

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 27 OCTOBER 2026

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FIRST SESSION - 12TH SITTING - SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 27 October 2026

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

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today›s sitting. Hon. Linos, you are welcome. The East African Community Marathon is scheduled for Sunday 29 November 2026 in Kampala, Uganda, organised by the Parliamentary Forum on East African Community Affairs (PEYAKA), working closely with the Ministry for East African Community Affairs.

The marathon will be held under the theme, "Run for Unity towards the East African Political Federation." This is an annual event to be held alongside the East African Heads of State Summit and hosted on a rotational basis among partner states. The marathon will be flagged off by His Excellency, Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, President of the Republic of Uganda and the Chairperson of the East African Community. It will serve as a legacy initiative during Uganda's chairmanship of the East African Community.

I have informed you in advance so that you can start training because I do not want people to collapse on the set off line- we have like a month, so we are able – I, therefore, call upon all ministries, government departments, private sector and the East African citizens to participate in this great regional event.

Honourable colleagues, on a very sad note, we lost our two former colleagues, Hon. Moses Matovu, who represented Busiro South in the 11th Parliament – *[Hon. Member: "Charles Matovu."]* - Charles Matovu, sorry. Thank you. I do not know what happened to my team that put together the text. Hon. Charles Matovu represented Busiro South in the 11th Parliament, and Hon. Amos Mandela represented the people of Buyamba County in the Ninth and 10th Parliaments. I had both of these colleagues in the House.

Hon. Charles Matovu was buried on Wednesday, 28 October 2026. That is on Sunday - I think I need to go and have a talk with my team. I am sorry, honourable colleagues. Sometimes, I tell my team to prepare for me, and I always want to follow. I am sorry about that. He was buried last Sunday and Hon. Ethel Naluyima represented us, as the Commission, together with other colleagues; and we coordinated with her.

As the leadership of Parliament, we support the families of our fallen former colleagues. We put in place an arrangement on how to support these families. Therefore, we coordinated it through Hon. Ethel Naluyima, and I thank you, honourable, for that coordination. *(Applause)*

We also lost Hon. Amos Mandela Mugerwa, and he will be buried on Wednesday, 28 October 2026. Our two colleagues represented their people with distinction, commitment and passion. May the good Lord reward them for their good deeds.

On the same sad note, honourable colleagues, Hon. Ruth Rujoki, District Woman Representative for Kiruhura, lost her mother, Canon Verinah Rujoki, a former counsellor, teacher, and mentor. This is also the mother of Mr Johnson Musinguzi, the Commissioner General of the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA); one of the smartest people we know in Ankole. Their mother anchored their lives on religion and also helped transform very many communities.

Therefore, Ankole and the whole country are mourning her and we thank her for her service to humanity. Burial will take place on Friday, 30 October 2026 in Rushere, Kiruhura District. Tomorrow, there will be a service at All Saints Cathedral at 9.00 a.m.

The Ankole group that includes Hon. Molly Kamukama, Hon. Cohen and Hon. Kajwengye are coordinating with us. We call upon those who are not able to go to Kiruhura to go to church and support our honourable colleague. We have also put up transport arrangements for the burial of Hon. Amos Mandela in Rakai.

Honourable colleagues, let us observe a minute of silence for the fallen.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, with regard to that matter, there is something we need to look at and address, as leaders, and I am glad the Minister for National Guidance is here. Those who attended the burial of our colleague, the late Hon. Charles Matovu, witnessed what I can term as unfortunate scenes.

I do not want to go into very strong words, but one of our colleagues, Hon. Herbert Kinobere, who had gone for the burial, survived lynching. Hon. Charles was a very serious footballer and a very close colleague to those in the football team, but also very amiable. Many colleagues had approached me that they wanted to attend the burial, and called for support, which we did. Therefore, I do not know what has happened to the country that even coming to bury a colleague becomes a problem.

Of course, I wanted to share with Hon. Kinobere because I saw in the videos the cap he was wearing. I think he was not sensitive to the charged atmosphere, meaning we need to be cautious. However, I think he came to bury a colleague, and he thought everything was okay.

I remember how I was treated when I went to bury for our brother, Hon. Nambeshe, as a Deputy Speaker going to bury for a colleague who was an Opposition Chief Whip. Now, it is becoming difficult to understand. If I cannot bury for you as a colleague – Even at a burial, we have taken there politics? It is a burden that troubles me as a person.

I remember we buried Hon. Nakimuli and there was no problem. Honourable colleagues, I think we shall need to find a way of sitting and talking as colleagues. This reconciliation can start from here because I see on our platforms that when a person loses a relative or a close associate, we contribute and I do not see any violence. I do not hear anyone saying, "Why are you contributing for so and so?" because this is a sad moment. All of us must come together to console and be there for each other. I missed the giveaway of Hon. Ali's daughter. I was somewhere, but I wanted to come. It is because he is a colleague; he invited me. I was lucky to be invited. So, now – No, I had another activity, and I talked to him. In our culture, once you give a cow, you have paid for your sins. I am delivering a cow to the daughter. *(Applause)*

Honourable colleagues, this matter is really troubling me. If we are so divided to the extent that we cannot bury each other or bury for another, where are we going as a nation? It is troubling me. These groups that we have

cheering us on or supporters on either side, and then the rumours, how they start – Like I saw some very unfortunate rumours going around on social media with regard to Hon. Amos Mandela.

However, I know Hon. Amos Mandela has been having a problem with his lungs. He has been moving with oxygen. He has had several colleagues supporting him. His life has not been good at all. Now, people start a fire on social media, which can go somewhere.

Therefore, because of what I have seen, I wanted to suggest, honourable colleagues, that – Government Chief Whip, on your side, you get a team, and then the Opposition side also gets a team. It can be five-five, okay? You sit and have a dialogue over this issue. It can start from here; it can start with us, honourable colleagues. *(Applause)* We can show the country that we can talk together; we can reconcile; and we can love each other, despite what goes on politically.

The Chief Opposition Whip also gets a team. You meet in the meantime, as I also consult with the Speaker and the rest of the elders and the minister for national guidance, and we see how best – whether we need to come here on the Floor and talk or whether we need a caucus of the whole House where there are no cameras and we talk to each other, okay?

I need to find it safe to bury for a colleague. I need to find it safe to stand with a colleague; and I need a colleague also to find it safe to associate with me because I am a colleague in the House, without suspicion of saying "How can Hon. Nambooze be at the burial of so and so?" or " How can Rt Hon. Nakadama go and bury so and so?" It is really sad. I saw Hon. Wanyoto, she was itching to say something all along when I was talking about the – But let me finish my communication.

Honourable members, remember last week I talked about the continued calls and petitions I am getting from the dealers in mobile hotspots, which we referred to the committee. Now, they have said that there are continued arrests and harassment. However, we have already referred the matter to the committee. I do not want to interfere with the work of the committee. I want to guide that the committee does the work expeditiously within one week so that the matter comes here for debate. Otherwise, many Members were coming to raise it even today. I had many in the office: Hon. Anna Maria Nankabirwa's people petitioned her, Hon. Cohen Kyampene was bringing the same, and Hon. Nambooze came over the same. Honourable committee chairperson, do you wish to comment?

2.28

MR ANDREW OULANYAH (NRM, Omoro County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Regarding the matter of hotspots, we have the hearing starting tomorrow at 10.00 a.m. The matters raised by some of the Members, like the honourable member for Kyankwanzi have already reached us. We are consolidating some of those applications so that we can handle them tomorrow and Thursday. We shall have two days of hearing those matters. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sure, Hon. Lumumba, that you were not here when we guided that as a House; we brainstormed. Do you want to make any comment on this or should we wait you handle with the committee?

2.29

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Ms Kasule Lumumba): Mr Speaker, I received an invitation from the chairperson of the committee, and I will appear before the committee tomorrow. Let us go and discuss there, then we shall come here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Handle everything within the committee, and then in a week - committee chairperson, I have given you one week. On Tuesday, you should have concluded so that on Wednesday you report here. Thank you.

Yes, I had picked Hon. Wanyoto, then Hon. Dr Baryomunsi, Hon. Naluyima, Hon. Nambooze and then Hon. Musisi.

2.30

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE (Ms Lydia Wanyoto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the issue of Communication from the Chair and the burial of our colleague, Hon. Charles Matovu, I also saw Hon. Opio's vehicle being stoned and vandalised, and even himself being sent away. What happens to a colleague's car that is vandalised when he has gone to attend a burial?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, that was Hon. Herbert Kinobere, whom everyone was saying that he resembled Hon. Opio. However, even Hon. Opio should be allowed to bury because he is a Member of Parliament.

MS WANYOTO: Mr Speaker, as you have said, leave alone people that go for burial, I attend many radio talk-shows and TV debates with some of your colleagues. When such incidents happen, it is very difficult for us to even explain. We look like we are bad people, and the cause of the death of our colleagues. So, even for us who go to give public messages, if you go on the radio and pass a condolence message before you debate, they send you messages and insults to say you are happy; you are celebrating.

I think the committee is going to help us. We cannot explain ourselves because it also looks sarcastic for you to say, I gave *mabugo*; Dr Baryomunsi, here is paying school fees for the late Ssegirinya's child. It is not good for us now to explain ourselves. I hope that the committee is going to clean -

Mr Speaker, as I stop talking on this matter, it starts with us here. If Members of Parliament are in charge of funerals and you know that your colleagues are coming, please protect them so that we handle our issues as leaders. It starts from the House. *(Applause)* Do not incite people against colleagues. We pay the price, and it is not good for the image of the House. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Baryomunsi. The honourable Minister of National Guidance will come last because we need you to listen to all sides.

2.32

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just wanted to add my voice that we come here representing different political persuasions, but we should appreciate that we are all national leaders. I being in NRM and you being in an opposition party should not make us enemies. As Members of Parliament, we should lead by example.

Mr Speaker, we went together for the funeral service of Hon. Nakimuli, and the service went well. You recall we sent advance teams to Luweero, and they told us, "Please, don't come here; you will be lynched" – *(Interjections)* - Yes.

We spoke about the late Hon. Ssegirinya. When I was travelling to Masaka for his burial, I was stopped and told: "You will be lynched at the funeral." There were two funeral camps. They said whichever camp you go to, you will be lynched, and I had to come back. As Members of Parliament, we should rise above some of these issues. *(Applause)*

Also, our friends from the Opposition, you have not helped in those situations. Actually, information is that some of you are the ones who fuel and incite that kind of violence, which I think we should not – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mwiru, Point of Order?

MR MWIRU: Mr Speaker, you guided on this matter, and in my view, the teams which are going to meet are going to have a discussion on this matter. However, the path that my good friend Hon. Baryomunsi and my sister Hon. Lydia are trying to take is as if we are not looking for a solution. I am only wondering whether my good friend Hon. Baryomunsi is in order to digress from your guidance. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mwiru, you know digressing is a very strong word. Usually, when we want to insult quietly, we – *(Laughter)* - you are not being helpful. What I am saying, Hon. Baryomunsi and colleagues, is that whatever is going on is a mistake. Therefore, here on the Floor, let us be cautious. We should not use a language of judging each other, since we are going to talk. We are going to have an honest discussion about this, trying to get a solution. Yes, Hon. Baryomunsi, can you conclude?

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you very much. I was giving material for the committee to look at. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, when I die, I would want my colleagues to come to Kanungu and bury me. The good thing is that I am not about to die. However, I would want the Kanungu people to receive Hon. Mwiru and the opposition because we are colleagues in this House.

The other day, I went to visit Dr Besigye in Mulago Hospital as a Minister of Health and as a brother from Kigezi. I had even earlier visited him in Luzira. However, the insults and rebukes which I received were really – I think that, as Members of Parliament, we need to guide the country. If we are talking of national unity and reconciliation, it should start with us, the Members of Parliament. Some of us embrace you.

You should not incite government people not to work with you because we must work together to address the concerns of Ugandans. Let us promote that unity and harmony as Members of Parliament, and then we guide and lead the rest of the country on that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister. Hon. Naluyima, Honourable Minister for National Guidance, you will come and conclude.

2.36

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to begin by appreciating you, the Rt Hon. Speaker, and the Parliament of Uganda, together with individual Members, for the support that was rendered to the family of the late Hon. Charles Matovu, which ensured that we accorded him a decent send-off. *(Applause)*

On behalf of the people of Busiro South and Wakiso District, allow me to register my apologies for the unfortunate incidents that unfolded that day. We could not have that control when members - I got to know later because I was up and down - that, that kind of provocation happened. I apologise.

I know, Mr Speaker, that you have suggested the constitution of a committee that will seek to better the happenings in this country. I know we shall talk at length about the issues that are affecting us.

I plead with your office to intervene in the matter of the arrest of 20 relatives and mourners. They were not properly identified as having been involved in the wrongdoing at the burial site. However, as I talk now, they are in detention.

I just pray that, with your intervention, I have also texted. I tried to call Hon. Kinobere, but he has not picked up, so I texted, pleading, because I am the mother of Wakiso District. As a mother, you come in at any moment. Being that it is the people of Wakiso and others from Mpigi, who were relatives of the late, I ask that the Parliament of Uganda come in so that the people are released from detention. I want to thank you and take this information.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ethel. I think I am going to link up with you after this session so that I get more details. I will also link up with Hon. Kinobere and then the authorities, on the Government side, so that we see how to look into this issue as part of the reconciliation efforts that we are looking at.

I had allowed Hon. Musisi and then Hon. Nambooze to conclude, and then the Minister.

2.39

MR GEORGE MUSISI (NUP, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the issue, still pertaining to your communication of our 'Wi-Fi friends' which matter is going to be handled by the ICT Committee, it would have been our plea that the ongoing arrests and the confiscation of materials that you have also - information which has reached you - possibly in the one week that Parliament has given to subject this matter before the committee, there could be some bit of moratorium such that they suspend their activities given that even the minister is here, and has subjected herself to appearing before the committee.

Possibly, in this one week when the committee is handling this matter, not to water down any recommendations, we could request that the suspension of all those exercises takes place in the meantime.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The minister has taken note; when she comes on the Floor, she will respond to that. Hon. Nambooze?

2.40

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join you and the House in mourning our fallen colleagues and *Mama*. I want to pray that God rest their souls in eternal peace.

I support the suggestion you have made to come up with a committee here to talk to each other. However, Mr Speaker, I do not know whether colleagues are as worried as I am about the hate that is building up among Ugandans. Most probably, this dialogue does not need to end here. We need to do something nationally. It is not within our culture that a person would die and others celebrate. It is not within our culture that a person would go for burial and be chased down. It is not even in our culture that somebody would go to visit someone in prison and he would be bashed the way Hon. Baryomunsi was bashed.

But then we say, why do you come to bury me when you are not defending my life? We should learn to defend each other's lives. Hon. Matovu died with a wound on his head. He was beaten during the elections. How do we move to make sure that the scar he had on his head does not become a scar on our country, Uganda? The violence that started during elections was never resolved.

Mr Speaker, you did promise that this House would have a day to discuss what transpired in this country during elections, but that day has never come.

Mr Speaker, today there is a poison scare in the country. People no longer eat at functions, even here in Parliament. You give snacks in a committee, and no one touches them because they think they are going to be poisoned. *(Interjections)* Yes, Mr Speaker. These people are saying that, but these are the people who do not even drink water at functions.

I would like to suggest, through you, to the Minister of ICT and National Guidance that, as a country, we need to do more than maybe sitting here among ourselves as Members of Parliament. The anger you saw in Wakiso did not start there. That is the anger that has been building up in our societies, and Mr Speaker, I would like to observe that as a country, we are sitting on a time bomb. I want to submit, and I beg that the people in the right offices consider this as a very serious matter. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let me just pick the final two. Hon. Ssentayi and Hon. Alenyo, then LOP, and then the minister concludes.

2.43

MR MUHAMAD SSENTAYI (NRM, Bukoto County West, Lwengo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. Allow me to register my thanks to our colleagues from the National Unity Platform because I am a Member of Parliament belonging to the NRM, but on the other hand, I am a member of the PLU; patriotic officer number 034. I went to attend the burial of my brother, Hon. Charles Matovu. I arrived at the burial site at midday. I was actually one of the few honourable

colleagues who arrived early. I was received well by the foot soldiers. *(Applause)*

First of all, I am not here to defend the National Unity Platform (NUP), but I was received well. I was dressed in a football jersey that the late Hon. Charles Matovu gave us when we visited him in Busiro. The chairperson of the Parliamentary Football Club advised that we attend the burial dressed in that attire.

I arrived by midday, was received, and was even given a front chair. Other honourable colleagues from the National Resistance Movement (NRM) also joined us, including Hon. Rwemulikya Ibanda of Ntoroko, Hon. Muhumuza, and Hon. Dr Kagabo – *Mzee* from Lwengo. They were all received and given chairs.

What made matters worse was when our brother, Hon. Kinobere, came. We are all aligned with the Patriotic League of Uganda (PLU), and I love it. However, honourable colleagues, we have to understand where and when to wear what. That is what brought issues.

Our brother came with a cap and found an incited crowd of foot soldiers. It is not the honourable colleagues who chased away Hon. Kinobere because we were very busy in mass. We also heard a crowd chasing a person who was first said to be Hon. Opio. That is why a Member said it was Hon. Opio. Even we who were at the burial got to know that the person who was chased away was not Hon. Opio when we left -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Opio, you can stand up. Does he resemble Hon. Kinobere? *(Laughter)*

MR SSENTAYI: I do not know, Mr Speaker. That is the incident that happened – *(Interjection)* - Mr Speaker, I beg for your protection. As you have guided in your communication, a reconciliation committee has to sit - *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, order.

MR SSENTAYI: Mr Speaker, I am not submitting to judge what happened, but I am here to give a recap of what happened on the day of the burial, as a person who attended.

As I conclude, I take this opportunity to thank our honourable colleagues, most especially the Chief Opposition Whip, Hon. Mwiru, because even when an opportunity for MPs to give a speech came, Hon. Mwiru received us. We all paraded ourselves in front and got introduced. That opportunity came, and we left the burial peacefully.

I am here to give a testimony. I arrived at the burial at midday, and left past 4.00 p.m. No one touched my shoulder or my shirt, and the car was very safe. I thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, that is why, in my communication, I touched on the issue of the dressing because you have to read situations.

I had allowed Hon. Alenyo. Hon. Sekabira, what is wrong with Hon. Alenyo sitting next to Hajjat? He sat on her? That is wrong. *(Laughter)*

2.47

MR MARSHALL ALENYO (Independent, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. On a very serious note, the issue of attending burials is as old as humanity, and it is something this Parliament will not reinvent. We have to attend burials of our colleagues, the people they love, wherever it happens.

I would like us to applaud this Parliament that we always find people from the West in West Nile, the Baganda in the East and the Easterners in the West. It is who we are. We are one Parliament. We represent all the people of Uganda and one country. When we go for these burials, we do not go as PLU number 96 or as NUP or as NRM, but to commiserate and make families that have lost people feel better. That is who we are, and that is the tradition of this House.

We joined the 12th Parliament and found our colleagues burying each other. I am very happy, Mr Speaker, that you have said there should be a committee to look into this matter. My only amendment to that committee is that, in this House, the majority of members are NRM. The second are Independents, and the third are Opposition. I request you to include, maybe, two Independents so that we balance this up because they too will have something to say in that committee. Otherwise, I agree with your submission. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Alenyo, I appoint you. *(Laughter)* At least on that, I have the power as the Dean of Independents. Hon. Mwiru, conclude this.

2.50

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr Paul Mwiru): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your guidance on the matter. I want to first thank my colleague, Hon. Ssentayi, because he has reduced what I was going to say in terms of contextualising this matter.

Honourable members, we are colleagues, and that is the starting point. Two, whether we are Members of Parliament or not, the *Ubuntu* in us does not disappear; "I am because you are."

Mr Speaker, you have given very wise guidance on this matter. On our side, now that our colleague Hon. Ssentayi has contextualised the matter, we wish not to comment further until the committee has engaged. I thank you.

2.51

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Ms Justine Lumumba): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and the Members for the spirit of supporting the proposal of having Members go, discuss and come up with a way forward.

I would like to add that, as the Government, there are institutions we have that are supposed to be used by both sides of the House, but we do not use them. We have also not come up with methods, ways or guidelines to use these institutions and guide them as per their mandate. One of them is the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD). Part of their work is to discuss such issues and issues pertaining to this country and also file a report here. We have not used that platform.

Another platform we have is the National Consultative Forum (NCF) that is under the Electoral Commission. It is a platform for dialogue among all registered political parties. We have not used this. I would request and suggest that when that committee files the report here, let us pick out what is good and important that will cause unity and harmony in the country and also take it to those two platforms.

Also, as the minister in charge of communication, I would request that after we have discussed and agreed, let us have people from both sides of the House, including the Independents, go and use the media. We shall give them space to carry that message to the public so that it also facilitates the work of the other platforms. It will even enable Ugandans to listen to different people.

When I was the chairperson of IPOD, we used to have discussions, and we would take people on the radio. One time, I appeared in Gulu on a radio with Hon. Nandala Mafabi. We were talking to the people on issues to do with unity.

Mr Speaker, allow me to inform the House that the discussions they are reading about in the media between Gen. Saleh, Dr Kiiza Besigye and Mr Lutale are ongoing. However, in relation to what you have proposed, we have all recognised that we have not yet forgotten about the January elections.

What Hon. Nambooze is talking about regarding what happened during campaigns is that we have not left that spirit of competition for leadership. We have still carried it today. So, they want to bring this ongoing discussion to that level, where it will be much more than Dr Besigye and Mr Lutale.

Let us maintain this spirit – because I am seeing it here - so that we stop anger from the campaigns that we have carried from January

to date. *(Applause)* We should be able to heal as a country, open a new page and move together as human beings.

And if you have observed, Hon. Ssegirinya belonged to the other side of the House, but Dr Chris Baryomunsi has gone back to take care of one of his children. You do not know how a fight will go when it comes to relationships. The person you want to chase away at a burial is the person who will come back after you have your political vibe to help the family when you have all abandoned them.

Therefore, it is important that, as the leaders of the time, we carry the responsibility from whatever side you belong to because you do not know what will happen tomorrow and who will be there for your family when you are long gone.

Mr Speaker, the issue that has been raised by the MP for Kira about the Wi-Fi hotspots. We have agreed to first wait for a report from the committee, which you have capped at one week; it should be here. However, he is suggesting that we stop the arrests for this one week.

We cannot afford, as a country, to continue losing revenue for any illegal activity. The discussion in the committee –*(Interjection)*- yes. We cannot sit here and let this criminality continue. And we will also be obstructing enforcement.

All we can do is to allow the committee to go on with its work, but how do we make it accessible for the people, in terms of the cost of internet?

How then do both sides of the House, not only the Government side, bring programmes to this country and extend digital transformation beyond where it is today? How do we amend the law? But that does not mean that as we make proposals, we go and cause more challenges to the people who have invested in the sector. I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, you have already concluded that it is a committee. I want to take it outside our rules, in the meantime, so that even we, as the leadership, can brainstorm on how best we shall handle this. But what is important is the outcome. We will start on the process as a House.

I will ask the Government Chief Whip and the Chief Opposition Whip for a team of five and two Independents. I have appointed Hon. Alenyo and Hon. Ngabirano, who is the coordinator of Independents. We will give ourselves one month.

We are going to guide you after I have consulted with the Speaker and a few elders in the House to develop very clear terms. I would like it to be under our administrative and in-house kind of engagement where, if possible, it can go to the caucus of the whole House, so that it will not be issues on the *Hansard*.

We want to speak to each other and see how best we can support each other, so that we do not feel like a threat to each other when we are here. Thank you. *[Hon. Komakech rose_]* Procedure, Hon. Komakech.

MR KOMAKECH: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a point of procedure, under Rule 88. I have not been in this House for so long but for the short time I have been in, I have noticed members rise under Rule 88 that reads, "A Member shall dress in a dignified manner."

They have always used this rule to send away members, who have left their homes Mr Speaker, I feel that in the same vein, I should use this rule. Instead of sending a Member away, let us appreciate a Member who has dressed better than all of us, with the exception of you, Mr Speaker. *(Laughter)*

For all the time I have seen this Member, he only dresses in a *Kaunda* suit. *(Laughter)* But today, the Member is extremely smart in this House. This Member is a moving dictionary and encyclopedia of Uganda and also a senior Member.

