

**PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**Tuesday, 10 May 2022**

*Parliament met at 2.02 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, we wish to welcome you to today’s sitting. I want to remind the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development to finalise with the tax Bills so that we can embark on the Committee of Supply and finalise the budget in time. We need to have this budget ready, and this can only be done if the tax Bills have been passed. So, from Tuesday, we should be able to look at the tax Bills.

Minister, you need to ensure that your members work throughout to have the tax Bills ready so that we pass the budget before the statutory date of 30 May 2022.

Honourable members, when we are in this House, we legislate for the people out there; for the voiceless. I have heard a lot of sentiments from my Members and even from the public about the coffee report. I want to assure all Members of this House that the report is ready and will be presented to the House. Nobody should imagine that we are suffocating the report. We are here for the people out there. We are the representatives of the many millions of people out there.

So, when you start with those sentiments, it is not very good for you. If you start accusing the presiding officer, then you are accusing yourself. It is about Parliament. We should work together and ensure that we make this country better.

Where there are mistakes, I want to urge my brothers on the Front Bench, just admit there are mistakes and we correct the mistakes and move on. (Applause) We are all human beings, who are bound to make mistakes. If we make a mistake, it does not mean we shall criminalise you, but we can make sure that we correct you.

Therefore, the report will be out soon and you will debate it. I would like to thank you once more.

Matters of national importance? If I give chance to all of you to speak on procedure, then we shall not finish the House. Hon. Macho?

2.08

**MR GEOFFREY MACHO (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia):** The great Speaker, you are always very accurate and on point on your procedural matters**.** I am very happy because in your communication, you always guide as a mother**.** You want harmony among the three Arms of Government.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I do not know whether our good friends on the Front Bench – majorly the ruling party where I am independent-leaning -

**THE SPEAKER:** What is the procedural matter?

**MR** **MACHO:** We talk issues in the august House and they go to themedia houses and begin blasting Parliament and the authority of the Speaker. I do not know whether we are proceeding well. For example, the issue of coffee has been in contention and the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon. Kasaija, has been heard addressing media houses concerning it. If the battle is here, come and we fight here and we see who the man is instead of going to the media houses to talk about issues that are supposed to be handled in the august House.

So, I do not know whether our big friends on the Front Bench are proceeding well when the issues that would have been settled here, they carry them to the media to cause more harm than good.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, anything that is here, leave it in the House. Do not go outside there and start talking about what is being discussed in the House. Do not start demonising Parliament. When you start saying Parliament does not have powers to do anything - Please, this House can come up with any decision, good or bad. I do not want to bring in the name of my *Jjaja* the way you are saying, but we will discuss that when the report comes. I have not heard him talk. Give me evidence that he talked. I will want evidence that he talked about it. I cannot accuse him of what I have not heard.

However, if it is true – honourable ministers, please, whatever is in the House should not go to the media before we conclude it here. You can only go and discuss after we have concluded - even for a resolution of Parliament, we have a Public Relations Officer (PRO) of Parliament that should be able to talk on what happens in Parliament.

2.10

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I am reacting to your communication, under rule 25.

You will forgive some of us. When the public thinks a report is ready, they think it is going to be discussed immediately. So, we have to educate them that that responsibility rests with the Speaker. So, please, the coffee report will be discussed when the Speaker puts it on the Order Paper.

Most importantly, however, you have told our colleagues on the Front Bench to admit when there are mistakes. Hon. Kasaija, I respect you. You are an elder. You remember how the former Vice-President, Hon. Gilbert Bukenya, ended up in Luzira. *(Laughter)* Hon. Jim Muhwezi was in Luzira. *(Laughter)* Even ministers can go there. At your age, you should not go there over an agreement*. (Laughter)*

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I want to thank you for giving motherly advice to people who are on the Front Bench. *(Laughter)*

It is shameful that a former Vice-President, who is guaranteed life even after leaving the office of the Vice-President – you were not in Kololo when prison warders and policemen wanted to handcuff Prof. Gilbert Bukenya. A policeman called Laban is the one who intervened and said, please -

**THE SPEAKER:** What is the procedural matter?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** I am reacting, under rule 25, to your communication. Laban is the one who intervened and said: “Please, we are going to be ashamed as a country. Do not handcuff a former Vice-President.”

I do not want to see the elder, Matia Kasaija, in handcuffs, being taken to Luzira.

Madam Speaker, I was only reacting to your communication, under rule 25, to thank you for giving motherly advice to the Front Bench. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

2.13

**MR BASHIR KAZIBWE (NUP, Kawempe Division South, Kampala City)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On behalf of the thousands of Ugandans that are suffering from outside, I am standing before you, not just as a mother, but as a leader of this august House. Yesterday, 9th May, a 23 year old young girl, Amina -

**THE SPEAKER:** Was it in my communication?

**MR KAZIBWE:** It is an important matter, Madam Speaker. A 23-year old young lady came to my house. She was limping. She had been beaten, bruised and was in total pain. She told me she had just left Saudi Arabia two days back. Her story can make everyone shed tears. She narrated to me how she was thrown out through a window of a bedroom on the third floor of a house where she had worked as a housemaid for the last nine months.

Nabirye’s story is just one from amongst the thousands of Ugandans who are suffering from those outside countries, where we have embassies, chancelleries and all those people that are supposed to be taking care of them.

The issue at hand, Madam Speaker, is: parents are sending back students to school to study to earn good jobs. Once the good jobs don’t come their way, they think they can get jobs outside, which never happens as well.

We are calling for a robust situation to address matters about people working outside by the Ministry of Labour, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and the embassies in those countries from where our girls are suffering. A few days back, we heard of a story of a girl who jumped through a window to her death.

Madam Speaker, I implore and call for your motherly touch on this particular matter, so that those authorities that are responsible for this can be called to order to ensure that our Ugandans suffering out there are helped before more numbers are brought back in coffins. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt hon. Prime Minister, the issue is about the Ugandan girls who went out of the country to work, but are being mistreated. What can we do, as a country, in terms of gender and the law?

Last week, we discussed that issue and we said we should be attaching these girls to embassies such that they have somewhere to report to.

2.15

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. The issue of our young girls and children suffering in those countries is not new to this House, like you have said before. So, as Government, there are a number of steps we are taking. One, is to strengthen our offices in the UAE countries, by recruiting more staff to work in the consular offices and in our embassies, such that they can deal with - because we have few staff in those offices; we are going to make sure we recruit.

Two, we are going to have a meeting with the countries concerned. For example, the minister in charge of UAE and those other countries is coming to Uganda for a meeting.

Thirdly, we have had a number of meetings with the companies that export labour. And we have put in place a number of measures. However, I also want to request that when these people who are suffering in those countries, get challenged, they should always run to our consular offices rather than killing themselves.

I would also inform -

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you allow the Prime Minister to finish before you seek the clarification?

**MS NABBANJA:** Madam Speaker, the Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development will come up with a comprehensive report to this House on the same. Thank you so much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable members. Before we proceed, I would like to inform you that one of my Members, Hon. Margaret Ayebare, MP for Mbarara, has lost her husband. Can we stand up for a moment of silence?

*(Members stood and observed a moment of silence.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you so much. And our sympathies go to Hon. Margaret Ayebare; we will stand with her in this trying time.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. The clarification I want to seek from the Prime Minister is: We were told here by the former Minister for Gender, Labour and Social Development, the Hon. Janat Mukwaya, that in Oman, when there was a ban on Ugandans going to work, 40,000 girls arrived there in one year yet there was a ban.

Therefore, the clarification I would like to seek, is whether you now have a consulate in Oman, and whether - because Saudi Arabia is a very large country, with its administration in Riyadh; Jeddah, where many of these girls go to work, is about 600 kilometres away.

In the steps that you have spoken about, do you now have a consulate in Oman, Kuwait, Bahrain and in all those countries?

**THE SPEAKER:** That is going to come in the report that is going to be presented to the House. Take note of that; it will come in the report, because the minister for gender is not here.

2.19

**MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Whereas Article 30 of the Constitution of Uganda makes education a right for Ugandans; and whereas the Act on education empowers the Minister for Education and Sports to come up with regulations on fees increment in most of the schools in the country, the ministry has only been coming up with circulars on, “Do not increase fees.”

These circulars are not enforceable and, therefore, both Government and private schools have continued to increase fees. When they increase fees, it affects most of us Members of Parliament because parents run to us. My concern is that the ministry is not using its mandate of coming up with regulations that can be enforced.

Therefore, my prayer is, as a way of helping us Members of Parliament, who are suffering because of all that is happening in the country -

**THE SPEAKER:** It is not about helping Members of Parliament; it is about helping the public.

**MR MWIJUKYE:** Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** As a Member of Parliament, you don’t need to be helped on fees because you can afford it.

**MR MWIJUKYE:** Madam Speaker, I agree with you. However, when they fail, they come to us. I am paying fees for almost 50 people in schools. My concern is: Can the minister be directed to come with regulations on fees increment?

Two, can Government provide these USE and UPE schools with scholastic materials so the pressure is reduced?

And, finally, can Government also help the private schools with cheap loans so that they don’t have to increase fees that make Ugandans suffer? I am saying this because as we speak, there is a crisis out there. The parents are not sleeping in their homes because of fees. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you; though, you smuggled it. Honourable minister, the issue is the enforceability of the circular*s vis-a-vis* the regulations. We are better off having regulations than a circular. I thought you needed a response to that? Is it on the same thing? Why don’t you bring a matter on its own rather than smuggling in these things?

**Mr oshabe:** It is not about smuggling anything, but he has raised a critical matter. I thought the matter of registration of candidates should be handled by the minister as he comes.

Madam Speaker, information from UNEB over the weekend indicated that only 50 per cent of PLE and about 20 per cent of UCE candidates were able to register by the deadline. This is a serious matter –

**The Speaker:** What was the cause? Why haven’t they registered all the students?

**Mr nsamba:** They have failed to register because of the high cost of registration. I want to think that the minister can respond to that at the same time with the increment in school fees. Registration fees are set by UNEB. It is a Government agency, to which we appropriate money here and it cuts across Government sponsored students and private learners. The minister can also be able to respond.

2.24

**The minister of state for education and sports (SPORTS) (Mr Denis Hamson Obua):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Members for raising the two critical matters. On the subject matter of the provision of the law, we are aware as the ministry that the law empowers the minister to put in place a statutory instrument for purposes of regulating, among others, even school fees.

I would like to inform Parliament that the Ministry of Education and Sports has already embarked on the process of coming up with a statutory instrument. The moment we are done internally at the ministry, and its approved by top management, we will move to Cabinet and then lay a copy of the statutory instrument for the consumption of Parliament. It is already work in progress.

On the issue of the different fees for examinations, with regard to the number of pupils and students who are candidates who have requested, UNEB informed us - and I want to say it here - that the process of registration is still ongoing for candidates: PLE, UCE and UACE.

The figures you are quoting are those they informed the country about at that particular time. They are optimistic that by the time we close, all the candidates will have registered. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Honourable minister how much was the money for registration before and how much is it now?

**Mr obua:** Madam Speaker, I would request that you give me time to consult such that I find out what the registration is as of now. I do not want to –

**The Speaker:** Honourable members, the minister is right. I want the minister to come back to the House to tell us how much the money for registration was before, how much it is now and what the basis of the increment is.

**Mr obua:** Madam Speaker, may I ask for only 10 minutes and come back and inform the House?

**The Speaker:** Please.

**Mr obua:** Thank you.

2.26

**Mr Solomon silwany (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri):** Madam Speaker, I rise on a critical matter of national importance. Last week, my community in Mawanga Parish, Buwunga Subcounty woke up to a shock when a group of individuals came to their community with agreements. They claim to come from a company called Rwenzori Rare Metals, saying they have discovered a mineral in the parish where these people live. They came to the community with copies of agreements asking community members to sign - to forfeit their land where they stay, saying that they are going to compensate them when they leave. However, this is a private company.

I, first of all, want to lay these agreements that these individuals came with. I beg to lay the agreement with the title “Rwenzoni Rare Metals; in the matter of an exploration licence number RL 1693 issued in respect of the districts of Bugiri, Bugweri and Mayuge.”

I also beg to lay the concern of the landowners in the area –

**The Speaker:** What is the title of the concern?

**Mr silwany:** The concern is, “Mawanga Parish, Buwunga subcounty: District Community Land Owners’ Concern; our proposal for further engagement with Rwenzori Rare Earth Metals Limited.”

**The Speaker:** Is that a concern or consent?

**Mr silwany:** It is not a consent, but a concern. These are the concerns that they were raising to the company because they want this to be done.

My prayer is: Minerals belong to Government; these are not individual resources. I would like the Minister for Energy and Mineral Development to come and tell the country whether this a genuine company that is trying to displace our people? Are our people safe to deal with such a company? People should have this information.

Therefore, I request the minister to come up immediately and inform us so that we as the leaders know what is going on. The population is in total panic and people are no longer sleeping. Displacing a whole parish is something very serious. I beg to move.

**The Speaker:** The minister for energy will come and make a presentation to that effect – Hon. Ssewungu, let Hon. Adidwa first make his maiden speech.

2.29

**Mr abdu adidwa (Independent, Bukooli South County, Namayingo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter concerning Musita-Namayingo-Lumino Highway, more so; from Bulamba to the junction of Kitoja-Lugala-Namayingo-Lumino.

The above highway was left with many challenges by the contractor which include:

1. The water passages were left wide open, which hinders loading and offloading of our commodities from the highway to the premises of our dear traders, leading to additional costs.

2. No pavements were put in place alongside the highway within Namayingo Town to provide space for people moving on foot and their goods.

3. No humps and zebra-crossings to control speeding vehicles: At Namayingo Primary School with a population of almost 1,500 school-going children; at the district headquarters being an administrative centre for Namayingo; and at Buyinja Health Centre IV with many users on a daily basis seeking services rendered by Government institutions. At the junction of Kitoja-Lugala –

**The Speaker:** What are your prayers?

**Mr adidwa:** My prayer is that the Leader of Government Business, the minister for works and the Uganda National Roads Authority should instruct the contractor of the said highway to put in place pavements alongside the road, set up a roundabout at the junction and put a zebra crossing and humps within Namayingo town, so as to reduce on problems. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

2.32

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Madam Speaker, first, I thank the NRM Government for connecting the country with tarmac roads. *(Applause)*

The issue on the Floor of Parliament, from my brother, will be handled. We shall handle all the drainage challenges; the parking, zebra crossings and maybe some humps - if you need them - to reduce the speed of vehicles. We are here and we shall handle them. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, let the minister come and make a presentation. I am told the last layer of the tarmac was not put. I think they should check and handle it.

2.33

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu):** Madam Speaker, let me raise this matter because it also concerns the minister. A number of schools in this country recruit students from senior one, senior five to six and primary one to primary seven.

However, what is happening these days is that in most of these schools, when students reach senior four, they start sieving them; they deny them the chance to finish studies at the school, yet they had been attending school since senior one to four claiming that their performance is not good, and they should find another school to do their O-level or A-level. I do not want to mention the schools here because I know them.

The matter of national importance I am relaying here is that the ministry of education should communicate urgently to schools, that this business of sending away students who have been studying in a particular school for four years - that because they did not get a first grade in their school, they advise them to look for where to register from - is unfair and not correct; it demoralises the students.

