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PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

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FOURTH SESSION - 26TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Thursday, 10 April 2025

Parliament met at 10.05 a.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) says the money is with the

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PRAYERS

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

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is your matter of national importance?

The House was called to order.

MR YERI: My prayer is: how do these people get their money?

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bahati?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. Let us have matters of national importance. Hon. Yeri Ofwono?

10.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, I thank Hon. Yeri for the matter of national importance. We committed to meeting all the obligations of the organisations that we rationalised. If the Government commits to meeting those obligations, we will do that. However, I will cross-check with the ministry of agriculture to ensure that the point he has raised is answered.

10.07

MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Mine is on the winding up of the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA). There was a grant, which was given by the European Union, to some beneficiaries – the farmers – that were chosen. They do not give you this grant in advance, but you implement the project before they give you the money.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We can get a verbal answer on Tuesday. Hon. Chemonges?

Therefore, the farmers went ahead and borrowed money, some from moneylenders, and performed what they were supposed to do. The staff from the coffee authority came, justified and gave a report.

10.10

However, up to now, no money has been paid to them. They are being tossed around. The

MR WILLIAM CHEMONGES (NRM, Kween County, Kween): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Mine is about the grant-aiding of a school called Kworus Secondary School in Kwanyiny Subcounty. This is a school that has now taken about 30 years, and it was started by the community. It now has 924 students.

The community has been struggling. They have constructed almost all the classes. The same subcounty does not have a Government-aided school.

Mr Speaker, it is almost 10 years since all the leaders from Kween have been pushing for the grant-aiding of this school. The teachers, who have been there, have now taught for 15 years and some are even now old. They have been there, teaching with almost no pay but with the hope that the Government would take them up and put them on the payroll.

Our prayer is that the Government grants aid to this school so that the teachers who have been teaching can be hired since this would not be very expensive for the Government. After all, all the classrooms have been built. It is one of the biggest problems that we have in the constituency. Thank you.

10.12

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, it is the Government's policy that we should have a secondary school per subcounty. From the reports that we have, we have made good progress. I think we are now almost at 60 or 70 per cent.

I will check with the Member but also inform the Minister of Education and Sports about this requirement – whether the subcounty has a secondary school or they need an additional secondary school because of the community's effort. The ministry will be informed accordingly to respond and get in touch with the Member about the matter.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item. (*Mr Ssemujju rose*) On what point, Hon. Ssemujju?

10.12

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I came to register a matter regarding Makerere University. I was approached by some staff yesterday, saying the university is

going to restructure and about 500 staff are about to lose their jobs. Their complaint is about the way it is being done and the selection of who will be affected.

Mr Speaker, I request that the Government brief Parliament on the restructuring that will cause us problems.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we shall not be interfering with the day-to-day running of Government agencies. Let us give them a chance. If there are any complaints, the Minister of Education and Sports should take note so that the process is as transparent as possible.

There must be a reason why Government institutions are acting in that way. However, I take your point that, in case they are acting, there must be fairness and merit in their actions.

I want us to concentrate on the budgeting process during this period, but I promise that I will take a keen interest in the matter. Next item.

MOTION FOR APPROVAL OF THE PROPOSED ANNUAL BUDGET FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026

I) THE COMMITTEE ON GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable committee chairperson? Hon. Bahati, kindly, link up with your colleagues. We need the ministers in here.

10.15

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Agnes Kunihira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am here to present the report of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026. Allow me to lay on the Table the report of the committee and the minutes of our meetings.

Introduction

On 11 March 2025, the Ministerial Policy Statements for the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Equal Opportunities Commission were laid before Parliament, as required under Section 13(13) of the Public Finance Management Act and in accordance with the Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

The ministerial policy statements were referred to the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development, pursuant to Article 155(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, and also Section 13(4) of the Public Finance Management Act and Rule 189 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament.

To examine –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we should use 15 minutes. We know because we assigned you, so we want you to go to your observations and recommendations so that we have more time –

MS KUNIHIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development handles two Votes: Vote 018 of the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and Vote 124 on the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Page 4 highlights the documents we reviewed and under vote 18; the ministry for gender is the sector mandate, the strategic objectives, and the expected outcomes, but I will not go through them. Page 6 highlights the compliance with National Development Plan IV (NDP IV), Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), and Gender Compliance.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can we go to page 29? The report will be fully captured on the *Hansard*.

MS KUNIHIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development

The committee observations and recommendations

The committee made the following observations and recommendations:

9.1 Counterpart funding towards observations under GROW project.

The committee observed that the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity (GROW) project, which is a World Bank Grant worth \$217 million to the Government of Uganda, is being implemented; however, the Government has not provided counterpart funding worth Shs 0.800 billion.

It should be noted that the counterpart funding for the project is required to support the necessary governance structures for the project operations (steering project technical committees), project oversight, monitoring and evaluations among others.

The GROW project intends to address these challenges through the following:

- i) Increased access to finance for women entrepreneurs to transition from micro enterprises to small and medium enterprises;
- ii) The provision of the enterprise development services, including business advisory services, women networks that facilitate market linkages, value chain and transforming negative social norms that prevent women from engaging in business activities;
- iii) Enabling inclusive infrastructure through common-user facilities and child care.

The committee noted with concern that the Government's inability to provide counterpart funding in the Financial Year 2025/2026 budget to support intervention under this project will result in two delays in project implementation.

The committee recommends that the ministry for finance should provide Shs 0.800 billion

as counterpart funding for the GROW project in the Financial Year 2025/2026 budget in fulfilment of Government commitment.

Rent Obligations

The committee observed that the gender ministry has been renting office space and that it needs to construct its own offices.

However, the ministry informed the committee that the Government halted the construction and acquisition of headquarters for Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs). Currently, they are renting the premises. All such ministries will be accommodated at a proposed Government campus at Bwebajja. As a result, the ministry will continue renting until then.

It was observed that the ministry for finance in 2021 committed to adjust the MTEF by Shs 1.073 billion but this has not been affected to date.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you will not read everything. I am sorry but you saw how we were doing it yesterday. This is your report and you. Pick out the salient issues –

MS KUNIHIRA: Regarding rent, we recommend that the ministry provide an additional Shs 1.073 billion to meet the rent obligations and also cover the arrears that have already occurred.

Titling of land

It was observed that the lands of the ministry are not titled and they require Shs 2 billion. Therefore, the Committee has recommended that Shs 2 billion for processing land titles be provided.

Child Disability Grant

Mr Speaker, the committee observed that during the Budget Framework Paper, the ministry required Shs 8.2 billion to provide for child disability grant; however, in the budget estimates, nothing has been provided.

Therefore, we recommend that Shs 8.2 billion be provided for child disability grant.

Withdrawal and rehabilitation of settlement of street children

The committee recommends that the ministry for finance should avail funds worth Shs 5 billion for the withdrawal and rehabilitation and settlement of street children.

Special enterprise grant

The committee observed that additional funds of Shs 5 billion have been provided, leaving a shortfall of Shs 5 billion. Therefore, the committee recommends that the ministry of finance provide Shs 5 billion to allow the programme to be carried out to up to six subcounties - an increase from three to six subcounties.

Labour externalisation

Labour externalisation is a policy issue, but I am going for the issues that require money. Joint programme on youth livelihood -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you can read the recommendation. It is a critical issue.

MS KUNIHIRA: Thank you. The committee recommends that:

- i) The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should prioritise the development of migrant workers' databases and monitoring systems to ensure traceability of Uganda's labour force abroad;
- ii) Resources are allocated to strike the implementation of a centralised database to track migrant workers, monitor their conditions abroad and support their integration upon return;
- iii) The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should establish a migrant workers' saving fund; and

iv) Establishment of additional labour attaché offices to provide for better protection for Ugandans working abroad.

Joint programme on Youth Livelihood Program (YLP) and Uganda Women's Empowerment Programme (UWEP)

- i) The committee recommends that the ministry for finance provides additional Shs 7.4 billion to reach out to more women and youth groups.
- ii) The ministry for gender strengthens its strategies of recovery under the joint program of youth livelihood and UWEP.
- iii) The Ministry of Gender should conduct sensitisation and encourage women and youth to diversify into business enterprises that provide a high return on investment.

We, therefore, recommend that Shs 7.7 billion be provided because currently, they have provided for Shs 27 billion.

The committee also recommends that Shs 9.9 billion be provided for UWEP and Youth Livelihood on the Bank of Uganda recovery account. The ministry enhanced recoveries through technical support, monitoring, and training, which resulted in the recovery of Shs 41.24 from youth and Shs 37.93 from women groups by November, as per the Auditor-General's report 2024. This money recovered from the joint programme has remained on the Bank of Uganda recovery account.

The committee, therefore, recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development will use the money to allow more youth and women groups to access the revolving fund.

1.10 Creative industry

Mr Speaker, the creative industry has gotten around Shs 28 billion through additional funds. Therefore, the committee recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should fast-track the following activities:

- i) Redevelop the Uganda National Cultural Centre,
- ii) Develop regional cultural centres to support upcoming creative youth with creative skills,
- iii) Development of feasibility and feasibility study on culture and creative industry.

1.11 Prevention and response to gender-based violence

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should set up gender-based violence shelters for the recovery and rehabilitation of gender-based violence survivors. This is a policy matter.

1.12 Strengthen compliance and occupational safety and health standards at workplaces, chemical safety and security programmes

Recommendations

- i) The committee recommends that funds be availed to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development for recruitment of more inspectors to enhance labour inspection and OSH monitoring. Mr Speaker, this is an area where the ministry also collects NTR.
- ii) The Ministry of Gender, Labour, and Social Development should develop mobile inspection units at regional levels to regularly visit remote and informal workplaces, as this is one of the areas that is a repetition.
- iii) The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development regularly monitors compliance with and effective implementation of occupational safety and health regulations and measures in all workplaces.
- iv) The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development enforces penalties for non-compliance and data and safe practices.

1.13 Election of workers at Parliament and local government

This is a provision in the Parliamentary Elections Act that some non-unionist workers

should also mobilise to participate in the elections.

The committee recommends that funding, to the tune of Shs 5.7 billion, be provided to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to enable them to comply with the Electoral Commission roadmap.

1.14 Implementation of National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme

The committee recommends and reiterates its earlier recommendation that the Ministry of Finance, Planning, and Economic Development provide Shs 3.0 billion to implement the National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme.

9.15 Child labour

Mr Speaker, the committee noted that during the Budget Framework Paper Financial Year 2025/2026, the elimination of child labour required Shs 6.8 billion. During the interaction with the Committee on Gender, Labour, and Social Development, the ministry informed the committee that Shs 5 billion was availed in the 2nd Budget Call Circular to cater for the same. However, in the draft budget estimates, only Shs 2 billion had been provided therefore leaving a funding gap of Shs 4.8 billion.

The committee recommends that the ministry for finance provides Shs 4.8 billion for the implementation of programmes aimed at reducing the rate of child labour in the country.

9.16 supporting *Jua-kali* enterprises to transition into formal economy

The committee recommends that Shs 7.7 billion be allocated to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to enable the rollout of the *Jua-kali* support programme.

Vote 124: Equal Opportunities Commission

Let me go directly to the recommendations and observations. The committee made the following observations and recommendations:

Scale up the implementation of gender equity planning and budgeting for both local and central governments

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provides Shs 5 billion for the comprehensive implementation of gender and equity planning and budgeting for local government.

15.2 Undertaking tribunal hearings to increase access to social justice

The committee recommends that the ministry for finance provides funds worth Shs 3 billion to cater for tribunal hearings, which would increase access to social justice.

15.3 Integrating ethnic minorities into the national development process

The committee recommends that the ministry for finance provides funds to the tune of Shs 3 billion to cater for the special programme for integrating ethnic minorities in national development programmes.

15.4 Scaling up the implementation of gender and equity planning and budgeting in Karamoja Sub-region

The committee recommends that the ministry of finance provides Shs 0.32 billion to scale up the implementation of gender and equity planning and budgeting in the Karamoja Subregion as an affirmative action.

15.5 Renovation and expansion for other offices at Bugolobi

The committee recommends that the ministry of finance provide Shs 3 billion for renovation and expansion of the Equal Opportunities' premises in Bugolobi.

Mr Speaker, on page 52, table 21 is the recurrent and development estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026. The overall budget for the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, Vote 018, is Shs 443 billion. There is an increase from the last financial year of around Shs 28 billion. The overall budget

for the Equal Opportunities Commission is Shs 23.6 billion, an overall increase of Shs 3.4 billion from the last financial year.

I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. Thank you for the comprehensive report. It will be captured in full on the *Hansard*.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this morning, we have students and teachers from Bukedea Comprehensive School, Bukedea District. They are represented by our very own, the Rt Hon. Speaker, Anita Annet Among and the Hon. Ngoya John Bosco. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. (*Applause*) You can stand up. They are very smart. Thank you.

The minister for gender is here so debate can start. I will start with Hon. Noeline Kitembo, followed by UWOPA, followed by Hon. Aogon. Three minutes each.

10.35

MS NOELINE KISEMBO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibaale): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the committee for a very comprehensive report.

My issue is one. It has to do with the labour externalisation and the committee chairperson has rightly put it that it is a policy issue. We have many of our young people going to look for employment in different countries and the ministry is at the centre of managing this. I agree with the committee recommendation that they need support, and the migrant workers need some kind of protection.

Mr Speaker, at the moment, in my district, Kibaale, we are grappling with an unfortunate situation. One of our own girls, Namata Teddy, from Kibaale Town Council, Busaana, died in Saudi Arabia. She went to work in 2022, and the company that processed her travel, called Swatt Services, has since closed. May her soul rest in peace.

At the moment, the family is grappling with bringing back the body. They have requested for Shs 16 million. Usually, most of these young people who go to seek employment abroad come from very poor families. When such unfortunate incidents happen, they are completely helpless.

I pray that the ministry comes in, one, to put in place what the committee has recommended, the migrant workers support fund, so that in such unfortunate instances, they are able to come in.

Mr Speaker, my prayer is that for this unfortunate situation that we are in, as the people of Kibaale, we seek help from the ministry for gender to ensure that the body of our own is returned home. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am sorry about that, honourable. Our condolences. I hope the ministry follows up on that matter.

Hon. Opendi -

10.37

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for its report.

Allow me to support the recommendations in that report. Specifically, we have talked severally about the issue of the Gender-Based Violence (GBV) shelters. These are safe houses that are needed by various people who actually have challenges, but cannot live in their communities when they have cases in court, Mr Speaker.