Mr Speaker, wouldn't it be procedurally right that this House appreciates Hon. Ofwono Opondo –*(Laughter)*- for dressing extremely well. *(Applause)* Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ofwono Opondo, on behalf of the House, you are appreciated. *(Laughter)*

Honourable colleagues, matters of national importance, I have Hon. Ayagalachi and the Honourable LOP.

3.00

MR PAUL MWIRU (NUP, Jinja South Division East, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a matter to raise, relating to the national IDs which were issued by the Government.

Personally, I was issued with a brand new one, but when the bank froze my account due to an update, I went with my national ID. But they told me that the ID does not work and I have to go to NIRA to get a letter to verify it. I found many people in the bank who had also gone to NIRA and obtained letters for verifying the national IDs, which were issued by the Government at a cost.

I seek your indulgence and that of Government to give us an explanation; you said that we are going to use the national IDs as Tax Identification Numbers, but as we speak now, they are not functional. We are making the public incur money to obtain letters from NIRA to do the verification. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister for ICT? I know NIRA was working with NITA-U. Whoever is ready on the side of Government can give us useful information. Dr Baryomunsi, I remember you were at the centre, and I see Hon. Lumumba.

3.02

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Ms Justine Lumumba): Mr Speaker, with your permission, I request Dr Baryomunsi to come and help me respond to that, since he had not yet handed over that bit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is a matter that is extremely critical, especially with the recent realignment of TINs to national IDs, and then students-. I do not know whether you want to give an off-the-cuff answer or you want to give us a one-page verbal response tomorrow.

3.03

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Mr Speaker, what Hon. Mwiru is raising is true; there is a challenge where NIRA has not harmonised the new batch of national IDs. Actually, I am a victim because I have a constituent who was applying to get a driving permit, and they told him to get a letter from NIRA, saying this ID is authentic. Even today, he was driven there, and they said, "You just hold on."

However, the response is that NIRA is synchronising with UCC on that matter. I could get more details, and then tomorrow, we can give a one-pager on the timelines for when that process will be concluded.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can I request that, colleagues, for now, we focus on action? Ensure you go and expedite the process. Then, the committee should follow up as it is doing its work. If we continue to see challenges, you can bring a statement here.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have three staff from the Hansard section of the Parliament of Malawi. They include:

i) Ms Maggie Gangire - Parliamentary Reporter;
ii) Ms Chikondi Manjawira - Broadcasting Officer; and
iii) Mr Webster Mkandawire - Broadcasting Technician.

They are here on attachment with the Department of Official Report. Please join me once again in welcoming them, honourable colleagues. *(Applause)* Thank you.

3.04

MR JAMALI AYAGALACHI (NUP, Bukooli North County, Bugiri): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise on an urgent matter of national importance concerning Kiseitaka Primary School in Kapyanga Subcounty, Bukooli North, Bugiri District, whose roof was blown away by last week's rainstorm. To make matters worse, Primary Leaving Examinations are just a few days away.

If this matter is not addressed immediately, our pupils will have nowhere to sit for these papers. My prayer is to the Prime Minister to rescue the school and renovate the roof so that learners have a place to sit for their final exams.

Mr Speaker, I kindly request immediate action on this matter. I thank you.

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

3.06

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Mr Speaker, the Member from Bugiri is saying that he wants immediate action. Of course, it is important because you are saying it is where the Primary Seven class is going to sit.

Since you are asking for immediate action, I will request that letter from the disaster committee. However, we will provide a temporary structure, like tarpaulin, for the P7 class to sit their exams. I will need that letter from the disaster committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you have a big team at the Office of the Prime Minister (OPM). Send one of your officers to go and assess and see the intervention you can make. My Member has to be here doing work.

MS NAKADAMA: Yes, Mr Speaker. I was assuring the Member that we have to put something temporary, so that the Primary Seven class can have somewhere to sit. We are going to work on that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kenneth Kizza?

3.07

MR KENNETH KIIZA (NRM, Bujenje County, Masindi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter pertaining to *[Inaudible],* which came down heavily, affecting Kabango Town Council and Budongo Subcounty, sweeping away two bridges, one connecting to Bulyango Public School, and affecting the business community in Kabango.

Here are my prayers: that the Ministry of Works and Transport undertakes to do emergency works on the bridge connecting Bulyango Public School and to do emergency works on the drainage system in Kabango. The road is being undertaken for upgrade. As a result, there has been a lot of devastation, with water entering people's homes and destroying people's merchandise.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Minister of Works and Transport?

3.08

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Julius Maganda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Member for raising a matter that directly affects his constituency and the district. We are aware that there are works going on that road, and there is a lot that affects the movement of people and trucks.

On this matter that has just come this afternoon, I want to promise that I will communicate with the contractor. Tomorrow, I can come back to the Floor to give an alternative report that would help the movement of people.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, communicate with the contractor and take action.

MR MAGANDA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We shall do that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just take action, and then you coordinate with Hon. Kenneth Kizza. Hon. Naluyima.

3.09

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My matter concerns the four-storeyed building that collapsed yesterday at Kawuku. At the time of the collapse, it is believed that around 100 workers were at the live construction site. Several of them are now believed to be dead.

My prayer is that the Uganda Police should come up and give us a clear figure of those they have managed to rescue, those who have been injured and those who are dead. We are praying that the Prime Minister's Office offer the affected families some aid, both those who are injured and those who are to go for burial. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think beyond that, honourable member, we should - Hon. Kenan Opio, was that why you were calling me at midnight? I found three calls he made at midnight.

3.10

MR KENAN OPIO (NRM, Busiro South County, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The man looks like an Opio. Why are you saying Opio? He is a real Opio. *(Laughter)* Yes, Hon. Kenan Opio.

MR KENAN OPIO: Yes?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, colleagues.

MR KENAN OPIO: It is true. That building collapsed at Kawuku, and I went there. That is why I was calling you. I also called the Minister of Internal Affairs. I also tried to reach President Museveni on the phone, but I could not. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sorry, I think our colleague lost some people. Is it the microphone or what? I found many missed calls, and I tried to get him in the morning. I called you back, but you also did not answer my call; it was a draw.

MR KENAN OPIO: Mr Speaker, you know that I am a victim of insults and all the waves. I want to thank the NRM Members who showed up for the burial of our former Member of Parliament. I really want to condole with everyone and the family. I was so overwhelmed by the internet. I do not know who regulates the internet in Uganda.

Mr Speaker, I want to apologise to some Members in this House because I am not happy with you. You know, at one point, I thought if they could lock me in one room with Hon. Ssenyonyi -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kenan Opio, that is why we put up a team to look into these issues. I know the emotions behind all this. I know the insults; I saw how you were treated on social media. I understand. We are trying to do it internally to see how best we can come together as colleagues.

MR KENAN OPIO: However, I want to thank my colleague, Hon. Naluyima. You were really there. *(Applause)* I saw young people like Hon. Maseruka and Hon. Nkerettanyi. You people, we all went for an election.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Opio, can you conclude?

MR KENAN OPIO: Mr Speaker, the point I am trying to make is that all of us went into an election. In total, I contested with 19 people, and we all know what that means. My request is for the leaders in the Opposition not to make unprofessional conclusions in such difficult times because you represent many people who believe in you. *(Applause)* We are all human. Death is the last experience one gets in this world, but for a Member who has a following to come up boldly and condemn and accuse me - in some situations, we need to be sincere. May the soul of my honourable colleague, our former MP, rest in eternal peace. *(Applause)* I

also say this with a good heart; I am going to support one of his – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Opio, you are the one on record. Conclude your statement.

MR KENAN OPIO: I am going to support one of his children and pay school fees for four years. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member.

MR KENAN OPIO: Concerning the building, this morning, I talked to the DPC of Entebbe, and they are still getting people out. I was among the few people who were allowed to reach the area, but I can tell you that the situation was terrible. The four excavators that I found on the ground were not enough. The police were very strained. I leave it to you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, it is in order that we pay respect to our Ugandans who died in that fatal building collapse.

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: May their souls indeed rest in eternal peace.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you heard the prayers from the MPs from Wakiso supporting the families of the victims. Secondly, Hon. Naluyima, in your prayer, we should have also added that a thorough investigation should be done on how such a building can collapse; whether there was incompetence or not.

MS NALUYIMA: Mr Speaker, part of the prayers I presented last week, when we had a scenario in Koboko-Bweyogerere, was that we should have called for investigations and asked all local authorities to come on board to conduct further assessments, given that this is now the rainy season. This is a season where, as long as there is a weak building, we are going to have issues, and every time we will be bringing matters. I pray that the investigation gets on track and local authorities take action now.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure. Rt Hon. Prime Minister?

MS NAKADAMA: Mr Speaker, we are sorry for what happened, and we condole with the families of those who lost their loved ones in that destruction. I am going to call on the Ministry of Internal Affairs to start the investigation, and they will come back with the report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Also, follow up on the support for the families.

MS NAKADAMA: I am going to make a follow-up on that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Adeke?

3.19

MS ANNA ADEKE (FDC, Woman Representative, Soroti): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I seek the intervention of the Prime Minister regarding the plight of citizens, residents of -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister of Works and Transport, kindly take note.

MS ADEKE: Minister for Works and Transport. Residents of Angai, Odudui in Arapai Subcounty and Gweri Parish and Dokolo Parish in Gweri Subcounty, Soroti District, where demolitions are scheduled to start tomorrow, the 28th day of October 2026, on properties that are near the meter gauge railway. No compensation has been done. Since 2024, when the exercise kicked off, compensation was done for only three individuals, and now properties within the radius of 100 metres are scheduled to be demolished starting tomorrow.

Therefore, I seek your urgent intervention that such demolition does not happen and that you have a meeting with the affected households and find a way to compensate them before any such demolition happens and the status quo changes. Thank you, Sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Works and Transport?

3.20

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Julius Maganda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank Hon. Adeke for the concern raised on the people of Gweri. We made announcements in respect to the people who encroached on the railway land. There has been construction and rehabilitation of the line from Tororo, Soroti, and Gulu, which is almost in the final stages, but the ministry and Uganda Railways Corporation are trying to demarcate and ensure they take ownership of the land and the pieces of land that had been encroached on.

The process earlier on was that we brought in the community and the leadership. These people have been aware for over a year that there would be a demolition when we made the announcements about it. At the moment, the process is ongoing, and it has the directive of the President.

I will only encourage the Member to take time and come to the office so that we are able to discuss those affected persons, probably the houses. However, for the areas where we know there are just gardens or trees, the demolition will take place. We can discuss something and give them a short time, but they have to move. That is a directive, and the ministry will proceed with the demolition.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you can meet MPs from the affected area tomorrow morning and then -

MR MAGANDA: Mr Speaker, I will be in the office at 10.00 a.m. and it will also be a pleasure to meet Hon. Adeke to have that discussion. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Welcome back, Hon. Maganda. Hon. Benson Lugwar?

3.22

MR BENSON LUGWAR (Independent, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on the issue of roads due to the heavy rainfall that affected the road that connects to the only referral hospital in Agago, which is Dr Ambrosoli Memorial Hospital. The road from Patongo to Kalongo is impassable. So far, two bridges are down. When you look at the road from Kitgum to Kalongo, Pader to Kalongo, they are all impassable, and all these are Central Government roads.

Can I at least request the Minister of Works and Transport, even if all four connections are in a bad state, to construct one fair road so we can access the referral hospital, the market, and so pupils going to school have a road to use?

Last week, we lost one student sitting senior four. She fell sick, and the ambulance overturned when she was being referred, and she died on the spot, which was unfortunate. So, the issue of the road in Agago has remained unresolved for too long within this country. I really request – Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. May her soul rest in eternal peace. Honourable minister of state for transport?

3.23

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Julius Maganda): Mr Speaker, this morning we received a report from our substation in Gulu concerning issues, especially the bridges that have collapsed due to the floods that have affected part of Northern Uganda.

We have dispatched reinforcement to the regional office to support the reconstruction of the roads and bridges, but also, as a ministry, we are trying to encourage our team to use the force account to ensure that these bridges can be fixed in time.

I would also like to say that this matter does not only concern one part of the region because we know the rains are beginning to affect most of the roads and bridges. So, the strategy that we are coming up with as a ministry and country is to try to cover the wider part of the country. I think the question and the answers may remain the same, as the plan is to see that we reinforce and support our offices at the regional level,

and then see how we can quickly support these places.

Mr Speaker, I also want to add that the bridge that collapsed in Kisoro this morning is now motorable. I will be happy when I see my Member of Parliament from Kisoro also come here one time to appreciate the effort we put in. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, Hon. Lugwar is saying at least make one of the roads passable. So, kindly focus on that, honourable. Thank you. Hon. Katabaazi?

3.26

MR KICONCO KATABAAZI (NRM, Rukiga County, Rukiga): Mr Speaker, I am here to report on the issue of floods and mudslides that have hit Kashambya Subcounty, causing severe damage in villages of Nyarubisi, Nyarugorogoro, Nyaruhanga, Rukoni, and Kantare, adversely affecting Kantare Secondary School, whose compound and laboratory were affected. Kantare Primary School buildings were also partially but adversely affected. Households as well as roads were affected.

My prayer is that the Office of the Prime Minister takes interest in this matter, carries out an assessment, and provides relief. Also, and more importantly, there is a need for risk assessment because 17 villages across Kashambya Subcounty in the six parishes are also at risk because of these floods, and if we do not prepare in advance, it will adversely affect our people. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Rt Hon. Prime Minister?

3.27

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): We thank you for that report. My team is going to join the people of Rukiga and the whole area because the rain is destroying everything. So, the team is going to be dispatched so that they can do the needful. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Ekoro Alex?

3.28

MR ALEX EKORO (NRM, Bunya County East, Mayuge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance regarding the escalating human-wildlife conflict in my constituency, Bunya County East.

Mr Speaker, Bunya East is bordered by Lake Victoria, and it operates on a wetland system. For the last several months, my constituents have been living in fear due to the increased presence of man-eating crocodiles, which are attacking people who go to fetch water from the lake shores.

As I speak, we have registered multiple cases of people being attacked, killed, and others sustaining life-threatening injuries while fetching water, fishing, bathing, and doing domestic chores along the lake shores. Children and women who go to fetch water –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, prayers.

MR EKORO: My prayers: That the Government considers compensation and a medical support framework for the families who have lost loved ones and the survivors of the crocodile attacks. That they also create extensions of water taps from the lake to support the people so they can fetch water safely. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, the prayers are spread across ministries, but the emergency ones which I have picked out are under tourism. But also, Dr Eunice Apio had a closely related matter.

3.30

DR EUNICE OTUKO-APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We have an invasion of about seven hippos in Oyam County North. It is the first of its kind because we do not really border any game park whatsoever. This happened on the 20th of this month, and we have lost several

field crops in the process, and people have been wounded; livestock have been attacked and killed.

There are some in hospital who need support. The Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) did visit one of the young men in hospital who is badly mangled; their limbs are all mangled and he needs critical medical care. So, they parted with Shs 40,000. This is what the Uganda Wildlife Authority contributed, which is not enough.

My prayer is that:
i) UWA takes note and collects the animals. They are quite aggressive and dangerous to everybody.
ii) That UWA goes ahead to compensate the farmers and the young man in hospital as well.

There is also a leopard that has been sighted in Ngai Subcounty around the 19th of this month, and the community is actually scared of what might happen. So, I would like to call upon the Government to do its bit. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Government Chief Whip, relay these matters to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities so that UWA can take action because we do not need an explanation for these issues but rather action - Yes, on payments, we know. We even handled this, but it is insufficient. We had a long debate over this when the committee handled it.

By the way, people who are affected are not people who are after compensation. People do not want these animals to come and attack them because, for a kid who is in hospital, how would compensation help? They would rather prevent more such scenarios from happening. Next item.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have a procedural issue, Hon. Sekabira?

MR SEKABIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, I am rising on a point of privilege because you guided that when a Member has a matter of national importance, they do not have to –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, kindly take your seat. You stood up on a point of procedure, but a point of privilege is a point on its own; it is not under procedure. You can check our rules.

3.33

MR ISMAIL KASULE (ANT, Hoima West Division, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We are in a multiparty dispensation, and we entered this House under different political parties. We were given a copy of the Rules of Procedure when we entered this House. Rule 9 (6) provides for the seating arrangement in this House.

Mr Speaker, the front bench on this side is reserved for the shadow ministers. However, we have seen very many members of the ruling party seated on the front bench while some of the shadow ministers are in the corridors, with nowhere to sit. I do not know whether we are proceeding well, when Members of the NRM - As a member of the Alliance for National Transformation, who is looking for members to recruit from this House so that I can get more members to whip. Maybe I should take it upon myself and recruit these ones before the one-year period that is required by the law for members to cross sides. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, whenever we are full, we allow free seating. Okay? However, the front row should be reserved. The front row should be reserved for shadow ministers. That one is very clear. Not even any other opposition Member or any Member of the ruling party or the Cabinet can sit there.

Hon. Sekabira. I was trying to correct you because if you look at Rule 80(2):
(a) point of privilege.
(b) point of procedure; so, when you stand up on procedure and you go to privilege, I get confused about how I will guide the House.

MR SEKABIRA: Mr Speaker, if you had allowed me, I would have banked on Article 126(2) of the Constitution. The matter I want

to raise is in my docket as the Shadow Minister of Internal Affairs.

Mr Speaker, this is the sixth time that I am raising a matter concerning non-compliance of the Government with Section 10(2) of the NGO Act.

The Minister, since 30 September 2024 -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, Hon. Sekabira, you are raising a matter. I have not allowed you to raise a matter. You are challenging me for not giving you time to raise a matter. I want you to challenge me, then I can guide you on whether to raise it or not.

MR SEKABIRA: Mr Speaker, I am raising a matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you do not have that power. You have to ask. You see, honourable colleagues, the other day I was giving guidance to the ministers and the opposition that the moment you stand up as a shadow minister - I do not have it anywhere under the Rules of Procedure that you, as a shadow minister, are entitled to bring a statement here.

The only rule you have is under Rule 55, where the Leader of the Opposition has the power to bring statements. The Leader of the Opposition can appoint you as a shadow minister, okay? You bring a statement on his behalf. The rules only provide for the Leader of the Opposition.

Now, these other matters of national importance and all that, I weigh whether it is an urgent matter. I must weigh it. If I find that it is not a matter that can get an explicit answer, for example, if you are telling me about the issue of Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs) and all that, can a minister here come and say I have directed, reopened, or what? No. You cannot. That is a matter which I would expect you, honourable colleague, to raise to the Prime Minister in the form of a question, so that she can do a multi-stakeholder engagement and give you a structured answer.

I receive many questions. Today I had 19, but I looked through them - in fact, I had Members in my office. I had Hon. Naluyima, Hon. Nambooze, Hon. Jalameso, and Hon. Apio. I told them that, usually, colleagues say I do not consider your questions. We are going to read through them together, and you show me whether they are urgent. Even Hon. Joel, you were there.

We read through all of them and agreed that the matters are many, but they are not of urgent nature to get a quick answer here. So, that is what I consider, honourable colleagues. Next item.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE STATE OF THE ECONOMY

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The statement is uploaded. IT team, you can run it on our screens, but give a copy to the Leader of the Opposition. Clerk, you can help us get one copy.

3.38

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to provide an update on the state of the economy. In particular, I want to explain the recent depreciation of the Ugandan shilling, the measures that the Government and the Bank of Uganda are taking, and the implications for households, businesses and public finances.

Mr Speaker, the Government recognises the difficulties that higher fuel prices, transport costs, and production costs are placing on our people. For a household managing a limited income, or a business trying to maintain production and employment, these pressures are real.

Our responsibility is to explain their causes clearly, take appropriate action, and protect the foundations of lasting economic stability.

My statement will therefore address three questions;

1. What is the problem?
2. How are the Government and Bank of Uganda responding?
3. What does this mean to all of us?

Mr Speaker, I now come to what the problem is. The Ugandan shilling has come under significant pressure, weakening from approximately Shs 3,604 per US dollar in March 2026, to around Shs 4,500 by late October 2026. This represents an increase of about 25 per cent in the shilling cost of a dollar, equivalent to a decline of approximately 20 per cent in the dollar value of the shilling.

The depreciation gathered pace in late September and October 2026, reversing the relative stability experienced earlier in the year.

Mr Speaker, our concern is not only the depreciation of the shilling, but also its speed and impact on prices, businesses and household welfare. Although headline inflation remained relatively contained at 4.6 per cent in September 2026, with core inflation at 3.7 per cent, below the Bank of Uganda's 5 per cent target, food crop inflation rose to 4.5 per cent, while energy, fuel and utilities inflation reached 14.5 per cent, placing additional pressure on households and businesses.

The underlying pressure arises from an imbalance between the demand for and supply of foreign exchange, particularly the US dollar. When demand for dollars to finance imports and meet other external obligations exceeds the supply generated by exports, investment and other foreign exchange inflows, the price of the dollar rises.

Consequently, more shillings are required to purchase the same amount of foreign currency, resulting in depreciation of the shilling.

Five main factors account for the current pressure on the exchange rate:

i) Higher international petroleum costs have increased Uganda's demand for foreign exchange. Geopolitical tensions in the Middle East have heightened uncertainty and pushed up petroleum-related costs, including shipping and insurance. As a net importer of petroleum products, Uganda must therefore spend more dollars to meet its fuel requirements when international prices rise.

According to the Bank of Uganda, net foreign exchange demand from the energy sector increased from $360 million in the three months ending September 2025 to $620 million in the corresponding period of 2026. This represents an increase of $260 million, adding significant pressure to the foreign exchange market.

These developments affect domestic fuel prices through two channels: the international cost of petroleum and the exchange rate at which dollars are purchased. When petroleum prices rise while the shilling depreciates, the cost of importing fuel increases further, putting additional upward pressure on pump prices and the cost of transporting goods and providing services.

ii) The demand for foreign exchange has increased across other sectors of the economy. Mr Speaker, businesses require dollars to finance imports, meet export obligations and remit dividends to foreign investors. Ahead of the first oil production, oil projects have increased demand for imported goods and services. Seasonal imports ahead of the December festive season have added to this demand, while lower earnings from some agricultural exports have constrained the supply of foreign exchange.

iii) International financial conditions and market expectations have contributed to the pressure. The changes in interest rates and investment returns abroad influence the allocation of international capital. In mid-September 2026, the US Federal Reserve raised its policy rate by 25 basis points to a range of 3.75 to 4.00 per cent. At the same time, sovereign bond yields in advanced economies remained elevated by historical standards.

Higher returns on investments in advanced economies can make these markets more attractive to international investors, potentially limiting portfolio investment inflows into emerging and low-income economies such as Uganda. The Bank of Uganda is assessing the extent to which these international financial developments have affected domestic foreign exchange flows.

Market expectations can also amplify exchange rate movements. When businesses and investors anticipate further depreciation, they may bring forward their purchases of dollars or delay converting their foreign currency earnings into shillings. Such behaviour can increase immediate demand for foreign exchange, further intensifying pressure on the shilling.

iv) The declining global prices for key agricultural exports, particularly coffee and cocoa, alongside reduced tourism receipts have temporarily constrained Uganda's foreign exchange inflows. After reaching historic highs in late 2024 and early 2025, international coffee and cocoa prices subsequently declined, reflecting changes in global supply and demand, including improved supplies from major producing countries and adjustments in industrial demand.

The International Coffee Organisation reported that its composite indicator price fell by 9.9 per cent between January and February 2026, and by a further 8.7 per cent between August and September 2026.

Domestically, the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries price tracking reported that average farm-gate prices for Robusta coffee declined by approximately 14.5 per cent from between Shs 13,500 and Shs 14,000 per kilogram - this has been the previous range - in September 2025, to now between Shs 11,500 and Shs 12,000 in the first half of September 2026.

The cocoa market has also undergone a substantial correction. The World Bank's April 2026 commodity market outlook projected an average cocoa price of $4.2 per kilogram in 2026, approximately 51.3 per cent below the average of 2025.

v) Tourism is also a potential source of vulnerability to external shocks. Ebola-related travel restrictions and health screening measures affected travel decisions and visitor arrivals. However, the extent to which these restrictions affected visitor arrivals and tourism receipts during the third quarter of 2026 is yet to be established.

