteen and he told me about how he survived an airplane crash and the whole process he went through. When we travel using aeroplanes, usually they tell you to buckle up when there is trouble. When he got a signal that there was trouble, he unbuckled instead. So, sometimes when I am traveling, I try that experience of unbuckling when there is trouble. It is his unbuckling, maybe, that helped him to survive at that time. However, I also believe there was the hand of God. After that conversation with him, I discovered that he was close to God and indeed, he built a church to pay tribute to God for having survived that crash. The only thing he was challenged about was when Bishop Ssekamanya challenged him to build a house for the priests near the church.

Hon. Okecho was generally a good man but I think he made one mistake of trying to join NRM, and I think that cost him his political life. However, we shall generally miss him. He was a knowledgeable man, he was courteous, he was humble and yet an expert. This House and Uganda will miss him. May the Almighty God rest his soul in peace.

3.52

**MR SANJAY TANNA (Independent, Tororo Municipality, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to covey my heartfelt condolences to the bereaved family. May the Almighty bless the late hon. William Okecho; may he rest in eternal peace.

My colleagues have talked about his qualifications, his impeccable work record and his representation in the House. I would like to emphasise that him and I were pioneers when we were elected as independent Members of Parliament. So, many a time when mystery shrouded our performance and our existence in this Parliament, we sat down and he guided us as an elder and kept us going to fight for our rights. Many of the rights we enjoy today have been got because of the hard work that he put in.

I knew him as an extremely honest person. I would like to add my voice to that of hon. Cecilia Ogwal and several other colleagues on this issue, which was also raised in church - though he has passed away, we demand as the people of Tororo that his name be cleared in the National Water and Sewerage Corporation issue.

We had an extremely cordial relationship with him. Many times I would call him, “survivor” because of the Rome airline accident that has been talked about. He was also an investor, which not so many people knew, but hon. Sam Otada alluded to it. He put up a factory to process cotton and he was so passionate on value addition to cotton; so, we used to refer to each other as investors.

His contribution through AWEPA - Hon. Akol has elaborated his contribution to the Budget Act in Somali Land and various other African countries.

I received a call a few days back from his wife about the sickness and I thought it was usual sickness. Unfortunately, within 24 hours, I got another call saying he had left us. I was in shock. What does this say? It talks about the predicament that we have always lamented about in this House; if anything happened to anyone of us in this House today, while we are planning to rush to India, South Africa and to London, we do not have the facilities within Uganda to keep us alive for 48 to 96 hours as we seek that expert treatment abroad. We all have a lot of money, we have very big jobs, but all that becomes useless and we have to leave the way hon. Okecho left us –*(Member timed out.)*

3.56

**MS BETTY AMONGI (UPC, Oyam County South, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to pay tribute to hon. Okecho, whom I was privileged to serve with in this Parliament and also to serve with in the previous Parliament as an independent. We were also the only two people who were taken to court. I was first taken to court by the Member of Parliament whom I replaced and as that case was on-going, he was also taken to court. In all these issues, we kept on comparing notes on the peculiarity of the issue of independent Members of Parliament.

I remember at the eleventh hour after we were already nominated and we were campaigning, a ruling came in to say that those who crossed, whether independent members to parties or from parties to independents, their nomination was nullified. We were quite many, over 70 as you have been told. On behalf of all of us, while we were all calling hon. Okecho in the middle of the campaigns, when we were left with few days we were being told that court had nullified our nominations. Some of us who were certain of winning the seat were also in that peculiarity.

It was hon. Okecho whom I called and he said, “Do not worry my sister, I am going to appeal.” So, we kept on the phone consulting. Even after the case, we had to join him. Some of us had to help with the financial resources because what he was doing was not only for him but it was a test for the Constitution and a test for several other things.

I was very glad just about two or three weeks ago, when a ruling came. We were all seated here thinking that any time court would rule that some of our nominations were nullified and there would be by-elections. However, just because of him, court recently ruled that the nominations of some of us who are seated in this House were valid. We are seated in this Parliament because of him. We must congratulate him on being a fighter and standing firm because being in court is not easy but he stood firm and went through with all the appeals –*(Member timed out.)*

3.59

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I stand to support the motion and to thank all those who have spoken well about our brother and father, the late hon. William Okecho.

The late was not only knowledgeable but he was also a principled and very peaceful person. During the campaigns – most of you know this – sometimes most of us rather than concentrating on our campaign strategy we tend to go beyond our mandate to de-campaign other aspirants in other areas. You would never find hon. Okecho doing that kind of thing. He stuck to his constituency.

