



PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - FIRST MEETING

MONDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2024



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 25TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Monday, 14 October 2024

Parliament met at 1.58 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. Last week we were supposed to have a sitting, but we could not sit because we had the Women's Forum Prayer Breakfast, the National Prayer Breakfast, and Independence Day celebrations, which affected our sitting last week. That is why we have preferred to start on Monday today, which is unusual but bear with us.

I informed you that we shall be having the East African Legislative Assembly sitting here. I am informed they will be sitting in the morning and afternoon. Therefore, we may not be sitting when they are around.

In the meantime, we have a lot of business pending, which we need to dispose of. I asked the chairpersons of the committees last week to be ready with the Rationalisation of Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) Bills so that we can pass them.

Once more, I welcome you back from Independence Day celebrations. For those who attended all the functions, thank you so much and we wish our country - at 62 - and

all the leaders of this country well, including yourselves; you are leaders- you cannot even clap for yourselves? *(Applause)* Thank you.

Honourable members, I have received complaints from several women who have written to my office about the issues of Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) project. They are wondering whether GROW is meant to benefit the women on Kampala Road or women outside there. The leaders are saying they do not have the regulations yet.

They want you to share with them the regulations and then give us an account of who the beneficiaries of GROW are. Therefore, I would like to ask the minister to come and give this House a report on GROW. *(Applause)* Yes, Hon. Avur.

2.03

MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach): Thank you, Madam Speaker. You are spot on, and I would like to commend you for being a good and listening leader to the women of this country.

Madam Speaker, I agree with you that not only from my district, Pakwach - I have consulted several women leaders here. The GROW project is intended to benefit women entrepreneurs of all classes, including those who already have ongoing businesses.

However, most women have complained that when they go to the banks where these funds have been directed, they are asked for

collateral in the form of land, including telling them that there should be building on that land. They must produce evidence that they own land. Other than that, some of them are being asked to take photos together with their husbands. We are wondering whether GROW is meant for only legally married women, yet there are very many women out there who are not married.

Madam Speaker, the women are saying that there are no guidelines in the districts. I tried to find out from the focal person in Pakwach District and the women leaders and they are saying there are no guidelines. If the focal persons do not have guidelines, where did the banks get these guidelines? We need to have these guidelines given not only to us leaders but also to the focal persons in the districts.

As you have guided, we need an updated report per district on how the GROW project is being implemented, and where possible, we need to be re-trained because we do not know how to promote GROW in our different areas. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Accountability for the monies being given out - Hon. Musenero- I am sorry, I meant Hon. Namanya.

MR NAMANYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For clarity, my name is Namanya Naboth. It is as short as that.

Well, Madam Speaker, thank you so much for raising that issue on the GROW project. I have personally interacted with several groups of women in my constituency but the regulation and the requirements that women need to access funds from banks-when you read through, women cannot afford them.

First of all, they want collateral, as the honourable colleague stated. It is not only collateral - when you present your collateral - like women in Rukungiri have land agreements but they keep tossing them around. You bring a land agreement; they say "We need a title." You bring a title, they say, "We need a title, which is certified"; a lot of issues that women in a local setting cannot afford.

It is, therefore, right that we get the minister here to explain the gymnastics of this GROW money. Other than that, this GROW money that is intended to grow women, will end up not growing anybody if we do not intervene in time.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, is it a procedural matter?

MS KAAYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Is it procedurally right that we have continued to debate when you already ruled that the minister has to bring a statement to this House?

THE SPEAKER: No, they are making supplementary contributions on what they want the minister to bring; making additions on what they want the minister to add to the report. You can also add from something Kiboga, only that you do not repeat what the other persons have said.

MS KAAYA: Yes! Madam Speaker, they go ahead to request that after having collateral you must have a living business, which you must have been attending to for one year and there must be documents certifying that somebody has been in that business yet there are very many women who want to start off -

THE SPEAKER: You need to tell us whether you are giving money for working capital or for-

MS KAAYA: Yes, many women do not have records of anything they have been doing for the last 20 years. We are wondering what they will show to prove that they have been in business.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Milton but do not repeat anything.

2.08

MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Two weeks ago, when Members raised matters relating to the GROW project, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development stood in for the Minister of

Gender, Labour and Social Development and committed to ensure both of them present comprehensive updates and statements on the Floor of Parliament.

In line with that, I am seeking for your indulgence to be emphatic that since we do not have much time - tomorrow - like the presiding officer stated last time, we dedicate some good time to discuss the GROW project. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members – Kasese you also had something? Okay, you and then Hon. Judith but let us be brief because we have-

2.09

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a challenge that I noticed in our country. I do not know what the national Identity cards are for.

In other countries, all you need is your national identification or passport. Here, we have reduced the national ID to the activities of the electoral process. I mean, why would you want to know what business I have and my trading licence, if all I have is a national ID? How are we going to help our fellow citizens when all they have is the national ID? So, where else can they go?

In any case, who is going to pay the GROW loan? It is the taxpayer and that includes the person who only has a national ID; especially the women.

I would like to relate that to this examination season, and I can tell you that our fellow citizens - especially sons and daughters - are back to their homes because they cannot afford paying tuition to zero balance. What kind of country are we trying to live in? We need to put in place a country that is big enough to accommodate everybody. Otherwise, we are going to have a country where it is only the children of the rich who will go to school. In conclusion-

THE SPEAKER: Are you saying that students are being sent away and are therefore, not doing exams?

MR KATUSABE: They are not doing exams because they have not paid fees to zero balance.

THE SPEAKER: Members, no child should be sent away from school. All the children should be allowed to do exams and they can pay their money when they are picking the results. You cannot chase away students when they are doing exams. This is wrong!

MR KATUSABE: You are the best in the world, Madam Speaker. I hope school leaders out there have listened to you. This House has the constitutional mandate that if we resolve or pronounce ourselves on something through its leadership; there is nobody under the sun who has the capacity to reverse that decision. I hope that our fellow citizens, especially school leaders, can take that.

In conclusion, and to reinforce that very point, we always talk about America. America accommodates everybody. If you are poor, you take your son or daughter to a poor school and if you cannot even afford a uniform, there are schools in America that will not ask anybody about uniform, if your father or your mother cannot afford it.

As I take my seat, in the schools in America –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable, we have understood but we are saying, whether private or Government schools, all the candidates must be allowed to do exams and whoever goes against that should face the law.

How can a parent afford to pay school fees for your child from primary one but then when they reach senior four, they are told not to sit exams? Some people may not have money at that time, but they will have money at a certain point and will be able to pay. *(Applause)*

MR KATUSABE: Thank you for that judgement and final verdict.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Judith.

2.14

MS JUDITH ACHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Nwoya): Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the same GROW program. The GROW project is a response to multiple hindrances faced by women entrepreneurs. However, not to repeat what my colleague has already said, the GROW project is not favouring the rural women who are work in the village markets.

When they go to the bank and request for say, Shs 5 million - I have my women who travel from Nwoya to Pakwach in a place called - that big market - to do trading there but when they request for Shs 5 million, they are sent back and told to reduce the loan amount.

They also say that they want requirements - collateral for the bank - I know the national ID is for identifying whether someone is a Ugandan or a resident of a particular place – and when they ask for cash flows, they want to see how these women businesses are operating.

However, if the aim of the GROW project is to respond to multiple hindering factors, then we are not responding to those factors by asking the rural woman to reduce the loan amount. Someone requests for Shs 1 million but you tell them to reduce it to Shs 500,000.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, let us agree this way. Let us get a report on this Floor on Thursday, on who the beneficiaries of GROW are? What the minimum and maximum amounts are, what the requirements are, what the regulations say and where the project has covered so far. How much money were you given for GROW? How much have you spent? Sources of funding and who are the focal persons on the ground so that we can be able to follow up on matters regarding GROW.

Lastly, as leaders of the people, how do we get information pertaining to GROW? *(Applause)*

2.16

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (GENDER AND CULTURE) (Ms Peace Mutuuzo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am happy to listen to the feedback from Members of Parliament about GROW, which was launched about two years ago. Like you have rightly put it, it is a concern in the general public.

Two weeks ago, the Cabinet requested us to bring a progressive report and today they are discussing that progressive report but what we have raised here is going to enrich the report because some of the things that you have raised were not part of it as far as I had read it before.

Therefore, we shall abide by your guidance, to bring a comprehensive report about the issues raised, on Thursday. Thank you.

BILLS FIRST READING

THE ASSETS OF DEPARTED ASIANS (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Leader of the Opposition has something to say.

2.18

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was going to first consult with you because I wanted to raise something in the presence of the Government but it seems to be absent.

However, I think I can still raise it so that it is put on record - *(Interjection)* - Government is here? I have been guided by a colleague that the Government is here but I hope she will have answers to my issues, now that you have decided to carry the cross - because it is a different docket but it is okay.

Madam Speaker, even though the Constitution and the Administration of Parliament Act say it is the duty of the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) to keep the Government in check, incidentally that duty is for all of us in this House. That is why we are here.

However, as we keep carrying out this oversight activity, there are many things that we discover. Colleagues and I were in Amuru last week. We went to visit Atiak Sugar Factory, and I will be sharing some of those findings in the coming days. We connected with them, raised concerns, because the Government has so far given about Shs 723 billion –

THE SPEAKER: Can I make a request, LOP?

