

**PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA**

**Thursday, 12 May 2022**

*Parliament met at 2.15 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, you are welcome to today’s sitting. I want to thank those who managed to go to church to pay their last respects to the husband of our colleague, Hon. Margaret Rwebyambu, Woman Representative, Mbarara. Many of you were at All Saints Cathedral here in Nakasero. That solidarity as Parliament means a lot. Tomorrow, we shall be going for the burial in Kashari, Mbarara. I urge you to go in very big numbers. Parliament will arrange for transport. Hon. Kinobere and Hon. Brandon will inform you about the transport arrangements.

I want to urge the ministers to be part of this. Ministers, you are Members of Parliament. Rarely do you see ministers in such activities. So, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, one day when a Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister or a minister loses someone – the Prime Minister has been very active and she always sends her contributions and we can understand her tight schedule.

However, ministers, the day you lose someone and you do not see even five Members of Parliament - and you see a backbencher having 100 Members because he or she has been participating and supporting others - or you may find that it is only the frontbench Members supporting you, yet you are the Woman Member of Parliament for a constituency; it will not look good.

So, the solidarity of Parliament should continue; we want to break barriers and be close to each other: whether you are a minister or a Speaker. Yesterday, the Speaker was in Kirinya at the home of Hon. Margaret Rwebyambu, and that is very impressive. *(Applause)*

So, I urge you, honourable ministers, to close that gap. Today, Hon. Baryomunsi was in attendance and he has been consistent on that. So, I urge all of you to attend to fellow colleagues.

Honourable colleagues, there is a matter that has been going on. I have received very many messages and I am sure all of you have seen them. That is the issue of the termination of contracts of health workers recruited under the emergency services of COVID-19.

On 12 July 2021, His Excellency, the President wrote to the Chairperson of the Health Services Commission, directing that all the medical personnel who had volunteered during the COVID-19 pandemic period should be regularised; that all of them should be employed. On 10 November 2021, the Health Services Commission wrote to all directors of hospitals and government health facilities informing them that the commission was going to run a validation exercise of all the COVID-19 health emergency workers.

So, they were regularised and they started earning. I think some even started getting some loans. Then on 18 March 2022, the Permanent Secretary, Ministry of Health, wrote a termination letter terminating all non-gratuitable contract workers under the emergency response to COVID-19.

So, after saving us and now that COVID-19 is gone, we have terminated them. So, if COVID-19 comes back, I do not know how we shall call these people to, again, volunteer. You had already placed them somewhere, but also the President made a directive and I think he said all doctors should be absorbed.

However, I am receiving messages from people who have Masters in Medicine and they are crying; it is really bad because they are in a very bad state. So, I would like the Minister of Health to come here on Wednesday, next week, and give a comprehensive statement on this issue. Also, she should tell us how far they have reached with implementing the presidential directive of absorbing all qualified doctors into our health centres.

With that, we will go to matters of national importance. I will start with Hon. Dorothy Nyakato - On what do you want to guide me? No, you do not need my guidance because it is under matters of national importance. Hon. Martin Muzaale?

2.22

**MR MARTIN MUZAALE (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am seeking guidance from you. There is a matter that has been raised on the Floor here several times, as a matter of national importance, but I think it has not been given enough attention.

The issue of prices that are skyrocketing every day, is a very serious concern. It has been raised here and the Prime Minister has been promising that she will come back with answers. We have not received those answers from the Prime Minister. Our colleagues from the Committee on Trade, Industry and Cooperatives had come up with something called, “The Consumer Protection Bill.” Government said, “No, we shall process it as Government”. We thought that if that Bill came on the Floor, we would be able to give our input.

Mr Speaker, day-in-day-out, prices of goods are skyrocketing. Government has not come up with any definite answer on this. Outside there, the public is calling us all sorts of names and they are losing confidence in this Parliament. They feel we have not done enough to give answers to them.

Mr Speaker, I ask for your guidance on whether a Private Member’s Bill may be brought to the Floor of this House so that we can give our input to have a definite solution to the problem. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, a Private Member’s Bill is your right. If they managed to convince you that it is coming and they have not brought it, bring it; it is your right.

However, at that time I remember I was even the Government Chief Whip and I know a lot had already been done. I know it was submitted in Cabinet and Cabinet appointed a committee of experts to look at it.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I think you should follow up so that next week on Tuesday, you update the House on this matter.

Just let the Prime Minister first –

2.25

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, I would like to respond to the issue of Members or ministers not supporting MPs in times of loss of dear ones. I would like to say that some ministers, including myself, have been supportive.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Sure, sure.

**MS NAKADAMA:** Therefore, not all ministers are behaving the same. I, therefore, urge those who have not been supporting fellow colleagues, to be supportive because when their time comes, they will also need that support.

I have been seeing some ministers - maybe, because we have two fora – there is one which is only for MPs and there is one for Cabinet. So, when they contribute through the Cabinet forum, Members of Parliament might not know and when some ministers contribute in the MPs forum, they are not indicated as ministers –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To make it very easy for you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, every minister is a Member of Parliament, but not every Member of Parliament is a minister. Therefore, what I was saying is, urge colleagues. It is not that we are saying that ministers are not associating, but it also helps for you to associate with MPs. MPs feel you are part of them.

**MS NAKADAMA:** That is why I said that I will urge those who have not been supportive to do so.

Secondly, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is here; you are aware that we put a committee in place in Cabinet, but since the minister is here, let him talk about the skyrocketing prices. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let him just give us a simple update and then I will allow you, honourable member.

2.28

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The issue of escalating prices is a big concern to all of us. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, go on.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA**: Can you protect me, Mr Speaker? *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, please. Go on, honourable minister.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Thank you. Now, I do not want to go into the narrative. You all should know the causes. *(Interjections)* Okay, cause number one –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, that is not how we shall proceed. What we were promised was a comprehensive statement.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Oh, okay. Now then let me promise - because this matter is before Cabinet; it is with the President. We have sent him all the facts. Once Cabinet and the President pronounce themselves on the way forward, I will come back here and give a full statement.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, Honourable minister, we need that statement on Wednesday next week.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Well, I will try, but I am constrained to commit myself on this. I do not order the President and I do not order Cabinet. But I will try my level best.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Try because, honourable minister, you made the statement to the public. I saw a press conference with the Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury and others; a formal statement to the public on why prices are skyrocketing. If a statement can be made to the media, why can’t it be made here? You are tying our hands, honourable minister. That is why I am saying, go and prepare; on Wednesday, we shall have you on the Order Paper.

2.30

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Mr Speaker, with your permission, could the honourable commissioner resume his seat and listen to the Leader of the Opposition? *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please, allow the Leader of the Opposition to speak.

**MR MPUUGA:** Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, I guess the honourable minister, with due respect, is talking to us tongue-in-cheek.

Initially, the Minister of State for Trade came here and offered a flimsy statement, which we dismissed. He was ordered to go back and bring a more formidable, deeper statement - which was brought. And the Rt Hon. Speaker advised that it would be discussed the following day after the presentation from this side of the House. We expressed our readiness to offer our views and alternatives. That space was never offered. So, there is a pending statement.

I am shocked that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is not aware that he has a statement in this House that is awaiting debate.

I would like to advise, Mr Speaker, that he should not go back to “cook” another statement; there is one here. We can only seek the indulgence of the Rt Hon. Speaker to afford it space for Parliament to debate and even offer advice.

At this stage, it is actually the right moment when Parliament is considering tax Bills and subsequently the budget. We cannot be at the mercy of the minister going to Cabinet, which we do not order to sit; our space is here. Mr Speaker, may you order for debate and we take a decision, which we shall compel Government to act upon.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is a very good observation, honourable LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION. However, we can allow them to update it. Hon. Basalirwa is demanding that they edit out the Ukraine and Russia war as one of the causes. *(Laughter)*

What we need is a comprehensive statement. Honourable minister of finance, please link up with the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives. On Wednesday, we shall ensure we debate that matter. If you do not have any update, we shall indeed debate what the Leader of the Opposition has said we have in the House.

**MR MWIJUKYE:** Mr Speaker, the procedural matter was related to what the LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION has raised. I just wanted to inform the House that Hon. Bahati brought a statement and I was asked to also bring a statement, as the Shadow Minister for Trade - which I did and it is uploaded - but we have never been given the opportunity to debate it.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Wednesday. Hon. Silwany and then Hon. Kasaija and we conclude this matter.

**MR SILWANY:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My procedural issue is on a different matter.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let us conclude this, Hon. Kasaija. Procedure should be about the conduct of the House. It should not be about a “certain matter”. So, you need to rethink your procedural matter.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Mr Speaker, we are living in a dynamic world. Things are changing every day. What may have been true last week may not be true today. That is why I said we will come back here, again, with an updated statement - with researched findings – people are researching all over the world. I can tell you that in my ministry, we are doing that. This is so that when we come here, we tell you the situation as it is of that day. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** This matter is closed, colleagues. Let us go to other matters.

**MR SILWANY:** Mr Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter, but I did not want to interrupt the minister because the issue was also critical.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for your communication and in particular, your communication on the termination of medical workers and emergency workers who helped this country and worked during COVID-19.

There is nowhere in this country that our people can run to apart from Parliament. This is the only place where they can run and be helped. Mr Speaker, you made a ruling and I do not want to dispute your ruling, but wouldn’t it be procedurally right to direct that any such kinds of terminations be halted until the Minister of Health comes here, makes a presentation and tells us how we are going to handle these workers?

Today alone, the messages I have received from across the country on my phone about health workers who are losing employment are so many. Wouldn’t it be procedurally right to direct that this is halted until the Minister of Health comes with a report to Parliament so that we halt the whole process, but maintain the status quo? I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, this termination was done on the 18th of March; so, there is nothing to halt. What we should be fighting for is reinstatement and implementation of the presidential directive.

This is why I want the minister to come with a comprehensive statement and I do not expect the minister to say, “The Minister of Finance should give me money”. No. Do it as a team. The Minister of Health should reach out to the Minister of Public Service and the Minister of Finance so that we have a statement that is owned by all, but not ministers throwing the blame on the other. I hope the statement will be comprehensive enough.

After the statement has come – *[Mr Silwany rose\_]* - Honourable colleague, do not access the microphone until I allow you. No, Hon. Silwany. I have ruled on that matter. Let us move because we have business to handle. Hon. Angura, what is the matter?

2.37

**MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo):** Thank you. Mr Speaker, you have ruled that the minister should come on Wednesday, but this is a very touchy matter.

COVID-19 started in China. Mr Speaker, as we watch what is happening across the world now, China is again locking its cities day in day out because of COVID-19. The situation that we think we are firefighting here can again overwhelm us, if we do not plan well.

Mr Speaker, this is a very touchy issue; we are dealing with a matter of life and death. The World Health Organisation (WHO) has not declared the world COVID-19 free. I know we are repeating ourselves, but this is a touchy issue.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What do you want us to do?

**MR ANGURA:** What I want us to do, as we wait for Wednesday, is to move and ask that the directive by the President be considered immediately because we do not know what tomorrow will have for us. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, I do not like doing things for the camera. If something has a budgetary implication, they have to go back and plan. How does it help for me to say “immediately”, yet the minister does not have money?

You must send them back and then they can come and explain. Let us be cautious that whatever decisions we make here, are decisions that can be implemented. It does not help us to make decisions we cannot implement. We can be praised outside for the decisions we have made, when it is just for the camera. Let us be clear.

**MR KYOOMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a procedural matter concerning the House. Yesterday, while we were here, Hon. Oboth moved a motion under rule 16 to suspend rule 222(2).

Accordingly, we deliberated, but thereafter, the rule was not reinstated. It would, therefore, mean that while we deliberate, the rule remains suspended. I am raising this to seek the guidance of the Rt Hon. Speaker on how to proceed.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You can move a motion to reinstate it. Otherwise, the rule was suspended for that specific purpose. Beyond that, the rule is back. If you want us to have a “double-double” – Colleagues, let us move otherwise, we shall not finish. Hon. Dorothy Nyakato.

Leader of the Opposition, everything is important here. There is nothing which is “very very important” and others “important”. I will give you an opportunity, but first, let us allow a Member.

Honourable members, be it the Prime Minister or the Leader of the Opposition, no one has authority beyond the authority of the presiding officer. *(Applause)*

I want to tell you that you have the same power here and I always refer to the Leader of the Opposition and Prime Minister, as leaders to guide their sides. When I am guiding and you say he is representing, then you can go out and he keeps representing you. Hon. Nyakato.

2.40

**MS DOROTHY NYAKATO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kitagwenda):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I rise on a matter of national importance concerning wildlife animals from Queen Elizabeth National Park.

Animals, most especially elephants, have consistently attacked the people of Mahyoro Town Council, Kanyabikyere, Kyendangara, and Rwetuma.

As I speak, last week on Friday, we buried a person who was killed by elephants. People have lost their lives and properties like gardens. As leaders from the affected area, we have tried to engage the relevant authorities, but up to now, nothing has been done.

My prayer is to request the relevant authority to intervene in this matter and expedite the process of fencing off the area in order to safeguard the lives of our people and their properties. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Government?

2.42

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama):** Mr Speaker, that place has been demarcated for fencing the game park so that the animals do not disturb our people. I think for the area that has not been fenced, maybe money has been exhausted and they might be waiting for it. Otherwise, work had started to fence that area so that animals do not get out of the game park. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER**: Honourable minister, I come from one of the affected areas because I neighbour Queen Elizabeth National Park. In the subcounties of Kiyanga and Kigyende, everyday – According to Hon. Mwijukye, one day, animals might even eat the Deputy Speaker.

We are in trouble and the MP is just crying out. What is very important is for the minister - I remember we touched this issue so much this year and last year. We need real action on the same.

Honourable Minister of Finance, I do not know if you have given us any money – Honourable member, it is an issue raised by a colleague and according to our rules, we shall not add anything to it. Honourable Minister of Finance, the Minister of Tourism was crying for money.

2.44

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you very much. It is a big problem and there is no question about that. *(Laughter)* Work has started – I can testify for the Murchison National Park because I was in West Nile recently and I could see the wire. *(Laugher)* So, work has started. I cannot testify about the Queen Elizabeth National Park because I haven’t been there, lately. You can comment better than I. It is a serious matter – and we know it very well and we are addressing it as and when the funds come in. We will solve that problem once and forever.

You have also seen there is a down side; we lost two lions – I think they were electrocuted. That is a matter that the technical people will be able to advise us on. Definitely, we cannot, of course, prefer wild animals to human beings. However, all I can say is that this is work in progress and, I think sooner than later, this problem will be completed.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The sectoral committee on tourism should visit the affected areas, see the progress and report to the House after the budgeting process. This is so that we can have very clear updates. Leader of the Opposition, did you have an issue? Has it been overtaken by events?

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Mr Speaker, I had wanted to make a procedural rejoinder to what Hon. Xavier Kyooma was saying because the matter to which he was making reference has even more deeper ramifications to this House and the rules per se’.

I, initially, thought that he was subsequently going to raise the attendant matters I had wanted to raise with the presiding officer – relating to the way that matter was handled. On the 27th, this House received your very able guidance on that subject matter and I was expecting nothing, but compliance by the front bench.

I tried to initially track for the notice given to this House on the subject and it did not exist, although they had sought to use rule 16 to circumvent the command under rule 222. I find it a bit suspect, Mr Speaker, given the gravity of the subject matter.

Initially, the subject matter of that motion is a matter before a committee of this House; the Committee on National Economy. By moving that motion, we have allowed the Executive to siphon business out of matters under House consideration, Mr Speaker. The Executive sought to move funds from recurrent to development –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Leader of the Opposition, what I need you to guide me on is: what is the aim of your submission? I, really, want to get it because there was a decision of the House that was made. If you could, just have a seat for a minute.

A Member moved the motion under rule 16(2). He said the rule he wanted suspended was not an entrenched rule, as provided for under rule 16(2). Now, when you weigh the gravity of the matter - these are our own rules. The rule which was suspended, if we felt it is a rule that touches very grave matters, would have been among the rules entrenched. However, we did not entrench it. So, the Member has a right.

Therefore, it will be in your opinion that this was a very grave matter or that this was a very important matter, depending on the feelings you have towards the matter. However, as long as the rules have not entrenched that rule, any rule – and on any single day – can be suspended as long as Members here agree that we suspend it.

Really, I want us to move forward because this was a matter that was sorted yesterday. I do not know if you are moving it for re-committal.

**MR MPUUGA:** Mr Speaker, with your indulgence, the critical role of the presiding officer is very important in these matters, especially aligning business with the rules. The subject matter of my submission - the vacation of rule 16 – is really a minority matter. The substance is in the gist of the motion.

Mr Speaker, when that matter came on the 27th, part of the debate was the efficacy of the motion on the Order Paper, namely, that it touches on matters before a committee. Therefore, there was all manner of trouble in allowing the minister to siphon matters when there is a committee report, which is ready, but has never found space on the Order Paper and that subject matter is -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, kindly, take your seat. This matter was on the Order Paper yesterday. You had a right, as a Member, to come here and vote on the matter. Unfortunately, you were not here. Members voted and concluded on the matter. Hon. Ssewungu gave his side: the same argument you are giving. Hon. Cecilia Ogwal gave the same argument you are giving. The House voted and concluded the matter. Therefore, that one is a closed matter. You have other ways of bringing it.

**MR MPUUGA:** Can I conclude?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, no, no. This is a closed matter.

**MR MPUUGA:** I rose on procedure, Mr Speaker, and you allowed me.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are taking me back to a matter which was resolved yesterday.

**MR MPUUGA:** No, Mr Speaker. I respect the Speaker so much. Being the Speaker – part of his duty that he cannot abdicate is to even listen to our nuisance and guide us accordingly. I, kindly, ask you to listen to me and I will get your guidance, humbly.

I talked about the business before this House, which is a committee report in which business is being siphoned by the Executive. The committee has a ready report on the subject matter from which finance siphoned business.

Mr Speaker, if the report comes and the business therein – in the report – is nugatory, shall we really be a smart Parliament? I raised that matter on the 27th. That is why I am not catering about vacating rule 16. It is very okay and your ruling is very right. However, for us to allow the Executive to undermine your own business which you sanctioned, as a presiding officer, is very dangerous and it is going to really get us into a lot of trouble, Mr Speaker.

Now that we are aware that the committee report was long signed on this subject matter – for instance, we are aware that part of the subject matter of yesterday, to which you ably guided because it was not your problem, the ministry is already utilising borrowed funds without parliamentary approval. Are we really a Parliament that is pushing for rule of law when we allow the Executive to move – come here, camouflage under the rules – and violate the written law, Mr Speaker?

So, what do we do with the report of your committee that is already long signed – about two months ago – but has not found space on the Order Paper, but the minister smartly siphons out what they want for convenience and our hands are tied? You have not violated any rule, Mr Speaker. Your guidance on the rules is okay, but you now understand my deeper concern.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am just waiting for you to finish and I guide you.