Secondly, it has a financial implication on the parent. Once you stop me from registering in the school I went to from senior one to senior four, that means the parent has to look for another school and pay new costs for that child. This habit is growing day by day because the school owners are looking at what we call “an abnormal curve” in education *–(Interruption)*

**MR SSEKITOLEKO:** Honourable member, on the same note, schools are claiming that even UNEB has not yet come up with a mode of marking -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, can you give us feedback?

**MR SSEKITOLEKO:** Even UNEB has not yet come up with a mode of marking, hence even parents and schools are asking what system is going to be used in regard to marking –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister -

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, as I conclude –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssewungu, you gave out your time.

2.36

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Denis Hamson Obua):** Madam Speaker, with regard to the fees payable for the different candidate classes, since 2017 to date, the examination fees have not been varied for different categories. The last revision was in 2016 and it came into effect in 2017. Each PLE candidate pays Shs 34,000; UCE candidates pay Shs 164,000 each; and UACE candidates pay Shs 184,000 each. These are the approved rates that have been in existence since 2017. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for giving those figures, but is he aware that UNEB shifted from the original system of form X and now they are mandating all schools to register online, yet many of our districts do not have access to the internet? As a result, most of these schools are charging more money than what UNEB is demanding to register the students online. We asked these people -

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssewungu, let us differentiate this. Is it the schools that are charging more money or it is UNEB?

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, UNEB will charge its official fee, but to fulfil the process of registration, again, you have to pay money, including photographs –

**THE SPEAKER:** But then it is not UNEB.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, it becomes an extra cost on the parents and the children. Let me give an example of a district like Adjumani or Kalungu. A school has never had a computer or internet. Now, it is supposed to pay Shs 35,000 for registration of a kid, but the one in Masaka with an internet system and computer is charging Shs 100,000 to register the child online.

Therefore, we had requested UNEB to maintain the two systems and give priority to the older one as we build the synergies in our country, so that students can register using their form X to reduce on the costs. Those who can afford the internet costs, like those in Naggalama or Namagunga can go online, but you cannot tell the school of UPE in Kalungu, Villa Maria or St Francis, that they are going to pay money to register online and each parent pays Shs 100,000, yet Government is paying for UPE Shs 10,000 per child. It is not applicable.

**MR OSHABE:** Before the minister comes in, Madam Speaker, I began the subject by saying that UNEB, last week, indicated that there were deadlines and the deadline was that by the end of term one, every learner must have registered for PLE.

There was a change of system. Why? Only 50 per cent of the expected learners have registered. That change of system impacted many learners. Whereas UNEB is charging Shs 34,000, the parents were overcharged by the schools. I will give an example: In Kassanda, most of the schools were charging PLE learners Shs 140,000. Remember, for the first time, we had PLE learners under the UPE schools. They were also required to register for that.

Madam Speaker, as the minister comes in, he must appreciate that parents were robbed of their money beyond what UNEB introduced just because of the change in the registration system. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the issue is a consequential effect on the change of the system, which has made the schools increase the amount. You need to come up with a document as to why there is that increased amount and what we can do to improve it because the increase by schools is unfair. It is not UNEB that is increasing this, but it is the schools. That is out of a consequential effect.

**MR OBUA:** Madam Speaker, I take note of the issues raised. Let me state this; when COVID-19 came, we all said that businesses had changed from “business as usual” to “business unusual”.

For registration, there are two windows. We thought by introducing the online one in addition to the traditional system, we would even cut costs because some of the schools have been saying that when they pay examination fees, someone must travel to Kampala. That is why there are two windows for schools to use. Those who can register online, it is well. Those who can register through the traditional way, it is also accepted. So, there is a general principle and the exceptions.

On the issue of the parents, every school has a Parent Teacher Association (PTA), Board of Governors and School Management Committee (SMC). Hon. Ssewungu, with due respect stated that he does not want to name schools here, but if there are specific schools that are not doing the right thing, I appeal to hon. Ssewungu to come to us and enumerate those schools on the Floor of Parliament. We will handle them on a case by case basis. I want to commit and I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Leader of the Opposition?

2.43

**THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I join colleagues to pass my compliments and appreciation to you, Madam Speaker, for, at last, accepting to find space for the report –

**THE SPEAKER:** It is not “at last”. Can you withdraw that statement? It is our responsibility.

**MR NAMBESHE:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. I thank you for allowing space on the Order Paper for the report on the controversial coffee agreement.

This coffee deal has been a very emotive issue. When you made that decision, my phone has been receiving an avalanche of messages and the question is to appreciate you, but also, wonder aloud, about “the soon” because you vividly put it that this report will be tabled soon, which I appreciate. But the one million-dollar question is about how long is “soon”.

The coffee agreement is generating a lot of petitions from the coffee players in the subsector. I am already in receipt of such petition and I have received –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, with due respect, have respect for the Chairperson of the House.

**MR NAMBESHE:** Madam Speaker, with due respect, I am beseeching your Chair to come out specifically so that this particular report will be tabled on a given – The people out there know the days when we sit. You could say maybe tomorrow or Thursday or even next week. At least, be specific so that we also prepare ourselves to the teeth for this report. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** I like it when you clap your hands for nothing. *(Applause)* Honourable members, making the Order Paper is a preserve of the presiding officer, and I have given you my commitment that this is going to be discussed. Do not cry more than the bereaved; maybe some of us are more bereaved than you are because we are coffee growers.

When you start crying, yet you grow *kamalewa* and we grow coffee - Hon. Ojara?

2.47

**MR OJARA MAPENDUZI (Independent, Bardege-Layibi Division, Gulu City):** MadamSpeaker, thank you very much, for giving me this opportunity. In 2020, Parliament approved the creation of 15 new cities and some of these cities became operational on 1 July 2020.

Section 4(a) of the Local Governments Act, Cap. 243 clearly states: *“A city shall be equivalent to a district, and a city council shall exercise all functions and powers conferred upon a district council within its area of jurisdiction*”. Section 4(b) of the same Local Government Act further states that a city division shall be equivalent to a municipality.

However, Madam Speaker, the operations of the city divisions from the time these cities started have not been in line with the provision of the law I quoted above. In addition, these cities have continued to struggle with the challenge of office space as most mother districts, from where the cities were created, have refused to move to their areas of jurisdiction, citing lack of infrastructures in the areas where they are expected to relocate.

On the other hand, the Minister for Local Government has not demonstrated any sign of even providing resources for either the cities to put new infrastructures for office space or the mother districts to put structures where they are expected to relocate.

Madam Speaker, I am sure you will recall that the Minister for Local Government had promised to provide to this Parliament guidelines on the operations of these cities and how the old districts would be supported to move to their new district headquarters. I, therefore, pray that this Parliament presides over this matter and causes the Minister for Local Government to provide the required guidelines, and take appropriate actions to ensure that the cities and city divisions are run in a manner in line with the provisions of the laws, but also in the interests of providing effective service delivery to the citizens.

On the same note, I pray that the Minister for Local Government demonstrates clearly how the mother districts will be supported and helped to set up infrastructures and move to their new locations. Thank you very much.

**MR AMOS OKOT:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Congratulations! I had not got the opportunity to congratulate you..

On similar predicaments, which Hon. Mapenduzi has raised on the Floor of Parliament, new subcounties and town councils that were created during the same period are also facing the same kind of predicaments especially with emoluments of subcounty chairpersons which are not being paid. In my area, whenever councillors sit for a council meeting, they go away without receiving any allowance.

Not only that, the local tax revenue – Government normally sends projects to districts, but when these projects are implemented by the districts, there is a local revenue which is collected. All this money is sent to the centre, but after reaching the central Government, it is not remitted back.

In the same manner, we pray that the Minister for Local Government, together with the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development pay the subcounty chairpersons and councillors so that they get the emoluments due to them. I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Rt Hon. Prime Minister?

2.51

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Madam Speaker,the issues of cities and their mother districts are being handled. We have come up with a number of guidelines and ways of operationalising the new cities. The Minister for Local Government will come here and give detailed plans on how to operationalise these cities.

Concerning the new subcounties and new town councils, I will also promise this House that the Minister of Local Government will come here and give details next week.

**THE SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the ministers for Local Government and for Finance, Planning and Economic Development should come and present on Wednesday.

2.52

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is about a month since I raised this issue of non-payment of salaries, allowances and operational funds for the newly created subcounties and town councils.

The presiding officer then directed the Committee on National Economy to go – I think there is a supplementary request that was brought here and this committee was given a week. Subsequently, Madam Speaker, you also indicated that that matter was going to be handled. However, to date, no action has been taken.

The financial year is coming to an end and the way we are operating is that there is a cut-off point where unutilised funds must be returned to the Consolidated Fund. What is going to happen if that money is sent - and they will have to send it back –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, let us wait for a report from the finance and local government ministers. They are coming to make a presentation to that effect and we must have an end to it.

**MS NABBANJA:** Madam Speaker, I would like to give information. When we appropriated this money, the finance ministry sent this money to the districts – those districts with the new subcounties and town councils. I thought you needed this information.

Secondly, the Minister for Local Government, like you have already guided, will come here and give details.

**THE SPEAKER:** Where did they send the money? To whom?

2.53

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Madam Speaker, in the supplementary which Hon. Sarah Opendi is referring to, we provided Shs 29.6 billion –

**THE SPEAKER:** Order, on what?

**MS SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, you have called the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development to answer. This Parliament approved Hon. Matia Kasaija as the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development. Was he sleeping and, thus, it prompted his junior to come and become the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development? Since when did the junior minister become Cabinet minister?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssemujju, the Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development has hon. Matia Kasaija (as the Cabinet minister) and hon. Henry Musasizi, hon. Evelyn Anite, hon. Amos Lugoloobi and hon. Haruna Kasolo. It is up to him to choose who should respond to what. They all have different portfolios.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, the reason I raised this matter is that I saw the Leader of the Opposition, the other day when you called him to make a response to the budget, he stood and instructed his minister to do so. The impression that Hon. Matia Kasaija creates by not even telling Parliament whom he has instructed, is that he was sleeping.

**THE SPEAKER:** It was actually I who said that hon. Musasizi should answer because I know that is his docket. *(Laughter)*

**MR MUSASIZI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the wise ruling. To bring comfort to my friend, Hon. Ssemujju, can I say that, “through my minister, I would like to give a response to the concerns hon. Sarah Opendi has”?

Madam Speaker, we provided for Shs 29.6 billion in the supplementary schedule number one for operationalisation of the new administrative units, particularly new town councils and subcounties. This money was released on the 4th of April – in the fourth quarter release – and all districts have received this money.

Going forward, in the budget which we are currently handling, this provision has been maintained and each town council and subcounty – we have even disaggregated it to show how it shall appear in the IPFs of local governments.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, our minds should be settled. The councillors will start getting their allowances. The subcounty chairpersons and councillors will get their due salaries and *ex gratia*. The town clerks at the town council level and the subcounty chiefs of the respective administrative units will get their budget provisions, starting next financial year.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Opendi talked about the matter which was sent to the Committee on National Economy on domestic borrowing. Honourable members, we cannot allow domestic borrowing at this time, bearing in mind the fact that we are already in the budgeting process. We have one month only.

Therefore, Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development, I request you to come and withdraw your motion tomorrow because we are not allowing the issue of domestic borrowing. First, put in mind the timing aspect. Secondly, the absorption; how sure are we that we shall absorb all that money in one month? We are not going to allow it.

Simply withdraw the motion and move on with the budgeting and we budget for the next financial year*.* [Member: *“Procedure.”*]Members, do not raise too many procedural matters. We have many important documents to handle.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE STATUS OF COMPENSATION OF THE UGANDA-SOUTH SUDAN TRADERS

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, especially the new Members of Parliament, the compensation of South Sudan traders remains an outstanding matter since, I think, 2005. The signing of the Comprehensive Peace Agreement was done in 2005, which opened a business opportunity between South Sudan and Uganda, and attracted very many traders.

In February 2010, the governments of South Sudan and Uganda signed a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) on cooperation between the traders of South Sudan and Uganda and that is where the arbitration was established – that was in October 2010.

However, because of the hostilities in the late 2013, Ugandan traders lost a lot of property – goods and items – and life. In November 2010, Government of Uganda came up to rescue 24 companies for the traders, under the umbrella body of Uganda Grain Traders Association, by signing a Memorandum of Understanding with the Government of South Sudan and that led to the payment of $56,431,987 billion.

On 30th December, the addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding was made on the schedule of settling off the outstanding bill, but in 2015 more claimants emerged.

On 3rd April, 2018, Parliament of Uganda passed a resolution authorising Government to implement a bilateral agreement with the Government of South Sudan, to pay monies owed to Ugandan traders since Ugandan traders had lost a lot of goods and a lot of money.

Subsequently, in 2018, Parliament appropriated Shs 40 billion towards the clearance of $41 million, which was owed to the Ugandan traders.

This money was paid to only 10 companies. Since then, while some traders were compensated, the 23 that were vetted were not compensated and indeed, Parliament has gone further to budget to facilitate this payment, but sadly, our traders have not been paid to date.

On 28 February 2019, the Minister of State for Finance in charge of Planning, Hon. David Bahati, presented a statement to Parliament on the status of compensation of Ugandans in South Sudan.

This was a response - on 21 February 2019 an urgent question had been raised by Hon. Simon Oyet of Nwoya. This House was dissatisfied with the response that was given by hon. Bahati.

The presiding officer then, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, constituted an ad hoc committee where the Leader of the Opposition was part of. The team went to South Sudan on a fact-finding mission and came up with a report, which was adopted by this House on payment of the remaining traders. In response to Parliament’s previous interrogation on the matter, the Minister for Finance, Planning and Economic Development presented a statement to this House. Notably, on 24 March 2020 and 6 October 2020 and pending payments are still outstanding up to today. On 23rd June 2020, Parliament passed another resolution on the failure of Government to pay the Ugandan traders that had an outstanding balance and ordered that in the budget of Financial Year 2019/2020, these monies be included.

However, to date, these people have not been paid and it is on that note that Hon. Cecilia Ogwal brought up that issue. I am giving you a background of how this money came about.

The verification was done by both South Sudan and Uganda. The amount was agreed upon by both Uganda and South Sudan. The reports are available and so, can we hear from the minister on that issue?

3.06

**THE MINISTER FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I take this occasion *-(Interruption)*

**MR MUSINGUZI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before the minister gives us the direction on this compensation to the Ugandan suppliers to South Sudan Government, I think it should be holistically answered.

Many suppliers and contractors, in Government ministries and authorities, have been demanding for their pay for the last one year. For example, in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries there are many projects which have stalled. Suppliers and contractors have not been paid for one year. In Uganda National Roads Authority, people have not been paid for 18 months and these people want to take their children to school. In the Ministry of Works and Transport, suppliers and contractors have not been paid.

With due respect, as they plan to pay the people who supplied South Sudan, they should also consider our own local suppliers and contractors.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Yona Musinguzi, can we first hear from the minister?

**MR MUSINGUZI:** Thank you.

**MR KASAIJA:** Madam Speaker, before I was interrupted - I was saying that let me take this opportunity to congratulate you for assuming this -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, let us listen to the minister. I know most of us are conflicted because we are suppliers locally, but let us first listen. *(Laughter)*

**MR KASAIJA:** I congratulate you and you are looking excellently well. We shall give you all the necessary support. In your opening remarks, Madam Speaker, you seemed to have virtually read my statement. Almost everything that I wanted to say, you have mentioned.

Therefore, not to bog down the House - and I hope this statement has been circulated to all Members - I will simply summarise and then tell you the final decision that we have taken.