MR SSENKYONYI: Yes –

THE SPEAKER: Can I make a request that you raise that when the Prime Minister and the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development are in the House?

MR SSENKYONYI: That is what I was saying. I will raise this in the coming days when there is a lot more presence. What I wanted to raise is specifically about today and you will help to guide, Madam Speaker.

I went with colleagues after I wrote, on the 8th of October, to the Management of ROKO Construction Limited that we would go and interface with them because so far the Government has given them Shs 263.3 billion but that there have been numerous concerns. I am sure some of the Members here have been called by staff of ROKO who have not been paid for four months. There are different projects, including the one of the construction of our new Chamber, that are not being attended to.

However, while we were there to carry out our oversight function, we found a letter at the gate written back to me saying that the board had denied us, as Members of Parliament, access to the premises of ROKO Construction Limited. While this is a private company but it has been given taxpayers' money.

In fact, on the day the first batch was passed in July of 2022, even the majority report of the committee had several concerns. I remember that report was read by Hon. Keefa Kiwanuka and both the majority and the minority report were saying we first do due diligence before we give this company money. Anyhow, it passed very quickly.

We do not know what is happening. Projects have stalled. Staff are complaining. They are not being paid. We went to interface and interact with management, as we have done elsewhere, except for Lubowa Specialised Hospital, which also denied us access. However, the others allow us access and we interact with them.

Therefore, I got confused because I know not very long the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will be back to Parliament asking for more money for ROKO Construction Limited. However, the company does not want to account. It is not paying staff. I wanted that we put the Government on notice; first of all, since they are planning to come for more money, can they first account for what we have given to them?

If the company does not want to account for taxpayers' money, then it should refund what has been given to it. We shall not bother it if it is using private resources, but if it is using taxpayers' money, it is important that the money is accounted for. I do not know what your guidance will be, Madam Speaker, because the Front Bench - but our honourable colleague said she represents the Government.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Government. *(Laughter)*

MS MUTUZO: Madam Speaker, I thank the LOP, for the concerns raised. As you earlier stated, it is unusual for us to sit in Parliament on Mondays and today we are holding Cabinet.

Madam Speaker, this matter will be referred to the Prime Minister. I am here to take notes for issues that will arise for the Government to respond to so that I bring them to their attention.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Meddie.

2.22

MR MUHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Central Division, Kampala City): Thank you, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as I told you, why we are sitting today is because

we must finish the work by Friday to allow the East African Legislative Assembly to sit here for 21 days.

MR NSEREKO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. While interacting with a few Ugandans in the diaspora –

THE SPEAKER: Order! I see people are fearing to go to the village – (*Laughter*)

MR NSEREKO: Madam Speaker, while interacting with a few Ugandans in the diaspora, it came to my knowledge that there are some Ugandans, just like other Africans, stuck in the Middle East, mainly in Lebanon, at the moment, where they are engulfed in the war between Israel and Lebanon.

As you are aware, and as everyone has witnessed, many Ugandans, who conduct duties as house assistants in the Middle East, are sponsored by individuals who own some of the homes in those areas, which are under severe bombardment at the moment. Therefore, just like other African migrant labourers, Ugandans need immediately what we would call, “foreign service assistance” to either be repatriated home or to find a safe haven at the moment.

Secondly, others that offer these services have reported that in various countries where they work, many of them who fall sick are not given medical attention because they either have insurance or some of their employers are disinterested in taking them to hospitals other than being given painkillers and paracetamol. At the end of the day, most of them come back in dire shape and some of them end up probably dying from those areas.

Madam Speaker, they want to hear the voice of the ministry in charge of gender and labour. The reason is that when they refer to the companies that took them there, there are no answers other than pure coercion to tell them that their role was to get them there and they have no responsibility beyond that. It is appalling. These are our young children; they are part of Uganda and we owe them a duty of care. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, honourable minister.

2.25

MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Maybe before the minister takes to the Floor, I would like to thank Hon. Nsereko, for raising that matter. However, on this note - and you could have read about this in the last one or two weeks - our ambassador to Malaysia, Hon. Betty Bigombe, is doing wonders because she was able to rescue people who were deceived from Uganda and taken to the rebels in Myanmar. Therefore, if all our ambassadors, those responsible for the Missions, could work with that type of heart, a lot could be achieved.

She mentioned, still in an interview with *The Daily Monitor*, that there are some people who are still in captivity by the rebels in Myanmar. Maybe the minister could also add her clarification on this matter about how many we still have in the captivity of the rebels because they were lured to Malaysia and Thailand that they were going to work, but ended up in rebel activities.

THE SPEAKER: Yes?

MS MUTUZO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On issues of the externalisation of labour, we have done a lot of reforms of late and we have some liaison offices where people can report, especially those in destitute.

However, a number of people had gone to these countries before these reforms came yet there are many companies that have been faulting these regulations. A number of them have been disqualified and we have had to cancel licences for some of them.

Madam Speaker, for a comprehensive report, the minister of state responsible for labour will soon come and present the new regulations and reforms and guidelines so that we can be able to direct or guide our people better.

Madam Speaker, on the issue that my brother raised, the Prime Minister will talk about the young people who are in the rebel activities.

That goes beyond my ministry's docket. The Rt Hon. Prime Minister will address that matter when she comes. She is more updated on the developments in Malaysia.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Remember, she told you that she is taking notes for onward transmission. Let us go to the next item.

BILLS FIRST READING

THE ASSETS OF DEPARTED ASIANS' (AMENDMENT) BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you will recall that on 24 September 2024, the Executive tabled the RAPEX Bill for the first reading. The House, however, stood over the tabling of the Bill due to concerns that were raised by Hon. Byakatonda Abdulhu, the Workers' MP. It was about the case that was in court – that it would amount to sub judice.

However, the Attorney-General wrote to us, saying that, that will not stop the Bill from coming for the first reading, and, we are in possession of that letter.

Honourable members, in the Bill that is being tabled, we expected a full inventory of all the assets and liabilities, as a schedule, so that we know what we are transferring and how we are transferring it. This should have been included herein. It is very fortunate that the LOP and I, have ever been leaders of the Committee on Public Account (Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises) (COSASE). We know what is in the Departed Asians Property Custodian Board.

The LOP will tell you off-head – and I will also tell you – what is in that place. So, I think it would be prudent enough for the minister to relay this information to the ministry for finance that as they bring this Bill for the first reading, they give us a list of inventories that is supposed to be taken over.

On the same note, when the minister was asked about this, he said he needed one year to get the

list of those assets. Since it is - RAPEX cannot wait; we need the list of the inventories. Yes, Hon. Oguzu Lee.

2.31

MR DENIS LEE OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Madam Speaker, thank you for your insight in this matter. You are aware that the issue in question is not just about the inventory of the assets, but there is also what somebody is already alluding to: a comprehensive audit. Why? –

THE SPEAKER: The forensic audit -

MR OGUZU: Yes, because we have information that Idi Amin compensated a number of these properties -

THE SPEAKER: President Idi Amin.

MR OGUZU: Yes, the late His Excellency Idi Amin – (*Laughter*)- compensated a number of the departed Asian properties yet those he compensated are getting to be repossessed. We are then asking: under what circumstances is that happening? There were properties that were mortgaged in banks and the Government of Uganda redeemed those properties from the bank, but those properties have, again, been repossessed.

In the submission of the Attorney-General then, Hon. Bart Katureebe, he guided that the ministry for finance, which is responsible – and is now seeking mandate – should go into prosecuting people. That has not happened, and they have not reclaimed those properties.

Madam Speaker, we have the property register provided in the law. The country would want to know what is in the register – that is, section 2. In the same law, we also have, the Assets of Departed Asians Act. In section 13, Madam Speaker, there was also an establishment of a special fund. We do not know what is in that fund. These people have been selling properties. Where are the resources? They have been renting. Where is the rental income? Where are the accounts of this body? Why do they want to dissolve this body without accounting for the properties? This body is supposed to invest –

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter from Hon. Richard Gafabusa.

MR GAFABUSA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am raising a matter of procedure, because, on the Order Paper, the Bill is being read for the first time; it is not yet even read. However, I see my colleague, the Hon. Oguzu Lee, debating and giving a lot of information regarding the Bill that is not yet presented and read for the first time.

I need your guidance on whether we are proceeding well for a colleague to debate a Bill that is non-existent at present.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, Hon. Oguzu Lee should take the information to the minister for finance and help them. That information, that you are giving, should help them. However, I have already made a ruling that we cannot have this read for the first time because of what I have already mentioned. Next item.

Yes, Hon. Kayemba Ssolo.

MR KAYEMBA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I rise on a point of procedure. There is a public outcry about the recently concluded census –

THE SPEAKER: How is it coming in?

MR KAYEMBA: Let me go ahead, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Aah, is it a procedural matter on what is happening? That is something for which you should have come before – to bring it up. The procedural matter that you should raise should be on what we are discussing now.

MR KAYEMBA: I agree, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Next item. Yes, procedure from Hon. Kaberuka.

MR KABERUKA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The procedural issue I am raising is from your statement, where you guided that some gaps from the Bill would hamper it from

being presented. You also mentioned something very cardinal about the Attorney-General's letter. The Attorney-General – I do not know whether he is the one who is supposed to waive a Bill to be –

THE SPEAKER: To determine sub judice.