The pressures facing the shilling are a combination of temporary shocks and deeper structural vulnerabilities. Some pressures, including fluctuations in international oil and freight prices, weather-related disruptions associated with El Niño, and episodes of foreign investors selling in domestic securities, may ease as external conditions and market sentiments improve.

However, other challenges are structural: A narrow export base, dependence on imported fuel and substantial import requirements for oil projects ahead of first oil production.
Addressing these underlying vulnerabilities is central to the Government's Ten-Fold Growth Strategy and the Fourth National Development Plan (NDPIV), which seeks to strengthen productive capacity, diversify exports, expand foreign exchange earnings and build greater resilience to external shocks.

How Government and Bank of Uganda are Responding

Our well-coordinated fiscal and monetary response has three objectives;
i) To contain inflation.
ii) To restore stability in the foreign exchange market; and
iii) To strengthen Uganda's capacity to earn foreign exchange and
iv) meet its external obligations.

The Bank of Uganda has tightened monetary conditions, including raising the Central Bank

Rate from 9.75 per cent to 12 per cent and increasing commercial banks' cash reserve requirements to 13.5 per cent from 11 per cent.

These measures are intended to moderate excessive demand, contain inflationary pressures and support confidence in the shilling. Their effects take time to work through the economy.

The Bank of Uganda will continue to manage liquidity and where necessary, intervene in the foreign exchange market to address excessive volatility, consistent with its mandate.

Uganda remains committed to a market-determined exchange rate. This allows the economy to adjust to changes in external conditions. Our objective is to preserve price, financial stability and support orderly market adjustment. We are not committing public resources to defending a particular exchange rate.

International reserves provide an important buffer against external shocks. Their prudent management must balance the need to address disruptive market conditions with the need to preserve the country's capacity to meet external obligations.

What is the Government's fiscal response?

The Government is supporting monetary policy through expenditure restraint and careful prioritisation. The fiscal policy response is to reinforce the Bank of Uganda's efforts to contain inflation and restore stability.

First-half expenditure releases for the Financial Year 2026/2027 have been limited to 4.6 per cent of the approved budget compared with the planned 55.7 per cent.

This restraint must be accompanied by strict commitment control. Accounting officers have been guided to align commitments with available resources. Delaying payment for obligations already incurred would transfer the burden to the suppliers and workers, weaken businesses and generate domestic arrears.

In implementing expenditure restraint, the Government will prioritise essential services, critical obligations, and investments that strengthen production, employment, and foreign exchange earnings. These include priorities under the Tenfold Growth Strategy, particularly: agro-industrialisation, tourism, mineral development, science, technology and innovation, and their essential enablers.

We recognise that expenditure restraint has consequences for economic activity. It will, therefore, be carefully targeted and regularly reviewed.

On fuel supply and cost measures, the Government, through the ministry responsible for energy, the Uganda National Oil Company and its private sector partners, is pursuing measures to strengthen petroleum supply security, improve procurement efficiency and minimise avoidable costs.

The minister responsible for energy has already outlined the operational measures, which include centralised bulk fuel importation, expansion of storage infrastructure to establish strategic fuel reserves, development of lower-cost pipeline transportation for petroleum products and investment in domestic refining capacity.

These interventions are intended to strengthen supply resilience, reduce logistical costs and mitigate Uganda's exposure to external price and supply shocks.

To cushion consumers against high fuel prices, the Government will continue to promote a free, fair and competitive petroleum market that ensures reliable and uninterrupted fuel supplies. This will help prevent supply shortages, maintain healthy competition and moderate avoidable price pressures on consumers and businesses.

Drawing on our experience in previous periods of high international oil prices, the Government will avoid counterproductive and fiscally unsustainable interventions such as price controls, which can discourage supply,

create fuel shortages and ultimately exert further upward pressure on prices. Instead, our approach is to promote competition, ensure reliable fuel supplies and protect consumers through sustainable market-based measures.

In the same vein, broad-based subsidies and tax reductions can be fiscally unsustainable and create economic distortions. These measures may also fail to deliver the intended benefits to vulnerable households for several reasons:

i) Market distortions: Subsidies and tax cuts can create incentives for smuggling, arbitrage and diversion of goods to markets where prices are higher.
ii) Loss of Government revenue: Tax reductions and the cost of subsidies reduce the resources available for the Government, thereby constraining funding for essential public services and development priorities.
iii) Unequal distribution of benefits: Broad-based subsidies and tax cuts often disproportionately benefit higher-income households and larger businesses, which generally consume more goods, own businesses that are subsidised and have greater access to economic opportunities. Consequently, lower-income households may fail to tap into the overall benefits despite being more vulnerable to rising prices.

The Government, through the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, will continue to monitor and regulate the domestic petroleum market to promote fair competition, transparency in pricing and reliable fuel supplies, while ensuring that domestic fuel prices reflect prevailing international market conditions, exchange-rate movement and other legitimate supply costs.

Mr Speaker, lasting exchange-rate stability requires Uganda to strengthen its capacity to generate foreign exchange through competitive production, export diversification, and increased value addition.

The Government is therefore, pursuing investments and reforms to boost agricultural productivity and agro-processing, expand tourism, strengthen manufacturing, promote mineral value addition, and improve access to export markets.

These interventions are aimed at diversifying export earnings, reducing dependence on a narrow range of foreign exchange sources and strengthening the economy's resilience to external shocks.

The commencement of commercial oil production is also expected to contribute to foreign exchange earnings and public revenues over time.

The Government will manage petroleum revenues prudently and in accordance with the applicable legal and fiscal frameworks. Together, these structural interventions will strengthen Uganda's capacity to generate foreign exchange and support greater exchange rate resilience over the medium to long term.

What are the implications for all of us?

Mr Speaker, addressing exchange rate pressures requires concerted action by Government, households, and businesses.

While Government will continue to implement measures to restore stability, all of us have a role to play in reducing avoidable demand for foreign exchange, containing costs, and strengthening the domestic economy.

The Government will rationalise non-essential expenditure including foreign and domestic travel, workshops, meetings and other administrative costs, while protecting critical public services and priority development interventions. We will also strengthen expenditure discipline and cash management to reduce unnecessary liquidity pressures and moderate domestic borrowing requirements.

Households should prioritise essential expenditure, conserve fuel and energy, and make informed purchasing decisions. Where quality and prices are competitive, choosing Ugandan-made goods supports local producers, sustains jobs, and reduces reliance on imported products.

Businesses should eliminate waste, improve operational efficiency, source inputs locally where commercially viable, and expand production for export markets. They should also manage foreign exchange risks carefully and avoid borrowing in dollars where their revenues are primarily in shillings, unless appropriate safeguards are in place.

To all of us, Mr Speaker, the message from my ministry is clear: let us avoid panic buying of foreign currency, speculative transactions driven by rumours, and other behaviours that can amplify short-term pressure on the shilling. The Government and the Central Bank will continue to provide timely, factual communication to support informed decisions and confidence in the economy.

Strengthening the shilling requires more than short-term adjustments. It calls for fiscal discipline, responsible financial decisions, greater domestic production, and sustained growth in export earnings. Through these collective efforts, we can reduce vulnerabilities and build a more resilient economy.

In conclusion, I would like to reassure this House and the people of Uganda that despite the current economic pressures, the fundamentals of our economy remain strong.

Uganda's economy continues to grow, supported by increased production, investment, and exports. In Financial Year 2025/2026, the economy grew by 6.4 per cent up from 6.3 per cent in the previous financial year, bringing its size to Shs 250.4 trillion. This is equivalent to $69.3 billion. This growth was broad-based, with all three major sectors of agriculture, industry, and services recording positive performances.

The ongoing depreciation of the Ugandan shilling reflects increased demand for foreign exchange, particularly to finance petroleum and other imports, alongside constrained foreign exchange inflows and shifts in international financial conditions. The Government and the Bank of Uganda are responding through prudent fiscal management, appropriate monetary policy, measures to promote orderly foreign exchange market operations, and interventions to safeguard reliable fuel supplies.

Over the medium to long term, expanding domestic production, diversifying exports, and strengthening foreign exchange earnings will help reduce vulnerability to external shocks.

We recognise that depreciation and the measures required to contain its effects carry costs for households, businesses, and Government. We will continue to monitor the implications for prices, credit, employment, essential public services, and the public finances, and adjust our response as circumstances warrant.

Mr Speaker, we cannot responsibly promise a specific exchange rate or predict precisely when current pressures will ease. We can commit to disciplined policymaking, timely and transparent communication, and decisions guided by evidence and the prevailing economic conditions.

The Government and the Bank of Uganda will continue to keep Parliament and the public informed of the exchange rate developments and the measures being implemented and their effects on the economy.

Finally, I appeal to all Ugandans to remain calm, avoid panic-driven decisions, and make informed financial choices. The Government recognises the pressure that rising costs place on households and businesses and remains committed to restoring macroeconomic stability while protecting livelihoods, sustaining production and employment, and advancing Uganda's long-term economic transformation.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The debate is going to start now.

4.10

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr Paul Mwiru): Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, Mr Speaker, this statement was uploaded, I think,

10 minutes before the minister presented it, and on our side, in view of Rule 55, we would wish that you grant us time to make a response to this statement. The minister has not captured the reasons, which we think are responsible.

On our side, we think that the rising of the dollar is largely due to a culmination of structural inadequacies and governance quality of the economy. We would wish to have a chance to demonstrate all those issues in the alternative so that we would facilitate debate. I will seek your indulgence, Mr Speaker. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Therefore, colleagues, you have been debating here over time that you know the issues. We should conclude these issues now. Let me tell you, what we say here, we might think we are debating very well, but we end up causing even more problems.

Parliament should not be the one to raise more alarm bells; we should be able to give hope. Therefore, Mr LOP, I would request - I know the shadow minister very well. I know his capabilities. I have worked with the Hon. Gyaviira for some time. Very quiet man, but very capable. I wanted to start with him, but if he wants, he can take a few minutes.

This is a statement that we are not going to resolve. There is no resolution on it. After, I will be referring it to the relevant committees to help them in their work because the minister has promised regular progress. Therefore, I will pick only 10 people; we will conclude it and allow the minister to go and do this sensitive work.

Leader of the Opposition (LOP), would you be comfortable with that? I trust your shadow minister.

MR PAUL MWIRU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We have agreed that, to him, it is rather an ambush but I have listened in carefully, and I want to make a response. He will pick it up from there.

Mr Speaker, while I have listened to the honourable minister - he makes no mention of the fact that the biggest spender of the dollar is the Government. Our debt rate ratio stands at 59.74 trillion as of June 2026 and is held in dollars, which is 46.3 per cent. From that perspective, we submit that the Government is the biggest consumer of the dollar in that respect. So, there must be effort by the Government to address that trend. That is the first point I want to raise.

Secondly, and most importantly, there is the issue of corruption, which is causing the dwindling economic security. We wanted to see the measure by the minister showing that corruption is affecting - in that regard, because of the misuse of funds - and we think the minister needed to come and speak to us in that direction.

Mr Speaker, 74 per cent of our citizens earn less than Shs 250,000 a month. We expected the minister to show us the long-term interventions so that this population raises its purchasing power.

The other issue is that when you look at our economy, you notice that most of our money is kept in commercial banks and on the mobile money platforms.

United States Dollars 1.42 billion translating into 5.6 trillion was externalised in form of dividends and interest earned by the foreign investors in 2025/2026. We expected the minister - whereas, we hear him when he talks about other factors, there are also other factors internally where we expected the minister to show us the short-term, medium and long-term aspect so that this matter does not keep on coming up all the time. Having said so, we thought that the minister needs to pay attention to these matters. I thank you.

4.16

MR GYAVIIRA LUBOWA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The statement by the minister is very elaborate and touches almost all the

sections of the economy but there are other matters that the minister has not considered.

When we look at the other stakeholders that drive the economy - we have the traders or the business community - when you visit downtown, you notice that most businesses are almost closing down. So, there are issues that are affecting our business community that the minister probably needs to intervene. Some of them include the URA behaviour towards this business community. On the URA portal, you find that from time to time URA is advertising merchandise that it is about to auction, and we wonder why URA cannot link up with these traders or business communities to have a solution that is human, because URA is not living on mars. They are with us here, and they know the constraints that the economy is going through.

I request that, in the interim, the minister encourages URA to link up with the business community instead of just implementing these procedural issues such as auctioning their merchandise. Probably they would go ahead and discuss to agree on the terms to help them meet their tax obligations - spread over some time to ease the pressure.

Mr Speaker, on that side again, we have the issue of rent. We know how much the business community is contributing to our economy but the landlords have become a problem to them. Just last year and through this year, the business community has been complaining about the landlords who increase rent at any time they want and at any rate. We know we are in a free market economy but sometimes, especially when we are in such difficult times, the Government should intervene and find solutions to help this community to keep their businesses moving instead of pushing them out of business because of these charges.

On the issue of fuel, we know that currently there is only one importer of fuel, Uganda National Oil Company (UNOC), which is a government entity. We think that the Government should intervene, despite these rising prices, day and night. We think that if the Government intervened by probably allocating more money to UNOC or subsidising it in a way - so that when UNOC is distributing to retailers - the prices will be lowered and we shall curb the increasing fuel prices. This is because fuel touches almost every bit of life and every bit of business.

We also believe that the Governor's first proposal of intervening with a few dollars being injected into the economy from our reserves in the short-term would actually help to relieve the increasing price of the dollars. We think that this, in the short term, could be a solution. This is because some of these interventions that the minister is proposing require a year or two or so, yet what we are experiencing now is the increase in the dollar price on a daily basis. I think, that proposal, if revisited, would also help to support reduction in the depreciation of the shilling.

Mr Speaker, finally, it is now time for the Government to revisit its decision. Around 2020/2021, the Government - should I say expelled NGOs and civil society organisations that were bringing colossal sums of money into the economy - actually in dollars. The Government decided to relieve them of their duties and/or they were expelled. We think that the Government should revisit its decision and let these civil society organisations return, so that we continue receiving that inflow that we are now missing.

Finally, Mr Speaker, in terms of helping our private sector, Government should consider massive payment of domestic arrears that it owes to the private sector, so that the business community is recapitalised to run their businesses. Probably, they would even avoid running around for loans that attract interest and push prices up. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable colleague. Those are concrete proposals from the Shadow Minister for Finance. That is why I gave him that much time. For the rest of the honourable colleagues, I am going to give you a maximum of only three minutes. Hon. Kirumira, Hon. Katabaazi and then Hon. Karuhanga.

4.24

MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luweero): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Uganda's economy is a baby to all of us and when it is affected, each and every Ugandan gets affected too. To begin with, over the years, our economy has been so reliant on earnings from exports, including coffee, which is the major export of Uganda. That is why there is a link between the agricultural sector and the economy of Uganda.

When the agricultural sector, which is the backbone of our economy, collapses, and the production and exportation of coffee, which is our major export earner, declines, our economy is definitely going to be affected.

As we speak, Mr Speaker, the major strategy to curb this is to increase the production and export of coffee. The only way we are going to bring the dollar back to its knees is through investment in agriculture, specifically coffee and ensuring that it is sold for foreign earnings. When that happens, we are going to see the dollar crumbling against the shilling. If we fail to do that, we are going to remain with the same problem.

I have been moving around my constituency, visiting coffee farmers. You should look at their coffee gardens. They are dying because of the climatic conditions. How are we going to tackle this problem if the agricultural sector is not coming to the party? That is where we have a problem.

The other issue, Mr Speaker, is that Ugandans working abroad used to remit money back home. The Ugandan community hustling abroad is always remitting and sending money home. However, as we speak, because of some of the laws we passed, including the Protection of Sovereignty Act, by the way Ugandans are now less discouraged from bringing their money back home.

The Shadow Minister of Finance talked about NGOs – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Katabaazi, then Hon. Karuhanga. I am done with the opposition; I have picked three. I need to pick two or three Independents, then I pick five NRM MPs and I am done.

4.27

MR KATABAAZI KICONCO (NRM, Rukiga County, Rukiga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for delivering this statement. I must say as a country, we have been waiting to hear what the Minister would say about the state of the economy.

As rightly pointed out by the Minister, when we have a delicate situation such as the one that is before us, it is very important to communicate responsibly. I want to commend the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for this communication because I am very sure there are many people out there in our markets who have been waiting for this particular statement.

Honourable members, we are dealing with a situation of supply and demand of dollars in the economy, and the factors driving the current state of affairs have been ably explained to us. As we absorb this information, there are a number of interventions that we could think about as Parliament or Government.

One of them could be about looking at quick wins. For example, our tourism sector, which has been adversely affected because of - in my view and in part - the Ebola crisis that has been happening in the Democratic Republic of Congo. Uganda has not registered any single case for some time now, but still we are blacklisted. We do not receive tourists. Even when we might project a bumper harvest in December, I know there are some people who might be afraid to come to Uganda because their going or returning might be a little bit problematic.

Therefore, I implore the Minister of Health and Government generally to take deliberate steps to ensure that that aspect of diplomatic

relations, in regard to resolving this matter, is of concern, so that we have our tourists and Ugandans back for Christmas, so that we can benefit from the bumper harvest that we normally have during the Christmas period.

Secondly, Hon. Gyaviira talked about the issue of rent but – *(Member timed out.)*

4.30

MR GERALD KARUHANGA (Independent, Ntungamo Municipality, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Whereas I would like to appreciate our friend and Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for an elaborate statement, I have very serious concerns.

Almost all, our medical supplies - sundries and medicines - are all imported. Surprisingly, we still import lots of peas from Canada, beans from Malawi and Rwanda, and sometimes maize, and of course, rice from Tanzania.

The current economic situation we are facing as a country demands that Government must make direct interventions. I am certain that with what we had hoped for as a country, wherever you go in our constituencies and the city here where most of us sometimes live, you can easily confess that Ugandans would like to hear the immediate, not even medium-term; they want to hear about the immediate interventions.

Mr Speaker, just in one year alone, our foreign exchange reserves rose by 56 per cent, from $4.3 billion to $6.7 billion.

It must have come out of lots of hard work, commitment and investments by these very citizens that are facing this problem. We would like to believe that the very citizens who created and ensured we have that situation where we can even have foreign reserves increase by 56 per cent, that now is the time when they cry out and say, "Hey, we are going through very hard times," to say it is time to make direct foreign exchange intervention as Government.

We can go around these matters, but ultimately we know the situation is prevalent right now.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, fuel; I mean, fortunately, we all travel - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry, Hon. Karuhanga. Let us have Hon. Christine Apolot.

4.33

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (Independent, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I want to appreciate the honourable minister for the statement. In the presentation, just like one of the colleagues has stated, on the immediate interventions, I thought that the minister would have given us an outline.

Mr Speaker, I believe that Ugandans are very happy about this presentation because they have been asking a lot, especially about areas concerning the fuel production in Uganda. The question is that it has been long since Government started promising Ugandans oil from Uganda. Up to now, we still continue to hear stories. When will Ugandans have their own oil so that we can counter these high prices?

Then I also expected a brief statement on the balance of trade in the minister's presentation. What is the status of the balance of trade? That can make us understand how Uganda should move on.

Finally, one time we had some sharing about the minimum wage for Ugandans. I am unsure about the answer, but I want to find out from the honourable minister, now that we are talking about the economic status of the country, would having a minimum wage for Ugandans be partly a solution to this, so that the employees of Uganda in various sectors can actually raise their ability to purchase? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Masaba and then Hon. Mpindi.

4.35

MR KARIM MASABA (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for his statement, though there are things I believe he should have captured. He has elaborated how the central bank, under the monetary policy, has tried to come in to cool the situation, though things seem to be getting worse. They have used the cash reserve ratio and the Central Bank Rate (CBR).

What the minister is forgetting is that once we tamper with the CBR, then we are tampering with loans that every Ugandan is accessing. Those who got loans five or 10 years ago are going to feel the consequence right now. How are these people protected, given that most Ugandans get loans at a floating rate? Their rates are not fixed.

Many of the Ugandans do not borrow for luxury. They are borrowing because they need maybe to pay school fees, they need to buy a house or build a house. The minister needs to address this because once they increase this rate, they have increased the loans that the Ugandans have borrowed.

The other issue concerns the reserves. I saw the Government coming out with statements that they will not touch reserves. The minister knows well that a statement like this will actually make the economy worse. It will make things worse because people who have the dollars will say, "Now the Government is not intervening; let us continue keeping our money until Government intervenes."

We expect a statement that maybe they are going to release some reserves because the minister should know well that the main reason countries keep their reserves is to stabilise their exchange rate and, of course, to cover for them when they are making foreign payments. It is high time that the Government came out and stated this.

On the fiscal side, the minister did not really address it much because he made a statement that Government has cut down on expenditure. However, I saw a document circulating, which I need him to confirm, with revised duty facilitation allowances for Government workers across Government entities. I believe it is not right at this moment, as we are looking to scale down our expenditures as a country.

If we are saving money, as you have stated that you have released less by Shs 3 trillion, where is that money going? Why don't we look at revising the tax rates as well if we are saving on consumption, if the Government is saving on the money that they would spend in the economy, but they anticipate collecting that money from somewhere else, either through borrowing or through tax collection? This is an issue we have always had an engagement on. Why don't you, at this time, look at how you can reduce the excise duty on petroleum products, because this affects the entire supply chain in the country? Everything is affected by fuel, as you stated in your statement.

It is high time we looked at how we can intervene in the fuel prices. Kenya has done the same at this moment because its prices had shot up. It has reduced the VAT - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nasser, Hon. Rose Obigah, and Hon. Drito. I will pick these three economists. Then I will see how I manage. Honourable colleagues, let us do it quickly.

Sorry, did I say Hon. Nasser instead of Hon. Iddi? That means the uncle is closer to me than my young brother.

4.38

MR IDDI BASSAJJABALABA (NRM, Bushenyi-Ishaka Municipality, Bushenyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to first thank the honourable minister for a substantial submission about our economy. However, the issue now zeroes in on the dollar supply, which is very limited in the economy and is affecting our economy.

However, when you look at the NDP IV, you notice that what is driving our economy are the

minerals. We are refining gold and selling it to other economies. They use it to stabilise their economies.

If we have decided to keep our reserves, not to touch the dollars, why don't we use the reserves we have to buy more gold so that we have more dollars in the economy? The gold is also here. At the end of the day, you will find that our economy will stabilise when we reduce the gold exports and we just buy and use it as a backup for our economy. That is one way.

Then the other issue was about fuel. Of course, I think the minister forgot about Russia. If you talk about the energy sector, it is also paramount to talk about Russia. Russia was producing 10 per cent of the world's oil. It was subjected to many sanctions, not allowing some countries to trade with it. We should also have in mind that global oil production was reduced by 10 per cent by the sanctions that were imposed on Russia.

All these oil prices we are having are also part of the cause, much as he talked about the insurance costs, the trans-border pipeline transportation, the geopolitics in the Middle East, and the rest.

With those submissions, I pray that the minister also considers buying Gold from our indigenous people here so that the central bank holds the dollar to back up our economy. I so submit. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you will forgive us, but today, we shall ask hard questions. However, I will remind honourable colleagues: isn't it a few months ago when the Ugandan shilling was the best-performing currency? I never saw anyone come to thank the minister because he did his job. I have learned from this.

I remembered that because I heard honourable colleagues who were talking about the Kenyan shilling, which at that time was in free fall. Currencies across the region were in free fall. All of them were running here because we were doing very well. I hope we can support you to get out of this together - Hon. Zambaali has said that when it performs well, you make a statement so that you are appreciated. Hon. Obigah Rose?

4.42

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As you have said, recently we were applauding Uganda shillings when we had growth through coffee and gold but now, we are on the other side.

Honourable minister, thank you for the wonderful report. This should have come yesterday. However, I would like to say that we have not answered very many questions amongst our communities. We have a challenge. I hope you have seen that downtown businesses are going down because there are still people who want rent paid in dollars, yet we have our shillings. Our own are making life difficult for the business community. I wish you could say something about this. In Uganda, why would people pay rent in dollars?

Secondly, what do you have in our buffer stock? I would think that if Uganda has lived for over 40 years, that is important. The imports seem to be increasing while these businesses are going down. This means that Uganda Revenue Authority will get less in the collection of our revenue, yet we service our debts with what we collect locally.