There are three categories of suppliers: One group consists of 10 companies, which negotiated with the Government of South Sudan. We made an agreement for them to be paid and that group has already been paid –*(Interruption)*

**MR NAMBESHE:** Madam Speaker, much as I appreciate the minister for presenting the statement, is it procedurally right for him to proceed before it is uploaded on our iPads?

**THE SPEAKER:** The landslides in Bududa may not allow the network to work very well. Honourable, it is uploaded.

**MR KASAIJA:** It can be relayed on the screen. Honourable member, please check your gadget. Anyhow, I was saying that there are three categories: One is of 10 traders or companies, which negotiated and we made an agreement with the Government of South Sudan and as I speak, all of them have been paid to the last cent.

The second category also has been verified. All we need to do now is to go to South Sudan and sign an addendum to the agreement. Then Government will begin to pay those companies- (*Interruption*)

**THE SPEAKER:** Just a minute, let him finish then you clarify.

**MR KASAIJA:** The third category has a problem with the verification by South Sudan. I want to assure this House that when I go down *–(Interjections)-* I am going to tell you what I intend to do so that we solve this problem once and for all. It has been on the table for too long, and people have lost hope. I think it is our responsibility to give them hope. That also will be discussed with the Government of South Sudan for that exercise to be completed.

Finally, I am promising this House that I am going to organise, after Cabinet has authorised me to go to South Sudan and get them. I understand they have been waiting for quite some time, but that information got lost somewhere, I think. I will go and negotiate to have these companies which have been verified by the Government of South Sudan included in the agreement. Immediately that is done, we shall come back here and begin to pay as and when resources are available. I beg to report, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Can we first hear from the mover then we come to you? Before the mover comes in, you said in your report that there are classifications of companies where South Sudan has given you a guarantee and the finance ministry has done the same, why haven’t you paid those companies?

**MR KASAIJA:** I could not pay because the guarantee is not the same thing as the contract; the agreement. I wanted to protect the interests of Uganda, that I pay for something that we as a country have a basis to reclaim. That is why we did not pay. I received correspondences, but unfortunately, I have not received anything on this guarantee. Now, they are even allowing some claimants to go and borrow from other institutions. That is really up to the claimant.

We could not pay on the basis of the guarantee, because we have not yet had the addendum on the main agreement, which would be the basis for South Sudan to pay back when the time comes to do so.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the last resolution that was passed by this House was on 23 June 2020. The resolution was that we should be able to budget for money to pay these traders. You are saying you are taking it to Cabinet. Do we assume that from that time we have not had any Cabinet meetings on the matter? Or is it not a priority?

**MR KASAIJA:** We have heard many Cabinet meetings ever since, but the problem is the capacity we have at the Treasury. As you can see, we have been trying to pay the 10 companies since 2019; simply because the funds are not available. When we want to pay, something else happens. You pass the budget here and at times we are constrained by cash flow. I am very glad you are saying that we should not borrow, which rhymes very well with our thinking, so that we reduce the debt burden.

**THE SPEAKER:** There is a procedural matter, but before hon. Patrick Oshabe comes; honourable minister, do you want to tell me that we are not going to pay these people because we do not have money? We committed ourselves as a country. There is a procedural matter.

**MR OSHABE:** Madam Speaker, I like the way Hon. Matia Kasaija always takes this Parliament for granted. I also like the way he takes things casually. In his statement, we expected him to lay before us, for example, the verified companies. Previously, that was the talk, about some companies not being verified and others being verified.

Madam Speaker, he is talking about commitments from the other government; couldn’t he present some proof to us and the traders who are aggrieved, in form of these commitments? You lay them on the Table! Then we will be sure that you are doing something about this. Otherwise, people lost their money. The way you casually talk about it, I think there is nothing that is going on. Are we proceeding well, when the minister has laid nothing at the Table?

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, I joined politics partly because of Hon. Matia Kasaija. I used to admire his style of leadership. As I talk in the august House, he is one of my five best friends because he made me admire leadership.

Madam Speaker, in his submission, hon. Kasaija, the finance minister has told the august House that the cause of the delay of the payments is because of the bad economy that we are having. I am happy that the National Resistance Army is the Government in power *–(Interjections)-* I am still building the foundation. Madam Speaker, I seek your protection from Hon. Aisha Kabanda.

Madam Speaker, I stood on a procedural matter because the regime I belong to boasts of having built the best economy in the East African Region. Even in our campaigns, we use the slogan or motto of “Steady progress”, which is in terms of the economic development of the country.

Madam Speaker, I do not know whether hon. Kasaija is proceeding well to come to the Parliament of Uganda and lament that the business people who have not been paid, like Masaba of Busia - he died because his buses were burnt in South Sudan! Like Mugoya who lost tonnes and tonnes of maize, and has not been paid - two of his women ran away because of poverty. And you are here crying that the economy is not doing well. I do not know whether the finance minister is proceeding well.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Kasaija. It was a commitment between Government of Uganda and the Government of South Sudan to have these people paid.

When we formed an ad hoc committee, the committee even went out to Kenya to find out how Kenya had handled its matter; by that time, Kenya had paid all the traders and had actually given those traders initial capital to start more business.

Now, the initial money we paid - Actually, the money we have so far paid is $56 million; that is what you have paid and those are the agreements you have. You would be neater as a finance minister to say that we are going to make an addendum *-* Order on whom?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, is Hon. Jim Muhwezi in order to begin receiving calls in Parliament; that level of arrogance? *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member,I am still talking to hon. Kasaija; you will be neater as a minister to help our people and say that you are going to get an addendum to this; because if you are saying that people supplied material, then they have supplied. Let us first hear from hon. Cecilia Ogwal, then -

3.23

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Madam Speaker, I am a bit upset that I have to speak after the senior finance minister has spoken and given a report about the subject which has been in Parliament for many years.

It is true that there are three categories and I would like Members to take interest in combing through some of the historical documents that Parliament has. The three categories consist of:

1. The 10 companies, which are covered by the memorandum of understanding - and I do not know what they call it - between South Sudan and the Uganda Government.

2. The second category is the additional 23 companies. These are fully verified by the URA. The 10th Parliament passed a supplementary budget to cover the 23 companies; and we have their list in our records.

3. The third category comes after the verification by the ad hoc committee that had to go to South Sudan. And they also came up with a report which we have in Parliament.

Madam Speaker, why I am upset with the finance minister is that after he has spoken, I have nowhere else to go. Even if I go to the President, the President will refer me to the finance minister. So, he is actually the alpha and omega on this matter.

The fact is, I would like the minister to confirm to me that all the 10 have been fully paid because the money was made available and by this Parliament. I do not want to go into details, but the $56 million which was already given; $10 million cash was given initially. And, I remember in that delegation - according to our records - I am not in Government, so, I do not claim to know some of the information which they have, but I know that the leader of the delegation was the senior minister, hon. Kahinda Otafiire. That delegation came back in 2016 with $15 million cash. We were now left with $41 million to pay from that agreement.

Madam Speaker, the meeting of 30 March 2018 approved that money and if our records are there, I hope the minister is watching. Fortunately enough, the minister of state then is in the House. That loan request was approved by Parliament on 30 March 2018; and it is on that day that the Minister of State for Finance then, Hon. David Bahati, actually made a commitment that he would do everything possible to ask for an addendum in order to sort out the other categories that had not been catered for in the loan that we had approved.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, as far as Parliament is concerned, we have a resolution, which must be implemented by Government for the payment of the additional 23 traders who are fully verified. And in fact, when they verified the 23 traders, URA stumbled over some errors in that list submitted to them. They cited some companies which ought not to have been paid.

I would like the minister - I do not want to divulge the information here - but I would like the minister to look for a copy of a letter the minister received from the Commissioner-General of URA then, Doris Akol, dated 7 August 2017. It gives you details and even advises you that there are certain companies you ought not to have paid.

It is not my duty to do it here; the letter was addressed to the finance minister, dated 7 August 2017, and signed by the Commissioner-General. I hope you have referred to that document.

Therefore, Madam Speaker and the House, what I expected of the minister is one; that 10 of *-(Interruption)*

**MR OSHABE:** Madam Speaker, I do not know why the two people are very mean with information. I stood here requesting the minister to lay an updated list or a list of the companies we are talking about, but he kept quiet. Now, the person with the information, Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, is also choosing to be mean with the information. Since she is a senior legislator, the least I would have expected her to do is to lay and say, “Now, that the minister failed, the information on the verified companies is here.”

Madam Speaker, is she in order to keep that information with herself instead of laying it before Parliament?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Patrick, the honourable minister is going to lay on Table the 23 companies. However, also what Hon. Cecilia is reading is a letter that was addressed to the minister. So, she has the letter, but it is not her letter. She went into information-fishing. However, the minister has the information and he is the right person to lay it on Table.

**MS OGWAL:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your wise ruling. I think today is not a very good day for me because hon. Oshabe is usually a very clear-minded person. *(Laughter)* I have just told the House that all the information is on our records. I have even given you dates of the meeting; and the date of the resolution of Parliament, but the honourable Member of Parliament, younger than me, wanted me to go and pull the *Hansard* and come back and relay. However, I will try to do that, Madam Speaker, as you allow me.

I am still proceeding. I want the senior minister, with the help of a team of ministers under him, who were very conversant with the matter - One of them was the Chairperson of the Committee on Budget, who was very much involved in that. I know why he was elevated to that position. The other was the Chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development. I also know why he was elevated to the position of a minister. We are all very conversant with this matter. Honourable minister, I want you to be open and tell us what happened.

I want to say that Government has no excuse to say there is no money because Parliament passed the money and gave them empowerment through a resolution. Parliament even went ahead to pass a supplementary budget to cater for the 23 verified companies. I want to request the honourable member to look at the Parliamentary resolution passed on 30 March 2018. You will get that list. In case you do not have it, I could read them for you because the records are with us, but due to time –

**THE SPEAKER:** Can you lay it on the Table.

**MS OGWAL:** I had laid on the Table the 23 companies before, but with your permission, I could do that again.

**THE SPEAKER:** It does not cause any harm.

**MS OGWAL:** The 33 companies should now be fully paid; the 10 companies and the 23 companies. I expect the minister to come to the House and tell us how the 23 companies have been paid. If their money was diverted, by what authority?

Madam Speaker, before I was removed from the Committee on Budget, I had put some sense in the mind of the ministry to have some amendment of the law. Therefore, the ministry must tell us where the money went. Since the money was approved by Parliament, you must tell us why you sent it to another agency.

Based on the facts I have given, I think I do not have anything else to contribute on this, except a statement from the finance minister. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, just a minute. I heard someone asking Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, “Which is your company?” We do not discuss because they are our own companies. There is a gentleman called Bongomin Sunday from Lamwo. He has run mad because he lost $3.3 million.

There is also a lady called Jane who collapsed in the office of hon. David Bahati. She actually came to my office and I referred her to him because he knew more about South Sudan. She collapsed before him. Isn’t that true?

There is another man called Gunya. All his businesses in Lira have been closed. He has lost all his houses. We cannot start saying “Which one is your company?” We are legislating for people outside there –*(Applause)*- the ones who voted for you; including the ones who voted for hon. Matia Kasaija. Hon. Kasaija, we want these people to get their money. *(Applause)*

**MR EKANYA:** Madam Speaker, I am on a point of procedure. The Public Finance Management Act is categorically clear that any debt, which has not been verified becomes part of a contingent liability. A domestic debt must be captured and a timeline for payment must be declared and submitted before Parliament. Under the Public Finance Act, any debt is a direct charge on the Consolidated Fund.

I am wondering whether Hon. Matia Kasaija and Hon. Cecilia Ogwal are moving according to our law and procedure. What is required is to ensure that, according to the Public Finance Management Act, Hon. Matia Kasaija creates a timeline for all these payments because they make first call on our budget, as salary does.

Before we discuss any other thing - This is a very serious procedural issue. Sometimes, we legislate outside our legal system and ministers take us for granted. I was not in the last Parliament; I was in the village, but I lost items and so, I want to know what the timeline is for the new claimants to submit their reports. Otherwise, I had a truck, which was burnt in South Sudan. I am now going to contact my friend and submit. Do we still have an opportunity? We cannot keep dilly-dallying.

On this, Madam Speaker, the Public Finance Management Act is clear. It is the first call on the budget like salary. We should order the minister to come up with the payment schedule. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** This is a very serious issue. Honourable minister, how long should we give you to have this sorted out?

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Madam Speaker, Government has got systems and if you do not follow them, you will be in trouble, like my friend there was saying that I should go to Luzira. I can tell you all of us are candidates.

About laying the list of claimants, I have it here and I was intending to lay this document, when I conclude -

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Matia Kasaija, can you lay the names on the Table.

**MR KASAIJA:** I beg to lay on the Table the statement on the status of compensation of Ugandan South Sudan Traders.

**THE SPEAKER:** How many claimants? Read the names.

**MR KASAIJA:** They are there. *(Laughter)* I am not going to read the list of those we have already compensated.

**THE SPEAKER:** I still remember what I asked, hon. Kasaija, and I am still going to get it. You will not lose it. I am the one who asked for it.

**MR KASAIJA:** As someone checks for the list of the 10 companies, can I, now, read the list of the 23 companies?

**THE SPEAKER:** Start with the 10 companies and then, go to the 23 companies. *(Applause)*

**MR KASAIJA:** They are:

1. Rubya Investment Limited;

2. Kibungo Enterprises

3. Aponye (U) Ltd

4. Afro Kai Ltd

5. Swift Commodities

6. Sunrise Commodities

7. KK Transporters

8. Ropani International Company

I think those were the 10 companies –

**THE SPEAKER:** No, there is Apo General Enterprises and M/s Sophia Omari.

**MR KASAIJA:** I do not want to do shoddy things. Can I ask that, tomorrow, I come and lay the list I have? *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, give the minister a chance. Maybe, he did not have the two names. That is why I have corrected him.

**MR KASAIJA:** Madam Speaker, as serious people – I am more concerned about those people that have not been paid. If you are interested in those who have got, I do not know. I am interested in those who have not got their money.

**THE SPEAKER:** Read the 23 now. Members, you have heard the 10; Rubya Investment Ltd, Kibungo Enterprises, Aponye (U) Ltd, Afro Kai Ltd, Swift Commodities, Sunrise Commodities, M/s Sophia Omari, Apo General Enterprises, Ropani International Company and KK Transporters.

**MR KIMOSHO:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have seen the 10 names and, of course, the 23 are coming also. I do not know whether it would not be procedurally right for us to lift the veil and know who the directors are. *(Laughter)* I am saying this because we are talking about people running mad because of debts and what they lost.

You might find that we are paying the same people in five companies, instead of distributing - amidst the meagre resources – across. *(Applause)* Isn’t it procedurally right that we lift the veil on the companies and know who the owners are?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we will lift the veil where we imagine there is fraud. *(Member rose\_)* Can I first get the list of the 23 companies?

**MR KASAIJA:** Thank you. The 23 are;

1. Roko Construction Ltd

2. Premier Commodities (U) Ltd

3. Aponye (U) Ltd and Afro-Kai Limited

4. MFK Corporation Ltd (Ifo Ajok Investments and Construction Co. Ltd)

5. Ake-Jo General Enterprise Ltd

6. Dott Services Limited

7. Tomosi’s Farm

8. Adroit Consult International

9. M/s Makpaco

10. T/A Gunya Company Ltd vs Ministry

Those are claiming their money in dollars and the total amount is $47.2 million.