**MR MPUUGA:** Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You know, in this House, I look at some of these things and I decide to keep quiet. Some test our patience, I see a certain Member saying “yeah” – jumping and I can decide and I leave you and you talk and talk until you get satisfied.

By the time we put an item on the Order Paper, honourable Leader of the Opposition, as presiding officers, we take our time and study whether that item is in conflict with any business of Parliament or is violating any of the rules.

Two things: first, what the minister was bringing here yesterday was an item where they were saying, “You allocated us Shs 146 billion. If you gave us money under non-wage recurrent, you gave us money for doing” – let us assume – vehicles, painting and all that. “We want to change part of the money - under the Shs 146 billion, which was supplied and approved by this House - to another purpose within the same vote.” They are not saying that this money is going to be borrowed externally, via suppression or domestically.

If you can remember very well, when we passed the supplementary budget - you passed that budget with very clearly indicated sources of financing. They were clear in the report. You adopted the report and allowed everything here.

So, the matter we were handling yesterday - we assessed it as presiding officers and found that it does not, in any way, conflict with the motion for borrowing that was tabled by the minister. That is why we allowed it on the Order Paper. The moment we allow such an item on the Order Paper, Leader of the Opposition – once you receive the Order Paper and you feel indeed this is an item that is conflicting with business or the rules and all that, our offices are open. That is why we release the Order Paper a day before, so, you can contact us.

I can reach here and withdraw any item from the Order Paper, okay? That would be it. That is why we had arguments and counterarguments.

This matter is closed, honourable members. Let us move on. Please, allow me to run the business, according to the Order Paper of today. *(Applause)* I will also allow, Hon. Lukyamuzi Kalwanga, you had a matter of national importance?

2.57

**MR DAVID KALWANGA (NUP, Busujju County, Mityana):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a matter of national importance regarding the abandoned projects that Government started in my constituency. It is not only in my constituency, but even in the district.

In 2019, the Ministry of Water and Environment opened up a project in Kitongo. After launching that project, they stopped it. In the same year, Government contracted Tessan Uganda Limitedto supply and distribute electricity in two parishes and one town council. That project was launched, but they only covered 50 per cent and it was also abandoned. The workers were not paid; the food they ate was not paid for. Where they used to sleep, people are demanding for their rent.

In the very month, they went and opened another project at Kitongo and Butayunja Subcounty, where they were supposed to distribute electricity. However, even that project, which was contracted by Mega Electricals Limited, was also abandoned. Anyhow, this case is not only in my constituency it is all over Mityana.

So, I have a few prayers to you, Mr Speaker:

1. Let the relevant ministries come on the ground and find out what exactly is going on.
2. If the contractors were paid, we need to understand whether they are the ones deceiving us –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Feta, can you allow the Prime Minister to listen to these matters because she will need to respond?

**MR KALWANGA:** If they are the ones deceiving us, we need to understand that.

Lastly, I move that you use your Chair, as the Speaker of this House, to instruct Government that if possible, let these people be paid such that we do not get commotion on the ground. My people are even ready to uproot those poles that were put there, hanging without wires.

Thank you very much.

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

3.00

**THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Lukia Nakadama):** The Minister of Water is here. I do not see the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development. Since the work had started, I know it is because of money that maybe that work stagnated because you have said 50 per cent has been done.

So, I request that you call the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development and the Minister of Water to come and tell us why that work is not being completed. I thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the Member has requested that ministers go on site. Let the minister and the technical people go on site with the Member. Honourable member, did you want to add on something?

**MR KALWANGA:** There is something I wanted to get clarification on from the Prime Minister. We understand the matter got problems with money, but you cannot start a project and you just work on 10 per cent of it, and leave it there. For the one of Butayunja, they brought poles and just laid them down.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is why I am saying that the minister should come on the ground with you. You will be able to take them around and then you will report back to this House on Thursday.

3.02

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Mr Speaker, I just want to indicate that this problem is not only in his constituency. From the time the Rural Electrification Agency was reintegrated into the ministry, they have had challenges in moving forward with their programmes.

I think the minister, after visiting that site, should maybe come and update this House on where we are with REA and the activities that had been planned. *(Applause)* That is what I wanted to add. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssewungu, you are going to be the final person to speak to this matter.

3.03

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu County West, Kalungu):** Mr Speaker, I want to thank the Prime Minister, although I see a new style of responding to issues. Maybe, the money got finished.

It is very funny because when this money is allocated, it is meant to cover the entire project.

Anyhow, honourable members, what is happening in most of these constituencies where they are putting electricity poles is that there are even no *Yaka* metres. People are given power – money was got through a loan. Now, someone has wired it with an amount of about Shs 500,000, but the *Yaka* metre costs Shs 1 million, yet this is money that we passed here under a loan, through the Speaker, to you, Madam Prime Minister.

So, you need to take keen interest to find out - your responses are a bit energetic, better than the ones of the other Prime Minister – *(Laughter)* – but take more interest in knowing what is happening.

Mr Speaker, we cannot pass a loan - in Kalungu, they extended power in the way Hon. Kalwanga has said, but people do not have *Yaka* metres, yet these were supposed to be given free of charge.

They were supposed to put power in schools, churches and mosques, free of charge on these loans. So, can you take more interest in this matter?

The Speaker will allow you to come back and explain why these projects are stalling, yet money was allocated to them by this Parliament. This business of saying, “Money got over” sounds funny; it does not sound professional and parliamentary.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable member. You know, for instance in my constituency, I saw someone writing on *WhatsApp* groups that now that he got the votes, the lines are going to stop there. Then, in 2025, they will resume. Someone even takes his time and moves around the constituency, telling people, “You see, wait for this power in 2025.”

So, let the minister come here and give a comprehensive statement on the implementation of REA projects. *(Applause)* Honourable Minister of Finance, Government is losing a lot of money because what happens is that there are even some areas where transformers get damaged before being commissioned. They put up a transformer for two years without commissioning it.

Also, people are saying that they cannot afford the connection fees because they are way too high. However, in the budget, you bring us hundreds of billions in deemed energy. Now, where we would say, “Why don’t you get that money for deemed energy and we use it to connect our people, so that they pay instead of paying for unconsumed power.

You know, you have over Shs 100 billion in deemed energy within one project. In Agago alone, we have already spent - that is in Aswa Adam, we have already spent over Shs 200 billion; that project was built at Shs 380 billion, and without consuming even one kilowatt of power, you are paying over Shs 200 billion.

The people around do not have power and they are saying, “Help us to get connected so that we pay”. However, you are saying no; we are comfortable, continuing to pay for power without consuming it. Therefore, let the minister come.

And I remember last week, I asked for your statement on the issue of deemed energy. Let it come and it should be on the Order Paper on Wednesday. Let us proceed to other matters, colleagues.

3.07

**MR JOHN MAGOLO (NRM, Bungokho County North, Mbale):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance concerning the scrapping of the District Discretionary Equalisation Grant (DDEG) from local governments.

In the month of April, this year, the local governments received a communication from the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to Treasury that all district discretionary equalisation grants had been scrapped. In my district, these funds were evidently used as supplementary primary healthcare grants; for the construction of pit latrines and survey of public places for government. This move to scrap off this District Discretionary Equalisation Grant funds will potentially curtail the operations of the local governments.

Mr Speaker, my prayer is that this circular written by the Permanent Secretary and Secretary to Treasury be withdrawn.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, let that money be reinstated and made functional in the local governments. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You know, on matters of local government, we have some experts here. Hon. Christine, would you like to expound on that matter before the minister’s response? She is the former LCV chairperson of Kumi.

3.08

**MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I am the Deputy Chairperson of the Public Service and Local Government Committee.

Mr Speaker, it was quite surprising when we saw that there was no provision for DDEG for district local governments. You are aware of the three grants that are sent to the districts and the use of the DDEG has been clearly seen in the districts.

As for my district, when new administrative units were created, there was no provision for the establishment of the administrative headquarters. Some of our subcounties used this DDEG for establishing structures.

Mr Speaker, remember that the priorities of local governments are not the same. It is from the DDEG that local governments can prioritise and implement such activities.

Mr Speaker, I stand to second the colleague that we should see it as a very important allocation to local governments if we are to see better service delivery in the districts. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:**  Minister of Finance, I think you have seen why we always need you here. You need to give us more time.

3.10

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Mr Speaker, I think I need your protection. *(Laughter)* Now, colleagues on a serious note, it is true that some funds have not been sent to the local governments. You know, this COVID-19 disoriented us as a government; there is no question about that.

However, let me promise once again that first of all, the Minister of Local Government should come here and give a full explanation because I might not be able to give you the details. My job is to look and find money and give it; but I am telling you that the money has not been fully released to local governments.

However, what they have done with what I have released is not a matter that I can expound on. Maybe, Mr Speaker, you could order that the Minister of Local Government comes here and explains to the House in detail.

**MS NALUYIMA:** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I am the Shadow Minister for Local Government. And as our deputy chairperson has clarified, when we were considering the budgets for local government, it was really so unfortunate when the minister presented to us that DDEG is no longer part of the local governments in this country. The same has also been communicated by the Ministry of Finance.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, according to the request and prayer of this matter, can the local governments have this fund reinstated? It originates from finance not local government. I beg to submit once again.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the circular came from the PS/ST, who is from the Ministry of Finance and not from the Ministry of Local Government. The local government can only say, “I implemented the directive of finance.” Therefore, why should we go to the local government? So, let it go back to you and on Tuesday, come to this House and give us an update on the matter with a clear view of reinstating the funds.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA**: Most obliged, again. *(Laughter)*

3.12

**MR NABOTH NAMANYA** **(FDC, Rubabo County, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance under rule 49 of our Rules of Procedure, regarding the shutdown of the hydropower plant at Kisizi Hospital in Rukungiri District.

Mr Speaker, Kisizi Hospital was established in 1959 by the Church of Uganda missionaries. Today, it is the biggest private hospital in western Uganda, and the only facility with a specialised infrastructure to handle general and medical illnesses, which are a major problem in Uganda caused by a series of economic and social factors.

Mr Speaker, this hospital handles over 3,600 cases monthly; both inpatients and outpatients. In this facility on Christmas Day of 1976, my mother did not enjoy Christmas; that is where she was and that is where I was born.

Therefore, since the establishment of the hospital, it has had its own hydropower, which was 60 kilowatts *– (Interjection) -* MrSpeaker, may you protect me from the minister?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member, it is only and only when a Member is on the microphone that they are on record; so, you are the only one on -

**mr naboth namanya:** Mr Speaker, the hospital entered an MOU with another company to expand the dam to have 300 kilowatts of power. Later, the Minister of Finance and the Minister of Energy - of recent, there is a standoff as to how they should move. Since the 3rd of May, power has been cut off. Patients at Kisizi Hospital are at risk because they do not have power.

Mr Speaker, my prayers are:

1. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, together with the Commissioner-General, URA – I am happy the minister is here - should immediately come up to resolve the outstanding tax-related issues that have resulted into the closure of the power generation plant at the hospital.
2. The Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, together with the rural electrification programme in the ministry, should come to rescue people by connecting the hospital and the neighbouring areas to the national grid, irrespective of the problems they are entangled in, which have been discussed here.

Mr Speaker, that is the problem that we need to solve so that the people in Kigezi and the western region in general, can be able to get medical services. I beg to move. Thank you.

3.16

**The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you for raising that matter. I am in touch. I think the doctor responsible wrote to me asking for the waiver of the taxes. I am working on that and I promise this House and you that we shall waive the taxes because they have no capacity to delineate that money. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Honourable minister, when can you report back here on the matter? Maybe just for noting.

**Mr MATIA kasaija:** Well, I could even report back on Tuesday because it is just a matter of writing a letter and I think we already did.

**Mr ssewungu:** Mr Speaker, I thank the Minister for the good response. However, can you put it on record that this is a Government assurance so that it can be captured on the *Hansard*?

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, Hon. Ssewungu, he is a minister.

**Mr ssewungu:** He said he is going to report, but he will waive. I want him to give us an assurance. I am asking, as the vice-chairperson of the committee, through the Speaker. You will report back, but are you assuring this House that you are going to waive the matter raised by the Member as the doctor wrote to you?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Honourable colleagues, I refer this matter to the Committee on Government Assurance. Hon. Ssewungu, ensure that the assurance given here is implemented –*(Laughter)*– you can invite him to appear before your committee.

3.18

**Mr eddiE kwizera (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am rising on an issue of national importance relating to the Uganda Electricity Transmission Company, where a committee was interacting with the board and the board revealed - it even gave the committee documents relating to corruption, mismanagement and non-completion of projects, transmission and substations. To the surprise of this country, the Minister of Finance disbanded that board and appointed another without reference to the Cabinet, which is irregular.

Therefore, when we look at the deemed energy, there is a cover-up in the Ministry of Finance. There is a ministerial or institutional conflict. The Ministry of Finance wants to manage where they cannot manage, the policy of power distribution. Now, there is a war between the Minister of Energy and the Minister of Finance.

May I ask, why did the minister disband the board and appoint another without even following the Cabinet - or even without concluding with the committee? We had interacted with Hon. Kasaija and he had assured us that we are going to conclude this matter. When we are here, we say that there is lack of a strategic unit planning for energy and we shall be lamenting every time.

I pray that this board that was disbanded be reinstated because the other one was appointed contrary to the law. Or, this House sets up an ad hoc committee to look into this matter and report to this House. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member, you are tying my hands. You have said the committee is investigating. It is supposed to report and it can, at any time, extract anything and bring it here. Therefore, if we go into that then we are violating our own rule 80, which is anticipation.

If you had not referred to the committee and raised it as a different matter – you are tying my hands. Can we give the committee time in which it can report here then we debate and the minister is made to answer?

**Mr kwizera:** The issue is where someone appoints a board that is illegal; it is now in office. The other is where the minister is frustrating the working of the committee.

**The Deputy Speaker:** I agree with you, but that should come from the report of the committee, which you have referred to that it is working. I do not see the chairperson here, but the vice, Dr Emely Kugonza. When are you reporting on this matter so that the minister is made to answer here when all of us have more details?

3.21

**Dr emely kugonza (NRM, Buyanja East County, Kibaale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are investigating the matter and certainly at an appropriate time, we will be able to report our findings to this House.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, chairperson. The Member tied my hands. I would be concluding on - so chairperson, ensure you expeditiously handle that matter.

3.22

**Mr Julius acon (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance on the poor roads in Otuke. As we are all aware, schools already reopened.

On a number of occasions last year, I raised this matter. As I speak, students have resumed school, but there are a number of places where they cannot walk across because the area has flooded. Pregnant mothers too, cannot go to hospital. The communities cannot even go to the market.

Mr Speaker, this has brought a challenge. It could not be only in Otuke. I think it is around the whole nation. This country is experiencing the same issue that I am raising today on the Floor of Parliament.

The community has already begun working on these bridges by themselves and they are requesting Government to provide them with culverts so that they can do it by themselves, rather than waiting for the local government and the ministry to come and help. They have already volunteered.

I request for at least 50 culverts for the subcounties of Orum, Olilim and Ogwete. The parents agreed to work on this. I rest my case.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Minister of Works, do you want us to handle this with the Road Fund, which we are going to be discussing later or do you have an immediate answer which is different from, “We are lacking money?”

3.24

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Musa Ecweru**): Mr Speaker, it is true some of the issues we are going to talk about are similar, particularly, when discussing the general challenges on the road sector.

Now that Otuke has raised this and indicated, like many colleagues, that there are roads which local people are already working upon and may need some culverts - While it is not possible to get enough culverts to run through the whole country, we can mobilise a few for Otuke. Fortunately, I will be in the region on Saturday.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Very good and thank you. Members, on urgent matters, there is no information. Let me just help Members. Whenever you want to add something to the minister, you either give information or seek clarification and it is the Member holding the Floor that allows you, not the Speaker. Hon. Sarah Najjuma?

3.25

**MS SARAH NAJJUMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance. My constituency is faced with a challenge of motorcycle and vehicle theft. This week alone, three cars have been stolen from Greater Ngoma, which has five subcounties namely; Ngoma, Kinyogoga, Ngoma Town Council, Wakyato and Kinoni.

Mr Speaker, Greater Ngoma does not have any police patrol and there is poor network in the area. So, the thieves are using that advantage to disturb our people.

Mr Speaker, through your Office, I request the Ministry of Internal Affairs to provide us with a patrol vehicle. If they do not have a new one at the moment, they can give us any vehicle that can be on the road to handle the situation.

I also request the Minister of Internal Affairs to sit in the right place because he is not visible. *(Interjections)* Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs, this is a very urgent issue. I have been demanding for a vehicle from you for Kyoko Police Station, but this one is different. This is a very urgent issue in which you should intervene as soon as possible so that we can handle the situation. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister - *[Hon. Sarah Najjuma: “He is there, I can see him.”]-* Hon. Sarah Najjuma, take your seat. *(Laughter)*

Colleagues, when you see a colleague seeking refuge, sometimes, forgive them. He was rushing to exile.

3.28

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi):** Mr Speaker, I want to assure Hon. Najjuma that I was not hiding; the bench was full. It is true, we have talked about mobility, especially in her constituency, but it is a general problem and it is being tackled in a comprehensive way. When we get vehicles, we will handle all the needy areas.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Chairperson of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, we talked about the Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL) earlier on. We give the committee only one week to finalise the matter so that you can report back and we handle it. Hon. Kayemba-Ssolo?

3.29

**MR GEOFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomansimbi)**: Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of national importance. This concerns our people in the Budda, Kyamabaale and Buwenda villages, who are threatened after one person, named David Senfuka, bought land in 2006, where we have more than 450 families. People are receiving threats every day that they have to leave that land immediately.

Through you, Mr Speaker, we would like to request the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to come to our area in Kibinge so that we can sort out that issue because Mr Senfuka’s life is also in danger. Whenever people see him, they want to beat and kill him. I beg to report.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the request is very clear. You need to take action. I think you should direct your minister to go on the ground.

3.30

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, the issue raised by my brother has been taken with the utmost importance it deserves. Eviction of our people from their land has been a problem in this country. We are devising ways of stopping land evictions, including your people in Bukomansimbi. I will direct the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to intervene and stop that problem. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. On that one, we really appreciate it because you have been going on the ground. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, ensure that they involve Hon. Kayemba; otherwise, the minister should not go on the ground without the Member who raised the matter. The area Members of Parliament; both the Woman Member of Parliament and the Constituency MP should be involved.

3.31

**MS RACHAEL MAGOOLA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bugweri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance. In the districts of Bugweri, Mayuge and Bugiri, mineral wealth was discovered: a rare earth metal, which is only found in Uganda, Africa, and I think in India and China. It is a very rare metal, but a private company came in and is doing business of educating people about it.