Secondly, as has been said, the late hon. Okecho was also a person who would not indulge in rumour-mongering. He was elected to Parliament in 2006, and it is common for people to get into conflict with others but the hon. Okecho remained focused on serving his people; he did not conflict with any Member of Parliament. Hon. Ekanya, who has been re-elected to Parliament several times, can testify to that – *(Interjections)* – Yes, even for Tororo Municipality because hon. Sanjay Tanna is doing his second term. However, for Budama North and South, it has been one term and –*(Interjections)–* yes. (*Laughter*)

Hon. Okecho loved his people very much. He came from Paya Sub County, an area that is always water stressed with women walking several kilometres in search of water. I remember making a contribution to the digging of a well. I got some support from some friends and donors after coming across some people gathered around a small pond waiting for water; they used their cups to draw water and they would draw a second cup after about 30 minutes or – *(Member timed out.)*

4.02

**MR WILSON MURULI MUKASA (NRM, Budyebo County, Nakasongola):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the motion.

Honourable members, it is an undisputed fact that the country has lost a great man. The country has lost a great man and an excellent cadre in the service of this country and countrymen. The record of what hon. Okecho has done for this country is very clear and illustrious. It shines before us as a beacon to emulate. We only pray that this beacon never goes out so that from time to time, this great land produces many more Okecho’s of his calibre for our own good.

On behalf of the people of Budyebo County, I would like to extend our heartfelt condolences to the family, the community and the people of West Budama North for this great loss. May the soul of this gallant son of this country rest in eternal peace. Thank you.

4.05

**MR MICHAEL WERIKHE (NRM, Bungokho County South, Mbale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to support the motion to pay tribute to our fallen brother, the late hon. William Okecho. On behalf of the people of Bungokho South Constituency, I convey our deep condolences to the widow, the children and the entire family of the late hon. Okecho.

I got to know hon. Okecho for the first during the Eighth Parliament. Indeed, as has been said by many colleagues, hon. Okecho was a very brilliant person. He was a humble and patient person when interacting with others. He was a good listener and before he acted on anything, he would do a lot of analysis. He used to base his decisions on information, having analysed it. That is why he provided good leadership during his term as the chairman of the Budget Committee.

We actually praised him, especially when we came up with the Budget Act. Parliament of Uganda was one of the few parliaments in Africa that legislated a Budget Act. Even when we credited his contribution, he would still downplay it as being a modest contribution to his country and in particular to our Parliament.

Hon. Okecho was a person who stood his ground in whatever he believed was right. That is one of the tributes that most of us admired about him. He has left a legacy and I believe most of us who interacted with him will live to promote what he stood for. I pray to the Almighty God to sustain the family, the widow and the children. Thank you very much.

4.07

**MR MICHAEL MAWANDA (NRM, Igara County East, Bushenyi):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker and colleagues. On behalf of the people of Igara East Constituency, I extend my condolences to the family for the loss of this great son of Uganda. I rise to support the motion to pay tribute to the late hon. William Okecho.

I first met the late with a friend of mine, a businessman, Abid Alam. When we met, they went through the experience they suffered when they survived the aeroplane crash in Rome. I later got close to the late when he was working in the Ministry of Finance in the Privatisation Unit. We did a lot together. He was a principled man. When he left privatisation, he joined the private sector.

Being a principled person, he had two options: one was to set up a laundry processing plant and the other a cotton by-product plant. He called me and we met more than four times and discussed these options. As earlier said, being a principled man, he wanted to be very sure at the end of the day that whatever he was going to engage himself in would not become a problem at the end of the day. He finally zeroed in on setting up a cotton processing plant.

Hon. Okecho promoted education. He liked and respected educated people. He at one time told me that much as people are blaming Government for producing very many graduates without jobs, it was better to have a literate population than an illiterate and unemployed society, which might become very difficult to manage.

Hon. Okecho, as alluded to by many of our colleagues, was a star performer. He was not only a star performer in Parliament but even in the public offices he held. Whenever you would visit him in his office, he would entertain you and he would welcome everybody in their capacity.

Late last year, I met hon. Okecho. He told me he was coming from the USA where he had gone to present a paper about the budgeting process in Uganda. We had actually planned that sometime this year we would meet again and arrange our forum. *(Member timed out)*

4.11

**MS MARIAM NALUBEGA** (**Independent, Woman Representative, Butambala):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, I join the rest of my colleagues to support the motion as a pioneer, together with the hon. Okecho, as independent Members of this Parliament.

I first met him in 2006 at plot 10 Kyaddondo. I remember him vividly. He was so inquisitive about the Memorandum of Understanding. Unfortunately, he signed it and I think that was the cause of the very many challenges that he faced during the subsequent elections.