I remember at the last event that we held, you actually committed to ensure that at least we start with one regional shelter per financial year, so that subsequently in four financial years, we would at least cover the four major regions of the country, beginning with areas where we have the highest GBV cases. I pray that that is done. It does not take a lot of money. Let us get away from corruption. The Uganda

People's Defence Forces (UPDF) can construct a GBV shelter in one region at about Shs 600 million, which we can afford.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, is the challenge of this National Apprenticeship Programme. We are scattering interventions. Under the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Office of the President, there are skilling programmes. Now, the gender ministry has this apprenticeship. It is all about skilling. Can we integrate this and have it under one roof rather than scattering the efforts across different sectors? I really beg that that is streamlined, and I hope the Government is listening because this is an Executive function.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I thought that was the purpose of programme-based budgeting, to harmonise all those -

MS OPENDI: Yes, that is what I thought, but they are scattered. The programme-based budgeting still does not bring these together, Mr Speaker. It actually leaves different entities handling these functions, but at the point of budgeting, they are all put under one programme.

There is a need for the Executive to streamline that, so that we have this under one sector. If it is education, let it be so. If it is under the presidency as a special programme, let it be so.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, is the issue of child labour. Surely, Shs 2 billion is needed to help the ministry for gender to end child labour. We have schools. It is against the law to employ children under the Children's Act. That is a case of enforcement -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I intervened in your time so you can conclude.

MS OPENDI: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thought it would be the law enforcement agencies and even the local councils in the villages to ensure that we end child labour. The Government has prioritised education with the universal primary and secondary education programs. Why can't these children be in school?

If we are talking about child labour, we are talking about children who are below 18 years. Why are these children not utilising the government education programmes, which fortunately, are now even closer to the community? Every parish has a primary school. For secondary education, yes, some subcounties still do not have them, but at least the parishes have primary schools. It is an enforcement issue under the internal affairs ministry and local governments. Why should the ministry for gender be given Shs 2 billion to end this child labour?

Mr Speaker, as I end, the Shs 3 billion for integrating ethnic minorities, can we get clarification? What exactly are you talking about? What ethnic groups is the ministry for gender actually referring to?

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

10.42

MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to take a minute to welcome the students of Bukedea Comprehensive Academy. You know, I studied in Mbale Comprehensive, so I had to welcome the students. I worked in Bukedea from 2006 to 2015, before I resigned to enter politics. These are our home products.

Mr Speaker, a few comments here. One is on the issue of the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project. I agree with the committee. We need to support the Government to get money for counterpart funding and what have you. The issue is whether the money is reaching us. For instance, in Kumi, I would love the committee to tell me how many women from my place have benefited. That is critical. We do not want to fund what we do not know.

Two, there is this issue of rent for Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs). Until then, Mr Speaker? It is high time we committed ourselves. If we are constructing offices, let us do that. The amount of money that we are putting into rent is too much, in my opinion. We must stop this kind of bleeding.

The other issue is the children on the streets. The best home for children at that age is a school. Why should we commit Shs 5 billion to try to remove kids from the streets, yet we do not know where we are taking them? They should be taken to school.

I agree with the chairperson of the Uganda Women's Parliamentary Association (UWOPA). Let us pay fees. We can use some minimum force, but let us trace the causes. I know that GBV is the real cause of this.

Mr Speaker, on the issue of the support of the *jua kali* transition to the formal economy, I am worried about it because what are the criteria for choosing the people who are going to benefit? If we are going to put Shs 7 billion in that, how much of that money is coming to Kumi municipality? I am worried that the money might be eaten by some people with metallic teeth because I cannot trace them. *(Laughter)* Who are these people? Can you tell me who is going to benefit? What is the criteria? What is the measure? Which region? Which culture? Which denomination? You need to help us - *(Interjections)* - I do not need the information right now. I know it is good information.

Social justice and tribunal sittings are very important for ensuring people's justice. I support the committee on this.

On the issue of migrant workers, the Government collects money from these people when they are going abroad, but we have not felt the work of that money - *(Member timed out.)*

10.45

MR TOM EKUDO (FDC, Gweri County, Soroti): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join you in welcoming the students of Bukedea Progressive Academy. Students, you are welcome and this House needs you and me after your education. This is where you are supposed to come to legislate. When we grow up, you are the ones to take over.

Mr Speaker, I will talk about the GROW Project. Last year, we were called for capacity

building as Members of Parliament and in that training, we were told that it was a program meant for everybody.

Two weeks back, I was surprised when somebody said, "This is the programme that I have brought for the people", and yet this is a Government program for Ugandans and not by an individual.

We need maybe to update some of our members. Even if we are going for votes, we need to get the votes rightly because that is killing the program.

The other thing I would like to talk about is the issue of street children. In the Soroti district and City, we have street children who have become a very big problem and if the Government does not intervene, they can be used by any other person because they are capable of doing anything.

Even now they have their organisation and their chairperson. If you ask yourself, where does their chairperson take reports, although, I have not heard the intervention of Government from the report. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Okot Peter -

10.46

MR PETER OKOT (DP, Tochi County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Silwany, do you have a procedural matter?

MR SILWANYI: Mr Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter. The debate that is taking place is very important, but our brothers on the other side, especially the ministers and the shadow ministers, including the Leader of the Opposition, have absconded from duty.

We always blame the Cabinet ministers when they are absent. Yet, at the end of the day, you will see other members running to the media, blaming a certain thing.

Will it not be procedurally right for you to use your powers to direct them to come to the House so that they do not embarrass the opposition?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, it was a procedural matter. It is up to the Speaker to determine. The acting Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Nalukoola is here. *(Laughter)* *(Hon. Ssemujju rose_)*

Hon. Ssemujju, please, let us not hit back, okay? Hon. Ssemujju was among the first people to be here.

MR SSEMUJJU: Yes, because he has put it on record that we are not here. This Parliament started when Hon. Silwany was not here. The Government that is facilitated with lead cars, security and everything, had only Hon. Bahati here when we started and I was the first here.

Mr Speaker, the record needed to be corrected. You started when we are here. Actually, we were overrepresented. This is because the Government was represented by only a junior minister.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, the Opposition is around. I can see nearly all the parties, and the one on the Floor is the Democratic Party Whip.

MR OKOT: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the well-written report. I have two observations to make.

1. Our colleagues have already spoken about "GROW," and some of these interventions are meant to support our women in improving their livelihoods. However, apart from the counterpart funding, the conditionality is stringent for our women to access this fund.

We know that in most of our societies, women do not own properties, such as land. When they go to the banks to access this money, it is announced every day on the radio that there are funds to be accessed by women, but the banks' conditions do not allow them. We may

be here saying that there are funds available for women, but they are not accessing them.

2. Mr Speaker, the grants to older persons; we all know that life becomes sweeter as you age. Seeing from the Social Assistance Grant for the Elderly (SAGE), our old persons really enjoy the little token that they receive.

We remember in the 10 Parliament how members put up a spirited fight to have SAGE enrolled in all the districts in the country. That was when the age was pushed to 80 years as a start.

Now, with this grant to older people, targeting 60 to 79-year-olds, only three subcounties per district are targeted, and yet the demand is too huge.

Now that the program has run for three years, let it be evaluated so that we can learn about its success. I must say that in my district of Omoro, the program is doing very well. This should encourage its expansion to the remaining sub-counties.

This is because older people find it difficult to enrol in these other projects now because they are told, "No, you have your special project." Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Iki-iki -

10.52

MR ROBERT KASOLO (NRM, Iki-iki County, Budaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to applaud the committee for the good report but I have two areas of concern where I need clarity.

The committee is asking for money to elect workers at parliamentary and local government levels, which I believe is the mandate of the Electoral Commission.

Could I be told why the Ministry of Gender is seeking for Shs 5.7 billion? A proposal from the Electoral Commission shows us sums of money that they need to organise the election.

I am aware that elections are conducted by the Independent Electoral Commission. Why is the committee recommending another Shs 5.7 billion? I am worried about that arrangement.

Another area is in the affirmative action that the Chairperson is seeking money for Karamoja Subregion. Karamoja has a ministry as an affirmative action responsible for the issues of Karamoja.

Now, if the Ministry of Gender is also budgeting for Karamoja and yet there is a ministry responsible for Karamoja, how do we correlate the two? The chairperson should clarify on those two areas. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Betty Engola and Hon. Bashiisha.

10.54

MS BETTY AWOR (NRM, Woman Representative, Apac): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also support the report from the chairperson. I have one issue with the GROW project. They allowed us to talk and mobilise women because what affects women affects many people.

Women were very disappointed going to banks like in the Apac district. We have two banks that were accredited to receive this money from "GROW," Centenary Bank and Post Bank, but when you get there, they say there is no money.

Last year, around September, we attended a workshop and the ministers assured us that after maybe about two months then, they would communicate to us regarding money – enough money – to these banks. However, up to now, the ministry has not communicated at all. What is going on?

Whenever I go back to my constituency, women keep coming and calling to ask about the GROW programme because they have their businesses which they want to, you know, grow. Can we know from the minister: when will these banks have enough money for the women of this country? I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bashiisha?

10.56

MS JULIET BASHIISHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My issue is child labour. When I am driving in a traffic jam, I am usually concerned about those young children who sell bananas, mangoes or apples. I wonder whether these children can go back to school after tasting the sweetness of money.

When we are talking about child labour, we should not only talk about those who are employed as housemaids or in other areas. We should also consider looking for parents who engage these young children in businesses. They are the same people who increase the percentage of school dropouts.

I, therefore, request the chairperson of the committee for gender to consider engaging the enforcement officers, to make sure that, at least, we start with urban centres and chase away all those children who are engaged in business, such that they are forced to go back to school.

Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. John Faith Magolo, followed by Judith Achan.

10.57

MR JOHN FAITH MAGOLO (NRM, Bungokho County North, Mbale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. When the GROW programme came on board, we were mobilised. We went to our constituencies and worked together with the community development officers and the gender department at the districts. We mobilised the women and they were all ready. We told them that this was the way to go and that this is for the women.

However, when I talk to my Community Development Officer (CDO) right now and go to the records, not even a single group or person – beneficiary – who was enlisted and trained to access these resources under the GROW project has received the money.

Would it not be a good idea for the ministry to generate a list of the beneficiaries of this programme and distribute it to the districts? This is because when they were popularising it, the districts and the community development offices were the conduits in popularising this programme. They cannot be thrown out now at the time of implementation. At the moment, all of us are not being looked at in a good way because we have not delivered in that regard.

There is also the issue of titling Government land. I really want to support the committee. The land of the Government is really at stake in every ministry. That should not only be in the gender ministry; the Government should really take it as a very important matter to secure the land that belongs to the Government.

Finally, the issue of development of the data bank for fast-tracking migrant workers is such an important thing. It goes back to the issue of the ministry developing the National Diaspora Policy. We are talking about Shs 1.7 billion that is remitted to this country by migrant workers every year. We are busy looking for money, but we cannot develop a policy to fast-track such a development.

Mr Speaker, I submit and support the committee. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Regarding the issue of migrant workers, the honourable minister for gender, I have met very many of our migrant workers in Dubai, and they told me that, as the Government, we need to negotiate for their rates. They gave me an example of Kenya, saying you find that they are doing the same job as someone from Kenya, but the Government of Kenya negotiated with the Government of United Arab Emirates on the minimum rate, and you find that the person from Kenya is earning double the amount earned by a Ugandan.

They are, therefore, saying that we have left them to survive – to be exploited – on their own. They requested that we intervene and negotiate for them.

The other one issue is maybe, should I say, for the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, working with the gender ministry - but the Government, generally. We have positions that we are losing out on in international organisations. I know countries – neighbouring countries – which have, for example, gone to the Food and Agriculture Organisation (FAO) headquarters and demanded that “we need a share of our jobs” and they have got them. However, for most of our people, when you talk to them, they say: “I am here on my own; I found my way here. So, I cannot be a good ambassador of the country.”

However, I meet others who are being promoted because their countries are intervening and demanding that they be supported.

We need a mechanism of supporting our people. We can develop a database, for example, of our people who are in United Nations organisations and other international organisations and then see how we can follow up and support them. In that way, we will have been many.

I can tell you that when you go to Rome, at FAO, and look at a certain country in terms of the number of people it has in influential positions and then you look at Uganda, you just wonder. When you ask, they say: “No, our government demanded and followed up.” There is a desk officer in charge of ensuring that their people are placed in international organisations to negotiate and lobby for their country.

For us, we leave it to who it may concern. I think it is something that we need to look at deeply. This is the feedback I got and I felt it would be good to share it here.

Hon. Judith -

11.03

MS JUDITH ACHAN (NRM, Woman Representative, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the committee for an elaborate report. I thank the ministry as well.

I want to make a brief comment on the GROW project. I think the problem that we have, as leaders, is that we did not pass the information to our people in the constituencies or the villages. The GROW project, ideally, from an inception information that I got when I personally attended the meeting, is for a certain category of people who have the collaterals and are already established or are able to get the GROW programme money.

The issue of the collaterals that the banks demand from our women in the villages – that women do not qualify for – has been catered for in the Parish Development Model (PDM). That is the information I got from the very first day when we were invited for the meeting. It is the same information that I am passing on to the people in the villages.

Secondly, on the issue of disability grants, I really support the committee's recommendation that we should support the ministry to enrol more groups for disabled persons in the villages, because these grants are really helping our people since it is tailor-made for specific and categorised disabled persons. They choose what they want depending on their type or category of disability.

Lastly, I support the Shs 7 billion recommended by the committee towards Jua Kali projects. If I can give a report from my constituency on this Floor, one group, every week, makes a dress and they get Shs 45,000 on that dress. Now, if they make, for example, two dresses, which is Shs 90,000 in a week, and you multiply this by the four weeks in a month, they get Shs 360,000. They also use the same centre and office space to train other child mothers. They enrol 20 child mothers every two weeks.

I would like to support the additional Shs 7 billion towards *Jua kali* because this will have a direct impact on our child mothers in the villages. I beg to submit.

11.06

MR CUTHBERT ABIGABA (NRM, Kibale County, Kamwenge): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to thank the committee for the good work, and

I associate with their recommendations. There is only one observation, which is cross-cutting: the issue of rent for Government ministries.

I have belonged to many committees where this has been a serious matter. The Government is not willing to provide money to construct offices; they keep referring to the Bwebajja campus. I would like somebody in the Government to tell us what progress has been made to actualise that campus because they keep hiding behind it to deny ministries, departments, and agencies money to construct offices. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Musasizi, you can help us on the Bwebajja campus. Remember, you said it was NSSF because if you are denying them money based on that, you must have information on their progress.

11.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES)

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The Government acquired land at Bwebajja to construct offices at what is called "The Government campus", in order to accommodate all ministries, which do not have their permanent homes. However, this campus needs to be constructed, but it requires financing.