The community is very worried because Government is invisible in this whole thing. We are aware that minerals belong to Government, but Government is not visible in telling people what the rare earth metal is and the company which has come to work there.

People have been given a timeline of one month to sign a Memorandum of Understanding for their land to an organisation, which they are worried about. My prayer is that the ministry comes out and introduces these people officially. I have heard that previously, ministers came, but this is long ago. So, the people now do not know and are worried about Rwenzori Rare Metals Company.

Mr Speaker, we request the minister to come, but before he or she does, we request that there is a directive to halt any discussion between the company and the people because it is causing a lot of anxiety. Families are fighting each other over the idea that land is going to be sold for a lot of money. So, we need protection for the community from Rwenzori Rare Metals Company.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, information is not allowed on such matters. Honourable members, I will not rule a thousand times.

**MS MAGOOLA:** I request that the minister comes on the ground so that the community can see that Government has come. Rwenzori Rare Metals Company has -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you are repeating yourself. You have already spoken and we got your point well. Rt Hon. Prime Minister?

3.34

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, Cabinet has come up with a policy to add value to all minerals in the country so that we can have employment for our people. Therefore, I am going to ask the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development to go down and see what is happening.

*(Applause)*

In the meantime, I am using my powers, as the Prime Minister, the way I did to – do you remember the other time of Iganga? *(Laughter)* I stopped the construction and I am also stopping any –*(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. James Mamawi?

3.35

**MR JAMES MAMAWI (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance. On Monday, 9 May 2022 –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members, the Prime Minister needs to listen to all these issues. Colleagues, I need order in the House. Hon. Sarah Opendi, the Prime Minister has to listen to the Member because the Member needs a response.

**MR MAMAWI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the protection. On Monday, a team of vigilantes from Olwi in Itirikwa Subcounty, National Forestry Authority (NFA) personnel and police went to Zoka Forest.

On the community realising the sound of machines operating in the forest, the community went, and together with the police, arrested six culprits. These suspects were taken to Ajeri Police Station. On a sad note, the following day, the six suspects had been released by police.

Mr Speaker, there has been a problem and as I speak, there is a big meeting near Zoka Forest in Olwi Village, in which the community is demanding to know from the police and the NFA, the whereabouts of these suspects since this has been their cry – illegalities have been taking place in this forest and people are not known. However, when they finally got these suspects, to their dismay, they were released the following day. Where are we going?

Our prayers are that the police officers who released these suspects be arrested and help Government in investigation.

Secondly, our prayer is that the team from the Ministry of Water and Environment, the Ministry of Internal Affairs and the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs helps us to move on the ground to solve this matter.

This is because, as I speak, we have all these institutions on the ground and there is a good number of officers who can help us to curb these illegalities, but we have not seen what they are doing. Illegality is ongoing. We need a meeting with them and the community to agree on how we can protect this forest.

Lastly, the community are asking that if Government lost interest in this forest, let Government allow them to harvest the resources themselves instead of people coming from very far and disturbing their peace of mind. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Internal Affairs, they arrest people who are cutting down forests and the following day they are released. People are saying you let them all go in and cut*. (Laughter)*

3.38

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have noted the concern of the honourable member and I will take it up with him and with the right authorities – the police leadership – so that we follow up on the matter.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the Minister of Water and Environment should also go and assess the damage because it seems a lot is going on in our forests and our protected areas.

3.39

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, we have to protect the environment. We have to protect our forests because of what we all know – the benefits that come with the ecosystem. Therefore, I promise, on behalf of the ministry, that we are going to handle it.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Finally, Dr Bwanika?

3.40

**DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance in regard to the Masaka-Mutukula Road. This road connects us to our alternative to the sea, which is the port of Dar es Salaam. This road is in a very bad state.

About a year ago, the Ministry of Works and Transport came, measured and marked this road. After they measured and marked, some structures and pieces of land were meant to be part of the project expansion. This road is due for rehabilitation.

However, after that, the Ministry of Works and Transport went silent. Our people do not know what is going on. They hear that the road design has been changed; it is now going to be narrowed. They cannot sell their land or use their structures because there is that uncertainty – the lack of information.

My prayer is that the Ministry of Works and Transport should come out clearly and state the scope of this work. When is the work beginning – because the road is in a very bad state? Are our people, who fall in those road markings, going to be compensated?

My second prayer is that a team of the Ministry of Works and Transport should go on the ground with the area MPs along that road so that we can reassure our people on the direction of this road. I so submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, those sending me notes and want to give information concerning roads, we have a substantive item, which we are about to reach, on the Uganda Road Fund. That is when you will be allowed to give all this information to the minister. I will give you time.

3.42

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Musa Ecweru):** Mr Speaker, Masaka-Mutukula Road is one of the roads that are in final stages of design. Each time a road is designed, before the contract is signed, there are some updates that are, sometimes, undertaken. What has happened on that road, because of the critical nature of that road, is that there were some improvements to be undertaken. It can only improve. It cannot be narrowed.

It is in a big list of roads whose design we have completed. I will be indicating the list to this House. However, I would like to assure my honourable colleague that there is no way we can ignore such a critical artery into the country. I will be very happy to give him adequate information and also be happy to take them to the ground.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Next item. Leader of the Opposition, do you have a procedural matter?

**MR MPUUGA:** It is very brief and I thank you for your indulgence, Mr Speaker. I had information – remember you are the custodian of the rules and, by extension, the protector of the House and its business.

The Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry has been under attack, but you guided last week that their business would be on the Order Paper after you have done perusal. I am getting information from some of my Members that they have been directed to go and present that report to State House tomorrow.

Mr Speaker, I am seeking your indulgence on whether you have instructed your committee to go and report to State House and not Parliament, and what I should tell my Members to do in view of the fact that the committee report is ready and it is the business of this House. I so seek your guidance.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable member, I am not privy to any such meeting. That is number one. Number two, any side can always consult their Members - any side.

We already have a report. It is in our custody, as presiding officers. I really do not know what they are going to discuss and what they will present. That is an issue which becomes difficult for me to rule on because it would be speculation on my side. However, I am going to inquire from the leadership of the committee and then the Members will be guided by us. Our work does not only stop here.

**MR KIBALYA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My procedural point is in the same spirit. The report from the Committee on Trade was ready last week. There has been a practice where a report can be uploaded, but it takes two or three weeks before seeking space on the Order Paper.

Wouldn’t it be procedurally right to upload that report because it is a fact that Members on the Committee on Trade, are down there doing COVID-19 test. Couldn’t it procedurally okay for the Clerk to upload that report today so that by the time you put it on the Order Paper, we have already gone through it.

It has been a practice that a report comes and they say, “It was uploaded yesterday; so, time is not sufficient to debate it”. This time can we have this one since it concerns everybody, even if it takes two weeks, we shall be revising it throughout.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, the report is going to be uploaded and debated here. The Speaker guided on Tuesday when she was presiding and I would not like to go back into what she made very clear.

STATEMENT BY MINISTER OF FINANCE ON THE STATUS OF FUNDING FOR

COFFEE AND TEA SEEDLINGS

3.46

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Mr Speaker, I am going to make a statement regarding the funding for coffee and tea seedlings.

At the 28th Sitting of the Third Meeting of the First Session of the 11th Parliament of Uganda, held on Wednesday, 4 May 2022, Hon. Asiimwe K Enosi, MP Bukabula County requested for clarification on the failure by Uganda Coffee Development Authority to provide coffee seedlings to farmers due to lack of funds.

Subsequently, I was also requested to provide information on the status of funding for coffee and tea seedlings. Now, I wish to clarify as follows:

Mr Speaker, you may note that at the beginning of this financial year, the economy was still recovering from the effects of COVID-19 pandemic and the subsequent lockdowns.

This resulted into shortfalls in revenue collections and necessitated budget suppressions to accommodate the various expenditure needs of Government.

Therefore, in light of the funding challenges this Financial Year 2021/2022, my ministry has managed to release 85 per cent and 87 per cent of the budgets for the National Agricultural Advisory Services and the Uganda Coffee Development Authority respectively as detailed in the table, which I will lay.

As regards the National Agricultural Advisory Services, the budget that had been approved was Shs 104.689 billion, but we managed to release Shs 88.7 billion, which translates into Shs 85 per cent.

For Uganda Coffee Development Authority, the approved budget was 87.303 billion, but budget released was Shs 84.829 billion, which represents 97 per cent. It is expected of the accounting officers to prioritise the funding for coffee and tea seedlings within the released resources and work plans.

Budget for Financial Year 2022/2023

The above notwithstanding, His Excellency, the President, launched the Parish Development Model as a last mile approach for organising and delivering public and private sector interventions aimed at wealth creation, employment generation at the parish level as the lowest economic planning unit.

This is aimed at supporting more Ugandans to join the money economy and consequently increase their demand for goods and services.

Aware of the revenue shortfalls arising out of the impact of COVID-19 on the economy, these necessitated the repurposing of the budget for Financial Year 2022/2023 mainly to fund the Parish Development Model, among others.

Therefore, a number of wealth funds including funds for coffee seedlings, amounting to Shs 45.5 billion and Shs 32.2 billion for planting material, were rationalised into the PDM. These funds are geared towards increasing production and supporting households for purposes of inputs.

This is in line with Cabinet’s approval of the agricultural value chain development strategy of 2021-2026, which prioritises the Parish Development Model Pillar (I).

Therefore, operationalisation of the Parish Development Model will ensure the scaling up to access improved inputs including seeds and seedlings, stocking materials to smallholder farmers in subsistence, which in turn will improve their production and productivity thus lead to increased farmers’ income. I beg to lay, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister - you seek clarification when he is still on the Floor. Honourable minister and honourable members, allow me to guide.

The first guidance is about issues to do with the budget for the next financial year; issues we are going to discuss now because we discussed the National Budget Framework Paper and made our recommendations.

The committee looked at the ministerial policy statements and made recommendations. The Committee on Budget is now consolidated and going to bring a final report. So, it would be in anticipation for us to start going into the next year. But now, honourable minister, the members here want seedlings; they do not want too many explanations and they want for this season, which they budgeted for.

Remember the money that was given was less and that time, we reduced the money for seedlings. We need a commitment that you are going to release 100 per cent of the money needed for seedlings. Once it is not enough, no one will blame you because we would say that the money you budgeted for the seedlings was released; that would make it very easy.

**MR KATUSABE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for that eloquent presentation. As you are aware, you have, in your office, countless petitions coming from fellow citizens -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Atkins Katusabe just a little. Can Hon. Sarah Opendi come near to interpret for the Rt Hon. Prime Minister? *(Applause)* Hon. Atkins, go on. *(Laughter).*

**MR KATUSABE:** Mr Speaker, thank you so much for -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Last time, I allowed you to remove your mask, honourable member. Let me allow you to do so, again, so that you can be audible.

**MR KATUSABE:** You are great, Mr Speaker, and I enjoy your leadership. Mr Speaker, I was trying to ask the attention of this House that so far, as we know, especially those MPs that represent coffee growing communities, we have got a lot of calls. And so far, as I know from my constituency especially from my district, it is crystal clear that the Speaker’s Office has countless petitions.

Mr Speaker, this government made a commitment to our fellow citizens, especially those that are into coffee growing as part of their livelihood. My procedural issue is that wouldn’t it be procedurally right for Government to make a commitment to our citizens, especially those that have already put their petitions in the Office of the Clerk – that Government allows them to have their seedlings sold or distributed to coffee farmers in the hopes that when Government gets money, these citizens are paid just like we have done a little before?

Lastly, Mr Speaker, I wonder why this aspect wants to, again, be reduced to that of vanilla. Some citizens are losing their houses because Government made a commitment that they would buy vanilla and they did not own up to that commitment. And as a result, our fellow citizens are losing property because they got loans from banks. Their houses and other property are being attached.

Finally, Mr Minister, you have had meetings with the Uganda Coffee Development Agency. I encourage Government to own up to that commitment.

Those farmers are watching us; we are their representatives. We are their voices and the time is now that the coffee seeds and the seedbeds be purchased by Government and paid for in the future.

That is the voice, Mr Speaker, that came from the farmers. I appreciate your leadership.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MS CECILIA OGWAL:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a procedural matter. I also appreciate the statement that the minister has given. I would like to implore the minister and government, generally, to put special attention to cotton. Cotton production is going down. Just as we invest in coffee by providing seedlings and encouraging farmers to grow more, I think it is equally important that we promote the growing of cotton, which is more entrenched.

Right now, cotton production has gone from over 200 bales to almost 50 bales per annum. That means that several farmers are now suffering because of that situation. I would like to implore Government to come up, particularly in this budget - we want to see you distributing free seeds to farmers.

And the extension service - how you are going to manage that - so that we can at least see a change in the next financial year. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

3.58

**MR FRANCIS MWIJUKYE (FDC, Buhweju County, Buhweju):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the minister for the statement. However, you have just returned on a visit from Buhweju, and while there, you said that you had talked to the Minister of Finance concerning tea seedlings for Buhweju District, which is a presidential directive.

Even then, we had been meeting the minister. We have met him, I think more than three times, with my colleagues from Buhweju. He has been promising to write a letter to the Minister of Agriculture, in that regard. I think he has promised more than 10 times. When you reach him, he tells you he will write it tomorrow.

Last week, I even wrote him a chit and he said, “I will handle it on Tuesday.” Tuesday passed; I expected it today, but I have not heard about it. I also know that you promised the people of Buhweju that the minister is going to write a letter in that regard and bring it to you.

Now I do not know what to tell the people of Buhweju. I do not know whether the minister has changed his mind; I do not know whether he forgot what he told you on the phone. I am at a loss.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, we have a situation. You have people who have seedlings in nursery beds. They know Government has been buying all these seedlings every year. Then we have farmers whose gardens are ready and they are used to receiving seedlings. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, these seedlings are one of the ways through which MPs mobilise their communities. Most of these seeds are given out through your MPs, who love you so much.

You woke up all of a sudden and said that under the Parish Development Model, people will have to buy their seedlings. I want to give you an example: the coffee planted in my constituency, the nursery beds are not from my constituency. If you say that I have to go and use the Parish Development Model money, which you have not yet sent, which is not yet there and the gardens are ready – and you are saying that I have to go and buy that coffee, then you would be sending me to borrow Shs 50,000 for buying seedlings. And I would have to use Shs 30,000 for transport to go and buy the seedlings from Bushenyi.

If you announce nationally and say that Government will no longer be buying seedlings from the nursery bed operators, that you are stopping this financial year, then the people who are preparing nursery beds will know and they will not blame anyone. People will not go for loans to prepare nursery beds.

Also, once the farmers prepare gardens, they will know that it is their onus to go and buy the seedlings and then we will arrange to have seedlings in the *Bitereko* in our communities – in the neighbourhood, so that you do not spend money on transport and all that. All of a sudden, you stand up *–* what we are requesting, honourable minister, is that you release 100 per cent of the money for seedlings because it is not part of the money that was frozen by Government.

Secondly, UCDA falls under the Committee on Agriculture, doesn’t it? Maybe, COSASE - we need to know the money released to UCDA and NAADS for this purpose. Has it been also absorbed? Sometimes they cry foul when they still even have money, which Government has released to them. We want to know whether they have utilised that money, which has been released.

Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, please update us on this.

**MS JANET OKORI-MOE (NRM, District Woman Representative, Abim):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I am stealing a few minutes from your time. We are concluding this matter shortly, then we will go to the Prime Minister’s Time.

**MS OKORI-MOE:** Mr Speaker, actually at the moment, we have so many petitions over the seedlings that had been supplied. In the budget, nothing has been provided. We have scrutinised it and we do not see anything. In addition to that, there are areas in the country, which have very old coffee trees, like the Elgon Subregion and the Rwenzori Subregion. All those coffee trees need to be stumped and replaced. So, it is difficult to understand how farmers in those subregions will be able, with the little money, to do the stumping and replacement of the old coffee trees.

So, we have petitions from many farmers who supplied their coffee seedlings. Some of them got loans from banks to put that enterprise in place and have nothing. I think we need to do something.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, in 2017, the President launched the Coffee Roadmap, which focuses on producing 20 million bags by 2025. Now, if we are to achieve that dream, how can we do it without providing money for seedlings? So, it is really a challenge, which we have to look into as Government –*(Applause)*- otherwise, we shall be deceiving ourselves.

Uganda used to be better than Vietnam, but now, Vietnam is number two in the world. We have gone to number eight, just because we like taking one step forward and three steps backwards. *(Applause)*

This is one of the things that is going to have a negative impact on our number one cash crop, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable chairperson, I have requested that you look into this matter as a chairperson in charge of the committee. First, look at the money we appropriated for this financial year before we go even any further.

Secondly, honourable minister, on Saturday morning, I gave you a call when I was going to Buhweju for a function and I told you, from my brief that came from my advance team - one of the two major issues from Buhweju was on tea seedlings, where the presidential directive was very clear – because Buhweju survives on tea – that is, they do not have roads, but they have tea; tea is what they survive on.

So, he directed and indeed, you informed the leaders of Buhweju. People made nursery beds. So, the people of Buhweju said, “Allow us to supply the tea seedlings to people who are ready, then you can pay us later instead of the seedlings for which we have borrowed money, dying and getting destroyed in the nursery beds and we cannot go anywhere.” At least, I am safe when someone owes me.

The minister made a commitment. He said, “Go and tell the people of Buhweju that on this matter, I have resolved that I am going to take action. This week, I am going to write a letter, authorising that.” However, he said two things; first, they will be paid like in two years. Secondly, he said they should be accountable; they should not exaggerate and inflate the numbers – transparency.

So, I communicated your message. *(Ms Nabbanja rose\_)* Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the minister needs to confirm my message, which I talked about with him, then, you can come in. I might be lying. I, then, directed the RDC when we were there. I said that the minister has told me this and that; ensure that this is implemented, once the letter comes.

Honourable minister, do you need to say anything on this and then the Prime Minister can come in? Otherwise, I am going to look bad.

4.07

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Mr Speaker, you know, in matters of public –*(Interjection)­*- no, coffee –*(Laughter)*- of public, you keep the last card and I thought I am keeping this. I had deliberately kept it as my last point.

I have promised him – where is your colleague?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is Hon. Ephraim Biraaro, Hon. Oliver Koyekyenga.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** *(Interjection)* Not you. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** There is Hon. Oliver Koyekyenga.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, I have not talked to you about coffee and tea. No, no, no. I know the Buhweju Members of Parliament. Where is the Woman MP?

Now, Madam Prime Minister, I hope you do not call me out of order because I have not consulted you, but I took a decision, as the man in charge of this economy. *(Applause)*

People have grown seedlings - both coffee and tea. Last time here, you were talking about coffee and I said no, we should not only look at coffee, but also tea.

