****

**Wednesday, 10 March 2021**

*Parliament met at 3.14 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

*(The Speaker, Ms Rebecca Kadaga, in the Chair.)*

*The House was called to order*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon’s sitting. I apologise for the late start. We were carrying out consultation on our work for the rest of this week. I am sure we shall catch up.

I just have one matter to communicate. I would like to thank the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development for finally producing the eighth and ninth periodic report to the United Nations on the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women (CEDAW). I saw a copy at the celebrations to commemorate International Women’s Day.I would like to encourage the minister to come and lay it on the Table, as required by the Committee on CEDAW, so that our committee can consider it and review the report for the House.

There are a few matters of national concern. Let us have the Hon. Ssewungu.

3.17

**Mr joseph ssewungu (DP, Kalungu County West, Kalungu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance concerning the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Some time back, I displayed in this Parliament the reading materials that were published by the Ministry of Education and Sports. They were being printed by the *New Vision* but they did not match the standard that the children had reached. Now, the ministry sent money to all the districts but has now distributed this money to different companies, including Fountain Publishers, MK Publishers and others.

My matter of concern is that if this money has been sent to Adjumani District or Kalungu District,why should the money be taken back to these companies? Kalungu District, for example, was given Shs Shs 189 million. Why can’t we use the district education committees for this?

All districts in this country have organisations for head teachers which have education committees. These committees can sit and prepare very good work for children, if necessary, basing on where they stopped before thelockdown.

Nursery schools (pre-primary) have not even been catered for, but the use of the money is restricted. I am going to lay on the Table all the circulars that were given to district education officers and copied to some other officials.This money is supposed to stay on the accounts, but the printing of the study materials is supposed to be done by companies that print books here in Kampala.

Madam Speaker, my prayers is that the district education offices at different district levels be given the authority to determine if they are to give children work, rather than giving this responsibility to companies, which failed at the beginning. These companies are not experienced. Districts set examinations every term for P.1, P.2 and P.3 based on recommendations from the academic committees of the districts.

As I conclude, I beg to lay these circulars on the Table. The first one was given to Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) on 26 February 2021. I think KCCA has got about Shs 800 million, but still restricted. The circular is on the purchase and distribution of home study learning materials in the Financial Year 2020/2021.

By the way, we are about to open schools. This money could be used to prepare schools for the next term. Why produce materials? I beg to lay this document on the Table.

I also have another one which reads *–(Interjection) -* Yes, these are from Government. It reads, “*Additional expenditure limits for non-wage recurrent education capitation grant for printing of home study materials in the Financial Year 2020/2021.”* This one has all the districts and the money they have given them. I can see Kotido Municipality was given Shs 86 million, Sheema Municipalitywas given Shs 68 million; I cannot read all of them.

I would like to table another circular on the printing and distribution of home study materials, which is restricting all district education officers from tampering with that money.The money will be sent back to Kampala for companies that have been out-sourced, yet they do not have the expertise we expect that can help these districts be competitive. I beg to lay, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** What is your prayer?

**Mr ssewungu:** I pray that this money is not given to the publishers, but we use district education committees to prepare work for children at district level. Fountain Publishers and MK Publishers do not have proper information and records of where schools stoppedin the syllabus before the Government mandatory lockdown.

My major prayer is that teachers should be used at district level to prepare materials for children. It will be cheaper than these companies that have been out-sourced by the ministry. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** Honourable members, we shall submit that to the Minister of Education and Sports, so that she can come and tell us the feasibility – oh, the minister is here!

3.22

**The Minister of state for Education and Sports (Higher EDUCATION) (Dr John Muyingo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Government of Uganda, through the Ministry of Education and Sports, secured some funds from Global Partnership for Education. This is the money we are using to print and deliver homestudy materials to the learners. We had to follow World Bank guidelines, and of course our laws.

From what my brother, Hon. Ssewungu, is suggesting, I think he may not be aware that we had to follow the World Bank guidelines and also the fact that people competed and the three companies were given the tender to supply these materials. The companies have gone very far. Some of these materials have already been delivered, because the companies are supposed to print and deliver to schools.

Last week, many of these materials had reached many of our districts.

However, Madam Speaker, I have taken note of the point he is raising. Perhaps in future, we will be able to do something –*(Interjections)*

**The Speaker:** If the contract has already been awarded, I do not think it can be interfered with.

**Mr ssewungu:** Madam Speaker, you could direct the committee to investigate this matter further because the information I am giving is indelible. The money is still on the account in Kalungu District, where I come from, and it has not yet been utilised.

If the World Bank gave you that offer and directed you to put the money on the district accounts, then, how does it come back to Kampala to determine the printing? I am on record here and I showed the materials they first gave these schools in the *New Vision*, which were not useful.

Districts have different machines that can be used to print. When you use teachers at that district level, they will prepare useful material for these children because they are the ones teaching them. However, you are using MK Publishers which has been making books to supply materials and saying they are already on the way. What was your input, honourable minister? When you were given this offer, did you just accept it for the sake of taking or were you interested in the children?

It is not about printing materials and you discover what you teach but it is what you prepare to teach the children and is useful to them.

Therefore, concerning the work scheme, you have to look at the notes you taught and the topics before you concluded; what are you going to teach ahead of this topic? After that, you prepare work commensurate to the children.

The minister has said, “They offered us” and they gave the contract to three companies; who sourced them? I have read circulars here and they do not state the same unless they want me to read them verbatim but some of them are very long. It is the ministry that determined this. It is in their circulars and I have laid them on Table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we shall ask the Committee on Education and Sports, in their oversight role, to examine that issue and give us an update before we start the budget process.

**MR SSEMPALA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to make an inquiry from the minister. They are printing materials for home study but we all know that previously, Government has been targeting Government-aided schools, which are just about 30 per cent of the schools in Uganda. Can the minister clarify and tell us whether the private schools are also part of that package?

**MR ONGIERTHO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The clarification I am seeking from the minister is that if every process of identifying the persons who are supposed to print those study materials was managed from the centre, what was the justification for first transferring the money to the accounts of the schools? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** That is what I want the committee to examine.

**MR NSAMBA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Ssewungu raised two fundamental issues: The first one is the quality of the materials being prepared. Secondly, who is doing the work?

Before we even go into discussing whether it will be done at the district or at MK Publishers, the critical matter that I feel is highly important for this House to consider and the minister to clarify on is the fact that Hon. Ssewungu is making an allegation that the materials being prepared are not right for our children. I think the minister must clarify this.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we have asked the Committee on Education and Sports to examine that complaint and report to us urgently before we go into the budget process.

**DR MUYINGO:** Madam Speaker, may I say something small?

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, minister.

**DR MUYINGO:** First of all, I would like to make it very clear that all these study materials will benefit all our children; both in private and public schools. A total of 34,230 materials have been prepared; 28,931 will go to primary schools and 5,300 to secondary schools.

One of the ingredients that required one to win the tender was to ensure that you had the manpower, the experience and the knowhow of printing and distributing these materials to the schools. That is one of the conditions and these people have the ability to do so. I have all the trust that the issue of quality – I submit, Madam.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay, the committee will establish the quality and give us a report.

3.29

**MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The matter of national concern that I present concerns malaria; all of us here know that the leading killer disease in Uganda is malaria.

Fortunately, in April 2018, His Excellency, the President, was here to launch the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Malaria and mass action against it.

There is a target of eradicating Malaria by 2030 but what is very unfortunate is that we are in the budgeting process and the Parliamentary Forum on Malaria has noted that malaria has not been considered anywhere - the fight against malaria has not been prioritised.

Everybody knows that Uganda is third in the world, as far as malaria cases are concerned. When it comes to deaths, it takes No. 7 in the whole world. However, ministries are prioritising other areas, leaving out malaria, which is equally causing poverty in the communities, since most of the money is going to treat these malaria cases.

Madam Speaker, our prayer from the Uganda Parliamentary Forum on Malaria is that:

1. The Minister of Finance, in line with the Minister of Health, earmarks some money. We suggested that Shs 235 billion be ring-fenced for areas that will help eradicate malaria in Uganda. This is because malaria majorly affects the children and pregnant mothers, though it is also in cases of other people *– (Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** What are your prayers?

**MR KIBALYA:** Our prayers are:

1. That the ministry of finance and the Ministry of Health come up with a budget so that malaria is handled and prioritised.
2. That the ministry of finance issues a certificate of compliance to mainstreaming areas or agencies. As we have the compliance for gender, malaria should equally be catered for in most of these agencies and departments.
3. That we introduce a budget tracking system for the Permanent Secretary of the ministry of finance to know that at the local governments, something caters for malaria. Money should be earmarked and ring-fenced to ensure malaria is handled right from our subcounties, parishes and districts up to the centre.

**THE SPEAKER:** First, on the issue of the budgeting, I think that we can incorporate some of these proposals. When the policy statements come, we can put them in our reports. However, I believe that the minister of finance has captured what is required.

On developing a certificate of compliance, I think it is a bit of a process but we can start on it and ensure that we put it in one of our rules, as we did with the certificate of gender equity.

3.33

**MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have a matter of national importance concerning the confusion on how and whether the school-going police constables will be paid for February and March, according to their contract.

Madam Speaker, there is confusion. When schools started, we had police constables who were schooling, who decided to remain in the villages so that they could benefit from their salaries.

The problem is that their supervisors are telling them that if they go back to school, they will not be paid. According to the contract, they were supposed to be paid up to March.

Secondly, nobody knew that schools would resume during this period. Therefore, when they were being contracted, no one knew when schools would resume.

The other confusion they are facing is that they are being told that they are going to be incorporated in Police and because of that, some of them are remaining in villages waiting to get that chance.

The other problem is that they opened up bank accounts so that they would be paid through those accounts. However, when they were paid last time, they were paid cash. This means that even this time, the money might go and then the supervisors use it in their own ways. This means those who would have gone to schools will not benefit and we do not know where the money will go.

Madam Speaker, I have two prayers. The first is that the Government comes out to clarify whether and how those police constables who have got *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Half a minute.

**MR TIMUZIGU:** The second prayer is that Government directs the concerned authorities to pay this money through banks so that there is no chance of cheating these young police constables because we are not sure whether that money, which is going as cash will be paid directly to them or whether part of it will be taken from them. They opened those accounts such that we could avoid corruption. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Okay. Honourable members, we will ask- are these under Police? We will ask the Minister of Internal Affairs to come and update the country on the fate of Special Police Constables (SPCs); one, whether they will continue to be paid, two, what will happen to those who have gone to school and no longer working as SPCs.

The other questions, which are here, do not qualify. One of them has already been asked, we are waiting for an answer, as for the second one, we just need to follow up with the Police. Can I invite hon. Oboth?

3.37

**MR JACOB OBOTH (Independent, West Budama County South, Tororo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On 8th of this very month, hailstorm and wind caused havoc in Tororo in the sub-counties of Magolaand Lyolwa. Particularly, the villages of Podut A, Podut B, and some primary schools whose classroom blocks was blown away. In Renner High School, the old laboratory block roof was blown off and several homes- over 200 families and households were affected.

Crops, especially millet, maize and banana plantations were all destroyed. This is overwhelming to the district. Madam Speaker, you know, I never come to this Floor just like any other day but this is a matter that has overwhelmed our district and the local area. There is nothing the district can do.

We request the Office of the Prime Minister - I have tried to get in touch with line ministers on phone but it has not been possible. I have written but I thought I would meet them here.

The Government is here. My prayer is that relief items and food be supplied. Some serious Government intervention should be given to the people of Magola and Lyolwasubcounties so that they can be fed.

Families are now settled with their neighbours. Some are in the neighbouring institutions. About 70 people were injured and were taken to Tororo Hospital and I think there are no deaths yet but about 25 of them have been discharged. It is very pathetic that we need Government’s intervention. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, hon. Oboth. Fortunately, the Leader of Government Business is here.

3.40

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you, Madam speaker. I would like to thank hon. Oboth for raising this very important matter. I watched on the television today and I saw what hon. Oboth has explained here. I tried calling hon. Hilary Onek who is in Bidi Bidi with guests and hon. Musa Ecweru is in the field. *(Interjections)* My apologies.

I went to hon. Moses Ali, the First Deputy Prime Minister and he called the Permanent Secretary, Mr Dombo to his office. We are organising a team to see the urgent issues that we can handle. I saw a school, which was also destroyed and I talked to the Minister of Education and Sports- hon. Muyingo, who was coming from Entebbe. He also promised that he would join the team of the Prime Minister’s Office to make sure that we handle the urgent issues first and then we come up with a policy.

In case a school is destroyed in the middle of exams and the candidates are disrupted what do we do? Therefore, we need that policy and we are going to work on it.However, the urgent issues to handle, the Office of the Prime Minister is organising a team to liaise with disaster management teams in those districts- Tororo and Kagadi. I also watched Kagadi, whose experience is the same. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let it be recorded that the Office of the Prime Minister has been informed and is undertaking action and I hope we shall be updated next week on how far they have gone. Let us go to item three.

3.43

**MR JAMES KAKOOZA (Independent, Kabula County, Lyantonde):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is an intended, deliberate – I call it deliberate because the conduct of Members of Parliament, the current and those who are coming in are tainting the image of Parliament; the language they are using in public on the issue of speakership is unacceptable. The two camps, of the Deputy and the current Speaker, are standing in the public domain abusing

the current Deputy Speaker and also the Speaker. I think we need to restrain ourselves. As much as these camps are there, the code of conduct in our rules is clear. These are current Members and we must observe decorum. It does not augur well for the institution of Parliament. As much as some of us are leaving and we are in the departure lounge, we must restrain ourselves and stick to the rules.

What is happening in the media – Our code of conduct is clear. My prayer – *(Interruption)*

**MR KIBALYA:** Thank you, colleague, for giving way. My colleague has been clear and the camps are clear. I am team Kadaga, so my camp is clear.

The honourable member knows all the MPs who sit in the Tenth Parliament and he has said they are using un-parliamentary language. To be clear and to save this institution – Under your leadership, Madam Speaker, this institution has been the best. It has been un-corrupt. To save this institution, we request the honourable member to point out two or three names or all of them so that we can know who is using un-parliamentary language. As far as I know, the team Kadaga camp is not using any bad language anywhere.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** This is a serious matter. I am among those members who are very talkative and I do not need a score from other members. When it comes to respect, I control myself - *(Interjections)*– I am team Kadaga, obviously, and I am not hiding that.

I have always defended Parliament, especially when I am on radio. What hon. Kakooza is saying is very key. Last Saturday, I heard a minister on Top Radio saying that the most corrupt institution in Uganda is Parliament. She said the committees of Parliament are very corrupt, yet she is a full minister –*(Interjections)*– This was hon. Beti Kamya. I have been seeking audience from that radio station to get that recording.

I have been here for 10 years and I have never been reprimanded for being corrupt. I have never seen a minister coming to me to convince me on any matter. We have our WhatsApp groups; when I am included on a group whose candidate I do not support, I exit that group.

I think this matter is key and we must give it a lot of attention. I am not afraid of mentioning those people. Some of you are afraid of mentioning them. I heard the Government Chief Whip, when they were going for the NRM primaries, say that she has been suffering because of Kadaga throughout her term. It is well known. She said it on the stairs and the recordings are available. This was when she was supporting hon. Namuganza to become the regional leader. You are afraid to mention her. These are the people. These are serious matters - attacking the person of the Speaker is not fair.

**MR KAKOOZA:** Madam Speaker, I was very careful when I was deliberating. I gave a general picture about the language of everybody in the institution. I did not mention anybody and I do not intend to do so.

All I am saying is that the code of conduct of the current MPs, and even some MPs-elect who have not yet been sworn in, is bad; they are using bad language. We cannot afford to injure the institution we believe in because of our personal interests. We can all go but leave the institution undamaged.

Madam Speaker, with your recommendation, I would like the people in the institution to go to the media and retrieve all that information because it is a public domain. Those people must be referred to the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline. Each Member of Parliament must treat fellow Members of Parliament with decorum. Thank you, Madam Speaker. *(Interruption)*

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Madam Speaker, Hon. James Kakooza has been here for some good time and he knows how Parliament has been transacting business here. If you have no evidence and you are not in a position to substantiate and give out names, do not bring allegations which are not substantiated.

The members who are watching will begin to point at these gallant sons and daughters who are doing good work here. The generalisation will not help us. Is Hon. James Kakooza in order to bring a matter of national importance which needs urgent attention without enough facts for Parliament to take action?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, he had just commenced and people started giving him information. I do not know if he wanted to say more. Let me invite the Minister of State for Minerals.

3.50

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (MINERALS) (Ms Sarah Opendi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. What has been happening in the media is something – allow me to use the word – disgusting. It is completely unacceptable. I have been in this Parliament since 2011 and what is happening now is completely unprecedented. We have been electing Speakers and Deputy Speakers without monetising this process.

When you look at what is going on now, you wonder whether this is going to be a transactional Parliament. Where are we heading? Why should people use money to become Speakers and Deputy Speakers of this Parliament? This House should not accept or allow this to go on. This is what is happening and it is completely unacceptable. We should have a process that is dignified.

Parliament is a House of honourable members. The process should be an honourable process. The people to sit there should be dignified; people who have the ability and people whose integrity is not tainted. I am even interested in becoming a Speaker or a Deputy Speaker but now without money; how can I achieve that?

Let us discuss this matter and find a way of ending this corruption. What kind of Parliament do we want to have? If this can happen for people to ascend to the position of Speaker and Deputy Speaker, what is going to happen tomorrow in the committees?

I would like to request that this matter be handled by the institution, whether it is the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline –*(Interruption)*

**MR KIBALYA:** Thank you, Minister, for allowing this information. We are here saying that we need to put this right. On most of the fora, the Government Chief Whip has been seen saying that the NRM Central Executive Committee (CEC) has decided, that State House has decided – It is on record, Madam Speaker.

If the Government Chief Whip is the one leading the other side to mislead and taint the good reputation of Parliament, yet the Speaker is voted for here and not in State House or elsewhere -

**MR MACHO:** I would like to thank my colleague for giving way. This is a House of integrity that every Ugandan is looking at.

I am very disappointed when fingers point at the Government Chief Whip, who is to be the monitor of the august House. This brings shame to us and to me, as a person of her party.