I knew him as a very principled person. He was very honest, very kind and he loved people and the nation. I want to tell the NRM people that hon. Okecho loved your party and he sacrificed a lot for it and you should always remember him for that. (*Applause)*

Death is normal and we shall all die. However, from what hon. Cecilia Ogwal quoted on this Floor, hon. Okecho was witch-hunted and I think it caused a lot of pressure and surely, it challenged his life.

Why are we having many former serving Members of Parliament dying? We should actually take time to ask why this situation is like this. It is because of the pressure. You can see the House is empty now; people are running up and down attending burials. As we speak now, there are four burials taking place in my constituency. I am already stigmatised and they want me there. Right now they want me to attend those burials and very many MPs have gone to attend burials. That is too much pressure.

The unrest in this House, the absenteeism – even NTV carried a report the other week that Members are always absent; why don’t we find a solution to this pressure? The government has failed to do its work of civic education to tell our people what the role of an MP is or what the role of the Director of National Water and Sewerage Corporation is. The government has neglected its role.

The Electoral Commission has refused to outlaw illegal campaigning. Right now, campaigns are taking place in our constituencies - posters are already mounted, billboards have been put up and people are campaigning. When they do not see us, they think we are either not coming back or we have neglected them. We shall bury more and we shall mourn more if this pressure does not stop. I believe this political pressure and the pressure of the work at the National Water and Sewerage Corporation must have contributed to the death of hon. Okecho –*(Member timed out)*

4.15

**MR FOX ODOI-OYWELOWO (Independent, West Budama County North, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The late hon. William Okecho represented me in the Eighth Parliament and he did so ably. The people of West Budama have asked me to put on record a number of things they will remember the late hon. Okecho for. I request you to give me only four minutes to go through these.

First, hon. Okecho was a family man. He loved his family, he loved his late parents, his wife and he loved his children.

Hon. Okecho contributed immensely to the education of the Jopadhola. You probably know that hon. Okecho lobbied Government for the creation of a university in Eastern Uganda and the creation of a campus of that university in the constituency that he represented in the Eighth Parliament. Busitema University has a campus at a place called Nagongera in Nagongera Town Council, which is in West Budama North, on account of the effort of hon. Okecho.

He was a pioneer investor. He wanted to create employment for the Jopadhola and Ugandans at large. In this regard, hon. Okecho started the first SACCO long before government even knew about the concept of SACCOs in West Budama. Okecho started a small group of *boda boda* riders and I remember vividly, he bought and donated to a number of youth in West Budama many motorcycles. He also got a licence to start a radio station and a small rural bank. He did all this to empower the people of West Budama North.

Hon. Okecho immensely contributed to the rural electrification of West Budama. For the first time in our lifetime, he lobbied for the extension of an electricity line from Nagongera all the way to his sub county of Paya and my sub county of Kirewa. His father had worked in my sub county and grew up in Kirewa. We loved him and I know he immensely loved us.

Hon. Okecho, as hon. Opendi has stated, contributed to the provision of clean water to the people of West Budama. He sank, using his own resources and sometimes lobbied Government, many boreholes and one of them was very close to my home village. So, we the people of West Budama thank him for that - *(Member timed out.)*

4.17

**MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County West, Sironko):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I extend my condolences to the family of the late hon. William Okecho.

I got to know Okecho because I worked with him in the Ministry of Finance, I worked with him in Parliament and that is the reason today I said I must be here to pay tribute to my friend. All of us, tomorrow, will be former Members of Parliament, but know that when you become a former Member of Parliament, your life is different from the one of a Member of Parliament. In most cases, you are forgotten immediately. That is why I am asking all of you who behave like tomorrow will not come, to start thinking about tomorrow and if you do not, you are in trouble.

Mr Speaker, I will beg that you add me one minute – I want to give you scenarios of hon. Okecho. I knew hon. Okecho when he was the director of PERD - by then it was called PU. Hon. Okecho was directed to privatise Nytil and Picfare won. They were supposed to pay us $10 million. Hon. Okecho insisted that they pay $10 million but the powers above directed him otherwise. He collected only $100,000 and he was directed to hand over all the titles of Nytil to Picfare.

Immediately Picfare got the titles of Nytil, they went to CFC and borrowed $8.5 million and they never paid. At the end, they paid the people of Uganda only $100,000. Hon. Okecho was thrown out and instead, they made him sit in a basement where they kept sacks of coffee at the Coffee Marketing Board in Bugolobi and immediately, after a short time, he was thrown out and they had wanted him to go to Luzira.