The season is running out and people are crying out that they will lose money. So, without consulting you, Madam Prime Minister, I took a decision that we shall give permission to the nursery operators to supply what they have in their gardens, provided they do it transparently - as you heard the Speaker say - so that they do not cheat. We shall pay in two to three-year installments. I want to reconfirm this, in this House; this is what I have taken a decision on. I have not consulted much in Government, but I am doing it for the interest of the economy and the tea planters.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think, colleagues, that is the right decision, where we need to support the minister. *(Applause)*

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** So, colleagues, particularly from Buhweju – because it is Buhweju people I have interacted with very much. The letter has actually been drafted; it is going to come. Go and tell our nursery operators to do precisely what that letter will say and then we shall make arrangements that they will be paid a little bit later, but at least we would have taken the burden from them. *(Member rose\_)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you do not access the microphone without my permission. This matter is closed. Item No.6?

STATEMENT OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS OF THE SUCCEEDING WEEK

4.10

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, I move under rule 28 of our Rules of Procedure that requires me, as the Leader of Government Business, to make a statement in this House regarding Government Business of the succeeding week.

Mr Speaker, we shall move a motion for a resolution of Parliament to amend the First Schedule to the Uganda Registration Services Bureau Act, Cap. 210.

Secondly, we shall update Parliament on the ratification of the East African Community Protocol to operationalise the extended jurisdiction of the East African Court of Justice.

Mr Speaker, I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. Let us go to the next item.

PRIME MINISTER’S TIME

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

4.12

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, I will take just a few minutes because I have a few questions.

Mr Speaker, Hon. Alero Tom Aza, MP West Moyo, inquired on the decision of the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Uganda National Roads Authority to halt the services of the Laropi Ferry, pending routine repair and maintenance work and its resultant disruptive effect on transport and communication in West Nile and the neighbouring countries of South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo.

Mr Speaker, the Laropi Ferry connects Adjumani and Moyo Districts and is part of the Atiak-Adjumani-Laropi-Moyo Road. The road is an important international route used to access Uganda’s borders with the Republic of South Sudan. The ferry is managed and maintained by the Ministry of Works and Transport.

Mr Speaker, to ensure safe ferry operations, it is important that careful maintenance is undertaken. Any incident affecting the ferry can lead to disaster with loss of life and property. The Laropi ferry utilises floatation devices called pontoons, to keep it afloat.

In December 2021, it was discovered that three of the pontoons had developed faults due to wear and tear, which caused water to leak into them. This affects the ferry’s balance and makes the vessel unsafe to operate. The maintenance was done and the ferry resumed operations in February 2022.

Hon. Jonathan Odur, MP Erute South, asked on the deplorable state of Kamdini-Lira Road, whose funding from the World Bank had been delayed by two months, leading to the abandonment of the site by the contractor.

My response is that Government is partnering with the World Bank in the rehabilitation and maintenance of the Tororo-Mbale-Lira-Kamdini road (340km) as part of the North Eastern Road Asset Management Project (NERAMP). The project is to be executed in two lots. Lot one: Lira-Kamdini Road and lot two: Lira-Soroti Road. Road works have commenced on the rehabilitation of section one.

I wish to inform this House that the honourable Minister of Works and Transport together with the area Members of Parliament, conducted a ground breaking ceremony for the rehabilitation of the road on 22 April 2022. The contractor commenced and the work is on-going.

Hon. Robert Migadde, MP Buvuma Island County, raised a question on the escalation of piracy on Lake Victoria characterised by raiding of boats and engines, fuel and the limited capacity of the police to stem rampart piracy.

Mr Speaker, the police has intensified operations on the waters and some suspects have been arrested from Ssenyi Landing Site in Buikwe. The Marine Police intelligence network has been enhanced to detect and deter any escalation of theft in the area.

The Officer in Charge (OC) Buvuma Detach started periodic community engagement meetings to sensitise the dwellers on maritime security and safety precautions, and encouraged them to report incidents to the police, promptly.

Hon. Dr Charles Ayume, MP Koboko Municipality raised a question on the need for Government to consider improving the modalities for deployment of newly recruited police personnel, including welfare and transportation to the new duty stations.

My response is that the personnel are deployed based on the results of manpower gap analysis that takes into consideration crime rate, emergency requirements, needs of the newly created units and availability of accommodation.

Mr Speaker, the welfare of personnel majorly covers feeding, clothing, healthcare, accommodation and salaries. Personnel are fed while on duty. In addition, two pairs of uniforms are provided with warm suits. The personnel access health services from over 90 Uganda Police Force health centres and government health facilities in the areas of operation.

After the initial training from Police Training School in Kabalye, Masindi District, the personnel are transported to their duty stations with the Uganda Police Force troop carriers and buses all over the country.

Mr Speaker, those are the questions I had for today. Like I told you, I have spent just a few minutes. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. [*Member rose\_*] No. Honourable member, read rule 41. The rule is very clear that only the Leader of the Opposition can clarify or comment on these matters.

Colleagues, I think you have seen. If we could utilise the Prime Minister - the answers you get - most of you come, but when I tell you to send the questions to Prime Minister - as the presiding officers, we are going to gazette the amended rules so that at least in the next session, which is starting soon, we have more direct or written questions on the Floor. This hybrid was approved by this House. Leader of the Opposition, do you have any comments on this?

4.21

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have very brief comments, but first, I want to thank the Prime Minister for the response.

One is the issue of marine security, there is a challenge. Two weeks ago, one of our Members, Hon. Helen Nakimuli from Kalangala Islands survived an accident. She and her colleagues were actually stuck in a boat the whole night in the middle of the lake and could not find any marine rescue. Last week, she also reported that her community members were stuck in the water the entire night.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, we need to do a follow-up. In the Financial Year 2019/2020, this House voted funds for procurement of marine rescue boats. My quick search indicates that some boats were bought and personnel were recruited to operate them. They actually pick a salary and fuel, but nobody knows them and their rescue boats are invisible. Probably, the people on the lakes are sinners and cannot see them.

Kindly, between your office and mine, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, we need to follow-up who is eating that money. Are the boats actually there? Mr Speaker, there is a problem on marine security that requires real follow-up, otherwise, accidents of that nature are going to be very rampant.

Two is the issue of police accommodation. I think all of us must be ashamed as to what the police go through. One ominous issue I want to invite the Prime Minister to take interest in, is that once a police officer is deployed in the irregular barracks, you have to buy a plot in the barracks. You buy a plot, but whom you pay to, the heavens know. When you buy a plot, you put up your “*manyata”* for your family, but when leaving, you must leave it there; you cannot sell it to the new person coming.

Prime Minister, you need to investigate whether that money goes to the Consolidated Fund and Hon. Kasaija is appropriating some of it or whether it is non-tax revenue (NTR) and it goes somewhere. It is a reality. Find out from any police person; they will tell you: “You have to buy a plot.” Whom you pay to, we need to find out.

However, the long and short of it is that, at least, this Parliament should make a difference to the police. It is a shame to all of us and we need to do something about it. Nobody should tell us that the money is not available. It is available to do a lot of things, including birthday parties, in this country. We can find money for our police. Thank you.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, Honourable Leader of the Opposition. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, if you have your copy of the Order Paper, I have seen you have managed to respond to at least two questions, which have been pending under the questions for urgent response.

When we have questions for urgent response lasting over a month or two months, it defeats logic. It clogs our Order Paper and we look bad and shabby, as a House. Therefore, next Thursday, Clerk, extract all these urgent questions. I think they are around six. The Prime Minister can answer any question. They are directed to the ministers. Let them channel their answers through the Prime Minister. I am very sure it will not breach any rules. At least now she has answered four or five questions and the rules say 15 questions and 45 minutes.

Next Thursday, let us clear all these urgent questions so that they get off our Order Paper so that it does not look bulky and Members say we are not answering their questions.

4.26

**Ms sarah opendi (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Mr Speaker – also the pending motions. We have a motion on the Order Paper. Schools opened in February. We brought that motion on the pregnant girls. Schools have opened for second term and the motion is still there. Can that motion also be dealt with?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Should we also give it to the Prime Minister?

**Ms opendi:** No, I am requesting that, that motion also finds its way on the Order Paper.

**The Deputy Speaker:** We are going to handle that, as presiding officers. I just wanted the Prime Minister to answer these urgent questions. We will sort them out.

Clerk, please, no urgent question should last more than a week without us having an answer. If the minister cannot answer, let us know they have failed. An urgent question cannot be here for three months. It loses meaning.

motion for A resolution of Parliament urging government to urgently operationaliSe the Road Fund

**The Deputy Speaker:** Thank you, colleagues. On this motion, we had two conflicting opinions. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has been moving under Section 30 of the Public Finance Management Act yet we are saying that under Article 153 of the Constitution, we have to move this way with the Consolidated Fund.

Therefore, I felt, at that time, that a minister who feels he is legally moving right and has not been guided by the Attorney-General, would not be comfortable continuing and responding to our issues. I gave him an offer to first go and consult the Attorney-General. He said he would update us and then we resume our debate, depending on the response we get. Honourable minister, were you guided by the Attorney-General?

4.27

**The Minister Of Finance, Planning and Economic Development (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, I got the response. I do not know whether I should read it or lay it before Parliament.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Read and thereafter - you don’t need to read all of it because it refers to cases and all that. Mainly, we are interested in the introduction and conclusion.

**Mr kasaija:** The introduction –

**The Deputy Speaker:** Clerk, you will capture the whole opinion in our *Hansard* so that future readers can read.

**Mr MATIA kasaija:** Mr Speaker, I wrote to the Attorney-General and this is how he has responded. He says, “Our understanding is that you wish to be specifically advised as to whether the existence of the two funds mentioned in the caption is in contravention of Article 153 of the Constitution…”

What is the subject matter? It is the Uganda Road Fund Act and the Tree Fund Act. He concludes as follows – without having to go into details:

“…the interpretation of Section (30) of the Public Finance Management Act must be made with the provisions of Article 153(2) of our Constitution in mind and not in isolation of the other relevant provisions of the same Act.

In a nutshell, it is our opinion, from all above, that the law allows for creation of other funds aside from the Consolidated Fund.

It is also important to note that the other funds have to be creatures of Acts of Parliament for purposes, as may be specified in the provisions of those Acts of Parliament.”

In other words, we are saying that we can create a fund - Parliament has the authority to create a fund, but when you create it, it must be through an Act of Parliament. I submit.

**The Deputy Speaker:** In short, honourable minister, are you saying that the funds, which were created - the Uganda Road Fund and all others under Acts of Parliament – from now onwards, with that opinion, are you going to implement them? That is what we need to hear, as the House.

**Mr MATIA kasaija:** Absolutely. Now that the legal issue has been sorted out for me, we shall definitely implement them. *(Applause)* On that score, can I lay it?

**The Deputy Speaker:** Please, lay it on the Table. Leader of the Opposition, did you want to say something?

**Mr MATIA kasaija:** Mr Speaker, I beg to lay.

4.31

**The leader of the opposition (Mr Mathias Mpuuga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister, particularly, the learned Attorney-General, in absentia, for that opinion. I had actually made an elaborate submission on the subject matter in the same line. I do not know why the minister had to really labour a lot, but I am glad he has made a concession. We need to move that way. The issue is to prioritise and make sure that these funds are actually operationalised because they are constitutional and are particular Acts of Parliament. I have nothing useful to add.

**The Deputy Speaker:** Colleagues, our major issue is; the minister for works is saying there is no budget for roads, yet we know there is a road fund, which finance has been denying money, yet the source is prescribed by law and the money is available.

The minister has been saying: “No, Section (30) of the Public Finance Management Act allowed us to collapse all funds into the Consolidated Fund, apart from the Petroleum Fund.” This means we also have to go and clear that part of the law. We have to amend the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 and put it in line with the Constitution, especially with that opinion of the Attorney-General, which he has said it contradicts.

Therefore, what we need is money.

Hon. Nathan Byanyima and colleagues, with this submission, I do not know what we should be adding on this; it is a very straight forward matter. However, for the Member who moved the establishment of the Uganda Road Fund, it is very important for us to give him a minute. He was the seconder and then the mover of the motion will guide him whether he feels satisfied.

4.34

**MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was at pain for some time because we laboured and I think it is high time we respected the decorum of this Parliament. When we talk of something, let us do it. We are not doing it for ourselves, but for the whole nation. It is unfortunate - Hon. Kasaija and Hon. Mukasa Muruli are two historical members of this House and the party. They are the people who came in here in 1985 and the roads were in bad shape.

In 2004, we had a road conference in Uganda and all the donors from all over the world came and let me quote one of the European Union leaders who said, “It is unfortunate that the Ugandan Government has relegated road maintenance to the backseat of the vehicle.”

What does it mean? It meant that we no longer cared. We were only after making as many kilometres of tarmack roads, but we did not march with maintenance. It is very unfortunate. I can quote, Hon. Kasaija, when Hon. John Byabagambi was the Minister of Works and Transport, he took the trouble - and we sat for so many nights and wrote a document to the President.

What does it say, briefly? From the research we had made in some of these countries and in the region, Uganda had the highest percentage of new roads: putting a lot of money in making roads, but with a smaller percentage of maintenance. You can imagine Uganda is at 87 per cent, but maintenance is only at 18 per cent. South Africa is at 3 per cent, but 87 per cent is maintenance. Kenya is at 18 per cent, but maintenance is at 82 per cent. This paper will be laid on the Table.

One time I sat with Hon. Matia Kasaija in his office. I said the Ninth Parliament or the Tenth Parliament put Shs 100 levy on fuel on top of the Excise Duty on fuel that Government takes. How much do we come to? He is a good person, by the way, and I respect him. The man came with figures of Shs 1.2 trillion for road maintenance and we had agreed that if we do not operationalise this Road Fund Act, which I will lay on the Table, but of course, it is available, we are supposed to have been adding like Shs 500 billion annually.

At the end of the day, we would be lending even to Government because that money would be enough for our roads. The more you continue tarmacking roads, the more it becomes very expensive for maintenance if you do not maintain them. That is very clear.

However, it is unfortunate that Hon. Kasaija is a good listener, but I do not see things taking place. Equally with Hon. Muruli Mukasa, he is a historical here and he is on top of merging: taking REA to natural resources; people are stuck. These Members will come back to Parliament if their roads are done.*(Applause)* I was in Parliament consecutively for three times and I happen to have been a chairperson for all these years, but roads were being done and I used to care for other Members of Parliament.

However, if we do not work on our roads: community access roads and district roads, even the votes that you are talking about, the noise that is around all over the country, we shall go in for lunch at dinner time.

Mr Speaker, there are no longer jokes about roads. It is a mandate of Government. As we talk, in the Kenya National Assembly, Kenyatta is trying to get authority to borrow money from the Kenya Roads Fund Board –*(Interjections)*- they have already borrowed.

To us, that money is a lot. Imagine we have about 137 districts and if you gave them Shs 200 billion, do you know what it means? Who would be home and dry? The issue is that Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, you have never cared about road maintenance. *(Applause)*

And unfortunately, the saga that came about the Uganda Road Fund, he was not there. It was Dr Ezra Suruma. Mr Speaker, I had to undress him politically on this Floor for him to take the paper to Cabinet. That is how bad it was. It was just a Muteso young man in office who whispered to me that papers had gone to Cabinet and they were moved because somebody said, “the Road Fund will be over my grave.” Nobody wanted it.

So, the Uganda Road Fund is for only routine and periodic maintenance for public roads. The money is strictly for maintenance. On the board of the Road Fund, there are passenger transport people and freight forwarders and engineers. What did they intend to do? It was because while the users of the vehicles will pay money on the fuel, the roads will be good for their vehicles. Currently, ask any Member here, you will notice that everybody is crying about roads.

Mr Speaker, now that the minister has said that there is nothing about the law, it is very clear. Members, let this Act be uploaded. I have given him a copy of this letter. Let him read it. It has a lot of history.

By the time Government came in, we had about 600 or 1,000 kilometres of tarmac roads. Now we are talking of 6,000 kilometres. Go back and look between Soroti and Lira. What is happening now?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. I think I have given you enough time.

**MR BYANYIMA:** Let me wind up, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Members, I am not opening this for debate. What the Attorney-General has done settles the matter because your debate was to urge that they give the money but the Attorney-General has said, give, and the minister has said we are going to start giving.

So, what we need to do, as a House, is to ensure that in the coming budget, money for the Uganda Road Fund, is in because it is very clear.

**MR BYANYIMA:** To wind up, as we talk, all the contractors in this country are demanding Shs 500 billion from UNRA and it is attracting Shs 240 million per day.

Why don't we get this money quickly and pay the contractors and start on a clean slate? Members, I beg that we support this move and the Uganda Road Fund becomes – even if you want to bring a *Muzungu* from America to control that money if you do not trust any Ugandan, let somebody be there, but let the money also be there to maintain all our roads. I thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Sarah Opendi, the mover. I have only allowed the seconder and the mover.

4.41

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank you for your leadership because this is a victory not only for the mover of this motion, but for the country as a whole.

As I said when I moved this motion, the Road Fund Act was enacted in 2008 and it is 14 years, yet Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development has been adamant in having regulations to operationalise this Road Fund Act.

Section 49 of the Act is very clear and states that the minister shall come up with regulations in consultation with the board and the Minister of Works and Transport. So, Mr Speaker, the many road accidents that we are seeing on the road is because of partially poor roads. We will definitely reduce the road accidents and even in our communities, we are talking about these big ones, but when you go to the villages, there are *boda boda* accidents. As they dodge potholes, they cause accidents.

Most importantly, the road network, once constructed, should be taken as an asset because huge sums of money are put on these roads. Once you have an asset, you have to protect it. Road maintenance would go a long way in protecting the infrastructure that Government has put.

I want to thank the Attorney-General, despite being away, for his response. My motion is specific, to ask – *(Interruption)*

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker and honourable member, for giving way. The information I am giving the honourable member is that in the Uganda Road Fund Act, there is a provision in it that the excesses they get in the money collected can even be used as investment, as a road fund, to get more sources of money to work on roads.

One time I was speaking with one of the ministers and he told me that the best opportunity Uganda had from South Sudan was to take our money there – like UNRA going there to construct roads. We would have got a lot of money.

What is failing this road fund is that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development refused to remit funds directly as per all the collections. Under the collection, they say any money you get from the sale of fuel, there is a percentage that is supposed to go directly to the Uganda Road Fund.

After getting that money, they are supposed to use that money to – I would ask the Members to take time and read the Uganda Road Fund Act properly. It is one of the best laws we have that would solve problems of our roads.

Mr Speaker, these people must tell us why they have been failing to remit funds-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No. Hon. Ssewungu, that is what they have sorted. When Hon. Kasaija was speaking, you were not here. He said from now onwards, he is going to comply with the law. *(Applause)* And we shall hold him accountable.