These are companies with claims in South Sudan Pounds (SSP);

1. Trust South Centre Co. Ltd

2. Speedways Service Company Ltd

3. Chant Agencies (Supply of food stuffs)

4. JB Trading Agency Ltd

5. Madut Chan Company Ltd

6. Omara John Bosco (Tezita International)

7. M/s Wang Logistics Co. Ltd

8. M/s EDSA Supplies Ltd

9. Menelco Stores (Maiwat Company Ltd)

10. Ahmos Investments Ltd (Ifo Aguoldit, Bangasu Star and Fairdeal)

11. M/s Makpaco

12. Benico Investment Limited

13. Atmos (U) Ltd (Inter Regional Trade and Transport Ltd)

Those are claiming SSP 36.3 million.

That is the list of the companies that have been verified and, as I promised this House, I plan to go to South Sudan to negotiate that we input this in our agreement. I am sure, whether I am around or not, that once we pay out, the Government of South Sudan will refund the Republic of Uganda.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, how much time do you need us to give you?

**MR KASAIJA:** First of all, I have to seek permission from Cabinet – that is not a problem because I can get it on Monday. Before the end of this month or the beginning of next month, I should have come back from South Sudan.

**MR SILWANY:** Thank you, Madam Speaker –

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, our rules are very protective of the Speaker. The minister read – I do not know whether I should classify it as an incomplete list – and you are the one who helped Parliament to complete the list. The same minister, with an incomplete list, is now laying it on the Table. I do not know whether he is laying the incomplete one, which you helped him with.

We raise these things out of fear. The person who signed the contract to give away coffee in the manner that he did, you will be very fearful of everything he is doing. In fact, even in South Sudan, if I were the one in authority, I would send him with CID. *(Laughter)* I cannot allow him to go alone.

The procedural issue I am raising, Madam Speaker, is whether we should allow the minister, who says he is not ready and now wants to go to Cabinet - he has read a list that is incomplete – to lay –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, what has been laid on the Table is the list of the 23 companies and not the 10. He did not have the list of the 10 companies and that is why he asked to come back and give us the list of the 10 companies.

I do not want to receive the list of the 10 companies from Hon. Cecilia Ogwal because she is not the one who paid. I want the list of the 10 companies to come from the finance ministry because those ones are already paid. So, you will bring the list of the 10 companies and lay it on the Table.

**MR SILWANY:** Madam Speaker, I was on the Floor.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay.

**MS CECILIA OGWAL:** Madam Speaker, this is purely a procedural matter. The minister attempted to read the list of the 10 companies, but he did not complete it and I am not about to help him because that is not my business. However, I just want to alert Members about the information we received from the Commissioner-General of Uganda Revenue Authority so that when the minister brings the list, they take note of that information, that there is a company called Aponye Uganda Limited and another called Apo General Agencies - because we asked for the directors of these companies. These two, I think it also includes KK, have the same names for directors.

Therefore, I just want you to take note so that when the minister comes with the list, you can do your own research to help me, but this is the little that I have been able to get. So, procedurally, I thought it would be good for Members to also –

**THE SPEAKER:** Actually, that takes us back to what hon. Atwijukire was saying, that we open the way. Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, can you now lay that document? By the way, there is no law that stops someone from being a director in more than one company.

3.54

**MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri):** Madam Speaker, if I recall, there was a committee formed here in Parliament whose Members travelled to South Sudan. I was part of that team that went to South Sudan to interact with the traders.

Madam Speaker, if you recall very well, this has become a song. Today is the eighth time the finance minister is committing himself to Parliament to sort out this matter.

Today, I want us to take a decision, as Parliament, to conclude this matter and not have it come back here again. You asked the minister how long he is going to take, and he is still estimating days. I told you this is the eighth time the minister has come here. When are we going to conclude this matter?

Secondly, when we last talked about this matter, we agreed that both the big and small traders would be settled at the same time. Where did the minister then again get the authority to pay out only the big 10 and leave out the small traders who are collapsing, fainting and some even dying? I know of a trader who died of pressure because of this money.

Madam Speaker, I would like to seek your indulgence to have the minister give us a real date when he will solve this matter. Tell us maybe that in one, two or three months, he will sort it out and we shall be patient other than giving us a speculative date for us to wait for, which then passes with nothing happening. I beg to submit, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I think I still have institutional memory to the effect that there was an MoU signed for payment of $41 million to the 10 companies, and I have that MoU here.

Now, what we are asking the minister is for him to go back to South Sudan and get an addendum for the 23 companies to be paid. That is all we need from you. Once you have that addendum, it takes a first call, these people must be paid; it is a public debt. That is what we want. Let us not come here and lament all the time.

3.57

**MR DICKSONS KATESHUMBWA (NRM, Sheema Municipality, Sheema):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have been celebrating the expansion of the East African Community. The expansion comes with a lot of market. However, much as we want to take advantage of these markets, this issue of South Sudan just exposes the risks that Ugandans have been exposed to, and that have not been dealt with.

Article 29 of the Common Market Protocol talks about the protection of cross border investments by East Africans within the region. It goes on to describe the investments as including stock and goods that we actually lost.

Madam Speaker, Government needs to come out with a policy and clear guidelines to deal with this problem once and for all. Some of these businessmen and women could have borrowed money in the market. Right now, we are grappling with high interest rates and part of the reason is because of domestic borrowing by Government, which is competing with the private sector.

The moment one goes to the market, the banks will prefer to lend to Government. One will borrow money and invest. They issue invoices and immediately they must borrow money to pay taxes, but then, they are not paid for all these years and Government has been going around over this issue.

I think the ministry needs to come out with a clear policy. If there are many people to be paid, what is the criteria for selecting a few and leaving out others?

Otherwise, generally, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to help us and sort out the issues of domestic arrears and payment to the private sector. It is crippling the economy and the earlier we do it, the better.

As we talk about South Sudan today, we need to note that we have other problems of the traders who lost business during the riots in 2007 in Kenya. We have issues of the traders who lost business when one of the supermarkets around closed. Therefore, what is the policy around compensation so that people know and are able to do business with competence?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, this is not a matter to do with compensation. This was a Government pledge because they entered into a relationship with the Government of South Sudan and it guaranteed to pay traders.

Maybe, for information to the House, the Government of South Sudan is waiting for the minister to sign the agreement. They have sent him a draft. So, it is upon the minister to decide when to go. I have just got a draft from South Sudan now.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just wanted to provide information because I think we have been in the House at different times. So, we seem not to be on the same page in terms of understanding the subject matter we are handling.

To provide information - we are dealing with business persons who supplied the Government of South Sudan, but when Government got problems, there was an understanding with the Government of Uganda that the Government of Uganda would pay and then South Sudan would reimburse later, not all the business persons who were doing trade in South Sudan.

The initial MoU, which was signed had only 10 companies, which had been sorted. When we had a debate in this House in the last Parliament, there was concern that there were other companies, which had dealt with Government and that is how the list of 23 came up. The minister is saying that he will go to South Sudan to agree with the Government so that there is an amendment to the MoU and the traders are paid. I have heard colleagues say that there are people who had bus companies and many businesses. I thought I would clarify that so that we would understand.

Now that the minister has said that we give him up to the end of the month, it is proper that we allow him to go, agree with the South Sudan Government, then he comes back and the payments can be processed.

With that understanding, hon. Joseph Ssewungu now knows the subject matter and we can now proceed to other issues and allow the minister to proceed. Thank you.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Order **-**

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, order on who?

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, it is not fair –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, when we come here to legislate, what we want are solutions; we need a solution. Let hon. Kasaija tell us to give him two or three weeks to have these people paid. Or have a memorandum of understanding being signed between Uganda and South Sudan. You want to politick all the time *–(Interjections)*

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, there is no politics here. Indeed, we know where to do politics from. We are serious about this matter.

I was in this House – I can tell you, that is why you see hon. Bahati very silent on this matter. When we had this issue here, it was hon. David Bahati, as the minister, who was fighting. And we had a battle on this Floor.

The issue was about the small companies and making all these companies share something as we were passing the money. Hon. Bahati promised this House – it is on the *Hansard* record of this Parliament – that they were starting with the 10 companies, but that they would immediately pay the other smaller companies. That is what is on the *Hansard* record of Parliament.

Right now, we are getting other statements and Minister Chris Baryomunsi is coming in to mislead this House that these companies came later.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, they did not come later.  Listen, I was part of the signing of the agreement. As said, we went to South Sudan together. The names that were given were the 10 names. That is what happened. After the 10 names were given for ratification by the Parliament of Uganda, that is when the 23 names came up.

Honourable minister, can we give you two weeks to bring an addendum to this House *-(Interjections)-* just a minute. Let us have the issue of the addendum resolved. That is what is important for us now.

**MR KASAIJA:** Madam Speaker, I will not object too much about the two weeks.

I do not want to commit myself here, yet, I may not be able to fulfil. I am scheduled to represent the President in some foreign country starting next week. I will not be here for the whole week. That means that week is gone. Then, when I come back – of course, I will leave correspondences going on, telling the people in Juba that we will be coming. I do not know how much time it will take because I have no control over their time. Supposing they say, “no.” Maybe, if you are saying that if we get a challenge, then I will come back and report to Parliament.

I would request –*(Interruptions)*

**THE SPEAKER:** You should not switch on the microphone and start saying, “order”.

**MR KASAIJA:** Why are not we listening to each other? You make life unnecessarily difficult. Let us listen to each other.

**THE SPEAKER:** How much time do you need?

**MR KASAIJA:** I promise that by the end of June, I should be back here to report  -*(Interjections)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the end of June will also come. The good thing is that it is a commitment from the senior minister. By the end of June, we want the addendum to the first MoU. We do not want words. We want action. We want these people to be paid. Is that okay honourable minister?

**MR KASAIJA:** For purposes of the *Hansard*, I am committing myself. That is my word. I will be here end of June – unless I fall sick. If I am sick, another minister will come here by end of June to sort this matter out. I am tired of this issue.

**THE SPEAKER:** What will you be here to do?

**MR KASAIJA:** I will be here to report to you that now, I have got the addendum and we are now going to proceed to start paying as and when money becomes available.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE AD HOC COMMITTEE ON THE CABINET DECISION TO RATIONALISE GOVERNMENT AGENCIES

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, on Thursday, 2 September 2021, I invoked Rule 19(1) of the Rules of Procedure of this Parliament to establish an ad hoc committee to inquire into the Cabinet decision to rationalise and merge Government entities.

This came out of the report that was being laid on the Table by the Minister for Public Service. The decision of this House was in response to that ministerial statement. We did not start from nowhere as it was reported in Cabinet, that we are adapting work to do from nowhere. We are working from somewhere. A report was laid on the Table and we wanted to investigate it. It is based on that, that the ad hoc committee that was constituted went and did its work.

As Parliament of Uganda, we need to satisfy ourselves that what was done by the Public Service ought to be done. Since we are legislating for the public, we needed to be involved in what was being done.

Therefore, under rule 19(1) of our Rules of Procedure, on 2 September 2021, we formed a committee and the committee is ready to report on the issues of mergers.

Chairman of the committee, can you present your report? - Please, allow the chairman to read his report as it is because he was so mean with his committee. He did not allow the public to watch it. He did not give the report out; he has been keeping it to himself.

4.11

**MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Permit me to begin the presentation of the report of the ad hoc committee on the decision by Cabinet to rationalise Government agencies by laying on Table two files containing;

1. The minutes of the meetings held by the ad hoc committee;

2. The written memorandum received from the agencies and other stakeholders the committee interacted with;

3. The list of all the stakeholders, including the chairpersons of the sectoral committees that appeared before the committee; and

4. A copy of the report of the committee.

The two files are here for your perusal.

I wish to thank the members of this ad hoc committee; we were nine and we went through a bit of a rough time to have these agencies report to us.

As the Speaker rightly put it, on 22 February, 2021, Cabinet took a decision that certain Government agencies, commissions and authorities be merged, others mainstreamed and others rationalised, an action that has generally been referred to as rationalisation of Government agencies.

The rationalisation was intended to rationalise public expenditure and facilitate efficient and effective service delivery. This is not the first time that Government is undertaking rationalisation of agencies and the civil service in general.

In the early 1990s, the National Resistance Movement Government adopted the World Bank’s structural adjustment programmes, which aimed at the liberalisation of the economy and privatisation of public enterprises to give more space to the private sector in the provision of public goods and services. So, what we are doing now is exactly what we avoided then.

In early 2000, a new wave of creation of semi-autonomous agencies emerged. The wave picked momentum as time went by. Many ministries competed to form agencies. The agency model as a way providing effective services, became the norm. As a result, many new agencies were created by Acts of Parliament, Executive Orders, Statutory Instruments and administrative arrangements. Some Government programmes and projects acquired statuses of semi-autonomous agencies and were run independently and parallel to their parent ministries.

Some temporary measures adopted by Government for specific purposes continued to exist as semi-autonomous bodies after the purpose for which they had been formed had ended. Examples of the semi-autonomous agencies that emerged from temporary measures are: The Privatisation Unit and the Non-Performing Assets Recovery Trust (NPART).

This continued for some time. Later, all these agencies were formed; almost each sector had a number of agencies - which you all know as of now. You can look at page 9 for Tanzanian experiences with agencies, which is more or less similar in the region. All these came as a result of the concern by the President.

The committee was informed by the Minister for Public Service that on 17th July 2017, His Excellency the President of Uganda raised concerns about the existence of several agencies in Uganda, which appeared to be duplicating the roles of Government departments, a burden on the Treasury, with undifferentiated and overlapping roles.

The President asked whether it would not be fair to consolidate, downsize, rationalise and pay well non-commercial portions of state employees.

The President also asked whether it would not be better to consolidate the Public Service employees into two categories: Those that support policy, regulation and implementation; and those that make money by running a few public enterprises as business entities.

The President demanded for practical recommendations; public institutions to ensure efficiency of Government in service delivery. The study that the Ministry of Public Service did resulted into what we are in now.

The committee examined 157 public agencies, 22 ministries, the Office of the President and Office of the Prime Minister. The findings by the Ministry of Public Service are indicated there on pages 12 to 17, under different sectors, and the agencies to be retained, merged and mainstreamed.

Observations

The committee was informed that Cabinet took a decision to merge, mainstream and rationalise agencies in order to facilitate efficient and effective service delivery.

Government has found that the current set-up of Government was riddled with structural and functional duplications, overlaps and wasteful expenditures.

The committee was further informed that the rationalisation exercise was to curb the high overhead costs of agencies and their inefficient utilisation of resources; address functional ambiguities of agencies evidenced by the mix-up of policy, regulation and implementation functions across ministries, departments and agencies.

The rationalisation exercise was further meant to deal with the un-harmonised legal frameworks within which some of the agencies operated and treat the bloated structures of some agencies, which are not aligned to their core mandates.

In the statement to Parliament by the Minister for Public Service - which I would not like to repeat, it is exactly what has resulted in this report and the committee to do this work; the need for Government to reform on the basis of a comprehensive study and in a cautious manner.

In spite of the goodwill with which Government proceeded with the rationalisation exercise, the committee observed that the exercise was not informed by a comprehensive study and consequently, the rationale and criteria used in the exercise were unclear and suspicious.

The rationalisation of agencies, if not reviewed, may greatly affect Uganda’s economic development efforts. The following are the committee’s general observations on the rationalisation exercise:

1. The focus of the rationalisation is on the semi-autonomous agencies of Government, yet Government ministries are the primary vehicles for service delivery and are notoriously known for their inefficiencies, corruption and wastage of public resources.