I want the Government Chief Whip, who has been mentioned, to look into the cameras and deny or agree to that allegation that has been put before her. Thank you.

**MS OPENDI:** Madam Speaker, the integrity of this House is at stake and something needs to be done urgently to end what is going on outside there. Thank you.

**MR OLANYA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable member for bringing up a very serious allegation that the House needs to look at very critically. I ask the honourable member to try to be very clear because we know names of people who are vying for the positions of the Speaker and the Deputy Speaker.

It is quite sinful if members of Parliament are trying to bribe fellow members of Parliament to vote for them for the position. Can the honourable member tell us those candidates bribing members of Parliament to vote for them? We need to bring those candidates to shame, mention their names and the camps so that we disown them, I beg to ask.

**MS KAMATEEKA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wonder whether it is proper for us to sit in this House and discuss these matters when the whole Uganda is watching. I wonder whether it will not be proper to have an in-house meeting where we can iron out all these issues out of the glare of cameras with accusations and counter accusations without evidence. I beg to move.

**MR NSAMBA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to declare that I am team Kadaga but I have not benefitted from any monies that are moving around and I have not been invited to any meeting that is giving out money.

However, the honourable minister that is raising this matter, Hon. Sarah Opendi, is known to tell the truth and always saying facts. I do not want us to leave her matter unattended to. By the end of this session, we should revisit our rules and ensure that they do not allow solicitation of that nature if we can go by what Hon. Sarah Opendi indicated.

Chief Whip of the National Resistance Movement, these matters should not just go like that. We know that you are exiting Parliament but we do not want you to leave this Parliament disjointed. It is an institution of Government, which we all cherish and where you have served for a very long period.

You can come up and beg for forgiveness and guide them properly on how to do this that you have done for the last 25 years. Thank you.

**MR MBWATEKAMWA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is true the allegations say that the Central Executive Committee does not want Hon. Kadaga, and one of the members has alleged that it is my Chief Whip who is trading this rumour. Is it true that the Central Executive Committee does not want you yet we are supporting you?

**MR BASALIRWA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Listening to the submissions of colleagues, Hon. Sarah Opendi, Hon. James Kakooza and others, under the penal code, there is an offence called misprision of treason. If you get to know about a treasonable act and you keep quiet, it is an offence.

I plead with colleagues who are seized with information of people who are conducting themselves in a manner incompatible with their status - do not ask me which team I am, I am team Kadaga. The Rules of Procedure of this Parliament are very clear; I see it on the rules committee. Whoever has information in that direction would do us a lot of good to provide it. If they are scared of doing it openly on the Floor, they could pass that information either to the Speaker quietly or to the chairperson of the rules committee so that the matter is investigated to its logical conclusion.

What we should not allow is people coming on the Floor and make statements and go away with them; that would be misprision of treason. I am happy with a colleague -

Finally, whether the Central Executive Committee wants who or who, the decision on who becomes the Speaker of this House will come from here and not from Kyankwanzi or State House.

Madam Speaker, I would like to put you on notice, regardless of the decision of the Central Executive Committee, that you must be on the ballot paper here. It should be us to decide and I have heard there are machinations elsewhere, where do you leave us who not belong to your caucus and yet we think that you can serve this country?

Anybody who thinks that they are going to use the Central Executive Committee to bulldoze the Speaker, it does not super impose ideas on Parliament and I do not think any of us should accept to go that direction. It is true that we are in a multiparty democracy but for somebody to be Speaker, they become a Speaker for all of us. They do not become Speaker for the National Resistance Movement.

Your discussions in CEC can be corridor whispers but they will not bind this House and we are prepared to resolve this matter here.

**MS RUTH NANKABIRWA:** Madam Speaker, my name has been mentioned so many times and I enjoyed the open method of work because it is what we follow in the NRM. I would like to thank colleagues who mentioned my name. I must speak the truth.

I belong to one of the WhatsApp groups we named in 3.17. I am the chairperson of the NRM Caucus and that position makes me a member of the Central Executive Committee of the National Resistance Movement.

I attended CEC when we were handling the candidates who had contested, at that time, for Speaker and Deputy Speaker. What I posted was a reminder of the CEC’s decision of 2016, where CEC persuaded hon. Oulanyah to step down for Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga–

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, do you want us now to bring the CEC members to confirm or deny what you are saying? Hon. Nankabirwa, please, please, please.

**MS RUTH NANKABIRWA:** We can do that. This is a reminder I made. It will remain on record. There were negotiations that time. There will be negotiations even this time. We are in multiparty elections; the parties have a say –*(Interruption)*

**MR AKAMBA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a well-known principle, in the law of natural justice, that whoever is complained against must be given a right to be heard.

Madam Speaker, is Hon. Nankabirwa in order to bring issues of CEC in this House, well aware that CEC is composed of very many members, most of whom are not members of this Parliament? Is she in order to want to assert something that she says or alleges was said in a CEC meeting, without giving the other CEC members an opportunity to come to this House and confirm or deny her allegation? Is she in order?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, she is out of order. Hon. Nankabirwa does not speak for the CEC. She is not the spokesperson of the CEC.

Furthermore, I do not think the CEC has a right to bind a future Parliament before its members are even elected. That is totally undemocratic. Stop talking about CEC here. We are talking about issues of the House.

Secondly, the CEC last sat in the primaries. That is the last time it sat. Do not bring issues of CEC here.

Honourable members, I just want to say one or two things. We have talked about amending the rules but I think we must also find a way of uninvolving the people who are not even in this House, who are expecting to come but they are already in the fray taking sides, insulting people. They have not yet been sworn in but they are busy, with encouragement of some members in this community.

The second issue is that the campaigns for the Speakership have been vulgarised by branded T-shirts, booklets, pens - [Mr Ssemujju: Procedure] – Please, hon. Ssemujju, hold on. That is not the way Speakership campaigns are conducted. Those who have been here know that we never use branded T-shirts. We do not print posters. We do not use branded pens. All this is not done in the Speaker’s campaigns. That is why I am saying it has been vulgarised.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The procedural issue I am raising is: yesterday, I declared my intention to stand for the Office of the Speaker - *(Laughter)* – and every Member of Parliament, under the Constitution, is qualified to contest for that office. *(Interjections)* Yes, because our rules are very clear on matters of conflict of interest.

Madam Speaker, I have heard people say “I am team Kadaga,” which disqualifies you from presiding over any debate on matters to do with election of the Speaker; because doing so means that you are using the platform of Parliament to disadvantage some of us who have also declared our intentions.

Can you, Madam Speaker, guide us on whether the rules have been overthrown and a candidate can turn a session of Parliament into a debate to discuss her candidature?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we are not debating. A matter of concern was raised on the conduct of members in this campaign. That is the issue.

**MR LUBOGO:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have seen this Parliament make very serious decisions impacting this country. Among the decisions we have made are those to do with constitutional amendments. This Parliament has ever amended the Constitution to remove presidential term limits. The same Parliament has ever amended the Constitution to remove the age limit for presidential candidates.

The consequence of these two amendments was to allow the President, who would have not been eligible, to contest for the next election.

Reference has been made on a decision, which was allegedly made by CEC - I am wondering: is it such a hard decision, harder than the amendment of the Constitution? Can a decision that was taken in CEC overrule the Constitution and Rules of Procedure of this Parliament? I beg to seek your guidance, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, if we are going to import positions of political parties into this debate, I will have to listen to FDC’s debate and import it here; bring DP’s debate and bring it here; then UPC. Please, leave the issues of CEC out of this meeting. Leave them out of this Parliament.

What we are talking about is the conduct of members in this campaign. That is our concern.

I want to invite the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline to examine what has been happening and make proposals for us to address the issues.

**MR AOGON:** Madam Speaker, I welcome your guidance. This House needs to remain respected because everyone usually has their eyes on this House. Somebody was saying that we do an insider meeting; in-house but this is a public house. People who are vying for positions are public figures and, therefore, there is nothing we are going to discuss under the carpet.

We the Independents have been quiet. You, the parties - NRM, FDC, DP and others should not confuse us. If you are unaware, we shall also announce that we want to contest for a position, which is not okay. Therefore, leave us; give us peace.

Madam Speaker, how I wish this election could be brought tomorrow so that we settle this storm. How I wish they could arrange and amend these Rules of Procedure, so that we finish with these things this week. *(Laughter)*

I respect your Chair and I appeal to members to behave honourably. The idea of writing stories in the newspapers anyhow, as if you are the only one who has pens and pencils; that is not good.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

4.12

**MR EDWARD OTTO (Independent, Agago County, Agago):** Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. As the Vice Chairperson of the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline, I would like to say that first of all, we are currently – as you are aware – considering the proposed amendments to the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

Last week, we sat doing that. We have not concluded on this process. As you stated, I wanted to let the members know that they are welcome to present some of these proposals, so that we can address the loopholes.

Madam Speaker, I think the other issue that you mentioned is in respect to people who are not yet Members of Parliament. As you are aware, previously, we invited members of the press into an inquiry when there was an article alleging that 80 Members of Parliament had gone to the Uganda North American Association (UNAA) convention. Therefore, there is a precedent in place. Obviously, where the rule is silent, your ruling somehow becomes part of the rule. I would like members to know that.

One of the challenges we have as the Committee on Rules, Privileges and Discipline, which has almost rendered us a toothless bulldog in a way, is that even when we see things in the press out there, our rules only allow us to look into a matter by the order of the House. When the House does not pronounce itself, if members do not bring out names and the matters are not referred to us, in many cases we are rendered spectators.

I implore members that when we bring these proposals in the House, as we have done before, please support us to close these loopholes. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable chairperson. Let us go to item No. 3.

Ministerial STATEMENT ON THE PRESIDENTIAL INITIATIVE ON WEALTH AND JOB CREATION (EMYOOGA)

4.15

**The Minister of State for Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Planning) (Mr David Bahati):** Madam Speaker, this is a statement on the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation, referred to as *Emyooga,* as requested by the House.

During the Fifth Sitting of the Second Meeting of the Fifth Session of the Tenth Parliament, an issue was raised by hon. Gaffa Mbwatekamwa on the alleged difficulty and lack of clarity on accessing *Emyooga* funds by a number of registered groups. You also recall that on 15 September 2020, we did present a comprehensive paper to this august House on this programme. We, therefore, wish to update you on how far we have gone in terms of implementation.

I wish to reiterate that the objective of this programme is to facilitate the transformation of the 68.9 per cent households still stuck in subsistence farming to the money economy and market-oriented production. This is in line with the National Resistance Movement Government’s agenda of social transformation for our country.

To that end, in August 2019, Cabinet approved the implementation of the Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation and directed the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to spearhead it.

We have found that the concept of the *Emyooga* programme has been widely misunderstood and often misinterpreted. The programme is scaling up Government support towards empowering low income earners through the establishment of revolving funds, called e*myooga* SACCOs, around selected enterprises at a constituency level with operations at the parish level – parish based groups.

The programme is directly linking savings mobilisation to production, which has not been the case with similar programmes in the past. To this end, Cabinet identified the following 18 enterprises and special interest groups to benefit from this programme, and this was to be on a pilot basis:

1. Boda boda groups
2. Women entrepreneurs
3. Carpenters
4. Salon operators
5. Taxi operators
6. Restaurant owners
7. Welders
8. Market vendors
9. Youth leaders
10. Persons with disabilities
11. Produce dealers
12. Mechanics
13. Tailors
14. Journalists
15. Performing artists
16. Veterans
17. Fishermen
18. Elected local leaders.

Through this programme, we are demonstrating to our people –*(Member timed out)*– I think the system is set for two minutes.

**The Speaker:** You have 10 minutes.

**Mr bahati:** Thank you. We are demonstrating to our people that there is already wealth within their means, if they work together and adopt the savings culture.

I will use an example to further explain the *emyooga* concept. You may have a constituency with 600 boda boda riders and only 500 of them agree to join the programme and come together to form 17 parish based groups, which subscribe to the constituency boda boda *omyooga*. If the riders under their o*myooga* SACCO resolve to save Shs 1,000 only per day per member, they will accumulate Shs 500,000 per day. This translates into at least Shs 3,000,000 per week, Shs 12 million per month and ultimately, Shs 144 million in just a year.

Therefore, under this initiative, Government is only complementing the members’ internally generated savings. Each of the elected local leaders’ constituency *omyooga* will receive a grant of Shs 50 million while the other constituency *emyooga* SACCOs receive Shs 30 million per constituency. We give the local leaders Shs 50 million per constituency and for the other *emyooga,* we give Shs 30 million per constituency.

While the apex of the *Emyooga* SACCOs follow the cooperative model and principles, they are distinct from the ordinary SACCOs because they are enterprise-based. However, the direct membership to the *emyooga* SACCOs is by parish-based groups, which have been modelled around the Village Savings and Loan Association (VSLA) methodology. The individual members can, therefore, only save with and access funds from parish-based *emyooga*.

I would like to update this House on how far we have gone.

Budget for the *Emyooga*

In the Financial Year 2020/2021, Shs 260 billion was voted by this House for the *emyooga* programme. These resources have all been disbursed to the Microfinance Support Centre, which was designated as the lead agency for this programme. This means that each constituency will have access to roughly Shs 500 million.

The Microfinance Support Centre, which is the fund manager, is working in collaboration with district *Emyooga* task forces that have been set up in each district and chaired by the RDCs. The district task force draws membership from the accounting officers, community development officers, district commercial officers and the civil society.

Colleagues, the *emyooga*  Programme is being implemented in five phases:

1. Community mobilisation and identification of beneficiaries;
2. Registration of parish-based groups and *emyooga*  SACCOs;
3. Train and educate them on a number of things including financial management;
4. Disperse the funds; and
5. To monitor and provide technical support.

Community mobilisation

The Minister of State for Microfinance has been moving across the country, mobilising people to form these SACCOs, working with the RDCs and CAOs. The programme was successfully launched countrywide and 4,080 participants took part in the meetings across the country.

Registration of parish groups

Under this phase, we mobilised and facilitated the formation and registration of 205,710 parish-based groups and 611 apex *Emyooga* SACCOs countrywide, reaching 4.1 million direct beneficiaries, as of 29 January 2021.

Training and member education

Under this phase, a training needs assessment for the parish groups and apex *Emyooga*  SACCO was conducted and customised training materials developed. The 2,800 technical officers, including district community development officers, underwent a training of trainers and they are supporting the district *Emyooga*  taskforces and the microfinance support zonal offices to plan, organise, conduct and monitor the quality of training for the members of the parish-based groups and the leaders of the apex *Emyooga*  group.

Disbursement of the seed capital

To prepare for funds disbursement, the microfinance support centre entered into MoUs with various commercial banks with a view to fast-track the acquisition of bank accounts ready for apex *Emyooga* SACCOs, by ensuring that the members benefit from affordable transaction costs and favourable terms and account features. I am pleased to report that 6,059 *Emyooga* SACCO bank accounts have so far been opened.

Madam Speaker, as of 28 February 2021, the Government had disbursed, according to our records, 188.2 billion, directly to the bank accounts of apex *Emyooga* SACCOs countrywide that have been validated by RDCs. If you go to a district, for the *Emyooga* project, we have so far disbursed 188 billion, to these apex SACCOs. These are SACCOs at the district level.

Monitoring and technical support

After the seed capital disbursement, the microfinance support centre will continue to monitor the beneficiary *Emyooga* SACCOs and parish-based groups, as well as provide technical support to their leaders under the company business development arm. Member training is also still on-going.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, it is important to know that this has been a pilot. However, the objective of this programme is to lift the 68.9 per cent of the population, according to a census of 2014, who are still into subsistence farming into the money market. We will be updating the House on the latest figures soon. This was an idea of the NRM Government but we will also benefit from you, on how best we can implement this programme. How best can we lift our people from this subsistence farming into the money economy?

Madam Speaker, as we finalise the budget, we will also count on you to discuss this matter. Hopefully, the resources that we have allocated to it will be approved by this House so that we can continue supporting and lifting our people from abject poverty into the money market.

Madam Speaker, I thank you, for the opportunity for allowing me to make this update.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, my difficulty is asking people to organise across 20 parishes in order to form an apex. Some are even more than 20. I have difficulties with that.

4.29

**MR GAFFA MBWATEKAMWA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and Minister, for attempting to answer my question.

Among the questions I raised, I wanted clarification from the honourable minister on how much money those groups are supposed to co-fund. This is because people have sold their goats, pigs and plots of land, hoping that they would get a lot of money. Otherwise, they were told to save a lot of money in order to access the money for *Emyooga*.

If your intention is to get people out of abject poverty – Yet you are telling them to co-fund and save. Now, what are they saving for, if you know that they are poor? This means that even the poorest person in that village is not going to access that money because he has nothing to save *– (Interruption)*

**MS AVUR:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. A SACCO in full means Savings and Credit Cooperative Society. Therefore, the information I would like to give to hon. Mbwatekamwa is that to be a member of a SACCO, you must have bought shares and saved. Honestly, they must save.

**MR MBWATEKAMWA:** Thank you very much, comrade, for your information. First and foremost, in our constituencies, we have had SACCOs but why is it that if they had the capacity of saving, they did not join those SACCOs? I thought the Government had brought something different that must benefit our poor people.

I expected to hear from the minister that instead of telling us that they have already sent more than 100 billion, how I wish he came with specific amounts of money. For example, he would tell us what they sent to Mubende and Bushenyi and how the groups have benefited. Otherwise, there is no money. It is just words. These people are hoodwinking Ugandans. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.33

**MS HELLEN ASAMO (NRM, PWDs Eastern):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. When this programme was conceived; we were very happy, especially us who represent the poor of the poorest. However, it is interesting to find that the programme seems not to be getting to its intended recipients.

Right from the name, our people in Eastern and Northern Uganda ask us what *Emyooga* is and we do not know what to tell them. We are struggling. As Members of Parliament and leaders, I do not think we have been given a full training on this, to understand how the programme is supposed to run.

We are told *Emyooga* could be skills and the like. However, when you group people, some are people with disabilities, some are women, others are youth and others are in produce trading. I then ask myself, which other people are aware of this programme?

To me, the programme - honourable minister, can we have percentages for each *Emyooga,* for the 18 you have counted? What percentage are my people with disabilities supposed to get?