The first option we looked at was an arrangement with NSSF to provide financing. However, this option was declined because it was not cost-effective. The funding was too expensive for the Government. We are now looking for other options, which can be a little bit affordable. If we get the financing, we shall construct, but I cannot tell when this will materialise. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

11.08

MS DORCUS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for this very elaborate report. However, I have concerns, especially about the GROW project.

In Alebtong District, which I represent, there is no single beneficiary of this GROW project. I believe that it is also true for several other districts, yet we know that out of the Shs 112 billion, which was allocated, the report says 51.4 per cent was released, yet only 6 per cent was spent. This is really sad. Even as we ask for counterpart funding, we know that there was a serious underspend.

I would like to urge the committee and even the ministry to put more emphasis to ensure that this GROW project can benefit the women. There should also be clarity on the information that is going out.

I listened to what my colleague, Hon. Judith Achan, was talking about GROW to be start-up funding, but the information we have on the ground is that GROW is for growing your project literally. It is for those who have already started their micro businesses and are looking at expanding them to small and medium enterprises. With about Shs 4 million as the amount to be received, that information has to go out very clearly.

The other is about the Gender-Based Violence shelters. Uganda has very clear guidelines for the establishment and operationalisation of the GBV shelters. However, even as we focus on setting up the shelters, we have a serious challenge with how we are doing the operationalisation.

Some of the shelters we visited across the country do not support the survivors with survivor-centred services, taking into consideration the different services the survivors need. For example, under health, there is clinical care for sexual assault survivors or what they call "Clinical management of rape". You find it missing, and there are serious gaps. Survivors are there, but they are not getting the necessary psychosocial support services required.

As the Government, we need to put more emphasis on ensuring that our shelters are doing well because other countries I know are borrowing from our guidelines to set up and

operationalise them. We are not doing well in the implementation.

The last one is about Women's Day celebrations. The committee and the ministry - this year, all districts did not receive funding - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this morning, we have Kwisania Savings Group from Budiope East, Buyende District. They are represented by Hon. Moses Hassim Magogo and Hon. Mary Annet Nakato. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

11.12

MS JOVANICE TWINOBUSINGYE (NRM, Woman Representative, Kiruhura): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in thanking the gender committee. I support the committee on the issue of the child disability grant.

In our communities, we have children with disabilities. Those children are suffering, marginalised and stigmatised. Some are not going to school. They are mistreated and not even counted among the children. Therefore, I thank the committee for considering those children. I support the proposal that we give them more funding, such that these children are supported.

Mr Speaker, allow me to appreciate the committee and support them on the issue of the Youth Livelihood Fund and the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme. We have our youth who are unemployed. If we continue supporting them, they can do some work and earn a living.

The Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme is doing well in my district. It is where you go and find accountability. Therefore, I commend and support the committee for the UWEP money. Let us continue supporting our women; let us continue supporting our nation. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

11.13

MR PATRICK NYANZI (NRM, Butemba County, Kyakwanzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My attention is drawn to two issues. One is the Shs 3 billion not provided for the implementation of the National Apprenticeship and Graduate Volunteer Scheme.

In my view, this money is not too much, and if provided, it would at least ensure that Ugandans who are potential employees become occupationally competent. I also recommend and support that this money be provided; it will at least help reduce unemployment.

Mr Speaker, we all have stories about migrant workers who come from our constituencies. The committee made a very good recommendation that resources be provided to fast-track the implementation of a database to track these migrant workers, monitor their conditions and what-have-you. Unfortunately, the same report does not specify how much. I do not think this database is very expensive.

For us to combat this problem, it would be important for the committee to specify the amount because, as Parliament, we cannot dictate that resources be provided. Which resources are these?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us hear from Hon. Mourine, followed by Hon. Kwizera and Hon. Auma. Honourable colleagues, those who were not in when the report was being presented, I do not know what you want to contribute.

11.15

MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee chairperson for that elaborate report.

However, I have two concerns. When we had the Women's Parliament and even after that, we discussed the Generating Growth Opportunities and Production for Women Enterprises (GROW) project in length. The presiding officer then requested that the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development should come

with a comprehensive report to be laid on the Floor of Parliament, and that it should indicate the list of all beneficiaries; district by district, cities by cities, but we are still expecting that information from the ministry.

The minister promised to come back, but she has not yet come back. Therefore, Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, we are still expecting that because we want to know more about the GROW project, as the Speaker then guided.

Secondly, right from the 10th Parliament, the ministry has been asking for money for child labour and street children. How I wish the money we give makes an impact, and now they are asking for more money for child labour. We want to know what they are going to use that money for. This is because we are still seeing street children across the entire country in all urban centres.

It is alleged that there are people who are making money out of these children, and they keep coming back every time they take them away from all the urban centres. Therefore, concerning the money that the ministry is requesting, what is the money for? These kids are still on the streets, and they are not even about to leave. That is where my interest lies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Kwizera?

11.17

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a few comments to make on the report. I thank the committee for the work they have done. I am concerned with the growing number of children on our streets because the ministry responsible should make an effort. When we talk about tourists who come to this country, the image they take back is that the Government is not doing its work. We want a deliberate effort to clean up the streets of these children so that the town is decent. That is one issue that the Government should interest itself in.

Another issue is the mushrooming number of traditional leaders because the Government

has indicated that they will be giving them Shs 60 million per month. Whether it is a grant or a salary, the committee has not told us that information. If it is money to be paid, do they deduct Pay As You Earn (PAYE)? Is it income to the individual, the king, chief or leader, or is it to the institution? We need to be specific. You are giving Shs 60 million to the Magezi kingdom or a traditional leader. Therefore, we want to know if it is his or if it is for the institution, so that we know that now there is a traditional leader who is receiving the money.

Mr Speaker, the law provides for regional governments, and we have refused to take up regional governments. Why should we then provide money to motivate people to start calling themselves things?

Another issue is about the GROW project in Bukimbiri County. I would like to be helped by the Government to know why we should not benefit from GROW. Is it in a phased manner or a pilot project? We need to know that kind of thing, Mr Chairman.

Secondly, Hon. Musasizi has talked about the position of the government campus, but many of the reports are referring to the “future plan”. We want to know from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development or the committee responsible, who brought this image of government offices, which is being used to deny ministries money for rent? Or is it being done selectively?

Finally, on externalisation of labour, can we have a policy that would – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Auma?

11.20

MS LINDA AUMA (Independent, Woman Representative, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I commend the committee for their elaborate submission, and I have three main concerns.

One, which is informative, is about GROW. It is important for us not to keep on talking on the Floor, yet offices are there. I took the initiative to go to the GROW office to get facts

and information. We are talking about only the loans in the bank, but GROW has other grants that are not loans. That is ongoing, and people are applying in various fields like infrastructure to support women in various markets; there is no need for collateral on that one. It is a grant and they are not going to pay back.

They have another one for skilling. People are expressing interest in various fields of skill that they intend to have, and the funds are there. Another is supporting rural women under microfinance because the women who have titles are mainly in urban areas.

There is also another programme to support rural women, whereby even if you are in a group, you can get that money, and your group will be your guarantors.

Therefore, honourable colleagues, let us not wait for the minister to come here. Other people are applying. Take time and go to the GROW offices. They are located in the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development office on the third floor.

Another concern is the externalisation of labour. We are talking about data, but other countries, as you stated, are looking for skilled labour that provides better earnings.

In October last year, the Rt Hon. Speaker sent us to Germany. We went and met some people at the Parliament of Bavaria. We realised they are lacking workers and they want Ugandan workers because we are honest and hardworking.

We found that in the Kenyan Government, President Ruto had space for more than 30,000 skilled labourers to be taken to Germany, and this is medical.

Our NRM Government has motivated the citizens to pursue the sciences. Now, we are producing what we cannot even absorb in our systems. Why don't we take this?

I went to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs - we realised that there was already a ban by the World Health Organisation for Uganda not to

export medical personnel. Why don't we talk to the World Health Organisation and withdraw that, since we are producing – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that is a critical point because on the issue of medical workers, they said the ratio of our medical workers to the population is still low. Therefore, if they take the few that we have, what will happen? Then, the few are not employed, so these are issues of negotiating, especially for nurses. Hon. Atkins?

11.24

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee and your membership for that very important report.

GROW is a white elephant in our country as it relates to women. This is money that will be paid by our taxpayers, including women.

Mr Speaker, when you want a loan, you go to the bank and because you have a payslip, you meet the requirements and the conditions. Somebody in here and all of us right here have cars or vehicles. We call them “car titles” or car logbooks. You can access a loan because you have a logbook.

We talk about land titles, but we know the land system in our country. We have not got to the point where everybody can have a land title. The banks where the Growth Opportunities and productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) money is, they condition it on a land title. Where is the Ugandan woman going to find a car logbook, a payslip, out there under the conditions that are required?

Mr Speaker, if we really care about our women - and I want to believe this particular House and its leadership do care about our women. I ask that the conditions should only be your national identification card (ID), like other countries, especially Western countries, do. All you need is proof that you are an American or European citizen, and you will have the

funding. What is the national ID for if I cannot use it to get a loan? Committee chairperson, I think that is very important.

Also, Mr Speaker, we are encouraging our young people to do welding, salons or food processing. All these activities are powered by electricity – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I allowed him.

MR KATUSABE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for your generosity – (*Laughter*) - Mr Speaker, we are really great friends.

You know that in this country, the thing that now brings all of us and our communities together is the lack of power. There is darkness all over the place. How is that person with the salon that we have given money to conduct business if they have no power? How are they going to process or make their juice and put it in the fridge, and earn some money from it?

There are things that we call facilitators. I believe that this House should focus on these because until we have those facilitators in place, we are not going to grow and empower our economy. Let us have good roads. Let us have clean, safe drinking water and electric power, and we will have grown and empowered our economy. I appreciate you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, the record of the House needs to be very clear. We always need to take a keen interest in everything that comes here. The GROW project was approved here as a loan. We were told it is for women entrepreneurs who are already at a certain stage. We said that we want to jump-start them again so that they can reach a certain stage.

We said that we have this Parish Development Model (PDM) for those who do not have anything, which does not require collateral security. I remember when this loan request was here, all these issues were looked at. We said that even these women who have already started businesses and have reached somewhere, but do not have access to affordable capital - we

passed the GROW project loan based on that. It is for people who are already in business and need help so that their business can grow.

We need to remain on that line because that was our resolution here. It becomes difficult for us now to come back and change it. That was the condition for the founder, the World Bank. Maybe, we can argue that we need more projects where women do not need to be asked for collateral security, as far as supporting their businesses is concerned. Yes, honourable minister.

11.30

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DISABILITY AFFAIRS) (Ms Hellen Asamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee and the Members of Parliament for the support that they have given us.

I will start by making a general comment because it seems GROW, as my in-law said, is the big topic in the House. He called it a white elephant, but I want to say it is not.

As the Speaker has said, this was money for women entrepreneurs; those who were already in business. We were looking at a missing gap. Women were brought by the Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP), and when it was fully fledged, some women came from that business level in groups. Now we have the PDM.

Also, the other rich women will go to the Uganda Development Bank (UDB). So, there is a missing link for people who cannot get to the Shs 500 million. I would like to inform the House that our ministry is organising a fully detailed paper. That paper is already being developed. We shall come and give the details of what has happened.

Mr Speaker, allow me to give some feedback on some of the questions that were asked. One, we have already handled the issue raised by Hon. Noline. It has already reached the ministry, and I think we are going to follow

that up. A letter was written to us already about the death of the lady.

I also want to pay my condolences to the family. We are trying to process. A letter has been written to the Ministry of Foreign Affairs to help us see how we can coordinate with Saudi Arabia to ensure that this body is brought back home. I will be in touch with you, as long as I am still the acting minister this week, to see how we can follow up. I have already been given information, and it is in the pipeline.

Members have brought up several issues. Let me try to follow them. There is the issue of Hon. Sarah on Gender-based violence (GBV). Right now, it is the Non-Governmental Organisations (NGOs), which are running the shelter areas. We all know that funding for NGOs has reduced, so the reason for asking for money is for us to try to put in the GBV shelters, which should be the Government responsibility. That is why we are asking the committee to help us see how we can come together and support our people. The NGOs have been supporting us, and we want to appreciate them.

The skilling is scattered. Yes, it looks scattered, but I think we have a joint framework. As the Government, we have the Ministry of Education and Sports, industries and institutions that give us apprenticeship, like hotels and places where we put these young people. Our work, as the ministry for gender, because we are in charge of issues of labour, there are youth who are not employed, and they are not in school. Those are the ones among whom we do the skilling in our ministry.

Then there are youth who go to vocational schools like Nakawa Vocational Institute, and maybe in our districts, which are under the Ministry for Education and Sports, but all of them target one area.

What I want to recognise is the fact that the programme approach has not yet picked up, but the ministry for gender and the ministry for education are still in one programme. When it comes to budgeting, we are still running them in our areas, but in the planning, we do it together.

We started the data bank in the ministry for the emigrants who are out there. This financial year, which we are ending, we did not get the money to continue with the process. We pray that the funding for the data bank be enhanced so that we can continue with the process. In fact, we have already launched. As you enter the ministry now, just last week or two weeks ago, we have launched an area where we are going to be receiving the issues of emigrants, listening to them and for those who need support. The staff have already been recruited. They are going to be getting all the information.

Unfortunately, some of our people, because of the porous borders, keep going on their own. When they have a problem, they come back to the Government. Those are very difficult to track. The ones who go through the right system, we can track them. Just as in her case, we have been able to track the matter because we got in touch with the institution that took her there.

However, some of our young people, especially those from Busia and Bugisu areas, then those from the other side of Karamoja, just cross and then you hear them stranded because they do not have any documentation.

And then for some young people who, after the two-year contract, because we give them two years, and they come back to their community. But after the two years, they begin thinking that they know that country and change to other areas different from where they were initially taken.

We cannot track such a person because they were supposed to come back, but instead remained moving throughout the United Arab Emirates, and when they meet the Speaker, they say, "I am stranded here," yet they have not come back to Uganda to apply afresh. So, there are also such cases.

On the issues of negotiations, my minister is really busy with this. We are even trying to get to the European market to see how we can talk about professionals.

How do we take them out there? We have also come up with bilateral agreements, which are strict, so as to help the immigrants who are out there. It is work in progress and we shall give a report here on what has come out of the meetings.

On the issue of the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) - some people said, "It is not in my village." I agree that all the money that we put in the first round went out and got finished. It is also true that the money did not go to all the regions.

All of you will agree with me that the headquarters of banks are in Kampala. Some of those banks already had women's facilities because that was one of the conditions for them to support us.