There is no evidence to show that a research was conducted on both Government ministries and agencies, which proved that duplication of roles, wastage of public resources and inefficient delivery of services was more in agencies than in ministries, hence requiring rationalisation of agencies instead of ministries.

In fact, it is an open secret that red tape bureaucratic procedures, wastage, overlaps, inefficiency and corruption are more rampant in ministries and local governments than in the semi-autonomous agencies.

The criteria used to merge some agencies and maintain others were not clear. Some poor performing agencies like the Uganda Railways Corporation and Uganda Air Cargo Corporation were retained, while others that appear to be effective and efficient such as NITA Uganda, Uganda Coffee Development Authority, Dairy Development Authority, (DDA) Uganda National Roads Authority and Uganda Road Fund where mainstreamed and other efficient and revenue generating agencies like Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB) were proposed for mergers with others. This suggests that there was no scientific study that informed the rationalisation exercise. The agencies were not distinguished on the basis of wastage of public funds, duplication of functions and inefficiencies.

The semi-autonomous agencies that were behind the visible achievements of the NRM Government such as Rural Electrification Agency (REA), Uganda National Roads Authority, Uganda Road Fund, Uganda Coffee Development Authority, (UCDA) among others were the ones that were stripped of their semi-autonomous statuses. This again casts doubt on the rationality of the exercise.

The rationalisation exercise appears to have been a reactionary move that aimed at quickly finding answers to the concerns raised by the President in 2017. It was not well thought out and the reason is that it lost sight of the need to examine the whole Government structure and re-engineer it for improving service delivery.

The problems that the President raised, which eventually led to the decision of Cabinet to rationalise agencies were narrowly defined to be a design and human resource issues only. That explains why the Ministry of Public Service was chosen by Cabinet to be the lead ministry in this study of the concerns raised by the President and in the implementation of the rationalisation roadmap.

Consequently, critical aspects like strategic planning, risk and business continuity analysis, international law and trade, global market success among others were relegated to the background. As a result, there is no guarantee that the adopted rationalisation strategy will improve the efficiency and effectiveness of service delivery. There is no evidence that the achievements registered by the country under the agency model of service delivery will be doubled or even maintained, when some agencies are stripped of their semi-autonomous statuses and placed back into bureaucracy or merged.

The rationalisation study, if at all it was done, did not benefit from the views of relevant stakeholders. Consultation is an old tested methodology for policy reviews and is actually a legal requirement in Uganda. The committee was informed by the many agencies it interacted with, that they were not consulted and involved in the rationalisation study. Neither did the Minister for Public Service interact with the private sector players who are the subject of regulation by Government before making recommendations to that effect.

Consequently, there is the risk that Uganda may lose investor confidence as a result of stripping some regulatory agencies of their semi-autonomous statuses. The committee noted that bureaucratising an agency like Cotton Development Organisation (CDO) is going to jeopardise the Public Private Partnership (PPP) in the corporate sector. A member of the association of the cotton ginners and exporters in Uganda confided to the committee that mainstreaming CDO into the agriculture ministry is going to be like removing the thread that ties together the beads of a rosary. That when CDO is removed as a regulator, the various players in the cotton sector will scatter and the crop will be no more; and the cotton exports will dry up.

Connected with the foregoing is the risk of the rationalisation exercise undermining Uganda’s access to international markets. Access and entry of our products like coffee, milk, cotton and many others to international markets requires conformity to international standards. Sadly, some of the regulatory bodies like UCDA and UCDO are mandated to ensure the quality of our products are being stripped of their semi-autonomous statuses. The risk of their executive role in our export seems not to have been taken care of.

The rationalisation exercise was embarked on without a comparative study in the region. The committee learnt that Kenya, Ethiopia, Zimbabwe and Tanzania did what Uganda is doing to bureaucratise regulatory agencies and as a result, they lost heavily on the production quantities and quality, and are currently in the process of reversing their decisions. The rationalisation study, if at all was conducted, did not benchmark from regional experiences. Currently, the Kenyan Parliament is considering getting back coffee into its original autonomous status and many others.

The process of rationalisation has not been effectively communicated. Most of the agencies the committee interacted with indicated that they were not consulted to provide their technical input. In addition, there has not been effective communication of the change or reform to the employees of the affected agencies. This has led to anxiety and fear, and reduced morale of staff. This will inevitably in turn, lead to reduced productivity and possible vandalisation of equipment and assets of agencies whose functions have been mainstreamed.

Madam Speaker, most of the agency staff have been harassed and not treated well, not knowing that they have been performing their duties. Therefore, some of them fear and most likely, if not handled, we are likely to lose like we did, when we were privatising.

The committee noted that the rationalisation exercise progressed without adequate study of the operations, work culture and quality of staff of some of the agencies. The Ministry of Public Service looked at the competitive salaries some agencies were paying their staff, compared to the salaries paid to the mainstream civil servants, but did not look at the performance ethics of the staff of agencies.

The committee learnt that in some agencies like UCDA, Meteorological Authority, NITA Uganda and others, staff work day and night, and over the weekends. There is a risk that once these staffs are absorbed in the civil service, and work as per the traditional civil service standard working hours, service delivery will be compromised.

Potential loss of specialised skilled labour

There is even a greater risk that some of the highly qualified staff in some of the agencies that are scheduled for mainstreaming will not join the mainstream civil service in favour of the private sector. This means we are likely to lose quite a good number of skilled officers, which has already started, especially in UNRA.

The committee noted that rationalisation of agencies will have serious legal risks and liabilities regarding employment and service contractual obligations. The committee noted that the quantum of this risk has not even been established by Cabinet.

The committee learnt that some contractors in the electricity sector had stopped performing because of lack of supervising agencies. The supervising agencies are supposed to be merged into one authority, but there is no timeframe known when the process of merging of the electricity agencies will be finalised. Consequently, vandalisation, time and cost overruns are likely to occur during the transition period. Yet, there is no robust strategy to mitigate all these risks.

In addition, the available legal cover against the evident legal risks and liabilities associated with the rationalisation exercise appears to be very inadequate. The Deputy Attorney-General informed the committee that he had provided legal guidance to the Minister for Public Service concerning contracting and renewal of contracts for employees in the affected agencies.

The committee observed that this was not sufficient legal cover, noting that Government has always lost in litigations concerning breaches of contract and a huge bill is before Government in favour of the former employees of Uganda Railways Corporation, Posts and Telecommunication, Internal Security and many others. In light of the foregoing, it is essential that Government proceeds cautiously with the rationalisation exercise.

The committee’s recommendations - sector by sector

The committee agrees with Government to retain some institutions as semi-autonomous due to their vital role in the socio-economic transformation of the economy. These include Bank of Uganda, Uganda Revenue Authority and many others. However, there are a number of areas where the committee found that the rationalisation would have negative effects on the economy and would undermine the momentum for socio-economic transformation. These areas are highlighted below and the recommendations and justifications offered.

Accountability sector

Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority (URBRA)

Cabinet took a decision to retain the authority as a semi-autonomous body. However, the committee recommends that Uganda Retirement Benefits Regulatory Authority be mainstreamed in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development just like Cabinet decided to mainstream the Uganda Microfinance Regulatory Authority in the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Justification

The body was created in anticipation that the pension sector was going to be liberalised and have many private players in the sector. It was anticipated that NSSF would no longer monopolise the social security sector. This did not occur. So, the purpose for which it was created has not been achieved.

Pride Microfinance Bank and Microfinance Support Centre

The committee recommends that the two entities be merged to form one strong credit institution that targets small businesses and groups both in rural and urban centres, which cannot qualify for credit from the many commercial banks that charge high interest rates, especially the foreign banks.

Justification

Uganda Development Bank, Housing Finance Bank and Development Finance Company of Uganda provide credit to large borrowers with collaterals. With Government’s policy of improving household incomes, a big microfinance bank with an extensive network of banks across the country, providing the small borrowers with cheaper credit is a strategic necessity to bring many households into the money economy.

Therefore, merging Post Bank, Pride Microfinance and Microfinance Support Centre into one microfinance bank will create the impetus vital for transforming subsistence households into money economy participants.

Internal affairs sector

Government took a decision to merge, under Uganda Registration Services Bureau (URSB), the following agencies and functions; NIRA, NGO Registration Bureau and citizens registration functions under the Department of Immigration in the Ministry of Internal Affairs.

The committee recommends that URSB and NIRA remain separate entities with one being in charge of registration of legal entities and another in charge of the registration of persons.

The committee further recommends that the function relating to marriage, currently under URSB, be transferred to NIRA so that NIRA is enabled to have a register of the complete life of a person from birth, marriage and death.

The committee further recommends that the citizen registration function and issuance of passports be transferred to NIRA.

The committee also recommends that the function of registration of NGOs, currently under NGO Registration Bureau, be transferred to URSB.

Justification

The URSB plays a critical role in supporting private sector development. It is mandated to promote, register and protect; business enterprises, security interest in moveable property, intellectual property and many others.

URSB currently registers companies, business names, partnerships and moveable assets. It has simplified the process of registration, which has resulted in reduction of the informal sector, increased the tax base and increased non-tax revenue collection. As a result of these measures, URSB has registered increased NTR (non-tax revenue) of Shs 42.5 billion in 2016 and others, as you can see.

The improved performance of URSB is attributed to zero tolerance to corruption, efficient service delivery, business process reengineering, improved transparency and accountability.

While Government has decided that the expanded URSB should be domiciled under the Ministry of Internal Affairs, possibly for easy security surveillance, the main thrust of URSB is business formalisation and promotion of the private sector.

The committee recommends that URSB remains under the political supervision of the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

NIRA should remain a semi-autonomous agency charged with the function of registration of citizens and issuing them with national identification documents.

In addition, NIRA should take up the marriage registration, currently under URSB. NIRA would then be a one-stop centre for registering births, marriages and deaths of citizens.

Justice, law and order sector

Government has decided that Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution be mainstreamed in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. However, the committee recommends that the decision be reversed in order to maintain the Centre for Alternative Dispute Resolution as a semi-autonomous agency.

Justification

The centre attends to cases that involve both Government and private persons. It is possible that matters for resolution brought before the centre might involve Government as a complainant or defendant. Therefore, placing the centre in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs may compromise the independence of the centre and potentially make Government a judge in its own case.

Education sector

Government has decided that the National Library of Uganda be mainstreamed in the Ministry of Education and Sports. The committee recommends this decision be rescinded by Government so that the National Library of Uganda, Uganda National Records and Archives Centre and Uganda Museum are merged into one semi-autonomous body.

The committee further recommends the National Library of Uganda be strengthened with financial resources and strong leadership.

Justification

A library is an important resource for national development. No country can develop and thrive without promoting the writing and reading culture. The National Library of Uganda, which is mandated to promote a writing and reading culture, has been kept unfunded and un-strengthened. Its visibility and importance has greatly diminished.

Therefore, the National Library of Uganda should be capacitated to execute its critical functions as outlined below, rather than mainstreaming it in the ministry for education or gender. The core functions of the National Library of Uganda, as per the law – but which have remained unrealised – are below and you can read them.

National Council for Sports, Namboole National Stadium and Nakivubo War Memorial Stadium

Cabinet took a decision to maintain National Council for Sports, Namboole National Stadium and Nakivubo War Memorial Stadiumas semi-autonomous agencies. The committee recommends that in order to promote sports in Uganda in a structured and sustainable way, Government should create a sports authority or ministry of sports to promote and nurture sports in Uganda from the grassroots.

Justification

The sports sector has not been prioritised enough under the current Ministry of Education and Sports. The public stadia in the various parts of the country are not being properly maintained, leading to their decay and encroachment. It is high time an authority or ministry of sports was created to promote sports in a holistic manner and manage all the public sports infrastructure and talent in the country, from the grassroots to the professional level.

National Council for Higher Education and the rest

Cabinet decided to mainstream the students financing body, Kyambogo Teacher Curriculum, National Council for Higher Eduation and Uganda National Commission for UNESCO into the Ministry of Education and Sports.

The committee recommends that National Council for Higher Education, National Curriculum Development Centre and Kyambogo Teacher Curriculum be merged into one institution.

Justification

The three institutions appear to have a common agenda - curriculum development at different levels of education. Merging them will enhance effective coordination and regulation of the three educational institutions.

Students financing board

The committee recommends that the Students Financing Board and the Central Scholarship Committee in the Ministry of Education be merged and mainstreamed in the Ministry of Education.

Justification

Both institutions serve the same purpose of providing funding to students who are unable to finance their education. The difference lies in the source of funding.

Uganda Nurses and Midwifery Examinations Board, Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board and Uganda Technical and Business Examinations Board be merged and placed under Ministry of Education and Sports.

The committee recommends that Uganda Nurses and Midwifery Examinations Board, Uganda Allied Health Examinations Board and Uganda Technical and Business Examinations Board be merged and Placed under the Ministry of Education and Sports. In addition, the examination functions under Nyabyeya Forestry Institute and Bukalasa Agriculture Institute should be transferred to the post-secondary examination body that will be created after the proposed mergers.

Justification

It is cost-effective to have a single examination body for post-secondary education.

Directorate of Industrial Training, Nakawa Vocational Training Institute and Management Training and Advisory Centre

The committee recommends that the three institutions be merged to create a Centre for Vocational Training in Uganda under the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Justification

The three institutions are in the same vicinity and provide access to vocational skills. Merging them will create synergies critical for vocationally skilling Ugandans for socio-economic transformation.

Agriculture Sector

Uganda Coffee Development Authority

Cabinet took a decision to scrap UCDA of its semi-autonomous status and transfer its functions to the agriculture ministry. The committee recommends that UCDA be retained as a semi-autonomous agency.

Madam Speaker, I am happy to report on this that even the agriculture ministry wrote a letter requesting that this particular agency should be semi-autonomous; so, the minister was with us on this.

Justification

Mainstreaming UCDA will negatively affect the achievements Uganda has attained in coffee production and export, will negatively affect our access to the international market and will stunt Uganda’s economic growth opportunities.

Coffee is the second most traded commodity in the tropical world after oil, and is the second beverage after water. More than 1.7 million households in Uganda depend on coffee related activities.

Uganda is the leading coffee exporter in Africa and is the second leading coffee producer in Africa after Ethiopia. Uganda should not risk its achievement by tampering with UDCA that is the main cause of our coffee success story. In 2020/2021, Uganda’s coffee exports totalled 6.08 million bags compared to three million bags in 2011/2012 which means our coffee is growing as a result of trust in other growing countries.

Uganda is the third country in the world with the best coffee as per the rankings of the Coffee Quality Institute in the United States, the first being Ethiopia, and Kenya second.

Why would one tamper with an agency that has put Uganda on the top of the list of coffee producers, coffee exporters and best coffee quality producers? It is most likely that once UCDA is mainstreamed in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, Uganda’s coffee production and quality will be greatly affected.

Uganda Coffee Development Authority has invested heavily in coffee quality assurance; the reason Uganda coffee has displaced other coffees in Italy and other markets. Coffee quality control requires swiftness and high levels of efficiency. Uganda’s coffee process engineers are deployed in the field to monitor quality compliance of 560 primary processors, 22 washing stations, 23 roasters, 704 buying stores and so much more.

The Uganda Cabinet appears to have taken these potentially risky decisions without benchmarking from the neighbouring countries. Government is strongly advised to learn from the experiences of Ethiopia and Kenya.