When you go to register, each member is supposed to pay Shs 20,000 and we are talking of 68 per cent of the poorest in Uganda. It is very hard to get Shs 20,000 in a village for registration.

Madam Speaker, when you come down to the district, you are supposed to register your group- the Community Development Officers (CDOs) tell you to go and register. I think the implementation and the follow up is very weak and our people are being destroyed.

There is a group which said they used some money but they got very little on their account. As we talk of big amounts being given here, what reaches the groups is very little and as a Government, before this money is taken as a “political thank you”, we need to investigate before we kill this good programme.

The other thing I would like to bring to the attention of the minister is that this is a Constituency Fund. We the members of Parliament who represent regions seem not to be taken care of and yet, our people are beneficiaries in the programme. We need to understand; how do we enter into this *Emyooga* programme? How do we, as regional Members of Parliament or national Members of Parliament, become part of the programme?

The RDC’s offices are beginning to take the programme to be political. We should be supporting all the people and that was the idea of this programme, when we discussed it earlier.

This money might go to waste. We need to change the strategy before we approve more money and also see if there are groups or people who have benefited. Have they started doing the revolving fund? At least the Women Fund, we see women talking; they have taken children to school but I am not hearing good stories on this one. We need to look at it and see how we can penetrate the system and see that poor people are supported. We need to see that this 68 per cent moves to 30 per cent. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.36

**MS VIOLET AKURUT ADOME (NRM, Woman Representative, Katakwi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister for the report on *Emyooga.*

In my district, I know we were able to get about Shs 590 million per constituency but I would like to tell you that since they are disbursing these funds to the apex group, there are associations formed at parish level. However, when it comes to receiving funds, they almost get it at sub-county level. Not all the *boda boda* riders and restaurant operators in the district get something substantial at the end of the day.

I wish the implementers of this project had taken into consideration the recommendations that were made. It was piloted in Kassanda -I think it was a Kassandamodel. We said that other than disbursing this to just the 18 different groups- *boda bodas*, salon operators, vendors, among others; we would have looked at disbursing these at the parish level. We would then have realised some impact of the *Emyooga* programme.

Honestly, we have had these groups formed and asked to buy shares but at the end of the day, they get Shs 30 million. This is nothing for all the *boda bodas* in the district.

I would like to say that although the idea is quite good -because we have not really done it like we did with SAGE that was piloted in a few districts. At the end of the day, they had complaints and this programme of *Emyooga*, which we have rolled countrywide, is a good idea.

However, the amounts that are therein are quite small to be able to generate a meaningful impact. If we are talking of empowerment of the youth, creation of jobs to those that are unemployed, this amount is very minimal, especially where there is co-funding.

I remember in Katakwi, we had that Kassanda model. Out of all those who contributed, at the end of it all, it is only those at the apex that benefited. Spreading it to the rural or villages never comes to reality. It is going to be the same story with these *Emyooga,* unless we re-design it to go to the parishes other than leaving it at the apex. Otherwise, we shall not meet the objectives. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.39

**MR EMMANUEL SSENGO (NRM, Gomba East County, Gomba):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would to begin by congratulating you upon your election. May God bless you in your endeavours of steering this Parliament.

I would like to interest myself on three issues. The first one, as the minister has pointed out, is the issue of subsistence farming, which is now at about 70 per cent. The second one is the production that is looking at marketability and the third one will be co-funding.

The idea of co-funding is right because beneficiaries must have a stake in the money that they are going to receive under this scheme. If they do not have a stake, they will think this money is a donation. They will just spend it anyhow. Therefore, the idea of co-funding has to be there for beneficiaries to have a stake in the whole arrangement.

On the question of production linked to marketing, I thought that if our intention is to uplift the people who are engaged in subsistence farming to commercial farming, more emphasis should have been put on agriculture. I had thought that most of this money should have gone to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to uplift subsistence farmers.

However, when the minister read out the *Emyooga*, he was talking of carpenters; I do not know whether carpenters are going to produce furniture for export, because that would be its meaning. If you are going to produce chairs and sofa sets for export, then go ahead. If you are just helping carpenters to make a few chairs around, which chairs may not even have market, I think we are misdirecting these resources.

On the question of marketability, if we are to help this nation, we must have production that is targeting a certain market. Are we going to grow a lot of ground nuts because we have the market somewhere or are we going to grow maize and then we get stuck with it, as it is the position now?

Therefore, the framers of this programme should have, first of all looked at the marketability of our production, then much of our resources should have gone into that direction. For example, they have talked of fishermen; that is okay, if you put a lot of money into fishing because we have market for fish overseas.

I would request that we go back to the drawing board and channel our resources to those areas that will help our people to come up, and that will earn this nation more foreign exchange and help us move forward. Thank you.

4.43

**MS JOVAH KAMATEEKA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are grateful to Government for having provided this fund. However, it was not clearly explained to the beneficiaries. They were requested to pay money and they were told that they would get the Government funding by September last year. They deposited their money and the *Emyooga* money was not forthcoming.

Secondly, the amount that each one put in was not uniform. Some people paid Shs 100,000 and others paid Shs 150,000. In some places where they paid Shs 100,000, they were requested to pay Shs 50,000 more. They would travel to the subcounty to collect their money and payabout Shs 20,000 each time they travelled, yet this money was not forthcoming. Clearly, they had paid their money anticipating that they would get the *Emyooga* money, which was not coming through.

The minister is talking of co-funding but this was not explained to the beneficiaries. Also, co-funding to what tune? If you have asked me to pay Shs 150,000, how much are you going to give me? In most cases, as we have seen, the groups of boda bodas, the produce farmers and sellers, even the youths – there are so many groups - each constituency was getting Shs 600 million and the *emyooga* are 20. As the minister has said, it was only Shs 30 million. You can imagine the people who formed themselves into groups and they were all looking at the Shs 30 million. Clearly, people put in more money than they will get.

If you are releasing this money, release it at one go because people paid at one go. You have the money; you are Government and you have collected money from people. Release it at one go so that people know what to do.

Also, people put their money in the SACCOs that we have. In the SACCOs, they can borrow money and use it and return it at any time. But here, people paid their money and it is lying there and they are not getting out what they expected.

As a colleague said, this programme was ill-thought out. We need to go back to the drawing board. We need to educate people. It was the RDCs who were in charge of rolling out this programme and teaching people. Clearly, information was lacking.

Can we give out the correct information? Can we organise people better, because we have their money and we have not given out what was expected? Otherwise, the Shs 30 million or the Shs 600 million per constituency is very little. That is why we needed to focus on key sectors that are productive, that can easily bring back the money. Thank you.

4.47

**MR DAVID MUTEBI (NRM, Buikwe County South, Buikwe):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity that you have given me to contribute to this subject.

I would like the minister to capture some facts or misconceptions about this programme. There is a misconception that this money was political and some politicians have gone around telling people to spend the money for consumption. That misconception should be broken.

Secondly, there is a problem within the configuration of the apex at which people have to apply for this money. When you look at the Government contribution of Shs 30 million at the apex and the number of groups that are involved, by the time they get to the apex, that money will be very little for those groups.However, the misconception they have is that they should apply for that money at once and all the groups expect to receive that money.

We should, therefore, pick a lesson from the previous monies that have been improperly utilized, like the *Entandikwa*money. Government should move very fast to prepare the people to effectively utilise this money without causing a loss of all these public funds.

Otherwise, the idea that was conceived of having this programme based on enterprises is one of the best, which we would take up if our people are prepared well to handle this money. Otherwise, the money may be wasted if these misconceptions are not overcome. Thank you.

4.49

**MR RICHARD GAFABUSA (NRM, Bwamba County, Bundibugyo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the surface, this programme is a good one. The idea behind it is also good, if we could make the operation better.

The first issue I would like to raise is the unfair sharing of the money equally to the different *emyooga*. In my constituency, for instance, we have very many groups at parish level consisting of market vendors. They are in hundreds but they are given Shs 30 million at the apex level. We also have less than 20 people forming the apex, for instance, for journalists, and they are also given Shs 30 million. You can imagine an apex group of 20 people having Shs 30 million but you also have over 3000 people under the apex SACCO of market vendors getting Shs 30 million.

At operational level, there is a challenge there. We need to be fair depending on how many people constitute one apex SACCO under that category.

I also want clarification from the minister. In the statement, I see a list of 18 *emyooga* but in my constituency and district, we have 19. I would like to be sure that the 19th in my constituency is also properly represented - the one of teachers in private employment. We have constituted it.

In the statement on page seven, there is something the minister did not share with us, which I thought was very important. That is Annex B - the list of beneficiary constituency *emyooga*. We also have issues. In my constituency, I was involved when the minister came to do general sensitisation of district leaders. However, since then, I have not been involved anywhere. I am now getting complaints from very many parishes and subcounties. It seems that some groups are being left out and are not considered finally when the money comes.

Lastly, on the issue of how much money each group should first save before they are allowed to access this money, out of the Shs 30 million because in some areas, for a group at parish level to access this money, they should have first saved Shs 150,000; others are saying Shs 200,000.

Honourable minister, you need to come clear and tell the country which is which. If a group has saved less than that or more; this money comes to the apex group and to get money from there, the parish association is supposed to borrow and then it is accessed at individual level to put in their business as they continue saving and borrowing.

I also support that people should be able to save and borrow; that is the only way we can sustain this programme and be able to grow it. Thank you, very much.

4.54

**MR ERIC MUSANA (NRM, Buyaga East County, Kagadi)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for this statement. I just have a comment on the implementation of this programme.

The programme seems to be good but what happens on the ground is completely different. For example, in my district, over 50 SACCOs received Shs 30 million each in an association of around 50 people.

Members of a SACCO think that this money belongs to individuals. I was trying to make a small calculation whether this can work out and the biggest problem is the implementation process and it seems to be hurriedly implemented without people understanding the process.

The honourable member asked a simple question: “At what level do we, members of Parliament, get involved?” and you mentioned that there is money at constituency level. I have not seen where members of Parliament are being prepared to explain some of these Government programmes like this one.

Honourable minister, this programme was not well thought out and is likely to have severe challenges at implementation level.

I have another comment about the local person; in registering an association and processing how to benefit from this money, people have mortgaged their property and have sold their animals, seeking a service from Government. This is another problem, which we need to explain to the people. Thank you.

4.57

**MR KEEFA KIWANUKA (NRM, Kiboga East, Kiboga)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support any idea which is about transforming the communities so that they can get out of subsistence farming as the objective of the “*Emyooga*”.

First, it was a problem for me during the campaigns because people kept asking what is happening with this project, which was not taking off.

Honourable minister, the starting point of this was not to get people together to start saving. People were brought together to get money from Government. The first one was in Kassanda, I believe Kiboga was the second.

Although when we had the President there, there was a bit of disappointment because we had expected a lot of money and when the President announced what was in the bag, there was a bit of frustration. It seems to me that we are fixing it as we try to address the problems that are there. It has now evolved into what is popularly known as the village savings and loans scheme.

I can inform Parliament that I was elected on the basis of the village savings groups. I have been involved in this for the last 10 years. I have over 900 groups with over 40,000 members who are saving.

The savings groups are based on a completely different model that enables them to do the savings, which I do not see in this “*Emyooga*” arrangement.

They are brought together because they live in a similar village and can easily meet every week to try to see how much they are saving and how much they can borrow and there is a lot of transparency. That is what encourages them to do the saving.

In this case, there is a bit of confusion; part of it is managed centrally at the constituency level and there is the expectation that people will come together and work at parish level.

However, working at parish level is difficult because they do not share much. Although they are in *“Emyooga”,* that does not bring them to work together on a day-to-day basis. There is a problem of how they can trust that arrangement for them to be able to save, which seems to be the premise for which the whole thing is now rotating.

With the very good ideas that we have on this, we need to go back to the drawing table, see how we can adopt it to the village saving model - on which a lot now seems to rotate - so that we do not have to reinvent the wheel. Let us work with the model, which has been tasted and known to work. This involves reviewing the whole thing without people losing trust in what is happening, as it is now. Thank you.

5.01

**MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo)**: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also thank the minister for the statement. Like other colleagues have spoken, this was a good project that our people can benefit from but I do not know whether we have not rushed it.

The challenges that I have encountered with this project most especially within my constituency was lack of proper sensitisation to deserve full operationalisation of the project.

Many groups saved money and even opened accounts in microfinance institutions but at the end, when they were required to formalise and open up accounts, they refused the accounts that had been opened in microfinance banks.

They were told to open accounts in specific banks. It made people start running around; they had already lost the first savings of Shs 150,000 and others Shs 200,000 to coordination that was not good enough.

Madam Speaker, I think we should encourage the ministry to continue to sensitise our communities on how these projects will be managed.

The community development officers who are involved in this programme have many other programmes they are running. As a result, they tend to mix this up, in the interest of the communities that are supposed to be benefitting.

On that note, our commercial officer in this case - Tororo District and Tororo County, to be specific – also keeps raising challenges of facilitation. He is running a very big area but he is not well facilitated. He is asking for more human resource support to help them be able to sensitise the people well, make them understand and also have apex offices open.

In some instances, people meet on the streets and receive this money and maybe even share it. There is need to see how to promote this programme and maybe, get the sub-counties to provide for an office at sub-county level to be the coordinating level for the parishes, as we move to the district level.

Otherwise, it is a very good product, only that the money is not enough. Since its beginning, we were promised that it will go to Shs 1 billion and thereafter, more than that. We should emulate it, support it with the necessary instruments, human resource and sensitisation and we will be good to go.

I thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**MR AZA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker and my colleagues. Thank you very much, honourable minister, for the statement. Honourable minister, I would like to get clarification from you.

I remember last year, the Government had promised Shs 20 billion or so for private school teachers and that it is going to be incorporated in the programme of *Emyooga*. We are now hearing that the teachers’ money has been transferred to the Microfinance Support Centre. We got information again that this money has been transferred to the teachers’ SACCOs and then again, that it is going to be taken to the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Which is which? Where is this money? Where is the Shs 20 billion or so? I am a proprietor of a private school and my teachers are crying for this money. Honourable minister, give us clarification. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Franca Akello, hon. Harold Muhindo, hon. Sempala, hon. Ongiertho - We will just have two more. I know it is a very important issue but we are taking a lot of time.

5.06

**MS FRANCA AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Agago):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for making this long-awaited statement. We really waited for this response because many issues were being asked, even before we went for campaigns.

Madam Speaker, we received many questions during the campaigns regarding the*Emyooga* programme. Earlier, we had a brief from the Ministerof State in charge of Microfinance about this programme.

I thought we had understood it but again, when we had training in Gulu; a regional training, which gathered all regional members for Northern Uganda. I attended this meeting. At the meeting, we were told what *Emyooga* means - because many people were asking what the meaning of *Emyooga* is - “seed”. That the idea of *Emyooga* is seed money and seed in Acholi is “*kodi*”. We were told that this *kodi* is meant to support the groups because a seed is basically for sowing so that you can be able to harvest.

Madam Speaker, when I was campaigning, everywhere I went, the groups were told that each of the 30 members was asked to mandatorily contribute Shs 20,000 and each group was meant to first deposit Shs 600,000, as a must, before they can access the money. They were promised that the money would be on their accounts before voting day on 14 January.

We kept on trying to explain here and there to the extent that in most cases, it became quite difficult for us, especially Members of Parliament, to get the exact meaning of this money.  Some of us really want to think that the timing of this project is quite wrong and I wonder why Government, whenever they have a programme, normally wants to bring it around elections time.

Look at the *Entandikwa* programme. I wonder where it is now, many years later. Look at the Youth Livelihood Programme; we are still trying to grapple with it. I am sure that one is already buried and we are waiting for the last funeral rites. Look at the Women’s Entrepreneurship Fund.

We are introducing projects or programmes and we do not concretise them in terms of training our people to understand it properly so that by the time they get the money, they know why they are getting it and they work towards that.

When you bring a project towards elections, everybody is bound to imagine - In some places we are being told that this money is from *Mzee* as a thank you for voting well. You vote well again in the coming elections.

This project was a good one but we need to do a lot more in terms of thinking of how best we can do it. We need to correct it before it goes far. I wonder why some districts and constituencies have not received this money up to now. This Parliament, before we went for campaigns, had already passed the money.

The Minister of State in charge of Microfinance – I wonder where he is - promised this Parliament that money will be on the accounts of all these groups before election day. No wonder people were expecting it as a campaign gift.

Therefore, we would like to know why some constituencies have received it while others have not, yet the money was passed. We would also like to know why some constituencies have different *Emyooga* groups and the groupings differ.

You have heard some Members are saying in their constituencies, these groups are 17 *emyoogas* at parish level up to the constituency. Some Members are saying in their constituencies, they have 19. For us, we were told 18. We really do not know why others have 18, others 17, others 19 and others have 20.

This must be explained. I thought that a programme that is meant for every Ugandan should have been uniform, Madam Speaker. Otherwise, I would like to urge the ministry to avail the funds. However, make sure enough training is done to these groups in order for them to understand. Otherwise, it will end up like the Youth Livelihood funds and other projects that failed. Thank you.

5.13

**Mr Harold muhindo (FDC, Bukonzo County East, Kasese):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to thank the minister for the statement. It has tried to shade some light on the *Emyooga* programme*.*

It has been very difficult for us to speak about what we do not know at a time when we were expected to know much about it. It was a very big and hard question for us during campaigns. It is now that we would like to seek clarifications on certain areas.

Madam Speaker, like you heard, groups were asked to first deposit Shs 150,000. Actually, they perceive it as a deposit, not that they should have saved the amount.The question is: what was the criteria for Shs 150,000 and not Shs 200,000 or Shs 50,000 or probably even registering these groups from the perspective of merit?

The other question is: how many groups have been registered countrywide? In my constituency to date, I do not have the right number of groups that were registered. However, in every village you go to, you are overwhelmed by the number of women that registered and paid the Shs 150,000 but do not know the future of the *Emyooga.*

The third question is: while we do not know the number of these women groups, how much money was collected? Who is going to account for it? We do not know whether it is with the national Treasury or not.There has to be somebody to account for the money.