For example, Finance Trust Uganda, DFCU Bank, and Centenary Bank have programmes for women. So, when they received the money, they already had women who were in businesses who grabbed 10 per cent because that was a very good deal for a businesswoman who already had a business.

While we who came from Serere, like Hon. Asamo, were still waiting to move to the bank, we realised that the money had gone out.

When we reported to the Cabinet, the President directed that we should regionalise this, and we are working on this. The remaining Shs 185 billion has to go to the regions. But we shall start with the 19 regions. The money will be allocated at that level through the same banks.

The money will, therefore, be going to those districts in the next phase. This week, my GROW office met with the World Bank, and we agreed on the modalities.

We are also negotiating for areas where there are no banks. For example, if people have a good cooperative society, money can be deposited there because we know districts – for example, in the Bukedi Subregion, where I come from, Butaleja District does not have a bank.

In those districts – for example, instead of travelling to Tororo, we could think about a cooperative to serve people in that community. I hope that when the minister is presenting the other report, the information will be given to members.

The other question on *jua kali* was from Hon. Aogon, about Kumi, but it is a national program. It might not reach everywhere but it is a very good initiative. Those who have benefited – I think Hon. Linda said it is a good programme.

How do you get information? Let us not wait for information here. When you pass these things, follow up with us to see whether we are implementing them in the way you gave us money, and see how we run it. Otherwise, this is a very good program because it supports the young people who are out of school, like these young girls who, unfortunately, get pregnant before they are 18 years old.

They cannot get the youth fund because when they go there, they are told “No, you are now a mother” and when they come to the women fund, they are equally told “No, you are not yet 18 years”. They are in the middle there. So, we have that category of people who do not have a sense of belonging, which is a critical issue.

I would like to say something about the issue of street children. Recently, there has been a growth in street children. This time, they are organised and are becoming gangs. One of my friends from Soroti talked about it. In Soroti, they call them “*owok owok*”.

These children can even undress you, get your bag and pour out everything. When you have organised a party, they come and carry away all the food. It is going to be a very critical thing in society.

The reason we are asking for money is to see how we can build capacity for the parents, children and the community before we talk about enforcement. So, the ministry needs this money to begin building confidence in the community.

Many parents have become - I will not call it carelessness but they are not responsible for their young people, and because they are dropouts, they have been left on their own.

The others were proposals, which we are going to take on as a ministry but I think I need to see what other things were brought in. Hon. Kwizera, I think your suggestion was more on what we can generally support and see how we can work on them.

I would like to give Hon. Atkins hope that we are working. We are not a white elephant; we might not have reached Kasese, but we will.

The money for the old persons is already being disbursed. Sometimes they give them Shs 75,000 per quarter instead of Shs 25,000. but I would like to remind the House that you passed the Parish Development Model (PDM) money, which has percentages. Can we follow up and know whether the percentages are working? Ten per cent is for the old people.

Go back to your parish and know whether the Shs 10 million has been given to 10 old people, Shs 10 million to 10 disabled people, and Shs 30 million must be given to the women at the parish level.

This is again our responsibility, as members of Parliament, to do the tracking. Where is the money? We have just left this money to go and I hope my brother, Hon. Magyezi, will agree with me - recently, I was with him and he asked: “How many disabled have received?”

For me, they have only given 1 per cent. So, I am still asking about my 9 per cent because I am both a minister and a Member of Parliament.

When you look at the records and you see only 1 per cent, you wonder about where the other money is, yet it is over. So, Hon. Okot, let us follow up on what the *wazees* are supposed to receive.

What I am reporting here is that they have gone beyond theirs because according to the report from the Local Government, they are at

12.5 per cent meaning, the old people are even faster because they have land - by the way, all the people have their money so they can easily get this money and use it. They are not like the young people who do not have access to land and property.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister.

MS ASAMO: Conclusively, I would like to thank the members again. I have recorded whatever you have given us. And I will send some to my technical people. We shall come back and report on some of those proposals. Thank you and may God bless you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson, do you have any pending issues?

MS KUNIHIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank my honourable colleagues for the positive responses. There is a Member who inquired about the issue of the elections of workers' MPs.

This is provided for under the Parliamentary Elections Act that the ministry should organise workers from sub-county level up to the regional level to cause a register for the elections of workers' MPs. That is a responsibility of the Ministry for Labour, which is responsible for all the workers in the country.

The other clarification is on child labour and street children. On the issue of child labour, some international reports are looking at our products as being produced through child labour.

One is in the area of fisheries, coffee, tea and sugar plantations. That is an issue of concern.

Another Member also raised the issue of the minority groups. This falls under the Equal Opportunities Commission (EOC), which is independent from the ministry. There are a number of other minority groups that the EOC would wish to integrate. For example, there is a tribe called Maragoli from Kiryandongo, and others. This is an area that is being handled by the Equal Opportunities Commission.

Also, a Member raised an issue of Karamoja being in need of affirmative action, and it is also being handled as an equal opportunities issue – equality and others.

I want to thank you, honourable colleagues, for your response and also for considering this report. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development on the Ministerial Policy Statements and budget estimates for Financial Year 2025/2026 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report, adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The adopted recommendations are referred to the Committee on Budget for reconsideration, harmonisation and consolidation, as far as our rules are concerned.

I want to thank you, committee chairperson and your team, and the honourable minister, for responding to the issues raised by the Members.

Next item.

III) REPOT OF THE COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable committee chairperson? I can see that the minister is around, so we are ready to proceed.

11.46

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Ms Linda Auma): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

I beg to lay on the Table, the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the Ministerial Policy

Statement and the budget estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026. I also beg to lay the minutes of the committee's meetings during the processing of this report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have 15 minutes.

MS AUMA: I am aware of that. Thank you.

On behalf of the committee, I beg to present the committee's report on the processing of Ministerial Policy Statements and budget estimates for the next financial year. I would not like to waste time. This report is under the agro-industrialisation programme.

We have the overview, the programme strategic objectives, the budget allocation for this financial year and the Vote budget performance – that is, the half-year performance for this financial year as well as major Vote achievements. The report has been uploaded. Honourable colleagues can go through this because it is clear.

Mr Speaker, I would like to go straight to the observations and recommendations of the committee. However, before I do that, I would like to highlight a very important concern under this agro-industrialisation programme, which is about making us not achieve our full potential as a sector.

Agro-industrialisation programme is allocated 2.4 per cent of the national budget in this coming financial year, from 2.9 per cent in the approved budget of 2024/2025. Additionally, the allocation to the programme is 30 per cent less than the NDP IV projected allocation of Shs 2,448 billion. This is very key. Remember that our budget should be aligned with the NDP IV. However, in the agro-industrialisation programme, it is not aligned.

Agriculture is a key driver of Uganda's economy, accounting for 70 per cent of the employment, but contributing only 24.7 per cent of the GDP. This indicates that the sector is contributing way below its potential, as most production is low-value raw materials.

In addition, most people involved in the sector produce for their subsistence, which is not captured in the GDP.

The allocation is not a fair reflection of its importance to the economy and contradicts several governments' international commitments towards agriculture funding. This calls for more investment in large-scale mechanisation, value addition, research and agro-processing, in line with the objective of the programme. I know very well we are members of the Comprehensive Africa Agriculture Development Programme (CAADP) and we are signatories to the resolution that 10 per cent of the national budget should be allocated for the agricultural sector.

In this regard, the committee recommends that the Government should raise the budget for agro-industrialisation programme in a phased manner – because we cannot say that we raise it to 10 per cent due to financial constraints – from the current 2.4 to at least 5 per cent in the medium term, with the view of attaining the 10-per cent allocation as outlined in the 2025 Kampala CAADP declaration, to which Uganda is a signatory.

The Government should align the budgetary allocation for the agro-industrialisation programme with the NDP IV target of Shs 2,448 billion in order to meet the projected budget allocation and programme goals.

MAAIF budget – this is Vote 010

MAAIF has absorbed the core functions of dissolved agencies, and it has not been fully funded in line with the original programming under these agencies. This is very key, Mr Speaker.

The committee notes that the budget allocation for the programme has declined, as stated earlier, and there is need to really put this into consideration.

The budget has actually reduced from Shs 1,128.5 billion to Shs 806.94 billion, despite taking on additional mandates. Instead of

increasing, the budget has reduced. This is a serious decline.

The committee recommends that the budget for the ministry be increased to cater for additional functions, especially agricultural extension, seeds and seedlings, fertilizers, hoes and high-value crops such as Hass Avocado, macadamia, cashew nuts, apples, sunflower and soya.

To address food security, production and productivity, there is need to provide 30 tonnes of maize, 20 tonnes of bean seeds per district, and for other stakeholders, Shs 50 billion be provided. Why are we saying this? There is already anticipation of drought this year.

According to UNBS, in 2023, to handle hunger in Karamoja only, Uganda spent Shs 350 billion. So, why don't we prevent this earlier by prior preparation?

In addition, Shs 50 billion should be provided for coffee seeds and seedlings, and Shs 3 billion for macadamia, Shs 5 billion for cashew nuts, Shs 5 billion for hass avocado, Shs 5 billion for apple, Shs 5 billion for soya, and Shs 4 billion for sunflower.

This will help us in creating continuity – and as the President has been saying, we should have *cura* – we have to calculate. We have to have seasonal earnings, daily earnings and annual earnings.

Agriculture mechanisation

Although MAAIF has made efforts to promote agricultural mechanisation, the committee recommends that the Government should prioritise increased investment in agricultural mechanisation to increase production and productivity of this sector, if we want to move from subsistence to commercial farming.

In addition to that, Shs 67 billion should be allocated to support the procurement and distribution of 1,518 horsepower tractors and 375 horsepower tractors, in line with the plan of the sector. There is a programme under

the ministry that each subcounty should have a tractor and each parish should have an 18 horsepower tractor – that is the hand-walking tractor.

The next is the issue of the mechanisation centres – and this follows up on equipping these areas.

The committee recommends that an additional Shs 75 billion be provided for this purpose. We have 19 mechanisation centres where our beneficiaries of the tractors, and those who want to have the operating skills, can go. They have the stores and other heavy moving equipment, especially for those who want to have bigger farms. They can access it easily at a subsidised price.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, can you limit yourself to the report?

MS LINDA AUMA: Yes, let me now move to agricultural financing.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) should expedite the ongoing process of formulating an agricultural finance and insurance policy. It is very key, Mr Speaker.

On water for agricultural production, the committee recommends that the funding gap of Shs 51.43 billion be provided in the Financial Year 2025/2026 towards the construction and rehabilitation of water harvesting facilities, including valley dams, valley tanks, ponds and on-farm water harvesting and storage infrastructure, as well as communal water reservoirs to support domestic use, agricultural production and livestock needs.

On the Acomai Agricultural Complex, the committee recommends that an additional Shs 9.9 billion be provided to complete the flood protection works around the scheme. This scheme is at about 98 per cent completion, but there is a gap.

Affirmative action for fisheries subsectors and aquaculture development

Honourable colleagues, I hope you have read the body of this. The committee recommends that additional Shs 50 billion be provided to fill the funding gap needed to provide fishing communities with essential resources, including fishing gears, motorboats, alternative livelihoods, and social services.

Two, MAAIF should expedite the formulation of a regulation operationalising the Fisheries and Aquaculture Act, Cap 314.

Three, the Fisheries Monitoring, Control, and Surveillance Unit be operationalised with additional funding.

Another issue under MAAIF is post-harvest handling and value addition. The committee recommends that MAAIF prioritises establishing regional and subregional storage facilities or silos to support farmers.

MAAIF should explore the possibility of establishing storage facilities at the subcounty level in a phased manner to support the Parish Development Model.

Three, MAAIF should establish a robust monitoring and evaluation framework to assess the effectiveness of storage facilities and related initiatives.

MAAIF should promote the use of technology in storage solutions such as a temperature and humidity control system, to enhance the preservation of agricultural products and reduce spoilage.

Five, MAAIF should develop targeted support programmes for smallholder farmers and medium farmers to access storage facilities, including financial assistance or cooperative models that enable shared use of storage resources.

MAAIF should prioritise the establishment and stocking of two national food and seed reserve facilities. This initiative will ensure a

stable supply of essential agricultural inputs and enhance national food security, directly supporting the objective outlined in the National Development Plan (NDP) IV.

Next and the last on that note is that MAAIF should take stock of non-operational storage facilities constructed under different programmes, and ensure they are brought to use by making the additional investment required.

The committee recommends that Shs 10.63 billion be reallocated for this purpose.

Farmer education and media outreach

The committee recommends that an additional Shs 2.52 billion be provided to support farm education, which is put in the local language, “*Kuzukuza*” media-based extension services, meaning wake up from sleep. (*Interjection*)-yes, that one.

Vote 142: National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO)

Agricultural research infrastructure

The committee recommends that the shortfall of Shs 13.14 billion be provided for the research infrastructure.

Staff recruitment under NARO

The committee recommends that an allocation of Shs 11 billion be provided in Financial Year 2025/2026 to facilitate the recruitment of essential staff for NARO.

Arrears under NARO

The committee recommends that Shs 4 billion be allocated in Financial Year 2025/2026 to clear outstanding arrears for NARO.

Vote 125: National Animal Genetic Resources Centre and Data Bank (NAGRC&DB)

Research Genetics, Inspection and Certification

The committee recommends that an additional Shs 35.77 billion be provided to support the establishment of the breeding and multiplication centres countrywide.

An additional Shs 28.5 billion be provided to boost the production of livestock semen and liquid nitrogen.

The committee also recommends that Shs 36.78 billion be provided to establish and renovate livestock breeding and production infrastructure on government farms and ranches.

Mr Speaker, on six, we have key underfunded and unfunded interventions that are in the table. Members, you can read what is provided and what is not. We also have in the table, that is, seven, the supply table of Financial Year 2025/2026.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the agricultural sector is a key driver of Uganda's economy, employing up to 70 per cent of the population, contributing half of all exports, and one quarter of GDP. However, it is not given the due attention when it comes to budgeting, as it is always allocated less than 3 per cent of the national budget.

The Government should consider investing heavily in this sector, as the benefits of such investments benefit the majority of the population. Agriculture should be considered the magic bullet to deliver this country to its aspiration, and therefore supported with an appropriate budget.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable chairperson. Honourable colleagues, I now open the debate.

I will start with Hon. Oguzu Lee, followed by Hon. Nakimuli, Hon. Nsamba, Hon. Isingoma,

Hon. Santa Alum, Hon. Kamuntu and Hon. Makhoha. I will then go to this side and come back here. You have three minutes each, strictly.