Ethiopia experience

In 2007, Ethiopia disbanded its Coffee and Tea Authority when the Ethiopian Commodity Exchange was introduced. The Ministry of Agriculture took on the responsibility for the promotion and quality control of coffee and tea. In 2015, Ethiopia realised that it had made a huge mistake to disband the Coffee and Tea Authority, when the quality and volume of coffee declined. Ethiopia reversed its decision to re-establish the Coffee and Tea Authority. Kenya also had a similar experience.

Uganda Cotton Development Organisation

Government took a decision to have the functions of the Uganda Cotton Development Organisation (CDO) mainstreamed in the agriculture ministry. The committee recommends that the Cotton Development Organisation be maintained as a semi-autonomous agency.

There is no money that Government puts in cotton, but the ginners do it alone, especially when we visited per day in Kitgum and other areas, we found that the ginners were doing all the work for themselves. There is no point as to why Cabinet should think of doing away with the Uganda Cotton Development Organisation. You can read the entire page 33, but let us move forward faster.

Dairy Development Authority (DDA)

Government approved the mainstreaming of the Dairy Development Agency (DDA) into the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. The committee recommends that DDA be retained as a semi-autonomous agency to promote dairy development, provide regulatory services and promote consumption of milk and milk products in the country.

National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS)

Government took a decision that NAADS be stripped of its semi-autonomous status and its functions be mainstreamed in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. The committee agrees with the decision of Cabinet that NAADS he mainstreamed and restructured to be a vehicle for agriculture strategic interventions and agricultural input provision.

Justification

NAADS was established in 2001 as a semi-autonomous body in the Ministry of Agriculture to provide agriculture advisory services. However, in 2014, Government took a decision that NAADS should focus on facilitating the growth of wealth at the household level for the entire country. Consequently, NAADS mandate shifted to supporting the agricultural value chain development with emphasis on: agricultural input distribution, good post-harvesting practices, agro-processing and value addition.

In 2014, Government, through the Civilian-Veterans Initiatives in the Luwero – Rwenzori triangle supported the implementation of NAADS interventions through the provision of seeds and other planting materials as well as stocking materials to the target beneficiaries with the involvement of UPDF commanders. The interventions of NAADS are aimed at increasing production and productivity of the various priority and strategic commodities for improved household food and income security as well as export earnings.

Consequently, NAADS has facilitated, through the Operation Wealth Creation Programme, the distribution of improved planting materials notably, maize, beans, cassava, banana, and all sorts of agricultural products.

NAADS has also distributed solar powered irrigation systems and tractors, hand hoes, community grain stores, milk coolers and matching generators, etc. Therefore, we feel that it should be mainstreamed in order to be harmonised and provide the same good services.

Uganda Agro-Chemicals Board

Government took a decision that Uganda Agro-Chemical Board be merged with the National Drug Authority. The committee recommends that Uganda Agriculture Chemicals Board (ACB) be created as a semi-autonomous regulatory authority in the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and be strengthened.

Justification

Currently, the National Drug Authority regulates human and veterinary drugs. Merging the functions of the Agro-Chemicals Board (ACB) into NDA would mean that NDA must take on agrochemicals, agro fertilisers, etc in addition to its focus on human drugs and veterinary drugs; in other words, regulating and promoting plant health. That is the decision we made.

Water and Environment Sector

National Forestry Authority

Government took a decision to mainstream the National Forestry Authority into the Ministry of Water and Environment. However, the committee recommends that NFA be maintained as a semi- autonomous entity.

Justification

The National Forestry Authority should be maintained and strengthened to contribute to the resolution of climate change crisis. Uganda is currently faced with climate change challenges. It has signed international agreements on climate change. Survival of mankind will depend on restoration of the environment, ecosystem and forest cover.

Uganda National Meteorological Authority:

Government took a decision to mainstream the Uganda National Meteorological Authority into the Ministry of Water and Environment.

However, the committee recommends that Uganda National Meteorological Authority be retained as a semi-autonomous agency.

Justification

Meteorological services are classified as essential services in Uganda by the Public Service Negotiating, Consultative and Dispute Settlement Machinery Act, 2008 *-* services, which if withdrawn abruptly may:

(a) cause loss of life;

(b) threaten the well-being of society;

(c) cause major disruption in the nation, and

(d) cause disaster.

The Uganda National Meteorological Authority was established by an Act of Parliament, to monitor, predict, promote and provide advisory services to Government and other stakeholders on weather, climate and atmospheric pollutants for the sustainable development of Uganda. Meteorological services are required by different sectors of the economy such as: agriculture, tourism, transport (marine, aviation, and the roads), monitoring and combating climate change, water resource quality and availability, and energy planning and development.

Madam Speaker, I now move on to the ICT sector *–* the National Information Technology Authority - Uganda (NITA-U).

Government earmarked NITA-U for mainstreaming in the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance. The committee recommends that the intention of mainstreaming of NITA-U into the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance should be abandoned, and instead maintain NITA-U as a strategic semi-autonomous agency of Government to spearhead the digital transformation programme for the socio-economic development of Uganda.

Energy and Mineral Sector

Rural Electrification Agency

In February 2021, Cabinet decided that the Rural Electrification Agency be mainstreamed under the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development.

The committee recommends that Cabinet rescinds its decision and reinstates Rural Electrification Agency as a semi-autonomous body to promote and execute the Rural Electrification Programme of the NRM government.

Justification

According to the Carbon Initiative for Development, the rate of electricity access in rural Uganda is remarkably low at just 11 per cent. Government is working to raise access levels to 25 per cent by 2022. However, this target may not be realised due to the abolishment of the Rural Electrification Agency.

The Rural Electrification Agency was established by the Minister for Energy and Mineral Development as a semi-autonomous body under the Establishment and Management of the Rural Electrification Fund Instrument, 2001, S.l. No.75 of 2001. REA has done a commendable job to connect rural areas of Uganda to the national electricity grid. It is responsible for 11 per cent of rural electrification in Uganda. There was great enthusiasm that with the development of more hydroelectric dams in Uganda, more rural areas of Uganda were going to access electricity through REA.

Madam Speaker, all Members of Parliament testified that they have benefited from REA. However, since REA was abolished and brought to the mainstream, the services are no longer as efficient as they used to be.

Uganda Electricity Distribution Company Limited (UEDCL), Uganda Electricity Generation Company Limited (UEGCL) and Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL)

Cabinet took a decision that the three electricity companies, namely: UEDCL, UEGCL and UETCL be merged. The committee strongly supports the decision of Cabinet to amalgamate the three electricity companies into one agency.

The committee further recommends that the electricity agency created through the merger should be capitalised.

Justification

The merger of the three electricity bodies into one semi-autonomous agency will create efficiency and reduce the cost of electricity in Uganda.

Madam Speaker, people are suffering because of the high cost of power. It must be the reason why there are very many bodies. Possibly, let us try that one - if they are merged; and we see if the cost will go down.

The committee observed that concessions of Umeme and ESKOM will be expiring in 2023 and 2025, respectively. The committee further observed that there are several ongoing contracts by the three electricity companies, which require constant supervision until they are finalised. The committee recommends that the merger of the three electricity bodies be quickened to avert a vacuum in the electricity sector and ensure effective oversight of the ongoing contracts.

Works and Transport Sector

Uganda National Roads Authority

Cabinet took a decision to strip UNRA of its semi-autonomous status and have its functions mainstreamed in the Ministry of Works and Transport. However, the committee recommends that Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) be maintained as a semi-autonomous agency for the management of road works in the country. The committee further recommends that UNRA should be restructured for effective performance.

Justification

UNRA has built capacity in the area of road design and supervision. Many projects are now being supervised by UNRA engineers. This has saved the country huge sums of money that used to go to foreign supervising consultants.

In addition, all roads in Uganda are motorable; thanks to UNRA. The achievements of UNRA are vivid and detailed below. Madam Speaker, there could be some inefficiency, but anybody who thinks of UNRA being mainstreamed in the Ministry of Works and Transport, where the work was before, I do not think the Ministry of Works and Transport has become efficient enough to take care of our needs on the roads.

Uganda Road Fund

Madam Speaker, where we are now, the Rt Hon. Prime Minister has said that Uganda is now well connected with tarmac roads.

**THE SPEAKER:** Clerk, whatever is being skipped in the report should kindly be captured in the *Hansard*.

*(The report is hereby appended.)*

**MR BYANYIMA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance. Cabinet in February 2021 took a decision to have the functions of the Uganda Road Fund mainstreamed into the Ministry of Works and Transport.

The committee recommends that the Cabinet decision be reversed in order to maintain the Uganda Road Fund as a semi-autonomous body under the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Justification

Uganda Road Fund has greatly helped in road maintenance in Uganda, and mainstreaming the fund in the Ministry of Works and Transport, will most likely negatively affect road maintenance in the country. The Uganda Road Fund was established by the Uganda Road Fund Act, 2008 for purposes of financing routine and periodic maintenance of public roads.

The aim was to have a sustainable source of funding for road maintenance. The Road Fund is under the line Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and not the Ministry of Works and Transport. The Road Fund is a financing institution independent of the Ministry of Works and Transport, UNRA, KCCA, city councils, municipalities, districts, town councils and sub-counties, which are implementing agencies for road maintenance. These institutions sign performance agreements with the Road Fund.

The committee noted that the legislated sources of the Road Fund under Section 21 of the Uganda Road Fund Act, 2008, were not being respected by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and URA. Instead, Uganda Road Fund was getting allocations from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. The committee recommends that the violators of the law be held to account.

Madam Speaker, I call upon this House to assist Uganda Road Fund so that it can progress to the second generation, where our neighbours Kenya and Tanzania are. Recently, members of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development visited Tanzania and they were wondering why Tanzania is doing better than us and yet, they were behind us. This is because of the Road Fund.

Uganda Railway Corporation and Standard Gauge Railway (SGR)

Government took a decision that the two institutions - the Uganda Railways Corporation and the Standard Gauge Railway be retained as autonomous bodies.

The committee recommends that:

1. All railway services (metre gauge and standard gauge)

**THE SPEAKER:** Chairman, are you saying that Uganda Road Fund should be on its own, this one which is a cash bonanza for engineers? *(Laughter)* Please, go ahead.

**MR BYANYIMA:** It is open to debate. Definitely, we are not saints. There could be some other views contrary to ours.

1. All railway services (metre gauge and standard gauge) should be under one agency for easy coordination.

2. Government should implement the SGR as a project, but on completion be handed over to URC for management.

Justification

Railway transport is a critical strategic area for bulky transportation of goods. URC was formed after the breakup of the East African Railways Corporation (EARC) in 1977, when it took over the Ugandan part of the EA Railways. It is, therefore, up to this House and Members to decide on how to resolve and manage it. However, there is need for Government to design a new railway law that will integrate SGR and URC and strengthen URC in terms of funding and leadership.

Uganda Air Cargo Corporation Ltd (UACCL)

In the agency reform, Government decided to retain Uganda Air Cargo Corporation as a strategic defence facility. The committee recommends that if Government is not ready to invest resources in UACCL, it should wind up the corporation as it is currently heavily underfunded.

Justification

Uganda Air Cargo Corporation Ltd. is a strategic airlifting capability, which is heavily underfunded. The UACCL is a body corporate, primarily established to operate air transport services within and outside Uganda. UACCL is a strategic arm of the defence system of the country. It is used for commercial business during peace times and strategic lifting during war.

Since its establishment in 1994, UACCL has been serving the whole of Africa and beyond by providing air cargo and passenger services.

Social Development Sector

Government took a decision to merge the councils for children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly into one agency. On the contrary, the committee recommends that the councils for marginalised groups be retained as separate entities for sustained affirmative action.

Justification

Merging the councils for the various vulnerable groups will diminish the visibility of the unique challenges of the children, women, persons with disabilities and the elderly. It should also be appreciated that children, women, persons with disabilities and elderly persons do not have same interests, requirements and needs. We, therefore, propose that they retain their positions as semi-autonomous.

Equal Opportunities Commission

Cabinet took a decision to merge Uganda Human Rights Commission with the Equal Opportunities Commission. Much as the Equal Opportunities Commission is also a human rights agency, the committee recommends that the proposed merger be avoided or rescinded.

Justification

Many people and regions in Uganda remain vulnerable and under excluded from equal opportunities due to Uganda’s history and other structural and cultural factors. To such people and regions, affirmative action and equalisation of opportunity remain a critical need. The hope for such people and regions is the Uganda Equal Opportunities Commission.

The Equal Opportunities Commission’s mandate is to promote the realisation of equalisation of opportunities among all Ugandans, to ensure that no one is left behind.

Conclusion

The committee appreciates the goodwill of Cabinet when it took a decision to rationalise some Government agencies. The committee, however, noted that the rationalisation process was embarked on without a comprehensive study of the whole Government machinery for service delivery.

The exercise did not benefit from adequate consultation of the stakeholders, and proceeded without examining the legal and economic costs involved, and without a business continuity assurance study.

There are risks that Uganda faces if the Cabinet decision on rationalisation of agencies is not reviewed. These include: legal risks arising from litigations against Government, loss of investor confidence, loss of employment opportunities, loss of competitiveness of Uganda’s economy and products, loss of international markets, injury to Uganda’s image and brand and reduced service delivery. There is also a risk of slowing down service delivery process and, weakening the quality of services if some of the Cabinet decisions are not reviewed.

The committee, therefore, recommends that Government should go in a cautious manner on rationalisation of some agencies. The committee agrees to some rationalisation decisions of Cabinet, but also disagrees with some.

In the latter case, the committee has made recommendations and justifications for them. The committee strongly believes that its recommendations will shield Uganda from exposure to serious risks and heavy costs.

Retention of agencies

Cabinet took a decision to retain 80 agencies as semi-autonomous agencies – which you have seen. The committee agrees with the decision of Cabinet on retention of the 80 agencies except one, which is URBRA, which the committee recommends should be transferred to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Merger of Agencies

The committee agrees with the decision of Cabinet to merge some agencies for efficient operations and economies of scale. In this regard, the committee concurs with Cabinet to merge electricity companies, the Public Service Commission, Health Service Commission, Education Service Commissions and many others as presented. The committee, however, disagrees with the Cabinet on merging the councils for children, women, persons with disability and the elderly. The committee also disagrees with the merger of Uganda Human Rights Commission with the Equal Opportunities Commission.

In regard to the agencies in the social sector, the committee recommends that their separate semi-autonomous statuses be maintained and more funding be extended to them.

The committee also disagrees with the merger of National Drug Authority and the Agro-Chemicals Board; and Uganda Registration Services Bureau with the National Identification Registration Authority.

The committee instead has proposed the merger of Pride Micro-Finance and the Micro-Finance Support Centre to form a credit bank for the vulnerable and weak economic actors who cannot access big commercial banks services that charge unaffordable high interest rates. The success of the Parish Development Model is hinged on a bank for the economically weak and poor.

Mainstreaming

On the mainstreaming of the 33 agencies, the committee concurs with the Cabinet decision, but recommends the retention of National Library of Uganda, Centre for Dispute Resolution, REA and agencies in the following sectors: Road sector i.e. UNRA and Uganda Road Fund; the Water and Environment Sector i.e. National Forest Authority, Uganda Meteorological Authority; agriculture sector i.e. Uganda Coffee Development Authority, Cotton Development Authority, Dairy Development Authority; and the ICT Sector i.e. National Information Technology Authority of Uganda (NITA-U).