As the people’s representatives, we would be interested in knowing how much money was collected and what is going to happen with these collections. There is an understanding that after the Shs 150,000 has been collected from the so many groups, it is the same money that has been given out. That is the understanding out there until Government comes out to clear it -*(Interruption)*

**Mr nsereko:** Thank you, honourable colleague, for giving way. Before elections, the Minister of State for Microfinance came to old Kampala and met all groups of Kampala Central that had congregated there. They promised the people that within 21 days, accounts of all groups that had been approved shall be having deposits of their money. It did not happen.

When we were there, we advised that it would be better that about Shs 40 billion, that had been apportioned for Kampala District as a whole, be disbursed at village level. The example is very clear. We have 1,000 villages. If, say, Shs 40 million was allocated to every village, the women have their groups and leadership and so do the youth and people with disability.If the women got Shs 20 million and were given start-up capital-

**The Speaker:** You are now giving more than information.

**Mr nsereko:** I am trying to give information that will help. If they were given about Shs 20 million per village and each woman - because this is seed money - got small start-up capital for a small business, let us say vending tea and other things, she would need about Shs 300,000.A total of over 50 women in 1,000 villages, which would yield to 50,000 people, would have got capital in this post COVID-19 era. A trickledown effect of 250,000 women in five years consistently would have accessed cheap capital. The same would happen to the youth and people with disability.

The information I would like to give my brother is very simple. Before you even think of what they took, even what they promised never yielded. Think about what we are telling you. If you use the village formula, you reach out to everyone and the effect will be felt. Thank you.

**Mr muhindo:** As I conclude, it is important that we also look at the aspect of monitoring this project. The local government is mandated with overseeing and monitoring Government programmes and projects. However, in this case, it is not clear who is in charge of *Emyooga* at districts. When you go to the office of the chairperson LCV, he is not aware; the chairperson LCIII is also not aware. The councillors are not aware. The question is: who is in charge of overseeing this project?

It is known that the intent of this programme was to give money to the communities’ disadvantaged so that they become rich. Instead, the poor women and men have collected money to give to the very few, who we do not know, and made them rich. This has to be clarified. Thank you.

5.19

**The leader of the opposition (Ms Betty Aol):**Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. Indeed, the statement should have been given yesterday. It took too long.

I would like to say that I am a grassroots’ woman. As such, I encourage groups to apply for *Emyooga*. I say, “This is your tax money; it is public funds. Please apply. If it comes, too good but if it does not, very unfortunate.”

People talked about Shs 150,000 but I am talking about Shs 600,000, if 30 people give Shs 20,000 each. At first, they were told to give Shs 10,000 and I told them to struggle and get the Shs 10,000 and pay. I visited very many groups and they had paid it. However, they again told me that they were asking them to give Shs 20,000. If you add Shs 20,000 to Shs 10,000, it will make Shs 30,000. When you calculate it all, it will come to Shs 900,000. This is stealing from the people!

The honourable member complained about who the implementers are. Who are they? If you ever see anybody, then it will be people connected to State House or to the National Resistance Movement (NRM). Why do we politicise public resources? They should not be politicised.

By now, you should be talking of strengthening but not giving seed money. Probably, strengthening –*(Interruption)*– let me conclude.

I would like to say that we should stop using Ugandans for ever in experimenting things. You should have experimented already, and indeed, you experimented with *Entandikwa.* Now with Emyooga, are you still experimenting? No, honourable minister, help our people to use public resources for their benefit and not to exploit or use them for one person’s interest because we are here to oversee public resources.

We still need more information on this *Emyooga* Programme. When they ask me questions, I tell them to go and ask the RDC. I tell them to apply but that I do not know anything about it. Today I have heard but it is enough *– (Member timed out.)*

5.22

**MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity once again. I would like to thank the minister for presenting the statement.

From my experience in working with NGOs, I believe this programme had good intentions only that the designers intentionally made a weak design for it. Often times, these programmes are designed weakly with the intention of making some middle people benefit from it more than the intended persons. I have seen this with a number of Government programmes. My problem is with the design because the intention is not to reach the final person.

I would also like to borrow from what hon. Franca Akello said. Why would many of these programmes mature around election time? I am a Member of the Committee on Public Accounts (Local Government). I know that we have a lot of problems with the Youth Livelihood Project. Some who are honest will tell you they thought the money was to pay them back for elections; so, they got it. The groups disembarked and they went away. We need to change from that.

Dr Keefa Kiwanuka brought up something very important; the culture of saving is growing in our communities. Honourable minister, if the intention was to support our people, we needed to have looked at the savings groups in the communities for us to design the programmes around there because those groups are serious. They are transparent in their transactions and the members are *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we have other papers.

**MR ONGIERTHO:** That is why even when we say that community development officers have a lot of work; they are trained to manage community programmes.

I still suggest that the ministry looks at the savings groups in the communities, engages the community development officers a bit and makes sure the programmes are married within those groups that already exist in the communities because they support and trust each other.

5.25

**MR EMMANUEL SSEMPALA (DP, Makindye-Ssabagabo Municipality, Wakiso):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My work has been made easier by the previous speakers but I would have wanted the minister to give us the project cycles of the previous programmes. For example, as an economist, I know very well that when an idea has been mooted, that is the first stage. The second involves planning for it and the third is about the implementation. The fourth is monitoring and the last one is evaluation.

However, we have not had any single evaluation of the other programmes that have been funded by Government, which I think is a big problem and that is why we are experimenting all the time.

I seem not to understand all these 18 groups. They do not seem to fall into the subsistence arrangement in the economy because subsistence production and the producers – many of those that you mentioned, do not fall into that category.

To stress the fact is to say that these programmes are political. In my constituency, the money was deposited on the *Emyooga* accounts on 13January 2021, when the elections were on 14 January 2021. In fact, as per last week, this money had not even been utilised.

Lastly, when we talk about Shs 590 million or Shs 500 million per constituency, I think it is not fair. My constituency has over 430,000 people and some constituencies have got 50,000 people. I think we ought to balance the boat so that we have an economy moving at the pace of the people. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

5.28

**MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi):** Madam Speaker, some constituencies have many people and most of them are already rich. My constituency has many impoverished people; Government needs to do something about mine specifically.

Allow me to first give my appreciation to Government. There is always a saying that something is better than nothing. At least, we are starting from somewhere. We can always improve.

I am concerned about the naming. Last time, we had “*Entandikwa”* and some other programme with a name that is very difficult for me to mention. Now we are calling it *Emyooga*. When are we going to use Ateso? This is discriminatory, Madam Speaker. It is unconstitutional. Why are we choosing one line of language? When are you using mine? It is better to use English, which is common to everybody.

Secondly, let the money be a grant, not a loan. If it is a grant, give the people a grant so that they do the work.

There is a lot of bureaucracy and complaints in the districts. People spend a lot of money *on Boda-bodas.* You do not get what you are going to get easily. What are we going to do about it?

They are talking of interest of 8 per cent per annum but who benefits from that interest? We need to understand. I do not know whether this is true or not but I am told there is interest levied.

Madam Speaker, the issue of the RDCS taking charge makes other independents or other party leaning members to think this is an NRM project. Can we think along those lines and see what we should do about the supervision of this money so that everybody feels easy in getting this money? Sensitisation is not being done.

Finally, I was told that there is a figure supposed to be for operations but it is like that money is hidden in Kampala. That is why the district commercial officers are complaining *– (Interruptions)*

5.31

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (FDC, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think there are very many things that the minister needs to clarify. Let us start with the issue of facilitation for the CDOs. This happened during the campaign time and became a burden to us, the candidates. They have called groups and their leaders asked for facilitation and food. Where did the 20 per cent that was meant for that go? The honourable minister needs to clarify that.

During the campaigns, they would call the groups and the CDOs would ask the candidates to help them with transport and food yet we are being told here that there is 20 per cent. Is that true or not?

On the number of groups per constituency, Hon. Bahati must be very clear about this. He should be given time to listen so that he is able to answer. We are hearing of 17, 18 and 19 groups per constituency: what is the correct number? That is what I had expected from you so that we get to know.

The next question is, how much money is being given per group? On the 12th of January, as I was addressing my agents, others came with money in gumboots. I asked where they had got with the money from and they said they had been given *Emyooga* money. Is that how they give money to the groups? What you are presenting here is different from what is happening on the ground.

Yesterday, a member of one of the veteran groups called me and said that their group was one of those that were registered but they were told that they must pay Shs 2 million. Why must people pay millions of shillings in order to access this money? I think that if there is money to be paid, it should be clear. I have heard Members here talking about different figures. Why are they demanding Shs 2 million from these veterans from Kasilo in order to be given money? This needs to be clarified. If this is not sorted, Madam Speaker, I would request that you halt this process and correct the procedure for accessing this money.

If you could also have a booklet to show that this is how this money is supposed to be managed, it would be better. Can you provide that to enable people understand and let this money be accounted for and given by the Chief Administrative Officers, not the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs)?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, may be you could –

**MS OGWAL:** Madam Speaker, I stand on a procedural matter and I seek your guidance. When the *Enyoga* money was approved *–(Interjections)*– It is not in Luo. In Luo, it is pronounced as “*Enyoga.”(Laughter)*

When this money was approved before elections, as Parliament, we expressed our fears and we told the minister that this money was likely to be misunderstood. It would not be taken differently from *Entandikwa,* which money we lost and we explained – if the minister cares to read the *Hansard*.

Madam Speaker, what happened in my constituency confirmed our fears. First, the mobilisation of the beneficiaries was done by the RDC. The Members of Parliament, who ought to have followed up this issue, were very far away from the centre of the organisation.

Secondly, any activity of Government, which is top-bottom, is bound to fail. We need to involve people from the bottom-up so that we empower people who really know what they are doing. Madam Speaker, in your constituency in Kamuli and in many constituencies, I found that Members of Parliament have had their own initiatives. They have trained their own groups – youth groups, women groups – and hon. Bahati knows this. In Dokolo alone, I have trained over 3,000 groups.

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

**MS OGWAL:** The procedural matter is, why do we go for people who are not demanding for this money and look for them to come and get the money and we do not even have a correct formula? The Government, in the interest of the rural people, should stop this programme until the Government clarifies how the selection is done, how the little money they have given out is performing and then we adopt a method that we know is likely to target the very groups that we want to facilitate. I beg to be clarified on that *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, the subject is very important but we have very many other things to discuss.

5.35

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (PLANNING) (MR David Bahati):** Madam Speaker, first, I thank Members for the contribution and this debate will go a long way in improving the way we implement this programme.

I will just attend to a few issues and maybe, seek your guidance because there are many issues, which were raised. The first is that each group of *Emyooga* is given Shs 30 million per constituency. There are 18 categories. We had added one for the private teachers but, later, a decision was made that they remain 18. The private teachers are handled through their SACCO, under the guidance and leadership of the Ministry of Education and Sports.

This is a grant from Government to a SACCO that has already been established and it is a revolving grant. Now, for any group to be established, whether it is those groups that are formed –like *kweziika groups –* for you to be a member, you must subscribe with something and what you subscribe *-(Interjections)-* Honourable colleagues,  can I make -

**THE SPEAKER:** Let the minister answer first – maybe, he is coming to it.

**MR BAHATI:** The subscription money belongs to the group. It is not Government money. What the Government is doing is to contribute support to the *Emyooga* so that you can be able to continue your trade.

The President on the 12thof December, in Kabale, made this point very clear to the whole country that the Government is not collecting money from any group, it is contributing.

The other issue is involvement of political leaders *-(Interjections)–* Colleagues, the Speaker had said that I conclude. *(Laughter)* At the beginning, we came here and made a statement but I think it is a valid point that we are going to design a mechanism where everybody from the constituency level can be involved in the management of this.

The other part was: was this a political programme? It is a social-economic programme that was implemented during the time of campaigns. It was a coincidence and it happened. However, the idea was started almost two years ago. We had been working on this.

Finally, there was the issue of organisation. A Member from Katakwi, hon. Kamateeka and some other Members said you find, for example, that a district is also a constituency. They are appealing for more organisation. I must make this bold statement that one of the challenges facing this country *–(Interjection)-* is the 68.9 per cent, as per the census of 2014, in subsistence farming. The NRM revolution has made tremendous progress but this remains a challenge. I would like to inform you that there will be a return of this revolution. Cabinet, on Monday, is going to make one of the fundamental decisions to attack this problem. We are going to organise and come up with what we have called a “parish model”.

We want every programme to come from the parish model, so that we avoid issues of going to the district or the region. We will focus on the parish. Whether it is the Emyooga, it will be done at the parish; if it is electrification, it will be at the parish.

Madam Speaker, this is what I wanted to tell you is coming. There is a burning point of clarification from my colleague –

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you are extending the debate. Despite all that has been said, I know many more Members want to speak. There are many people who are not satisfied and many people who have got issues.

Honourable members, I would like to propose that we arrange a date where the minister appears before the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development and Members go for the hearing and put forward their issues. Otherwise, no one is satisfied.

**MR BAHATI:** Madam Speaker, I would be glad to hear from –

**THE SPEAKER:** No, we shall not conclude this. I am just trying to give you an opportunity so that those who have not spoken present their views.

**MR BAHATI:** If you can allow me to give the honourable member from Kagadi a chance, then I will have finished.

**MR OKUPA:** Madam Speaker, a committee room may be too small.

**THE SPEAKER:** The committee can sit in the conference hall or you can even sit here in the morning.

**MS JANEPHER MBABAZI:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Government because Kagadi District received Shs 1.2 billion to give to the 36 SACCOs. The problem is that they cannot access this money. The reason is that they have not received the operational licences from Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

My worry is that this money might be taken back to the Treasury. Honourable minister, we would like you to clarify when the certificates will be issued to the groups.

**MR NSEREKO:** Madam Speaker, I would like to tell the minister that the word of the Government should be credible. When the Government commits to honour resources or pay people, ordinary people make further commitments.

I was clear that the minister in charge of microfinance came and made a commitment of three weeks. It is now months. Now, they are veering the formula, because we told them that we appreciate, they are picking some leaves from the ground.

The reality is that the financial year is winding down and at the end of the day, these people will not be paid. You do not even have the courtesy to come here and first apologise to those that you promised to pay. At least, have that courtesy so that people have confidence in the Government. The Government should have disbursed letters to say that they may have delayed to commit those funds to you as a result of x, y and z. You cannot just keep quiet and come here to the Floor of Parliament and say that tomorrow Cabinet is coming up with a new formula. That is not right.

**MR BAHATI:** Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I would like to say that I am ready to come and face the committee. We appreciate that there have been some delays. We apologise for these delays.

Finally, regarding the name of the programme, when we say Emyooga and we translate it into Lusoga and in Ateso – *(Interjections)*

**THE SPEAKER:** No, we have an official language in this country.

Honourable members, I want us to agree that we need further debate on this issue. We have asked the minister, and he has accepted, to receive memoranda and be present in the hearing before the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development. So, those who have not spoken and those who have new ideas on this thing – We are going to do the budget and we need this money. Is it going to move in the same way?

On Tuesday, there is a meeting of the finance committee. You are free to sit here in the Chamber in the morning. All those who have an interest in this subject should come. Honourable minister, please be here so that Members can address this issue and come up with the proper structure on how this thing works.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE IMPENDING EXPIRY OF COFFEE SEEDLINGS DISTRIBUTION PROGRAMME

5.48

**THE MINISTER OF AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Mr Vincent Ssempijja):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. You may recall that on 13 December 2018, I made a statement on the same subject, where I explained to the House that coffee has been the backbone of Uganda’s economy for a long time and continues to be so.

Recent statistics indicate that the demand for coffee globally is increasing at a rate of about two per cent per annum. This implies that by the year 2030, the global demand for coffee may have a deficit of about 30 million bags. These bags are weighed in 60 kilogrammes each. If no production increase is made, then we will have a deficit.

I also informed the august House that it is for the above reason that in October 2014, His Excellency the President directed that Uganda needed to plant 322 million coffee seedlings per year, for three years. So, by the year 2020, Uganda’s coffee production will have reached 20 million bags per annum. Revenue from such increased production was expected to reach $ 2 billion or above, if our coffee was mainly sold in the specialty markets.

On the issue at hand, I wish to report to you that since His Excellency the President’s directive in the year 2014, the Government of Uganda, through my ministry, together with the Uganda Coffee Development Authority, intensified the campaign for coffee planting. By the end of 2019, a total of 1.26 billion coffee seedlings had been supplied by the private coffee nursery operators and planted in 114 districts, out of the 114 districts of Uganda.

The coffee seedlings were being procured on credit under accredited Public Procurement and Disposal of Public Assets Authority (PPDA) guidelines and by close of the season B of 2019, coffee seedlings arrears had accumulated to about Shs 150 billion**.** This accumulation of the arrears was due to low annual releases by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for payment of the arrears.

I, however, wish to thank the august House because in May 2020, Parliament approved the release of Shs 73 billion towards clearing of coffee seedlings arrears. I am happy to report that to date, most of the seedlings nursery operators who had arrears of files for 2018 and 2019 financial years, have been paid.

On 4 January 2018, I received communication from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, which I attached as Annex (i), advising me as follows:

(1) That authority be granted for Uganda Coffee Development Authority to procure on credit all the verified mature coffee seedlings for planting, until the second planting season of 2019 and payments would be made in the medium term.

(2) The Uganda Coffee Development Authority shall not procure seedlings on credit beyond those provided for above, until further guidance.

(3) That in light of the above, the existing verified arrears of seedlings procured on credit should have the first call on resources released to the sector.

(4) The Uganda Coffee Development Authority should communicate to all nursery bed operators the above decision and to also urge them to halt raising new nurseries, until the outstanding obligations have been settled.

After the above guidance from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the following communications were made for the benefit of the coffee subsector stakeholders, particularly, the coffee nursery bed operators.

(a) On 30 March 2018, a press release, which is attached as Annex (ii) was run in the newspaper media, advising on coffee planting and seedlings distribution for the March-May 2018 season.

(b) On 5 March 2019, another press release Annex (iii) as attached was published in the *New Vision* newspaper, advising coffee nursery bed operators to scale down production and distribution of Robusta coffee seedlings in the Robusta coffee growing areas.

(c) In addition to those press releases, the UCDA field officers and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry extension staff, continued to communicate and advise coffee nursery bed operators and farmers on the above scaling down the seedlings operations through group meetings, radios and TV media.