Why don't we stay some of these imports because we have to pay loans? The loans are constantly increasing, yet what we are getting from the Uganda Revenue Authority will soon be going down so it will not balance. Instead of depleting the little and finding ourselves in a very awkward place, we can stay this borrowing and move on. Otherwise, thank you. You have made us so proud. The more you go on radio and on television, the more you will save this country. We are behind you.

4.44

MR MARTIN DRITO (NRM, Upper Madi County, Madi-Okollo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the elaborate speech

from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. He has put himself in a situation that is not his own creation.

Uganda's reserves are predominantly denominated in US bonds, dollars and Treasury bills. Since the outbreak of the war, the dollar has appreciated by 6 per cent, while Gold has appreciated by 48 per cent. Figuratively, if we had switched our reserves into Gold, they would be hitting the appreciation of the dollar to about $9 billion in reserves. It may be necessary to have a policy shift so that we can keep more of our reserves in Gold than dollars so that we can hedge the Ugandan shilling against such fluctuations.

Secondly, about $5.7 billion of our income is from Gold. However, the question I need to ask and maybe to which a policy has to be implemented, is whether this $5.7 billion is actually the money that is repatriated into the country or the overall export value of our gold.

It may be necessary for the Government to come up with a policy where a percentage of earnings from our gold export has to be brought back into the country so that it reflects into our reserves in dollar terms. Other countries implement this.

Thirdly, 30 per cent of our imports are from Asia, 50 per cent of that is from China alone; 29.2 per cent from East Africa, 23.8 from Africa and the Middle East 9.7 per cent. It could be necessary for us now – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude that point, Hon. Drito.

MR DRITO: It could be necessary for Uganda to join the China cross-border interbank payment system so that instead of us using the dollar for importing, we can directly use the Ugandan shillings for buying goods from China, which seems to be our biggest import partner in Asia.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kateshumbwa, then Dr Wakida.

4.48

MR DICKSONS KATESHUMBWA (NRM, Sheema Municipality, Sheema): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement. It boils down to our capacity to earn the dollars, but also to restrain ourselves in spending in dollars.

The minister talked about the restraints they have done on the fiscal side, but I would like to advise the minister that as you take those measures, you should be aware that the actions by the Bank of Uganda in closing CBR and CRR have already created pressure on the private sector, especially borrowers.

You are now in a catch-22. You are taking these measures but you must make sure you preserve growth. Therefore, if you are going to cut down or delay expenditure, the ministry should avoid tampering with the budget of productive sectors, because we want production to continue growing. You have talked about Agro-industrialisation and the wealth funds. We should see the ministry not tamper with the budgets that lead us to more growth.

Secondly, you talked about the impact on tourism. We have not seen in your statement or the Government strategy any reassurance to encourage tourists to come to Uganda. There is no promotion that is going on – (*Applause*) - what is the Government going to do to market this country so that we start seeing the inflows of tourists? We would like to hear that strategy.

We would also like to know whether the Foreign Direct Investment (FDI) inflows have dropped. We know that of course the institutional investors in the bonds are going out, but what about the remittances by Ugandans who are abroad and the foreign direct investments?

What is the Government doing to introduce or market this country, and also reassure investors that Uganda is a safe investment destination? The measures we are creating could have a potential impact of creating uncertainty. If you start raising the CBR and then inflation goes up, then investors will wonder whether, if they come and invest, they will get a return.

Finally, on the loans, we know that the impact of this exchange rate depreciation will increase our loan repayments. We would like to know if he is considering us looking at some of the mistakes we have been making in borrowing. For example, the issue of – *(Member timed out)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I think you have learned a new tactic. When you hijack a microphone, you do not look at me; you look to the other side. *(Laughter)* Yes, Dr Wakida?

4.51

DR PATRICK WAKIDA (NRM, Kabweri County, Kibuku): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the minister for an elaborate explanation. I felt like I was in a classroom lecture. What you see is a catch-22 - in economics, we teach two principles: "demand and supply," and what you feel in this economy is that there is a high demand for the dollar compared to the supply of dollars.

I want to use this time to tell you our sources of dollars:

1. It is through our exports;
2. It is through the sale of our services;
3. And then we have money coming in in the form of the NGO sector support;
4. Tourism; and
5. Then other sources.

I want you to ask yourself: "How are we performing on that?" But I also want to ask the honourable minister - when he came, I wanted him to give me a projection of the performance of this economy as compared to how it was projected in April.

However, I will also tell him that we projected this country to grow at 10.7 per cent. After quarter one, we revised it to 7.7 per cent. With these measures, are we still slated to grow at that rate? That is the first.

We also set our inflation target at 5 per cent. It has moved to 4.6 per cent and I can tell you - he will not tell you here - the current inflation, if you went both in the market and on an average person, you will notice that it has surpassed 5 per cent.

In economics, we use measures for economic expansion. One of them is the Purchasing Managers' Index. As we speak, the Purchasing Managers' Index dropped from 55 per cent to about 52/53 per cent. Are we managing this economy right? That is the answer I want him to come to.

Secondly, honourable minister - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude doctor. Since you decided to lecture, you can now submit without –

DR WAKIDA: There are several things that this country can do - and I do not support anybody in this House who suggests that we touch the reserves. The rationale is this: Kenya touched their reserves in the month of April. If it was December, they would never have touched it. If you pull-out your reserves now, it is going to buy consumer products. There is no country that can support consumption using its reserves.

My suggestion is to tell our people to manage what they have for now. Do not borrow and do not misuse what you have. We are entering a recession. In economics, we have an economic cycle. We start from a boom, we go through a recession, and sometimes go to a depression, but we recover. And I am very sure we shall recover. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Guma. Then I conclude with Hon. Amelia. Colleagues, we have other upcoming debates where most of these issues will be captured.

4.56

MAJ. (RTD) GUMA GUMISIRIZA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Mr Speaker, it is interesting to hear that for such a serious matter, one is given three minutes to make a rejoinder statement. First of all, Hon. Musasizi, thank you for your statement. We had COVID in 2019 - weak human beings died, but strong guys survived COVID. The Middle East situation and America is part of the story but not the whole of it.

Our economy has been having certain production pitfalls, and when this Middle East situation occurred, the patients started facing the problem. "The patient" means the weak economy. We have been producing raw materials and exporting to the international market –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, what do we do? Because you appear to be weak on the microphone. *(Laughter)* You have "died" on the microphone.

MAJ. (RTD) GUMISIRIZA: Just one second, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes?

MAJ. (RTD) GUMISIRIZA: Let the Government reduce expenditure. Why does Uganda have a trade deficit with East African countries? This situation we are talking about has equally affected the entire world, especially the East African countries.

Uganda is the most affected. Why? Anyway, I think I should stop there – *(Laughter)* - fiscal discipline, which they talked about – *(Interjection)* - but I do not have the time. It will need me to delve into the economics and explain, but there is no time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister?

4.59

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, let me take this opportunity to appreciate colleagues for making an input to my information paper. The reason we have taken time to come to the House is because of the risks and the uncertainty the messages from this House will send to the markets and the investors.

A case in point is when you say "this economy is weak" yet I have just said, "all the fundamentals are robust," what message are you sending to the investors? That is why we need to be extremely cautious when we are debating this matter.

I do not want to say much. All I can say is that most of the issues the colleagues have raised, if you carefully read my statement line by line, you will get the answers to the issues you have raised because there is nothing I did not touch. I took my time to prepare this statement.

When we are out there, let us defend our country. Uganda is one of the countries that has managed the economic fundamentals sustainably over the years. Mr Speaker, when you run through the previous 10 years, you will find an average growth of about 6 per cent. Look at other economies and see how they have been growing.

Mr Speaker, also, to say we subsidise or run to the bank and use part of our reserves to mitigate this problem, what if this problem remains with us for another year? What will happen? Do you want an economy with no reserves? The answer is definitely no.

Mr Speaker, on Gold, we are already using Gold to buffer our reserves. The Cabinet passed the policy, and I think we informed Parliament about it. So, Gold is one of our assets that we are using to buffer our reserves.

Mr Speaker, I thank you very much. I want to invite colleagues to use this information to inform the public about what is happening and comfort them that we are working on everything possible and we are confident we shall overcome this storm. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, this Floor is always open for you if you feel you need to update the House further, or if you feel there is an intervention that requires the input of this House. We have a Committee of National Economy through which we always monitor the economy. Therefore, I hope the Committee will be engaging with you.

However, for now, honourable colleagues, what we need mostly is to see how all of us can come together and contribute to the stabilisation of the economy by supporting the minister. Honourable minister?

MR MUSASIZI: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. As I stated in the statement, if circumstances require that we make other interventions, we will definitely come back and inform the House.

Otherwise, let us manage the situation as it comes, because we monitor on a daily basis; every evening, we are monitoring the performance of the economy. How has the day ended, especially on the interest rates?

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I commit that I will keep the House informed about the interventions we will be making. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE HEALTH SECTOR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, 10-minute response. It was just your response. Then we go to the item on agriculture, which I know colleagues can also relate to the one we finished of finance, and then we do the other items. We need to sort accountability Committee reports.

5.04

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, and honourable members. I made a presentation here last week, and it was extensively discussed. Over 80 Members of Parliament raised issues, which I took note of, and I have an extract of the *Hansard* to capture whatever the honourable members raised.

I beg, now that you have given me 10 minutes, that I do not read verbatim the response to every issue raised. However, I would like to just assure Members that we have captured all the issues you raised, and I will respond, but the most important response is what the Ministry of Health will do: areas of infrastructure, devices, ambulances, the many things that you raised during the debate.

We shall continue to interact where it requires the Ministry of Health to visit, as in the case of Kaberamaido Hospital and other hospitals, which are dilapidated; our teams will visit. Therefore, we shall respond in different ways, including my response, but the Ministry of Health will do the practical responses, and we shall be updating you as we go along.

Mr Speaker, our disease burden - I will just do in summary, as we have said - is characterised by communicable diseases, non-communicable diseases and what we call neglected tropical diseases. Neglected because, at times, they do not get sufficient attention in the Global Health Agenda.

Diseases like leprosy – Some of those diseases you rarely hear about, but are there – as we have always said, up to 75 per cent of these illnesses are preventable. Therefore, our approach is disease prevention and control and health promotion. There were concerns, which were raised by a number of Members about the need to support prevention, promote health, and the other interventions.

Hon. Silas Aogon of Kumi Municipality raised that point. That is why we put a lot of emphasis on community health education, interventions like immunisation, family planning, and nutrition; all these constitute a big package of what the Ministry of Health and indeed the Government promote, so that we can prevent most of the diseases which afflict our people.

In addition, even when we invest in prevention and promotion, we know that some of us, our health will break down and therefore, we need health facilities.

Mr Speaker, many of the questions and concerns, which came from honourable members, were to do with infrastructure in the health sector, upgrade of health centres, and having health centres where they are not. Therefore, I will answer that in general, without specifying which specific health centre you raised, but we have captured all your concerns.

Let me start by saying we have three categories of health facilities in Uganda. We have the public facilities, which are run by the Government, and those range from the national referral hospitals, to regional referral hospitals, to district hospitals, but sometimes we call them general hospitals because they serve more than one district in many cases.

Then we have Health Centres IV, Health Centres III, and in some areas Health Centres II at parish level. That is the Government structure.

We also have what we call the private not-for-profit health facilities. These are facilities run by faith-based institutions. The Catholic Church, the Church of Uganda, the Orthodox Church and the Islamic faith run health facilities at various levels.

We have a partnership where the Government extends financial support through Primary Health Care grants, and also money to facilitate them to procure drugs and medical equipment through Joint Medical Stores.

Then we have the third category, what we call private for profit. These are hospitals and health centres established by individuals, well, as a service but also partly as a business. So we have those categories. I just wanted to give that classification.

Our plan as the Ministry of Health is to upgrade the national referral hospitals to super-specialised hospitals in the country. Then also we elevate the regional referral hospitals to national hospitals, and then elevate meaning in terms of the services they render what we call the district or general hospitals to regional referrals.

We have already started. For instance, we are now deploying specialist doctors in the district stroke general hospitals. Now they are also internship centres where they train because originally, the district hospitals would have medical officers, clinical officers and nurses without specialists, but now we are deploying specialists at the district or general hospital.

We are going to elevate health centres IV to community hospitals and expand the other lower facilities, including health centres III.

On the issue of health centres II, the Government initially started constructing health centres II at the parish level.

However, there was a policy change that we first strengthen the upper-level health facilities and we do not continue with the construction of new health centres II. What we are doing now is to elevate health centres II to health centres III.

Maybe when we have improved the quality of the services at health centres III upwards, then that is when we shall revise the policy to go to health centres II.

Below that, we have the community health extension workers and Village Health Teams (VHTs), who are community workers that support the health system through community interventions. I did pledge last time that I would bring a stand-alone paper on community health workers so that we can discuss them at length.

I just want to say that we are now processing resources to do major infrastructural programs to enhance health centres IV to community hospitals. In the first phase, we shall do around a 100 health centres IV, upgrading them to community hospitals. In your debate, that is why I am saying I captured the debate and we have all these. However, we also have records in our ministry. Therefore, even if you never got a chance to raise your issue, we have the records and statistics in our ministry so You should not worry.

Actually, there is a Member, Hon. Julius Nakiyi, Member of Parliament representing Budadiri East, who sent me a note and said that he did not get a chance for his people in the constituency to see him raise this issue. He said he never got a chance to talk about the upgrade of Budadiri Health Centre IV in Sironko District.

He said, "when you rise, mention it." To the people of Budadiri, your Member has raised it through me. *(Laughter)*

We listen. Even when we meet in corridors and you give me information, we capture it and put it in our records. We are processing resources and at some point we shall come here for the necessary consideration to upgrade health centres IV to community hospitals, to also upgrade health centres IIIs to IV , and also health centres II to III, especially where we have subcounties without health centres II. Therefore, we shall be coming but we are now in the process.

I think through the debate, there were issues of criteria that were being raised. An honourable colleague said, please address issues of equity. Do not concentrate these services in only one part of the country.

I just want to say that there are various criteria that we look at. For instance, there are some Members who said there are structures that were started and are not completed. Therefore, we give priority to completing what was started.

A Member from Mbale said there is a huge surgical structure in Mbale Referral Hospital

that was erected and is not complete. Therefore, we give priority to where work has started and is not completed. Even when I was watching television, I saw a huge structure in Serere District, which was started – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Switch on your microphone, honourable minister and conclude.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Looks like somebody had switched me off.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Your 10 minutes ended; so, just conclude.

DR BARYOMUNSI: When it comes to the criteria, we look at the population being served, issues of equity and balancing the country. We prioritise presidential pledges because many of you said, the President pledged so we capture all those.

We consider special circumstances. There are colleagues who said their areas are flooding around Lake Kyoga, hard-to-reach areas, facilities on the highways just like the Member from Kiryandongo said on Kiryandongo Hospital. Therefore, we look at all those criteria in order to capture the interests of the whole country.

Mr Speaker, there were issues to do with the human resource for health workers. We have a challenge of low staffing levels. We have revised the staffing norms, like I communicated some time back here, where we are now making a provision at health centres III. We shall now have 55 health workers from 19. At health centres IV, we have a provision from 49 to 130 health workers, including five doctors at a health centres IV and two medical doctors at a health centres III.

When you compute using this new structure, the staffing level is now at 34 per cent. Therefore, we need resources to recruit, but we have begun recruitment. If you have seen the newspapers today and yesterday, we put major adverts where we are recruiting additional health workers. In light of the time constraint -*(Interjection)* -

Let me proceed. When I sit, you can come and whisper. I am summarising.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, when you ask for space, and you do not get it, sit. Do not insist.

DR BARYOMUNSI: The other issue that was raised was on Human Immunodeficiency Virus (HIV) and acquired immunodeficiency syndrome (AIDS), including the cost of condoms, which Hon. Linos Ngompek raised. There has been a debate on social media regarding his submissions, but I want to thank him. Some were saying how can a Member of Parliament raise issues of condoms? If an

MP does not raise issues of condoms who raises them? Condoms are one of the measures that we promote in the fight against sexually transmitted infections, including HIV and AIDS.

I just want to briefly say that the other day the Chairperson of the Committee on HIV/AIDS gave us a report, whose recommendations we have captured. The HIV prevalence in Uganda has reduced from as high as 18.5 per cent in the early 90s to 5.9 percent.

However, there is regional variation. Karamoja has a prevalence of 1.3 per cent, West Nile - 1.4 per cent, Busoga - 4 per cent, the Mid-Eastern - 4.4 per cent - You check and hear where you fall - Teso - 4.8 per cent, Kampala - 5.4 per cent, Midwestern - 6.1 per cent. Mid-north - 6.8 per cent, North Buganda - 7.2 per cent, South Buganda - 7.3 per cent and Southwestern, which is Ankole, Kigezi - 8 per cent. Therefore, we have a lot of work to do.

On the question of condoms, we provide free condoms through the public healthcare system but we encourage organisations and institutions, including Parliament, to avail them in places of convenience so that people have access to condoms. I just want to assure Parliament and those viewing that the condoms, which come into the country are tested by the National Drug Authority and they are effective in preventing infections, including HIV.

Please we still promote our original message of abstinence, faithfulness for those who are married or have sexual partners, and correct and consistent use of a condom as a measure. Therefore, I salute Hon. Ngompek for raising that. Actually, somebody on the social media said Hon. Ngompek should be our President of Uganda because he has raised something, which many people fear to raise.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, why don't you conclude? I request that you summarise all responses, which you captured, and then, we upload it on our Alfresco system for the Members to access it.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Okay. Finally, Mr Speaker, just a comment on Ebola and I will sit down. I am going to upload on the system the statement, which I issued yesterday to the press, regarding what is current regarding Ebola disease in Uganda so that Members can read. Just assurance to the Members, like I said yesterday, we do not have any case of Ebola in Uganda as I stand here now. *(Applause)*

However, there is an outbreak in DRC, which started in Ituri province and has extended to eight provinces. Also in Kenya, the last time I checked the cases were nine. I have to check whether they have increased. We are surrounded by neighbours on the west and east with countries that have Ebola outbreak.
We have strengthened public health measures on the points of entry and exit into Uganda. At the border points on land and the airport, we are strengthening the measures. Why? Yes, they have been there but of late if you have been following the discussions, Kenya registered a case of a Kenyan national who was living in DRC as a businessman. He fell sick and then he chose to go to his country. He sneaked into Uganda and flew through Entebbe Airport.

When we got the announcement in Nairobi, we reconstructed the travel history of this gentleman and were able to pick sixty contacts in Uganda. Yesterday I announced that we quarantined these contacts including all those who were at the airport on that day when he crossed. They have completed the 21 mandatory days and we have discharged them. None of them developed symptoms. None of them tested positive.

There was also a case reported in Nigeria of a woman who is a Ugandan from West Nile married to a Swiss diplomat who travelled from Abuja to Uganda on the 15th of September and then returned on the 3rd of October. Actually, he traveled on the same day with that gentleman from Kenya and then she tested positive in Nigeria. We are also reconstructing her travel history. What appears is that she came, and she was at her home.

We are also carrying out what we call genomic sequencing. Genomic sequencing means you look at the virus, which she has and then you look for its parents. Where did that virus come from? I am using the layman's language. You trace back. Could she have got it from that gentleman who travelled to Kenya? Could she have gone to Congo? You look at the strains, which are circulating and you try to link it. We are doing all those assessments. Like I said yesterday, once we conclude the investigations, we shall communicate to the public.

As of now, we do not have a case of Ebola in Uganda and international travellers should be free to come to Uganda anytime, and we shall keep updating the country on that.

Like you have guided, Mr Speaker, I actually have the detailed responses for the Members which I received. I will have them uploaded on the system so that Members can read all these responses. I thank you very much and wish you -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, lay them here, and then our team will upload them.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

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

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE AGRICULTURE SECTOR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, it seems you wrote on that one. You can have a clean version anytime, even tomorrow, and I shall give you space to lay it on the Table.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Much obliged. This one, I wrote on. Tomorrow I will lay the clean copy.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, you presented the statement, but then yesterday I communicated with our team that you should talk about the performance of tea, as just a simple addendum. I do not know what you are doing with the tea sector. Did you do anything to that? If not, then we can continue. Tomorrow we have some item where we can discuss the tea sector generally if you do not have any update.

5.26

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (ANIMAL INDUSTRY) (Lt Col (Rtd) Bright Rwamirama): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am not ready with the tea. I propose, as you suggested, that we debate the statement and tomorrow I can answer on the tea.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure!

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The debate starts now. Shadow Minister of Agriculture? Okay, I will start with Hon. Sarah Kityo, and then Hon. James Kakooza. Now, those who have already spoken - no, you have a right to speak, but you will take longer to catch my eye. If you see my eye bypassing you, it means I want to give opportunities to others. Hon. Tabandeke, are you the Shadow Minister of Agriculture?

5.27

THE SHADOW MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Mr Charles Tebandeke): Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very good. I will give you five minutes, shadow minister.

MR TEBANDEKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the time, but in case I am constrained, I will beg for additional time. In the statement from the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the performance of the agriculture sector, I noted that there are a lot of constitutional legalities not met and fulfilled.

Mr Speaker, in line with our Constitution, particularly objective 22 of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy, mandates the State to ensure food security. Objective eight provides for the State to preserve natural resources for agriculture and particularly Article 26 protects against deprivation.

Mr Speaker, when the minister was explaining and laying the statement on the performance of the agriculture sector, he forgot these provisions, more so on the issue of deprivation of property, more so land. We cannot build stable agricultural production when we do not have a proper land tenure system, more so protecting *bibanja* holders.

Mr Speaker, besides that, this requires a practical remedy, more so in the cattle corridors, if I am to mention, stretching all the way from Rakai, Masaka, Kiboga, Lwengo, Kyankwanzi, Mubende, Nakaseke, Luweero, Nakasongola, to Kayunga. There are profound land evictions that have persisted with no permanent remedy.

Mr Speaker, under Chapter 18 (Article 105) of the Treaty for the Establishment of the East African Community, Partner States commit to achieving food security and rational agricultural production. Partner countries came up with the Maputo Protocol, where food production, more so agriculture, must at least have 10 per cent of the budget allocation.

To my dismay, our budget only constituted 4 per cent. If computed in allocation with the budget, that is about Shs 300 billion. We assume agriculture is the backbone of Uganda's economy. How can a backbone constitute only Shs 300 billion against the eight something trillions, which this House passed? I see it as more of a myth than a reality.

Mr Speaker, the importation of food is still high compared to what we export, and the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has just noted that we have registered food inflation of 4.5 per cent. All that has not been addressed.

Specifically, agriculture, according to the UBOS statistics of 2006, employs about 70 per cent of our population. Surprisingly, only 4 per cent is employed in commercial agriculture. Now, the NRM and the National Development Programme's target of the money economy and advancing from subsistence to commercialisation goes begging.

This requires serious consideration in the budget to empower our farmers. Mr Speaker, if we still have 68 per cent of our people employed in subsistence agriculture, we are likely to register low production, low income, disguised unemployment, poverty and a higher level of dependency, which are not solved by subsistence agriculture.

I get constrained where the Government continues to borrow for failures. Members, we all know that the Government has so far allocated about Shs 3.26 trillion in PDM, but the impact of PDM to agriculture as a sector is not realised.

Honourable members, of the Shs 3.6 trillion allocated and disbursed to 10,000 SACCOs, it is only Shs 2.7 trillion that reached households. There is a figure of about Shs 500 billion which has gone begging, and cannot be accounted for. This is as a result of corruption and mismanagement, to mention but a few – and this was indicated in the Auditor-General's report. In the minister's statement, I do not see all this accounted for.

Mr Speaker, I am seeing this as a myth, and it is a daydream that we are putting false hope into Ugandans that we are aiming at strategising and improving agriculture to change from *kulya kwe kida kyonka* to a money economy when all such errors are not addressed.

Mr Speaker, you are an economist; I would like to interest you to the CBR scenario. It has increased drastically. When the Bank of Uganda increased the borrowing interest from 9 per cent to 12 per cent, what does the commercial bank do to the farmers who are relying on agriculture given the vagaries of nature? The harvest is done either once a year

or sometimes, it collapses, fails and is once in two years, and yet the interest rate still increases. The PDM is accounted at 6 per cent interest. As if time is not enough, but I would beg that -*(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member. If I get more time, I will add you. Let me just allow colleagues.