MR KABERUKA: To determine sub judice - we are a House of record, Madam Speaker, and we have other Bills that have been stopped because of the sub judice rule. Would it be really - I need your guidance - should we refer to the Attorney-General because - Madam Speaker, the rules give you the whole mandate to determine whether something is sub judice or not. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. You know, in this country, and in all the books of law, the law allows only the Speaker to determine what is sub judice. That is why I never allowed it to stop. It is only the Speaker who determines what is sub judice.

Yes, Hon. Morris – just before Hon. Morris takes to the Floor, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have pupils and teachers of Green Valley Nursery and Primary School, Katikamu North, Luwero District. “*Asalam alaikum*”. You are most welcome.

(Applause) They are represented by Hon. Denes Sekabira. Where is Hon. Denes? He is just out there, having lunch. They are also represented by Hon. Brenda Nabukenya, who is in a meeting assigned by the Leader of the Opposition (LOP). Thank you so much for coming. They are good leaders so bring them back. *(Applause)*

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You do a lot of work for these ministers. These Bills were there before. We had to ask them to do thorough work before bringing them back. A minister brings a Bill which is not even a quarter of the material we expect, and they put you to task to train them and put them in the right place. Here, when some Members of Parliament are doing something which is not right, they say the training was not right.

Madam Speaker, maybe you should ask, through the President, to have some of these ministers trained on what they are supposed to do better, so that we do not waste a lot of time. They bring Bills which do not reflect what we expect of them. Tomorrow, another minister will bring the same story year-in, year-out. It has become too much, Madam Speaker, for you to guide them severally on the same thing.

Through your Office, do some induction for these ministers so that by the time they bring back other materials, we see work that reflects them as ministers. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Henry-Maurice, to the best of my knowledge, we have competent ministers. It is just that they are not here, but we all learn on the job. Next item.

BILLS FIRST READING

THE SEXUAL OFFENCES BILL, 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the right of a Member to initiate a Private Member's Bill is enshrined in Article 94(4)(b) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, and it is operationalised by Rule 121 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

For this particular Bill, a Certificate of Financial Implication was issued by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. This certificate indicated that some of the proposed measures therein are already implemented by relevant government agencies, and that proceeding with the Bill will lead to wastage of public resources.

In addition, the certificate indicated that the proposals in the Bill have a financial implication, which will be accommodated within the medium-term expenditure framework of the implementing agencies such as; the Uganda Police Force, Uganda Prison Services, the Office of the Directorate of Public Prosecution, and courts of law.

In light of the consideration, the Attorney-General did not indicate the particular laws that he said were being duplicated. They did not tell us how much was involved in terms of the financial implication. I request that the House allows this Member to introduce the Bill for first reading, and then it will be interrogated in the committee, so that we know which Bills are being duplicated. I now call Hon. Anna Ebaju.

2.42

MS ANNA ADEKE (FDC, Woman Representative, Soroti): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your wise guidance.

On 23 May 2023, this Parliament granted me leave to introduce a Private Member's Bill entitled, "The Sexual Offences Bill, 2024." This Bill's main object is to consolidate all sexual offences into one piece of legislation.

Madam Speaker, on this subject matter, I have carried out numerous consultations and thereby, today, I beg to lay the Sexual Offences Bill accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Implications as required under Section 76 of the Public Finance Management Act. I beg to lay a Bill entitled, "The Sexual Offences Bill, 2024" accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Implications.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. In furtherance to Rule 129(1) of the Rules of Procedure, the Bill stands – it is signed - referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. However, the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs will take lead and report back to the House within the 45 days.

MS ADEKE: Most obliged.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

LAYING OF PAPERS

THE INSPECTORATE OF GOVERNMENT
BI-ANNUAL PERFORMANCE REPORTS
FOR THE PERIOD OF JULY TO
DECEMBER 2023 AND JANUARY TO
JUNE 2024

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Article 231(1) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda requires the Inspector General of Government (IGG) to submit to Parliament, at least once in every six months, a report on the performance of its functions, making such recommendations as it considers necessary, and containing such information as Parliament may require.

In furtherance to this constitutional provision, I received two bi-annual reports from IGG on 3 October 2024, and today the reports will formally be laid on Table. I now invite the Parliamentary Commissioner to table the report on the Floor.

MR OGUZU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank IGG for complying with the law.

Last week I raised an issue in relation to compliance of ministries, departments, and agencies (MDAs), and Parliament of Uganda in bringing annual reports to this House. Section 50 of the Administration of Parliament Act requires that the Parliamentary Commission shall bring to this House an annual report detailing activities of the House and other MDAs.

Now that the IGG is complying and the Commission is in the process of laying this, when do we expect the annual report of the Parliamentary Commission, on activities of Parliament, so that you are also in compliance with the law?

THE SPEAKER: The Parliamentary Commission has always complied and laid the reports on the Table. Commissioner, please lay.

2.47

MS PROSSY AKAMPULIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rubanda): Thank you, much Madam Speaker. I beg to lay the Inspectorate of Government's bi-annual performance report to Parliament for a period July to December 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Please, lay. Honourable Members, the report is referred to the sectoral Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for further scrutiny and consideration.

MS AKAMPULIRA: Thank you. Madam Speaker, I beg to lay the Inspectorate of Government bi-annual performance report to Parliament for the period of January to June 2024.

THE SPEAKER: The report is referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

Honourable Members, the report of Posta Uganda Limited will be presented by Chairperson of Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities, and State Enterprises (COSASE). I now want to invite the vice chairperson Public Accounts Committee – (COSASE) to present the report.

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The way things are moving, there are days when you will call the House on Monday. However, originally, we had information that all state ministers do not attend the Cabinet and there are ministries that have three ministers, others more than three.

We need to know through your office whether if a sitting is on Monday, that all ministers and state ministers that do not attend the Cabinet daily will also be absent. Thank you.

2.50

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (GENDER AND CULTURE) (Ms Peace Mutuuzo): Madam Speaker, I am here to inform the House that the ministers of state do attend Cabinet. Today I did not attend because

there was a Kiswahili council on the Order Paper and my colleagues did attend; so, I am well represented. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Maurice Kibalya was asking why all ministers, including the state ministers, were absent, yet some of them would be here.

MS MUTUZO: Madam Speaker, all ministers and ministers of state do attend Cabinet. I excused myself because I knew that there was an unusual Parliament sitting on Monday and there was something on the Order Paper.

Usually, we sit on Tuesday to Thursday in Parliament. However, today, since there was a reflection of a Bill that we are supporting, I came to ensure that we do not miss out.

THE SPEAKER: After, all we shall need a treasury memorandum.

2.51

MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central, Nakaseke): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Under Rule 219, I beg to lay the minutes attached to the report.

THE SPEAKER: Please, lay.

REPORT OF THE PUBLIC ACCOUNTS
COMMITTEE ON COMMISSIONS,
STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE
ENTERPRISES (COSASE), ON THE
REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL
ON THE FINANCIAL STATEMENTS
OF UGANDA POST LIMITED FOR THE
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023

MR MAYANJA: Madam Speaker, I also beg to lay a copy of the report of the Public Accounts Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE), on the report of the Auditor-General on the financial statements of Uganda Post Limited for the financial year ended 30 June 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Please, lay.

MR MAYANJA: Let me go directly to the gist of the report. Page 2.3: Review of Financial Statements of Uganda Post Limited (UPL) or Posta Uganda. Honourable members, when you go to page 6, because of limited time, the committee made the following observations and recommendations under sales revenue performance.

It was observed that sales revenue reduced by 6.29 per cent due to a decline in receipts from bag rentals that is 64 per cent, Mbags 53 per cent, post shop sales 68 per cent and commissions by 102 per cent. This arose from competition from unlicensed courier operators.

According to a market performance report of Uganda Communications Commission for the quarter ended in March 2023, 60 per cent of the courier business is conducted by unlicensed postal and courier operators causing the Government to lose tax revenue but also compete with licensed companies.

The committee recommended that UPL diversifies its revenue streams while at the same time Uganda Communications Commissions improves its regulations of the industry to curb unlicensed operators in the market.

Operating expenses in Financial Year 2022/2023 declined by Shs 0.492 billion due to lower spending marketing by 50 per cent. This, in effect, could have also impacted on lower sales revenues.

The committee recommended that UPL continues to invest in the marketing of its services to improve revenue streams. The structure of the company's employee costs largely towards human resource rewards should be monitored and kept within the 65 per cent threshold of recurrent spending.

The company's interest costs arising from the overdraft facility to boost its liquidity position should be suspended until the company institutes a mechanism of collecting outstanding receivables.

Debt write-offs have grown by 149 per

cent: caution needs to be exercised with the continued rise in debt write-offs. The committee recommended that UPL should establish a collection mechanism for all outstanding receivables prior to the start of the debt write-off process.

Default on statutory payments. Analysis of payables and other accruals largely consisted of UCC liability, payroll liability, Pay As You Earn (PAYE) payable and Value Added Tax (VAT), which are statutory in nature. This means the company is defaulting on statutory payments.

The committee recommended that UPL prioritises payment of all its statutory obligations within the medium term and incurrance of new statutory liabilities be avoided.