The tearing down of semi-autonomous regulatory agencies in the agriculture sector, namely: UCDA, CDO and Dairy Development Authority will negatively affect Uganda’s exports to the international market, in the exact manner that Uganda’s tea was affected when the Uganda Tea Authority was abolished. As a result of abolishing Uganda Tea Authority, Uganda tea is sold by auction at Mombasa; at a cheap price and branded as tea from other countries. It will be reckless to throw away our national regulatory stamps, which have made our exports attract a premium price on the international market.

In addition, the mainstreaming of UNRA and Uganda Road Fund will expose Uganda’s most valuable assets to risk. Uganda’s road network is its most valuable asset and constitutes one of the largest assets in the country, currently valued at $8 billion equivalent to Shs 28.8 trillion.

Once again, the committee calls for a cautious approach in rationalising agencies. Poor leadership of some agencies should not be confused with poor value of agencies in service delivery.

The benefits of agencies:

i) Increased efficiency;

ii) Strengthened and clarified responsibility and accountability lines;

iii) A more encouraged and professional administration; and

iv) A more service-oriented administration placed closer to citizens, should not be lost.

Agencies should be allowed to perform with considerable managerial freedom and an extensive duty to report the results of their performances. The agencies are crying out for less political interference, but more managerial autonomy.

Finally, rationalisation of Government agencies alone will not yield sustainable results unless the entire Government, including ministries, are reviewed and rationalised. The working environment in the ministries must be improved with attractive remunerations to match the salaries offered by agencies. The ministries must have the capacity to develop policies and standards that are to be followed by the agencies.

Consequently, the committee recommends that Government commissions a comprehensive study - at times we think that we should involve sectoral chairpersons of this Parliament - of all Government ministries, departments and agencies, with a view of increasing efficiency, effectiveness, fairness and justice to service delivery, and in delivering better quality Government services.

Madam Speaker, this is what we were able to gather and we hope most of you, Members, have better ideas that we can bring together and create a formidable solution that can help the country to reach its own destiny. I beg to report. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable chairperson. As you have noticed from the report, the decisions taken have far-reaching consequences. They require us to exercise sober judgement. Let us not just make a decision because there is poor management in an institution so that we say, “okay, let us merge this.” We need very sober judgement in whatever we say. I encourage whichever Member is going to contribute, to have studied the legal regime surrounding these institutions, and the decisions they intend to submit, to avoid a lot of troublesome issues and conclusions.

Before we commence debate, can I hear from the minister who gave us this information because people thought we just looked for this information; they forgot that we got it from the Minister for Public Service.

5.12

**THE MINISTER FOR PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Muruli Mukasa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson and the ad hoc committee that produced this report. I received this report this afternoon when I came to Parliament. It is, indeed, a very substantial report, which contains very many recommendations that are of profound input; some of them go contrary to recommendations of the Cabinet.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I would like to beg your indulgence and that of the House that we do not debate this report now. Let Cabinet, the Ministry of Public Service and Members of Parliament be given time to study the recommendations of this committee, and have the opportunity once again to interact.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, do not speak for the rest of the people. We have different constituencies. Please, do not say “even us.”

**MR MURULI-MUKASA:** Thank you very much, for that guidance. The time we need will give us an opportunity to study these recommendations in-depth, interact further with members of the committee and give time to the Cabinet to look at these recommendations so that in the end, when we come to debate, we are not only informed, but maybe have reached harmonisation so that the debate does not take long or we do not pull ropes here and there; but come up with recommendations which are intended to be of great benefit to this country, so that we push the bar of service delivery higher. I beg to request.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members -

**MS OPENDI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise to seek guidance. I have no problem with the suggestion by the honourable minister. However, the guidance I would like to seek from you, Madam Speaker, is whether - on page five, you will note that the committee was constrained by time. Yet, there are very key institutions like Mulago National Referral Hospital that the committee was not able to interface with.

Madam Speaker, the guidance I am seeking is whether you would allow a few comments so that the minister can pick them up and go and study them as Cabinet, and then when we revert, maybe, he will have a position on them. That is the guidance I would like to seek.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, as I said in my opening remarks, the decision that we make here has far-reaching consequences and I would like you to be mindful of the legal regime in regard to these institutions. If the minister has asked for time to look at the report and come back with a harmonised position, mindful that it is this House that has the powers - I repeat that we are the ones that - Honourable members, I am organising an orientation for Members of Parliament from 16th to 18th June. When the Speaker is speaking in the House, the Speaker must be heard in silence. *(Applause)* As I have said, we can give the minister time to harmonise with the Cabinet position and report to this House.

This House can repeal - remember most of these institutions were legalised by Acts of Parliament, and it is only this House that has powers to either repeal or reject. Honourable minister, you will come back to this House with a harmonised position and we are giving you two months.

**MR MURULI-MUKASA:** Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourble members, by the time I give the two months - I understand what the minister is going through.

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We cannot challenge your ruling, but I am just seeking clarification. Government already started the process of the merger without repealing the Act and taking care of the interests of the workers. Some of the staff have been told, “you are this side now and this is your salary” contrary to the law and the terms and conditions of service. They were not given options to either take the new offer or resign and get paid.

Therefore, I am seeking your guidance on whether it is not proper for you to direct the minister to suspend the entire process until this House takes that final decision. *(Applause)*

**THE SPEAKER:** There is another procedural matter.

**MR EDDIE KWIZERA:** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I am a member of the Committee on Natural Resources and we handle several agencies. We are in receipt of the minister’s letter, stopping agencies of Government, established by Acts of Parliament, from recruitment, that is repealing or an amendment to an Act of Parliament.

Therefore, if we are going to stop the debate now, are we going to take the minister to -

**THE SPEAKER:** We have already ruled on the debate.

**MR EDDIE KWIZERA:** Can the minister now retract his directives to stop appointments of these CEOs? Otherwise, we are going to pass a budget, and that budget, will not have accounting officers. So, what shall we be doing? I thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, I hope you are writing.

5.20

**MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. What is very clear is that Government commenced an activity in total disregard of the law. We warned you – we are on record for warning you – and the consequences are likely to be dire.

Madam Speaker, your guidance is welcome, especially on the issue of time. We only pray – this discussion on the merger has created a lot of anxiety in these agencies. It has killed morale and there is a lot of uncertainty. In fact, if you engage any of the officers in these agencies, they are not very sure of what to do, especially with regard to their mandate. Those that are established by Acts of Parliament are not very sure.

Therefore, I only hope that in the meantime, Government finds a way of addressing issues of anxiety and uncertainty in these agencies, not to undermine the morale of the officers. However, it was a very big mistake to have undertaken such an exercise without regard to the law and processes, as established by Parliament.

As the report has mentioned, your recommendations and observations initially had little to do with the laws that established those agencies because eventually, you would have had to come back here. Even if you wanted them repealed or amended, you would have to come back here. That did not happen. However, we hope, going forward with this report, that that matter will be addressed. The issue of anxiety and uncertainty in these agencies must be addressed by Government.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, is it true that you have written to agencies to stop recruitment? If it is true, what next?

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** Madam Speaker, the rationalisation has not taken the practical step. What we are discussing now – and indeed, what this report has presented – is just the process leading to rationalisation, finally.

Madam Speaker, we gave ourselves a roadmap and said that in case in those agencies, maybe, have contracts that have expired, they can recruit, but the contracts should end not later than 30 June 2023. So, there is no total ban on recruitment. That is what we have communicated to the agencies -

**THE SPEAKER:** You have communicated to institutions about stopping recruitment.

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** We communicated to that effect and many agencies have followed our advice. We got -

**THE SPEAKER:** You see, honourable minister, it is not that they have followed your advice willingly. You ordered them. The word should be “ordered them.” My question is: Where do you get those powers?  *(Member rose\_)* Just wait a minute.

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** From the Cabinet.

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, does the Cabinet have powers to repeal a law?

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** No, Cabinet does not have the power. You see, I think -

**THE SPEAKER:** Why don’t you wait for a process to go through smoothly other than causing that kind of anxiety? Some people are worried; people have lost their lives because of this.

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** We are sorry about that *–(Interjections)-* honourable members, please, listen. Let me explain –

**THE SPEAKER:** You first listen to the minister.

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** Yes. Thank you, Madam Speaker. This whole process of rationalisation, first of all, started as a policy. The policy was taken to Cabinet and we are in the process of putting the final touches to it.

Now, the final touches, which will include coming to repeal laws that established these institutions, will come here. It is only after the laws have been amended or repealed that the practical side of rationalisation will come into play. So, really, it is a question of what comes first: policy or the law?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, practically, that is what is supposed to be done. However, where you ask institutions not to recruit or to lay off people is bad. Why don’t you wait for the whole process – until it is repealed – like what you did to REA?

5.26

**THE MINISTER FOR SECURITY (Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Jim Muhwezi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think there is no conflict because the Executive, my honourable friend, always manages the government side. When we made these bodies, many of them originated from the Cabinet. They were brought here and we made the laws that established them.

Now, what has been happening is the same process. Government is considering merging some of them and those that were established by Parliament, we will come here and we shall discuss, and Parliament - like the committee recommended, some of them may be merged.

So, your ruling, Madam Speaker, is correct. Let us go back, discuss and come back here.

**MR JOHN OKOT:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have been listening carefully to what the minister was explaining –*(Member rose\_) -*

**THE SPEAKER:** He is on Procedure.

**MR JOHN OKOT:** I have been listening very carefully to what the ministers that have been standing on the podium were talking about: Cabinet decided and they brought it to the House that enacted the parliamentary Act. From that time, it ceased to be an Executive order.

The Executive does their work – they can initiate policies and all the Bills – but the moment they come to this House and pass an Act, it should be this very House to repeal it and not the Executive.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, you have already ruled and given a timeframe for the minister to come here so that he can report on all this. However, the House is saying there is a lot of anxiety outside among our brothers and sisters who are employed by these agencies.

Given that you have already passed the ruling, is the minister proceeding rightly to continue insisting that Cabinet has already taken a decision?  That is why they are trying to make those adjustments in their staffing system. Aren’t they honouring the Parliament as it is?

5.29

**THE MINISTER FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think there is a misunderstanding of what is going on. First of all, we know which business to bring to the House. Before the business comes, there is a process followed by the Executive.

What Hon. Jim Muhwezi and the Minister for Public Service are saying is that there has been a discussion within the Executive, which is even not complete. If I recall, just on Monday, one of the items on the Order Paper of the Cabinet meeting was this issue of rationalisation. What we are saying is that the Executive Arm of Government, would like to reorganise the departments for better service delivery. Where it requires repealing or reviewing a law, then we shall come here. Therefore, I think there will be time for that debate. Otherwise, for anybody to say that –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have:

1. Sheikh Khab Lule - District Khathi, Kabale.  You are most welcome;

2. Hajji Isa Tindyebwa – the Chairman, Kabale Muslim Council; and

3. Birungi Fatuma – Women Chairperson, Kirigime Mosque.

They are represented by Hon. Nicholas Kamara and Hon. Catherine Ndamira. You are most welcome. *(Applause)* Hon. Kamara, where are you? He is there. Join me in welcoming our people.

Honourable members, I made a ruling to the effect that in two months’ time, I need feedback from the Minister for Public Service. In the meantime, before we do real rationalisation and before we repeal the Act, can you withdraw your letter stopping recruitment? *(Applause)*

Why are you suffocating institutions? At the end of the day, you are going to say that an institution is not working, yet, that will be because they will not be having staff. I was very happy when you said that you were sorry about it. Actually, my brother Jim was spoiling everything. Can you commit yourself, to ensure that all the institutions are operational?

**MR MURULI MUKASA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance. As far as we are concerned, apart from REA, the status quo of all these institutions remains until we have gone through the entire process, including the repeal of laws governing some of these institutions; and the practical aspect of rationalisation. Thank you. *(Applause)*

RESPONSE TO AN URGENT QUESTION RAISED BY HON. KAYEMBA GEOFREY SSOLO ON THE LACK OF FUNDS TO FACILITATE UGANDA’S PARTICIPATION IN BIRMINGHAM 2022 COMMONWEALTH GAMES DUE TO TAKE PLACE FROM 28TH JULY TO 8TH AUGUST 2022

5.34

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Denis Obua):** Madam Speaker, on Tuesday, 3 May 2022, Hon. Kayemba Geofrey Ssolo, the Shadow Minister for Sports, raised an issue on the lack of funds to facilitate Uganda’s participation in Birmingham 2022 Commonwealth Games due to take place from 28 July to 8 August 2022.

In the response by the Ministry of Education and Sports, I informed Parliament that a joint meeting had been organised on the same the following day, Wednesday, 4 May 2022, chaired by the First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports.

At this point, the Rt Hon. Speaker guided and directed that the Minister for Education and Sports reports to Parliament on the outcome of the meeting. I now wish to report and inform Parliament as follows:

1. The First Lady and the Minister for Education and Sports chaired a joint meeting with Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development at State House Nakasero on the above subject, on Wednesday, 4 May 2022.

2. The meeting decided as follows:

a. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development releases the required financial resources in two instalments;

i) In the fourth quarter for the Financial Year 2021/2022; and

ii) In the first quarter of the Financial Year 2022/2023 to facilitate qualification, preparation and presentation of Team Uganda at the Commonwealth Games 2022 Birmingham, UK.

b. A letter to the effect 2(a) above has been written by the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports; and to the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Finance and Secretary to the Treasury.

I beg to report and submit and also to lay a copy of the letter for purposes of effecting the decision of the meeting chaired by the First Lady and Minister for Education and Sports, where major decisions on the Commonwealth Games were taken. This letter is dated 5 May 2022; is addressed to the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury; and signed for Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Education and Sports. I beg to lay and report. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. We need the team to go and represent the country. We must prioritise sports in the next budget to avoid the ad hoc kind of decisions that we are taking. We need to make it a priority in the budget for the Financial Year 2022/2023. All we need as Parliament is a team to go for the Sports. *(Applause)*

RESPONSE TO AN URGENT QUESTION RAISED BY HON. SARAH OPENDI ON THE STATUS OF OPERATIONALISATION OF THE MENTAL HEALTH ACT, 2018 AND THE INCREASING NEED FOR MENTAL HEALTH AND PSYCHIATRIC CARE IN THE COUNTRY

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable *“Senga,”* this issue was raised on mental health. Mental health is on the rise because of very many factors. You will even find that within ourselves, there is a lot of mental health. Everybody is mad. It is the level that depends. *(Laughter)* – I am a chairperson of mental health.

5.38

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Anifa Kawooya):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. During the Parliamentary Sitting of Wednesday 27 April 2022, Hon. Sarah Opendi, Woman MP for Tororo District requested for a report on the operationalisation of the Mental Health Act, 2019; and also wanted to know the state of deployment of psychiatric nurses and other mental health workers in public health facilities in Uganda.

Until 2019, mental health care services were principally governed by the Mental Treatment Act of 1964. Under the old Act, the focus of mental health services was largely on the institutionalisation of persons with mental disorders. The Act did not provide for preventive care at the community level and established mental health as a separate service rather than a component of the broader health system. Since the 1990s, there have been efforts to change the status, which succeeded in 2019, with the passage of the new legislation.

The new Mental Health Act, 2019, which came into force on 18 February 2021, introduced mental health services at community level, new referral and admission procedures, and has significantly strengthened the protection of rights of people with mental health conditions, including the introduction of the requirement to consent for treatment.

The Act further regulates the provision of mental health services to foreigners and provides for the right of prisoners and other persons in detention for mental health care.

The Act also addresses the issue of stigma by adopting a more appropriate language toward people with mental health conditions.