MR TEBANDEKE: May I make only this one prayer, Mr Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, if it is one prayer.

MR TEBANDEKE: Mr Speaker, I so pray that the issue on the performance of the ministry into livestock need to be addressed, more so the pastoralists. I have not heard it. The importation of layer birds from secure regions need to be addressed. I also further pray that we to come up with an agricultural bank, which this House passed in 2022 and you were the one presiding, that can speak the language of the farmers, other than these commercial banks that go on exploiting.

I request that if the minister's statement does not address the issues spoken to, then with your indulgence, it can be put on hold so that we combine and come up with a clear statement that can speak to and address the interests of farmers.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, we cannot make a statement on behalf of the minister. We can only add value through debate so that, from our submissions, the minister can say, okay, now I need to go back; I do ABCD. I think that is what we should focus on.

Let us now open the debate. I start with Hon. Kityo, then I go to Hon. Cohen, then I go to - I am looking for farmers but I am not seeing them. I will go to Hon. Freedom - Hon. Kyambadde, had I allowed you on when we were on – Oh! You are the chairperson of the committee on agriculture. Sorry about that. Honourable colleagues, let us do two minutes each.

5.36

MS BABIRYE KITYO (NRM, Bukoto County East, Masaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the honourable minister for agriculture and the entire team. Before I add something that I feel should have appeared here, allow me to thank the honourable minister and the entire ministry for sending Hon. Migadde to my constituency. He really calmed us down. He talked to the fishermen, and the entire constituency was really, excited.

I also wish to thank him for these positive remedies. He shared the same with us, and I was so excited when I saw the same issues he had shared with us being seen and presented in the national report from the honourable minister.

Mr Speaker, I beg to make one more request to the honourable minister. In the fishery sector, one of the challenges we have is the items imported in the country that are used in illegal fishing. Our question and that of our voters is; where do they pass? Why are they allowed in the country? I request that you think through that and then you come up with a solution such that we are able to have or to raise or to get enough fish from our natural lakes where we grow them from, such that our economy will still be supported through the fishing sector. Thank you, very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Cohen, then Hon. Kwiyucwiny, and Hon. Kyambadde.

5.38

MR COHEN AMANYA (NRM, Igara County West, Bushenyi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. Agriculture is one of the cornerstones or the backbone where Uganda is getting its income. When you look at the GDP of this country, it creates a scenario where the first one in the export industry is coffee. The second is tea, and the third is maize. I would like to beseech the minister to let us protect these products. We were talking about the state of the economy but if we do not

protect these sectors, we will be here, and it is in your docket.

You told us not to discuss tea, it will be done tomorrow, it is okay. However, when you look at the other sectors, particularly the data you are using, for example, to bring inputs into this country and to the farmers. For example, for the fertiliser you have just given to the tea and coffee farmers, you based on data from one of the institutions.

I beseech you to have your own data because, as we speak, the fertiliser you supplied to the farmers was not enough, beacuse, the system you used did not match the number of people on the ground, and we are having that problem. I do not know how the Government will resolve that problem because you are using the data that is in Kampala, but on the ground as they say in Kiswahili, *vitu kwa* ground is different.

Mr Speaker, also on the third note, is that when we are looking at the arising and emerging issues in the agricultural sector, how is the country, or how is the ministry looking at it? We have the laws of this country. We have a lot of regulations, and we have put Acts in - *(Member timed out.)*

5.40

MS GRACE KWIYUCWINY (NRM, Ora County, Zombo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries for the paper he presented. Honourable minister, in Zombo District, we have a district conference on agriculture from the 11 to 13 November 2026. They have written an invitation letter to you. If you come, you will be the first Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to come to Zombo District. I pray that you break that record and not just that, but also to give us information and policy guidelines.

We have Arabica coffee and we are number two in producing it. It is not what somebody said that it was Madi-Okolo but Okoro coffee growers in Zombo District. We need to also be exporters so we would like to learn more and also stage ourselves in the economy of the world.

We have popularised coffee but there is a challenge of few extension workers. What do you have in plan to increase these in order to promote coffee?

Secondly, there are many things you have done; the cottage industries, milk coolers, coffee and maize processors. However, in Northern Uganda or even in the whole country, many of these are defunct and not functioning. Are we comfortable to see the Government spending money and nothing works? Where is the problem? I think the problem is on both sides.

On the community side – *(Member timed out.)*

5.42

MS AMELIA KYAMBADDE (NRM, Mawokota County North, Mpigi): Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the minister for the paper but I want to raise four issues:

First, the fertilizers. There is a prospective fertilizer industry that is supposed to be built in Mpigi but they have been at it for almost four years. It has never been constructed. Why don't we fast-track that? Recently, the fertilisers we got were not enough and you could find that Parish Development Model (PDM) people were fighting over them with the other coffee farmers.

Secondly, the value addition facilities that we have all over the place. They were constructed but are white elephants. I have raised this matter before, but we have not had any response to it. Why don't we finish them off so that people can use them to add value to their crops?

The Agricultural Credit Fund. We hear a lot about the Agricultural Credit Fund, but who benefits from it? I understand they put Shs 178 billion in the last financial year, but who benefits from it? All these farmers are struggling and they do not have sufficient credit for them. How do we access it? We would like to have more information about it.

Lastly, are the extension workers there or not? You look but never find them. If they come, they pretend that they are volunteers and then

ask for money. I rest my case. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

5.44

MS ANNET BIRUNGI (NRM, Workers Representative): Mr Speaker, thank you so much for giving me an opportunity. I would like also to thank the Minister of Agriculture for the report he gave us. I have only a concern for a special interest group called "workers." Uganda has tried so much to help the farmers already. As I talk now, there is a letter that was issued by the Minister of Agriculture stating that the Members of Parliament (MPs) from Kampala can pick coffee seedlings to take to their constituencies. I want to give that specific example but whenever workers MPs try to lobby for our constituency, they tell us that your constituency is already in the community. Also the example of the Parish Development Model.

There is a big number of over 500 workers who voted for me. I also want to show responsibility for them. Honourable minister, I request that you help me. I know that even fertilizers have been distributed in the districts. Since it is a special interest group, at least give us our fertilizers, specifically and also PDM funds where possible so that we can have our special things since we are a special interest group. Thank you very much.

5.46

MR SIRAJI EZAMA (NRM, Aringa County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to talk about the Agriculture sector, which concerns the tools that we are using in our communities. Most of our farmers use those rudimentary tools that cannot sustain Agriculture given that the number of tractors that were given to the districts were not enough. You will find that a district only receives one tractor. The sub-counties were receiving those hand-driven tractors, which cannot even perform the roles that can be performed in the agriculture sector because the land pattern in those sub-counties vary. Some of those hand-driven tractors cannot manage the land in other sub-counties.

On irrigation, due to the climatic change in Uganda, we need to have irrigation systems in all the sub-counties. The Government has not invested enough as far as this is concerned. I request the Minister of Agriculture to put more money in irrigation because we cannot have lack of food in in those districts. Thank you very much.

5.47

MR PATRICK BINGI (NRM, Butemba County, Kyankwanzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister for the statement that he gave us. However, I was not satisfied with what the ministry intends to do in dealing with counterfeit Agricultural products. Mr Speaker, I do not think there is a bigger problem affecting the Agricultural sector than counterfeits.

Today, a farmer will buy a herbicide, use it to kill the weeds, but instead the weeds will appear like they have been watered. You use acaricides to kill the ticks, and the ticks will appear healthier the following day - *(Laughter)* - Farmers everywhere are asking us; how did these products get on the market? The fake seeds and many others.

The minister was talking about Agricultural police. I have not seen that in Kyankwanzi. The laws are in place, the policies are in place, but the problem is strengthening the enforcement and implementation. I wish the ministry could come up with very stringent terms to eradicate these products from the market, Mr Speaker.

5.49

MR BETTY ENGOLA (NRM, Woman Representative, Apac): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the minister for his statement and wish to make an appeal to the Minister of Agriculture. In Apac District, we have the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) and Agric centres. These are trained personnel in that centre but they are silent. We want to feel them and get their guidance. We want to feel their impact because I can see them bailing special grass and Napier grass. That helps livestock

fattening. They should do that for Apac District and the entire sub-region.

Mr Speaker, because Agriculture as said is our backbone, we want to improve it. As President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni says, we must be productive. I want the entire district and the sub-region be felt by this centre, Agric and NARO. I thank you.

5.50

MS SARAH ITUNGU (NRM, Woman Representative, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, I would like to thank the minister for fisheries for coming on the ground to Kasese District to look at the issues of the fishermen at the lake and giving them hope on the licences.

I also want to thank the Ministry of Agriculture Animal Industry and Fisheries for the statement. It was my first time to hear about earth moving equipment in this statement that was made. Why? It is because we lack information. So, I thank you for giving me that information.

However, every time we talk about the cattle corridor, we leave Kasese District behind and yet we have a lot of cattle keepers in my district. I request that we are considered for that earth moving equipment to support us with the dams, so that our cattle keepers can get water for their animals.

Another issue that I heard about for the first time is the agriculture interest-free loans. We did not have information about such loans. We have large commercial farmers in the whole country who do not know anything about that loan.

Give us that information to pass it on to our people, so that they can benefit from this loan. In fact, it can even help on these issues we are talking about regarding the economy, efficiency and such projects. When we ask for loans, let us utilise them so that revenue can be gotten from our people. If we give them interest-free loans. They will work hard and – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bisaso, Hon. Andrew Oulanyah and then I need someone from Karamoja.

5.52

MR ABDUL BISASO (NRM, Kassanda County South, Kassanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like, first of all, to thank the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and the Government for giving coffee seedlings to farmers –*(Interjection)*- yes. They have given coffee seedlings to farmers in some districts. We have so far received some.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank the Minister of Agriculture and encourage the ministry that like the President said, most of the money is going through the Parish Development Model (PDM)there are large-scale farmers who may not benefit from the programme but can benefit from the coffee seedlings.

There is a new brand of coffee called "*Liberica*". I think the traditional name is "*Kisansa*". There is little information about this brand and yet it is originally a Ugandan coffee. I pray that you encourage National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) to do more research because, if well managed, it gives more yield than even Arabica coffee.

Many people in Kassanda South are starting to appreciate *Liberica* coffee, the so-called *Kisansa*. It is like a mango tree; it has a very big shade. People grow it but lack market for that kind of coffee. It is extremely cheap for those that get market. I pray that you find more information and market for such a brand of coffee. Thank you.

5.54

MR ANDREW OULANYAH (NRM, Omoro County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to join my colleagues in thanking the minister for the statement. I have basically three comments.

One is that every year, we talk about the vagaries of weather, like my Honourable Colleague mentioned, that we leave the farmers to fend for themselves, whether it is raining or shining.

Can we also think about crop insurance? I did not hear the minister talking about it.

Secondly, if you look at the report that the Committee on Science, Technology and Innovations came up with, concerning the innovations that are in the agricultural sector by NARO, most of them stay in the laboratories. How can we finance those innovations to come out and help the communities?

A case in point is on the issue of extension services. Some of our communities have one extension worker to 55,000 farmers. That is a very huge ratio. How can we use these technologies that NARO is investing a lot of money in to scale down e-extension services?

Right now, you can use Artificial Intelligence to scan a virus or disease on a plant and diagnose it. But the barriers of entry and access to these devices are still very high. How can the agricultural sector make sure these devices are affordable and accessible to the everyday farmer? I beg to submit. Thank you very much.

5.55

MR SOLOMON OSSIYA (NRM, Toroma County, Katakwi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, thank you for your paper; it was very elaborate. I would like to raise one issue, especially for the Teso Subregion.

Teso, up to now, has failed to define a clear agro-enterprise that they can run with. The Iteso have been pushed out of the swamps because of the issue of conservation - the President has mentioned that a number of times - so we are out of rice.

The other crops which we have are being affected because we are in a very semi-arid region, making it very hard for our crops to prosper. If there is an area in Uganda that has come to Parliament because of food shortages, Teso has come very many times, like Karamoja.

Honourable minister, please consider the issue of aquaculture - fish production. Can the Fish Fund be instituted, so that we see the people of Teso benefit from aquaculture significantly? This is because Teso has got 48 per cent swampland the whole year round. We have got water that is on the surface and we are directly advantaged to do aquaculture. So, we would like you to put your focus on that.

The third one, honourable minister, is on planting materials. The seasons have been up and down. People have gone to the garden, planted, but failed.

People have planted citrus, but it has failed. People have done cassava, but it has failed because of the dry spells. Please provide us with planting material because without that, we do not have hope in Teso. Thank you very much.

5.57

MR FRANCIS AKORIKIN (NRM, Kapelebyong County, Kapelebyong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a very important sector. Previously, when we were discussing about the economy of the country, my submission was linked to agriculture.

While the ministry has been telling us that the problem is international oil prices, data from the Uganda Bureau of Statistics shows that the import bill for food crops for the country has been increasing over the last three years.

As a result, while we talk every day about coffee, tea, and others, over the last three years, Ugandans' ability to produce basic food like tomatoes, cassava, rice, and onions has been on the decline. The minister should come here and tell us how we are competing.

As I speak right now, if you go to the border points, we are at the stage where we even import tomatoes. This means that if we do not improve our competitive advantage in food crops, the country will continue to get hungry because we do not have food.

Finally, we have just received a distress report from Karamoja that animals are dying in a subcounty called Rupa because they do not have water. The only remaining water dam they had in Kobebe is getting dry. What emergency

effort is the Government putting in place to provide water to help rescue the livestock in Karamoja?

The same applies to Teso, including my constituency Kapelebyong. Yesterday, I got a call at midnight from a farmer telling me that they do not have water for livestock. Good enough, the minister in front here is a minister for Animal Industry. *Papa* minister – *(Member timed out.)*

5.59

MR GERALD NANGOLI (NRM, Elgon North County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I will speak from a farmer's perspective.

Recently, the Government rolled out the issue of the "pay to vaccinate" for Foot-and-Mouth Disease. The policy was that every farmer must pay Shs 8,000 per cow to be vaccinated against FMD. I would like to assure you that in my area, two-thirds of the population cannot afford to pay Shs 8,000 per cow. Personally, I had to pay for all my neighbours within the community. Paying Shs 8,000, out of 7.1 million Ugandan farmers - As I speak, according to the statistics, only 80,000 farmers have been able to pay Shs 8,000. It is on the higher side.

Two, is about the issue of counterfeits my colleagues mentioned earlier, especially agricultural inputs like fertilisers versus their cost. You buy counterfeits at a very high cost. As I talk, from March to date, one bag of 50 kilograms of fertiliser, that is NPK, rose from Shs 125,000 to Shs 230,000. You are not sure whether you are buying a genuine commodity or a fake product. Diamond phosphates (DAP) moved from Shs 130,000 to Shs 180,000. You are not sure whether you are buying a genuine product or a fake one.

Three is about urea. Urea moved recently from Shs 125,000 to Shs 200,000. Farmers, even if we are supporting them with PDM, we are putting a cash injection of about Shs 4.4 trillion to farmers – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Elder, followed by Dr Aliti.

6.02

MR KARIM MUSA (Independent, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I really would like to appreciate the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries for the elaborate report. However, there are only a few issues which I have picked.

The issue of the aflatoxin machine that has been installed in Namulonge is a very brilliant idea because our cereals are not meeting the standards for export, and even for our own consumption. On a practical basis, would it not be prudent to put these machines either regionally or else in every district? My constituency is actually the food basket for the whole of Yumbe. You know? We grow cereals, and we do not even know their standards.

Two, Mr Speaker, we have a problem of a variety of cassava, which my farmers told me. When it stays for six months, it starts to rot. I find a little bit intriguing and funny. In the past, we used to grow cassava. You would keep the cassava until you wanted to eat and finish it from your agricultural field. As if this one matures in six months. If you do not eat it, it rots. I think that needs to be looked – (*Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Doctor?

6.04

DR TOM ALITI (NRM, Maracha East County, Maracha): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to add my voice in thanking the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries for the elaborate report on the status of agriculture.

Mine is on the issue of school agro-demonstration farms. We need, next financial year, to start to support school demonstration farms. One, this will be in line with the competence-based curriculum. Two, it will change youth mindsets to attract them to agriculture. Three, it will improve school feeding programme. Four, it will help skill the

youth. Five, it will create wealth. Six, it will help students to choose agro-enterprises.

Let us support school demonstration farms. It is this Parliament that should provide a budget for school farms. I am not saying the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries; it is this House. I call upon all of us here to support and provide a budget for school demonstration farms so that we can provide seeds, inputs, and seedlings to schools.

I have started this in Maracha, in Ofude Modern Senior Secondary School. They are doing very well. The students now love agriculture, and they are growing vegetables, beans, soya, and maize. It is doing extremely well. They love it. The community is learning from them, and they are learning from the community. I urge the House to support school agro-innovation hubs.

The second issue is on regional agricultural mechanisation centres. I think the one for Northern Region in - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Alenyo and Hon. Muzaid.

Hon. Alenyo, did you contribute to the debate on finance? *[All Members: Yes]* If you contributed to the debate on Finance, let us get Hon. Muzaid Khemis. It is good to alert me, honourable colleagues.

6.06

MR MUZAID KHEMIS (FDC, Central Division, Arua City): Mr Speaker, thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Alenyo, stop misusing your height to capture my -

MR MUZAID: Mr Speaker, I want to thank the minister for the statement that he has put before us. I have two to three issues.

One, the Government is investing in strategic critical agricultural areas like mechanisation, irrigation and disease control. I am appealing because there is a challenge with structural management arrangements. Could I request the minister to see that we have balanced agricultural investment?

Like the issue from the Financial Year 2024/2025, dairy products alone had $285 million. From the minister's report, the dairy issue is not addressed well. Could I request him to see that the pastoral corridor is availed an irrigation system so that the issue of water that is affecting the pastoralists is solved?

Two, could we give vaccines as a soft loan for the pastoralists, as we offer the Parish Development Model (PDM)? Lastly, could we avail seedlings when we are having PDM issues? Giving cash, to me, I see in urban setup - One time I said on the Floor of Parliament here that - we must come back to urban cash-for-work. When we give cash to these boys, others buy smartphones, and others buy radios and mattresses. That one is there.

I think we need to empower Ugandans with seedlings when we are having the PDM programme so that they are able to work and understand, rather than giving them cash. For urban setups, can we bring back – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, on the Opposition side. If you are not Opposition - Kayunga -

6.08

MR JIMMY KANAABI (NUP, Buikwe South County, Buikwe): Thanks, Mr Speaker. I also want to applaud the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) for the statement.

Mr Speaker, Buikwe District is known as a coffee and cocoa growing area. When the ministry decided to supply fertilisers, they sent us fertilisers for tea, yet we are known for coffee and cocoa growing. I am appealing to MAAIF to retrieve the tea fertilisers and bring us fertilisers for coffee and cocoa since it is raining. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nakweede, followed by Hon. Baseke.

6.09

MS HARRIET NAKWEEDE (NUP, Woman Representative, Kayunga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to talk about hoes. During campaigns, we saw the distribution of hoes that we thought were bought by the NRM party. When we researched, we realised that it was a programme initiated by the Government. About 18 million hoes were proposed to be distributed to the farmers.

According to what I was told by a Member who was in the 11th Parliament, seven million hoes were bought and given to the NRM flag bearers and distributed. My question is, when is the balance of the hoes going to be bought and distributed to the farmers?

Secondly, is the issue of seeds, especially maize seed and beans. When I was in the council, between 2016 and 2021, the district production department used to distribute seeds to the farmers, and I believe it was doing great work. Changing the distribution of seeds, the money that was supposed to procure seeds to the Parish Development Model (PDM), means that all the people in the district are beneficiaries of PDM. I propose that we go back to the old procedure where seeds, especially maize and beans, were procured, taken to the district production department and given to the farmers. I know it was beneficial to everyone. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Baseke, then Hon. Mutonyi.

6.11

MR FRED BASEKE (NRM, Ntenjeru County South, Kayunga): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. A while ago when we were discussing the state of the economy, one of the Members of Parliament told us the only way we can have inflows of dollars is through exports. Coffee as a crop has been proven to bring in foreign exchange. We have been exporting 9.6 million bags, but our target, which was set in 2016, was to produce 20 million bags by 2025. We never achieved that target, and it has been set to 2030 to produce 30 million bags, but right now we are producing 9.6. How do we get there? As we increase production, we are going to bring in more foreign exchange.

Right now, we have stopped the distribution of free seedlings to farmers. They told us that we should go to PDM. They give Shs 1 million. A cutting costs Shs 2,000 so within your Shs 1 million, you will have only 500 seedlings, and we are looking at producing 20 million bags by 2030.

I know there is a policy shift, but we thank the President. Last financial year, he issued a directive, and we can procure seedlings for northern Uganda. I propose, because of the contribution of coffee to this economy, and now we are grappling with dollars in this economy, let the coffee be separated from PDM, and we have affirmative action all over the country, because recently they were launching coffee in Teso and Bukedi. There is no – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mutonyi?

6.13

MS ROSE MUTONYI (Independent, Woman Representative, Manafwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister for his report. I also want to make a special request that as they distribute coffee seedlings, in Bugisu, we have very little land, and most of this of it has been occupied by coffee. The parents cannot allow the youths to share in the proceeds of the coffee, so the youths are redundant. They are playing *matatu* and going into drugs because they are redundant. The only way we can save our youths in Bugisu, if the parents can give a little land, is to go into horticulture.

When we were here in the Ninth and Tenth Parliament, the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries distributed seeds to us, and they helped our youths. We have a ready market for onions, cabbages and so on in Kenya, and we are looking for foreign

currency. Why don't we help our youths who are redundant and fighting with their parents? Some of them even go to the extent of cutting the coffee trees which have ripened seeds and carrying them away so that they can pluck and go to sell. We can reduce the fight between the parents and the youths when we provide seeds for horticulture.

My prayer is that the minister looks at Bugisu. We have little land which the youths and the parents – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Onesimus? I have picked enough independents. In fact, that is the final one we conclude.

6.15

MR ONESIMUS TWINAMASIKO (NRM, Bugangaizi East County, Kakumiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for a good statement. I am glad to note that Uganda's agricultural sector grew by 6.4 per cent in the last financial year, exceeding its 10-year growth of 4.2. Since this sector is employing more than 15 million Ugandans, it would be important for the Government to prioritise massive mechanised agriculture; this would boost production and also help in driving rural transformation.

Mr Speaker, can the Government of Uganda be able to procure tractors per subcounty to support farmers to enable them cultivate larger areas of land? This is because, the way the Government is procuring ambulances per constituency, I would pray that the Government procures tractors to help farmers boost production at subcounty level. The Government would then come in to support value addition, create jobs, and stimulate development of related businesses and infrastructures. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I have been discussing with the Clerk and out of my generosity, I end up not being able to finish the work I am supposed to do. Rule 54(2): the statement made by the minister under (1) may be debated, and the debate shall not exceed one hour. We have already exceeded. Honourable minister?

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, and Members, for their contribution and proposals. First, I will start with the Leader of the Opposition on the alleged illegalities in food security not being tackled in the report. The issue of land eviction is not the mandate of the ministry, and I propose that you raise a substantive question to the relevant minister to deal with it. For us in agriculture, we support farmers across the board. Now, the issue of the Maputo Declaration, well, appropriation is done by Members of Parliament, and we have discussed the budget.

The consideration of the approach of the NRM government is that we move the sector on a program approach. If you put 10 per cent in agriculture and you do not put money in the roads, then where will the produce pass? If you put 10 per cent in agriculture and you do not put money in marketing infrastructure, then where do you market? If you put all the money, so we balance. We have a sector working group, and because of the money we have in the budget, this has been the approach.

More subsistence farmers, what is the Government doing? I thought you are aware that the Parish Development Model (PDM) was targeting this group and we are rolling out PDM; we continue to give grants to those SACCOs to make sure that everybody is in the money economy. For agriculture, we are pushing for pillar one, which is production and marketing.

In the minister's statement, there is no evidence of increased production. Really, there is a lot of evidence nearly on every page and one of the Members here was talking of 9.5 million bags of 60kg. We moved from 3.3 million bags and our target is 20 million bags in the year 2027. As far as far as I am concerned, our production has increased in coffee, our production has increased in milk, the fisheries have recovered. The figures are there in the report.