On company liquidity position, the company is facing liquidity challenges as the current ratio is less than 1. The committee recommended capitalisation of the company by its shareholders, subject to the improvement in the management of existing resources over the medium term.

Observations and recommendations on the Auditor-General's queries.

3.1.1 Implementation of the Approved Budget

Committee Observation

The committee observed that:

- i) There was under-collection of revenue by the company by Shs 4.031 billion
- ii) While management cited effects of COVID-19 for the poor performance of NTR, the committee observed that in the Financial Year 2021/2022, NTR generated was much higher than the year under review by Shs 0.66 billion. Both periods are after the pandemic. Therefore, the excuse of COVID-19 could not exhaustively explain the decline in revenue collection.
- iii) All collected revenue is spent at source.

Recommendation

- i) The management of Posta Uganda should improve the company's revenue mobilisation efforts to ensure sufficient revenue at the entity's disposal to implement its plans.
- ii) The revenue collected by the entity should not be entirely spent at source, but consider making a profit and declaring dividends to the shareholders.

3.1.3 Utilisation of Collected Revenue

Committee Observations

The committee observed that unutilised revenue of Shs 0.397 billion reported as profit of the company for the period under review is, in fact, unspent revenue despite the entity under-collecting revenue.

Recommendation

The Accounting Officer should ensure that revenue is spent as per the approved budget.

3.1.4 Unsupported output budgets

Committee Observation

The committee observed that non-provision of the detailed costing for activities implies that the costing at the output level cannot be justified, and as such, there is a risk that the company either over or under-budgeted for these outputs.

Recommendation

- i) Going forward, the Accounting Officer should ensure that budget figures are appended to each activity to ensure rational operations and proper accountability.
- ii) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should capitalise the entity.

3.1.5 Implementation of outputs

Committee observation

The committee:

- i) Observed that failure to monitor and report on the performance of planned activities makes it difficult to verify whether the activities were fully implemented.
- ii) Noted that the difference between the unimplemented activities and the utilised funds was significant.
- iii) Also observed that failure to indicate detailed planned activities creates haphazard implementation of the entity's work plans and compromises the quality of its output.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that management should ensure that staff capacity is built to enable development of proper work plans and performance reports, which can be utilised to measure performance.

3.2 Management of the Government Salary Payroll

3.2.1 Validation of Employees on the Entity Main Payroll

Committee Observation

The committee observed that dealing with staff with lack of requisite information, such as National ID, appointment letters; jeopardises their eligibility and authenticity during and after their service time.

Recommendation

Management should periodically update employee lists, reconcile the payroll, and liaise with other relevant stakeholders to ensure timely payroll access of new employees and deletion of those who have exited.

3.2.2 Inconsistencies in Employee Details

Committee observation

The committee observed that inconsistent information undermines the integrity of the company's records and may complicate the employee service history and retirement procedures.

Recommendation

- i) The accounting officer should engage the affected staff and ensure that employee records are duly updated and brought to the attention of the appropriate authorities within a specified timeline for action.
- ii) The accounting officer should ensure that the staff whose particulars had inconsistencies and were advised to make statutory declaration or deed poll, should submit the same for verification during the following audit period.

3.2.3 Utilisation of the Wage Budget

Committee observation

The committee observed that failure to utilise the budgeted wage funds implies unrealistic budgeting in respect of the wage bill and locks resources which could have been used to deliver other public services. Besides, this could also expose the unutilised funds to the risk of misuse.

The committee was equally concerned about the unutilised wage budget of Shs 1.63 billion in the financial year under review with the payroll liability and payee payables as mentioned in their financial statements. The un-utilised wage budget should have been used to offset payables.

Recommendations

- i) Management should always adopt prudent budgeting principles by using the positions in post and approved recruitment plan as a basis for budgeting.

- ii) The Accounting Officer should always ensure that payment or payroll liability and PAYE payables are consistently done as budgeted, failure of which, he should be held personally liable in accordance with section 79(1)(e) of the PFMA.

3.2.4 Review of the Entity Staff Establishment

The Auditor-General undertook procedures to review the completeness and relevancy of the entity's establishment and noted that out of 249 approved positions, a total of 170 positions were filled, leaving a gap of 77 vacant positions.

Committee Observation

The committee observed that vacant positions negatively affect the company's capacity to deliver on its mandate.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the accounting officer should quicken the process of filling vacant positions currently in the entity's staff establishment.

3.3 Asset Revaluation

Members, you can see a copy of the report attached (Annexure 1) for more details.

Committee Observation

The committee observed that:

- i) Not all the property of POSTA had been included in the Asset valuation report which put at risk, those assets that were not declared in the valuation report. It was noted that the assets that were not valued were disclosed on page 24 of the financial statements.
- ii) For most of the property valued, the value of land was higher than the value of the buildings. This implied that the buildings were in a dilapidated state.

Recommendation

- i) The accounting officer should address the ownership issues and ensure that all the company assets are properly valued and reported at fair values as per the provision of International Accounting Standards (IAS).
- ii) The dilapidated property of UPL should be urgently renovated and redeveloped in order to achieve value for money.

1.4. Unresolved Property Disputes and non-approval of write-off of Receivables

Members you can check on Annexure 2A and 2B for more details.

On page 22 are committee observations.

The committee observed that:

- i) The unresolved property disputes were beyond the management level of UPL leading to forfeiture of receivables for nine years.
- ii) Unclear ownership of the property is the main reason behind failure by tenants to pay outstanding receivables to UPL.
- iii) The committee notes that the entity's land is at risk requiring urgent intervention.
- iv) There were areas that needed thorough and special investigation but the Committee did not do so owing to resource and time constraints.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that:

- i) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance resolve the impasse between the companies and ensure that UPL is paid all outstanding receivables within six months from adoption of this report.
- ii) The committee be given more time to deeply investigate the matter relating to ownership, status and management of the entity's property.

3.5 Trade and other Receivables

Committee observation

The increasing trade receivables by Shs 5.5 billion, is a matter of concern to the committee as they continue to deny the company the cash flows which are vital for service delivery.

Besides, a high level of accounts receivables may lead to uncollected debts and resultant cash flow deficiencies that may lead to other liabilities for funding operations and even risk business closure.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that management should enforce and exhaust the data management policy by making prompt reminders to data and devise a strategy to fully recover the debts.

3.6 Accumulation of trade and other payables

Committee observation

1. The committee observed that among the payables were payroll liability, NSSF payable and PAYE payable, which are statutory obligations. Accumulation of payables creates a risk of litigation that may lead to payment of penalties and fines for delayed settlement to possible aggrieved parties in the future.

Recommendation

- i) The accounting officer should ensure that all statutory obligations and arrears are prioritised and settled as first call on their budget for Financial Year 2024/2025.
- ii) UPL should put in place a policy for management of payables, and minimise the risks associated with continued accumulation which may become a burden to the entity and lead to nugatory expenditure.
- iii) Prior to recapitalisation, UPL should implement its debt collection policy so as to fully meet its obligations as they fall due.

3.7 Management of Significant Court Awards against UPL

It was observed that the Court of Appeal delivered a judgement against UPL wherein UPL was required to settle a total of Shs 45 billion to the plaintiffs in the case involving UPL and UTCL v. Bernard Mwetise and Ors Company Advocates No. 10/2014.

The claimants had sued UPL for recovery of pension, general damages and other court reliefs.

At the time of the audit, the claim had not been settled by UPL and there was no commitment to pay the claimants who had won the court case in certainty.

To this, the accounting officer stated that UPL should not settle the claim in question because the amount was beyond its means, adding that the Government of Uganda took over liability which arose during the process of privatisation and rationalisation of Parastatals and that a third party notes had been applied for to have the Attorney-General join as a party.

During the interface with the committee, the accounting officer provided a status update obligation indicating that the Government of Uganda took over liability to pay pensioners of the defunct Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Corporation, that is (UPTC).

Committee observation

The committee observed that since the Government of Uganda took over liability in this case, it is therefore its obligation to make timely settlement.

Members, you can look at Annexure 3 for more details.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should expedite its obligation and any other related incidental costs within six months after

adoption of this report.

3.8 Unpaid Salaries and Gratuity

Annexure 4(a), 4(b), and 4(c) for more details.

Committee observation

- i) The committee observes that delays and failure to promptly pay staff salaries and wages will lead to a demotivated workforce and high staff turnover, which has already caused adverse effects to UPL’s operations.
- ii) The committee observes that there has not been a joint effort by the concerned stakeholders (MoFPED, MoICT& NG and UPL) to address delayed payments of salaries and gratuity.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the concerned stakeholders should work jointly to expedite settlement of outstanding salaries, gratuity and pensions.

Lastly, on Page 27-

3.9 Unimplemented Procurements

Committee observation

The Committee observed that;

- i) Planned procurements worth Shs 40.457 billion were not yet implemented by 30 June 2023. Delayed implementation of procurements leads to delays in implementation of critical planned programmes.
- ii) The planned procurement amounts of Shs 40.457 billion were above the entity’s budget of Shs 17.543 billion and therefore, unable to undertake the procurement.
- iii) The entity’s revenue performance of Shs 13.512 billion could not be able to cover both the entity’s operational and procurement requirements.

- iv) Some of the procurements required a multi-year commitment plan to enable their implementation.