Honourable member, before you come in, I need to recognise our guests. In the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers of Katoma Seed Senior Secondary School, in Kiboga District. They are represented by Hon. Abdul Mutumba and Hon. Christine Kaaya Nakimwero. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me and welcome them. Can you stand up for recognition? Thank you. Very smart.

Hon. Oguzu Lee?

12.03

MR DENIS LEE OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the very elaborate report.

An observation has been made about the compliance of the proposed budget for the agro-industrialisation programme in relation to the National Development Plan IV (NDP IV). It has been clearly brought out that there is a mismatch. Therefore, the budget is not complying with the NDP IV. I do not know where the minister for finance is, but this is a very important matter that must be addressed before we even move.

Two, we know the contribution of agriculture. Ideally, each program should have brought to us their contribution to the Gross Domestic Product (GDP) of this country. There are ministries that are very quiet on how much they are putting in the national coffers and we have established agriculture as one of those doing commendable work.

Why do I say that? Strategic crops like coffee that contribute significantly are often underfunded. For example, last year, coffee brought to this country US\$ 1.1 billion. Ideally, if we are concerned with generating more resources for this country, we would have put money in coffee research, quality assurance infrastructure and we would have made sure

farmers are supported. However, this seems not to be happening.

I would like to invite this House to pay attention to some of our strategic crops like coffee, by making sure we support research initiatives and disease-resistant seedlings are available to the farmers.

We have been grappling with the issues of climate change and the only way we can be able to confront climate change is if we invest in drought resistant species. How are we going to achieve that?

We need to be able to provide resources to the sector. We know most of our farmers are facing the problem of food insecurity.

Across this country, we would expect investment - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable, I said you should use three minutes each.

MR OGUZU: Please, allow me to say this. I wanted to drive to the food reservoirs. Globally now, people invest in food reservoirs so that whatever little is produced can be kept safely and whenever there is scarcity, we would be able to tap in that. I think these are very key considerations that we must make, but most importantly, the budget of agriculture needs to be aligned with what was in the National Development Planning IV. Only then shall we move ahead to approve this budget for this sector. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nakimuli?

12.07

MS HELEN NAKIMULI (NUP, Woman Representative, Kalangala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the very good recommendations, especially in the fisheries sector, where I come from.

I would also like to commend you for including fuel for the Fisheries Protection Unit (FPU) in the operations on the lake. It is very unfortunate

that some of our fishermen are asked for fuel on a monthly basis. It is supposed to be given to the FPU to carry out their operations because they always say that they do not have enough. Therefore, if you include that in the recommendation we will be grateful.

However, I also think that this is robbery during broad daylight because if you ask the people you are supposed to do operations for money, it is unfair to them.

In the committee recommendations, we talked about seedlings, but I represent a fisheries community. Most of them do not do agriculture - farming - but rather fish farming. They do not do crops and animals; not all of them, of course.

I thought we would also get an idea of the fishermen to be given fishing nets. When you give the farmers seedlings, it is also important that you do not leave out the fishermen and women. I implore the Government to give the fishermen fishing gears like the fishing nets and subsidise on the taxes on the fishing gears like the engines that they use because an engine now of 15 horsepower cost Shs 9 to 10 million.

The fishing nets are very expensive. That is why they go into illegal fishing because the legal fishing methods brought into the country are cheaper than those that are legal.

Therefore, I implore the Government to ensure that the fishermen in Uganda are also considered. Apart from the fishery fund that we are advocating for, also give them free fishing nets to ensure that the fishermen also enjoy their life in this country. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nsamba followed by Hon. Isingoma.

12.10

MR PATRICK OSHABE NSAMBA (NUP, Kassanda County North, Kassanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is the first budget we are working on after the RAPEX Bills that took us a lot of time here, considering when the

Government promised that the end result is to save money.

I would like to hear from the committee chairperson and the minister about the savings made from the RAPEX Bills because so many agencies were rationalised. I want to hear what happened to the savings. How are Ugandans benefiting from savings made from RAPEX?

Mr Speaker, we had challenges with the functionality of the ministry of agriculture. Can we get confidence that harmony has been created? The information we get from there is that they fight and cannot complete a meeting in that ministry; fighting for this and that.

I would like to hear from the minister how far they have gone with making this ministry functional in terms of - there is a lot of infighting, Mr Speaker. How far has the minister gone in fixing that problem? Remember, our biggest fear was the poor functionality of that ministry. Kindly, update this House now on how far you have gone in ensuring that we are not going to hear the same stories always.

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Isingoma followed by Hon. Santa.

12.12

DR PATRICK ISINGOMA-MWESIGWA (Independent, Hoima East Division, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I join colleagues in appreciating the chairperson of the committee, Hon. Linda, for a good report.

My attention was specifically drawn to the issue of seedlings. When we had just come to this House, we used to get a lot of seedlings to distribute to our constituents. This went on for about two years, but since the inception of the Parish Development Model (PDM), we have constantly been told that this role has been taken over by PDM. Therefore, the ministry of agriculture is no longer responsible. Nonetheless, there is a shortage of seedlings amidst this kind of dispensation.

Today, my office in the constituency is currently inundated by constant requests from constituents of seedlings which we cannot readily provide. Mr Speaker, how do we proceed with this? This is because the seedlings are not there; this is a planting season, and yet the role has been transferred to PDM.

My second point is on this -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, on that point, make your proposal because we never provided a budget for seedlings to the ministry. Therefore, we should not expect the ministry to give us seedlings when we never budgeted for them.

DR ISINGOMA-MWESIGWA: Exactly.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Therefore, your proposal should be that maybe we provide money for seedlings.

DR ISINGOMA-MWESIGWA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for augmenting my point. You have heard from the Speaker. Can we find money for seedlings, so that we can alleviate our people's misery? This is the planting season, it may be too late now, but better late than never. Let us put money in the budget for seedlings.

The last point is on the National Livestock Breeding Organisation. This organisation's activities have not impacted our Bunyoro sub-region at all, which is very unfortunate, because it means the area now has some bit of deficiency as far as this organisation is concerned. May I propose that the ministry considers decentralisation of this organisation to all regions in the country – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, conclude your point because I interfered with your time.

DR ISINGOMA-MWESIGWA: Thank you, once again, for being very considerate. I was saying that this national breeding organisation is only headquarter-based. It is not visible in other regions within the country. Hon. Linda,

we want you to consider this. This is a very important organisation. We want to feel it impacting our regions.

Right now, it is headquarter-centred. That is my request, Mr Speaker. Can we find money which can help us decentralise this organisation to other regions within the periphery?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Santa, followed by Hon. Margret Makhoha.

12.15

MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank the Chairperson for this elaborate report.

There is no doubt that agriculture is the key driver of this economy. Over 70 per cent of our population is engaged in this sector, vis-à-vis the budget, which is declining from Shs 2.9 million to Shs 2.4 million, according to the committee. Where is our plan and priority, if we cannot plan for this 70 per cent, but plan in reverse order?

Mr Speaker, the chairperson said that there was a commitment. The country committed to 10 per cent of the budget to agriculture during the African Union Extraordinary Summit on Comprehensive Agriculture. I disagree with you, the chairperson. 10 per cent of the 70 per cent of our people is not asking for too much. As a Parliament, we need to provide money to these people, moreover, the majority of them are women.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, I want to talk about seeds and seedlings. When we were rationalising, we were told that it would help in saving money and being cost-effective. What are we seeing now? The National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) which was providing the seeds is no more. Cotton Development Organisation is no more.

The committee proposed a budget of Shs 50 billion for seeds and seedlings. This is a planting season and our people are not being helped so much by the Parish Development Model

(PDM). If there is anything that this Parliament can do to this budget, it is to provide money for seeds and seedlings to our farmers, who are the majority and where the majority of Ugandans are employed.

Lastly, I want to make mention of the post-harvest handling, together with farmers' education. Many times, we have seen a problem of poor storage and poor quality of our produce. Asking for Shs 2.5 billion for educating our farmers on post-harvest handling, on how we are supposed to handle our harvest so that we tap into the world market- just in the neighbourhood; Southern Sudan, our produce was rejected because of the poor quality. If this Parliament can provide this money to help, directly in extension services, I think, we shall be helping this country a lot. I thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Margaret Makhoha, followed by Hon. Margaret Rwabushaija. Hon. Byakatonda.

12.18

MS MARGARET MAKHOHA (Independent, Woman Representative, Namayingo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I also appreciate the committee chairperson, for the good report. It is very true that for Uganda, agriculture is our backbone. It is, however, very unfortunate that, according to the Chairperson, instead of increasing the budget, it is being reduced.

I wish to talk about two issues in her submission: One was; if we want to mechanise agriculture, we should give out tractors and moving tractors to our people. This is not your first time as the Ministry of Agriculture to procure these tractors, but somehow, some of our communities that received them, do not know where to get the spare parts.

It is very unfortunate that you give out tractors, which in a few years are dumped into scrap, simply because you have procured tractors which would not have spare parts in this country. If you procure from, say, China or elsewhere, can you please let the country know

where you put your spare parts so that we do not dispose of them as it is being done today. That is one of my key submissions.

I represent Namayingo, which has Bukooli Islands, but, at times, we even fear going to these fishing communities, because when you go there, they harass you. When you talk of PDM, they ask you how they can benefit from it. Shs 1 million of the PDM cannot help a fisherman.

I, therefore, request the Government that if it wants to help people, if it is affirmative action for the fishing communities, let us put money there. It is us who are in charge of passing the budget. Let us find the money, so that we can help our people. The Shs 1 million, which you always talk about cannot be of help to the fishing communities.

It is our duty to make sure that we provide for and help our people to be well, so that they can economically be of value to this country. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the VIP gallery this afternoon, this morning- it is not yet afternoon; oh it is afternoon. We started very early, you know, we left here towards 10.00 p.m. last night, and we were here early morning.

In the VIP Gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from the Parliament of Kenya. They include:

1. Dr Phillip Brightone Buchere Maj. (Rtd), Director, Senate Liaison Office;
2. Mr Samson Sorobot, Director, Sergeant-At-Arms;
3. Mr Anthony Njoroge, Director, Litigation and Compliance; and
4. Mr Richard Kemboi, Chief Procurement Officer;

The delegation is currently undergoing training at the Eastern and Southern African Management Institute (ESAMI).

They are accompanied by Dr Henry Warihiu and Mr Peter Gaway, staff from ESAMI.

They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me once again, colleagues, in welcoming them. (*Applause*)

Thank you. Hon. Kajwengye, Princess - I had picked Hon. Byakatonda, earlier. After Byakatonda, it is Hon. Kajwengye, then, Princess, Karamoja, Hon. Stella, Hajji - oh I had picked one of the - Yes, so after then Princess, then - Please, I am still in charge. Where did you get this indiscipline from? I do not know why you are hurrying- No, Hon. Byakatonda is usually here.

I was picking colleagues to speak. I had picked, Hon. Kajwengye, Princess, Hon. Stella Atyang, Hon. Kamuntu, I will pick you when I am coming back here; I will come back. Hon. Stella Atyang, Hajji Iddi, Doctor, Nsaba-Buturo, then Hon. Annet Mugisha, Jinja and then I do another round, colleagues. Hon. Byakatonda -

12.23

MR ABDULHU BYAKATONDA (Independent, Workers Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. You know when you talked about food, I got conditioned. I thank the Chairperson for the report. I think agriculture is quite crucial.

Last year, the statistics said that 70.26 per cent are employed by agriculture.

Mr Speaker, the Government had a number of commitments. Under the Malabo Declaration, we committed to give agriculture at least 10 per cent allocation of the budget but currently, we are still at 3.37 per cent, actually, it is even 2.4 per cent.

How do we promise people heaven, yet we do not go to places of worship? We need to be serious and do whatever it takes to prioritise agriculture.

We need to talk about agro-processing which you have only given Shs 2.4 billion. What processing is that? When I went to the village last weekend, farmers had got money from PDM, but the problem is where to sell their products.

I remember one of them coming with a cock which is sold at Shs 15,000 but desperately, they can sell it at Shs 10,000. That demonstrates the issue of market access.

The emphasis here has been on research and development but even our institution, The National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO) – as the chairperson has mentioned – is in arrears. The manpower is below 40 per cent and equally, the funding gap is severely low.

We need to ensure that we move in this direction because what happens to the commitment under the Malabo Declaration? We said at least 10 per cent, so we would even be at 15 per cent but 2.4 per cent?

I beg to move that we look at funds sustainability, if we want to increase employability of our youngsters because globally, Uganda has the largest youngest workforce and those are unemployed.

The other challenge is when we were growing up and even up to now, people who were culpable in schools were normally given agriculture as a punishment, to go and dig. So, our children have grown up thinking agriculture is a punishment for criminals. We need to change the narrative, so that we put it in our curriculum and ensure that we move.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware – *(Member timed out.)*

12.26

MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura): Thank you. Mr Speaker, I will address myself to three points.

1) Water for production

I am happy that the 2025/2026 budget has for once addressed the pertinent issue, in regard to agriculture. Climate change has robbed us of our usual rain patterns. We must rely on water that we already have in dams.

Unfortunately, the existing dams are what you can call “communal water granaries”. For example, in my constituency, big dams that were constructed in the 1940s, 1960s and 1970s have gone to waste.

They need to be desilted. Previously, there was a misalignment because water for production belonged to the Ministry of Water, yet the Ministry of Agriculture was implementing micro-scale irrigation, when they did not have dams.

I am happy now that this budget has put it clear that they are going to desilt these communal water granaries. I would be very glad to see Rwabigyemano, Rogonji, Muryampinguzi, Kaaro, Kyamagaaju and Kyakabunga desilted. With that, then you have a base and water to pump and irrigate the crops.

2) Value addition

Having produced, we now need to go a notch higher and invest in value addition, so that we can export processed goods. I am happy that this budget is also addressing it.

Lastly, research and development must be aligned with production. For example, our NARO scientists have come up with an anti-tick vaccine, which in essence is going to stop the cattle haemorrhage that we have been seeing and stop us from spending colossal sums of money. But we do not seem to be budgeting for its production.

In the last supplementary budget, we made available Shs 60 billion. I want to see this 2025/2026 budget consistently availing money for production of the anti-tick vaccine for our 44 million live animals. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. On the issue of the anti-tick vaccine, we also need harmonisation because we have two centres. We have the team of Prof. Kahwa, which receives huge billions under Presidential Affairs secretariat, that is the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation under Dr Musenero and then you also have NARO.

How are the two harmonising? Are we going to continue building two blocks from this aspect? We need to harmonise and know that since Makerere has developed its own and NARO has developed another, we can have two anti-tick vaccines but under one entity.