On importation of layer birds, we have a challenge because the poultry industry and farming is private sector-led. We had a challenge because the poultry breeders were not focusing

much on the layers because of profitability. We have had engagement with them and we have put up guidelines. We have supported them on importation, especially from safe areas. We have also increased capacity for National Animal Genetic Resources Centre (NAGRC) to produce layer birds and broilers.

Hon. Babirye, representing Bukoto County East, asked where illegal fishing gear pass on the border? Really, smuggling has to be fought. We have the borders where they are not supposed to be passing through but people smuggle them in and we continue to arrest them. So, we cannot leave illegal things on the market on the account that they were imported into the country.

Hon. Grace Kwiyucwiny, about Zombo, you should be the first minister in Zombo. Please come to the office and we arrange a visit to Zombo. But I can tell you that Zombo is on our radar for coffee, it is on our radar for tea, and also zero-grazing cows for dairy.

Agricultural extension workers don't work. Well, encourage honourable members also to be with us on this matter of extension workers who are not working. Extension workers are under control of local governments and you are aware that much of our budget actually goes to these people. Their salaries were increased and we have provided the mobility for them. Where you have a local chairman who is very serious, and very active members of parliament, they are doing their job. Where the chairmen and the Chief Administrative Officers (CAO) are lazy, the extension workers are not working.

We need a combined effort to make sure that the extension workers do their job. As for the numbers in extension and those who mentioned about the numbers, it is a budgetary constraint that is actually limiting us to roll out the entire expansion to acceptable levels.

Hon. Kyambadde, the fertiliser plant in Mpigi. Honourable colleagues, the President invited here investors for organic fertilisers. For us as a ministry, we have provided space. We have also provided earth-moving equipment to prepare the ground. The ground is prepared. I was there at Kampiringisa about five days ago. The investor has not put up a plant and we have written to the Solicitor-General because he had an offtake agreement. We are thinking of canceling the offtake agreement and we look for another investor who can do the job if this man cannot continue.

Hon. Kyambadde again on value addition. Yes, we are responsible for primary processing and post-harvest handling. So, we continue to give these facilities, and where they are not working, please reach out to the district authorities; let them reach our ministry and we can see how we can revive these facilities because when we give out these facilities, we give to cooperatives.

The assumption is that the cooperatives should actually repair the facilities when they break down. Where there is no power, please reach out to us, and we shall contact the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to connect power on these facilities.

Hon. Birungi Annet – Where do we access –?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Special consideration for workers.

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: A special consideration for workers. Any worker who is farming in constituency X and any worker who is farming in municipality Y – When we provide money for the municipality, the assumption is that those farmers in those municipalities are accessing these facilities.

My advice to you is that you come so that we link you to the department of enterprise development so that they can take you around to ensure that the workers also benefit from these assets.

Hon. Ezama, put more money in irrigation. I agree with you and the paper is about that.

Hon. Bingi Patrick Nyanzi on counterfeit drugs. Yes, the Ministry of Health and National Drug Authority (NDA) have been controlling these drugs and we must agree that they were overstretched. So, the Government in

its wisdom, to increase effectiveness, have separated agriculture, veterinary, fisheries, and all input for agriculture, food and feed to create an agency that will be overlooking at this.

The law is here in Parliament under the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. You should contact the chairperson of the committee and have your input there because we want to eliminate counterfeits on the market once and for all.

Hon. Sarah on earth-moving equipment. Yes, we have a few units of earth-moving equipment. The demand is more than what our capacity can give. We have solicited for the budget to increase to make sure that we avail this earth-moving equipment in all 19 planned mechanisation centres so that farmers can access this equipment and do whatever they want to do in agriculture.

Agriculture interest-free loans. If you look at the report and if I can recall, I think on page four, we have provided this information. Go to page four of the report where the paragraph starts with "financing" you will get the details. As for the follow-up on the interest, I think we should discuss with the Ministry for Finance, Planning and Economic Development but as of now, that is what it is.

Hon. Oulanyah Ojok - New innovations remain in the laboratory, not in the field. Well, when National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) pass out innovations, we publish them and notify local governments. Most of these innovations are available and I am going to take up the matter. But I request you Hon. Oulanyah to come to the ministry so that I can understand the details because we pass on the necessary information to local governments so that they can pass it on to the farming community. We also pass it to the seed multiplier so that they can get foundation seed and multiply them commercially.

Hon. Ossiya Solomon - Teso is endowed with swamp and should consider aquaculture. If you read the paper, that is the move. For those living in wetlands, we are promoting fisheries, especially aquaculture, to make sure that we preserve the environment and also increase income for the population.

Member for Kaberamaido - Importation of food is high, especially tomatoes. Well, we are actually exporting more food than we are importing. I think much of the import is on fruits, especially which we do not grow here like apples. However, we are doing everything possible to do import substitution through commercialisation of agriculture and teaching farmers that actually we can grow apples here. We have apples in Kigezi, Tooro, and we have apples in highland areas. Equally for wheat.

Hon. Karim Musa of Aringa North County; Aflasafe facility: Yes. That is a very good idea. We are now able to curb aflatoxins in the ground. Our capacity is still low. If money allows, it is a very good idea if we can spread these units regionally. That would enhance our fight against aflatoxin and promote export.

Hon. Tom Aliti, Maracha East County, Demonstration schools. This is also a very good idea. We had a school nutrition programme where farmers were learning on the demonstrations for schools. Unfortunately, the money was inadequate. It covered only 67 districts. If we rolled out, it is a very beautiful thing. Farmers would come to school and learn with their children about the farm and duplicate in the farmland.

Hon. Muzaid; the Government is investing in strategic areas such as mechanisation, disease control, and irrigation. We need to step up. Yes. This is also good. I think that is what the Performance Enhancement Platform (PEP) is all about.

Member of Parliament for Buikwe: Fertilisers for tea, and yet you are growing coffee. It is not true that actually we do not grow tea. There is a very big estate. However, this time the fertilisers which were given out were for tea. Before the tea fertilisers, we had provided fertilisers for coffee.

I want to tell the honourable members, through you, Mr Speaker, that this token offer of the Government is actually to demonstrate that

when you use fertilisers, your production go up. The soil gets exhausted when you cultivate it for a long time. However, when you give farmers fertilisers, they notice that fertilisers can dramatically increase productivity, they will go and buy fertilisers.

The good news is that we have no tax on fertilisers. Equally when we are giving out acaricide that contained the deltamethrine that kills tsetse flies, we do not cover the whole country, but it is a demonstration that when you use this acaricide, it kills tsetse flies. So, when it is exhausted, as a farmer who has animals, you should actually get income from the animals and look after the animals.

The same case with the Foot and Mouth Disease (FMD). Members of Parliament demanded that let this FMD cost be borne by the farmer. We have brought the vaccine, you are not moving, people are not vaccinating the cows. Somebody who has 300 cows, really to get one small bull to sell in order to vaccinate your herds annually, it makes a lot of economic sense.

The economic consequences of not vaccinating the animals is actually to contaminate the market; dairy will not go, our meat will not go, all animal products will not move, and the animal industry will be quarantined. I would urge members to support the Government programme on fighting disease and pests because of the quality of the products we produce that access the market, and guarantee income for this country.
As you notice in our tables, the export earnings from non-traditional crop cash crops has expanded.

Finally, I think Hon. Harriet Nakweede, Woman Representative for Kayunga District: Give seeds and planting materials. You cannot eat your cake and have it. We are agreed here as Parliament and the Government that we put money from all the seed providing agencies to Parish Development Model (PDM). If you want to continue, as Government, we have no problem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you see, this issue has been consistent. What the honourable member brought out - even in the previous Parliament - people have been consistent and that is why the Government is intervening in piecemeal. Hon. Bisaso has said has received seedlings in Kassanda.

People are demanding seedlings from me in my constituency. I am doing my own nursery beds, and I am giving seedlings. However, not everyone is able to do that. You know? What the members are requesting-

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Mr Speaker –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, the Speaker is addressing you. What I would request you, honourable minister, is to pick the voices and then give feedback to the Cabinet. You say that, "MPs are saying A, B, C, D… on the issue of seedlings". Then we can see how best we can move around it.

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Thank you for the guidance, Mr Speaker. I also, on the same note, want to clarify that those areas which received the seedlings were for strategic intervention for northern Uganda, which, by colonial design, was mapped as not a coffee-growing area – *(Interjection)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will ask Hon. Bisaso how he got on the list of seedlings. This might be like the case of iron sheets. *(Laughter)* Hon. Bisaso got seedlings for northern Uganda?

LT COL (RTD) RWAMIRAMA: Mr Speaker, I have taken note and I will convey the message.

Hon. Tumwesigye from Bugangaizi: Provide mechanisation and we give tractors for subcounties. The subcounty model failed. When we gave tractors to subcounties, the subcounty leadership made them political. They would select who to dig for and when the truck breaks down, nobody would repair it. We,

therefore, opted for cooperatives and organised groups because this model works.

We have made a proposal as the Ministry of Agriculture to do cost sharing so that we can increase the level of tractorisation in the country and make improvement on precision agriculture.

Mr Speaker, I want to thank you for the opportunity and I want to thank the Members for their advice. I have taken a very important contribution from Members and we shall take care and make sure that we implement some of those ideas. Thank you very much for your attention.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Colleagues, we shall continue following up on all these issues along the way. Thank you, honourable minister. Next item?

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) ON THE REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL FOR THE AUDIT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2025 COVERING UGANDA POLICE FORCE, UGANDA PRISONS SERVICE, MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS AND MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, honourable colleagues, before I go on this, because many colleagues sent me chits here and all that - When we sit, at least I ensure that we resolve one matter. At the end of the day, when you enter any meeting, which minute can you extract? Now, these are statements are very critical items, but I cannot extract a minute out of them because we would not have resolved anything where I can put a question.

The resolution is by you. When you see me trying to push hard that at least we make a resolution, I want someone to say that when Parliament sat on this day, they resolved a, b, c, d. Not that they received only these statements. You have to bear with me.

Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs, do you need to clarify any matter before the debate ensues? Please, the Floor is yours.

6.40

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I need to make just a few clarifications on the report before we get into the debate. The others will come out, but I wanted to just highlight the issue of the performance of the Engineers Brigade.

First, I want to be on record that the Engineers Brigade has the capacity to do the work that has been given to them – *(Applause.)*

I would like to report that in the period from 2021 to date, the Engineers Brigade has received 489 projects to undertake. Of those, it has completed and handed over 324 projects. 89 projects are pending and currently ongoing and all of them are, on average, at about 60-70 per cent. Those include the 11 AFCON projects.

On the partially funded projects, we have another challenge. A project is given to the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, handed over to the Engineers Brigade and given money in a quarter or a financial year. However, in the subsequent period, no funds are provided. Therefore, we have 29 projects for which we have completed the scope and the money has been paid to the Engineers Brigade. However, we have not completed the entire project because it has not been funded.

Then, we have 47 projects which have not been started for various reasons; none of them includes failure on the part of Engineers Brigade. All of them relate to the fact that either the scope has not been fully agreed upon by the parties, or the Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) has not been completed. Therefore, we wanted to correct that.

Mr Speaker, we would like to state that these delays, wherever they are, are because of delays in funding from the Ministry of Finance,

Planning and Economic Development and various Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). The lack of full scope, failure to phase the works commensurate with the funds that have been given to us, late release of capital funds from the Ministry for Finance and lack of documentation.

However, I would like to assure the House that the Engineers Brigade has grown even more than it was in 2021. We request that Parliament does support the Engineers Brigade to continue doing this work.

Lastly on this issue, it will serve no useful purpose whatsoever to talk about competition within Government. That is why the law provided for what we called internal mechanisms, force on account within the Government. If the Government can do the work, then it should be able to do it because that serves the meagre resources that we have available to us.

I am happy that nowhere in this report have they challenged the quality of Engineers Brigade on their work. The issues, which we had were administrative, but I can assure you that we have done all the work. Mr Speaker, if you allow me, I beg to lay on the Table the performance report of all the projects.

We receive requests from Members on the Floor saying, "This project has not worked because of - it has stalled..." verything as at yesterday is in this report. I beg to lay the same. Otherwise, we are ready to receive all the comments in respect to this report. Of course, we want to make a general comment about the issue of accountability on the part of our accounting officer.

Mr Speaker, we get challenges. We do place a budget before the Executive, bring the budget here to the House and go through this process together as the Government to try to figure out the resources that are available. As members of the Executive, we do actually appreciate when the resources are not enough.

We must use the resources that are only available to us. For example, our accounting officer is being castigated for not providing for domestic arrears. We had domestic arrears of about Shs 140 billion and provided 5 billion. Some of these service providers are continuing service providers.

Therefore, we get into the middle of the accounting period and the service provider says, "I'll not service you anymore unless I receive funding," and we can understand that. We go back through these processes to try and get these things done. We pray that the honourable colleagues do understand the challenges that the accounting officers go through in trying to manage the ministries with less resources than what was planned.

Of course, we also have another challenge which we are trying to address at the Ministry of Defence. When the budgeting is done, they remove money from some areas at MoFPED or within Parliament or in the Executive without necessarily going back to the entity to consult. What take-away may not be as important to us in the ministry as – We go back and go through this process.

We pray that Members of Parliament review the issue of holding our accounting officer liable for moving money from one area to another. Look at the circumstances under which these accounting officers are operating and then we can handle that. I thank you very much for listening to me.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, if I read the report well, the committee is saying it is allowed and okay to move money but with permission and clearance. Therefore, that is the law.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, no money was moved in the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs without following the law. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Committee chairperson, do you want to respond to that now? I would like to guide on this like this, Mr Chairperson. First of all, I would like to also give my own testimony on the Engineering Brigade.

In my constituency, if you know there is a Government project, for example, a school or health centre, and you want to give it to any other contractor, kindly wait. I want Engineering Brigade – *(Applause)*

I have seen the kind of work they have done, compared to those who are trying to cut corners to make money and all that. I can carry a block - I go and pick one from Bitereko Health Centre III, which was used by the Engineering Brigade, and compare it with the one by another contractor.

When it comes to issues of accountability, there are not much and I am talking about my constituency. I cannot be shy about it. Attorney-General – Sorry, you know he supported us so much here on the Floor. All the time we would be calling him "AG" from both sides. Minister for Defence.

When you disagree with the chairperson and the report, you make a proposal because he has a recommendation. If amendments are not brought, then I will put questions on the report. However, we usually discuss amendments here because he has many. You need to study them and maybe you can guide. Committee chairperson?

6.49

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) (Mr Patrick Nsamba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Our findings from the Auditor-General's report are clearly stated in the report about the UPDF Engineering Brigade. We found issues that border on weakening or breaking our laws.

Now that the UPDF Engineering Brigade has received the capacity, why don't we respect the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) Act? They have the capacity, and they do good work. It will automatically be possible for them to compete fairly so that we uphold the law on procurement in the country. That is our simple proposal.

Section 17 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) is about the expiry of appropriation, monies at the end of the financial year. When these entities receive money, instead of returning the money as per Section 17, they call for the money and push it to the UPDF Engineering Brigade. Even when there is no memorandum of understanding.

In other words, Section 17 of the PFMA - because this entity is just pushing the money to the UPDF Engineering Brigade, they do not even record it in their books. Honourable minister, in the books of the UPDF Engineering Brigade and the accounts of the ministry, only Shs 4 billion was recorded.

However, on interacting with them, they had over Shs 40 billion pushed by other ministries. Had we not engaged with the Ministry of Education and Sports, probably we would not have got that information.

Therefore, to uphold the law, we are saying something simple. Yes, the UPDF Engineering Brigade is doing a good work but we are saying, "eat the pie you can chew."

At the moment, they are being given everything and many projects, as highlighted in our report. The Ministry of Health has so many projects that have stalled. Ministry of Education and Sports has schools that have not been built.

Everywhere, there are projects that have stalled because of that. We are saying that open up for PPDA and let the UPDF Engineering Brigade come and say this is what we can do this financial year, so that what is pushed to them is what they can afford to do.

On the issue of domestic arrears, honourable minister, it is the same Government where the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development came here and promised Parliament that they were going to clear all domestic arrears in the next, actually they made that promise in the Financial Year 2024/2025. They promised that in the Financial Year 2026/2027, there would be no ministry with domestic arrears.

Mr Speaker, the ministry we are talking about was given little money. However, section 159(2) bars any entity from acquiring or borrowing on behalf of Government or to commit Government.

However, the ministry goes ahead, as if there is no law, to acquire more commitments during the financial year. We would understand if they ended up on diverting resources and that is against the law.

Honourable minister, you are our Attorney-General here. You know very well that it is against the law in existence but it is also provided for in Section 22 of the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), 2015, "how you handle virements. Section 22 is very clear on that, so we are holding you for flouting the available laws even when you have challenges, needs or you are operating in a certain environment.

Actually, when we met the accounting officer, he told us, 'You people, we are operating in a difficult environment.' Then we said if that is it, inform Parliament to change this law for you.

Let section 22 be changed for you so that Parliament can appreciate that you are different and you are allowed-Mr Speaker, the issue of virements, diversion is not only in defence, it is across. It is as if all entities were given an open ticket to make commitments in a financial year beyond their budget.

The worst-case scenario is – We can understand ministries where, if in their budget they had Shs 100 billion and Parliament gave them Shs 80 billion. If your commitments are within the Shs 20 billion you never received, it is understandable that you probably had a budget to that tune.

However, these other entities had a budget of Shs 100 billion; they go and make new commitments of Shs 30 or Shs 40 billion; that is total disrespect to the law.

Above all, these laws are provided for, and if they were followed, we would not have made these - if anybody - actually we found some entities that had authorisation under section 31 "we sought authorisation and the minister allowed us". We never commented about that.

However, these that are operating beyond what the law says are the ones we highlighted here in the law. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was just responding to -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, these are very clear issues. You cannot do a virement without clearance of the PS/ST of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Secondly, I also read that if the accounting officer is saying that "We are stuck with this money because they sent here money without a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU)." That MOU is the one which is like a contract. So, what was that money sent to do? What is the scope? Therefore, I think the committee is raising very clear issues that we need to –

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, allow me just one – Honourable minister, if you could just help the ministry and prevail over them. The entire budget of Parliament this financial year is Shs 1.1 trillion.

However, in the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, you had Shs 1.1 trillion and the accounting officer could not show the committee how they used that money. Shs 1.1 trillion, equivalent to the entire budget of the Parliament of Uganda, an institution. We really want to think that you could prevail over them instead of coming to defend so that next financial year such things do not appear. Thank you, very much.

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

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I want us to dispel the idea that the UPDF Engineering Brigade is operating outside the law. It is in the PPDA Act. Force accounting is actually in the PPDA Act. It is part of the law.

In that procurement law, it is not only competition. You have direct procurement, sole sourcing, all those are methods of procurement. One of them provided for in the law is force accounting and that is what we use.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, I do not want us to leave the Floor with the idea that the UPDF Engineers Brigade is operating outside the procurement law. It is operating within the law.

Secondly, on the issue of transferring money to us without MoUs, that has been sorted, and you can be sure that you are not going to find that. We cannot receive money that we cannot account for. It will not happen again.

Again, about the many projects that are stalled, the report is before you. We do not have a single project that is outstanding under the Ministry of Education and Sports. For the record, we do not have a single project that is outstanding under the Ministry of Education and Sports. The projects that have stalled are in the Ministry of Health, and it was an administrative issue.

The report is here, and colleagues, really, because of these projects, you help us to hold our officers to account. All these projects are in your constituencies. We are here. The three of us are here. If there is a project that is stalling in your constituency, we do not even need the Auditor-General. Pick up the phone, call us and ask why this project is not moving. We will follow up and find a solution to that. The whole idea is to pick up on efficiency, because we have the Engineers Brigade right under direct Government control.

So, if there is a project that is stalled in your area, a project that you see or think is behind schedule, please come to us and let us follow it up.

However, for the ones we have tried to get the report as it is now; Of course, Mr Speaker, I do understand where the committee is coming from. The committee is dealing with an audit report for a period, and I am not saying that they are wrong. The answer I am giving is now, because we do not know what it was like then. Therefore, I am just hoping that we can reconcile that and see, yes, the Auditor-General could have pointed out a position at the time, but we have corrected that, and this is where we are.

On the domestic arrears and new commitments, yes, we operate in very difficult circumstances, but we try our best to keep within the framework of the budget that we present here.

We are going to look at this and find out where this gap is and bring it up. On the Shs 1.1 trillion, I am sure the Chair knows how to go and get the Shs 1.1 trillion on classified expenditure, how it is audited, and how it is handled. *(Interjection)*- It is not what? *(Hon. Nsamba rose_)*

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, the classified audit is not part of this presentation. Not all the money classified in these entities is part of this. We wrote to the Speaker to guide us on how we are going to move on classified.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are going to guide you.

MR NSAMBA: Yes, and you have not guided. Therefore, this is entirely not part of classified.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, Hon. Nsamba, on what page is that observation where you referred to the figure of Shs 1.1 trillion? We are discussing a report of the committee that is a very strong figure and a strong statement, which I wanted to be captured very well. We can go on, if you are - I might not have captured it well, because, I read the reports over the weekend.

MR NSAMBA: On the report, page six. You know, when Hon. Wanyama was reading this report, the speed was too high. Nevertheless, on page six, we have a statement, and I am going to read one paragraph. It says, *"Section 43(3) of the PFMA, Cap 171 and Regulation 14(6) of the PFMA Regulations, 2016, require accounting officers to have a clear work plan indicating the activities to be implemented with the funds released. The Auditor-General*

reported that activities worth Shs 605.4 billion, Shs 5.01 billion, Shs 4.9 billion, and Shs 1.104 trillion were only partially implemented by UPF, UPS, MIA and MoDVA, respectively." Therefore, Mr Speaker, it is on record.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, it is not on record. You said it is defence.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Yes, but Mr Speaker, this is talking about a partially implemented work plan. It has nothing to do with Shs 1.1 trillion not accounted for.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is it. That is what I wanted to know.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: You are saying you gave us Shs 1.1 trillion; you gave us money, and we have not completed what we said we would complete. It is very different from saying you gave us Shs 1.1 trillion; we do not know where it is; we cannot see it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, the chairperson has clarified. The *Hansard* will capture it well because I read these reports. That one I would have gotten it. It would have been a very big red. He is showing that indeed issues of accountability and implementation are very critical. Therefore, the *Hansard* team will capture it well. I think we can correct the record, honourable. Should we go with what you have read that is on page six, instead of the earlier statement where you were comparing the Parliament with the ministry?

MR NSAMBA: In the earlier statement, I said, you engage with the accounting officers to explain to you how they used this money, and they are unable to account. For us, we think the issue is the work plan they come with here in March for ministerial policy statements; they throw it away. If somebody was implementing that work plan or the revised work plan, they will be able to tell you about these particular numbers and these particular figures.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, I am asking, and I seek your indulgence. Should we capture what is in the report? *[Hon. Nsamba: "Yes."]* compared to what you said verbally.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I think last time you allowed us to capture the report as provided here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I am saying that when you are comparing Parliament and the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, okay? I am saying that now you have corrected it as it is on page six. Therefore, should they replace your earlier statement - because the *Hansard* needs to capture it very well, with this one, which you have read from the report? Would that be okay? I need you on record.

MR NSAMBA: Yes, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Chairperson. Therefore, honourable colleagues, let me start with the two ladies. One, two. Then I come to this former - this deserter. Did you desert or you were discharged?

7.07

MS SHAFIGA WANYENYA (NRM, Bungokho County North, Mbale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I will give you time, honourable, to clarify.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I just want to request that, to be fair to the Members, this report is not only about MoDVA; it is about four institutions.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That's it.

MR NSAMBA: Therefore, let them do us justice so that we do not go only on the Engineering Brigade. We look at it entirely in the different ministries. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: For sure, I agree. I am only concerned that the ministers were here; they knew the items were here, yet they have moved out. Now, if a minister is not here to respond to issues to do with their ministry, it becomes difficult. How will the House go on and adopt its resolutions? We will not be stopped. Hon. Shafiga.

MS WANYENYA: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I am also a member of the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. I have had the opportunity to move around and see some of the work that the brigade is doing. Just as you have also given your testimony, it is the same with me.