It is not, therefore, true that the coffee nursery bed operators and the general public had not been informed of the scaling down of seedlings production and the stopping of procuring of coffee seedlings on credit.

In conclusion, I wish to inform the House that with regard to coffee planting material production, the strategy is to continue undertaking the following actions:

(1) In Robusta coffee growing areas, we shall continue to promote and support establishment of coffee wilt disease resistant materials; mother gardens.

(2) In the Arabica coffee growing areas, we shall continue to support and certify a limited number of Arabica seed gardens and Arabica coffee nurseries.

(3) Uganda Coffee Development Authority shall continue to plan and budget for any plantlets that will be required to be procured by Government and include such procurements in the budget for the financial year. And I hereby request for Parliament’s support.

Madam Speaker and colleagues, I wish to thank you for the concern towards the coffee nursery bed operators and the coffee farming community at large. I request for your continued support for the coffee subsector and agriculture generally. I hereby wish to submit this statement to you, together with the attached documents for your noting and support. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

5.57

**MR NATHAN NANDALA-MAFABI (FDC, Budadiri County West, Sironko):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Uganda is 241,037 square kilometres. From the supplies of coffee alone, which the Uganda Coffee Development Authority and the National Agricultural Advisory Services has supplied to Uganda, it clearly shows that by now, we have supplied coffee which can plant 300,000square kilometres – I hope the minister is listening. It means that even this Parliament building would be having coffee trees everywhere.

Madam Speaker, before the minister can say that the nursery operators should be stopped; what the minister should have come here to do is ask how much of the coffee, which has already been supplied and paid for, has been planted.

Most of these suppliers are supplying air and they are demanding air. I would like to give you a practical example, a playground takes a maximum of 200,000 seedlings. You will find a seed operator saying that they have supplied 5,000,000 seedlings, which means that when you get 5,000,000 and divide it by 200,000, it comes to 25 playgrounds yet that nursery operator does not even own two acres of land where to plant.

So, because of coffee being on demand - which is true; as we speak, the price of coffee has gone high and people in Uganda Coffee Development Authority and the Ministry of Agriculture have taken it as an advantage to take the taxpayers’ money.

Madam Speaker, I would like to make this proposal:

1. The minister should come back and tell us how many seedlings have been planted in each region -

Madam Speaker, there is no COVID-19 – I am not even the one who coughed aAnd as for me, I never ‘ate’ money for the masks. So, I cannot get COVID-19.

1. Madam Speaker, even the current arrears that the minister has been “crying” for was air supply. For example, they are saying that they are demanding Shs 300 billion. If we take it on average that each seedling is Shs 200, which means you are talking about Shs 1.5 billion seedlings, and you have already paid about Shs 700 billion, that clearly shows that they supplied air.

Madam Speaker, first, we should direct the Auditor-General to do a forensic audit in coffee seedlings; there must be a forensic audit of coffee seedlings.

Secondly, they must bring to Parliament these suppliers of seedlings and where they have supplied. The law, which we passed is very good and it is going to list those seedling nursery operators. That is why I wanted them to have a licence because you get somebody always walking in Kampala but claiming he is a coffee nursery operator, yet he has nothing. He does not even know how they hold a hoe but his job is to always be in UCDA “for having supplied” and he is claiming he is a nursery operator.

Thirdly, we should direct the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries to go and visit these so-called nursery operators. They are known and they should show us where they plant their seedlings year in, year out.

Madam Speaker, for us in Bugisu, they brought very good seedlings; even if you had seen them. However, where they came from, they had been grown with fertilisers. They gave the farmers and immediately, the seedlings died.

When we asked where they got these seedlings from, we discovered that the person who supplied Bugisu seedlings had come from Bugiri. How do you produce seedlings for Bugisu in Bugiri inBusoga? *(Laughter)*Busoga is not for Arabica coffee but for Robusta. The source of Arabica is not in every area.We will not get seedlings anywhere, even if it is Bugisu. For example, lower Bugisu cannot get seedlings from the hills of upper Bugisu. The hills must generate theirs.

When we said that these seedlings should not be paid for, the man claimed that he had supplied 3.5 million seedlings to Bugisu this season, which must be paid for. When we asked UCDA and the team to show us where the seedlings are, up to now, nobody has shown us.

Madam Speaker, I want to plead with your office that serious directives should be passed because some people are cheating Ugandans in the name of doing a good job. I thank you.

6.04

**MR MOHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Division Central, Kampala):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Other than oil in the world, one of the biggest consumed goods is coffee. Uganda is privileged to have good weather and fertile soils but we are empty or devoid of good decisions on investment.

Whereas in the world, the oil producing and exporting countries – at least the majority – are enjoying the proceeds of oil, the coffee producing and exporting countries, other than Brazil and a few others that have aggressively come out with policies to increase processing and market their coffee like Vietnam, which started a few years ago, none of the other countries mainly in Africa - let alone Ethiopia – have benefitted from coffee production largely.

The reason is very simple; the steps we take to grab this part of the market in the world. In the world annually, over 400 billion cups of coffee are consumed but it is not consumed raw. Most of the coffee is consumed processed.

We have put a lot of leverage on the growth but not value addition. This is one of the traditional cash crops that we have had in this country. No one looks at this sector as one where Government must come in and invest in value addition.

Firstly, from helping those in the private sector that have factories that are collapsing every other day, who are trying to produce – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Wind up.

**MR NSEREKO:** They are not only trying to help the producers process this coffee but also add value, so that Uganda can harness more foreign exchange from this coffee.

What happens is that we talk about the seedlings here and there. Hon. Nandala-Mafabi has submitted very well on that. However, when we discovered oil here, we had the National Prayer Breakfast and other things. We even have the National Oil Company. Where is the coffee company and coffee processing factory of this country, owned by Government? Zero.

That means we do not invest our resources where we have leverage and where we have an advantage. We have now been overtaken by Kenya, Vietnam and Ivory Coast; countries which we were previously ahead of. It has always been lip service; “Yes, we are the biggest producers of coffee and donors,” but we are sending unprocessed goods.

For as long as Government is not investing itself because it is getting cheap capital in coffee processing, making big ties with companies like Starbucks. Starbucks does not have any farm but it is the biggest achiever in selling coffee; over $20 billion per annum, more than what Uganda is getting to even service its own budget.

Therefore, we have to think beyond what we are seeing. Yes, we must have accountability as we are issuing seeds but we must start processing here from Uganda and Government should take the lead to, first of all, help companies that are collapsing as a result of COVID-19.

It is only coffee and oil that have not gone down during the COVID-19 pandemic. Coffee is the black gold and we should put our money where we have an advantage.

6.08

**MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Thank you, honourable minister, for your passion about coffee. It is not only for today; it has been there for some good time.

Honourable minister, I was happy when you mentioned that the demand for coffee is growing at two per cent per annum. Indeed, it brings good news and if you say that we should grow more coffee, I really support you. I support the Government in that effort.

However, honourable minister, I want to get clarification on whether you have found out why this demand is increasing and therefore, whether it will be sustained. Before we use the entire land in Uganda or the remaining land we have for planting coffee, we should know whether that demand is going to be sustainable. Otherwise, we can use all the land we have and then we remain with no land for growing other crops.

Honourable minister, it is good to make that clarification, such that Ugandans are sure that when they grow their coffee, they will keep on getting money as you are promising.

Secondly, honourable minister, there is another question about the coffee, which remains unplanted and just gets dry without being used. That is why maybe hon. Nandala-Mafabi was asking for an audit on the seedlings.

Honourable minister, you are grappling with arrears to pay for seedlings and the minister has directed that you get another date to buy more seeds, which might go and dry – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Please, conclude.

**MR TIMUZIGU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would think that for whatever amount of seedlings we are going to buy, we make sure that we have a plan to go and evaluate and discover whether those seedlings have been planted.

Otherwise, the Government will spend a lot of money, which we borrow and at the end of the day, we do not get the results that we were expecting. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.11

**ms noeline kisembo (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibale):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I am very passionate about coffee because I am a coffee farmer.

I would like to thank the minister for the statement. I would like to thank the ministry because they have done a lot to promote coffee production. They have distributed a lot of seedlings as the minister has said in the statement. However, I would like to point out the fact that the on-farm extension services to the farmers who we are giving the seedlings is very low.

Apparently, whereas we are giving so many seedlings to farmers, especially in Kibale District where I come from, the survival rate of the seedlings is very low. It is mainly attributed to the low extension services given to the farmers. How much are we doing to improve this? I did not get that from the statement.

At the moment, the coffee farmers in my district, and I am sure the country over, are affected so much by pests and diseases. Theseare numerous - the twig and stem borers and so many others. How are we handling this? As much as we distribute the seedlings, if we do not have a vibrant system of on-farm extension services, all the efforts we are making to distribute the seedlings is going to be in vain.

I would like to be clear. We were informed that they are scaling down on distribution of Elite coffee seedlings.The understanding was that there would be more distribution of clones so that farmers can have improved resistant –*(Member timed out.)*

**The Speaker:** Please conclude.

**Ms Kisembo:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to know from the minister whether there is a plan in this season or the coming one to get us the improved seedlings. When should we expect them so that our farmers can be prepared accordingly? Thank you.

6.14

**Ms mary kabanda (DP, Woman Representative, Masaka):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement.

I also agree that the global demand for coffee is high. However, the price is very low in Uganda. Another thing is that the quality of the seedlings that are supplied to our people, especially in Masaka, is not good. When you compare the coffee gardens of private people with the coffee that has been supplied by Government, you can see the difference.When you go to Mubende and look at the coffee on the German farms that have been established there and compare them with coffee that has been supplied in Masaka, you see the difference.

I submit to you, honourable minister, that these nursery operators supply seedlings but the quality is not good. They are supposed to be paid their money because they supplied. Sometimes they bring seedlings and just place them down and they dry off even before they are planted because of the poor quality.We kindly request the honourable minister to consider quality if our people are to benefit from coffee.

Allow me to ask the Minister for Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries - we had very good market in New York and whenever –*(Member timed out.)*

**The Speaker:** Please conclude.

**Ms kabanda:** We had very good market in New York for Uganda coffee and wherever you go, they cry for that coffee. I am wondering why that international market has not been opened for export so that our people may benefit. Thank you.

6.16

**Mr Stephen mukitale (Independent, Buliisa County, Buliisa):** Madam Speaker, Government should get stamina to rationalise, restructure and merge a lot of these Government agencies if we are going to help this economy. There are so many middlemen in the agriculture value chain–even for us who have sugar, or even for those you have just talked about where we are having poor quality maize. We are now quarrelling with our neighbours as if Uganda does not need quality and standards.

I was a shipping agent for the biggest coffee buyer in this region - SUCAFINA and SOCADEC - for 10 years. The District Farm Institutes (DFIs) then gave good planting materials. Why do you think this middleman you are calling the nursery bed owner is going to give you good quality?

Look at our vegetable oil. I have done research. We went with hon. Bahati to Kericho. Who will allow you to meddle in the supply of tea there? Go to Kalangala vegetable oil project. Which serious exporter will allow anybody to give them planting materials? Not even the sugarcane planters will allow this.We are not serious because it is garbage in, garbage out. Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) is suffering with Teso juice because of wrong inputs. If you have wrong inputs, you have missed it. I do not know why we are experimenting with some of these things. We are not going to reinvent the wheel.

Madam Speaker, I entirely agree with the idea of the audit but let us allow our Ugandan farmers to own the nurseries, the milling and the value chain. That is where the money is.We have relegated our farmers in the name of privatisation and liberalisation. Can we support industry specific cooperatives so that those in the coffee, sugar and milk industry are in control from the inputs? That is why in those days of cooperatives we had UCCU; they gave inputs.

Do you think middlemen are going to help you? They are looking for profits from the beginning up to the end. Even with the earlier debate that we had, it is important that when we are talking about areas like post-harvest handling and value addition, quality must be emphasised. We should not quarrel with neighbours. If Burundi, a fragile state, can stop your maize because of aflatoxins, why do you blame Kenya?

We had a problem here with the supply of COVID-19 disaster relief - bad beans and maize. Now you are saying that it is Kenya complaining, but we complained here in Parliament about the supplies from the Office of the Prime Minister. Therefore, handling of grain – Parliament has facilitated committees to go to Kenya and see how grains are handled.

Can we seriously look at the issues of the right inputs and make sure that we do not stop at only planting the trees but the coffee must be well handled up to the time of production? It must be well processed and the post-harvest handling must be good to avoid losses. Countries get wealth out of value addition but not exporting raw coffee. Thank you.

6.20

**Ms jesca ababiku (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement.

Honourable minister, I have only one inquiry from you. I would like to know the specific strategies you are developing to support new districts that wish to join the rest in growing coffee.

Two or three years ago, you did a lot of sensitisation across the country, including West Nile and the Madi subregion. Based on that, many farmers were interested.

However, you have just talked about slowing down supply and distribution of seedlings; so, we would like to know what specific strategies you have for us. Adjumani District is interested in getting into coffee production. Thank you very much.

6.22

**MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I join my colleagues in thanking the minister for the report. Every region has its comparative advantage. Before the invasion of the sugarcane industry in Busoga, coffee was the major crop and it remains the major crop.

Most of these mistakes in the coffee industry are not made by the farmers but by either the authority or the ministry. If the Uganda Coffee Development Authority had a clear policy of regulating the nursery operators and supervising – Hon. Noeline Basemera talked about the extension workers. These extension workers of the authority are only seen when it comes to signing the papers for distributing seedlings but are not seen anywhere on any of these farms.

One great mistake that is always made is that they distribute seedlings when the rainy season is about to end. The season begins at the end of February but the seedlings are distributed in May. These farmers cannot, therefore, make an extra effort to water these seedlings.

We need to grow and promote coffee. I went to the minister and requested him for the strategy or policy used in stopping the growth of Elite Coffee from most of these regions. For example, Busoga cannot help itself because there is a particular type of coffee that grows in the region. Therefore, cuttings being introduced in Busoga will not grow. The whole Busoga Region has one *–(Member timed out.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Conclude.

**MR KIBALYA:** In Mayuge, they told us to pick coffee cuttings from Mukono, Madam Speaker. How do I pick coffee cuttings from Mukono to go and plant in Kamuli?

We said that we need supervision. The farmers are migrating again from sugarcane growing back to coffee. What are they going to do if you stop them from growing Elite Coffee that grows in Busoga? Do you want them to grow coffee cuttings that cannot grow there? The rains this season are unpredictable. What should they do?

The ministry, the agency and everybody concerned must put this thing right. They must help the coffee farmers and nursery operators in Busoga. We need to streamline this. Otherwise, we shall end up blaming very many people and yet at the end of the day, it does not help the farmers.

We still need to grow Elite Coffee in Busoga. We need to streamline, supervise and see how best we can help the Busoga farmers, especially those interested in coffee growing.

There are those that are now cutting down sugarcane, uprooting it and clearing their land. They also need a crop that they can benefit from.

6.25

**MR ANGEL MARK DULU (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. It would be cost effective if all these farmers were identified and the seedlings are decentralised for two reasons. The first one is that the seedlings would have got used to the local environment before they are transplanted.

The question of them dying would be reduced because they are already used to the environment. If a seedling is brought from a far location to another type of soil, it faces chances of dying so it would be better if we identify farmers and decentralise it.

Secondly, I would like to know what advice was given to the minister by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, particularly on the question of purchasing seedlings on credit. He was not clear enough as to whether he has taken that advice or not. They are doing it outside Parliament because that is already a loan. We need two things there. If somebody is purchasing it on credit, that already drags us, the Ugandans, into a big loan. We need to know the terms so as to avoid future disputes.

Otherwise, I expected him to say it is true and he is preparing some write ups before the Parliament but he was silent about it. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.27

**MS JANEPHER MBABAZI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kagadi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the Government for this initiative of coffee growing in the country. I am one of the biggest coffee growers in the region of Bunyoro.

My concern is on quality assurance right from the ministry, UCDA, the district and to the farmers. We face very many challenges, especially on the supplies being made. Some of the people who supply these seedlings at the district level are just pocket suppliers. They get orders and go pick seedlings from those who already have them without checking what exactly is going to be supplied.

Another problem we have in the market is the pesticide and fertiliser producers. There are very many fake things on the market. I request the ministry to emphasise quality assurance, especially the extension farmers’ services, improvement of fertiliser control and distribution as well as the pesticides.

There is also the issue of seedling count. Hon. Nandala-Mafabi just said that the minister should bring the list of the number of seedlings that have been supplied in the country. I think this does not add value to the august House. We have the Office of the Auditor-General, which I think does the audit of all seedling arrears. If we need this report, we can get it from the Office of the Auditor-General.

Otherwise, I would like to thank the Government but we need to put in effort so that we can get the good out of this. I thank you very much.

6.30

**MS ROBINAH RWAKOOJO (NRM, Gomba West County, Gomba):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank you for the opportunity and to thank the minister for this report.

Gomba West is a good producer of coffee but I have noticed that in a bid to attain good quality, some omissions are made. My colleague has just talked about the people that supply seeds but some of them supply substandard seeds. When farmers are supplied with seedlings and they begin planting, no supervision is done of these farmers. I believe it should be a collective effort that can benefit them and the nation.

The coffee prices are still low because coffee has been infested by pests in certain areas and yet, there is lack of genuine pesticides.

Honourable minister, I remember there was a time you told us that the Government was going to begin selling its own pesticides and even acaricides because they were tired of the fake ones; we are looking forward to that. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

6.31

**MR ERIC MUSANA (NRM, Buyaga East County, Kagadi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the good statement. My specific reference is questioning why the ministry has not prioritised the practical nature of planting seedlings. I am saying this because there is a lot of crop failure. Actually, the statistics that you have, if you go on the ground, you will find a completely different picture altogether.

The issues of procurement, if we can check, we have ghost companies, ghost seedlings and people who are dumping seedlings at people’s homes even when they do not want them. That is why you have issues. You have a lot of money in arrears and yet, on ground, you have several questions that you have to answer. If you look at ghost seedlings and ghost suppliers - a Member here talked about supplying air and this is very true.