12.30

MS HARRIET BUSINGE (NRM, Woman Representative, Hoima): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to add my voice to the ones of those that have thanked the chairperson and committee members. I will precisely go to coffee. The committee and the entire House feel that we should have coffee seedlings because it is what we are promoting, as a country.

Much as we are advocating for new seedlings, the Uganda Coffee Development Authority, the liabilities that the ministry inherited did not pay for some seedlings that were supplied.

Hoima district has people that still demand from this Government, especially in Buhnika Subcounty where I come from. They were using their nursery beds. We should find money as Parliament to pay those people. It is not proper that the Government seems to be cheating the poor farmers.

Secondly, part of our area, the Albertine Graben near Lake Albert, falls in my docket. I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, because you found time to host those communities here.

We appreciate you because the sentiments were that Parliament does not care for the fishing communities. We realised that they have lost their livelihoods.

Those are gazetted fishing villages and their only source of livelihood is on the lake; which has been taken over by the army. They do not access it and everything that they use does not match with the times.

I recommend that we find a sizable amount of money to facilitate the acquisition of the recommended gear, so that our people can live. Otherwise, it is horrible for members of Parliament and other leaders, people are very angry.

Thirdly, is the post-harvest handling. We have seen cases where Uganda cannot export maize and this is dangerous. With PDM that has promoted production, we anticipate that we will have increased production from the PDM monies that we are giving out and other ventures.

I recommend that we should have some money for construction of silos at all levels. We can start small, maybe with a county and have storage. Some of us who come from villages know that some of our population cannot house themselves comfortably. So, it is a – (*Member timed out.*)

12.33

MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also join my colleagues to thank the committee for the elaborate report that has been presented. The chairperson informed us that Shs 350 billion was spent in Karamoja to solve the issue of hunger.

I would like to know in which financial year and how it was spent. If it was spent in a certain financial year, it would be good for the ministry to explain to the Karamoja Members of Parliament how that money was used so that we can appreciate.

Two, I want to comment on the issue of tractors. The ministry always provides tractors, but the number of tractors that are provided is too few to help the farmers to grow their crops. I want to give an example of the last financial year, when Karamoja was given 10 tractors, and they decided that they would do it district by district. They started with Karenga and the year ended with Karenga. Each district needs tractors so that they are able to grow crops in a timely manner.

I would suggest that more funds be given to the ministry for the purchase of tractors so that, at least, one tractor is provided per parish.

Additionally, there is the issue of water for production. We all know that Karamoja is prone to hunger, and the reason is inadequate water.

We have been urging for water for production, especially the construction of mega-dams. When the First Lady was the minister for Karamoja, at least she tried. She constructed for us two big mega-dams, that is, Kobebe and Nakicumet. They hold a lot of water, and are the ones helping us to water our animals for a longer time. However, those are few. What the ministry is doing is actually to construct small water ponds that hold little water and for a short time.

If there is money for water for production in Karamoja, bigger mega-dams should be constructed. Bigger mega-dams are like semi-lakes. We had actually proposed that you construct a semi-lake in a central place of Karamoja, in Lopei; it is a swampy area where all the water for Karamoja slopes to. It is a central place that helps more than five districts of the region. You could provide money to do that.

Secondly, you – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Hajji Iddi Isabirye?

12.36

MR IDDI ISABIRYE (NRM, Bunya County South, Mayuge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the chairperson and the members for the report.

Mr Speaker, we are all products of agriculture because, in one way or the other, you cannot survive without agriculture, and we must be known as a country for something. For quite a long time, Uganda has been known as an agricultural country. We have been known for growing coffee and for the natural resources that we have.

Mr Speaker, we cannot lament on the question of water for production with all the lakes and rivers that we have in this country. Where are our planners? Honourable minister for agriculture, with all the lakes and rivers that this country is endowed with, can we lament on the issue of water for production when the countries in the deserts have water? I think that

what we need to do is to call upon our planners in this country – how do we use the lakes and rivers that we have? We have a lot of water in this country. We should not talk about lacking water.

I want to emphasise the issue of the allocation of the Shs 50 billion that the committee has suggested. Shs 50 billion, for the fisheries sector, I would say it is not even adequate. For a long time, agriculture, as a ministry, has had three sectors: crop farming; livestock; and fisheries. However, if you look at the way allocation has been done in the ministry, the fisheries sector receives meagre allocation, yet fisheries, alone, is a gold mine.

If we invest a lot in fisheries – Members, you will agree with me that investing in fisheries is like putting money where you can see it. However, when you look at how allocation has been done, as Parliament, we need to implore the ministry to make sure that we invest in fisheries.

We are aware of what our fishing communities have been going through, and this should be done as an affirmative action. If we are talking about creating an alternative – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us have Hon. Annet Mugisha, Hon. Katali Loy and Dr Nsaba-Buturo.

12.39

MS ANNET MUGISHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bushenyi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I add my voice to appreciate the chairperson and the committee for the report. Mine is about arrears for nursery bed operators.

In 2022, the operators had a contract with the Government to supply seedlings to the beneficiaries. However, up to now, these farmers have never been paid, yet Vote 152 allocated Shs 19 billion and Shs 2 billion, respectively, to pay the nursery bed operators. We do not know where the money went. These farmers acquired loans from banks and SACCOs. The loans have accumulated a lot of

interest. As I talk now, farmers have lost their properties to banks. Some of them are battling with cases in courts. We do not know what to do.

Mr Speaker, the nursery bed operators from Bushenyi have already petitioned your office, and I know it is there. They want to be paid. The unfortunate part of it, Madam Chairperson, is that I have – (*Interjection*) - okay, through Mr Speaker. In her report, I have not heard about anything concerning paying arrears for our farmers. If you are not paying in this financial year, incorporate these farmers in the next financial year.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Katali Joy?

12.41

MS LOY KATALI (NRM, Woman Representative, Jinja): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving this opportunity. I thank the committee chairperson and the members for the detailed report. I agree with Members that the agriculture sector or ministry's budget should be enhanced.

Mr Speaker, on seedlings, during the time when we were giving out seedlings, our people were benefiting, but right now, it is the rainy season –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Order, honourable colleagues! I can hear a lot going on. I do not know what it is. Please!

MS KATALI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was talking about the supply of seedlings. At the time when we were used to supply seedlings, our people were benefiting. Right now, our people have no seedlings. With the Parish Development Model (PDM), people are doing whatever they want, not necessarily buying seedlings.

On this same point, when we look at - I agree with the committee that we should budget for the seedlings; the Government should provide funds for the seedlings. However, I request that sugarcane is included. Sugarcane, by default,

belongs to the trade ministry, making it difficult or impossible to get benefits from the ministry for agriculture. So, as we think about supplying seedlings –because I know we supply for tea and others – sugarcane should be included.

On tractors, Busoga – or Jinja – is still waiting. Some areas have received tractors, but we have not received any. So, I agree with the committee that we should provide funds to procure tractors, including for Jinja.

On arrears, it is embarrassing that year in, year out, we come here talking about arrears. People have supplied to the Government, but they are not paid. These people have gone to banks, have huge debts and have lost their property. It is embarrassing for us to come here year in and out and say that the Government cannot pay arrears.

It is my prayer that the Government makes it her desire to pay these people.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr Buturo?

12.43

DR JAMES NSABA-BUTURO (NRM, Bufumbira County East, Kisoro): Mr Speaker, I have a deep regret that the committee did not mention anything regarding genetically modified organisms. This is a disastrous indication that those who are charged with managing affairs of our country are not concerned about our existence, our sovereignty.

Why am I saying this, Mr Speaker? There is a conspiracy to kill our indigenous traditional seeds, in preference of genetically modified organism seeds. It is a conspiracy, which is spearheaded by the seed multinational corporations. Its purpose primarily is to ensure that we are dependent on outsiders.

Who, in his right mind, would align with those whose determination is to see that our indigenous traditional seeds and crops are killed? There is no mention in the report yet it is to do with our existence; the idea that we become a market for others and accept to depend on seeds whose prices we have no

control over, seeds that go along with pesticides whose primary purpose is to kill our soils.

I can say that many of our farmers today are witnessing decline in their yields. Soils are dying. Isn't it right that the report should recognise this threat to our existence that clearly is intended to make us subservient, dependent and losers of our sovereignty? While I do commend the committee chairperson for his report, I regret completely that we have failed to mention this issue of genetically modified organisms.

Lastly, a few months ago in this House, I moved a motion, which was urging the Government to promote, protect and preserve indigenous seeds. The House was in agreement completely. Not surprisingly, the ministry of concerned has gone quiet over this – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude, senior. Switch on.

DR NSABA-BUTURO: My indication is that there is reluctance from the quarters concerned to ensure that we protect, promote and preserve our seeds. This is treacherous and must not be accepted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member, we shall be asking for an action-taken report on the motion, which was passed here. We must have deliberate efforts. Remember when we had the Genetically Modified Organisms (GMO) law here. We found out that nearly all our scientists had been paid for, for post-graduate studies by those same seed companies. Whenever you could touch, you would find the people you who were mainly funded by Monsanto.

By the way, just go to the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) or National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), you will find that the biggest funder for doctoral and post-graduate studies is Monsanto. They confessed.

Therefore, I think we need also to have a budget to develop our own scientists as Government

so that they can be conditioned to think like Ugandans but not in support of their founders. That is an open secret. We cannot hide away from it. We need it to hear from these farmers of Buganda – Nakasongola, Hon. Wanzala and then we go to Hon. Kamuntu.

12.48

MR NOAH MUTEBI (NRM, Nakasongola County, Nakasongola): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to associate with the committee to support the report. I entirely agree that I represent the farmers, cattle keepers and the fishermen.

I would like to talk about the fishermen. Last Friday, I was at one of the landing sites in my area. The fishermen had to tell me a number of things. When you move around Lake Kyoga, those who are bordering Lake Kyoga like Hon. Okupa can bear me witness, that our landing sites are blocked by the water weed. You cannot access. The fishermen are in trouble of accessing the lake. My humble request is that the committee should also think about putting in place a fund to unblock the landing sites.

Secondly, the fishermen have gone ahead to register cooperatives. I want to suggest that there must be deliberate efforts to fund these fishermen so that they can have money to replace the lost property during the enforcement. You are aware, Mr Speaker, that there is enforcement taking place on the lake against the poor fishing methods. Fishermen have lost their nets and engines, among others. Government and the committee need to think about the fishermen and have a special fund for them to replace the lost property, as I have stated.

About water for production, I am happy that I am saying this. When you go to a number of districts, there are valley dams, as Hon. Kajwengye stated, which were excavated in the 1940s up to 1978. Those valley dams are there and silted. They need to be desilted. When you go to my place, like Kyankonwa, Nabubobya, Bamugolodde, Kisenyi and a number of other places in Wabinyonyi and Kakooge Subcounties, they need to be desilted. A special fund should be identified for this.

Lastly, people are demanding for hoes and seeds. Since it was a routine that every time we used to take maize seeds to them, when the season comes, they say, where are the seeds? Where are the hoes? It is important to think about it – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kamuntu followed by – I had already chosen but there is a special case - the Dean of Independence, Hon. Zijjan; and then Hon. Kiyaga.

12.51

MR MOSES KAMUNTU (Independent, Rubanda County West, Rubanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me also to join my colleagues in thanking the committee chairperson and the members for a detailed report. I come from Rubanda where we have two research stations, that is, Kalengyere and Kachwekano Research Stations.

Those research stations were abandoned. When I was growing up, my father was the chairman of the outgrowers so we would interact a lot with Karengyere Research Station, where varieties of Irish potatoes were being developed. I do not know what happened, those research stations have been abandoned for the last ten years. Right now, when we need improved seedlings, we go to our neighbours, Rwanda.

I am happy that the committee has put little money on NARO. However, for people from Kigezi, we grow Irish potatoes and vegetables a lot. For us to have improved seedlings, we need NARO to keep on doing research on new seedlings. Now that the project in NARO was abandoned, we are facing it rough to pick seedlings, whose soil tastes we do not know. We are losing Irish potatoes in Kigezi because of that case.

Mr Speaker, in Rubanda I have pygmies but they have never been considered in any programme, especially agricultural programmes. This time, I would like to see these people also included because I am tired of buying food for them every day, and yet they are over 1,000. When you buy food and train them, they ask

you for firewood and sauce pans, but they are Ugandans and they vote. They used to live in Ibamba and Echuya Forest Reserves which was their natural habitat, but they were evicted.

Mr Speaker, we need to consider and train our people in agriculture because they are Ugandans - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Zijjan followed by Hon. Hillary Kiyaga.

12.54

MR DAVID ZIJJAN (Independent, Butembe County, Jinja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson and her committee for a good report.

My focus is on the quality even before we debate the interventions and the amounts therein. The quality of what is supplied; whether it is seeds, seedlings, stems or animals, we need to consider quality against quantity. I have observed that the challenge we have is that when money is remitted, the deals start. The suppliers - the people who are contracted to procure and supply those seeds, stems, seedlings, animals and etcetera - buy from within and the quality is not regarded. Therefore, they supply seeds which are substandard, stems which have diseases and animals of poor breeds.

There was an intervention recently where MPs, I think, had 10 cows to supply in their different constituencies. The supplier assured recipients that the cows were in-calf but they were not. The cows had issues and the people who received them resorted to slaughtering them for Christmas because the animals had become liabilities, rather than productive interventions.

Therefore, as we think about giving money for these interventions, there has to be due diligence to ensure that there is value for money, the crops, the seeds, the stems and the animals supplied must be of good breeds and high quality. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Hillary Kiyaga and then Hon. Okupa.

12.56

MR HILLARY KIYAGA (NUP, Mawokota County North, Mpigi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is an inquiry from the chairperson about the 19 mechanised centres. I would like to know if the committee interrogated and found out whether they are operational and where they are located. I have been asking most of my colleagues, but many of them are not aware of where these mechanised centres are located.

Lastly, Madam Chairperson, I would like to know how you went about examining the quality of products on the market and the regulation. How do we empower the regulating bodies since we are budgeting for this year? Most of the farmers are complaining about the poor products on the market so we need to empower the regulating bodies such that we get rid of the fake drugs and inputs on the market. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

12.57

MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we met with the Minister of State for Fisheries and the permanent secretary, the minister promised to avail this House with the regulations after the law we passed.

Mr Speaker, it is over -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we sorted that out yesterday. You can move to another point.

MR OKUPA: Have they delivered the regulations?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We sorted that out yesterday. You can check the *Hansard*.

MR OKUPA: We need the regulations because the issue that we raised at that time -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we sorted that out yesterday. Kindly go to another point because we shall be repeating ourselves.