After PU, hon. Okecho was on the streets; he formed a company that was producing towels - I think it was on Kibira Rd in Industrial Area. Mr Speaker, nobody wanted to buy his towels because he was a local. The towels were good but I am one of those that bought the towels because I had a small hotel to use them. Despite the fact that they were starting, we used them and we are saying we should promote our locals. Hon. Okecho used to drive his own car to deliver these products but he did this on his own; nobody, not even Government came to his rescue to help him as a local investor but had they been Indians, they would get resources free.

Hon. Okecho came to Parliament in 2006. He used to sit where my brother is sitting there and he was made Chairperson of the Budget Committee. Hon. Members, we would fight here over the budget but hon. Okecho was used, again by the state, to push many things because he was *–(Member timed out.)*

4.21

**MR GEOFFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo County, Tororo):** Thank you very much. Mr Speaker, maybe at the end, you will give me an opportunity to make an announcement on the burial. Hon. Fox Odoi should have done so. We stand here to pay our respects to our brother, hon. William Okecho.

To the family, we want to say that the late lying in front of us here was one of the best MPs, not only of this country but also among the best of the world. I travel a lot and I get people asking about hon. Okecho but because of time, I also want to thank Government for supporting with the burial.

The other issue is that people have talked about the politics of that constituency. Let me say this and hon. Fox Odoi should take it with respect on why hon. Okecho lost in the last election. Hon. Okecho was the NRM flag bearer and in the last election, he was an independent and he won; and hon. Fox Odoi was independent and he won. Hon. Okecho became NRM flag bearer because some of the people of Tororo County who were NRM supporters loved him. They said, “We are going to support hon. Okecho to be the flag bearer of NRM.”

Then hon. Fox Odoi became very intelligent and he got the FDC and UPC of that constituency and then he won the election. So, the point that doctor raised – hon. Okecho would have been a Member of Parliament here if he had remained independent but because he decided to go that side then the people of Tororo County who had negotiated with him so that he would get a district said, “Hon. Ekanya, let us send you hon. Okecho as an NRM member to lobby President Museveni so that this district is divided.” Little did he know that the NRM support in that place was weak. Hon. Fox Odoi, having been an intelligence person in State House knew where the votes were. He remained independent and here he is as the area MP.

That is the scenario of that constituency. That is why you see hon. Oboth-Oboth is an independent; he won that constituency in the last election. That is how West Budama is –(*Interjection*)– hon. Sarah Achieng is across. *(Laughter)* I do not want to say more because the matter went to court.

I just want to say that I met hon. Okecho before I became a Member of Parliament after my university and when I went to him, he told me to go back and read because I only had one degree and immediately, I became Member of Parliament, I went and added to my qualifications. Therefore, to the family, I want to say that your father encouraged me to attain another degree. That is why I am what I am – *(Member timed out.*)

4.25

**MS ANNET NYAKECHO (NRM, Woman Representative, Otuke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Colleagues and the family of the late hon. William Okecho, as a namesake to the late, I am really proud to share the same name with such a great man. I do not know whether I will be able to be as great as he was because listening to the contributions the Members made, the late hon. William Okecho was a great man that you can rarely compare him to anybody in this country.

As we are all seated here, amongst us when we die tomorrow, people may get problems trying to give condolence messages because of our past. However, I am happy that hon. William Okecho has made the people from Tororo very proud and we are really grateful to God that he gave him to us at a time when the country needed him most.

Growing up as a young girl, I used to hear the name William Okecho. He was a prominent man, successful, intelligent, name it – he had all the qualities and today, before us, we have a gentleman who has really worked and done what God created him for, for his country.

Mr Speaker, the Swahili have a saying that “*Asante ya punda ni mateke” -* that the thank you of a donkey is a kick. While listening to my mother, hon. Cecilia Ogwal, I was saddened that amongst us, we would just decide to dismiss somebody like that and I want to re-echo, seriously, that Government needs to clean the name of hon. William Okecho such that he rests in peace and that his family name is cleared - *(Member timed out.)*

4.27

**MS GRACE ASAMO (NRM, PWD Representative, Eastern):** Mr Speaker, on behalf of my family in Tororo and on behalf of the disabled people in Eastern Uganda and especially those in Tororo District, I would like to extend my sincere condolences to the family of the late hon. William Oketcho.