**MS OPENDI:** Mr Speaker, I would like to end by requesting that my prayers are fully implemented by the minister, one of which is that the minister should operationalise the road fund in accordance with section 49 of the Act by end the of this financial year. This is so that come July 2022, all the monies collected, as clearly stated in section 21 of the Road Fund Act, are remitted directly to this road fund.

Secondly, the minister responsible for finance should ensure that funds collected by the Uganda Revenue Authority as road user charges are remitted directly to the fund as stipulated in section 21(3).

My last prayer is that the minister lays before this House, by June, the regulations of the operationalisation of the road fund. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, I now put the question that a motion for a resolution of Parliament urging Government to urgently operationalise the road fund be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Motion, adopted.*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, what this means is that – you do not have any contradictory information. Now, if you do not have contradictory information, why do we sit here and repeat ourselves? Let us learn to move quickly; and you do not need to speak on every matter.

What this means is – honourable minister, I know you are bringing corrigenda to this House; this means you have to go back and review your own corrigenda. The money, which you were taking somewhere else, now has to go to the road fund.

Committee on Physical Infrastructure, please, the money for the road fund has to be money for the road fund. *(Applause)* Let us do our research and do estimates. If they put in little, we will be able to follow up.

Minister of Works and Transport, when this happens, we have now eased your work. He has spoken. I do not want the minister to be –

Colleagues, this also sorts out the same issue for the tree fund. The Attorney-General addressed both matters. I am going to allow the mover of the motion on the Tree Fund to just move it so that it goes on the record of Parliament since it was already on the Order Paper. Let us have just the mover and one seconder because the issue is already sorted. This is so that it goes on the *Hansard* and we move on.

**MS ALUM:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to know whether we are proceeding well. Yesterday, there was a question raised by a Member of Parliament concerning the money for the roads which was not submitted for the subcounties and the town councils.

Mr Speaker, you directed that today, the minister would come and that we were going to discuss that fund. Even in my district, there are subcounties which did not receive money for the third and fourth quarters.

Most of our equipment are grounded. I would like to thank the minister who has said that come July – next financial year – we shall be receiving this money for the road fund.

Mr Speaker, my procedural point is, from now up to the next financial year which starts in July, with us having very many impassable roads, what is going to happen? Our people cannot move. The equipment cannot work and the money is not there. I thought that it would be procedurally right for the minister to let us know what is going to happen in the most immediate time before the next financial year.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is very important, honourable member. Honourable minister, the Member is very clear. I do not need to repeat what she has said.

4.50

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. You are spot on. Yes, she is right because you can have your tarmac roads, but if the access roads are impassable, then you are doing nothing, particularly in the context of trying to make sure that everybody gets into the money economy.

I would like to ask your permission, Mr Speaker, that I come back here next week to tell the House and the country how we are going to operationalise what we agreed upon. This is because I cannot take a decision now. I have to talk to my technical officers and make consultations and then I will come back here next week.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Would Wednesday be appropriate?

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Yes, Wednesday would be appropriate.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I think that is very fair. Thank you, honourable member, for raising that matter.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION OF PARLIAMENT URGING GOVERNMENT TO OPERATIONALISE THE TREE FUND TO FACILITATE THE PROMOTION OF TREE PLANTING AND GROWING AT NATIONAL AND LOCAL LEVEL

4.52

**MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I move under rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament to state this motion.

Motion for a resolution of Parliament urging Government to operationalise the tree fund to facilitate the promotion of tree planting and growing at national and local level.

*“WHEREAS Objective XIII of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy enjoins Government to protect important natural resources, including land, water, wetlands, fauna and flora on behalf of the people of Uganda;*

*AND WHEREAS Objective XXVII(i) of the National Objectives and Directive Principles of State Policy implores the State to promote sustainable development and public awareness of the need to manage land, air, water resources in a balanced and sustainable manner for the present and future generations;*

*AWARE that Article 39 of the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda grants every Ugandan a right to a clean and healthy environment;*

*ACKNOWLEDGING the contribution of trees in combating climate change and to the realisation of a clean and healthy environment through absorption of pollutant gases, provision of oxygen, cooling the temperature, curbing water pollution, provision of food and medicinal herbs, provision of habitats for animals, among others;*

*CONCERNED that according to a 20l4 research by ACORD, Policy Briefing Paper Series No.29, Uganda was one of the countries that was losing forest cover at a very alarming rate and within a period of l5 years, from l990, Uganda’s forest cover had reduced by approximately, l.3 hectares which represented an average annual deforestation rate of 1.8 per cent and in less than 20 years, Uganda had lost about 25 per cent of its forest cover;*

*FURTHER CONCERNED that forests and trees are experiencing more pressure than ever as demand for food, human settlement, wood and fuel grows, yet efforts have not been made to secure sustainability of forests and trees through programmes that facilitate continuous tree-planting and growing;*

*NOTING that section 39 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 grants the Minister responsible for forestry or a district council, powers to issue directions for the planting and growing of trees, including directing persons to undertake tree-planting, the frequency of tree-planting and the days on which tree-planting is mandatory and the specifications of tree-planting to be undertaken;*

*AWARE that one of the major challenges affecting the restoration of forest cover and promotion of tree-planting and growing is inadequate funding, which incapacitates the implementation of tree-planting and growing programmes;*

*FURTHER AWARE that despite the establishment of the Tree Fund under Section 40 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 with the objective of facilitating the promotion of tree-planting and growing of national local level and supporting tree-planting and growing efforts of non-commercial nature for the benefit of the public, the Tree Fund has never been operationalised;*

*COGNISANT of the resolution of the UN Climate Change Conference of the Parties (COP26), 2021 to reverse deforestation by 2030 and the UN Sustainable Development Goal No.13 on climate action under which, Member States are called upon to take urgent action to combat climate change and its impact by 2030;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by Parliament that; Government operationalises the Tree Fund to facilitate the issuance of directions for the planting and growing of trees in accordance with Section 39 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003.”*

I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. Is the motion seconded? *(Members rose\_)* The motion is seconded by the whole House. This is very straight because the minister has already conceded to it, although we shall also need him to come on the Floor specifically on the Tree Fund. I will allow the seconders two minutes each.

4.58

**MR LAWRENCE SONGA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Minister of Finance and the Attorney-General, for accepting this position. However, I also want to correct the data which the mover of the motion has given, that Uganda lost forests at an alarming rate between 2001 and 2020.

The figure is 918,000 hectares not 1.3 hectares, which is equivalent to 12 per cent and it is equivalent to 413 metric tonnes of carbon dioxide emission - and that is what is causing climate change.

However, I am grateful that this motion was brought and I second it because climate change disasters are increasing and the rate at which our forests are getting lost is increasing, yet forests help us to make profit, prosperity, and they protect the planet and promote peace in the world.

Forests affect all sectors of the economy; we get energy from forests, tourism is thriving because of forests, agriculture, food security, health and the economy.

We need a long-term fund; our forests are getting lost is because we do not have sustainable funds, yet we have many donors who are willing to give money to this Tree Fund. Therefore, to reverse this, in 2003, the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act was enacted. It came into force on 8 August 2003 and Section 40 created the Tree Fund.

The purpose is to promote tree-planting and growing at national to local level. You are aware the National Forestry Authority is only managing 506 central forest reserves, but we need funds to plant at community level, under the district forestry services and the public land.

This fund will guide that and in 2008, Cabinet approved this, the delay was basically on four reasons;

1. In 2006, there was restructuring for the Ministry of Water, Land and Environment. It became the Ministry of Water and Environment.
2. The creation of the National Forestry Authority, but as I told you, it is only managing 506 forest reserves.
3. There was the shift by Ministry of Finance from a letter written by the former Permanent Secretary/Secretary to the Treasury that the Public Finance Management Act was against this.
4. The limited political push at the Ministry of Water and Environment.

However, I would like to categorically state that the shift by the Public Finance Management Act - based on that letter in 2012 - did not repeal the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act and clause 27 of the Public Finance Management Act gives power to create special funds and it does not affect the existing funds like the Road Fund, Tree Fund and the Environment Fund.

There was also political will, I remember very well in 2014 during the drought resistant summit, the President himself echoed that there should be a fund to support forests and wetlands.

There are donors that are specifically interested in giving funds to the Tree Fund and this will provide a long-term sustainable investment and funding and will also promote accountability, supplement the poor funding and also help to deal with the challenges facing the economy.

Therefore, I stand here to support the motion that the Tree Fund be operationalised.

Also, the environmental levies, as an amendment to that motion, be passed at once, because the sources of these funds will come from the environment levies. I beg to submit. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable member. Colleagues, I do not know why you are laboring much. This is a motion that urges and that is what I was sharing with Hon. Angura.

The Attorney-General’s letter has covered clearly all funds, as per Article 153 of the Constitution and Section 29 of the Public Finance Management Act - all funds created under that. The National Environment Fund, which you are talking about, is also created under Section 32 of the National Environment Act; so, it is part of all those.

Whether the fund has been brought here or not, or whether we have a motion here or not, the Attorney-General’s letter is covering all funds that are created by Acts of Parliament. *(Applause)* So, I felt that clarification needs to be made so that we avoid –

Honourable member, I will allow you to conclude on this matter because you are the Shadow Minister of Energy and Minerals. I will allow Hon. Joanne Okia, two minutes to conclude.

5.04

**MS JOANNE ANIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Madi-Okollo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to second the motion, urging Government to operationalise the Tree Fund to facilitate the planting and growing of trees at both local and national level. We all know the benefits of trees and tree cover, as stipulated by the mover of the motion. I am not going to go into the details.

Mr Speaker, several times, colleagues rise on issues of national importance because of roofs which have flown off buildings of institutions and schools. This issue can easily be solved, if there is a programme or some kind of guidance given for tree planting, whenever there is an institution like a school, which is built or even those which already exist.

I support this motion strongly. Also, the Office of the Prime Minister would not be running around solving issues which could be easily solved by planting trees. So, I second this motion and I thank you.

5.05

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I start –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** These are seconders. If you have a copy of the motion, you will see the seconders on the last page so they are the ones I am reading.

**MS ALUM:** As I second the motion, Mr Speaker, we are known to have very good laws, but the implementation is lacking. When you go to the districts, you will find out that there are officers in charge of the environment and planting trees, but these offices have very little money. I am happy that today, the Attorney-General, through the Minister of Finance, has really accepted that going forward, we are going to have this fund.

Mr Speaker, Uganda is a fast-growing country and because of that, the population is putting a lot of pressure on trees for fuel and settlement. It is only prudent that we follow it up by planting trees.

As I stand to second this motion - and with the Minister of Finance present, I would like to state that the issue of the environment is key and a priority in the global agenda. For that reason, Mr Speaker, I would like to note that we need to make it a cross cutting issue. For example, we are constructing roads, but I have never seen, in Uganda, where a road is constructed and we have planted trees along these fast-developing roads. *(Applause)* This would be a very good way of planting trees.

Going forward, we should borrow a leaf from other countries. When you go to very many – even in desert countries like Dubai – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude, honourable member.

**MS ALUM:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to conclude. I was saying that in very many big cities, even in desert countries like Dubai, you will find trees planted along the roads. Infrastructural development always has a component of tree planting.

I want to beg that as a country, we borrow a leaf from these countries which do not just talk or have laws, but also implement. I want to thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable member. I am concluding with the shadow minister, Hon. Christine Kaaya. This is a straightforward matter, honourable member. Your submission will not add any value; it is already concluded.

5.10

**MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I had, first of all, requested to present a procedural matter.

Section 40 of the National Forestry and Tree Planting Act, 2003 mandated the minister in charge of forestry to ensure that this Fund is operationalised. However, the way we are grilling the Minister of Finance - we anticipated and expected the minister in charge of forestry to give us an update, as far as operationalisation of this Fund is concerned.

We also looked at the period - 20 years down the road without the implementation of this Fund. Why is it that 20 years down the road, this Fund has not been operationalised? We expected the motion to bring out those issues. Probably, there are issues that need to beef up this motion, by a relevant committee.

As the minister operationalises the finance part of it, it should come out clearly on fulfilling some of the gaps because the climate change challenges 20 years back are not the current challenges. So, we need to update this, especially on the operationalisation, as we receive the funding. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I now put the question that the motion for a resolution of Parliament, urging Government to operationalise the Tree Fund to facilitate the promotion of tree planting and growing at national and local level, be adopted by this House.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Motion adopted.*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you are going to give us money so that we have trees everywhere. Honourable minister, do you want to say something on this? You know, trees are very important.

5.10

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The environment is very crucial; you cannot talk about an economy when the environment is being destroyed every day.

I am very passionate about forestry. When growing up, as a child – no, much later, in Kibaale where I come from, we were about 37 per cent forested. It rained and rained. It would begin at three o’clock in the morning and stop maybe at three o’clock in the afternoon. Today, that is history.

All the forests have virtually been cut. Wind comes and blows the houses, which I have been encouraging people to put up. It destroys all the banana and coffee plantations, which I have been encouraging people to do, with my colleague, Hon. Kugonza here. Now, where are we going? This is why I support this matter. *(Applause)*

Do not worry; money will come. Once there is a will, there is a way. Isn’t that not what the *Bazungu* say? This is not a joking matter, I am telling you. Every Ugandan must take this matter seriously because without protecting our wetlands, forests and hills, there will be no economy to talk about; that, I can tell you. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, I have committed myself. I will do everything I can to ensure we operationalise the Tree Fund. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Ithink, honourable minister, you have seen - you have two days during which – you can have a seat - you have been fully here, that is, last Thursday and today; we have achieved a lot for this country. *(Applause)* He has not eaten anything. I held him – you know, we have been on this matter, trying to call here and there so that he can have the comfort of coming here to give us answers that do add value.

Therefore, I would like to thank you for being with us today and for fulfilling the commitments you made on Thursday, last week. So, there are commitments you have made for Wednesday, next week. Please, do as you have done today. We shall be grateful as the House – and you have seen that we always miss you.

5.14

**MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Honourable Members, I would like to thank you for the support we have accorded to the amendment on the operationalisation of the Uganda Road Fund and the tree planting fund.

One constraint that we also need to address to enable the minister do his work effectively is to amend the URA Act. In one way or another, the former minister used to hide under that, that his hands were tied. That is because URA demands that they only collect for the Consolidated Fund, hence needing us to have an amendment to that particular clause - yes, like for the road fund and the tree planting fund. We need to be specific in amending that one. That is what I wanted to put on the record.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. The Attorney-General has been very clear; all those ones contradict Article 153 of the Constitution. In his opinion, Article 153 of the Constitution is very clear and that is a shared opinion.

I had also read and – I was sharing with the Leader of the Opposition here that I had come ready with my own ruling. Had they not been ready to give their side, as the Speaker, I was going to rule so that we move. *(Applause)*

So, I am very happy that we all had convergence. Whenever the Constitution is very clear, all other laws are just subordinate.

Regarding that issue, the minister will have to address it on Wednesday, when he is coming back on the operationalisation mechanism for these funds. That is when we should interrogate all those matters further.

Hon. Aza, what is the issue? I can see you are restless.

5.16

**MR TOM AZA (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Mine is in form of a question -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** To whom?

**MR ALERO:** To Government, represented by the Prime Minister, who is here. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That would be a matter of national importance.

**MR AZA:** Mr Speaker, when it comes to enforcement -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, Hon. Aza, please wait. You see, here, you don’t just wake up and say, “I have a question” or “mine is a question”. No, we have – and you are a senior.

We have questions provided for. It could have been under *–(Mr Aza rose\_)-* No, first sit. Under rules 49, 41, 45, and 42, you are allowed to ask, but in an orderly manner. Now, all of those questions either come by you giving notice or during my communication or during the Prime Minister’s Time, but not in the middle of the Order Paper.

So, I would like to guide you to prepare a question for Tuesday. I will give you an opportunity to ask that question, but within the rules. I am constrained by the rules.

RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS TO URGENT QUESTION ON THE IMPENDING EXPIRY OF NATIONAL IDENTITY CARDS

5.17

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi):** Mr Speaker, the question of the mass enrolment and renewal of National Identity Cards is a general information paper for the House, as instructed, following the question by Hon. Betty Naluyima, the Woman MP for Wakiso.

This paper is uploaded and I hope each one can go together with me as I read.

Introduction

The Ministry of Internal Affairs is mandated to ensure and maintain internal security, keep law and order, citizenship identification and preservation and protection –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, this is a statement on the roadmap for the 2024 mass enrolment and renewal of the National Identity (ID) Cards. So, when checking on *Alfresco*, please look for that.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** The National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) is a body under the Ministry of Internal Affairs and was established by the Registration of Persons Act 2015, with a mandate, among others, to register citizens and legal resident aliens and issue them with the national and alien identity cards.

The National Identity Card contributes to the promotion and protection of the law, order and specific components of internal security, as well as the realisation of lasting and sustainable peace, safety and stability as well as promotion of socio-economic transformation and development of the country.

The ministry will take the lead in the planned renewal of National Identity Cards, being complemented by other ministries, departments, agencies and local governments.

The background

Mr Speaker, in 2004, under Minute 34 (CT 2004), the Cabinet approved the setting up of a comprehensive national bio-data bank for easy access by Government institutions. This decision was emphasised in 2013 when the Cabinet, under minute 114 (CT 2013), restated the critical importance of having a national identification system that would be used for identification of persons, issuance of national identity cards, passports and security planning and service delivery.

A memorandum of understanding between key stakeholder institutions, namely; the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Electoral Commission, the Directorate of Citizenship and Immigration Control, the Uganda Registration Services Bureau, the National Information Technology Authority, the Uganda National Bureau of Statistics, the Ministry of Local Government, the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs, the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance and the Office of the President, was signed on 31 December 2013, to implement the project.

In the implementation framework, 10 ministries, departments and agencies were designated as participating MDAs, while six were designated as supporting MDAs. The project was implemented under a multi-sectoral approach with clear roles and responsibilities for each of the participating MDAs.

Each of the participating MDAs had defined roles and responsibilities in the execution of the project. The project had a governance structure, which included an inter-ministerial steering committee to provide strategic policy direction to the project, chaired by the Minister of Internal Affairs and with other participating MDAs.

After the successful implementation of the National Security Information System (NSIS) project, NIRA was established to consolidate and continue with the registration of persons for identification, issuance of national IDs and other subsequent functions, including renewal of national ID cards on a continuous basis.

It is against this background that the authority has governance and management structures established in the Registration of Persons Act, to deliver this mandate and will ensure that the mass renewal and the enrolment exercise of National Identification Cards is achieved.

Justification – some people may ask the question: why invest in a project that expires?

The justification of expiry and renewal of the national IDs is here covered.