The Act, in addition, established the Uganda Mental Health Advisory Board, to advise and monitor the implementation of this new law.

Dissemination of the Act

On 10 November 2021, during the commemoration of the World Mental Health Day in Uganda, the Act was officially launched. This commemoration attracted over 400 stakeholders, including members of the Parliamentary Forum on Mental Health and Non-Communicable Diseases. We have since disseminated it both online and in physical meetings and have shared copies with different stakeholders.

The Ministry of Health has also sensitised the mental health professionals on their role in regard to the different provisions of the Act. The Mental Health Division of the Ministry of Health conducts quarterly support supervision visits to the regional referral hospitals and general hospitals countrywide, and continues to sensitise healthcare workers about the Act. Currently, the Ministry of Health has partnered with the Network for Public Interest Lawyers to further disseminate the Act. This activity is scheduled to start on 15 May 2022.

The Act established the Uganda Mental Health Advisory Board for purposes of setting standards and monitoring the implementation of this Act. The Ministry of Health, on 15 February 2021, wrote to the different ministries and agencies, as stipulated in the Act, to nominate the respective officers as members of the Board. Unfortunately, this process went on until 23 March 2022, when we received the last nomination, and the ministry is currently in the process of appointing and inaugurating the board members.

The Act also provides for the appointment of district mental health focal persons from among the district health staff to coordinate district and community mental health services. To this end, the Ministry of Health, in consultation with the relevant stakeholders, has drafted terms of reference, and the final draft is now ready for approval. We will then share this with all chief administrative officers to guide in the appointment of district mental health focal persons, as stipulated by the Act.

Some provisions of the Act require regulations for proper enforcement. A case in point is, Part III of the Act, which focuses on the treatment and admission of persons with mental illness that requires guidelines on voluntary and involuntary admissions. The process of writing these regulations is ongoing.

Regarding the state of deployment of psychiatric nurses/mental health workers, mental health care was identified as a component of the Minimum Essential Health Care Package in 1999, to be provided at all levels of care. As such, mental health services were integrated into Primary Health Care at health centres III and IV levels. At the health centre IV level, the human resource staffing norms provide for an enrolled psychiatric nurse. While district hospitals should have a psychiatric clinical officer and two psychiatric nurses to run the mental health clinic. The regional referral hospitals should have a psychiatrist and other cadres of mental health workers.

Due to challenges in recruitment at the district levels, the positions for the mental health workforce are not yet filled up. However, so far, six out of the 13 regional referral hospital mental health departments are headed by psychiatrists, and more than 15 new psychiatrists are being trained. The psychiatric nurses and clinical officers are available in the country, but not yet recruited by the districts, as aforementioned.

In conclusion, I would like to appreciate this august House, and specifically the Parliamentary Forum on Mental Health, of which you are the patron, as you have clearly said, for their efforts in ensuring that services to the people with mental health problems are streamlined.

I would like to thank you for your support, especially during the COVID-19 lockdown when the mental health units within the regional referral hospitals were taken up as COVID-19 treatment centres. We have since returned these facilities for their correct use, and most of them have been renovated as our mental health facilities.

I thank you, Madam Speaker and honourable members. For God and My Country. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, honourable minister, for returning our facilities of mental health. We also need counselling services for people with mental health. It should be countrywide because most of these people get these effects because of depression; you know what people are going through now after COVID-19. We need to make sure that we prioritise this kind of treatment. You may find that somebody is not even sick, but because of depression, school fees issues and sickness, they get mentally unstable. We need special counselling services for these people.

5.47

**MR GEOFFREY MACHO (Independent, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Madam Speaker, I am the only chairman of the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Mental Health in the 11th Parliament. I would like to thank the minister because, since this country got independence, today, she stood up to speak about mental health.

At the same time, I would like to thank the media fraternity of this country – today’s *New Vision* headline was: *“14 million Ugandans mentally sick”,* including some people in the august House, because we have very many problems arising from burials to everything. When you see a Member of Parliament speaking alone and using gestures, just know there is a problem.

Madam Speaker, I would like to agree with you that we need counselling. Minister, to further your submission, we request Government to provide budgetary plans for the Ministry of Health, on mental health, because the money given to a unit of mental health is very little. And, we request that these units be upgraded to departments because a total of 14 million people – that is almost a quarter of the population.

Madam Speaker, I thank you for your advice. We should mainstream mental health treatment in all Government hospitals.

I have seen experiences where people who have mental health challenges are beaten and chased away from hospitals because we do not have mental health specialists to handle them. Therefore, this is very timely, and I thank my sister, hon. Sarah Opendi. As I summarise, Madam Speaker, we have a challenge; medicine for mental health in this country is not available. It has been left for private pharmacies to handle, and is very expensive for a mental health person, because the major cause of mental health is poverty, frustration and disease.

I, therefore, request that this should not be the last time the minister submits, and if possible, Madam Minister who has presented should be appointed as the focal point minister in charge of mental health so that you help us; you had left this matter to our patron to meet the chairman and the Members.

Already, we are happy that UNICEF and World Health Organisation together with her ministry, are inviting 100 Members of Parliament from 23rd to 27th to Jinja for a training on issues of mental health because we need to streamline mental health in all sectors of leadership and budgeting.

Madam Speaker, I came this morning from Busia –

**THE SPEAKER:** From 23rd to 27th of which month?

**MR MACHO:** Of this month, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** No, the invitation has been declined. This month we are busy with budgets. So, tell your people that my Members will not go out of Kampala until the budget is read.

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, we shall advise them to comply with your directive because the Speaker’s directive is final.

Lastly, I was giving a submission concerning my journey this morning. While on my journey from Busia to Kampala, I met almost 18 people who have “grown-up mental illness.” *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** How did you measure?

**MR MACHO:** Grown-up mental illness are mad people –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the report has been given and you have made your prayer.

**MR MACHO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** And we have a very – Yes, I will come to the person who asked the question and then the chairman.

**MR KOMAKECH:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** By the way, the statement from the minister is not for debate.

**MR KOMAKECH:** Madam Speaker, it is a clarification. Madam Minister, thank you very much for the report. One thing I wanted to inform the House about is that mental health will not speak for itself unless as Members, we stand and speak for these sick individuals.

Secondly, I agree, the minister said we will have psychiatric nurses and clinical officers in every district, but right now, there is only one psychiatric nursing school in the entire country, Butabika School of Psychiatric Nursing; and only one school for psychiatric clinical officers in the entire country; School of Psychiatric Clinical Officers, Butabika. I do not know if these institutions can provide us with the nurses and the clinical officers we need in the country. That is something that the minister needs to look into.

Thirdly –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister take note.

Thirdly, the minister talked of having 13 referral regions for psychiatric clients, but in Gulu, we do not have a psychiatrist: Gulu is a regional referral hospital, representing the entire northern region, but there is no single psychiatrist there, other than psychiatric nurses and clinical officers.

Taking the point further, Pader District is highly hit with Nodding Disease Syndrome. Madam Speaker, Pader District has not even one psychiatric nurse –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Komakech, is that the course you did?

**MR KOMAKECH:** Yes.

**THE SPEAKER:** You disadvantaged our people by joining politics. You should have remained *-(Laughter)*

**MR KOMAKECH:** Madam Speaker, I came to speak on the Floor of Parliament so that I could speak on the fate of the people. It was not being brought out for people to understand what they are going through.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we have heard the statement of the minister.

5.54

**MS SARAH OPENDI (Independent, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I raised this issue, and I would like to thank the minister for her response. However, this Act was assented to by the President on 25 December 2018. I know it takes a while to develop regulations, which unfortunately, the Principal Medical Officer, the late Dr Sheila Ndyanabangi, when she passed on, left a bit of a gap. I want the minister to give us a timeline within which these regulations will be in place.

Secondly, although the minister talks about the health centres III and IV, district hospitals; and generally, that these psychiatric services have been streamlined into the primary health care services; it is not the case.

As we speak now, I have a person with a mental health challenge currently at home. We took her to Tororo Hospital and she was referred to Butabika; and another, we brought last week to Butabika. So, Madam Speaker, this is a serious issue, and when you hear that 14 million Ugandans have mental health challenges, it means, out of every 10, three people have a challenge.

So, when I look at Members of Parliament here, I am imagining out of every 10, who are the three? That is what the statistics actually show. *(Laughter)*

I request that the minister should prioritise this and maybe, in the next three months, they should have the regulations in place so that these services can be available and we stop bringing people to Butabika Hospital. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, we need the regulations in place and they should be operationalised - not just having, but operationalisation. Yes, Chairman of the Committee on Health.

5.56

**DR CHARLES AYUME (NRM, Koboko Municipality, Koboko):** Madam Speaker, one of the lacunas inthe Mental Health Act, is the fact that it does not superintend over private mental health care facilities. So, most of the mentally ill patients are left at the mercy of these people. The Act does not superintend over them. I think it is something that we need to look into in future when we are amending the law.

Secondly, there are less than 60 psychiatrists in the country. It is not a very attractive profession because most people think it is not well-paying - and you cannot force people to go to school to study a subject. That is why most of the general hospitals and regional referrals do not have psychiatrists, but the structures cascade as far as health centres IV.

Probably, in future, we should have psychiatric nurses go up to health centres III. And, in the Public Health (Amendment) Bill, we are trying to capture mental health as one of the non-communicable diseases in there that need priority. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Next item.

RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER TO AN URGENT QUESTION FROM THE RT HON. PRIME MINISTER

5.58

**THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (SECURITY) (Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Jim Muhwezi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

The Rt Hon. Prime Minister contacted the relevant Minister for the Presidency. She has requested for seven more days to come up with a comprehensive and appropriate response, after investigating this matter.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is that the matter, which was raised by Hon. Abdallah?

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Yes. It was the interaction of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure. The police –

**THE SPEAKER:** By Ssebamala?

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Yes.

**THE SPEAKER:** On the same note, there is a Member of Parliament - hon. Robert Ssekitoleko   and hon. Brenda were also blocked this weekend. Isn’t that true?

5.59

**MS BRENDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luweero):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also want to bring to the notice of this House and the minister, that on Saturday, we organised the local people to do community work on a wetland that needed culverts and other technical works. We procured the materials to make sure that the road was worked on and was passable. We also intended to train the communities on how they can actually handle, in case the district has not come in to help during the rainy season.

When we reached the venue, we found three patrol vehicles with the new District Police Commander (DPC), and they told us the President was in the Kiwoko, Nakaseke District, in a crusade and so, we could not just come and do other activities. They stopped us and chased away the local community members. We ended up running away because we could not proceed.

We had planned this activity about a month before. How can a leader in a community be stopped from doing community work with their voters?

My prayer is that the minister should look into this. I think we need to train the men in uniform. They actually do not know what to do. At the end of the day, we fail to do our work; and you must know that this is giving us more support. We were stopped and had to pull away and nothing happened that day. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, these people engaged the community to work on a road. If they brought the community to work on a road, which we have failed to work on as Government, why would you chase them away?

Secondly, what insecurity do those people who are digging the road bring to the President, who is in another district? We need to be humane on some of these things.

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Madam Speaker, it is regrettable that this is happening. We are going to take measures to inform the local leaders about the role of Members of Parliament. There should be harmony because we are all pushing for the same thing – to give good services to our people. This is what Government is doing and I am sure that is what Members of Parliament are working for. We shall investigate this matter and take appropriate –

**THE SPEAKER:** Give us the reports at the same time.

RESPONSES BY MINISTERS TO URGENT QUESTIONS:

  ON ALLEGED HUMAN RIGHTS VIOLATIONS, ABDUCTIONS, ARRESTS AND TORTURE OF CITIZENS BY THE CHIEFTAINCY OF MILITARY INTELLIGENCE (CMI) AND INTERNAL SECURITY ORGANISATION (ISO) CITING THE CASE OF A ONE ISMA SEMUTO WHO WAS ABDUCTED FROM KALAGI ON WEDNESDAY, 27th  APRIL 2022 AND DETAINED AT KIREKA ON THE ORDERS OF GEN. BIRUNGI; BY HON. KIWANUKA ABDALLAH, MP-MUKONO NORTH

6.03

**THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (SECURITY) (Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Jim Muhwezi):** Madam Speaker, on 5 May 2022, my honourable colleague, Hon. Abdallah Kiwanuka raised a matter about Isma Semuto aka “Munna” whom he alleged had been abducted.

In response to this matter, Isma Semuto was not abducted, but was arrested on 23 April 2022, at Kalagi, in Mukono District. He was involved in the murder of   Lukabwe, the former GISO of Kyampisi, in Mukono District.

This murder was committed with others who are still at large. He is detained at the Special Investigation Unit, Kireka Barracks, a gazetted detention station. Investigations are still going on. I beg to report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is he still in the cells?

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Yes. To my knowledge, he is still in the cells.

**THE SPEAKER:** When was he arrested?

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** On 23 April 2022.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can he be brought to court?

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** I do not have that information, but I can find out and report back.

**THE SPEAKER:** What I am saying is: If he is a suspected criminal, take him to court so that the court can charge him; other than keeping him in the cells. You are breaching the law on the 48-hour rule.

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Much obliged.

**THE SPEAKER:** We need a report on what happened to Isma Semuto. Let him be taken to court so that the court can decide his fate.

6.05

**MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono):** Thank you, Madam Speaker for that wise guidance. I am rising on the response given by the minister and a few others, which the minister has deliberately left out.

We accept that Semuto might be a criminal and might have participated in the murder with many others. Around 20 people were arrested together with him and the wife of Lukabwe. They have spent two months in detention. They do not allow the family, lawyers and doctors to access them.

My colleague, as a lawyer, knows the provision under Articles 23 and 28 of the Constitution. I expected a directive that they are taken to court together with Mr Stephen Kasozi, who was arrested a week ago.

Every other day, they arrest people –

**THE SPEAKER:** Now, we are talking about Isma. You raised an issue about Isma. If Isma is in the cells, he has a right to access his doctor and people. Take him to court, charge him with murder, if investigations are over, but you cannot continue keeping him in the cells illegally.

I am not going to start discussing torture.No. I am talking about Isma, and I am saying, Isma must be given freedom to see his doctor, lawyer and relatives.

**MR KIWANUKA:** Madam Speaker, the only issue – we would not be coming here to always mention various people who are being abducted - I call upon the honourable minister to prevail over his agencies – CMI and ISO. The President was clear about what they are supposed to do, but they have deliberately refused to comply. Please, prevail over those –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable acting Prime Minister and Minister for Security, let us differentiate between criminality and politics. Let us not have people detained because of politics. If they are criminals, handle them. If they are just mere politicians who make noise left, right and centre, you can keep them for a short time and release them. Why should we keep people who are looking for a living?

I read somewhere where they said –

**MAJ. GEN. (RTD) MUHWEZI:** Madam Speaker, we are very much aware that these agencies – ISO and ESO – do not have powers to arrest. It is only the Director General who may keep a person for not more than 48 hours.

Therefore, these agencies do not arrest. Even this Isma Ssemuto was arrested by police – CMI working with the police – and that is why he is now at the Special Investigations Unit, Kireka, which is a gazetted police detention facility.

**THE SPEAKER:** No. We are talking about all the uniformed personnel, including the police. Therefore, we should not have people who have political issues. Let us have criminals – because our cells are full.

I would like to thank you very much. House is adjourned to 2 o’clock tomorrow.

*(The House rose at 6.09 and adjourned until Wednesday, 11 May 2022 at 2.00 p.m.)*