Mr Speaker, I got to know the gallant son lying here during the primary elections in Tororo – at least I took part in them - and I found him to be a man of humility; a man who was friendly and welcoming. He helped guide me on how to come to Parliament because I was seeking a position and I started my campaigns right from the village in Rubongi and moved on and on many occasions we would meet and talk about elections. *(Interjection)* Yes, we are very many. He guided me and this gentleman, even after I joined Parliament we could meet here; the first time we met at the SACCO and he would ask me, “How are you finding the debates?” And I remember when he was appointed the chairman of the National Water and Sewerage Corporation he said, “My daughter, I have been appointed into this office.” And I told him it was better than having nothing and I think this was good.

Mr Speaker, I stand here to testify that the late Okecho was advocating for the tarmacking of the Nagongera Road. He used to tell us during campaigns that his wish was for that road to be tarmacked. Maybe it is because of the high turn-over of the MPs who are voted into office in West Budama North. But I ask Government to consider the late Okecho’s plea for the tarmacking of Nagongera Road and if it is done, it will be in memory of the late William Okecho.

To the family, I pray to God to give you strength to go through this trying moment; I know it is tough to lose somebody who has been an icon in the family and I am sure God will comfort you.

May God rest his soul in eternal peace. Thank you.

4.31

**MS SARAH MWEBAZA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibuku):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to support the motion and join my colleagues in mourning the late hon. William Okecho.

The late William Okecho was my neighbour here on the third row when I joined Parliament; we could sit here and he could guide us on issues to do with budget and other issues to do with figures that we could not understand.

The late acted as our Vice-Chairperson for Bukedi Parliamentary Group during the Eighth Parliament. During that time, he mobilised all the members from Bukedi who came from districts involved in cotton-growing and at that time, cotton prices had dropped and he mobilised all the members to mobilise their constituents to replace cotton-growing with fish-farming. I remember him mobilising us to go and meet the President to see how we could handle the issues of cotton-growing in our region and also promote fish-farming. As Bukedi, we have missed someone who was concerned about the development of our area.

Mr Speaker, in the Eighth Parliament, when we started the anti-gay Bill together with hon. Bahati, the late hon. Okecho was among those few who joined hon. Bahati. He used to mobilise all of us from Bukedi during our parliamentary caucus meetings and asked us to support hon. Bahati’s efforts. If he were here in the Ninth Parliament, I am sure he would have been one of the members to support the anti-gay Bill. To the people of West Budama North and to the family of the late Oketcho, I can assure you that he was one of the people who supported that Bill and he encouraged us without fear or favour; he hated that nonsense.

The late hon. Okecho was very knowledgeable and was a gentleman who actually united us; he did not want any confusion in the region. Whenever any issue came up in Bukedi amongst the members of Parliament representing women or constituencies –*(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, please welcome Dr Anthony Okecho-Ojony; he is the Prime Minister in the Jago of Tieng Adhola Cultural Institution. He is here to observe the proceedings. *(Applause)* Thank you.

4.34

**MS REBECCA AMUGE (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me join my colleagues in sending my condolences to the people of Tororo, the Jopadhola and the family of hon. Okecho.

I came to know hon. Okecho during the Eighth Parliament; I was one of the 37 independent members of Parliament. The late hon. Okullo-Epak tried to bring us together so that we could form a force and hon. Okecho welcomed the move. However, in the middle of the organisation, some people came in and we saw that their intentions were different. They had started organising us but I think they were organising us towards something else. So hon. Okecho advised us to abandon the idea. When hon. Okullo-Epak, who was the vision bearer, passed away, we lost the vision. But the decision and discussion was such that we needed to get parties to join. And, therefore, in 2010, we decided to join different parties: people like hon. Betty Amongi moved to UPC, *Imat* Cecilia Ogwal to FDC, and I chose NRM. We came to be known as the Ocampo-77 and until hon. Okecho died, we called ourselves as Ocampo-77 because we were dragged to court as 77 members and only 13 of us managed to return to Parliament.

And hon. Okecho asked us not to be bitter when were going through these challenges. And that was really challenging to all of us because at one point we thought it was an inside job because we did not know what exactly was happening. But I would like to say that much as hon. Okecho was a humble person, he was a very firm legislator. He would get irritated by irrelevant contributions; he would get up even when he was not picked and the Speaker would ask him to allow a particular member to complete their contribution.

And, therefore, in the area of budgeting, I think we did well as the Eighth Parliament because of hon. Okecho’s contribution and that of hon. Akol – I do not want us to forget her because she also made a huge contribution.