In my constituency, I have seen the engineering brigade, and the works they have done are top-notch, as well as the works that I have seen as we moved around as a member of the Defence and Internal Affairs Committee.

Last month, we moved around in Bombo, in the NEC facilities, and all these works are a testimony that they are doing great work. So I would love this House to note that most of the works that we are seeing as pending projects in Government are the procurement processes, as the committee suggested that we go through the PPDA.

Mr Speaker, these works are delayed because of those processes in the PPDA. Therefore, if we are using the Engineering Brigade and it is doing the works in time, I would highly recommend that even these other projects that we are complaining about are also given to the Engineering Brigade.

Mr Speaker, I submit and request all the other Members to support them - even when they come up with other projects - because they are doing a very good job. Thank you.

7.09

MS CATHERINE ACHOLA (NRM, Woman Representative, Pallisa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for ably explaining that report and I also join my colleagues to appreciate the engineering brigade for the good work they are doing. We visited the hospital and for anybody to think that they are not doing a good job is unfair. Even the public out there appreciates the engineering brigade for being timely and thorough with their work.

I want to say something about the accounting officer. Our Government operates a deficit budget, we are all aware. We budget and implement as and how the money comes. If there are projects that have not been completed, I would want to believe it is because of the availability of funds. Just like chairman said, that it cuts across all the other agencies because of our deficit budget. It would be wrong for us to fault all this on the accounting officer.

In fact, I request, Mr Speaker, that this report be referred back and the committee reviews it with an objective mind. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, but honourable colleagues, the committee finished its work. If you have a problem with any recommendation, propose an amendment and then we discuss that amendment here. Otherwise, you know we have up to December to have finished all this. Therefore, if you have a specific amendment you want, you can take your time. Was there a specific amendment?

MS ACHOLA: My concern is on loading the responsibility on the accounting officer. I request that an amendment on that be made.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Unfortunately, honourable, the accounting officer is the one who carries the burden of ensuring that funds are clearly utilised but the minister has clarified on many things. Out of his clarifications, you generate amendments and they are discussed with the chairperson, the team and we put them to a vote. That is what is critical and that is how you come to a conclusion on matters.

7.11

MR BERNARD OTIM (NRM, Maruzi North County, Apac): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First for clarification, I did not desert but I officially left the service of Uganda Police Force. I would like to thank the committee for what they have done. They have discharged their constitutional mandate, but it is even more important to thank the President, who in his wisdom, guided that these contracts be given to the UPDF Engineering Brigade. It is also important to thank the Engineering Brigade for the good work they have done so far, as much as they have not done even a single project in my constituency. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, one thing comes out, the fact that the committee raised the issue of stalled projects. As much as the minister has ably explained why some projects stalled, it is just a matter of time that this will catch up with us. More projects are coming and it is nature that people can be overwhelmed.

However, you understand that we have one Commander-in-Chief, who is the President of the Republic of Uganda. He commands the UPDF, the police and the prison services. These other sister security services have construction units that are also able to deliver services. Why would it not be in the interest of the Government that if the UPDF is seemingly getting overwhelmed, which they are not yet, but in planning, why can't the police construction unit be embedded to the UPDF so that; their capacity is also built -*(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I was calling Hon. Stephen but honourable minister, as Hon. Stephen comes, we also needed your comment on the recommendations on page 18 because the chairperson has brought out salient issues, and he wants to be sure you looked at them.

7.14

MR STEPHEN TWESIGE (NRM, Buyaga East County, Kagadi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the report, and the minister for ably responding to some of the issues. However, I want to carry the point made by the chairperson - and I am here speaking on behalf of the business community. The engineering brigade is doing a good job and I think everybody in the House agrees that they are doing a better job, but if they are doing a better job, why don't they stand out and compete in the market? It would be in the interest of the engineering brigade and in the interest of everyone out there. In the world of business, where some of us stand whenever we are out of this House, it is the type of product. You have good products out there that are speaking for themselves, so, let us now really stand and begin competing using the other - Yes, we agree the PPDA Act has all these types of procurement and the one they used to choose UPDF is one of them, but let us open it up and really compete.

That would be my prayer, honourable minister. It is not that we do not appreciate the work being done by the UPDF, but I am only saying that there is favoritism on the side of the UPDF. Therefore, let the Government allow competition – *(Member timed out.)*

7.16

MS LILLIAN PAPARU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a few remarks in regard to the report. When we look at the fire brigade of the police, we have had cases of accidents or incidences that can hardly be attempted or be stopped in time in this country. I think this report points out why some of these outcomes are there.

On the infrastructure under the police fire brigade, it is said here that the maintenance and tracking is a problem. This can now testify; we have seen fire outbreaks in Owino, almost clearing everything, and yet we have a complete department.

On the recommendation, I want to agree with the committee, that the accounting officer should fast-track because that is an area that we need to focus on.

On UPDF Engineering Brigade - I am a member of the Committee on Education – Recently, we went and visited the AFCON projects and yes, they are going on. I wanted the minister to clarify on the link between the engineering brigade and Ministry of Works and Transport because we realised some of the start time of these projects were delayed because of the collaboration between the the UPDF Engineering Brigade and Ministry of Works and Transport. For sure, when we went, some of the projects were already delayed. As a layperson, some of us were worried of when the completion will be.

The minister confirmed that the engineering brigade now has capacity. We want to agree,

but I also want to understand because we hear that they are also subcontracting some of their works. Could we understand at what capacity they are doing that? Nonetheless, we appreciate the work they are doing?

7.19

MR KOY KARIISA (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have read the report and noted a number of things. I am not going to speak about the UPDF Engineering Brigade because it is well talked about. However, there are a lot of issues being raised by the committee, seemingly condemning the Accounting Officer in many areas.

First, the committee was complaining about companies not providing bid securities. However, in the PPDA regulations, you can provide a bid declaration that can work as a bid security, provided it is domestic bidding. The companies they mentioned had provided that one. So, I think that was not good.

Secondly, I saw where they were saying that one company was given a contract to supply boots and meals. But when you look in the details, there were two different procurements which the company competed for and won those contracts. I think that one is also in order because if you compete and win a contract, it should not –*(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Point of order?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, we are discussing a report, where we have stated clearly the Auditor-General's findings. When you read our report, it states the law, the Auditor-General's finding and the committee observation. The Member who is holding the Floor is talking about other findings which he does not mention and they are not part of this report we are discussing. Is the Member in order, Mr Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kariisa, I think the issues you are raising are on page 18. It becomes easier when you refer to recommendations. The procurement issues which you are talking about start from pages 16 up to 19. So, you should be clear.

Also, what the chairperson is concerned about, which I also picked up, is, for example, a bid declaration replacing a bid security. Which provision of the law is that? A bid security is an amount which, if you do not comply, I can go and cash. With a bid declaration, you only sign to acknowledge and declare that the information you have put in your bid document is true, to the best of your knowledge. So, how can a bid declaration replace a bid security?

MR KARIISA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The PPDA Regulation 63(9) is about a bid securing declaration. When you secure a bid, it means that in case you do not perform, the institution of Government can be able to get that money from you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: A bid securing declaration. Over to you, chairperson; he has responded to you. That is for you. Thank you, Engineer.

Hon. Robina? Honourable colleagues, you are becoming many yet I want us to handle another report. Let us use two minutes each quickly and finish this. Hon. Robina, Hon. Zadock, Hon. Musinguzi and Hon. Mamawi.

7.23

MS ROBINA RWAKOOJO (NRM, Gomba West County, Gomba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to give a testimony about the UPDF Engineering Brigade because it did work on the maternity ward in Kyayi in my constituency very well. They are left with the interior. However, they did the work very well because we were lacking a maternity ward. There is also Maddu Seed School in a place called Kigezi.

There is an area in the report where they are talking about women groups being allowed to have contracts, but then the amount of money that they want to bid for is less than what the Ministry of Defence wants. I am praying that they allow the women groups to join and come in to take those contracts. Thank you.

7.24

MR ZADOCK MUTEKANGA (NRM, Buhweju County, Buhweju): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is also on the Engineering Brigade. I also join others to appreciate the work they are doing. In Uganda now, we are producing a number of engineers but most of them have not joined the army. Most of the work is being done by the army and those sons and daughters of ours are just redundant outside there.

My prayer is; is there a way the UPDF Engineering Brigade can use them, much as they are civilians, to work with them and they get experience, so that they can also do a good job outside the Engineering Brigade, rather than being idle outside there, when all the jobs are being done by the Engineering Brigade? Thank you.

7.25

MR PATRICK MUSINGUZI (NRM, Kashari North County, Mbarara): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Cognisant of the feedback and submissions by the members of Parliament herein about the great work done by the UPDF Engineering Brigade, I would like also to commend them that they are doing a great job in my area, much as I have been notified by the honourable minister about why some of the projects are stalling.

I would, therefore, suggest that we support the UPDF Engineering Brigade to ensure that we give them more work. I have been seeing the way my colleague, Hon. Balaam Barugahara, has been running up and down with thieves in local government. It would be great to give the UPDF Engineering Brigade more work, since they have said they have the capacity, so that they help us in local governments. Thank you very much. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

7.26

MR JAMES MAMAWI (Independent, Adjumani East County, Adjumani): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for making a good report. The Auditor-General's report is all about accountability and that is why the chairperson of the committee was emphasising some clarifications with the minister.

One of the reasons I think the Government is using the UPDF Engineering Brigade is to ensure that there is quality work being done and at the same time, there is also saving in Government projects. If all these works are done by UPDF Engineering Brigade, we would love to hear that more work is done than what has been planned because this is an entity of Government which is non-profit making.

We thought that by using them, we are going to accumulate some savings and do more work. If you look at what the Members are yearning for here, everybody is asking for schools. Everyone is asking for health centres. We thought this is an entity which is going to help us put up more of these infrastructures but we have not seen reports that they have done more work because they are given this amount of money.

In future, we would like to also hear such reports from the chairperson of the committee, so that we know what is exactly happening. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: *(Hon. Fungaroo rose_)* No, honourable member, you have just entered. *(Laughter)* I do not know where you are coming from. You have just entered; you are just being unfair. Yes, Hon. Namatende?

7.28

MS EUNICE NAMATENDE (NRM, Woman Representative, Bugiri): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I stand to commend the UPDF Engineering Brigade. I sit on the committees on education and government assurances. I can tell you the truth that I can compare both. We moved through western and northern Uganda but contractors are abandoning work.

I am here to commend the UPDF Engineering Brigade for being very organised and disciplined. Wherever we have been moving as the Committee on Education and Sports, they

would listen to us, we would tell them what we want and they would promise to deliver.

So, I am here to support and also request - I inform you that they are very good performers, and we should support them. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nsegumire.

7.29

MR KIBEDI NSEGUMIRE (NRM, Mityana North County, Mityana): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am here to appreciate the work well done by the UPDF Engineering Brigade. They did a great job in my constituency at Kajoji Health Centre III. However, honourable minister, I was notified that Kikandwa Health Centre III is going to be done. However, up to now I have not seen anything.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let me pick the lady. Honourable lady and -

7.29

MS SARAH WEKOMBA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also join colleagues in thanking the committee for the report. I also want to commend the UPDF Engineering Brigade.

In Bulambuli District, when we had the landslide issue, it was the UPDF Engineering Brigade that put up the houses that are housing the victims who were moved to the Bunambutye Resettlement Camp.

Secondly, under the recruitment of the UPDF, they recruit qualified staff, and include them in the process of construction when they are doing their work. That is really good. Also, the youth are able to join them.

Recently, there was a thanksgiving of the honourable Minister Musenero in Butebo. They built that hospital. When you left, the youth are begging you to go back and help them push on with life. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, honourable member, and then we go –

7.31

MR VINCENT OPITO (UPC, Dokolo South County, Dokolo): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the chairperson and the minister.

First, allowing the UPDF Engineering Brigade to do construction is a local content strategy. It is like we are using Ugandans to build Uganda. We must appreciate that.

It is also risky to bring other people to construct our buildings here, bearing in mind what happened in the 1970s during Amin's time, when the people who built our airport came. They already had the map, so, it was very easy for them to execute their duties to rescue the Israelis who were hijacked.

I also want to bring to this House's attention that the military has a very high level of supervision. A junior military man is supervised by a senior military man. Once the work fails, they go to court-martial. They fear that.

That does not bar them from following our laws. Much as the engineering department is there, they should follow all the laws so that we do not go out of hand. Thank you so much.

7.32

MR BRUCE KABAASA (NRM, Rubanda West County, Rubanda): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee because their revelations are what we have been seeing in following up on the work of the UPDF Engineering Brigade and the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs in general.

I am trying to reconcile the recommendations with the law. When I look at Section 13(3) of the National Audit Act of 2008, it provides that Parliament or the minister may request the Auditor-General to conduct a special audit.

On page 31, the committee recommends that the Auditor-General should conduct a forensic audit of all projects undertaken by the brigade on behalf of ministries, departments and agencies (MDAs).

The correct statement here should be a special audit because it is provided for in the law. Besides being provided for in the law, when you go to the definition of audits, a forensic audit will most likely put the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs to a standstill, yet it will come with the same result as a special audit.

I propose that we amend recommendation three from a forensic audit to a special audit. I move, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, do you agree? No, on record. I do not want it to be a whisper between us.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I agree.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very good. Thank you. Now we are moving. Hon. Kiconco Katabaazi- I will put a question on these amendments at the end.

7.34

MR KICONCO KATABAAZI (NRM, Rukiga County, Rukiga): Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity to make my input in this report. I will be very brief. My concern relates to page 15 and recommendations one and two on the aspect of failure to comply with procurement planning and reporting.

Recommendation one states that "the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should take disciplinary measures against the Permanent Secretary and the Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST) and the Executive Director of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) for failure to enforce the requirement under Section 60 of the PPDA Act, Cap. 205, on the submission, approval and display of the annual procurement plans of the entities and report to Parliament within three months of the adoption of this report".

Two, that "the PS/ST should hold accounting officers of the Uganda Police Force (UPF), Uganda Prisons Service (UPS), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA) and Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs (MODVA) liable for contravening Section 60 of the PPDA Act". I have read the section, but I also note that here, you are placing a responsibility on the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to take disciplinary measures against a civil servant; the Permanent Secretary. For me, there is a problem here because we are now calling on policymakers to be involved in civil servant matters, yet at the same time, under two, the same person you want to be disciplined is the one you want to hold the accounting officers accountable - (*Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude that point.

MR KATABAAZI: Which, in my view, brings a contradiction. I propose that, under one, the PS/ST be responsible for taking disciplinary action against the Executive Director of PPDA. The other parts of the statement should be kept as is to be in tandem with two. I propose.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, if you captured just - Anyway, the minister wanted to say something. I pick your point. I will not lose it, Hon. Kiconco.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Hon. Kiconco, I agree with you entirely, but maybe add that, if you say "should be held liable", you have already made a judgment call. What is the PS/ST supposed to do: go and arrest them, or what?

I think the recommendation here should be that the committee has found that there are matters that need to be investigated and, should the PS/ST find the person liable, he should take the appropriate action. However, here, you are saying they are already liable. The PS/ST should just move to arrest the accounting officer and move on.

We need to couch it in that way, that we are recommending that this matter be investigated by the PS/ST because you think there was money that was not properly accounted for, and then if found liable, action should be taken.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, I just wanted to get your mind on

this because you see, you look at the narrative, and then you look at the proposed action or punitive measure, whether it is in line.

For someone failing to produce a procurement plan, should that person be held liable, or are these areas where you can propose an improvement? It would be commensurate.

Number two, procurement plans are also a requirement during budget processing. How did it pass the committee here? How did we appropriate money to the entity when it had no procurement plans? Then, we come back and say, "No, you should be held liable and be disciplined. Did we ask for that procurement plan before we approved the budget?" We could look at it from an angle of improving the process and also require the committees to be strict on ensuring that the procurement plans come as part of the budget. Committee chairperson?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, let me begin with Hon. Katabaazi, who is wondering why we are talking about the minister. Section 78 talks about the minister. It is not our creation but where I pick your mind is where you say that it is probably a harsh punishment. We come to this because section 12(15) requires all entities to come with procurement plans. The assumption is that, at least, they submit something in March when we are doing the budgets and approvals -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not submit something but a procurement plan. You are going to give people leeway.

MR NSAMBA: Yes, Mr Speaker, there is an assumption. Section 43(3), there is a contract the accounting officer makes with the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PSST) based on what was approved in Parliament.

However, every time we would ask, "Where's the work plan or the procurement plan that you contracted with the PS/ST according to the law? None of them could produce it. They would tell you there is a procurement and disposal, the Electronic Government Procurement System (eGP). That is the excuse now.

On our part, we saw it as negligence on behalf of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) and the PSST because the law expects these to receive the plans. However, when you say we can change it to say next time you will do better, I have no problem -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I want you to be comfortable, chairperson. What I was saying is simple. The Public Finance Management Act (PFMA) requires that the budget should come with a procurement plan.

However, the budget was brought here without a procurement plan. The question from Parliament should have been, "Where is the procurement plan?" We never did that part but now we are saying, "No, even you who never delivered it to Parliament should be held accountable." I am trying to see how both of us can do better. That is not to say that we should be lenient and leave people.

Hon. Fungaroo, how can we have a middle ground of ensuring this stops so that the committees themselves are informed that it is a requirement before they process the budget at least, by the level of Ministerial Policy Statements (MPS)? We can wait at the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) level, but at MPS level, we should have a procurement and work plan.

How did the budget pass without it, before we spot a log in someone's eye? Do you think we can have a middle ground, chairperson?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I want to marry what you are saying with what Hon. Katabaazi is said that we are punishing the PS/ST and also asking the PSST to punish the accounting officers. Maybe, we can tone it down and then recommend administrative measures. Maybe we say, "…administrative measures to ensure that the PPDA and the PSST take this into action."

Also, you are talking about the Budget Committee and sectoral committees to also look at these as important areas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Katabaazi, you can refine your recommendation in line with this. By the time we put it to a question, you would have come out with something more acceptable.

MR NSAMBA: Let me do that. I know Hon. Katabaazi may not be able to.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: My concern is that you cannot bring an amendment to the report of your committee. A Member can bring it, then you discuss and concede on it. Hon. Katabaazi should do that.

Mr Chairperson, I would like you to go on and address the issue of Hon. Kariisa on procurement. We are a House of record. I want to be sure of what we put here. The issue he raised is on page 16, where you say MoDVA had 57 contracts worth Shs 152 billion, for which the bidding documents required a bid security.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, all I can amend is a recommendation but not the Auditor-General's finding.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am not saying you amend. This is where I want us to have proper clarification. Hon. Kariisa, the bid securing declaration can never replace a bid security. I think you were referring to the PPDA Regulations 3 of 2026, where a bid security is clearly required. One must bring it. That is under open and international bidding.

The bid declaration comes in on restricted bidding, direct procurements, and all that under which the PPDA can suspend you for three years without participating if you violate it. For the other open ones, you must attach a monetary security. Therefore, the Auditor-General said that the bid securities were required.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, this is to clarify that for these 57 procurements that were referred to, the ministry used restricted bidding and quotation procurement methods where the instructions to the bidders required a bid-securing declaration in compliance with the law. Here, the bid instruction was clear. It was not for bid security because it was direct but restricted bidding and quotation methods.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, do you want to say that at the exit meeting, the Auditor-General could not see this? These are issues, which are handled at the exit meeting.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: I am also baffled because I saw it once and it was clear to me. I do not know why they needed two meetings, but what I saw from the procurement, it was restricted and the instructions to bidders were that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, at this level, we cannot amend the report of the Auditor-General, so we go with it the way it is. When you are working on the Treasury Memorandum, you will cover it within the Treasury Memorandum. Otherwise, the Chairperson and we cannot amend the finding. Honourable minister, are there issues you wanted to clarify?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, first of all, I thank the committee for this. We are going to look at many of the recommendations that you have given us. We have noted and I am sure it will make our work better.

I would like to clarify on the issue of the African Cup of Nations (AFCON) and this issue of sub-contracting. There are some aspects of the AFCON project that we had to subcontract, one, because of time. For example, the cladding outside. The whole concept of having the cladding brought to us and then we do it ourselves was that it was quicker and easier to get the provider to come down and do it themselves.

There is some work that was actually sub-contracted at Namboole. For all these other projects, we do not sub-contract except that

we have a local content procedure within the Engineering Brigade. Wherever we do work, at least 30 per cent of the works must be obtained from the area where the work is done. If you need manual labour, we must get it from the local area. So, some people think that we do not have the capacity. But that civil- military relationship is extremely important to UPDF that where we do work, we must involve the civilians in that area.

So, when you get to an area and you find people - even at these stadia that we are building, you will find those who are clearly marked "Engineering Brigade" and then other people who are not part of the Engineering Brigade but are from that area. So, we do not subcontract on all those projects although for Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) - that is Namboole specifically, we did.

Also, for some of the grassing areas specifically during the first projects we did, we subcontracted but now, we do it ourselves. The first time they came to do the planting it was a partnership but now we are doing it ourselves. Mr Speaker, you asked me to comment on two procurements which appeared at page 18. That is the is-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure, chairperson?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, AFCON is not part of this report. I do not know how the record is going to be captured because in 2024/2025, UPDF Engineering Brigade had not been given the responsibility to handle the year under audit.

I do not know how we are going to capture the record because we expect it to be handled in the forthcoming audit report. So, it is not part of this one.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But they worked on Namboole. You remember honourable member?

MR NSAMBA: I beg your pardon?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: They worked on Namboole.

MR NSAMBA: But it was not about AFCON.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay, maybe we remove the word AFCON but they worked on Namboole.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, I am happy to skip many of the issues. I thought that some of the issues that the Members raised, even if they are not part of your record, may be important information for Members.

For example, I had never reported to you about the local content because you are supposed to check on whether or not the UPDF Engineering Brigade is actually applying the local content and making sure that the public is involved. But I will stick to what has been raised in the report.

Mr Speaker, you asked me to comment on the issue regarding the procurement of meals for ready to eat and the Ranger boots that were awarded to two separate firms.

First of all, for the meals ready to eat; there were six firms that participated in that procurement. And that was procurement number MDS/SPLS/22019-20/00084. The record is there. So, it was not a direct procurement. For the Ranger boots, 28 firms participated in that procurement. It is MD/SUPLS/2019-20.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, why wasn't this information given to the committee? Honourable chairperson, did you receive this information and ignored it?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker the minister is volunteering very good information but it was not provided to the Auditor-General at the time of audit. And if they missed it at the time of audit, they would have provided it at the exit meeting.

However, even if they missed it at the exit meeting, they would have provided it during our committee meetings. Unfortunately, it

never came. Now I do not know why it missed all those stages and it is coming here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, they missed the first step, second and third step but the information is here. Now you can use it the way you want to use it. I have given you the information that this was how it was procured. I do not know why it missed because I was not there during that process.

That was for the accounting officer, however, I have given you the information on those procurements, the procurement numbers and everything. So, I will leave it at that.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, honourable minister, how do we treat the recommendations? because of the lack of that information, the committee reached certain conclusions. So how do we treat it?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: I would propose that the committee, in light of the very good information that I have supplied you, amends the recommendation and drop that sanction. *(Laughter)* But for me what happened –*(Interjection)* – Just let me finish this point.

MR NSAMBA: Let me give you this information; it is very important for you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have instead switched off.

MR NSAMBA: Honourable minister, when we engaged the accounting officer about these meals ready to serve, they said; "We have difficult circumstances under which we operate in. There is this one supplier of meals ready to eat, who knows those difficult situations".

The accounting officer never told us that it was more than this.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Thank you, for the information. I am going to take it up with my accounting officer and understand what the challenge is. And I think at one point we did say that when we are dealing with these things, I think it is important to involve us the political leaders in these processes.

I am very interested in knowing what the accounting officer is bringing here but when we are not involved, I can only answer when I am on the floor. Regardless, I am going to follow it up.

There was the issue of the amount of money provided for in the procurement rules. It is Shs 30 million – procurements below Shs 30 million which are supposed to go to the women groups.

We have a challenge there because most of our procurements are bigger. But the Ministry of Defence working with the National Executive Committee and veteran affairs are trying to work out on how to split some of these of these contracts. We have been trying to get as many people involved, but we take the recommendation and are going to look at how to involve more people.