MR OKUPA: Most obliged. I will cross-check. Thank you. I was raising this because they have continued arresting fishermen from Kasilo and detaining them in Kamuli. I do not know why they cannot detain them in Serere if they have committed any crime on the lake. That will help us.

On the issue of the dams desilting, I am one of the people who are supposed to have benefitted from the desilting of dams. Two years ago, the ministry came -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You as a person or your community?

MR OKUPA: As Kasilo County. All the ministers were there and we commissioned it. However, two years down the road, it is on and off. May I know from the minister when these projects will be completed?

I also request that the committee chairperson and her team lead a committee to these areas to see the progress of desilting these dams. They are supposed to provide fishing ponds and access roads, but nothing has been completed up to now.

There is the issue of tractors, which we only hear of. They have promised us tractors over and over again. I would like to know the criteria for giving tractors to the farming communities.

Serere Research Station – Dr Okaasai over there knows it. When shall we rehabilitate it to what it used to be, when Hon. Okaasai and the team just joined the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries? Year in, year out, when are we going to rehabilitate Serere Research Station?

As I conclude, there is the issue of animals that they gave some districts. My chairman informed me following what the committee chairperson has talked about - I do not know whether they check the service providers. How can they say that they are bringing bulls for breeding and they bring a castrated bull? *(Laughter)* How can that happen? I would like the honourable minister to get in touch with the chairperson – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Member for Kyotera and then Hon. Mayanja.

1.01

MS FORTUNATE NANTONGO (DP, Woman Representative, Kyotera): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson for the report and I wish to add my voice to the issue of the arrears of the coffee nursery operators. As of now, they stand at over Shs 33 billion. This financial year, over Shs 15 billion was released to clear some of these arrears. However, only Shs 14 billion was paid.

Mr Speaker, it is very important that we empower our people to plant coffee because it is an important cash crop for export. However, these nursery operators are using their money and getting loans to ensure that we promote the planting of coffee as a project done by the Government. I, therefore, think that it is very important that funds be allocated to clear the arrears so that they can go on with their businesses.

Secondly, the issue of funding the Fishermen Protection Unit (FPU) to provide security on the lakes is very important. This is because as we speak now, there is so much insecurity on the lakes. As Members of Parliament, we are being asked to give money for fuel by the fishermen and we have come in because they are our voters. However, the Government should take it on to ensure that they provide fuel to the FPU units so that they can do the work that they are supposed to do on the lakes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Allan Mayanja?

1.02

MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke): Thank you, Mr Speaker for the opportunity. My concern is on post-harvest handling and value addition. According to the report, the ministry has allocated Shs 10.63 billion for the warehouse receipt system.

Honourable minister, we need clarification on this. Is it an anomaly? We are aware that

warehouses are supposed to be handled by the Ministry of Trade, but we can see you are suggesting Shs 10.60 billion for the warehouse receipt system.

Instead, this money should have been allocated for storage facilities. For instance, in Nakaseke, or even the whole country, our farmers are selling maize grains very cheaply between Shs 500 and Shs 700 per kilogramme because they lack storage facilities yet they are buying the so-called improved seeds very expensively. In Nakaseke, they buy a kilogramme of maize seed between Shs 20,000 to Shs 50,000, which is very expensive.

Mr Speaker, I suggest that this Shs 10.6 billion be allocated or re-allocated to storage facilities starting from the level of a subcounty to regional or even sub regional level. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chair, Climate Change.

1.04

MR LAWRENCE SONGA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee for the submission and for the report.

It is true that 70 per cent of our people are involved in agriculture, and majority are smallholder farmers who are feeding Uganda and the world. Therefore, these farmers need a lot of support. Incidentally, a good number of them are actually women. In all our undertakings as far as agriculture is concerned, let us support these smallholder farmers with technology, including small-scale irrigation, post-harvest handling, and storage. I think that will be very important.

There is also the issue of climate change, which is affecting most of these farmers and yet we do not have capacity for agricultural insurance. Therefore, the Government should be in position to support these smallholder farmers with insurance so that in case of losses, they do not give up agriculture.

On disappearing indigenous crops – the traditional ones, which are now disappearing - sometimes when you look for pumpkin seeds, you will not get the original ones. Why don't we also invest in seed banks to protect our indigenous seeds? We should have seed banks where people who want to plant indigenous can access that.

On trade, you are aware that the European Union has put in place the deforestation law. We need two things. One, we need to have trade negotiations with the European Union so that this does not touch us so much.

At the same time, we should create markets locally, including negotiating with international communities. For example, these refugees we are hosting should buy food from here other than bringing food from elsewhere. That will also support our farmers. Another negotiation should be on the issue that the law should come gradually, not abruptly.

In addition, bulk water transfer is needed in Uganda to support agriculture. Some of this will require that we go to regional communities so that we can have this bulk water transfer that can support agriculture.

Finally without good infrastructure, we are not going to encourage farmers to promote agriculture. Therefore, we need to address this quickly. I really implore the chairperson to comment on the climate smart project which is coming and also the oil seed infrastructure. Thank you very much.

1.07

MR SOWEDI KITANYWA (NRM, Busongora County North, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues to thank the committee for the good report.

Yesterday, when the honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was presenting a motion for this budget, he indicated that there are 10 budget priority areas and one of them was expanding irrigation for agricultural stability. This points to the issue of water for irrigation.

According to the report, the committee has noted that we require Shs 120 billion to ensure that we provide water for production. What is provided for is Shs 68 billion and we have a deficit of Shs 50.1 billion. I beg that since irrigation is one of our priority areas, we should be seen to fulfil what we intend to achieve. We need to look for funds and provide the whole Shs 120 billion so that we can fulfil our priority areas under this budget. Otherwise, it is self-defeating. If we say that water for production is one of our priority areas and yet we cannot allocate funds for the very area that we have identified as a priority area, we seem not to be fulfilling what we intend to do. Thank you.

1.09

MR EVANS KANYIKE (NUP, Bukoto County East, Masaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries – (*Interjection*) - This brother of mine, Hon. Ngompek, wants to distract the acting Leader of the Opposition.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: LOP, may I request that you step slightly away from the microphone so that the sound output is clearer? Thank you.

MR KANYIKE: Mr Speaker, I was saying that the committee was concerned about the underfunding of the agricultural sector; tte 2.4 percent vis-a-vis the 10 per cent. As a Government, we are part of three declarations: the Maputo Protocol, which we signed in 2003, the Malabo Declaration of 2014, and the recent Kampala Declaration of 2025. It is challenging.

Aware that as a country, 70 per cent of the population is employed in the agricultural sector, we need commitment from the Government because we do not sign these protocols as a formality or a ritual. We need commitment from Government so that we fund the agricultural sector, which employs the biggest population in the country.

Two is the issue of agricultural mechanisation. The report missed a point to show which land has been opened. Madam chairperson of the

committee, you did not show the land which has been opened and the number of farmers who are benefiting from the tractors we give out as Government as well as the criteria.

You see, almost in every part of the country, we have cooperatives. How I wish the Government prioritises these cooperative unions so that the tractors which are given out are given out through the cooperatives, so that they can be accessed – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: LOP, please conclude.

MR KANYIKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am also concerned about agricultural financing and accessibility to credit facilities. We made a resolution here in Parliament and the Government should act on that resolution which was taken by Parliament. The resolution said that the Government should establish an agricultural bank where the farmers can get affordable credit facilities.

Mr Speaker, our farmers compete with business people in the commercial banks and yet the agricultural sector is vulnerable to climate changes.

Lastly, I am also concerned about the importation of a lot of fertilisers from China, Netherlands and Kenya, aware that in 2018, the President and his Cabinet went to Tororo, Osukuru and opened a fertiliser facility but up to now, it has not been given enough funding to take off.

What was the intention of the President moving from Kampala to Tororo to open up that facility? It was opened but at the end of the day, we have nothing from there and yet we are blessed as a country; we have phosphates, especially in Tororo. We should avail funds for this facility to take off – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Leader of the Opposition. We consider your statement because the committee considers both the statement from the ministry and the alternative statement. I do not want us to repeat ourselves here.

MR KANYIKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, I am trying to be courteous.

MR KANYIKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My able ministers of agriculture and fisheries articulated our alternative budget priorities. How I wish that the chairperson of the committee and the ministers responsible take time to read them as they will help on how we process this budget. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, start with the very important issue; you started an animal breeding programme but you gave out castrated bulls for breeding, according to Hon. Okupa.

1.16

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (AGRICULTURE) (Mr Fred Bwino): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of

all, I would like to commend the honourable chairperson and members of the committee for eloquently presenting the situation in the agriculture sector. I also thank the honourable members for analysing the report by the chairperson through the 23 honourable members who have contributed.

Hon. Oguzu Lee called upon the Government to align the budget with the National Development Plan (NDP) IV. I totally agree with him.

He also talked about the importance of agriculture vis-a-vis the financing of various enterprises. He gave an example of coffee that brings in a lot of revenue to the country but is not adequately financed.

I would like to correct Hon. Oguzu that actually, in the last financial year, the foreign exchange that this nation received from coffee was not US\$ 1.1 billion. It was US\$ 1.6 billion. It is bringing in more than what you thought, although we are still exporting raw coffee. However, you are right about these enterprises receiving inadequate financing.

Hon. Helen Nakimuli commended the committee for providing a recommendation for more support to the Fisheries Protection Unit, and I agree with you.

On inadequate support to the fisheries community compared to other farming communities in terms of inputs, if you looked at the report by the committee, there is a provision for affirmative action for the fisheries community. We request Parliament to support our proposal that a special fund or budgetary provision be made for the fisheries community as affirmative action.

Hon. Nsamba requested us to talk about the savings made from Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Expenditure (RAPEX).

Honourable colleagues, for those who attended the House yesterday, the report on Public Service and Local Government was presented and the same question was raised. The Minister of Public Service informed the House that RAPEX is still a work in progress. The Ministry of Public Service has not yet completed the exercise and at this stage we are not able to determine how much we have saved and I associate myself with that response.

Hon. Nsamba wanted the confidence that the fears that were expressed here during the debate on RAPEX have been addressed by the ministry, specifically, issues to do with the capacity to absorb the agencies that were brought back to the ministry.

I would like report to the House that the agencies that came back to the ministry are settling in well and the progress is good. For the issues of harmony that you mentioned, I am not aware of cases where meetings have not ended without “a fist-fight” between participants. The ministry is functional.

Hon. Patrick Isingoma talked about the population demanding for seedlings but the ministry says the funds were taken up – funds that were meant for seedlings are now in PDM.

Yes, that is true. We have had expressions of this concern from across the country and that is why we made a proposal that some budgetary provisions be made for seeds and seedlings as well as stocking material, most especially as we cross to the new policy environment where the Government is no longer distributing agricultural inputs to the population.

Our proposal is part of the report that has been presented and upheld by the committee. We, therefore, request for your support so that some money is provided for in the budget.

There is also the issue of the National Genetic Resources Centre & Data Bank (NAGRC&DB), which is responsible for livestock breeding, not reaching Bunyoro. The Member’s proposal is that we decentralise it to all the regions.

We have made attempts to come nearer to the population, but we have not yet covered the whole country. We are in some parts of the North – we are in Acholi, Lango, Busoga and Ankole, but we have not reached everywhere. However, your request has budgetary implications. Therefore, we suggest that Parliament supports us as we plan to come nearer to the people.

Hon. Santa Alum brought up the issue of seeds and seedlings. She said that National Agricultural Advisory Services (NAADS) is no more, and the committee proposed some money for seedlings and seeds. I think her proposal was that Parliament approves the proposal by the committee, that some money be provided for seedlings. I agree with her.

On the issue of -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you have five minutes.

MR BWINO: Thank you. Let me try to hurry up. Hon. Margaret Makhoha said that the tractors are distributed, but the country is not told where to find spare parts.

This is the rationale for the 19 mechanisation centres that the honourable chairperson talked about. Allow me to combine this with the

concern of another honourable member, who asked about where these mechanisation centres are.

The 19 mechanisation centres, according to a decision of Cabinet, are in all the subregions. We are supposed to establish one mechanisation per subregion. For example, Busoga, Bukedi, Bugisu, Sebei – those subregions that correspond with the old districts at independence. I think they are 18. The 19th is supposed to be a national referral mechanisation centre, located at Namalere.

Are they operational or not? We have started on the journey of establishing those 19 mechanisation centres. So far, we have only five in place. However, even those five are not fully equipped. Some of them are not fully constructed. Therefore, it is work in progress. For example, in Mbale, there is one that we started, which we are still constructing and equipping. Another one is in Lango – in Agwata. There is one in Kiryandongo and another in Mpigi to cater for the areas near Mpigi. We have one in Busoga, specifically in Iganga. We have just started the one in Iganga.

Therefore, our plan is that in each of those mechanisation centres, there will be spare parts for the tractors that we distribute to the country. We shall not stop at that. We shall also train tractor mechanics and technicians. We shall also train operators of these machines, in those mechanisation centres.

On the issue of the fishing community – that they are not supported – I think I have already addressed that.

Hon. Byakatonda talked about the Malabo Declaration. I think this is for all of us, because this House has the mandate of appropriation. We need to progressively increase the budget for agriculture, in view of this.

Hon. Kajwengye talked about the communal water facilities that are silted. Yes, we have made a proposal but as I said earlier, it is a budgetary matter; we need to address it together.

Aligning research and development and production, for example, the anti-tick vaccine. On the anti-tick vaccines, we have made a request for funds for mass production of this vaccine and we hope that we shall get those funds.

Mr Speaker, you have asked us to harmonise the two centres – the one of Prof. Kahwa – Prof. Kahwa is from Makerere University – and the other centre of National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), in as far as the anti-vaccine study is concerned. It was –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is for production, honourable minister. I know we funded the studies.

MR BWINO: Okay. Mr Speaker, the point is taken and we shall harmonise them.

Hon. Harriet Businge raised the issue of seedlings arrears. I want to put the record clear that in the Financial Year 2022/2023, the Government took a decision, having received the petition from nursery operators, to buy seedlings for tea and coffee from them. This is because the operators were complaining that when the Government stopped distributing seedlings to farmers directly, at that time the Government did not warn the operators that such a policy was in the pipeline. They had therefore prepared massively for big procurement by the Government.

The Cabinet took a decision to buy all those seedlings from the operators on condition that the operators accept to be paid in three financial years. These operators agreed so, we got the seedlings worth Shs 71.8 billion for tea and Shs 37.4 billion for coffee. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development was supposed to phase the payment in three financial years.