Madam Speaker, there is an issue of an authority. The UCDA is not a small institution. It only stops at monitoring distribution but does not go on looking at how much has been planted, is it growing and is the quality correct, what could be the actual problem? Don’t they have a mechanism of supervising the planting and- (*Member timed out.*)

**THE SPEAKER:** Minister of Agriculture, Industry and Fisheries -

**MR SSEMPIJJA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable members for the contributions. I would like to say that I came with our technical officers who have been carefully recording what the Members have contributed. Much of it is really words of wisdom, which we are going to use to improve.

However, let me say that 1.2 billion seedlings cannot plant the whole of Uganda. It can only plant about 4,000 square miles. When we talk about 114 districts, even if you had about 20 square miles in total, that would make the 4,000 square miles. Therefore, it is not a small area. We have been planting in 114 districts.

I just wanted to say that the situation is not as bad as we think. Since we started here with your support, we have been able to move from three million bags to seven million bags to day. Most of these have been elites. I would like to agree with hon. Kibalya. The only problem is the coffee wilt that at first, the coffee wilt could attack the seven lines, which we were planting and where we were getting seeds for the elite seedlings.

However, certainly, we are going to look into the matter of Busoga because at one time, Busoga from 1990 to 1993 had the best coffee in Geneva. Therefore, we cannot lose Busoga in anyway like we cannot lose the north. Robusta grows some of the areas where you have hot weather and we need to expand to these areas as soon as possible. I just wanted to tell hon. Ababiku that we have to move to Adjumani as soon as possible.

The other one is the issue of value addition. This is the way to go. Government has already taken the agenda of agro-industrialisation, which we think that Parliament will support. Coffee will not be left behind.

The other one is why the demand is going up. Yes, because of coffee, we had problems of logistics. Ships were not loading as expected. You know that most of the people who were dying that time were those who were working on ships because a ship is one enclosure. Therefore, they were taking a lot of time and care to load things in Mombasa.

The other logistics, you know, we have this problem at Malaba where we have trailers coming for our coffee and other items lining up for a stretch of 63 kilometers. All this has really affected the flow and that flow has affected the prices. However, on the other hand, of recent, coffee prices are going up again.

Madam Speaker, we have been serious on monitoring what is going on. All the lines that are given as mother gardens, to the nursery operators are from National Coffee Research Institute Uganda (NaCORI) our research stations. At first, we had seven lines but these were susceptible to coffee wilt. We have new ten lines, which are resistant to the coffee wilt and all these are from NaCORI.

Therefore, those who have been getting seeds from UCDA to go and raise them as elite seeds but now because we think that if we continue with that elite seeds, if the coffee wilt strikes again it will certainly wipe out those susceptible lines. That is why we want to go into the new ten lines. However, of course, as we go there, we need to keep on planting and we agree with the Members who say that for the time being, we should be planting and monitoring.

Therefore, it has not been to whom it may concern. The UCDA has been licensing the nursery operators and monitoring what they are doing up to the time they supply to the farmers. The farmers have been asked, every day, we have a team of auditors, the number is big, they keep finding out whether the coffee has reached the farmers.

The only problem that we accept is the death rate. We have been losing a lot of seedlings on the farm and at some stage, in one year, we lost more than 50 per cent. But we have corrected that by now emphasizing supplying to a farmer who has dug and fertilized the holes. Now, it is a bit different because the survival rate has gone back to between 80 and 90 per cent. We lost and we agree that there were some mistakes made. We were in a hurry to reach 20 million bags. This led to some mistakes being made, but we have so far corrected them.

Purchasing on credit is really what happens in practice, because you cannot pay somebody before the coffee is delivered. That is what happens. However, at some stage, as you know that the President had promised 322 million seedlings every financial year but the money that was released by finance could not even buy 100 million seedlings. Because of that, the arrears accrued and that is why we have to pay them.

With the release for the next financial year, we will have done away with the arrears. We will also be able to supply the cuttings, although they still will not be enough. We need maybe two more years to have enough cuttings, only that we cannot stop farmers from planting. We will be going to some of these areas in the north, east, Busoga, to agree with the leaders on whether we should continue planting. Of course, we expect Parliament to support us in terms of money to pay for the plantlets if we have to recruit new districts and plant more coffee.

There were problems with the prices because of COVID-19 but they are now going up again. It is true that coffee is the second-most tradable commodity in the world, after oil. The growth is going up. This two per cent we are talking about is minus China. When we add China to the list, since the Chinese have started drinking coffee, this percentage will go up. So, we have to prepare.

I would like to inform Members that we are not even close to using our arable land in full. So far, all that is being grown is on one-third of the arable land in Uganda; three-quarters is still not yet used. Coffee cannot cover all the land. Other crops will also be there. The 18 enterprises, including coffee, must be promoted.

The extension workers, water for irrigation and all others will be taken into account.

Madam Speaker, the rest were about your wise guidance, which I would like to humbly take. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much, Minister. We need to go to the next item because it is important. I would like to remind members of Government that under rule 145 of the Rules of Procedure, your policy statements are to be handed in by the 15th of March, which is a Monday. So, you have majorly tomorrow to send in your policy statements. We shall put that item on the Order Paper tomorrow.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE BAN BY THE KENYAN GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA’S MAIZE AND OTHER AGRICULTURAL EXPORTS TO KENYA AND THE MITIGATION MEASURES BY GOVERNMENT TO ASSIST THOSE AFFECTED BY THE BAN

6.46

**THE MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (Ms Amelia Kyambadde):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on the matter of the ban of maize exports to Kenya and to also update Parliament on what Government has so far done since the ban.

As we may all have read, from Friday, 5 March 2021, social media was awash with internal communication by Kenya banning the exportation of maize by Uganda and Tanzania to Kenya. We have hitherto not received any formal communication to that effect as stipulated by international trade protocols that both Uganda and Kenya subscribe to, which require any country imposing such measures to inform her trading partners. Despite not having sent any formal notification, unfortunately the ban is already in effect.

According to Kenya, the ban is because the test results revealed high levels of mycotoxins that are consistently beyond safety limits. They further allege that particularly aflatoxins and fumonisins are known to be carcinogenic, that is, causing cancer. However, no such test results have been shared with our competent authorities such as the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) for verification.

Maize is another Ugandan product that Kenya has essentially banned from getting into their market. As we all know, the other products are milk, specifically targeting the Lato brand, sugar, poultry and poultry products. In addition, Kenya imposed a 35 per cent excise duty on Liquefied Petroleum Gas (LPG) cylinders manufactured in Uganda in contravention of Article 15 of the Customs Union Protocol.

There have been engagements in sugar and they allowed us to import 90,000 metric tonnes and they released only 20,000. For poultry, they would release and ban, release and ban. These are the challenges we have.

Madam Speaker, I chaired an inter-ministerial meeting this morning to forge a way forward with my colleagues, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, Hon Kasaija; the Minister of Agriculture, Hon. Ssempijja; the Minister of State for Regional Co-operation, Hon. Oryem;the Minister of State East African Community Affairs, Hon. Maganda; and my colleagues in the ministry, Hon. Werihke and Hon. Gume; and also, the High Commission of Kenya. We resolved as follows:

For us, as Government, to formally raise concerns with the Government of Kenya over their failure to follow laid-down procedures of communicating such measures under the East African Community.

Already, there are high-level engagements involving the President of Uganda and President Uhuru. Next week, we intend to hold a joint inter-ministerial meeting between two Governments to address this issue of maize and other non-tariff barriers at the border with Kenya.

We have put in place an administrative measure that allows only the Uganda National Bureau of Standards or the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries certified grains and cereals to cross the border or circulate in the domestic market.

Normally, if there are such cases of standards verification, the Kenya National Bureau of Standards informs the Uganda National Bureau of Standards of any irregularities but this time, there was no communication.

We will be consolidating the alternative markets just like we have been doing with the Democratic Republic of Congo and the African Continental Free Trade Area. We are also encouraging and supporting the formation of cooperatives to undertake self-regulation.

As I conclude, I want to assure you of Government’s resolve to get to the bottom of this matter. We will use all available options to address the issues that concern Uganda as well as those that concern Kenya, the East African Community institutions such as the Council of Ministers, the East African Court of Justice and, if possible, reciprocal measures.

In the Council of Ministers in Arusha, this issue has been very high on the agenda all the time but we regret that Kenya has not been too responsive. I rest my case and I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, what will it take for this Government to reciprocate? The eggs, milk, chicken, sugar, maize and you are still - the maize is from all over the country, not just Kampala.

6.54

**MS JOY ATIM (UPC, Woman Representative, Lira):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the minister for the information she has given. I would like to thank this House for being concerned about what has happened in the neighbouring country.

We appreciate that we are a landlocked country and I wonder the kind of relationship we have that is making us suffer as a country. The minister has alluded to the fact that they are going to try every means possible – through the Council of Ministers, the East African Court of Justice and the rest – to resolve this matter.

In the East African Community, what are we up to? We have Members of Parliament up to that level. We have the Minister of East African Community Affairs. If there are any issues, why don’t these people come and sit at that level? We, the local people, are the ones who suffer.

For example, our people produce a lot of maize. Kenyans come up to the local village to buy groundnuts or cassava from the gardens and we are free with them but the ban that they are putting on Uganda is very painful.

I implore the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries that, yes, everybody suffers from aflatoxins and we equally do not want to eat such. Can we help Ugandans on the issue of post-harvest handling? Can we put our house right and see how these things are going to happen?

On the issue of milk, what is wrong with the milk that they do not want to buy it? The other time it was about sugarcane and we had to talk on the Floor of Parliament. Please, let the neighbouring countries have the heart of oneness in East Africa.

In the hospitality business – most of them are in our hotel business but they are not willing to take our people. I think that is not okay. The Minister in charge of agriculture should do the needful. The Minister of East African Community Affairs and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, please, our people are suffering. The price of maize has now come down to Shs 200. What is the benefit of the harvest in this country?

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, some time back we were told that there are agricultural inspectors at the border who clear the items – the phytosanitary inspectors: why is this happening?

**MR SEMPIJJA:** Madam Speaker, we need about 1,000 inspectors but so far, we have 85 from 30 that we had before we put in place a new inspectorate department. Therefore, we do not have enough numbers to man all our borders and the airport 24 hours a day but that will be handled. We have already discussed it in Government.

To answer your question, Madam Speaker, the biggest problem now is that our brothers and sisters from Kenya have been going right to the remotest village in Uganda to buy cereals. It is Ugandan food that has fed our brothers and sisters there for a long time.

They come with Kenyan registered trucks and the East African Community protocol says that there should be free movement of goods and persons. Therefore, they are free to reach there, buy and cross without going through the Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

That is why we decided this morning that in future, we are not going to allow any grain to go out or even be sold within without being certified by the Uganda National Bureau of Standards and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries inspectors.

That is what has been happening. They have been doing it to their advantage and now that they have a bumper harvest the other side, they are protecting their own *- (Interruption)*

**MR GUME:** Madam Speaker, on this incident, the trucks of maize that were stopped, were not stopped at the borders but deep inside Kenya in Nakuru. So, we are getting confused. Like you said, we have inspectors and UNBS at the border points. However, this is a situation, where the trucks entered Kenya, reached Nakuru and they were stopped there. That is what is confusing us.

7.01

**MR MOHAMMAD NSEREKO (Independent, Kampala Division Central, Kampala):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the honourable minister for the statement he has given. We need to stand up and not be bullied in this region. Our brothers and sisters from Kenya must realise that as East Africans and as Africans, we must work together towards the challenge of being sucked up by those from other areas. That is why we are in the East African Federation and we must live with that sense of brotherhood.

Since 2019, Uganda has fallen victim to these blockades, which have cost Uganda’s economy over $500 million, equivalent to Shs 1.9 trillion. This is tactical. The reason is that we do not sit down with our businessmen on a regular basis to understand what others do tactfully.

Our brothers from Kenya should explain that today, it is the maize. What was wrong with our cement? What was wrong with our eggs? What was wrong with the milk? What was wrong with the steel? There is something that is fishy.

**THE SPEAKER:** Even the gas cylinders.

**MR NSEREKO:** And the gas cylinders. The reason for the gas cylinders was the shift of the factory from Kenya to Uganda. The issue was: if you have left Kenya, we shall retaliate. The gas issue is a big cartel; it must be controlled by certain people from other borders. The same has begun with maize.

With the bumper harvest in Kenya, the issue is simple. Post-COVID-19, they were very clear; we need to follow the policy statements of the ministers on the other side of the aisle. They clearly said they are moving in for protectionism. So, they must protect because the supply is high and the price of Uganda’s maize was relatively low. Definitely, they were bound to lose.

Remember, they import over $100 million in form of maize from Uganda. In this case, it was grains and these were clearly checked but they have not given proof to the effect that the maize they impounded was contaminated.

That is why the question should have been that we did not rise up and stand our ground when it happened to poultry. We did not stand up for milk. We did not even stand up equivocally for cement, steel and gas. It will now continue because there is a game.

I have always told you that this game started when there was an alliance between Tanzania and Uganda in the construction of the pipeline and this has been targeted. However, our colleagues should come out and clearly say it is because Uganda was meant to sign with Kenya but it switched to Tanzania. That is why even the blockade is targeting not only Uganda but also Tanzania. How is it by coincidence that the maize from both Uganda and Tanzania was contaminated? This is the biggest frustration of the East African Federation that we are facing.

We should not accept that people come from across the border and work here freely and we only fold our hands, yet, the products we are producing cannot go to Kenya, in effect, affecting our balance of payment sheet, against Kenya. We have a blockade in Rwanda; we now have a blockade in Kenya. This is frustration.

We appeal to our honourable brothers. The current chairperson of the East African Community is *Ndugu* Uhuru Kenyatta. He should understand that Kenya produces a lot and we provide a market but also Uganda should be given a chance to market in other economies.

This time, we should stand up and lay the ground. The President of this republic must stand his ground. These issues of dilly dallying must stop. We are letting in everything but what we have in surplus cannot be taken on by other countries. This is not a fair way to trade as a family.

Madam Speaker, as I wind up, on the grains - like we are talking about – we must also create a fund for these eventualities. We have now realised that our colleagues might not necessarily be happy with our progress and might not be reliable in future. Now, what will you tell the farmer, who is banking on their produce today, that it is Shs 400?

In the short term, let the Government intervene and say it shall procure their maize at Shs 600 and store it. For instance, the older the crop, according to grain, the more the price.The older the crop storage – because the moisture content is lowered by the age of the crop – in the form of maize, the older the crop, the higher the price.

Therefore, the short-term intervention that the ministry should do, other than engaging our brothers, if they stand their ground, is to intervene by trying to bail out our farmers by buying at Shs 600, so that we cushion them from the losses. That is why before, we had the marketing boards. We had that security. We must do this immediately so that we cushion their losses. This is why Governments are there.

As we are negotiating, let us cushion their losses. You can imagine within two days, some people had borrowed and invested over millions of dollars to purchase this maize. Yet, the volatility of the market will lead to unreasonable losses. We must do an intervention, as we call upon our brothers to stop this behaviour. Thank you.

7.07

**MR MBWATEKAMWA GAFFA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I think the great questions of the day cannot be solved by mere speeches, except by blood and iron. The blood and iron I am talking about is not about getting guns; tit for tat should be a fair game. Madam Speaker, rub my shoulder and I rub yours.

Yesterday, our colleague, the senior smuggler - Oh sorry - Hon. Macho from Busia – *(Laughter)* – brought very nice proposals. I was expecting the minister, in her submission, to tell us if we should go ahead and adopt these proposals immediately.

The minister has not addressed the short-term measures that we can apply to our farmers from Mubende and farmers from Uganda, who have already supplied and made losses.

As I conclude, I would like to add my prayer to what hon. Chemutai said. She actually had a nice prayer. I do not see the essence of singing the East African Anthem, if that marriage is not yet useful to us. I would also propose that we postpone the East African Anthem until further notice. Thank you very much.

7.10

**MR KEEFA KIWANUKA (NRM, Kiboga County East, Kiboga):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think it is a very serious matter that deserves serious questions.

First of all, I would like to say that I am surprised by the minister’s presentation because she says they will be raising concerns with Kenya, so that they get formal communication. However, I wonder what better communication can be than returning 150 trucks of maize.

Madam Speaker, I am a bit anxious because whereas it is a very serious matter that we are dealing with, we should be careful not to overreact in a way that will aggravate the matter.

My prayers are two: First, we need to give Government an opportunity to see what can be achieved with the formal communications that they are trying to get. However, on the other hand, we need a formal hearing on this matter by our committee, so that they can present a report to us, which will be very well considered with all the issues around it. We can then discuss it.

Secondly, there is also a more serious issue that the ministers have not responded to, although they mention that there is a check on the grains that are going out. It is a well-known fact that sometimes when maize is harvested, if you badly handle it – for instance, if it is wet and it is exposed to molds - it can become poisonous and humans should not consume it. It should not even be taken by livestock.

Therefore, there is a serious issue of post-harvest handling that has to be dealt with. These are matters, which should be handled by a committee and it reports back. We would then have a very good discussion on the way forward. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**The Speaker:** It seems there are many Members who want to contribute.

7.12

**Mr Geoffrey macho (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Madam Speaker, I will be very brief. I would like to thank the honourable minister for her submission, although her statement is not convincing enough to build confidence in the hearts of Ugandan traders, who are crying at the borders. I would call the minister’s statement “a workshop paper,” because she came and outlined to us how we should have ways to solve trade barriers concerning the East African Community Federation.

However, Madam Speaker, the matter for which you called upon the Prime Minister to come and give a statement was to find an immediate solution. Kenya and Uganda, whose borders I usually crossed when I was young, had a proverb which says, “medicine for fire is fire”. I believe the time is now for Uganda to speak louder with action.

The presentation of the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, who is representing the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, cannot solve the problems of loans that people have got from banks, yet maize is rotting on trucks. This statement cannot help at all to solve the problem of the transport costs, which the vehicles and transport companies are demanding from people. We, therefore, need a solution with immediate effect.

I expected the minister to say that the heads of state have started engaging and they have moved at least half-way through the engagement. However, there is no message of hope at all. The traders do not see hope at the end of the tunnel at all. That is why I still believe that our resolutions of yesterday should stand.