Recommendation

The accounting officer should exercise prudence while compiling budgets and annual procurement plans to take into consideration and current cash flow challenges faced by the company.

Conclusion

Madam Speaker, the foregoing observations on Uganda Posta Limited are adequate to infer that the entity’s NTR performance needs significant improvement. The outstanding payables and receivables, under-absorptions, understaffing, court awards and the unresolved property disputes compounded the operations of the entity against an overarching demand to deliver on the entity’s mandate.

The scope of the challenges encountered requires concerted efforts of wide-ranging stakeholder-ship and players to bring them to a logical end. I beg to move.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairperson of the Committee on Public Accounts on Commissions, Statutory Authorities, and State Enterprises (COSASE). Yes, Hon. Christine, did I hear anything about pension for the people who used to work with UPL? Have they all been paid? Did you get an inventory for the people who are supposed to be paid and how much is outstanding?

3.17

MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Madam Speaker and the committee for the report. On page 8, it is indicated that there was a gap in the collection of revenue and they cite that it was the COVID-19 effect.

The year in focus was the second one after the COVID-19 period. I have also been hearing a number of excuses like “...due to COVID-19”, yet in the year immediately after the COVID-19

scourge, the entity performed even better than the second year. So, I do not know how we can close off the COVID-19 effect but it is continuing to be an excuse to many entities.

On page 11, they indicate that the work plans did not have costs and budgets. Madam Speaker, as a country, we may not have all the money to offset these budgets. However, when we indicate that they are unfunded priorities, somewhere somehow, we can get interested donors. If these activities do not have costs, it becomes difficult for any help to come in.

On page 12, they indicate that some of the outcomes and outcome indicators did not have activities. We are wondering which logical framework they used and what the Board approved as the annual work plan.

What does the monitoring and evaluation officer do and how do they conclude that “we have tried to implement according to plans...” when there are no activities, in line with the main objective. They even indicate that some of the outcomes were not in line with the strategic objective of Posta Uganda.

This brings us to the question; do they even have a monitoring and evaluation officer? What did the board do in the approval of the annual work plan?

Let me conclude with page 17, where they show – actually, in all the years, apart from the first year of 2019/2020, they were not spending the entire wage budget, but the entity still has a lot of payroll liabilities like Pay As You Earn.

We are wondering why you did not use the money to offset this but at the same time, it means there must have been redundant funds that were misused. If the money remained on wages and was not paid for these liabilities, then what did it do?

Madam Speaker, thank you very much for allowing us to look into Posta Uganda.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Who is managing Posta Uganda? Is it the Government of Uganda? Is there an investor?

MR MAYANJA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the question. Right now, the accounting officer is called Mr James Arinaitwe. He came with Mr Robert Asiimwe (Head of Finance); Mr Charles Opio (Company Secretary), Mr Daniel Onyango (Manager Procurement), Ms Maureen Nakawunde (Supervisor) and Ms Immaculate Namubiru (Manager, Corporation), as of now.

THE SPEAKER: How many shares do we still have with Posta Uganda?

MR MAYANJA: Madam Speaker, most of the questions should go to the frontbench, but unfortunately, it is blank.

MR ELOTU: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Uganda Posta Limited, trading as Posta Uganda, is under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and is 100 per cent owned by the Government of Uganda. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you for the clarification.

3.23

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Madam Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I also thank the committee for doing a detailed analysis on the performance of Uganda Posta Limited.

Uganda Posta Limited is a very good idea for this country. It is the only thing that offers a proper identity, especially for corporate persons. However, from the report that the committee has read, it appears Uganda Posta Limited is being mismanaged or rather, it is not being run as a business.

They have explained the unpaid interest on overdraft, the receivables exceeding Shs 5 billion, many things that are gross - a proper business that is being run. Or if someone likes the job, they would do better. Therefore, Posta Uganda requires re-engineering and to change vision –

THE SPEAKER: Financial re-engineering.

MS NAKUT: Exactly; change the strategy but it is maybe not being supervised very well -

THE SPEAKER: As an accountant, you first want to understand where the receivables are coming from. Who are those people that you are supposed to pay that have not come to claim their money? Is it something that you have kept there as a suspense account that you do not know how to allocate the money? How much payables do you have?

MS NAKUT: Somebody is not bothered. It is not being run properly as a business so you do not care whether people pay for services you are offering or not. The only thing going right, according to the report, is the payment of salaries, but that is not fair for the country, Madam Speaker.

Therefore, I propose two things that must be added to the resolution the House will make if the House allows it.

1. The Board of Posta Uganda reassesses its vision and strategy so that it finds something that can work for this country; and
2. The Government of Uganda changes the process of appointment or selection of boards because it is not possible for this Parliament to supervise everything and every day. There are boards and there is a reason they exist. The selection of board members should be made public so that the people who are appointed to any parastatal of the Government are up to the task of ensuring that management does the right thing.

I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Leave alone being up to the task of management, but also knowing what they are going to do. If you look at an institution like that, are you a technical person who is able to understand what is to be done? Thank you.

3.26

MS LILLIAN PAPARU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee for this report.

The Auditor-General's Office has, for the last three years I have been in this Parliament, emphasised the section of payroll and payroll management across entities.

The other week, we discussed the reports of the public accounts committee (PAC). Now, here, the report on one of the entities under the Committee on Public Accounts (Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises (COSASE)) has been presented, but the irregularities in the payroll management are something that cuts across and affects very many entities.

The report indicates that the entity returned about Shs 1.6 billion and, here, we are looking at 77 vacant positions that are not filled and other payables or statutory obligations that are also not being fulfilled. This is a mismatch.

Madam Speaker, there are other entities where even staff go without salary for some months because they do not have enough wage, but in another entity, we are seeing that they are returning monies. I think the relevant ministries should cross-check this so that we do not have redundant money somewhere while some people are suffering somewhere else.

One of the key things in this report is about the spending at source and this is not the first time; this has continued to happen. I do not know whether the accounting officers are penalised because they have consistently -

THE SPEAKER: That is against the Public Finance Management Act.

MS PAPARU: Yes, they are spending at source, which is an irregularity. I think this should be looked into seriously. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I think you need to - the person who is spending the money at source should be held accountable.

3.28

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE (Independent, Isingiro West County, Isingiro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also thank the committee for

the report. The issue I have is on debt write-offs. When I was reading the report, debt write-offs were up to 149 per cent and they do not have a debt write-off mechanism.

I hope this is not -

THE SPEAKER: A debt write-off policy.

MR RAUBEN ARINAITWE: I hope this is not negotiated so that they write off the debt and, then, later, they share it.

Secondly, there was unspent revenue. When revenue is not spent on activities, they go and claim that, that is a profit. I wonder what type of management of the board and the accountant they have in this institution.

The last issue is that sales revenues are decreasing. When I went to administrative expenses, they were declining because they were leaving vital issues such as marketing. Very few people know what Uganda Post Limited does – apart from when they used to have the buses; that is when it would be identified. They are spending most of their money to pay themselves salaries and overtime and they are leaving the marketing aspect.

Lastly, I wonder: when we were looking for the rationalising of agencies, why did we leave this one? This one should have been the first on the list. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Member from Kumi, Hon. Noeline and then the Member from Lyantonde.

3.31

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: My teacher, you will speak.

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT: I appreciate the committee for the report, aware that information about Posta Uganda is getting limited and the young Ugandans are not as updated about the importance of this agency.

The first is related to what the honourable member has said – the decline or reduction of the sales revenue by 6.2 per cent. We expected some bit of detail about its cause. What are the factors responsible for that - what has brought about the decline? The committee could have gone ahead to make proposals on how such gaps could be addressed.

The second one is related to the uncosted work plans. Madam Speaker, it now comes back and challenges us, who are the participants during the time of budgeting. I think we need to be very critical at the time of budgeting, when we are looking at the budgets that are presented before us. When we have the totals, do we really go further to look at the breakdowns of the totals that we are given? Otherwise, we can be taken blindly – we approve totals that we are not able to explain to the public or to the Ugandan economy. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Noeline?

3.32

MS NOELINE BASEMERA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibaale): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the committee for the report.

I am seeking clarification. The committee has reported that the company is defaulting on the payment of statutory obligations. I want to understand: is it from the budgeting perspective – that when they are budgeting, they do not factor in the statutory payments they have to effect or it is budgeted for, but diverted?

Whereas I agree with the recommendation to ensure that these statutory payments are made, I want to find out why they are not complying with the payment of those statutory obligations.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. You will find that most of the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) default. They budget, but you will find that they will not pay the Pay As You Earn (PAYE), National Social Security Fund (NSSF), gratuity, water bills, electricity bills and all those kinds of things. So, most of these MDAs tend to be stubborn.

3.34

MR ENOS ASIIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think that when we are seated on this side of the Government, the opposite side should be doing better than us. However, when you look at this report, there is a lot to put them to task to explain. This is because if you do not know the ownership of the company that you have just reported about, it tells you a lot.

My expectation of the committee would have been a comprehensive review of the management of postal services – Posta Uganda – [Ms Namugga: “Order.”]-

THE SPEAKER: Yes, order on what? *(Laughter)*

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, the colleague is making a very good submission, but he is out of order to insinuate that the committee chairperson does not understand the report that he does present.