When I was deputy chairperson of PAC, hon. Okecho told us that he never goes for trainings because he is mentoring young people; he gave most of the opportunities that came to his committee to the new members, especially for training. And they would testify that most of them were trained under hon. Okecho - *(Member timed out.)*

4.37

**MR JACK WAMANGA-WAMAI (FDC, Mbale Municipality, Mbale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand on behalf of the people of Mbale, all the Bagisu who live in Tororo and those who voted for the late Okecho to extend our sincere condolences to the family, the relatives and friends of the late Okecho.

I came to know the late William Okecho when I was posted to work in our mission in Rome after the Rome crash of Uganda Airlines. And from that time, William Okecho became my friend and when I came to this House in the Eighth Parliament, William Okecho was one of those people I admired. He sat in that corner and was a man of substance; a principled person; morally outstanding and he was an MP that people admired.

You see, such people are very few, because he was not a bootlicker like the many we see around. He would talk the truth; he called a spade a spade. That is why when they threw him out of National Water and Sewerage Corporation, he just kept quiet and looked on because he is principled. He never moved away from his principle of speaking the truth and the truth came out because he never wanted the wrong person to be elected in that position, and he maintained his position.

He died a humiliated person. He always consulted me because they had promised to make him an ambassador. And such a person should have been a right ambassador but we see so many who have been appointed who do not even have the qualifications and have made this country a laughing stoke. What a loss to this country!

Death comes and we cannot avoid death, we have to accept though it is very painful. We have got to accept that William has gone, but he has left a legacy for the Government to know that you cannot humiliate a person because of his principles. May his soul rest in eternal peace.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, I have also noticed hon. Peter Clever Mutuluza, the national cake –(*Laughter*)

4.40

**MR WILLIAM NZOGHU (FDC, Busongora County North, Kasese):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to register condolences from the Rwenzori sub region and particularly from the Rwenzururu Kingdom and the people of Busongora County North, but excluding the Ankole sub region because Ankole sub region is where hon. Ephraim Kamuntu comes from and it is Prof. Ephrahim Kamuntu that suspended the late hon. William Okecho from his position as Board Chairman Of National Water and Sewerage Corporation.

I have always said that this world is round. When you look at the situation, even cleaners in KCCA came from Ankole –*(Interjections)–* yes, majority of them come from Ankole and they do everything possible to humiliate the rest of the regions as long as their tribes men and women occupy those positions. That is why they removed hon. William Okecho and put their real tribes’ man. So, Mr Speaker, today is a special day and indeed it is a special sitting *–(Interruption)*

**MS LUMUMBA:** Mr Speaker, is the honourable member in order to make such allegations at a time when we are mourning a peaceful man; at a time when we are mourning a gallant son of this country who was not provocative irrespective of what happened to him; at a time when we are mourning a man who represented a constituency where I studied in my affirmative age and at a time when the family is looking up to the Members of Parliament to tell the country the good in this man?

Is he in order to say that the Banyankole, in whatever office they head, they employ only Banyankole when he knows well that the President of this country is a Munyankole but the Cabinet has most of the tribes represented? When it comes to the Executive Director – he mentioned that the cleaners of KCCA are Banyankole but the ED of KCCA is a Muganda. The Director for Medical Services and Environment is called Mr Obbo. Is he in order to make such an allegation against a tribe?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, in this House debate is guided by some principles. The principle key of them is propagating the unity of this country because we legislate for the good order and development of the country. Yesterday, we were in West Nile celebrating 100 years of that part of the country becoming part of Uganda. It was a big celebration – that spirit should guide the country that whatever names we give ourselves as tribes or regions are not strong enough; they are not deep enough to challenge the depth of the blood that connects us to other people.

So when we debate these matters here in the House, we should carry that spirit of oneness of the country. So, hon. Member, let us celebrate the unity of this country by making statements that confirm that.

**MR NZOGHU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your wise ruling.

Mr Speaker, I said that today is indeed a special sitting. You know, in life, there is time for everything. In the past one year, hon. Ssekikubo and his colleagues have been sitting here but today, he is seated there and throughout the whole session, and nobody has said that hon. Ssekikubo should not sit there. That is why we must promote this kind of spirit that there is a time for everything. We should not witch-hunt people and look at them as enemies, but as one Uganda; one people.

Mr Speaker, I want to tell this House and all Ugandans one fundamental aspect that good people are usually very good, and bad people will always remain bad and that is why even today, everybody has said the best things about the late William Okecho. But I want to sound this piece of advice. We are coming to the 2016 elections; in 2011, some people pulled triggers of guns trying to shoot people but a bullet did not kill hon. Okecho *–(Member timed out\_)*

4.47

**MR ASUMAN KIYINGI (Independent, Bugabula County South, Kamuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues to second the motion. I first came to know hon. William Okecho when I was at the National Medical Stores as company secretary. By then he was in PERD which subsequently became PU. The National Medical Stores is a government entity but my interactions with hon. Okecho at that time convinced me beyond reasonable doubt that he was a man who believed in good co-operate governance. He emphasised transparency and accountability in all transactions of an entity. No wonder he has been paying the price for being firm when it comes to matters of good governance, and accountability in every entity where he was.