1. Section 69(4) of the ROPA provides that a national identification card shall be valid for such time as the Minister shall prescribe by regulation. Under regulation 19(1) of the Registration of Persons Regulations SI 67/2015, a national identification card shall be valid for a period of 10 years from the date of issue and shall be renewable in accordance with the set regulations.

Furthermore, regulation 23(1) provides that a holder of a national identification card shall apply to the Authority in a prescribed form for renewal at least two months before the expiry of the card.

1. The first batch of national identity cards totalling to 15.8 million were printed and issued out during the National Security and Information Systems Project in the year 2014/2015 and will expire between August 2024 and June 2025, which justifies the requirement for renewal as stated in the legal provisions above.
2. The security features on the polycarbonate material used to make ID cards also deteriorates progressively and are severely compromised after 10 years. You can compare this to notes of currency.
3. Biometric features used in the identification significantly transform over time, for example, children getting IDs at 16 will look different at 26. NIRA seeks to take advantage of the strides in technology that will increase portability and verification to support global transactions.
4. Uganda has porous borders and is yet to attain 100% birth and death registration. The exercise will improve accuracy and credibility of the register for planning and improved service delivery.

The National Identification and Registration Authority shall, therefore, undertake a mass enrolment and renewal exercise beginning January 2023 using a multi-sectoral approach with the national technical task force, providing leadership for the exercise. Expected outcomes of the exercise will include the following in tandem with the NDPIII:

1. Registration of the remaining 17.2 million unregistered citizens;
2. Substitution of the national ID cards upon expiry in 2024 and upgrade of citizen national ID card to a smart card (e-ID) and creation of personal digital identity;
3. Upgrade of the identification system and integration of the iris recognition biometric technology and DNA in the NIRA system;
4. Aliens’ registration; and
5. Substitution of aged registration kits and implementation of business continuity for the national security and identification system.

The scope of the exercise

The Authority plans to carry out a mass renewal and enrolment exercise from August 2023 to August 2025. The exercise will cover 70,626 villages countrywide, 10,595 parishes, 2,184 sub counties and 146 districts. Subsequently, renewal and enrolment will be mainstreamed into activities of the rationalised entity. You know we are doing rationalisation of Government agencies.

The exercise will leverage on the Parish Development Model framework as its vehicle and will, therefore, recruit temporary staff to handle several activities. The projected temporary staff will be 141,252 at village level representing two staff per village. Every parish will have a supervisor and an overall coordinator at sub county level.

NIRA district staff will provide overall supervision, monitoring and reporting of the exercise. Each applicant renewing shall fill and sign a renewal Form 9 in accordance with regulation 23(1) of the Registration of Persons Regulations SI 67/2015. This information shall be verified against the existing information in the national identification register, after which a new card will be printed and issued. Persons enrolling for the first time shall feel Form 3 in accordance with regulation 10 of the Registration of Persons Regulations SI 67/2015. Pre-printed cards will be personalised and issued using portable printers.

During renewal, a proposed new digital card shall be printed and issued instantly to the respective person. The systems update/development and adjustment shall be done in conjunction with the Uganda Security Printing Company.

Proposed methodology

The exercise will be implemented by the Authority – “Authority” here means “NIRA”- through highly consultative processes that will involve key stakeholders under the following steps:

1. Massive enrolment approach
2. Assumptions
3. There are 17.2 million Ugandans who have never been registered with an average of 1,623 persons unregistered per parish. Of these, it is assumed that 50 per cent (812) are above 18 and 812 are below 18 years. Of the 812 below 18 years, it is assumed that 50 per cent are below seven years and therefore, will not have biometrics taken. It is assumed that urbanised areas may have up to 2,000 people per parish and rural areas between 800 to 1,000 persons;
4. The enrolment exercise is planned to happen over an eight-month period beginning January 2023. After this period, these services will be operationalised and delivered at the district level.
5. There are 146 districts and 10,594 parishes in Uganda. On average, each district has 73 parishes.
6. Enrolment will happen at each parish in a rotational manner, with NIRA deploying 10 registration kits per parish per day.
7. Enrolment will happen Monday to Saturday - six working days. Therefore, to cover a district, 17 parishes will take 73 working days (approximately two and a half months.)
8. A kit will capture biometrics of six people per hour and 60 people per day. At a parish, 600 persons will be covered in a day. It will take three rounds to capture all the unregistered people in urban areas and two rounds in rural areas. This is because the biometrics for 400 people below seven years will not be taken.
9. Mass enrolment process
10. Unregistered Ugandans will use online services to pre-register and capture their bio data - I know this will beg the question, “We do not have these services in the rural areas.” The idea is to have those who are able to access IT services to do so and those who cannot will be reached at the parish and subcounty level - This will give rise to internet café-like businesses up to village level;
11. After capturing bio data, the applicant will print a QR encoded sheet of information they have captured at application. The QR encoding will hide the personal data in a format that can only be read by NIRA machines so as to protect personal information;
12. They will present their QR encoded application to the registration assistant who will visit the parish. This is to reduce time taken for by data capture;
13. The registration assistant will scan the QR encoded form and capture the biometrics of the applicant;
14. The applicants who qualify (16 and above) will receive cards in a separate issuance exercise at subcounty level in a period of 15 to 30 days; and
15. Applicants can track status of application using a short USSD code (\*216#) or through the NIRA website.
16. Mass renewal approach
17. Assumptions
18. There are 20 million Ugandans who wish to renew the IDs. Children under 16 years are not eligible for ID cards acquisition.
19. The renewal exercise will happen over a 12-month period beginning August 2023. After this period, these services will be operationalised and delivered at district level.
20. There are 146 districts and 10,594 parishes in Uganda. On average, each district has 73 parishes and 1,887 persons seeking renewal.

4) Renewal will happen at each parish in a rotational manner with NIRA deploying 10 registration kits per parish per day. Enrolment will happen Monday to Saturday, making it six working days. Thereafter, to cover districts with 73 parishes will take 73 working days approximately two and a half months.

5) A kit will capture biometrics of l0 people per hour and 80 people per day. At a parish, 800 persons will be covered in one day. It will take three rounds to capture all the unregistered people in urban areas and two rounds in the rural areas.

Mass renewal process

1. Ugandans renewing IDs will apply using online services to renew.

2. The applicant will print a QR encoded sheet of information of the application to renew.

3. They will present their QR encoded application to a registration assistant who will visit a parish. This is to reduce time taken for bio data capture.

4. The registration assistant will scan the QR encoded form, and re-take the biometrics of the applicant to cater for changes in his biometric capture.

5. Cards will be issued at subcounty level in a period of I5 to 30 days.

6. Applicants can track status of application using a short code (\*216#)

Certainly, there are financial implications for this exercise because it is not cost neutral. The financial cost estimates of the mass renewal and enrolment exercise will cost – this one was not supposed to appear here, this was just a consecutive guess and this is yet to be approved by Cabinet. Sorry for that omission, but the financial implications of the exercise, as I intended to present them, are in that small table:

1. These will cover the costs for new national identification system software, hardware card personalisation, equipment and maintenance and support to be provided by Uganda Security Printing Company. On that, my remark is that the submitted estimates are still under scrutiny for viability vis-a-vis the expected revenues and system efficacy, including considering local content in the development of the intellectual property. These will have to be considered by Cabinet before presentation to this House.
2. There is a cost regarding stakeholder engagement, communication, operation and attendant costs for the mass renewal and enrolment exercise. Please, ignore that figure because it is still being worked out.

The exercise should potentially generate revenue for Government, the details of which are also being computed for capture in the overall financial implication of the exercise.

Note that for citizens who do not seek an express service, the full cost of the new card will be borne by Government.

Proposed roadmap

The roadmap leading to the issuance of the enhanced card is captured below. You can see in that table.

1. Approval of the renewal concept by the board of NIRA, the lead actor here is the chairperson of the board and directors – the timeline is September 2021.
2. Submission and approval of the concept note by honourable Minister of Internal Affairs, chairperson and NIRA board of directors are responsible. That too was done in October last year.
3. Submission of the Cabinet Memo (Concept Paper) to Cabinet. The minister has done so and it is before Parliament. We are yet to consider it, but it will soon be considered. It should have been done in March.
4. Approval of the Renewal Concept Note by Cabinet will be February to March.
5. Formation –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, it is not appropriate to tell us things of March when we are in May. So, go to May and then, tell us how you are expediting the rest.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** I am just drawing to you the plan as it was, Sir.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The dates are already passed. You are telling us February and March and we are in May. So, if they had no timeline –

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Anyway, I can skip to No. 10 - approval of the mass renewal budget that is under NIRA management and it should be concluded this month.

11. Business process gap analysis and re-engineering to cater new processes and desired process improvements. NIRA management should have been done by that time.

12. Requirements gathering, validation and documentation with stakeholders to generate functional systems and technical requirements, the lead actor is NIRA management and it should have been concluded between December 2021 and 2022.

13. Bench marking has been done. I think I can run to No. 17.

17. System development and integration, the timeline is May 2022 to June 2023.

18. User and system acceptance tests and integration and quality assurance. NIRA is responsible and USPC should be July 2023 to September 2023.

19. Data migration and system deployment, the actor is NIRA and USPC and the timeline is May 2023 to September 2023.

20. Card production and personalisation, data centre established should be October 2022 to September 2023. (*Members rose\_)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, the minister is still reading a statement.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:**  Procurement of bank cards, the lead actor is NIRA and USPC and the timeline is October 2022 to July 2023.

22. Pilot of the new system and card with selected stakeholder groupings before the mass enrolment, the timeline is August 2023 to December 2023.

23. Pre-renewal and enrolment activities – awareness, sensitisation, communication and stakeholder engagement, the timeline is February 2022 to January 2024.

23. Awareness campaign, change and communication strategic, communication, recruitment and training, development of manual and sensitisation materials, logistics support all fall in that bracket.

24. Actual enrolment of 17.2 million citizens without NINs, the responsible agency is NIRA and the timeline is January 2023 and August 2023.

25. Renewal and enrolment. Issuance of cards for those renewing, the responsible agency is NIRA and the timeline is August 2023. Last, continuous supervision and monitoring and quality assurance, the responsible agency is NIRA management and the timeline is October 2021 to August 2025.

Mr Speaker, this roadmap like you guided and observed, some of the items have been done while others have not. It has been presented for consideration and approval to Cabinet. It will eventually find its way to the Floor of this House for requisite funding because in this year’s Internal Affair’s ministerial policy statement, it is only captured as one of the unfunded priorities. Your support in the realisation of this plan is critical. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. The Member who asked the question, Hon. Betty Naluyima -

5.40

**MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We still need some clarification because whereas he has given the roadmap and much as it is clear, the funding will be sorted later, as we await the Cabinet to inform us. The matter still stands given that from 2021, the Ministry of Finance indicates to us that over 28 per cent Ugandans are still under the poverty line.

And we were told last time that renewal is now at Shs 50,000. To me, he has not yet answered. The people who are going to have this last renewal, are they going to pay or not, given that Ugandans are still poor? You mentioned that those who are registering for the first time are not going to pay unless they need express cards. The minister mentioned that the project is still expected to generate revenue. How are Ugandans catered for as far as renewal is concerned vis-à-vis the figure they have to pay? That is still my question. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, this exercise should not be a revenue generation exercise. Now, if you are making a national ID mandatory for whatever I am going to do, from banking to getting salary, then, you cannot again make it a revenue generation exercise.

So, I will allow a few colleagues. I have not been doing this, but I will allow Terego, followed by Hon. Bwanika. I have already picked three people this side and I will go this side after.

5.42

**MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me join the House in congratulating you. Since you took over that Chair, this is my maiden speech. I honestly congratulate you.

I just have one thing to ask; honourable minister, renewing the ID costs much. As if that is not enough, the delays are embarrassing, yet you cannot do anything without the IDs.

Many Ugandans are suffering. They cannot even get passports. There are those who are caught up abroad. They come, you go to the district, you take the photograph and you cannot get this. Can we expedite this and not make it a penalty to serve without a sentence? Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Dr Bwanika?

5.43

**DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The minister has indicated that NIRA is going to do fingerprinting - that is biometrics; that they are also going to do DNA profiling. Do you want to profile the blood of the people of Uganda? Is that so? - Because that would be unprecedented. DNA profiling is done on criminals. Do you want to keep the data of the entire population? Their DNA? Do you want to invade our privacy, our blood - as a Government, to keep DNA data on our people? That is against our privacy. That is against our human rights. I want clarity from the minister.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I am going to pick colleagues who have not spoken. They are the ones I am going to give the opportunity.

5.44

**MR JULIUS TUMUSIIME (Independent, Rwampara East County, Rwampara):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I commend the responses by the minister and also state that NIRA is doing a commendable job. However, there are a lot of gaps. Where I come from, we do not have a NIRA office like many other new districts. Yet, the demand for IDs across the young generation is immense.

I pray that Parliament supports NIRA; let us give them the necessary funding to expand and have all Ugandans registered. This is because the national ID has become so important that without it, one cannot transact anywhere. However, Honourable Minister, the issue of data sharing amongst institutions needs to be looked at carefully because we have the Immigration registering and capturing finger prints for young people, for example. Some of us have registered our children, yet these children do not have IDs. Is there a way such information can be transferred from Immigration and captured under NIRA so that we do not have our children going through all these long lines to register? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Dr Musa. I will conclude with the business class. I will pick one. Please, agree on one of you.

5.46

**DR MUSA NOAH (Independent, Koboko North County, Koboko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This being my maiden speech since your ascent to that position –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, that is the business class, the one of Milton is first class. So, the rest of us are in economy class*. (Laughter)*

**DR MUSA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. Since this is my first time to speak since the House entrusted you with this position, allow me join the rest of the colleagues to congratulate you for ascending to this position. I wish you the best of luck to deliver on this.

I would like to seek clarification from the minister on two issues. One is the issue of how this system is going to generate revenue for Government. Yet, at the same time in the report, the minister is indicating that citizens who are not going to be in a hurry to get their IDs, the cost of the new IDs will be borne by Government. You need to clarify how they are going to generate revenue.

The second thing is the timeline for beginning of the exercise. He indicated that at the parish level, the enrolment will start around January 2023, but I see in the schedule, the system development and integration is going to be in June 2023. How are we going to start at the parish level when we have not designed and developed the system? Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, even if it is one minute, let us be quick so that we give more colleagues an opportunity.

5.48

**MS MIDIUS NATUKUNDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also join my colleagues to congratulate you upon taking that Chair.

I thank the honourable minister for his statement and answering the questions about national IDs. Mine is about the students who were registered almost three years ago. Right now, they are being told to register again. They tell them that they no longer use that information and so, they should register again. They are now confused; should they go back to where they registered from? Should they go back to the homes they were in? I think there needs to be clarity on where they can go so that they register again.

On the issue of the presence of NIRA in our districts - Rukungiri is one of the biggest districts in the country, but we have got only two NIRA staff in the district. You can imagine from Nyakishenyi or Bwambara, transport costs you about Shs 30,000 on a *boda boda* to go to the district and then, they tell you “Come back tomorrow and do this or the other.”

I would suggest, if it is possible, to find some days and send these NIRA staff nearer to the people; to the subcounties. Put an announcement and they come and register them at places nearer to them. It would be a better service to our people. I thank you.

5.49

**MR SANON BWIIRE (NRM, Bulamogi County, Kaliro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement and updating us on what is going to be done. We still have many Ugandans who are poor. Right now, I am not poor, but there are Ugandans who cannot afford Shs 50,000 –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, can you prove that you are not poor? *(Laughter)*

**MR BWIIRE:** Mr Speaker, I am a Member of Parliament and I am not bankrupt.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** And you are putting on a bow tie and you can lay on Table. *(Laughter)*

**MR BWIIRE**: By the time you put on a bow tie, you are somewhere. *(Laughter)* Mr Speaker, when we commercialise the issuance of identity cards in Uganda, we are making it optional. This is because there are people who cannot even afford Shs 50,000 for a month.

The moment they charge Shs 50,000, they will make it optional, yet a national ID, as you, a security expert, you need it because you are going deeply into this and that and we really need that security detail such that our country is safe.

Why should Ugandans keep on paying for everything that comes their way? I think for the issue of the national identity card; Parliament allocates money to NIRA to make sure that they issue identity cards. Why should you again come up with those exorbitant fees to continue crippling Ugandans? I do not support this. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I want to first pick – my memory is not serving me right, there is an honourable member next to the Member for Kiruhura, then I come this side, and then, I will come back here. Do not mind.

5.51

**MR TOM AZA (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and my dear colleagues –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Let me tell you, if I was to go by the composition of this House, I would pick over 70 per cent from this side. That is if I was to go by that. I would end up suffocating you, honourable. I am trying to be fair. I am trying to reward colleagues who have stayed for long, but when I scan around, those ones who walk out, come back, and walk out again. We have loyal Members who do not move much and I am trying to pick those. *Mama Imat,* you are the most loyal member in this House. (*Applause*) This is not debatable. She was here by 2.00 p.m.

5.51

**MR TOM AZA (NRM, West Moyo County, Moyo)**: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, honourable minister, for your report. I have been keenly listening; you talked about porous borders. We have porous borders in Koboko, Yumbe, Moyo, Adjumani and issues of dual citizenship.

As I speak, there are Sudanese refugees who have registered both as Ugandans and Sudanese for issuance of a passport and national identity cards. Honourable minister, how will you guide on these? Can you involve grassroots leaders, especially the LCIs, IIs, IIIs, as well as the councillors?

Lastly, we have the issue of urban refugees who are scattered all over Arua City, Adjumani, Moyo, Koboko, Yumbe and they masquerade as true Ugandans and impersonate Ugandans. How will you guard against all these? Thank you.

5.53

**MR GEOFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East, Arua City)**: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the presentation. I was privileged to be one of the first NSIS coordinators in the first project, in Adjumani District and later worked in Koboko.

My experience was that we had an efficient and effective system in place that only needs to be improved. We do not need to design a new system. Designing a new system is going to be very costly to the taxpayers.

The biggest challenge the country is facing is accessibility to the processed cards. Currently, about 50 per cent of the 17 million cards that were produced are in the district headquarters’, but the last person in the village cannot access these cards.

The ministry should plan to have staff at the grassroots longer, other than being there for a short time. They can scale down the number of staff. Instead of having five staff in a parish, you can have three and these three can stay there for 100 days, than having 50 or 40 who are there only for one week.

A mother who cannot afford Shs 5,000, is required to travel to a district headquarter to spend Shs 15,000, but finds a very long queue, fails to access the identity card service and then, goes back. Many people have given up on accessing identity cards on account of distance.

Also, non-citizens accessing our identity cards is a security matter issue. In the districts, it is the RDCs and DISOs issuing orders that “This is our businessman from South Sudan, register him. This is our businessman from Congo, register him.” Good enough, the minister is in charge of police and security. It is important the component of coordination - Last time, PISOs) were recruited, but you would find a PISO receiving directives from the RDC saying “This is our businessman, register him”. So, the security component of accessing these IDs should be strengthened.