He was very aware that the committee chairperson told him that the Frontbench should explain the details – and it is not good for you to allude that a colleague does not understand a report that he spoke to.

Madam Speaker, is he in order to demean the efforts of the committee chairperson, who presented a very good report?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am constrained to rule on that.

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am very much in order because – *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: No.

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Okay, I am sorry. I apologise. Madam Speaker, my concern has a lot to do with what is on page 12, where the committee recommends that we capitalise Posta Uganda, with all the irregularities that they have mentioned or, actually, what the Auditor-General has mentioned.

THE SPEAKER: We should only capitalise after doing a thorough audit of this institution, to find out whether it is a money-making institution or not.

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Exactly. Madam Speaker, that was the basis of why I said my colleagues could have done better than what they did.

Number two, Madam Speaker, they are talking about courier services being - I mean, about the Government not giving them business. I really think that this is also not right on the side of the Government. We should support our own companies -

THE SPEAKER: No, we cannot support something if they are inefficient.

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Madam Speaker, my argument is this -

THE SPEAKER: Let me tell you: show your efficiency before we support you. Now, if you are going to tie institutions saying “you must use Posta” when DHL is faster than Posta, how will it work?

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Madam Speaker, number two, there was an issue with unlicensed courier operators in the market. You are not telling us what UCC is doing on that. You are only making a recommendation. You are not telling us what they should do or why they are allowing unlicensed operators on the market to actually outcompete the licensed operators as you mentioned.

Number three, they are also not recommending on credit. Honestly, Posta Uganda is borrowing to run its operations, but at the same time giving out credit with receivables of \$15 billion. You are actually borrowing on behalf of these people you are giving out credit to. Then, you are not making recommendation on why they should not stop giving out credit. Even if they stop giving credit, it will deal with the liquidity issues you are talking about and the challenges of debt collection you are mentioning. You have not made a recommendation on that.

I think we should make a recommendation on debt collection. We make a recommendation on them giving out credit, yet they are borrowing to sustain their own operations. We should also give a recommendation on budget utilisation. The report left out those issues and that is why I was complaining about their position. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Cosmas Elotu, Hon. Kyooma, and then Hon. Moses –

3.38

MR COSMAS ELOTU (NRM, Dakabela County, Soroti): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Allow me to commend the committee for their observations and the good report made. Indeed, Posta Uganda, as it is, is under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, the committee that I sit in.

The issues raised particularly on properties, Posta Uganda is almost losing all these properties to either UTEL which is a new company which is being formed, on the other hand - and also the other parastatals that came out of Uganda Posts and Telecommunications Corporation.

I think the committee recommendations should be adopted and strongly be recommended for purposes of restructuring how this entity operates. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

3.39

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee for this elaborate report.

I agree with Hon. Nakut. Globally, postal services are really recognised and important. However, the way Posta Uganda is managed leaves a lot to be desired.

Madam Speaker, you have already pointed on the receivables –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. “Children”, you are welcome. He is the minister of children and youth. Yes -

MR KYOOMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. You have already talked about the receivables. When you look at a bad write-off which has increased by 149 per cent is an increase by which bad debts written off have increased.

Secondly, there is a proposal of a further write-off of more than half a billion. The report is very clear that they actually do not have receivables management policy, implying that this write-off is just accidental. They just write-off the way they are pleased. Yet with bad debts write-off, it must be keenly done -

THE SPEAKER: Maybe we also need to understand who has the power to write-off.

MR KYOOMA: Yes, Madam Speaker. In the circumstances that they actually do not have a policy, it also becomes difficult. Now, this casts doubt as to whether the so-called bad debts written-off were bad. In principle, for you to write-off a debt, it must have proved to be bad. You must have put in place all ways and means to collect revenues from those debtors, and you have failed, and it is clearly seen that you have failed.

However, in the absence of that, it means that what is called bad debts and are written off, may remain a state to be investigated. I would like to propose that this state of affairs requires a special audit so that it is done in detail. I would have recommended a forensic audit, but the fact is that it is very expensive. I think a special audit can also suffice.

Madam Speaker, related to this, unsupported budget outputs – you just indicate outputs without indicating the figures to that effect. I think we are giving the committee and the auditor a lot of work, and yet they want money. You indicate outputs but you don’t indicate figures.

Further to that, I thank the committee because it was very analytical; even the activities to the outputs are not detailed. Even these outputs are not tailored to the strategic plan. What does it mean? That they just spend as and when they get.

I think the whole thing needs a special auditor, so that the activities of Posta Uganda are put in the right direction. I submit, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, when I look at the report, it is a good report but most of the recommendations you have given are generic. They are generic but we need to go in-depth and look at issues of the receivable, payable management policies, the bad debts policies, all those policies in terms of - we are looking at how much money we are saving from this? Who gives the powers to have a write-off? These are governance issues that must be sorted out. Yes, Hon. Moses, Hon. Ebwalu, Commissioner, Hon. Apio –

3.44

MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii County, Nakapiripirit): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity.

THE SPEAKER: I will come to the ladies and –

MR ALEPER: I thank the chairman and his committee for the report they have presented as a ritual. It is only civil to appreciate someone for work they have done.

I just want to comment on a few things. First, is on unlicensed service providers. This is a very critical issue because it casts light on UCC which is the regulator. They should explain why they are not able to manage the sector or the industry. How can people operate in an environment where they are supposed to regulate and operate? They should make sure that they get to the bottom of this and get rid of the unlicensed service providers.

The report mentioned something about unspent money under the budget of salaries. This is something - versus the payables, which includes aspects of salary. Those two observations are so contradictory. If there was a budget, which was not spent on the salaries, how then could there be payables that arose from the statutory deductions arising from salary? Somehow that part of the report needs to be interrogated and reconciled or harmonised so that we can get what is really required of it.

On the diversification of revenue streams as a recommendation, I am sure you have looked at the mandate of Posta Uganda; the service that it is supposed to provide. It limits them from moving to other trades to be able to diversify their revenue streams. What we should be recommending is, possibly we should widen the mandate of Posta Uganda so that it can have the latitude to go and explore other revenue stream areas.

On failure to collect receivables, with such an organisation or institution, this is a Key Performance Indicator for management. Failure to collect this amount of receivables is a vote of no confidence on the part of management.

The recommendation should have pinned the management on this. If you cannot do the basics, then why are you holding that portfolio? It should have gone to that. Madam Speaker, given the amounts of money that are involved, first of all, receivables of Shs 15 billion, we need to get to the bottom of this.

As someone observed, Posta Uganda is about to be cannibalised by Uganda Post Limited (UPL). We should recommend a forensic audit at whatever cost, because it will help us to have the best and most explicit state of affairs of the institution before it can be cannibalised further. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: When you recommend a forensic audit, they will tell you there is no money. I am a very rich person with all the professionals, and I am going to do - one of the reasons that we are here is to help institutions.

We will not go as auditors we will go and say “this is how you are supposed to run this institution.” So, I will not go for forensic but I will get my specialised persons here. I know what you can all do. Yes, Hon. Ebwalu?

3.48

MR JONATHAN EBWALU (Independent, Soroti West Division, Soroti City): Madam Speaker, during the period of rationalisation and privatisation, a number of people were affected, including those in the Uganda Post

Limited (UPL) but Government did not pay them.

I do not know whether there was a process and the Government declined to pay them because they went to court and won the case. I was following the report here, up to Shs 45 billion and this was way back in 2014 but they have not been paid up to now.

A number of our people who worked in the Uganda Electricity Board (UEB), the East African Community, Uganda railways, have them died without being paid. And now seeing our people here who served the country diligently, not being paid - The committee recommended that they should be paid from the date of adoption of the report.

Madam Speaker, I request that this House directs the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to come to Parliament and make a commitment on when the Government is going to pay these people. A report like this will go. But the Government should commit to pay these people.

Number two, I have heard that debts are being written off, but who are these debtors? Before we even move further, this House should demand a list of these debtors to be laid on this Parliament so that we follow who they are. Is it Hon. Okupa? Is it Hon. Ebwalu? Is it Hon. Faith?

I would like to request the House to demand that the list of the debtors be laid so that we get to know these people. I thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mpuuga, Hon. Apio, Honourable Member for Workers, and Hon. Elijah.

3.51

MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to appreciate the committee for the endeavour. They must have struggled to make sense of the nature of the agency they are trying to assess.

I was going to debate the report but let me just read two paragraphs and sit down. As a way of regurgitation of what the report is saying, for Members to walk in the footpath of the presiding officer of saying, “let us not make reference but instead do something about this mess ourselves.” I am beginning with the paragraph on revenue.

“Total revenue amounting to Shs 13.512 billion, of which sales revenue was Shs 9.89 billion and revenue from other sources was Shs 3.619 billion.

For the financial year under review, compared to the previous year, it declined from Shs 10.56 billion to Shs 9.89 billion”. Now, proceeding further, the reasons were rentals, post shop sales reducing, commission reducing-

Operating expenses

In the financial year, they declined by Shs 0.492 billion. When you go down, this was on account of lower spending on professional and legal fees, insurance costs, general maintenance and marketing – you are talking about management. You are happy that your costs are reducing because you do not market, you do not pay insurance, you do not –you are listening to- and you are ask: “So, what is going on?”