Colleagues have talked about the performance of hon. Okecho on the Floor of the House - of course, it was exemplary! He was very informed, calm, and logical and never threw tantrums or banged tables to make a point. He just always made his point and that would be it. Even when he disagreed with someone, he would just say, “Well that is my position.” You could front your position to which he would listen calmly and that would be it. So, there is a lot to emulate from the late when it comes to decorum and behavior we exhibit on the Floor of the House.

Mr Speaker, Members have talked about the litigation on Article 83 of our Constitution in regarding the question of independents. Of course like it has been mentioned, hon. William Okecho was the pioneer in this field. When the Constitutional Court said that he had been wrongly nominated and therefore had to lose his seat, there were serious consequences for all of us. But in an omnibus way, many of us had come in the Eighth Parliament as NRM but because of problems within the party, I stood as an independent. But with that decision, without reference to any other investigation, was used to throw us out of Parliament in a manner which up to now – *(Member timed out.)*

4.51

**MS EVERLINE TETE CHALENGAT (NRM, Woman Representative, Bukwo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the people of Sebei and on my own behalf, I wish to join my colleagues to support the motion to pay tribute to the late hon. William Okecho. The late Okecho was a down-to-earth person. He would welcome colleagues with a smile. I always saw him laughing and smiling. Many good things have been said about him; that he has been a great and hardworking man, he had a heart for his people, he was committed and was a firm legislator and, Mr Speaker, I have come to know that he escaped death in the Rome plane crash for a purpose. God preserved him to accomplish His mission. I am convinced that he has won the race and a reward awaits him in Heaven.

To the family and the people of Tororo, God gave him to you and the same God has taken him back. The same God will give you the strength and courage to overcome and fill the gap he leaves behind. You loved him more but God loved him most. May the Lord comfort you during these hard times and may his soul rest in eternal peace. Thank you.

4.52

**MR MATHAIAS BIREKERAAWO (DP, Bukoto County South, Lwengo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the motion to pay tribute to my colleague, the late hon. William Okecho. I got to know the late hon. William Okecho in the late 1980s when he joined the Uganda Airlines as the Assistant Marketing Manager. We worked very closely with him. He was a very brilliant guy because I recall there was a time for buying new aircrafts and it was him who always moved with the late Col. Gadi Wilson Toko to purchase the aircrafts.

I want to convey my sincere heartfelt condolences to the widow and the children because when we were in Kenya – that time I was the area accountant for Uganda Airlines and the late William was appointed Deputy Area Manager for Uganda Airlines for the entire eastern region – I mean Uganda Airlines but that time we covered areas like Kenya, Somalia and Ethiopia. I recall that when I left Uganda Airlines during the struggle to liberate this country, the late Okecho was promoted and made the Area Manager for Uganda Airlines but based in Rome. And when in Rome, he was a diplomat – and I can use the word “diplomat” because while there, he welcomed all Ugandans because those were not good times for Uganda but he represented Uganda as a real son of this country.

In 1988, we met in London; I was coming back to Uganda *–(Interjections)*– no, by then the struggle had ended and at that time, they were taking aircrafts for hang check-ups. This is a period when aircrafts are taken for check-ups just like you can take a car for service. I left on a Sunday and William Okecho told me he would come the next Sunday because those were the last flights and that there would be no flights for some time until the aircrafts came out of the hangers. That is when he survived the Rome plane crash because he had flown from London to his station in Rome. Those of you who interacted with him so much in the Eighth Parliament may have noticed that he had some scars on his arms. Those were results of that accident in Rome *–(Member timed out.)*

4.56

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Phillip Wafula Oguttu):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I stand to pay tribute to my OB, the late hon. William Oketcho. I met William at Bukedi College Kachonga –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member for Lwemiyaga, you are going to speak next. What is your problem? *(Laughter)* I am in charge of this Chair and not you.

**MR WAFULA OGUTTU:** Mr Speaker, I met hon. William Okecho at Bukedi College Kachonga. He was my senior and an academic giant but also a giant physically at that time because I was a small boy and he was very tall. I recall that he is one of the few people who were dropped off to school in a car because he was a son of a sub county chief. At that time, personal cars were rare and to be dropped at school in a car was something very big. Despite that, William kept friendship with the ordinary mortals like us. He wasn’t a very proud person. He was always smiling and quite receptive to people’s ideas.