Lastly, is the issue of timely recruitment and facilitation. You recruit 100 staff, train, send them to the field to work, but they work for three months when they have not accessed Shs 50. It is possible that these staff can be compromised. They can take Shs 10,000 or 20,000 to gain access to the system. If we are going to kickstart the project, the money should be processed in time. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, we allowed you much time because of your experience. The people in the “business class” have agreed on who will speak and then, I go back to “economy.” People in economy should learn to be patient. *(Laughter)*

5.57

**MR POLYCARP OGWARI (Independent, Agule County, Pallisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. A national ID is a very important thing, like other colleagues have said. There is nothing much you can do in this country without a national ID.

I request the ministry to spread NIRA offices countrywide. There are some districts that have NIRA offices - Can all districts get NIRA offices? Like it has been mentioned, it is not economical for a poor man to travel all the way to Kampala or a certain distance to get a national ID.

What is the qualification to get a national ID? You find a foreigner with a national ID - and I know some who have our national identity cards. I was shocked to learn that some “bazungus” have our national IDs. What will happen when you have a national identity card? You are eligible to vote. My question to the minister is: what is the qualification of getting a national ID? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thought the people in business class had agreed and so, I will go with the Honourable Member who stood first. I do not get his name well – Hon. Richard, I know you. Allow me to pick the Member I do not know well.

5.59

**MR SIRAJI EZAMA (NRM, Aringa County, Yumbe):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Pertaining to the importance attached to the national ID, it is prudent that every Ugandan should have a national ID. When the exercise was carried out, up to date, some of the people who were captured on the database have not accessed their national IDs.

The exercise was taken to schools and pupils and students were enrolled into the system, but I do not understand why they were enrolled. Those who were aged to get the national ID have not got them. Why were those who were still underage, who did not have the opportunity to get the identity card enrolled? Yet, they are being demanded to capture their data again in order to get it?

There should be something very funny happening, which makes the process very expensive. At the end of the day, what money has been used for is not achieved. *(Hon. Richard Oseku rose\_)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, you have your time. If you take that, then you will not speak; I will not pick you. Hon. Siraji Ezama, proceed. I am going to pick Hon. Richard Oseku because I know he is very technical in these matters.

**MR EZAMA:** When the minister was presenting, a colossal sum of money, about Shs 400 billion, is being demanded to carry out the exercise. Mr Speaker, I see that the money is not worth to carry out the exercise. At least, the money should be broken down in order to ascertain how much is going towards this process and how much it is going to attain so that we also know that something we are going to approve in this Parliament should be what the exercise should take. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I share the views of the people of Aringa. *(Members rose\_)* Let us have Hon. Katabaazi and then Hon. Veronica Nanyondo. *(Member rose\_)* No, you have just come. Please, engineer, no. Please, please, please. *(Laughter)* I do not like Members who just come and want to submit immediately. Let us learn to come and be in this House, not just come. *(Applause)* Please, I will not tolerate that one when I am in this Chair.

Hon. Francis Katabaazi, then I will go to Hon. Veronica Nanyondo, MP for Busiro, then I go to Masindi and Kalangala. I have not yet picked the independents. So, I will pick him and also *Mama* in that order. Thank you.

Colleagues, if you see the Order Paper, this was an issue given only five minutes but because the minister brought a comprehensive statement, touching on her issues, I invoked rule 48 of the Rules of Procedure, where I can allow a few additional comments. So, let us do this quickly so that we allow others.

6.02

**MR FRANCIS KATABAAZI (NUP, Kalungu East County, Kalungu):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also take this opportunity to congratulate you upon rising to that office because it is my maiden speech since you became the Deputy Speaker.

This issue we are talking about, of IDs, I do not know, honourable minister, whether we are going to expire being Ugandans, after the expiry date. I have friends in nearby countries like Kenya, but they laugh at us and, say: “You people, are you going to expire afterwards?” You can imagine a national ID that has an expiry date.

I would like to seek a clarification about that because I think I have a remedy for it. It is better we go for what we call “the Personal Digital Identity”. I think you just get once and do not have to renew it because in renewing – there are some figures on the iPad, which you did not want us to see. It costs about Shs 430 billion, which was –*(Interjections)*- your time is coming, I think. *(Laughter)* Business Class –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You have two minutes, honourable member. If you decide to share it, it is up to you.

**MR KATABAAZI:** So, that figure, which came on the iPad – the financial implication – clearly shows this is a very expensive venture. You see, every year, there will be new people; many people will keep expiring, as Ugandans. I do not know. In fact, that bit of expiry; I just imagine when you are going to stand for MP or councillor on Friday and your –*(Member timed out.)*

6.05

**MS VERONICA NANYONDO (NUP, Woman Representative, Bukomansimbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement. I would like to bring to the attention of the minister that most of the NIRA offices are not working. When someone loses an ID or you want anything from the office, they always refer you to Kololo.

This brings a lot of congestion in Kololo, which leads to corruption. When someone spends the whole day there, he or she will be forced to see an officer and give him some money so that you bypass others. Can we make those offices to be working? Empower them so that they can also print national IDs, if possible, to avoid congestion. Thank you.

6.06

**MR CHARLES MATOVU (NUP, Busiro County South, Wakiso):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wanted us to address the issue of IDs with the Constitution. It spells out, in Chapter Three, from Articles 9 to 14, how one acquires citizenship. Like my colleague said, we hope our citizenship will not expire by virtue of an ID expiring.

With that, in regard to the ministerial regulation, I would request that these IDs do not expire until, probably, one dies and then, the renewal – these IDs should entirely be made free on the first registration. Perhaps, when you lose it, then you can fetch out a few coins to replace it.

I thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Kalangala?

6.07

**MS FLORENCE KABUGHO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kasese):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My name is Florence Kabugho, Woman MP Kasese District.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Oh, sorry, honourable member. You resemble the one of Kalangala. That is why you also quickly stood up. *(Laughter)*

**MS KABUGHO:** It is okay, Mr Speaker. You are not the first person to mention that. On behalf of the people of Kasese, I congratulate you upon your elevation to that top most seat of the 11th Parliament.

Mr Speaker, it is my prayer that Ugandans are given a privilege to enjoy their citizenship. This amount of money that is levied for the acquisition of the cards to be taken as a national, is, I think, too much for majority of Ugandans.

We are facing a challenge of high prices. We have just ended a lockdown, which left the economy crumbling and then, you ask Ugandans to pay for national IDs. Sincerely, let us look at the fact that most people cannot afford that money. Does it mean that the person who will not afford that money will not be a Ugandan?

I pray that the ministry looks into that issue. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.09

**MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, in your presentation, you have noted that for citizens who do not seek an express service, the full cost of the new card will be borne by Government. We need clarification on this. For those who will need express service, how much will they have to pay? You need to be specific on this.

Secondly, persons with disability, specifically those with no fingers or hands, face a lot of challenges during these activities. Most of them are denied such services. Honourable minister, you need to come and answer. This has to eppear clearly on the *Hansard* that these people with no fingers or hands should get such a service. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.10

**MR PATRICK MWESIGWA (Independent, Hoima East Division, Hoima City):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also want to join honourable colleagues in thanking the minister for the statement. However, honourable minister, my worry is on how you are going to deal –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, if you can, step away from the microphone so that you can be more audible.

**MR MWESIGWA:** Exactly. Honourable minister, my source of worry concerns the issue of moral decadence within the staff of your ministry. Believe me or not, morals among staff in Ministry of Internal Affairs, especially in NIRA, have decayed so much that the success of this programme depends very much on the extent to which you are able to stem this level of moral decadence.

There is a belief that most of the public services are private. They are public in word, but in the real sense, these staff get money for these services in order to carry the work for which they are paid.

Therefore, you need to go back on the drawing board and see how you are going to address this problem.

Hon. Veronica talked about the problem of corruption in the districts. I confirm that it is there. There is a lot of corruption at the districts, honourable Minister. Our poor people are being extorted for them to access offices of national ID and it is a big problem. I would like to appeal to the Minister to take this as very -*(Member timed out.*)

6.12

**MR MOSES ATTAN (FDC, Soroti East Division, Soroti City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to refer the House to Article 9 and read it verbatim. *“Every person who, on the commencement of this Constitution, is a citizen of Uganda, shall continue to be a citizen.”* Article 10, on citizenship by birth reads thus: *“The following persons shall be citizens of Uganda by birth: every person born in Uganda, one of whose parents or grandparents is or was a member of any of the indigenous communities existing and residing within the borders of Uganda, as at the first day of February 1926 and set out in the Third Schedule of this Constitution.”* We have citizenship by birth, citizenship by registration and citizenship by neutralisation.

And if I will refer to the duties of a citizen -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Member, your two minutes are going. You better -

**MR ATTAN:** Yes, I would like to bring this out clearly, regardless of my time running out. Let me talk about the duties of a citizen, particularly that I have to register for electoral and other lawful purposes.

I want to put myself in a situation where I have to register for electoral and other lawful purposes and the National ID is mandatory. I am not a citizen by registration or naturalisation; I am a citizen by birth. My National ID has expired, are we amending the Constitution?

Secondly, which –*(Member timed out.*)

6.14

**MR JULIUS EKUDO (FDC, Gweri County, Soroti):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is the 17 million people who do not have national IDs. I do not know how much time we shall need to cover that number. My prayer is that the ministry puts more manpower to cover this number. The process is very low. That is why you see those many questions; it is because of the process.

There is also the issue of shortage of passport books. Today, I was at Immigration - from Monday up to today, somebody seriously sick and supposed to travel to South Sudan cannot move because he has not got a passport. The process is slow, yet they are saying that the books are not available. This happens every year towards the end of the financial year. This needs to be corrected. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

6.15

**MR NABOTH NAMANYA (FDC, Rubabo County, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, I would like you to take note of the fact that NIRA staff do dubious work, which is illegal.

Please, take note that the staff in your office are dubiously changing biological sex through applications. Some people go and apply to change their name as well as the sex when for example, they are biologically men. I have documents backing this in my office and honourable minister, for clarity, let us have more interface about this issue.

In my view, this is an immense error and it is illegal. Therefore, honourable minister, you need to put your house right for us to trust that you are going to back up NIRA data in the right way and that it will not be misused.

If your staff illegally accept some people to change their sex, how can we be sure that they will store the DNA of Ugandans and that it will not be misused? I beg to submit. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think colleagues, we need to be cautious of the housemaids we are employing.*(Laughter)* People are changing their sex.

6.17

**MS ASINANSI NYAKATO (FDC, Woman Representative, Hoima City):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is six years down the road since some Ugandans were issued with identity cards with errors. These people paid the fee for the errors to be corrected, but to-date those national IDs have never been given back to the owners. Those people use letters from police and LCs in the place of their national IDs.

I would like to ask the minister to tell the House when his staff are going to correct the mistakes on people’s identity cards and more so, those ones who paid for those errors to be corrected.

Secondly, you said you are going to be testing DNA? How are you going to ensure the results are perfect because in some countries, scientists use eyelids not the fingerprints?

Are you going to be using eyelids of the people? Are you going to be using fingerprints? Are you going to be getting the blood samples for Ugandans? Which strategy are you going to use to do that?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, you said you would be charging around Shs 500,000 and that is a proposal for making changes. I do not know whether it is specifically for only age. Okay, you can answer that later. Otherwise, will the fee be only for age - because other changes will come.

For example, women usually take on their husbands’ names. So, would such a woman have made a mistake? No. So, if I go and I want to add on my husband’s name or even my wife’s name - people you are even changing sex.

6.19

**MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa)**: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I would like to pick it up from the question that has been on the table. The expression that is acceptable here is that issuance of national IDs should be entirely a Government programme and one hundred per cent borne by Government of Uganda.

Therefore, I think honourable minister, whatever the case, whether you are issuing a new one or doing renewal, let us agree that this should be the responsibility of Government and money for that will be appropriated by this House to facilitate every Ugandan to get a national ID.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, on the issue of errors, there are many poor Ugandans who are not benefiting from the Social Assistance Grant for Empowerment simply because of the age variance. You find somebody who is about 80 years of age, but their ID reads 46 years. These people are suffering and wandering, but nobody is helping them because of the rigid processes that are involved. Therefore, there is a need to deal with these corrections.

The other issue is that we are aware that in 2017, we embarked on an exercise to register learners. A whooping Shs 54 billion was invested and we registered over 10 million learners, out of which over 500,000 – *(Member timed out.)* Mr Speaker -

**The Deputy Speaker:** No, you cannot add yourself time. I am giving each Member a chance. We are already time-barred, but I felt we should do it.

6.21

**Mr KIIZA KENNETH NYENDWOHA (Independent, Bujenje County, Masindi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the Minister for the report. The National ID registration being a continuous process - my fear and prayer is that the ministry should interest themselves in strengthening and empowering their offices at district level. The challenge therein are of very many IDs lying idle. I would pray that the minister and the ministry interest themselves in why there are very many national IDs unpicked.

Another challenge we have has been with the change of particulars whereby the error has been made by NIRA staff, but then they end up putting it on the person who has registered for the ID. We pray that they can clear these anomalies since national registration is a continuous process. Thank you.

6.22

**Mr Lawrence songa (NRM, Ora County, Zombo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is a straight question. There are many IDs, especially of learners, that came up with errors, notably the date of birth. It was not their own making, but that of the NIRA staff. Do they need again to pay a lot of money or go to court? For example, my daughter was born on 13 July, but the ID came indicating 13 June. It was not her mistake. What advice can you give on that? Do they need to pay 500,000? What should they do?

6.23

**Mr Fredrick angura (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the Minister for the statement and request him to go back to his team. Plan well and let us be smarter this time when we are starting the renewal of IDs for all of us and the country at large.

Honourable Minister, like Hon. Oseku said, we have many of our old parents who are supposed to be beneficiaries of the SAGE funds, but some of them do not have IDs. Efforts have been made to try and see how they can even be supported to get those funds as you process their IDs. To-date, the money is being returned.

Then, Honourable Minister, you have talked about benchmarking. I think this should give us a lasting solution. I am neighbour with Kenya. My neighbours there have a system that is very fluid. It is a matter of a child being born today and tomorrow, an ID will have been issued. When it comes to renewal, you do not have this hullabaloo of running up and down –*(Applause)*

What are we borrowing from the benchmarking that our teams have gone for? I want this time to request, if it is the resources, you are at the right place. Come up with a substantive budget so that we can provide resources to make a lasting solution for this process to go uninterrupted - like we expect interruption again.

Lastly, people have talked about IDs not being picked. It is true very many IDs have not been picked. People are running up and down. They cannot locate where their IDs are. Can you sort that before we get to the next round? I thank you.

6.25

**Mr richard gafabusa (NRM, Bwamba County, Bundibugyo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Just two things, Honourable Minister. I think one area that you need to emphasise and invest in is the awareness-raising when we are in this process. What I know, for instance, is that if there are mistakes on the national ID and these are identified by the owner picking there and then, the ID should not taken. The details are captured and this person is not required to pay anything. That is what is supposed to happen. However, because many people do not know and because they have suffered along the way to get the national ID, when eventually it comes, many people are not bothered to cross-check the correctness of the information on it. Sometimes, the mistakes are discovered later on when they are using the ID. Therefore, we need a lot of sensitisation.

Secondly, on the issue of the expiry of the National ID, maybe the Minister should tell us the reasoning behind the 10 years that were given for the ID to expire. My thinking is that probably, it is because after some time, our faces change. If, for example, you took this photo when you are 20, after 10 years, probably physically, you have changed. Maybe, we need to renew with a new photo and therefore, a new ID. However, this should not be at the cost of citizens, but Government –*(Member timed out.)*

6.27

**Ms faith nakut (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to thank the Minister for the detailed report –

**The Deputy Speaker:** Sorry, honourable members. Your time is saved – I am trying to pick those who have not spoken today, they had not yet been given a chance. We all want to be on the *Hansard,* yet we do not have the time – it is not for the sake. Members are standing up. We usually do not have time and so, I want to ensure that I pick as many colleagues as possible.

Hon. Faith Nakut, your two minutes start now.

**Ms Nakut:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to thank the Minister for the detailed plan. I am sure that we have enough time to improve it. I have two issues to raise. One of them is on those who lose their IDs to natural causes. Those in my view should not be charged anything when they choose to replace their IDs. I represent people who are prone to wildfires every dry season. This year alone, we have 500 households that have lost their houses and everything, including national IDs.

I represent people who got attacked with this insecurity. We had criminals coming to houses and asking people for national IDs. That is beyond their control. It is my prayer that those ones be given new IDs at zero fees because it is not their wish to go through what they are going through.

Secondly, on the inefficiency of NIRA, I agree with colleagues that it has to be investigated. We need to look at it because the inefficiency makes everybody suffer. I know of people here in Kampala, who applied for renewal of IDs, two or three years ago and they have not yet got them. They cannot even open a bank account. Therefore, my prayer to you is to allow a committee to investigate the inefficiency in NIRA so that we can advise the ministry better on what they can do across the country. Referring people to other districts or regions is costly. The burden directly falls on us, the MPs, when –*(Member timed out.)*

**The Deputy Speaker:** Honourable member, on that matter you were requesting, the sectoral committee has that power. They have been processing - the moment we start creating special committees and all that, we are weakening sectoral committees. Let the sectoral committee look into issues of NIRA and then, it reports back to this House. *(Applause)*

One of the reasons I allowed all these comments is because the minister said he is going to Cabinet. Instead of him going there, they make a final decision then we come here when it is difficult for him to change, he had better get the input now. When he goes to Cabinet, he will be saying, “No, I interacted with MPs deeply and they contributed ABCD,” and they have a constructive engagement. Thank you so much.

6.31

**Mr william chemonges (NRM, Kween County, Kween):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to begin by asking a question. What is it that failed in the system that we are on now such that we are now coming up with changes? Ugandans have really suffered in getting these national IDs. When you pass at Kololo Ceremonial Ground at around 4.00 a.m., you find some Ugandans are already lining up just because they want to get national IDs.

When you go to passports office, the new place is now on Kyambogo Road. I live around there; people begin lining up at around 3.00 a.m. or 4.00 a.m. and the line is very long. This is just to process a passport.

Finally, I think Ugandans should get national IDs free of charge and it should begin from the day a child is born and renewal should be after 18 years. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. That is brilliant. Colleagues, I have around six minutes left and I am constrained by Rule 52(2), which allows a debate on such a statement, but it does not allow us to exceed one hour. And I can see we are about to make an hour.

6.32

**MR WILLIAM MUSEVENI (Independent, Buwekula South County, Mubende):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is on data entry clerks. During the last exercise, we had problems with them because of poor facilitation. Those people are the ones who are extorting money from the poor Ugandans. However, if you talked to them, they would tell you that they were not facilitated; “Our machines are down, we want fuel and you want IDs; what should we do?”