“However, despite the declining expenditure and administrative expenses, employee costs rose by Shs 0.143 billion. This was occasioned by a rise in acting allowances...” I Hope members are following what I am saying.

“There was a noticeable rise in financing costs of the company” – *(Laughter)*- “...from Shs 0.268 billion to Shs 0.312 billion.”

Profitability

It registered an increase in profit after tax compared to the previous year. This increment was due to non-provision for tax payment. So, your profitability is increasing because you did not pay tax, a statutory obligation.

The company profit before tax was higher by Shs 1.67 billion and the reasons are very clear. Debt write-off, non-payment of taxes. I think we were talking about a management crisis in the agency.

I would like to disagree, respectfully with my brother who said, “They should have been rationalised.” No, these agencies are set up for a reason, to employ people and that is why I disagree sometimes with Government’s rationalisation of agencies on account of mismanagement.

However, if it is on account of this management, simply scrap up management. If people are handpicked from Kampala Road to offices, you get this. Can we get an understanding of how this came to be, that people are happy not to perform, not to pay taxes and then they say, “We are making a profit, and we hid away from taxes?”

I think it is a serious management crisis and the House should have the strength to recommend a serious follow-up on the nature of management and how they are going about their work.

In the Financial Year 2021/2022, there was a crisis on the budget of UPL. Parliament had declined to give them money because of failure to pay former employees yet there was provision every financial year.

These issues must be interrogated, so that we can help the country, not simply wishing away the agency. It is very useful but it is facing a management crisis. Thank you.

3.55

DR EUNICE APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to also join my colleagues in thanking the committee for its work but in addition to what has already been noted, it has been very many years since I heard that when land is valued higher than the building sitting on it, then that land must be devalued and I find that quite simplistic.

On page 20 of the committee report, the committee observed that for most of the property valued, the value of land was higher than the value of the building on the land. The committee went ahead to deduce that the buildings were in a dilapidated state without anything additional to push the point further.

Madam Speaker, growing up, I was taught that the value of land depends on the forces of supply and demand. I would like to request that if possible –

THE SPEAKER: Land appreciates; it does not depreciate.

DR APIO: Yes, it appreciates. I would like to request that the committee or the persons in charge - the ministry or whichever - if it pleases you, Madam Speaker - give us something definite. Do we have properties that are dilapidated and are in need of renovation or not? It is not clearly stated here. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Workers’ representative?

3.57

MS MARGARET RWABUSHAIJA (Independent, Workers’ Representative):

Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Those of us who are representing the workers have a challenge. As someone mentioned, you find that when they close or change the “guards,” the workers lose out completely.

What I know about Uganda Posta Limited (UPL) is that people were retired in public interest because there was no money, anyway. Instead, they are going around for 10 years. You can imagine these people worked diligently with a lot of their energy. They have children. When people retire, that is when they want medicine because they fall sick but nothing is done yet we know that when a new board comes in, surely they must know that they have liabilities and assets to look into and make sure that they do what is expected of them.

The same thing has happened to other Government organisations, which have been mentioned. I know more about the railways because we moved to the new management when they started. To date, they have not been able to pay those people so, you see the plight of the people who are working in this country.

When we talk about gratuity, which was lost, we also have National Social Security Fund (NSSF) that they did not even pay for. People have been moving up and down. They have tried to go to court but nothing has come out. Surely we should help these people who are voiceless, in this Parliament. We always say we are standing for the voiceless.

Madam Speaker, honourable colleagues and friends, I would like to see a change in this one at least so that we know that there is a starting point. Otherwise, we are a laughing stock. Thank you.

4.00

MR FRANK KABUYE (NUP, Kassandra County South, Kassandra): Thank you, Madam Speaker and the committee chairperson for the good report that has given us some insight on what is happening in UPL.

Madam Speaker, when you look at the report, it brings out clearly that this entity is suffering and struggling to meet its financial obligations yet it is declaring a positive cash inflow. The same entity is not able to pay salaries on time. It cannot meet the gratuity obligations on time or clear the rent arrears.

I think, by the report that the committee chairperson has given us, it is clear that the management of UPL might not be up to the task or is not willing to give the country the best. These are people that are entrusted to offer a service to the nation but they might be seated somewhere doing what pleases them and when they wish to do it.

Therefore, I strongly agree with the recommendations of other colleagues to see that a special audit or deep investigations are undertaken. This is to ensure that a lot of the

work that is done in this entity matches the demand and the quality that is needed to run a country and an organisation like that, where taxpayers' money is invested.

Also, Government should come up. The good thing is that we got clarification that this is a Government agency 100 per cent. However, when you look at the staffing, whereby we have a 77 staffing deficit and the delays in the payment, these might be some of the reasons those that are given the opportunity to work do not meet the desired quality; they do not operate on time. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Kampala representative?

4.02

MS SHAMIM MALENDE (NUP, Woman Representative, Kampala City): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I would like to thank the committee vice-chairperson and the entire committee for the report. I bring you greetings from the people of Kampala that I represent.

My submission is basically on the issue of a breach of statutory duty. We have realised from the report that the entity is not obliging or keeping up to date by paying and remitting to the NSSF, Pay As You Earn (PAYE) and such other levies. This creates a lot of legal implications that can come with a lot of repercussions and more financial costs and implications –

THE SPEAKER: Fines to the institution.

MS MALENDE: Yes. In that spirit, I think it is also better that we advise these entities to start making good use of their legal departments. I have worked in some of these entities and I noticed, as a lawyer, that sometimes they do not listen. Lawyers are the experts of experts. They interpret all the laws and advise accordingly. When you do not comply with any law, at the end of the day, you will find yourself in court. Thank you.

4.03

MS GORRETH NAMUGGA (NUP, Mawogoola County South, Ssembabule):

Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Denis, I was calling you but you were not here. You will speak on the next one.

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, this one is about unimplemented procurements to the tune of Shs 40 billion whereas Posta Uganda had a budget for the financial year under review of Shs 13 billion. Much as the reasoning was that some of these were multi-year projects, this is very abnormal. I think it gets back to the management of POSTA. This is over-commitment. You cannot commit an organisation to that extent. You know what it means.

If you look at the contracts that were supposed to be implemented, you cannot commit an organisation to the tune of Shs 40 billion when you just have an annual budget of Shs 13 billion. Even if you had collected all the money for the three years, assuming the project was for three years, that is close to Shs 30 something billion.

Madam Speaker, this comes back to the committees of Parliament. These work plans come to the sectoral committees when we are processing the budget. We should also give much more attention to the work plans versus the budgets such that we can avoid over commitment. Otherwise, this is a duty of all of us –

THE SPEAKER: Yes.

MS NAMUGGA: The fact that we are yet to undertake the budgeting of the Financial Year 2025/2026 means we should begin on this so that we advise agencies rather than waiting for accountability, which at the end of the day becomes a cost to every one of us. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, the Vice-Chairperson of the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government). Leader of the

Opposition, do you see how making people to be in leadership makes them grow? Now Hon. Gorreth speaks with authority. *(Applause)*

4.05

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Madam Speaker, she forgot to remind us that she is a former minister for science and technology. *(Laughter)*

I would like to join honourable colleagues in appreciating the committee for the work they did in unearthing a couple of things. Again, I am at pains. How I wish the Front Bench had a lot more colleagues than we have here today.

This entity has got two shareholders here; the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance; not the ministry, but the minister - the individuals. It would have been good if those two shareholders were here to, first of all, help us understand whether they even know what is happening with the entity for which they are shareholders. All these things we are seeing here speak to a leadership problem.

Management might be on their own doing whatever it is that they want to do. We do not know if the Board is interested and resultantly, the shareholders. When you see – I am at the risk of repeating what colleagues have even been mentioning; payables, Shs 20.4 billion, court awards to the tune of Shs 45 billion - you are having payroll liabilities.

THE SPEAKER: To whom?

MR SSENYONYI: There you are. Payroll liabilities; staff not being paid. This is to the tune of Shs 3.23 billion yet we expect them to deliver. How do we expect them to be a standard entity when you are not paying basics like salaries? This means the staff will come on Monday, Tuesday they will not show up, and you are not going to call them to order because you are not paying them. They do not have transport to come to work every day but we expect results.

I am surprised that we are surprised that this entity is performing this way. Why are we surprised if things are shaky? Even though we have handled the report today, we should have an opportunity to hear from the shareholders who are commandeering this entity on our behalf as Ugandans. This is taxpayers' money that is being blown up this way. I hope we can have that opportunity.

I would want to hear from them because we are quarrelling and agitated and for them, they are happy that things are happening well. We need to call them to order before we even call the entity to order, because they are our direct link. I hope we can get to do that, Madam Speaker. As we pass through this, we need to follow up on these ministers to help us understand if they are in charge or interested in this at all.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much. Honourable members, you have all heard. I now put the question that the report of the Public Accounts Committee (Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises) on the report of the Auditor-General on Financial Statements for POSTA Uganda Limited for the year ended 30 June 2023 be adopted with the amendment.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE SPEAKER: Based on rule 191, we need an in-depth scrutiny of this institution such that we will hold the ministers and the shareholders accountable. As we wait for a treasury memorandum, I am going to name a list of five Members to go and look at these books of accounts of the institution:

- i. Hon. Faith Nakut will chair the committee,
- ii. Hon. Moses Aleper,
- iii. Hon. Herbert Tayebwa,
- iv. Hon. Xavier Kyooma,
- v. Prof. Elijah Mushemeza.