As Parliament, we should also resolve to ban agricultural products that come from Kenya with immediate effect, so that Kenya can also feel the pinch. If an acting executive director in a country can write a letter, which the minister says was hearsay, and if Kenya can respond to hearsay on social media and ban maize, what do we call the cooperation of East Africa? That is foolery and a shame.

Kenya should stop acting like a big brother and a bully to other partners.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I expect the minister to come back. I do not know why the minister gave this statement. We have the Rt Prime Minister in the House - the head of Government Business in Parliament. He is the one I expected to come and stand here and give a statement, so that all the media houses say, “The Rt Hon. Prime Minister of Uganda spoke” but not the Minister Trade, Industry and Cooperatives.

The speech and statement of the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives has been one of lamentation, to an extent of saying, “We shall go to the East African Courts of Judicature.” This means that she has totally failed.

I do suggest that the Prime Minister should give a statement today in this august House, so that it builds confidence in the Ugandan business community and farmers. The other time, the same Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives gave a statement on milk and there was no change. She also gave a statement on poultry products and there was no change. She gave a statement on sugar but there was no change. She is the same lady who has come to give a statement. I do not know which miracle or angel God can put in her so that things work.

I, therefore, pray that the Prime Minister comes and gives a statement. Whenever the minister gives a statement, Kenya is rewarded. When the poultry products were banned, the minister gave a statement and Kenchic of Kenya started exporting their chicks here and Ugachick collapsed.

When the same minister gave a statement, as I talk now, Ugandan milk was stopped from going to Kenya and Kenya’s Brookside milk company was registered here. They are buying milk at a cheap price and exporting it.

I do not want the same honourable minister, in the name of Amelia Kyambadde, to come and give another statement. Let the Prime Minister in the House come and speak, so that we know that the most senior Government Prime Minister, who has served in all regimes of Uganda, from Obote I, Obote II, Amin I, Amin II and President Museveni, came and gave a statement. Thank you.

**The Speaker:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister and members of the Executive, you are making our position very difficult because we have been having these debates here. Come and tell us that you are going to meet with the Kenyans. From November, we have been addressing these issues. Up to now, the eggs, cylinders, sugar, milk and pork products are still banned.

7.17

**Mr Edward otto (Independent, Agago County, Agago):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to thank the minister for the statement and at the same time appreciate the concerns of my colleagues who have spoken on this matter that I think is very serious.

While I would like to treat this whole ban with contempt for the reasons that Members have stated, I think this ban also raises very serious questions. Aflatoxinsare a form of poisoning. If they are saying that the level of aflatoxins is so high, that probably suggests that Ugandans are dying.

The minister is talking about UNBS; what doour tests show? Have we verified on our side that what they are saying is true? The minister has not stated that. She is simply generalising. If there is a test, and science is exact, and it is a fact - as we are yelling, Burundi has also banned our maize. I think we need to also carry out our own independent tests and confirm whether these allegations are true. Otherwise, the frequency at which these bans have come raises a lot of questions.

We are wondering whether these partner states are serious. We are hearing Members of the East African Legislative Assembly crying about funding. Put your money where your mouth is. Are people serious about this integration?

Madam Speaker, as a way forward, I think that we need more answers to this. At the end of the day, if our people are suffering, it is not their problem. We need to help them. The ministry needs to come up with a mechanism of intervention to try to help people who are making losses in this area. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

7.19

**Dr Michael bukenya (NRM, Bukuya County, Kassanda):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to start by thanking the minister for the statement but also to give the House a little bit of scientific information.

The most recent study on aflatoxins and maize, which was done by the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC) in East Africa, shows that Uganda’s maize is the safest, with aflatoxin levels of 9.7 parts per billion. Tanzania is at 48 and Kenya is actually the worst. Therefore, the justification for the ban might not be that; so, the minister should be able to tell us what the reason is.

Secondly, I was a little disappointed by the minister. The people of Bukuya are watching; we used to mine gold but we have stopped. We started cultivating maize and now there are problems. The minister has not given any short-term solution and confidence to the person of Bukuya. Children are going back to school and we are selling our maize to earn a living but somehow, we have to sell it at Shs 150 per kilogramme. We cannot even recover anything we invested.

The minister, with her inter-ministerial committee, did not address anything concerning the peasant in Bukuya; so, I do not know what I am going to take back there. She has actually advised the farmers to form cooperatives now. What do you want them to do? We have our maize, which is ready. We have been planting but we have nowhere to sell it and the Government cannot protect us. That is really disappointing.

The minister should tell us something that we can take back to assure Ugandans that the Government cares for them. Where are the silos? We have been talking about this for the last five years but where are the silos? There is nowhere for us to keep our maize. The Government should be able to provide at least Shs 500 in such circumstances for a farmer to take home.

Finally, Madam Speaker, there is someone sleeping on job because, first, it was the milk and then we went to the sugarcane –

**THE SPEAKER:** The milk and then the eggs, the chicken, the pork products, the sugarcane and then the maize.

**DR BUKENYA:** It will soon be the coffee we have been talking about and yet there is market everywhere in the world. However, they want me, a farmer from Bukuya, to wake up and go to Iraq and look for my own market. I am a bit disappointed by the minister’s statement. It lacks a lot and she should come back with clarity and with answers to Ugandans because the issue is building. Everyone is closing their border; Rwanda, Burundi, Tanzania and Kenya. We have to run somewhere else and someone has to think for the rest of us. That is what I ask of the minister. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

7.23

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Parliament has all the reasons to get annoyed over this matter. We are frustrated, disappointed and therefore, what we are doing is absolutely in order.

I was here yesterday and I heard contributions from hon. Mbwatekamwa, who said this marriage we entered into was a bad one. Parliament can go ahead and move resolutions because it is a just cause. As I moved away yesterday, I called the President to brief him about this very important matter. Fortunately, he had watched us and before I told him, he told me what he has done.

I thought I should stand here and give this message. First of all, the President has already seriously spoken to his brother, President Uhuru Kenyatta. The matter of just putting a ban without talking, like hon. Amelia Kyambadde indicated in her statement, was unfortunate.

The President told me to remind this august House that, as we get annoyed, rightly so, the NRM Government, since 1980, has been championing Pan-Africanism to do away with borders. We are standing here and talking about borders yet the East African Federation was going to be the answer. The East African Federation cannot be done away with; supposing we are attacked and we need support on security matters; what if we need humanitarian support or we need to work together to boost our economy. Hence, the East African Federation must remain on course.

Therefore, I am pleading with colleagues, who are moving proposals indicating that since we **have been frustrated and mistreated; we can do away with this marriage. This was the message.**

**Nevertheless, I would like to agree with the Members who have spoken here that something has to be done to ring the loudest bell to our counterparts that we are aggrieved and frustrated. I beg to submit.**

**THE SPEAKER**: Honourable members, I would also like to say that His Excellency also called me and said he saw us “on fire” on this issue but that the federation issue is important. However, it is not going to solve the money issues in our pockets. Our people want solutions that will bring money to their pockets. We shall handle the federation when it comes but right now people want money in their pockets. Give us a solution: Is the Government going to buy the maize and keep it? That is what we want to hear.

7.26

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to pick up from where the Government Chief Whip has mentioned and then later on your statement.

This is not the first time that we are getting humiliated by Kenya; there are very many issues. The question that I would like to ask the Government Chief Whip is whether this talk is just beginning now or in the first instance when it happened to the eggs and sugar, our Government kept quiet. That is the clarification I would like to know; if indeed they talk, why is it that the fruits of the talk are not being seen by the ordinary people of Uganda?

I would like to state that, as a Government, we should have protectionist policies towards our people. Protectionist policies should start at two different levels; at that level that the honourable Chief Whip mentioned; that brotherhood level where the Presidents talk.

Also, as a ministry or Government, I would like to know how we are going to protect our people. I come from Lango sub-region and many of our people depend on grains. We have the middle men who have been surviving on maize and they have stocked a lot of it but the prices have dropped up to Shs 200. What will the Government do to help these people?

We have very many farmers that had cleared acreages of land to plant maize. I would like the Minister of Agriculture, in this case, to help us. Should our people continue with the maize farming because the largest market that we have been depending on seems to be closed? What should the farmers do? What should our people do? They had already prepared land.

We buy maize seeds from Kenya when they are brought here. They even go up to the villages to get whatever they want from there. When it comes to our turn, we are being treated like children and not partners and yet we are members of the East African Community.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please conclude.

**MS ALUM:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to look at it from the angle of the people of Uganda having a Government that is supposed to protect them in such instances. If the Government cannot protect us, then where else can we turn? This is not the first time. It has happened time and again. Before we know it, we shall realise that we have nowhere to turn to.

By the way, this reduces us to an undesirable level as far as our economy, employment and income are concerned. Therefore, maybe, today is not the right day but as a country, we need a very serious and clear answer that will solve this problem because we have a Government in place.

**THE SPEAKER:** As I invite hon. Chemutai, I have revived a mail from the man of Lato Milk. He says nothing has been resolved on the milk. His factory is now at 15 per cent capacity, causing unemployment not only in the factory but also to the farmers. He has just written to me now.

7.30

**MS EVERLYN CHEMUTAI (NRM, Woman Representative, Bukwo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister but I am equally disappointed on her submission. We are talking about the farmers who are suffering now. It is time for children to go back to school and they need to sell the maize so that they get money to take children to school. It is time for buying farm inputs, fertilisers and so on but they do not have the money. What is Government going to do? That is what I expected the Minister to tell us.

We also have an issue - two years ago, the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries -I remember the honourable minister was there and we budgeted money for silos. Every region was supposed to have one. This is the time now when the Government is supposed to buy maize from our farmers and store it in silos so that when prices stabilise, we sell it back to the farmers. I believe the minister will tell us what happened to the silos we budgeted for.

7.32

**MS VIOLET AKURUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Katakwi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. It is quite disheartening that Ugandan maize has been banned from the Kenyan market, which is very unfortunate especially since we are in the East African Community. I imagine, like she rightly said, that this contravenes the free trade agreement in the Community.

I think there are quite a number of lessons that we need to pick up from here. Could it be an issue of Kenya protecting its own market and farmers? If it is true, they are talking about aflatoxins and according to the information we are getting, it is quite poisonous to human health and animals, if taken in large quantities. I think there is a message that we are picking here.

I know in our districts, we have extension workers. I think our farmers need to be sensitised about post-harvest handling. I know there has been a big challenge there. We do not need to take this for granted. At one point, when we were procuring posho and maize for the COVID-19 affected communities, I remember there was an issue that was brought here about rotten maize that was being supplied.

I think for the good of our people, if they are saying that if these aflatoxins are taken in larger quantities, they could cause liver cancer, we should not take issues of health for granted. Government needs to see how to improve our standards.

I know Kenya is already a middle-income country and we are only moving towards that. We would not wish to sell anything anyhow. We need to sensitise our farmers especially on post-harvest processing so that we actually stand out in the region.

Honestly, I know there is a lot in terms of losses for the farmers but that is why we are calling upon Government; how can we rescue the farmers? A mistake has been made but we need to rescue them in terms of buying from the farmers or providing an alternative for them so that we do not suffer.

We have had this challenge in the region. Burundi was also banned. I want to believe that there is something that is fishy; they could be protecting their own farmers and we as Ugandans, are not doing something for our farmers. I think we need to either buy from our farmers as a short-term measure for them to solve this problem. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

7.34

**MR ANGEL MARK DULU (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. In physics, we say some friction is required for movement. If we look at our situation in these East African countries, Uganda has tried its best to foster a good relationship. However, all indicators are negative and do not favour Uganda and yet, we tend to ignore the things that have been happening and will continue to happen.

My motto is that where science fails, we go local and it will help a lot. When we were looking after animals in the wilderness, when a fellow kid kicked you, you would do the same. The next morning that kid would be your permanent friend and he would fear you.

Kenya and Tanzania have always done this but we have always lubricated the relationship at our own cost. What do we gain out of this? We have been talking about commodities but it is not only commodities but also human beings including me. When you go there, you get problems but when they come here, they just behave as if they are moving from one compound to another within their own village. What is wrong with us? I feel even if it means declining our diplomatic relations, we should do it so that tomorrow *-(Interruption)*

**MR GUME:** Thank you for giving way. Madam Speaker, the issue of destroying our marriage with Kenya will be detrimental to this country. Analytically, we have had from 2015, 2016, 2017 and 2018 a positive balance of trade with Kenya. It is only in 2019 and 2020 that we have unfavourable balance of trade. Therefore, given the circumstance and past performance, it would not be fair for our country -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, we need to solve the issue of the farmers. Please, let us find a solution. What are we going to do with the people who have lost money? That is what we want to hear. The people who have lost money, the trucks that are stuck there, what is the Government going to do for them? That is what we want to hear.

**MR GUME:** Madam Speaker, I agree with you that we should look at how the maize will find its way and how we shall get market. I have heard people say here that we should get off the Community-

**THE SPEAKER:** We have not made a resolution on that; they are just talking.

**MR GUME:** Thank you for your information but I think you have not been paying attention to what Members have been discussing. They did not say that we have not been trading with these people at any one point, we did but with many difficulties and we are not happy. Unless you can prove to us that all that the Members have been saying in this House is wrong - Otherwise, that information does not hold in anyway.

I would like to conclude by saying that in my culture, when a man fights with a woman and the woman decides to go home, unless the man plus the in-laws go and resolve the case at your home, when you come voluntarily, that man tends to take you for a ride. That is the reason Kenyans are taking us for a ride. Whatever they do to us, we just go back voluntarily. We should return to them under certain conditions.

7.40

**MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.I just have one or two questions for the minister.

One, the ban was on Uganda and Tanzania but we are reliably told that the Tanzanian border, as far as the movement of maize to Kenya is concerned, was cleared. Confirm that to us. If so, why?

Secondly, the case of aflatoxins should be taken on a case by case basis. Was all the maize from Uganda full of aflatoxins? We would have expected some maize to cross and some maize to be retained. That goes to our Ministry of Agriculture. As far as testing is concerned, can we confirm whether all the maize that crossed to Kenya was tested?

We shall continue to rotate around. I remember the year before last, we had a challenge here when the prices of maize dropped up to Shs 100. On this Floor of Parliament, we deliberated and even requested Government to come out and support the farmers who were losing. We discussed the need for silos. This should be the time when we are talking about how much we are going to buy this maize for and how much we are going to put in our silos, as a way of securing what our farmers deserve as far as their future is concerned.

We should not run away from these issues. The COVID-19 pandemic has been a problem not only to us but across the world. Government should interest themselves in the issue of protectionism. The pandemic time was good for us because the farmers had harvested a lot of maize. There were good harvests.

Finally, I would like to implore Government on the issue of the community gate in Malaba. Now that maize has been stopped, we have other foodstuffs that can continue going to Kenya but because of the closure of the community gate – I raised this here and we were told the gate would be open in two days. The case of the gate is very bad. Let us have the gate open and we continue to have some business going on. Thank you.

7.42

**MR STEPHEN MUKITALE (Independent, Buliisa County, Buliisa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. My first prayer is that Parliament resolves that Ministry of Foreign Affairs writes a diplomatic protest note of displeasure, not only for maize but for all the other five items which have been discomforted. In diplomacy and trade negotiations, it is sometimes better to take a hard stance and write a protest note so that by the time you are negotiating, you are trying to get a slightly better position than when we are talking and waiting.

We have the right to write a displeasure protest note diplomatically. It is done in international practice. Do not only mention the maize. We have already talked about milk, gas and the other areas. That would bring us to a negotiation table. Even if it means bringing in third parties in the East African Common Market, let it be. Let us first write that protest note. We cannot continue talking from November to now.

The other point is that it is true COVID-19 took us back to the real economy. Kenya lost tourism but they concentrated on agriculture, so did other countries. I am surprised that we did not foresee this. I thought we discussed this last April, that we are going into more produce. This is the cobweb theorem - senior six economics. When there are more people in agriculture production, there is a glut and therefore prices go down and so protectionism comes in.

What I am requesting is, can we therefore look at this as a critical matter because as the minister has rightly said, in the last five to seven years, our terms of trade with our neighbours – balance of payment – has been improving. You are aware that South Sudan and DRC have been buying a lot of our goods. Let Uganda stop being complacent by taking raw materials.

The issue of value addition and the issues of standards is important. As I said earlier, I am an exporter and importer. Even if, honourable minister, there is no ban which has been agreed on interstate, a sovereign country has a right to intercept goods against being dumped for quality. As a transporter, even in Nakuru when I am intercepted, that country has that right to do a spot-check of goods at any point if there is suspicion. It is their right. What is going to happen if these goods are subjected to laboratory tests and they are found to have high levels of aflatoxins?

As we move the hard way to protect our people, let us also be mindful of the common practices because the transporters are even having it worse. I pray that Government takes it seriously.

Let us add value as we want to dominate this regional market. We do not pray that Congo and DRC will remain fragile and we just export anything without standards and quality. Thank you.

7.46

**MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mine is a very simple one; I will not even take the two minutes.

The minister stated clearly that Kenya did not follow any protocol and surprised the Government with a ban. What I am seeing from our side is that we are starting with protocol and discussions. Why can’t we start by reciprocating and then we can come back to the protocol when we have stopped some of their products? That is all I wanted to say. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, why can’t we reciprocate? We cannot go on like this.

7.47

**MS PROSSY AKAMPULIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rubanda):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The problem that we have in our country is that we love people in other countries more than we love ourselves. We show a lot of love and sympathy to others, more than we show to ourselves. Right now, Kenya is teaching us that they love their people. They are trying to protect their own but for us, we are here telling our people that we are negotiating.

Honourable minister, your statement is painful to the farmers. I was talking to a poultry farmer who told me that she has 7000 trays of eggs and she does not even know where to put them because Kenya put a ban. Now, you are coming here to tell them that you are holding talks. This is what hurts our people - when they hear such statements from us, when they hear us talking like this and a minister telling our people such things.

I, therefore, call upon Government, as we are working together, let us focus more on helping our country. Let us focus on helping the poor Ugandans who are in the farms. We keep telling them to farm and now we are not helping them. We are just talking, telling them we are still negotiating.

We ask you, honourable minister and Right Honourable Prime Minister, Ugandans are waiting for a statement that will heal the hearts of the farmers, a statement that will encourage farmers to go deeply into farming. Thank you.