Then, the public would stealthily decide to pay to enable them buy fuel for generators for the machines to work. They took it as a chance and everywhere they could solicit for monies from the poor Ugandans who do not have money. I know there is a budget for that. Why should the monies remain in the big offices? People who are doing donkey work are not facilitated.

I beg the minister to take interest in this. This time round, look for a solution for that. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

6.33

**MR IDDI ISABIRYE (NRM, Bunya County South, Mayuge):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the statement.

There are issues that we need to look at; the issue of human resource development and recruitment as far as NIRA is concerned. NIRA offices always has many people lining up, including senior citizens. There are no seats and people struggle the whole day and some of them even leave without being worked on.

When you go to Kololo Ceremonial Ground, many Government agencies are using it for various activities. And once Kololo Ceremonial Ground is booked, these people who travel to go and get these national IDs are not worked on. They come from very far and spend the whole day, yet some of them do not have homes here in Kampala. This is a very important issue because at first, national IDs had been resisted. Honourable minister, when it was introduced here, actually, it made us Members of Parliament sensitise our people on the importance of national identity cards. Now that its importance can never be overemphasised, we should issue these national IDS free of charge. I do not see any reason why we should charge either for replacement or any other reason to spend money over national identity cards. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Twinobusingye –*(Hon. Kibalya rose\_)* No, Hon. Kibalya, you took a break and disappeared for over an hour and you have come back fresh. So, allow the tired ones to speak first. I was monitoring you when you were here and you disappeared and you have just entered.

6.35

**MS JOVANICE TWINOBUSINGYE (NRM, Woman Representative, Kiruhura):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the statement. My main concern is on university students, especially those who seek for the loan scheme. A national ID is one of the requirements that they need for them to access the loan scheme. Some of these students are denied the chance of getting the sponsorship and scholarships because of not having IDs. I would like to seek clarification from the minister on how these students are going to be helped because it is challenging our students to access the loan scheme and scholarships.

We have to emphasise the issue of delays; there is too much delay in registration. If the problem is human resource, we have our students who have a lot of time. If the problem is that we need to recruit, but we make the exercise so fast rather than delaying it. I submit, Mr Speaker.

6.37

**DR ABRAHAM ISAMAT (NRM, Kapir County, Ngora):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The issue of the ID is increasingly becoming a requirement and a qualification for any individual to get a service, especially in the formal sector.

Yesterday, I was in one of the banks and I had an ID. However, because of some urgent matter, when I left the bank, I forgot the ID in the vehicle. Upon going back, I realised that I had forgotten the ID and I was about to miss a service from that bank. I agree with other proposals that have been made - the issue of the ID should be free of charge. I am happy that the honourable minister, who has given us a very good statement here, is still around.

Most of us, as Members of Parliament, our constituents are demanding that we help them and pay money for the renewal of their IDs. So, let it be on record that as we conclude this matter, our position should be that IDs should be free of charge. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.38

**MR RICHARD WANDA (NRM, Bungokho Central County, Mbale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for a comprehensive statement made. I agree with the Members that the ID should be a right and it is also a requirement for every country to know its citizens. So, I believe a ministry should be concerned about having a database for its citizens. It happened during the COVID-19 time.

Mr Speaker, we did not have statistics about our people. So, if we have, as Hon. Chemonges suggested, from childhood, from birth, a child is entered into our national system. This will avoid intruders who come from everywhere and become Ugandans just by acquiring an ID. At the same time, as a country, I want us to take this opportunity first of all, it is not expiry, but rather a renewal. We should call it a renewal of details on the ID.

I request the honourable minister to take this opportunity to weed out non-Ugandans from our national register. There are foreigners –*(Interjection)* Yes, it is possible. They are foreigners who own our national IDs at the expense of Ugandans who cannot even afford to get them. So, this should be the opportunity to clean our database and remove non-Ugandans.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is that Hon. Ameede who is that in the corner? That is Hon. Kevin Ojinga. Let me give a chance to both of you. Let me give chance to both of you. They have not spoken. Hon. Acon, you spoke earlier. Honourable member, please, proceed.

6.41

**MS KEVIN OJINGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Pallisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to agree with the previous speakers on the issue of corruption in NIRA. I want to testify that recently, I tried to register one of my sons, who is supposed to sit Primary Leaving Examination (PLE). I visited NIRA and truly, these guys were not open about what they wanted.

I tried to follow the protocol, but someone told me, “My dear, if you want to be yourself, you are going to take months without being registered.” When I went back, I tried to call the guy and he said, “My idea, you have to do something, “*Kitu kidogo.”* Honourable Minister, you have to look into this matter seriously.

Another thing I want to tell the minister is that in his report, I did not hear him say whether there is any plan to relocate from Kololo. Sincerely, we are inconvenienced. Most of our people are inconvenienced. Someone travels from upcountry and we, the leaders, suffer because we are called to accommodate and provide transport for someone. Therefore, I pray and ask the honourable minister to look into the issue of relocating from Kololo in –*(Member timed out.)*

6.43

**MS SUSAN ABEJA (Independent, Woman Representative, Otuke):** Thank you. Mr Speaker, I would like to congratulate you. I would like to appreciate the minister for the report he has presented.

I always receive calls to give money to come to Kololo. Since NITA Uganda has been accorded a vote by Government of the Republic of Uganda –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** We are discussing NIRA.

**MS ABEJE:** I am talking about NITA Uganda that provides e-services. I would advise the minister and the ministry to utilise NITA Uganda. If they can centre these people in our districts, just to carry the IDs - but on documentary work, I think they can handle this. I thank you very much.

6.44

**MS STELLA ISODO (FDC, Woman Representative, Ngora):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Since this is my maiden speech before you, congratulations from the people of Ngora District. I would like to add my voice to what colleagues have already talked about and this is about accessibility to NIRA officials and the inadequate sensitisation.

In Teso Subregion, we have a regional office and so, if you have a major issue, you have to travel all the way from Ngora to Soroti. Now that the NIRA office has also been added another responsibility for the registration of births and deaths, I think the minister has to take note that we have to improve on sensitising people to understand, which procedure one needs to follow when one loses their ID, or renew it.

We have media houses, but I have not heard the officials going there to educate people. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. *Hajji* here might make me suffer. He has been here from 2.00 p.m. He even changed positions so that I see properly. *(Laughter)* Honourable member, raise your issue and then, Hon. Cecilia Ogwal will conclude. I had to punish him for changing positions. You have to remain where you are and an opportunity will come, honourable colleagues.

6.45

**MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luwero):** Thank you, Mr Speaker for the eye contact. Honourable minister, the issue of identity cards is critical for our people. Right now, it is the gateway for very many things, as other Members have noted.

I would like to point out one issue. It is an issue of coherence with the rules of the land. If you look at section 69(4) that you have quoted, “Registration of Persons”, it contradicts some Articles of the Constitution with regards to citizenship of the country. It is spelt out properly, who the citizen of the country should be. There is an issue of coherence with the rules that you have quoted. And most importantly, we are in a country, where there are very many people coming from other countries. Therefore, identification of nationals and non-nationals is very critical at this particular point, especially when it comes to issues of crime.

Coming up with conditions upon which we should give IDs for our citizens becomes problematic. You are going to find out that some citizens of Uganda do not have accessibility to IDs because of the conditions we have established as leaders. Those are the two things I wanted to point out. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Vice-Chairperson of the committee, I hope you have taken note of most of these issues. You can see we have done nearly one hour and a half because the issues you are raising here, you also represent me. We face the same issues.

Honourable minister, issues of corruption are still there and we know. In fact, you have tried to streamline passports, but national IDs - I was in London recently and I met one Ugandan who was extremely happy. He said “I got my passport in 14 days for the first time without me paying anyone to help me”. He said “I did it online” - The positive remarks are there. I have learnt that when you do something good, Ugandans appreciate it, but when you do something bad, - Hon. Cecilia Ogwal and then the minister.

6.48

**MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo):** Mr Speaker, it may be right also for me to say that Dokolo should record its congratulatory message to you, for assuming the office of the Deputy Speaker.

I have three issues to raise and I wish the minister takes note of them. It is purely a constitutional matter. Firstly, Article 9 of the Constitution says that by the time this Constitution came to effect - and if I recall, it was in October 1995, when the 1995 Constitution was promulgated and enacted.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** And you were there and you participated.

**MS CECILIA OGWAL:** Unfortunately, I did not sign because there were certain issues that were not resolved. By the time the Constitution came to effect, all of us, who were citizens at that time, are recognised by the Constitution as citizens under this Constitution.

Therefore, Mr Speaker, it is my humble plea to Government that all Ugandans who were citizens by birth and descent, at the time the Constitution came into effect in October 1995, should be entitled to a free national ID; all of us. Not because you can afford or cannot afford. We are all citizens by descent or by birth and I am entitled. Mr Speaker, the second Article I would like to interest the minister in is Article 17(h) which requires that a citizen has a right to register, specifically, for election.

Now, Government deliberately retired the voters’ register without an explanation, yet this is a constitutional provision. You need to get the Cabinet to clarify on that. It is good you brought this debate so that we can review some of the decisions that have been taken. It is important we look at it and see if certain things can be corrected.

I would want you to look at Article 61 and Article 62 together. Article 61 says that where there are complaints related to election, it should be brought to the Electoral Commission. The Electoral Commission cannot take any decision without reference to NIRA, yet Article 61 says that on matters of election, Electoral Commission is independent. Take note of that and make sure that the Cabinet can help you.

Thirdly, somebody mentioned the problem of misrepresentation of age of senior citizens. As one of those who is not represented here legally, but by virtue of voters from Dokolo, I would like to say that it is not only misrepresentation of age, which has denied some of our senior citizens the chance to benefit from the SAGE money. The biometric system cannot capture the finger prints, including mine.

When I enter here, I have to keep rubbing my fingers before the machine can capture my data. *(Laughter)* That is one of the issues that you need to take up so that our senior citizens can benefit from the SAGE fund. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Cecilia Ogwal took more time because she is the acting Leader of Opposition. Do not say why give me two minutes, yet - Honourable minister, some were comments and others were repetitive. So, use a short time.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Mr Speaker, I would like to note the - excuse my words – “indictment” wrapped up by Hon. Cecilia Ogwal, but I request that I run through each because they were different.

Starting with the issue raised by Hon. Naluyima, on payment, I would like to say that, like I said then, there is no payment, yet. That was a passing proposal. There is no payment regarding acquisition of national IDs, even for changes. It was just mentioned by the executive director before the committee, but grabbed by the media and sensationalised.

Therefore, I would like to restate here, for the record, that there is no payment. Coming to the renewal, I would like to say, still, that there will not be any payment –*(Applause)-* except for aliens –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, I do not understand: why would foreigners get our national IDs?

**GEN MUHOOZI:** They get alien cards.

I agree, there are delays, not just with NIRA, but with even the DCIC for passports and there are many reasons for this. Members have alluded to some of them, which border on inefficiency and corruption – I cannot rule them out. However, there is also a stampede for these documents, especially because of labour export-related issues. Young people want a ticket and this, coupled with new applicants and those who want to renew their cards, sometimes cause pressure on the system, which cause these delays. However, we work hard to go through all these.

On corruption, I would want to get further and better particulars so that we can follow and clean up the system.

Hon. Abed Bwanika asked, how much information will you take from us? My sister from Masindi asked: “will you draw blood?” We are not vampires. *(Laughter)* I do not think we shall draw blood. We shall use the IRIS to improve the current biometrics, which are not sufficient, to be in tandem with the international system, but to the extent that does not offend your privacy.

The honourable from Rwampara raised the issue of decentralisation of NIRA office. Yes, I wish we could – and this has been amplified by other Members, but it is not cost-neutral. We want support from you to go down as much as possible. In the meantime, we can work out clinics in the far-reaching areas and handle the cases related to NIRA.

On data integration, I agree that where we have the same data with other departments, the idea should be that this has to be integrated, even to cut costs, for example, with NITA-U like people intimated.

Dr Musa asked about how the new system will generate revenue. Aliens are where we generate revenue, especially in matters regarding immigration. For this one, I would want to get advice from the technical people in matters they propose to generate revenue so that I share with you with an authoritative -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** For that one, you share with the committee at the committee level.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Enrolment system development should be sequential, not simultaneous. Dr Musa was asking: how do you enrol, yet you have not developed the system? I think one process should follow the other – and in the road map, system development was to come after enrolment – I think. I have to refer to it again. They were not supposed to be developed at the same time.

On students who registered long ago, this is a hanging issue. I will need to consult NIRA. There are many uncollected cards, including that of my son. I want to be on record on that one. They were registered while in school, but their IDs were dispersed to various locations and it is up to us to make them available for those young people.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, we want to know what you are going to do about it, not acknowledging that there is a problem.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** We are going to work on that. I am going to propose – I am going to “jump the gun”, but I do not think this is sufficient. You need a day or two with NIRA staff to talk through these things.

I do not think committee level is sufficient because these are very important issues and some of them are technical. Mr Speaker, you can advise -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, let the committee do a comprehensive interaction with NIRA and bring the report here. *(Applause)*

**GEN. MUHOOZ**I: Hon. Alero talked of porous borders and non-Ugandans. Yes, the culprits may include those Government officials. We may have some rogue, but also those LCs you talked about are not holy because these recommendations come from the LCs for money. Sometimes, unfortunately, some of the LCs are foreigners, especially along the borders.

Therefore, I think we need another vetting level within the process to ensure that we weed out those people who pass scrutiny. This exercise will also provide another opportunity to weed out foreigners. We have been doing so, but they have been spontaneous. Somebody comes to renew and you say, “But you are not a Ugandan” and then, you can confiscate the card or the passport. However, I think the system should have the capacity to red flag such cases at inception during registration.

There is already an efficient system in place. There is no need for a new one. That is according to one honourable member who was there at the beginning. Systems, unfortunately, also outlive their usefulness over time and this is a studied process. We need a new system, but that interaction with the committee will provide better and further information on that one. Also, there is the idea of local content to mitigate costs to use our own people in the development of the new system.

What is the qualification for citizenship? I have heard it repeated over and over, as if the ID confers citizenship; it does not. It is like a name tag. I even heard *Mama* Cecilia talk about the 1995 Constitution, as if it conferred. We were citizens before that Constitution. It only affirmed our citizenship.

Still, I heard some Member say that the Registration of Persons Act (ROPA) contradicts the Constitution; it does not. It only gives effect to the Constitution, as far as citizenship is concerned.

Hon. Ezama wondered why we registered under-age people. It helped to get them National Identification Numbers (NINs) - and they are still there - and those who are of age, of course, to get cards, even if uncollected.

Somebody also talked about how a card expires. I thought that one was covered sufficiently in the justification. However, to cut the long story short, I think the way to go is the e-card - to have a digital card.

On NIRA offices not working, congestion and corruption, we need to look deeper into this. It has been raised by many honourable members; issues of corruption. Where you can substantiate claims, please, come forward and we follow through, so that we clean up the system.

Hon. Matovu of Wakiso said that this should be a free service. Yes, it should be, like I said before and it should not be charged. The honourable MP from Kasese says ID should be cost- free. Yes, except for express services. I think if you need an express service, you must pay a cost - you must incur some cost. That is the proposal. How much is it for the express service? I do not have the figure. We shall get this for you in the interaction with the committee.

On persons with disability; very good point. They need preferential measures in the process. It is very disheartening to find people in wheelchairs going through the same process as the other able-bodied individuals.

Hon. Mwesigwa said there is moral decadence at NIRA - corruption. I noted that. If we can have a chat and you give me information to follow through. The honourable MP for Soroti says citizenship by all; the three methods have the same rights. He wanted to distinguish between those who are citizens by birth, those who are citizen by naturalisation and those by registration.

Once you have got citizenship, then you have the same rights in the law of our country - no special citizens in Uganda. *(Applause)*

Time, time, time. There are time delays, I agree; I cannot agree more. Some of these delays are caused by our home in Kololo being shared for other purposes. We get interruptions, especially during public functions. I cannot agree more. We are looking for a home, but only that all the systems, the backup and everything is in Kololo. So, it will take quite an effort to move everything to the new home. However, we are doing so in order to avoid these interruptions.

The MP from Rubabo said that people are seeking to change sex. I think I heard about that case and I hope what we say here remains here. This is because of –*(Laughter)*- those people who are bisexual. I was told that in a certain European country - I do not want to mention. These are very delicate issues - when a child is born, you do not mention the sex until he or she is old enough to say that “I am either a girl or boy.” *(Laughter)* That is how far things have gone. However, the laws of our country are clear and we shall share and see how to proceed on this case, but it is a serious matter. Those values and cultures are even being imposed on the way our systems work here.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, conclude.

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** *Mama* Cecilia Ogwal had three issues on Articles 1, 17, 61 and 62 of the Constitution. I will strive to read through these, to the extent that they relate to our rights to vote. We have no intention at all to disenfranchise Ugandans and I want to give comfort to Members in that respect. However, also, we shall have to look at the issues of some of the people whose biometrics cannot be read. I am told there are people who have cultivated a lot, to the extent that these ones -–*(Laughter)* - have faded. So, we need solutions to that, but I cannot say what. The technical people can advise.

Hon. Abeja NITA-U. Yes, I cannot agree more. We need to exploit their expertise in the area of IT to even mitigate some of these problems. The MP Ngora says NIRA services need decentralisation. It has been said and said over and over again.

There an honourable MP who talked about contradictions in the law and the Constitution, I want to assure you that there are no contradictions in the law regarding the Registration of Personals Act and provisions of the Constitution, to the extent that they relate to citizenship. I think I have gone through everything. I request we have that interaction. I want also to implore Members not to get tired of improving this proposal because this is for our good. I think we shall refine it in the last few days that remain before we conclude it. Thank you very much. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, colleagues, like we agreed, the committee is going to look into these matters. Please, Hon. Milton Muwuma, this statement is very comprehensive and broad so, it is a very good beginning point, but honourable minister, also proceed because of these issues we are going to reconcile positions much later. And also, once you finalise with your Cabinet process, please, update this House so that areas of improvement are noted by this House.

We would like to thank you for giving attention to this House. We do not have any pending matter with you as a minister; whenever we put you on the Order Paper, you always come. *(Applause)* And we wish that others could learn from you.

Hon. Mukasa, the Minister for Public Service is always here. Thank you and honourable colleagues, thank you, too. Thank you, honourable colleagues, the Leader of the Opposition and the team and this side; the side of the NRM caucus, Hon. Faith Nakut for mobilising and Gen. Oseku for doing a good job. Thank you also to our technical team for sitting for this long. I adjourn the House to Tuesday, next week at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 7.11 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 17 May 2022 at 2.00 p.m.)*