About the excess projects, yes honourable member I agree. The money that is left behind after we have taken the little amount that Engineering Brigade asked for, should siphoned into more projects.

Maybe Parliament should ask the entities where the other money goes because it does not come to us. For us we receive exactly what is supposed to be done for that project. Whatever was planned is not with us. Although, we are going to follow up and we welcome Hon. Bruce's intervention on the special audit.

I must put on the record that we welcome anyone who would like to come and check on the work we do at Engineering Brigade and are happy with you coming to visit and see what we do anytime. So, we welcome the special audit and I am sure it will go a long way.

So, with that, I propose that we amend the recommendation that relates to the Engineering

Brigade being procured competitively because;

1. The Engineering Brigade is not a legal entity that can bid but rather a department of the ministry.

So, if you say that they are going to do it competitively, you are in essence saying that the Engineering Brigade should not do it. And that is why the law provided for force accounting because it anticipated that you may have entities within the Government which have capacity but do not have the legal capacity to bid.

So, we propose that the issue of procuring the Engineering Brigade using the competitive method of procurement be dropped from the report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, what is your view on that? You have switched it off.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, our recommendation is asking the Government to review. Honourable minister, read it properly. It is asking you to review this. And we have given the reason why you are reviewing is because of those many projects that we have highlighted. We did not mention that you are doing shoddy work.

However, we highlighted and the Auditor-General highlighted projects that stalled, projects that were not completed on time, projects whose money is being held on the accounts of - and our recommendation is that the Government should review. Government may go, review and come back and tell Parliament we have –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Improved – Improved or we have done this and our recommendation is that**.** Would you be okay with that, honourable minister?

7.56

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS (Mr Kiryowa Kiwanuka): We are happy to go back, review, come back to you, and tell you that we have reviewed and we have found that the force accounting is the best method. However, we will go back and review.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Which is okay.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Hon. Kiconco Katabazi? Chairperson, I need you to capture this well.

7.58

MRKICONCOKATABAAZI(NRM,Rukiga County, Rukiga): The recommendation I had proposed. The committee recommends on page 15 that;

1. The minister responsible for Finance should take necessary steps to ensure that the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST), and the Executive Director of Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) comply fully with Section 60 of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, Cap 205 on the submission, approval, and display of annual procurement plans of entities and report back to Parliament within three months of adoption of this report.
2. The Permanent Secretary and Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST) should investigate the accounting officers of the Uganda Police Force (UPF), Uganda Prisons Service (UPS), Ministry of Internal Affairs (MIA), and Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs (MoDVA) for alleged breach of Section 60 of the Procurement of the Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Act, Cap 205 and report to Parliament within three months of adoption of this report. I beg to propose.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson is that okay?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, the first one is okay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The second one?

MR NSAMBA: Because he is proposing that instead of holding them liable, he is saying that the minister should force compliance. So I am requesting that even on the second one, the PSST should force compliance. Not an investigation. Should also do the same. Force compliance as he has proposed in the number one.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Yes, we fully agree, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable colleagues, we have only two amendments. The one, which came from Hon. Bruce Baraba and the Chairperson, considered on it and this one, which they have also agreed upon.

I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts, Central Government on the report of the Auditor-General for the audit year ended December 2025 covering Uganda Police, Uganda Prison Service, Ministry of Internal Affairs and Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs be adopted with the proposed amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Reported adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I hereby direct the Clerk to extract the recommendations together with a copy of the *Hansard* and transmit them to the relevant ministries, departments, and agencies for action so that we can have a treasury memorandum within six months as provided for under the Rules. Chairperson, you wanted to say something?

MR NSAMBA: Chairperson, I thank the Members. Thank you so much for helping us conclude these at least four votes. We appreciate it, but most especially the members of the Public Accounts Committee.

Mr Speaker, when you are put on the Public Accounts Committee, you will become like a civil servant. You arrive here at 6 a.m.; at 7:30 p.m., we are in a meeting to review what we are going to work on at 10 o'clock.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That is why I want us to do another report; we will finish it.

MR NSAMBA: So, I really want to appreciate the members of the committee. Thank you very much, Parliament, Mr Speaker and the honourable ministers. There were three. Oh. They are all here. Honourable ministers, thank you so much, especially this minister who has been particular in his ministry. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You know we are going to take advantage of him also on the next report; he will help us, reason being, in the audit year he was a minister. Yes, he was a minister during that time.
Though he might not authoritatively speak for the ministry, at least he can give us guidance. It is a short one; it is a quick one.

However, what I have observed, honourable chairperson and Hon. Government Chief Whip, would it be prudent for me to guide the committee chairpersons for accountability committees to always do exit meetings with the ministers on what they found? When you find issues.

Minister of Defence, I wanted your attention: There is an issue I am proposing here. Because I have seen these clarifications you have made. If, for example, these recommendations had been identified early and the members had put them to you, because you are the one who will come here on the Floor. These accounting officers cannot access here. It would have helped to sort out very many issues. Do you think that would work? Because these are not recommendations, the committee is hiding.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, actually what you are proposing is extreme – and again, involving us. We must have an engagement after the report has come out. This whole report, we had only three issues.

However, there were many things we did not participate in; we just saw the word.

However, we would have benefitted from the committee chairperson. What did he see, what was the engagement? Therefore, if we have a meeting, say with the ministry for justice and the Public Accounts Committee, you get an opportunity to go through these recommendations. What exactly are you looking for? What can we - and then we can come here when it is clear.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then you bring in your accounting officers that the committee is asking for ABCD. They are going to recommend - because you see the committee is not aiming at fault-finding. The committee is processing. We are happy when we do not find faults. Our work becomes much easier. Do you think it would be helpful, chairperson?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, our mandate is constitutional. We have six months. And in those six months we have 120 days. Our program is packed from Monday to Friday. Unless we have had situations where some heads of different ministries have accompanied their colleagues during the time of audit scrutiny. That is the only opportunity. Mr Speaker, to create a day to see a ministry -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It can be even in writing. Honourable chairperson, the final work you bring here is what you should focus on. What does it help to bring work and then you reach here, the minister is tabling certain evidence, and we start getting contradictions on how to handle it.

What I am saying is very simple. Maybe we can go back and discuss it, but to me, I think it would be helpful. Once you have found problems with an entity, then you call the minister, okay, whom you are going to find here on the Floor, to handle issues. You say, honourable minister, these are the faults we have found in your ministry. It can even be in writing if you cannot meet.

You say we have found these faults before we write our final recommendations; can we get clarification from you. Then you write your final recommendations. It will enrich your report. We can make that a working standard procedure if you agree to that chief whip; you would communicate with your Committees.

8.07

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr Paul Mwiru): Thank you. Mr Speaker, the treasury accounting instructions require accounting officers to keep documents for audit purposes. And when the audit is being done, there is an entry and an exit meeting. Actually, we do not expect that they would be receiving documents in Parliament because we will be looking at the Auditor-General's report.

I do not know what you are proposing, Mr Speaker, that before the Committee concludes its report again, it refers to the minister.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: To the minister.

MR MWIRU: To the minister as a political head?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, because he is the one you will engage with here to avoid what we have seen. Do you know why, Hon. Mwiru? You know the auditing process. You were chairing an accountability committee. You reach and the accounting officer says, at the exit meeting, that, I provided this information, but the Auditor-General did not consider it.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, when the audit report is out, it is a public document and the ministers are expected to consume it. We always feel good, as the Public Accounts Committee, when we meet the accounting officer, and they tell us, honourable chairperson, this was the problem and we worked on it. The Auditor-General raised this, now things are different. For us that assures us that the ministry never took the Auditor-General's report for granted.

When we arrive here, for example, you are dealing with the Financial Year 2024/2025, the ministers would have already seen all these

recommendations. I am expecting they that they would have acted on them already. I liked it when the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs said we have worked on this; this has changed. We expect the minister to come here on the Floor of Parliament to highlight, since the audit; these are the things that we have acted on.

Mr Speaker, to create another time to engage a minister - unless we say when we are doing the invitations, we should extend the same invitation to the minister. One problem that will be created is that the minister will not allow to come to a committee on a day he is not available so we will most likely stall.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you would have done your part, chairperson. but usually towards the end - there is a difference between correcting the mistakes and all that. In providing clear information, the honourable minister has given you, for example, on procurement of food, where the Auditor-General said it is only one company. However, he has said there are six companies on boats, one company, and he is referring to clear information.

Therefore, that is what I am trying to avoid on the Floor. Why? My concern is how you process recommendations. You were denied information, which made you reach a certain conclusion. I am sure if they had given it to you and you verified it - you could not verify it on the Floor. So, in improving - we are colleagues. We are not trying to find fault in each other. We are only trying to streamline. We shall continue discussing it, but I feel it is helpful. We can discuss it and engage more.

Thank you, committee chairperson. I am happy that you have been putting in a lot of effort. That is why I want us to finish item number five. It is a quick one. Let us also open up for debate.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) ON THE REPORT OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL FOR THE AUDIT YEAR ENDED DECEMBER 2025 COVERING OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC PROSECUTIONS (ODPP) AND THE MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Robina?

8.12

MS ROBINA RWAKOOJO (NRM, Gomba West County, Gomba): Thank you Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for its report, but I want to say that the issue of staffing gaps has to be addressed because in the Administrator-General's department, for example, they are talking about 59 positions approved and only 44 being filled. They have 15 vacant ones. They are blaming the Administrator-General for not giving certificates of no objection to the full, but he or she cannot do that without enough staff members.

Also, families have disputes; you have to call them and they do not seem to agree. Therefore, it is not entirely the fault of the Administrator-General. Unless we fill these staff gaps, it will continue affecting them.

It also does the same when it comes to court. You find that we have appointed new judges and we are not upping the number of state attorneys. Therefore, judges will go and sit and compete for state attorneys coming to their courts.

Also, state attorneys are supposed to go to higher courts. For example, if you have matters in Supreme or Court of Appeal, you would not then go to High Court or to a magistrate's court. Therefore, unless this staffing gap is addressed, even if it means talking to the Ministry of Public Service, this is going to continue causing a backlog. I think it should be given attention. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes Hon. Nakiyi, then Hon. Cohen.

8.14

MR JULIUS NAKIYI (NRM, Budadiri County East, Sironko): Thank you. Mr Speaker. In line with what you said previously, my view was that - our intention as Parliament and the Auditor-General should not be about just catching the thief. We do not do what we call catch the thief audits only, but about value addition and sealing areas of value leakage.

I will even propose that we speak to the Auditor-General, to come up - because I have seen the issues of all government agencies are similar. They are only like 10. If he came up with a template, then you put in questions such as:

1. Have you complied with the procurement rules?
2. Have you done the recruitment correctly?
3. Did you get approval to vary certain votes?

They should be similar across all the entities. Now, we distribute these templates across all ministries so that the staff can pin them. Whenever they are working, they have to look at that - It is like a template for them. Whenever they are working or doing recruitment, they ask, have I complied with the recruitment manual? They tick off. That way, it will save us in future.

On holding a meeting before you come here with the ministers, it saves time. It and refines the recommendations. We come here and do it very fast, because it is not that we want to really arrest. We are only trying to deter, and we do not need to do a postmortem.

Therefore, we should talk to the Auditor-General to come up with templates – because some people even commit crimes when they do not know that they have committed them, or do not know what they are supposed to do. Once we have put in place the templates, if they comply or not, it is up to them. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you Hon. Nakiyi. Yes, Hon. Cohen.

8.15

MR COHEN AMANYA (NRM, Igara County West, Bushenyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The report talks about staffing, which is a big problem in terms of the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP), other state attorneys and the courts because without the DPP, the courts would not work. Without staffing at the DPP, even if we create more judges, each judge will need one state attorney.

However, you find in one area, one state attorney moves from one district to another. You find that a state attorney in Mitooma is the one dealing with matters in Bushenyi. Until we address that issue - and I agree with what the committee came up with - we will have more case backlogs. In terms of even the numbers at the police station, they will be overwhelmed. That is why there is there will be a lot of criminal cases in this country. Therefore, for us to be able to curb down, we need these agencies.

Also on these bureaucracies, in terms of seeking approvals, I think it is high time that the Public Service together with the Attorney-General and the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, sit down and harmonise this problem. This is because it is affecting the common person down there. They do not know what is happening in this bureaucracy. That is why we need to put all these entities in one house, then we will have a white smoke. The white smoke that we need, as Ugandans, is to see that the criminal justice system is working. Someone is arrested today; he has not been taken to court. We as Members of Parliament will come here and make noise, "someone has not been taken to court." However, where is the problem? The problem is in the inefficiency within the system. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kungu?

8.18

MR SAMUEL KUNGU (NRM, Kigulu County North, Iganga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. One issue which has cut across these two reports; the one we have been discussing and this one, is contingent liabilities. Particularly, with the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional

Affairs and the DPP, I see contingent liabilities shooting.

Mr Speaker, when we have quite a lot of amounts in contingencies, that means that the Government is being exposed to many litigation cases where they are most likely even to lose and pay.

Mr Speaker, prudent accounting is, if there is a likelihood of an event occurring, for example, a likelihood that the Government will lose on a case where they need to make a provision, they should make it clear. Where the likelihood is not certain, they just need to disclose but not to put a specific amount. When you put a specific amount, that means that you are very clear and certain that you have this exposure. When we see contingencies going higher and higher, it means we are exposing the Government. I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Finally, Hon. Rose Obigah.

8.19

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When you go to centres that hold suspects, the production of suspects cannot be done when we do not have officers of the DPP. I have centres that I am aware of that were constructed but they cannot be operationalised because the DPP has shortages and the magistrates and judges cannot honestly work without the DPPs.

Some productions on Fridays fail because we do not have the DPP to come before the Magistrate to commit. If you go to centres where suspects are kept, especially Luzira, I was there last week. I am telling you that there is almost no space for anybody to put down their body. Therefore, I agree with the committee's recommendation. We need to expedite that and recruit DPPs to match with the number of Magistrates. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Alenyo, finally.

8.20

MR MARSHALL ALENYO (Independent, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This report is super. First of all, I have friends in the DPP. Being a lawyer, I want to thank the DPP for the work they are doing. Their success rate is very high. Their case turnover is excellent and they are doing research.

However, Mr Speaker, there is a phenomenon in the Office of the DPP where people who have died have not been paid, and it takes so long. People who work there all wonder. I am very happy that the report has tried to thread that through.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, is the issue of confirming the assistant DPPs. They need to be confirmed so that they work soberly and strongly.

As the report comes through, it also brings up the issue of supervision. Mr Speaker, fishermen in Pakwach are arrested in Pakwach, but they take their plea in Masindi, which is more than 150 kilometers away. This is operationally wrong. You cannot arrest people in Pakwach, which is a very different magisterial area, and you take them to take plea in Masindi, 150 kilometers away. It denies them bail; it denies their relatives a chance to go and see or hear what these fishermen or these poachers are being charged with. I appreciate that the report came through that the DPPs are doing well, but they need some support. Thank you. Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That is an issue which the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs should – Now – yes, honourable minister?

8.22

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Mr Kiwanuka Kiryowa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for this report and the Members of Parliament for supporting this issue. I think when you are dealing with the Justice, Law and Order sector, it is important to move the courts together with the DPP and Attorney-General's Chambers.

Many people talk about the Criminal Justice System, et cetera, but the people in the Attorney-General's Chambers are few. The work is a lot. It is all over the country, so the issue of staffing in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs is also important. Mr Speaker, before you put the question, if you are going to put the question, on page -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I wanted you to touch something on page six.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Page five going to page six.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, page five to six. Yes, I wanted you to touch on it.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: The committee further established from the audited statements that the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs diverted Shs 40.7 billion from the budgeted item to items that were not authorised. I do not know, but this is with the budget of Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs as I know it, even if you diverted Shs 1 billion, it would affect so much. I do not know where they will find Shs 40 billion out of a budget of Shs 164 billion to divert.

First of all, in the budget for that period, the ministry was given less money than was required. Instead of making a recommendation that the Accounting Officers be held liable for diverting this money, I think this matter should be put to the Permanent Secretary/ Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST to establish what exactly happened because I highly doubt that it is possible in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to divert Shs 40 billion. It is not there. Mr Speaker, that is a -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: How would you propose we amend? What would be the proposal?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: I propose that the PS/ST should investigate the finding of the Auditor-General that Shs 40.7 billion was diverted from the by the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, but you should investigate with a view to do what?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: With a view to establishing the facts and if anyone is found culpable, taking the appropriate action.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. Committee chairperson?

8.24

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL GOVERNMENT) (Mr Patrick Nsamba): Mr Speaker, I do not think there is anything to be investigated on diversions. A diversion happens and the Accounting Officer was with us. We asked for authority to divert. They were unable to provide for that authority. Now, I do not know what kind of investigation because if they had been given authorisation to make those diversions, the committee would really appreciate to say now, according to the law, it is okay, you did the right thing.

Now, which investigation is there to be done? When the Auditor-General has already highlighted and the amounts are clearly known, we have held a discussion with the entity and there is nothing more to be investigated.

Mr Speaker, if this animal called diversion is not arrested, this impunity is going to continue the moment you start sending it to other investigations. This is something that is clear, section 77 (1) (m) does not allow unauthorised expenditures to anyone. For me, I really do not think - this this is a very clear one, a diversion was there, there is no more investigation, in my opinion, that is required.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, I think the problem we have here is that the committee chairperson has come to the conclusion that the Auditor-General is infallible, a very dangerous thing because as long as there are human beings there, they make mistakes just like I have shown you in my case.

Therefore, I do not think we should take a position that once the Auditor-General says, then that is gospel truth as it was in the beginning, it is now and ever shall be. No, I am telling you, I was in the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, and I am just saying on the side of caution because to go and say if you find - you see Parliament, if the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs comes back here and says you gave a recommendation that we hold this person liable, we are unable to implement it because when we went there, we found ABCD -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am getting the pain of the committee chairperson, okay? You see the PS/ST is not an investigating body. Since we are talking of if we find that we cannot conclude that someone is liable here, what about if we say the IGG investigates? This would be abuse of office. It would be - because you see if the IGG finds you culpable, he can prosecute.

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, by law the person responsible for the money is the PS/ST. Therefore, all these people are accountable to him. The accounting officers are actually reporting to him on a day-to-day basis. So, the Auditor-General has found that money was diverted, and the committee has found that they put the question, no answer was given. Even if you put the language, say, the PS/ST should take action on the allegation of diversion of funds - What I would not want for us to say is that the committee has made a judgment call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think you had brought it out better. This last one might sound that…

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: … that the PS/ST takes appropriate action on the finding of the Auditor-General that Shs 40.7 billion was diverted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, how do you see that?

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, one, the minister must appreciate the audit process. The audit process starts with the Auditor-General. He goes through that, he submits findings to the entities, and the findings they submit, they go through a process which is called exit meeting where the accounting officer has the opportunity to supply more information. Now if the auditor is supplied with more information and the auditor still insists on it, then it comes to us as Public Accounts Committee.

In Public Accounts Committee, we ask, "you disagree with the auditor, why did you divert this or maybe you had authorisation to do this?" It is another opportunity to give the information about that particular issue. It is not true that I am saying what the auditors found out is gospel truth, like you mentioned here. Actually, there are so many things that are not before you which the entities came and explained to us, and we understood, and dropped them. There are so many on the Auditor-General's report.

Now, by the time we come here before this House, we are sure that the entity was given the opportunity to explain these things, and probably they never convinced the committee. Now we are here before you. The recommendation you are preferring is that the PS/ST takes action?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes. The PS/ST takes action against the accounting officer of the ministry, on the recommendation of the Auditor-General that this much was-

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I would like the law guru to help me marry that with section 78 which clearly talks about those things. Liability, and some of those things can really come through. I am not a lawyer myself, but we look at that law, and we recommend according to that law as provided.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Section 78 of the PFM Act?

MR KIRYOWA KIWANUKA: Mr Speaker, under Section 76(2) and 77(1), it is the judge to make a finding that you are liable. That authority to find someone liable is vested in the judiciary. Here we make a recommendation because, for example, if they go to court and

the court says they are not liable? That is why we are proposing that instead of saying find this person liable, we are saying take appropriate action. The appropriate action could mean taking them to court, removing them from the accounting office or all those things. You have given the person responsible the duty to take the appropriate action on the recommendation of the – but to say that a person is liable in the report is to make a judgment call.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But even then, chairperson, you as a committee, you are saying that you have not found them liable. You are telling another officer, to go and find them liable. You are taking it away from yourself. I think the minister is giving- what we want is action taken. Is it not what we demand? We want that if someone diverted money, appropriate action should be taken against that officer. Honourable acting LOP.

8.33

MR PAUL MWIRU (NUP, Jinja South Division East, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I get it from the committee that there was money budgeted for. Let us say, the release was 100 per cent, and they are saying that the Shs 40.7 billion, when they looked at the audit; it was not spent on what it had been planned to be spent on. They are saying it is a diversion. What we are looking for from our side is that, as the Constitution says, whoever concurs in the misuse of public resources must account. We want that whoever concurred in the misuse of money to account for that money.

That is all we are actually saying. As to which word- because you see, we also arrive at the fact that the audit cycle must end. From our perspective, once the recommendation is passed, the next one now is you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yeah, but Hon. Mwiru, what the minister has proposed is, to go and take action against that officer which means that the PS/ST will call that officer and say, «You received this much, here, I am seeing the Auditor-General is saying you did A,B,C,D… and I am going to take action against you.» Then the officer will say, «No, but sir, I accounted.» Or the officer will say, «Sir, you see situations…» The PS/ST will then look at the appropriate action, which includes dropping the person as an accounting officer, or recommending that IGG or CID take up the matter.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, one of the biggest issues is that it is Parliament that appropriates this money. The budget committee takes time to approve, according to the work plan they have submitted. This is the work of Parliament, which the accounting officers reach there and throw away. We are limited in our punishments. When people hear us or watch us on the media, they think we are going to take serious action against these accounting officers, yet we end up having no serious action taken; then the issue is on us as Members of Parliament.

However, Mr Speaker, the minister has proposed that we recommend appropriate action instead of holding them liable. I am not comfortable with it as a chairperson, but let me take it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, what would you be comfortable with?

MR NSAMBA: I am comfortable with serious punishments against these accounting officers, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But holding them liable is also not a punishment. It is not a punishment. Honourable chairperson, you are not saying that Parliament should hold them liable. Instead, you are saying that the accounting officer should go and hold them liable. So, before holding liable, he has to go through a process, and this is what the minister is saying. In fact, action is more straightforward.

MR NSAMBA: Mr Speaker, I will concede to that. However, on a serious note, in all the reports we are coming with here, you will see that diversion is continuously on.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us be strong on that.

MR NSAMBA: Yes. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: A very good example of how we can be strong. When they bring the list of accounting officers here, we should look at it. For those who were diverting money, we can even decide to have a quick sitting of the accountability committees and refer that list to the committees.

The accountability committees will look at what the issues these accounting officers have. Once we find that someone has been diverting money, we refuse to approve them and give clear information. Where they cannot take action, we have our own channel of doing it.

MR NSAMBA: Honourable Speaker, let us move in that direction.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) on the report of the Auditor-General for the audit year ended December 2025, covering Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, be adopted - proposed amendment.

Let me repeat it to be clear because it was only one amendment. I am saying this because I have seen on social media a chairperson of the committee, Hon. Muwada, saying that my officers change resolutions when they are communicating them. That is a very serious matter. I want to tell the Chief Opposition Whip tomorrow to bring that evidence here so that the Member comes and clarifies. If he has evidence, I want it tabled here indicating which resolutions have been altered so that we can take action against those officers.

I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts (Central Government) on the report of the Auditor-General for the audit year ended December 2025 covering Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions and Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs be adopted with the proposed amendment by Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I congratulate you once again, chairperson. We are moving and are going to be working in overdrive, because we have up to December to finish this report. I do not want the chairpersons to finish their reports then we realise that we cannot get space on the Order Paper, so we want to give them priority.

I thank you very much, honourable colleagues, for being here. There was a lot of jam outside and you have survived it - *(Laughter)*- if we go now, I am very sure you will not find jam, so you should thank me for making you survive it; especially, these days when fuel is tough.

You have survived spending your fuel and getting stuck in the jam. House adjourned to tomorrow at 2:00 p.m.

(The House rose at 8.41 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 28 October 2026 at 2.00 p.m.)