The team of five. I will give you the terms of reference tomorrow. No, I am looking at the qualification - It is an Ad hoc Committee. Prof.

Mushemesa is the Independent.

Honourable members, let us not mind about the position. Let us look at getting information. Give me one - I have added Hon. Karim Masaba. Who? Hon. Namugga, you are not an accountant. Go away. If it was procurement, I would put you. I have added Hon. Karim. Next -

MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF
THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE
ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS - CENTRAL
GOVERNMENT ON THE AUDITOR-
GENERAL'S REPORT ON TREASURY
OPERATIONS AND CONSOLIDATED
FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF
GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA FOR THE
YEAR ENDED 30 JUNE 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, pursuant to Rule 174(4) and (6) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I now invite the Chairperson of the Committee on PAC-Central Government. Up today - the Leader of the Opposition, I humbly report that I have only received reports from the Public Accounts Committee-Central Government and the Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities, and State Enterprises (COSASE), and tomorrow is the deadline. I will adopt all of your reports omnibus.

4.12

MR MUHAMMED KIVUMBI MUWANGA (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I must tell you that the two committees have done well. *(Applause)*

MR MUWANGA: Madam Speaker, I am going to present a report of the Public Accounts Committee - Central Government on the Auditor-General's Report on Treasury Operations and Consolidated Financial Statement of the Government of Uganda for the year ended 30 June 2023.

Madam Speaker, I beg to lay the minutes of the meeting and the two reports: One for the

consolidated account and one for treasury operations. I must also report that I have looked into other reports and it is the first time that the Public Accounts Committee has a report on the consolidated accounts of Government and the treasury operations.

Madam Speaker, on the first part I will be very slow, and I assure Members that it is fairly a technical report. It is not a straightforward report. For the first four to five paragraphs, I will be extremely slow and do a summary on the rest.

Madam Speaker, after the first paragraph, any Member of Parliament will know the state of our finances as Government. Let me leave the funding performance and go to the committee observations.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Vote 130 - the one they have always talked about, and Treasury Operations is a very important Vote for us. How I wish and pray that the House allows the chairperson to present that report tomorrow when the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is in the House. *(Applause)* This is not just an ordinary report because the minister must be there and he must respond to it immediately. Is that okay?

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE SPEAKER: You will present it first thing tomorrow and the minister will be here. Next item?

MR MUWANGA: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. All the ministers will be here, including the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Acting Leader of Government Business, we want all the ministers here tomorrow. Next item?

BILLS SECOND READING

THE UGANDA NATIONAL KISWAHILI COUNCIL BILL, 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, last week we deferred this Bill. Leader of the Opposition, you had issues with the Bill.

4.18

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Madam Speaker, there were three issues that we raised but up until now, there has been no proper remedying of these issues.

Firstly, the Bill that was availed was not signed. You know these colleagues have been very vigilant that whichever Bills are tabled, they ask - and Hon. Lee is present - is it signed so that they show us? This particular one was not signed. That can be seen as a seemingly small issue but it is a critical issue because the document has got to be owned by somebody. So, one, it was not signed.

Secondly, there was pettifogging over where this should be housed; the Ministry of Education and Sports on the one hand, the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development on the other hand and the Attorney-General pretty much meandered. So, we did not get to conclude this particular issue.

However, we advised the Government to go back, get orderly and then re-table this Bill, which is a simple thing to do. Even if they insist and somehow it gets to pass, it will be challenged in court and you do not want that. Get it signed and let us be sure under which ministry this entity that we are processing is going to be housed so that it is very clear. We then know who we get to deal with and who we hold accountable when we want to.

Unfortunately, up until now, the Government has not done that. I had thought they would have cleared all of that so that we move very smoothly.

Madam Speaker, you said she is the acting Leader of Government Business. I request her to move and sit on the other end, with your permission, because the Leader of Government Business plus her Aide De Camp who is carrying her bag - *(Laughter)* - but hopefully she will have a proper response for us because we put these questions to them when she was present. I do not know if they have rectified those issues. We are helping the Government to be orderly so that tomorrow, you do not have challenges if it is passed and there are many legal boxes that are not ticked. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Additionally -

MR OKUPA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The other issue was about the Kiswahili Council. Kiswahili is not the first language Ugandans are learning. Do we have councils for other languages? We have Luganda, Ateso, German and French being taught in schools but we do not have a council. Why should this be special?

Secondly, why does the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development want to take it, when all the other languages are under the Ministry of Education and Sports? It would possibly be the other way around because the other ones, which are cultural languages, should have been the ones under the gender ministry and then the ones which are not traditional languages here should be in the education ministry.

Madam Speaker, just like I put it, all these should be housed in the ministry and there should be no council, because other languages do not have councils, unless I am really convinced that a special -

MR EBWALU: Madam Speaker, we are not going to gamble with the future of our children. Why do we need a council at this time?

My humble view is that if you want to make Kiswahili compulsory in schools other than bringing a council - We are here talking about rationalisation but again you want to bring people to manage the council. What is the

use of this council? Are you going to bring a Luganda, Kumam, and Ateso Council? Which council is that? Who will manage all this?

In any case - *(Interjection)* - there is no procedural matter here so sit down. I am talking. *(Laughter)* In any case, this is a very important matter -

THE SPEAKER: He rose on a procedural matter.

MR EBWALU: Therefore, is the Government procedurally right to bring the Kiswahili Council here yet we are already handling the rationalisation Bills and scraping them off? I do not support this and we must chase the Government away with this Bill. Let them come another day.

MS KANUSHU: Madam Speaker, I am raising a matter of procedure because I do not know why the honourable members are debating a Bill that is not on the Floor. We have not yet called it neither have they presented it -

THE SPEAKER: No, it was introduced last week but we just deferred it. Do not worry.

MS KANUSHU: Madam Speaker, it is a procedural matter because it is not on the Floor so why are we debating something that is not on the Floor?

THE SPEAKER: It was brought on the Floor. You were absent - you know I had sent you out; I delegated you to do some work.

MS KANUSHU: It has not been introduced, Madam Speaker, and the Bill is not yet here.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Kibalya?

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Ministry of Education and Sports was introduced in this Government to handle whatever concerns education. Whatever you talk about - whether education is in Lusoga or Lugbara, it is under the Ministry of Education and Sports. We are here debating and I am surprised to see that the Ministry of Gender,

Labour and Social Development has interest in something that is in line with education.

In the last sitting, last week, issues came up and we said, “Since this is the same Government, let them go and sit and streamline.” In fact, even streamlining was just for formality, but we do not even - I think it is high time we tell them because it seems they are not aware that we do not expect to hear any other ministry outside education talking about anything that is related to education.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, I had a meeting with Hon. Mutuuzo and Hon. Ogwang with their main ministers, together with the Prime Minister, in my office. They were supposed to go and harmonise.

Hon. Peace came back to me and said that was the Cabinet position while Hon. Ogwang said the Bill belongs to them. I am now directing that – no, we are not voting - both ministers come to the Floor or they come back with a harmonised position from the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister.

4.26

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (GENDER AND CULTURE) (Ms Peace Mutuuzo): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me an opportunity. I pray that I clarify before another point of clarification comes up -

MR KIBALYA: I would like to find out whether she is speaking as a Prime Minister or as the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development.

THE SPEAKER: Both.

MS MUTUUZO: Thank you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. I would like to allay fears of colleagues -

THE SPEAKER: I am not the Prime Minister.

MS MUTUUZO: I beg your pardon. Madam Speaker, I wish to allay the fears of colleagues

as to whether the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development or the Minister of Education and Sports should have sponsored this Bill.

This Bill is sponsored by the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, not by error. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is sponsoring the Bill because it is mandated under Objective XXIV of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, Article 6 on languages, Article 37 on the rights of culture and similar rights –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Peace –

MS MUTUUZO: Yes, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, are you going to repeat the same thing when you come with the Minister of Education and Sports? I am telling you that I want to see both of you here. I have already made a ruling to that effect; that both of you come and we sort out this issue. Then, there is the aspect of the retrospective signing of a Bill.

MS MUTUUZO: Most obliged, Madam Speaker. This is a Cabinet position. This Bill was presented in Cabinet and the Cabinet cleared it –

THE SPEAKER: Can I have a Cabinet minute?

MS MUTUUZO: Cabinet Minute No. CT –

THE SPEAKER: No, the extract because I do not sit in the Cabinet.

MS MUTUUZO: The Cabinet extract is 437/2022 –

THE SPEAKER: Can I have a copy, saying this is what was agreed? It is very simple, Hon. Peace. Come back on Wednesday and we pass the Bill.

MS MUTUUZO: Most obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, it is as simple as that. We have made a ruling to that effect. Let us have it done on Wednesday, because the Ministry of Education and Sports is saying that, that is their Bill. I do not know who is right – the issue of the East African Community should not be an issue. What matters – for example, *Ateso* is spoken in Kenya so, should it be – In Sudan and Ethiopia? *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, I would like to thank you so much. The House is adjourned to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 4.29 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 15 October, 2024 at 2.00 p.m.)