When he was the Director of the Privatization Unit, I went to visit him. I had read a lot about this unit especially on the case of Chile, which had impressed me so much. Chile had created 400 millionaires in three years as a result of privatisation and I thought I would sell this idea to William. If we would not benefit, our country would likewise not benefit. He told me it was a good idea but it wasn’t possible because his bosses did not see it that way.

The last time I met William was at Ntinda when he was having problems at National Water and Sewerage Corporation. We were at an ATM and I asked him, “How come you, a chairman, could be sacked?” Because chairpersons of boards are very close to the ministers and I was surprised that he was sacked. He told me he was being used to do wrong things and he would not accept it. I believe that William must have died a very disappointed man over this matter and like my colleagues have said, we pray that this matter is resolved so that William is cleared posthumously.

He was a person who served this country with dedication and selflessness. He cared about our country and he cared about his name. He actually told me, “How could I build such a good career and somebody ruins it at that moment?” Please, those who are in charge, do something to clear William’s name. Thank you very much and may his soul rest in eternal peace.

5.00

**MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (Lwemiyaga County, Ssembabule):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise to support the motion and pay tribute to the late William Okecho and to extend the condolences of the people of Lwemiyaga to the family and the entire country. Hon. Okecho joined this House in the Eighth Parliament but he took over as chairperson of the Budget Committee from the big shoes of hon. Beatrice Kiraso; those were huge shoes but he indeed fit in perfectly well. I am raising this point because we seem to be sacrificing technicalities and specialised knowledge particularly in the leadership of the committees of this House because then one would aspire, would lay out his ways, his CV and one would be elected unlike nowadays where people are being appointed and it has its toll on the quality of the committees and the debates in this House. It is a matter that may be we may have to take off time and see how to promote the two. Yes, we are in a multi-party political dispensation but we needed people of the late William’s calibre.

Secondly, he survived a plane crash but he has died of stress. He survived what would have killed him; imagine falling from the sky and you survive and your fellowmen make conditions hard for you so that you meet your creator. I have heard members here lamenting that let the Nagongera Road be tarmacked in his memory, how can that be yet when he was still alive nobody remembered the virtues of such a man? He was thrown down in the dust in the sewers when everybody could see but nobody stood up to his name.

Lastly, the NRM Government emerged out of the alleged vote rigging. That was the *Casselberry* we were told. But how come after the 35 years we are still back to it? It should have been a taboo with the NRM and now we have another scheme of using courts. Can you imagine? At least Obote did not use the trickery of court to throw out the alleged opponents like it is now. It is a shame *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, I said we will stop at 5.00 p.m. It is past 5.00 O’clock and we need to give the family the time to get ready. I have information on the progress that will happen from now on. The body will leave Parliament now and will be at his residence in Ntinda for tonight. Those who would like to go home and continue with the vigil, the directions will be available from hon. Ekanya, hon. Sarah Opendi and all the other Members from that sub region that know the place. It will leave tomorrow for Tororo and the district councillors will pay their last respects at 2.00p.m. Burial will take place in Paya Sub County in Tororo District on Friday, 25 April 2014 starting at 11.00 a.m.

Hon. Members, the motion is that this House collectively conveys its deep condolences to the bereaved family, the Government of Uganda and the all Ugandans upon the demise of a distinguished son of Uganda and it takes cognisance of distinguished service the late hon. William Okecho rendered and the contributions he made to the country in different capacities. That is the motion to which I now put the question for your decision.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*(Motion adopted)*

*East African Anthem*

*National Anthem*

*(Exit of the late hon. William Oketcho.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Members, I thank you for being here and paying our last respects to hon. Okecho. The time will never be enough for all the Members to contribute; this debate is important and again, if I could have enlarged the time, it would have interfered with the family programme. So, I apologize again to some of you who were not able to make your contributions but the time agreed was 5.00 O’clock, and that is what we tried to do.

Hon. Members, the programme is as announced. Please, let’s try to be with the family on Friday at the burial. There is a bus that will be leaving Parliament on Friday morning. Tororo is not too far; the bus will leave by 6.00 O’clock and if you want to use the bus, be there. Those who will drive, you know the way to Tororo and I am sure you will be guided from there.

So, this special sitting is now adjourned but the normal ordinary session will continue tomorrow at 2.00 O’clock. This sitting is adjourned.

*(The House rose at 5.11 p.m. and was adjourned until Wednesday, 23 April 2014 at 2.00p.m)*