7.49

**MS JANE NABULINDO (Independent, Woman Representative, Busia):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The reason we wanted the Prime Minister to come here and give a statement is because the traders of Uganda were expecting to hear from the Prime Minister that since there is a ban from Kenya, tomorrow we are buying all the maize.

Two, all those nice houses you see in Busia are owned by Kenyans. For us, we cannot even be allowed to buy a plot in Kenya. When Kenyans come to Uganda for medical services, they get it free but for us, it is double.

We have loved Kenya so much and even though my mother is a Kenyan, we need to be serious. Let us also ban their Irish potatoes and carrots from entering here.

7.50

**MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi):** Hon. Jane Nabulindo, your idea is so brilliant and it should be supported but let us start from where they started. Starting from a wrong place is always wrong. This is a marriage which has already gone wrong; we have reached the divorce levels and we must divorce.

This one can tantamount to aggravated economic rape. Kenya has decided to abandon us even when people are observing the level of wedding that we are having. What kind of East African Community is this?

You banned the milk, the sugar - what happened to the sugar? Did it become sweeter than before? What happened to all these eggs; did they have bigger egg yolk than normal? We are at pains just because we have technical officers of Government who need to go and support their families. The best way to do this thing is to spend the night here so that Kenya gets to know that we are not happy.

People used to tell us that there is a very good relationship between the President of Uganda and the one of Kenya; what went wrong? Was it deceit? There is no way we can continue speaking about this without taking reciprocal action. Let us do the needful. We cannot waste more time.

They did it yesterday, they have done it again and are about to do it again but we are still waiting, thinking we are Uganda, no - this issue of saying that we are going to have a written document cannot help us. That diplomacy will come after we have done something big.

We are not quarrelling but complaining because it is natural. If you do not complain, then you are not a normal person. This is the time. Thank you.

7.52

**MS MARY KABANDA (DP, Masaka Municipality,** **Masaka):** Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. We should take this issue seriously and investigate what is behind the banning of our maize in Kenya. Today as I was coming from Masaka, I met very many trucks carrying maize. I was forced to stop at the weighbridge and all these lorries; T865/DEV, T968/DHL, T965/DHL, T49/DES, T410/DHG, T697/DEB, T518/DBE and others; all were carrying maize and taking it to Kenya.

We should find out what is behind the banning of our maize from being sold in Kenya. It is not the bumper harvest; I refute that information because if they had it, they would not be exporting from Tanzania.

I request that the Uganda National Bureau of Standards carryout investigations. If there is a problem with maize, it means that it is going to affect our children because our basic food in schools is maize.

I request that Government finds a way of buying that maize from the farmers because people need money. People are poor; I have a school and we have been buying a kilogramme at Shs 700 and now they are selling it at Shs 200 per kilo. It means that the per capita income of the poorest is going to fall below the poverty line.

Lastly, we request our members in the East African Legislative Assembly to take it seriously and present our case. I thank you.

7.56

**MR JOHN BAPTIST NAMBESHE (NRM, Manjiya County, Bududa):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is now common knowledge that all manner of non-tariff barriers in the East African Community have rendered the intra-regional trade a fiasco, a complete failure. However, the one-million-dollar question is, what is the motive behind the sustained action of banning of whatever product from Uganda to Kenya?

You can mention a whole list of them; it is because they are throwing a stone in stagnant water to see whether it is fish or a snake that comes out. We have remained very lenient and silent even when Kenyans come as far as Bududa to buy *bogoya* in the villages. They buy all manner of agricultural products because we have a competitive comparative advantage in the East African Community for the best organic agricultural products.

What should be an emergency on part of Government, which I expected in the minister’s statement, should have been a bailout plan for the over 150 trucks which are stuck at the border.

Let me take you down memory lane; one time we had a boom in maize production and Shs 100 billion was committed by the Ministry of Finance after this House approved, to procure the maize which was in excess but this money instead ended in their products and accounts.

This House should demand accountability for the Shs 100 billion. When I see my good friend, the Minister of Agriculture, stating that we are now going to ensure that no grain leaves Uganda or is sold unless it is certified, I highly doubt whether they will implement it because even when His Excellency the President directed that there should be - he must also be wondering.

He has been the promoter of value addition and had directed that there should be no maize sold in this form unless it is milled, packed and sold as posho but implementation in Uganda is one of the policies that ought to be legislated upon. We have so many laws but there should be another law on implementation. Thank you.

7.59

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have been reading the Book of Lamentations. We lamented on the issue of sugarcane. We lamented on the issue of the dairy products. Now, we are lamenting about maize grain and others.

We have reached a point when we need a prescription. In Lango, if your children keep dying, you are either asked to marry another wife so that you have children or something else.

What I have witnessed, which actually discouraged me, is a display of the Government uncoordinated activities. The President gave his view and one of the ministers had the information. The mainstream minister – the one in charge of the ministry – came without knowledge of what the President had said about the subject matter.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, one of the issues we have to deal with is how we can cure the Government persistent behaviour of uncoordinatedness in the governance and particularly, on matters to do with the economy and the lives of the people.

Secondly, I am very concerned because Uganda is a landlocked country. It is important that we now prescribe to our dear partner for now as the Government comes up with plan B to focus on:

1. We will stop further imports from Kenya until this matter is resolved; simply suspend, not doing the crude way they have done to us; and
2. The Government must come up with plan B on how we are going to deal with the maize issues, which was already been in transit to Kenya because that is incurring costs, in terms of transport, damages and so on, so that we do not over hurt the people who are already bleeding with the COVID-19 pandemic.

Thank you, Madam Speaker.

8.02

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Ms Betty Aol):** Madam Speaker, thank you very much. I also would like to thank the minister. I do not see the Minister of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees because this is an emergency. Since it is an emergency, maybe the Prime Minister will answer this question.

The most urgent is buying off this maize from the traders. One thing we must know is that the longer the maize grains remain on the lorries, the more expensive it is for the traders.

At one time, we said that whenever we have a bumper harvest, we should buy and keep it in silos, so that in case of a disaster, we have something in store. In case a disaster does not come up, then we can also use it for stabilising prices in the market. In times of scarcity, you then empty this in the market.

The resources should continue being in use and circulation. This is very unfortunate. We need these traders to be handled immediately by buying off their grains before this diplomatic talk can continue.

We must also love our Ugandans. You see, in other sectors, when it comes to business, they say, “Foreign investors, foreign investors” yet when we are elsewhere, it is as if we have tails. We must be loved in our country.

Let me conclude by saying that value addition is important but as of now, we need our people to be helped and Government should buy this maize. We are not going to cry to Kenya but we should also replicate. We should stop Kenyan products from entering the country.

8.08

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (FDC, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Yesterday, when we resolved to have the Leader of Government Business to come and make a statement to the House, we did that because we wanted a powerful message to come from the Government of Uganda. That is why we have the Leader of Government Business.

I am yet to hear that powerful statement because all these statements, which have been disjointedwould have been delivered by the Rt hon. Gen. Moses Ali, in the absence of Rt hon. Rugunda. That way, Ugandans would have felt it that yes, our Government cares for us.

However, in a situation where the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives came here - in fact, when she said, “As I conclude”, I was disappointed because I thought she was giving a preamble. I thought that was a preamble but it was the end.

We had wanted a statement to come from the Government of Uganda, giving short-term, medium-term and long-term measures and for short-term, say: “From tomorrow or midnight tonight, the Government of Uganda has banned the importation of goods A, B, C, D from Kenya; We are going to enter into negotiations on Friday. There is going to be a Summit.”

That is what we expected to hear from a serious Government. I am yet to hear from Commander Gen. Moses Ali. He knows when the troops hear from the Commander, they only say, “yes.” Otherwise, if you left the corporals to be issuing statements with the Commander just seated looking on and not saying, “*piga*” - *(Laughter)* It is very disappointing and demoralising.

We are waiting and I am still waiting on the reaction that the President gave on DGF is what we expected. When he came, he said, “DGF, I am suspending you.” Minister of Foreign Affairs, issue the statement. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development issued a statement. What are we doing? Was that more important than this? I thought this is more important than that.

I like the song “You do me, I do you.” *(Laughter)* That is what you should have done. The Swahili say, “*Unanifanyamimi, ufanyawewe.*” That is what we expect from you. Can we have that from you, Gen. Moses Ali? That way, Ugandans will say they are being catered for.

And for the Minister in charge of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, they have made allegations that there are aflatoxins in our maize. What have you found? Have you confirmed that? What about the milk; what was the problem with it? What was the problem with the cement? Is it also aflatoxins? What was the problem? Can you confirm to us that what the Government of Kenya is saying is true?

We should not just be lukewarm, paralysed and look weak. We should be able to tell Ugandans - otherwise, Sudan, DRC will also say, “the maize from Uganda is contaminated; stop it.” What have you found? Can you tell Ugandans whether these allegations are true or not?

We should then be able to know how to move away from that. Without that, Ugandans will simply be gaping at the Government as if there is no Government.

Madam Speaker, we want to hear from the Leader of Government Business. What is he going to do from midnight tonight? That is what we need to know and we are waiting for it. Without that, we leave everything to God.

Thank you.

8.09

**THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the opportunity. I have listened attentively as my honourable colleagues made submissions. Allow me to say this: From 1962 to 1966, we had a stable economy. After that, we did not have a stable economy until 1986. During that time, Kenya’s economy was growing – they were industrialising while we were fighting. I am trying to say that we have since embarked on rebuilding our economy and, perhaps, our neighbours are beginning to see us as potential economic opponents.

I come from the district of Kyegegwa where one of our leading forms of earning money is maize growing. Last time when we were supplying maize to Kampala during COVID-19, we discovered that most of the maize was coming from Kyegegwa, Kamwenge, Kyenjonjo and Mubende. The beans were coming from Isingiro *–(Interjection)-* Allow me to finish. I have little time.

I am trying to say that our farmers are in pain and it is our obligation, as Government, to stand with them at this time. Just like hon. Nambeshe pointed out, there was a time we appropriated money and put it in the Grain Council of Uganda to help our farmers. It pains me very much for a farmer, who has tilled his land, bought fertilisers and prepared everything, to sell a kilogramme of maize at Shs 200.

The Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries is preparing to give us maize seeds. How do I take those seeds to farmers knowing that they have no market for their produce?

In 2016 when I had just joined Parliament *–(Interjection)-* I would like to be protected. “National dialogue” is talking too much.

**The Speaker:** Order please.

**Mr kafuuzI:** In 2016 when I had just joined Parliament, the Office of the Prime Minister resettled 6,000 people in my constituency. These were Ugandans who had been expelled from Tanzania. I did not know the corridors of Parliament well; perhaps, I should have made that an issue. They are Ugandans and we are in the East African Community. Now, here we are. Our eggs were banned from Kenya, our maize is being banned, our milk and everything else are banned, yet we continue to look to God for survival.

I would like to propose this: Let us take a multi-pronged approach. As Parliament, we have an obligation to appropriate. Give an assignment to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to prepare a supplementary budget so that Government can purchase this maize from our farmers. *(Applause)* Knowing that they may not do the right thing, put in place the right measures to follow it up and make sure that the actual farmers sell their maize.

Remember, we are reopening schools and farmers are expected to pay school fees. How will they pay it if they are unable to sell their produce –*(Interjection)-* Yes, I am the Attorney-General but remember that I represent Ugandans and I am here by virtue of that. I am pained. My people are unable to sell their milk and now they are unable to sell their maize.

As Government, – I call upon you, my senior colleagues - we need to do something. I do not want us to be so reactionary as to close borders and recall ambassadors. Our Minister of Foreign Affairs can engage. The President and the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives can engage. However, in the meantime, we need to find a solution and purchase this maize. I beg to submit.

**The Speaker:** Honourable members, the issue of non-tariff barriers against Uganda has been on this Floor for more than a year. I do not want to believe that the Government was not aware or that the President did not know. We even had a debate here and people were telling them not to continue with non-trade barriers. A resolution was taken here. Didn’t the Government know? Didn’t it reach Cabinet? The ministers were here.

Our position is the following: We encourage you to continue talking but you need to reciprocate as you talk. We need a reciprocal measure now. *(Applause)* We also need action in the East African Court of Justice.

This is a clear breach of the treaty. We have said it very many times but no one has the courage to take up this matter. The Government does not want to. Therefore, we want an immediate solution for the farmers. We want a mid-term solution for the future but what is our position in this Community, Prime Minister?

I want the Government to show that they care about the people of Uganda. How can you leave their eggs to get spoilt because there is no market? Poultry, no market; pork, no market; gas cylinders, no market; sugar, no market; maize, no market and you are still saying you care about Ugandans!

8.17

**The minister of trade, industry and cooperatives (Ms Amelia Kyambadde):** Madam Speaker, I would like to thank you. As I began my statement, remember I told you that the principals were consulting at a high level, so it did not contradict the Government Chief Whip at all.

We talked about the protest note as well and the fact that they have not written to us officially about this. It has been on social media and so we do not know the details.

Another point I would like to bring out –

**The Speaker:** Honourable minister, are you aware about the trucks at the border? Don’t you know that?

**Ms kyambadde:** The trucks were Kenyan –*(Interjections)*– Please, protect me, Madam Speaker. I have allowed others to talk.

These were Kenyan trucks and they were stopped from Nakuru after they had crossed the borders *–(Interjection)-* Yes, carrying our maize. However, do we also have the purchasing power? If we say that we disconnect from Kenya, do we have the purchasing power to procure this –

**The Speaker:** Really! Honourable member, when will you take care of the interest of Ugandans? These are diplomatic measures to increase the pressure.

**Ms kyambadde:** Yes, we are increasing the pressure and we are meeting them. I will allow the Prime Minister to say something – *(Interruption)*

**Ms ogwal:** Madam Speaker, the minister made a statement on the Floor of Parliament in response to the ban on Ugandan maize entering Kenya.

The minister has now said that whatever we have been discussing is a social media story and there is nothing official. Is the minister in order to just listen to us talking about serious matters and say that we are talking about matters that have appeared on social media? In other words, there is no substance to back it up. Is the minister in order to waste our time to sit here and lament for the people of Uganda up to almost 9 O’clock? Is she in order?

**THE SPEAKER:** I am surprised because the minister said they held a meeting this morning with the ministries of Finance, Foreign Affairs and Agriculture –

**MS KYAMBADDE**: Madam Speaker, we met about the fact that this issue appeared on social media but there was no proper communication on that matter. Nonetheless, I do appreciate all the issues that have been raised here and I have taken note. We have to sit, as Cabinet, to discuss those issues. I will leave my boss to respond to that.

**MS NABULINDO:** Before the boss responds, yes, it is true that those trucks are from Kenya. When they offload the Irish to Uganda, we load our maize. The trucks were from Kenya but the maize is ours. As we talk, the trucks have offloaded all the maize and they are abandoned in Busia.

8.21

**THE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Gen. (Rtd) Moses Ali):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Due to time, I request that our brothers, who have been speaking since we started this afternoon, just give us two minutes of silence or even listen to others. I think that would be proper. If we talk and they talk, there is no need to talk. We should respect each other.

I do sincerely appreciate the contribution of colleagues. I have been quiet here and I have been listening and following. We are in a very awkward position.

You keep referring to me as “the General.” Yes, I am a General. Now, let me tell you what the General does. There is no question whether I am Idi Amin or not because he is not here. I am here and I am a General here so, please, do not confuse issues. Do not bring past leaders; that is also a responsibility.

Before a General tells his soldiers to go to war, he must weigh the implications. You have said, “…before midnight tonight”, what would that mean? What should I do? Do you want me to declare war on Kenya? What must I do? What would you like to achieve?

Madam Speaker, I sincerely appreciate and I am sympathetic with each situation. However, we now need opportunities. The only record I will get tomorrow is the *Hansard* of this meeting today, if it is going to be produced as fast as possible.

Otherwise, what do I take tomorrow to the Government? Even if everybody heard this discussion, we need something to present. This is what I am asking. How do you give us a chance- Otherwise, what you said here has a lot of implications within the country itself and our neighbours?

Since some of us attended this meeting, tomorrow we would like to present to the Government that Parliament needs answers. However, answers of what you have raised here cannot be done by one person. I cannot do it because my capacity has a limitation. Even Parliament needs the Executive to come in and put into action its decisions.

Therefore, if the secretaries can help me, I would like them to help me get the *Hansard* of this meeting today, so that I can request for a special Cabinet meeting. If acceptable, I will have something to present, which will be the *Hansard*.

By then, midnight tonight would have passed. So, we are not going to react to that. We are going to react to some other issues you have raised. You have made a number of requests here and if we are going to tell them to buy the maize, how much is it going to cost? How much maize are they going to buy? What is the impact of that? All this needs to be weighed.

I am glad that I have attended this session because now I am not going to be told what has happened here since I have heard it for myself and I should be able to present it. Thereafter, we shall come back with the Government’s position on this. That is my position and I think we need to be a bit sober. Thank you, Madam. Let me not spoil it.

**MS BETTY AOL:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. We have been debating this issue for a long time and this one is now an emergency. We all know that we are already in the rainy season. Probably, this maize is germinating and rotting somewhere. It is an emergency, which does not wait for those formal meetings.

I would have loved to hear from the Rt Hon. Prime Minister about – you have tasked me, I am going to start straight away. This could be even on phone so that maybe those other things could be finished tomorrow.

Today, you should consult with your boss and everyone who is important. You know that the Minister of Relief and Disaster Preparedness should be part of this. Besides, this is maize but we had many other things before. This is not something that has just started today. It started long time ago but we have not received satisfactory answers from you. Honourable Prime Minister and Leader of Government Business, you need to inform us, why don’t you tell us the truth about this?

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable members. The Clerk will extract the *Hansard* and pass it on to the Prime Minister. However, I instruct the Committee on East African Cooperation, to convene and examine Article 75(6) of the Treaty for East African Cooperation in relation to the ban on the eggs, milk, poultry, pork, sugar and maize and see whether the Republic of Kenya is not in breach of the Treaty and the Customs Union. We need an urgent evaluation of that so that it informs our next action.

Thank you very much honourable members. House is adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

*(House rose at 8.30 p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 11 March 2021 at 2.00 p.m.)*