The ministry for finance has been providing some funds and we have made partial payment. Unfortunately, these arrears are not provided for. My request to this House is that you intervene and funds are provided to clear these arrears.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, this is a matter we handled here with the minister for finance, Hon. Kasaija, and he had promised two years. I remember here on the Floor.

MR BWINO: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister, your time is up. That is if you are going to answer the one of giving castrated bulls. Clarify on it.

MR BWINO: Mr Speaker, I will start with that one. As we heard from Hon. Elijah Okupa, he told us that -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable colleagues, a Member on the Floor has a right to accept your request or not and you do not insist, so, if the minister has felt he has clarified enough, please let us not harass him. Honourable minister, continue.

MR BWINO: He told us that the program is a breeding program. His concern is that a castrated bull was supplied for a breeding programme. This is contradictory. I want to request you, Mr Speaker, that you allow me to get details of this, so that we get to the bottom of it and we report back.

In conclusion, I want to also comment on the issue of Genetically Modified Organisms (GMOs) that was raised by Hon. Nsaba-Buturo. My comment is in the form of a request to Parliament that we need to conclude legislation on this matter, because in the absence of legislation, there is a gap.

When you go to the supermarkets in Kampala, there are GMO products which are taking advantage of this vacuum of a lack of legislation. Therefore, my request is that both the Executive and the Parliament work together to ensure that we conclude this process of legislating on this matter. I thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Chairperson, did you have one or two matters to clarify?

MS LINDA AUMA: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. My issue was raised by Hon. Stella Atiang on the Shs 350 billion that was provided to handle the hunger that was in Karamoja. She was asking when this money was provided.

This was in 2022/2023 when hunger hit Karamoja. Colleagues, you remember that. That is why, in anticipation of what is going to happen this year, we had to provide this for the entire country. This anticipation of the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is not strictly for Karamoja but rather what Uganda is going to experience.

On the issue of mechanised dams that Hon. Kajwengye raised, it is in the body of our recommendation and it is going to be desilted.

Finally, I thank honourable colleague for supporting the agricultural sector and you, the leadership of this Parliament, Mr Speaker. I also thank Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. That is why this time, our report is not bulky. In the budget estimate, they provided an extra Shs 300 billion to the agricultural sector.

Nevertheless, it is not enough if we are to really bring out the full potential of this agro-industrialisation programme. I thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the ministerial policy statements and Budget Estimates for Financial year 2025/26 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now refer this report and specifically the recommendations to the Committee on Budget for reconciliation, harmonisation and consolidation as per Rule 149 (2) of our Rules of Procedure.

This is where the issues of compliance with National Development Plan IV (NDPIV) should

be handled at that Budget level. Otherwise, you would tell a committee to cut within or look within its resources. Finance has already done its part of bringing the draft estimates, as required under the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). The whole budgeting process is in our hands.

Honourable colleagues, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have students and teachers from Mpanga Muslim Secondary School, Butambala County, Butambala District. They are represented by Hon. Kivumbi Muwanga and Hon. Nalule Aisha Kabanda. They have come to observe proceedings of this House, please join me in welcoming them. Next.

THE COMMITTEE ON EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Mr Chairperson, you have 15 minutes. This is one Vote. Let us do it, colleagues and then we break off for lunch. 15 minutes, Mr Chairperson, and I know you are good at keeping time.

1.40

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EAST AFRICAN AFFAIRS (Mr James Nsaba Buturo): Mr Speaker, permit me, first of all, to congratulate you for setting a national record when, two weeks ago, you visited the Pearl of Africa, Uganda. That was in my constituency. You raised over Shs 1.7 billion, a record that has not been broken.

Mr Speaker, in case any Members want to know what the Pearl of Uganda is, it is Kisoro District. (*Laughter*) This is where Winston Churchill stood and made that famous declaration that “*Uganda is the Pearl of Africa*”.

Also, Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I see Hon. Okupa feeling bad about it. That it was not Kasilo.

MR NSABA BUTURO: Certainly not Kasilo and I do not think Mitooma would compare anyway. The scenic beauty of the Pearl of Uganda is unparalleled.

That aside, permit me, to lay on the Table a report, minutes and related documents of the Committee on East African Community Affairs on the ministerial policy statement of Ministry of East African Community Affairs for Financial Year 2025/2026.

I go straight to the recommendations and observations made by the Committee on East African Affairs.

Programme Implementation Action Plan

The committee notes that there was no information for the base year and baseline indicators in the ministerial policy statement of the ministry.

The committee recommends that this issue be brought to the attention of the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to review the Programme Budgeting System to allow incorporation of the baseline year and indicators on the system.

ii. Expiry of the strategic plans for the ministry and other Ministries, Departments and Agencies

The committee recommends that the National Planning Authority and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development fast track completion of the strategic plan of the MDAs, including the ministry, in order to enable them to monitor implementation of the National Development Plan IV.

iii. Limited awareness about the existence and benefits of the East African Community integration

The committee makes several recommendations:

a. The Ministry of East African Community Affairs expedites the formulation of a communication strategy for the ministry, in order to create the right approaches for effective communication to create awareness to the populace of the benefits of the integration and how they can tap into the available trade opportunities;

- b. The ministry, together with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, UNBS and other stakeholders under Private Sector Development Programme, should organise trainings for traders, manufacturers and other business people countrywide on the required qualities and standards of goods and services for the market, and how to add value on their products, package, preserve and market them in the East African Community market; and
- c. The minister should organise East African Community cultural exhibitions, sports galas and other social activities, bringing Member States together to showcase their talents, values and abilities. This will ease the integration, since people from Member States will appreciate the way of life of others and work with them harmoniously.
- iv. Non-operational East African Community Protocol on Peace and Security

The committee recommends that the ministry advocates for cooperation between partner states' border agencies through binding agreements, and also the creation of professional joint forces at entry points to all partner states and on the roads, with joint patrols operating in the area to curb border conflicts, smuggling and murder of traders or suspects.

- v. Non-operational Customs Union and Common Market Protocol

The committee recommends that:

- a) The ministry fast tracks implementation of the Customs Union and Common Market protocols on all East African Community borders, which will open up and also widen the market created by the integration. It should also devise and advocate for sanctions and punitive actions towards non-compliance to East African Community protocols and policies;
- b) The ministry fast tracks the removal of these Non-Tariff Barriers across the region to allow free trade within the region.

- vi. Several barriers faced by agriculture and livestock cross-border traders
- a. The committee recommends that the ministry works hand in hand with the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries under the Agro-Industrialisation Programme to fast track establishment of testing laboratories to deploy quality assurance managers from relevant agencies for verification of goods at the borders;
- b. There is also need to construct quality control infrastructure for handling agricultural exports at inspection points (National Agricultural Food Safety Laboratory and Support Centre, Export Animal Quarantine holding ground and abattoir facilities, Land Border Quarantine Stations, Land Border Export Inspection facilities); and
- c. There is a need to empower agricultural officers at the border points to be able to issue agricultural export certificates to ease the cost of doing business by the traders.
- vii. Poor infrastructure in terms of roads and railways which do not suit transportation of products to the markets and understaffing.

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that:

- a. The Government allocates resources to improve the road network across borders, as well as revamp the railway network to enhance trade among partner states;
- b. The Government should also increase funding at border posts in order to ease movement of goods, people and tourists;
- c. The East African Community needs to pick a leaf from the Southern African Development Community infrastructure projects, where these countries collectively invest in road, railway, water and air transport in a selected part of the region to enhance the transport network in the region; and

- d. The Government should fast track the construction of the Suam and Mulwanda border posts between Uganda and Kenya to decongest the other border posts.

viii. Kiswahili language

The committee recommends that:

- a. The ministry be provided with Shs 1.5 billion to facilitate promotion of Kiswahili in all the ministries, departments and agencies, and local governments; and
- b. Kiswahili should be popularised in all government institutions as a way of integrating and unifying communities, and also to facilitate trade.
- ix. Payment of East African Community gratuity and pension for former employees of the defunct East African Community

The committee recommends that the ministry expedites the process of ensuring that the 166 pensioners of the defunct East African Airways, as verified by the Auditor-General, are paid.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the East African Community integration process is facing several challenges that need our urgent attention. The proposed budget estimates for the financial year have been given out and we are pleased to announce that the report does encourage the ministry concerned to give more funding to the Ministry of East African Community Affairs. I beg to submit. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable chairperson. Honourable colleagues, debate starts now. I will start with Prof. Mushemeza, Dr Akiki, Hon. Linda, Member from Rukungiri, Hon. Atima, Member for Kajara, “*Afande*”, Member for Lamwo, Doctor and Hon. Angura. I am first picking those who have not yet spoken. I am giving you three minutes each.

1.52

PROF. ELIJAH MUSHEMEZA (Independent, Sheema County South, Sheema):

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the chairperson of the committee for a well-articulated report. I have two issues which have been pending over the years.

Whereas the Constitution of Uganda clearly articulates the principles that guide Uganda’s foreign policy, over the years, the Ministry of Foreign Affairs has not come up and articulated Uganda’s foreign policy. We find other ministries like the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs with a defence policy, and this issue was raised during the days of New Partnerships for Africa’s Development (NEPAD) and the African Peer Review Mechanism of not having an articulated document on Uganda’s foreign policy. What is the problem?

The second and last issue I want to raise has also been on the table for over the years, where it has been expected that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs would liaise with the Ministry of Trade and Industry to deploy commercial officers in our embassies so that we can promote trade and business. I expected this policy statement to capture the budgetary implications of these two important issues that have been on the table. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr Akiiki Florence?

1.52

MS FLORENCE ASHIMWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Masindi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and I thank the chairperson and the committee on East Africa for the good report.

I want to address the issue of the promotion of Kiswahili. It is no wonder that indeed Uganda is behind in terms of the language of communication, and indeed when we are in Tanzania or Kenya, Ugandans are always seen speaking English. While our counterparts are talking Swahili, we feel left out.

However, this issue came under our Committee of Gender, Labour and Social Development, specifically under culture. We discussed it, and it was under an Act of Swahili, but we pushed the Swahili issue to the Ministry of Education and Sports. This brings me back to the issue of programme budgeting. Why, up to now, have we failed to understand the issue of programme budgeting and we are still under sector budgeting? We find that some of these programmes could be put under one programme so the Shs 1.5 billion - When we push Swahili to the Ministry of Education and Sports, won't it be sort of double budgeting?

Mr Speaker, programme budgeting is still a big issue. Some programmes should fall under one sector so that we budget; if it is water for production, you find water in every sector. We need a whole workshop on programme budgeting. Therefore, Shs 1.5 billion to the Ministry of East African Affairs, then there is Swahili in education - I do not know what. Can we take it to the Ministry of Education and Sports? Are you the right sector to handle this? I stop here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I would think it is one way of making this ministry relevant. Otherwise, you know as part - because they have a task of making the East African Community known to the people so since Swahili is a critical language for East Africa, it would be a channel. Maybe they would use it as one for the sensitisation of the people about the East African Community and then the language, and we hit two birds with one stone. I am just thinking aloud. Hon. Linda?

1.56

MS IRENE LINDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Fort Portal City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I equally join my colleagues in thanking the chairperson for the presentation of the report of the committee.

My point of issue goes on non-payment of arrears for the senior citizens who worked with the East African Community. They have been moving all the time because we do not

have regional offices; they have to move to Kampala to claim their money, which has never been paid to date. Mr Speaker, I want the chairperson to tell us if they are planning to budget for payment of these arrears.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Midius?

1.57

MS MIDIUS NATUKUNDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukungiri): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in thanking the committee for the report. I commend them because in the report, the chairperson said that we need to organise cultural and trade exhibitions to promote trade and other businesses in the neighbouring states and I agree with that. However, some of the businesses that have started in the neighbouring states in the East African Community have not been given enough support. I can attest to a secondary school in Burundi which uses the Ugandan curriculum.

I remember at one point in this House, someone raised that issue. When it comes to time for examinations, these students sit for the Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB) examinations, but they are forced to come from Burundi and sit their examinations in Uganda. I would think that if they are given enough support, the students can, if they are given a centre in Burundi, sit the examinations in Burundi and not in Uganda.

When you talk about education, I remember 10 years ago, we used to have many students from East African Community flocking to Uganda to have their education here. As you can see now, the situation has changed. The number of East African students coming to Uganda has decreased. Therefore, I think they should look into that and see what happened and provide avenues to promote the education sector so that we can have these East African students coming to Uganda again.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Atima, followed by Hon. Timuzugu.

1.59

MR JACKSON ATIMA (NRM, Arua Central Division, Arua City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in thanking the chairperson and the committee for a wonderful report. My concern is the common currency used in the EAC. I will recommend that we advocate to use one currency in the EAC so that it eases transactions in our businesses. This is basically because when you move to some of our neighbouring countries, you find that the value of their currency is too low, which cannot allow business transactions to happen properly. It would be an achievement if we advocated for one currency.

Two, I recommend that we work on our pricing of some essential commodities like fuel, which cause smuggling in this country. You find that in some of the neighbouring countries, prices of fuel are too low, making our traders to cross the border and bring this fuel, which is smuggled, and we lose revenue through that. If we can harmonise some of the essential commodity prices, that would solve some problems in the EAC.

Lastly, the use of visa. You find that some of our neighbouring countries make it difficult for Ugandans to move out, yet if we had harmonised that, it would be easy to cause movement.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Timuzugu, followed by Dr Bhoka Didi.

2.00

MR MICHEAL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, and allow me to thank the committee led by the chairperson. When this Community was established at the beginning and even at its rejuvenation, the aim was to make sure that there is political and social cohesion.

Secondly, we wanted to have trade within the Community so that we do not lose a lot of money as we import from far away countries. At the moment, people in Congo can speak Swahili. I do not know how it jumped to Congo

and left Uganda. I do not know how Rwandans can speak better Swahili than Ugandans when it is very far from Kenya.

Therefore, the recommendation of the committee that Swahili should be encouraged in all Government agencies and departments is very important. Hon. Akiiki was talking about taking Swahili to education. It is a cross-cutting issue. In Parliament, there is no way we can benefit from education. We have to use our budget to make sure that we learn Kiswahili. Other ministries also have to use their own budgets. So, each and every ministry should budget for Kiswahili.

I am proposing that in the budget for the coming financial year, let us make sure that every department and ministry, including Parliament, budgets for Kiswahili so that we have a Kiswahili teacher and we at least start.

As we teach Kiswahili in schools, we also go ahead and learn it because we cannot wait. We have to negotiate as we trade and ensure political cohesion in East Africa. Thank you.

2.03

MR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to start by appreciating the committee chairperson and members for prioritising the recommendations of fast-tracking the payment of gratuity and pension of our servicemen who served in the defunct East African Community (EAC).

Many of these gallant men and women have died, very frail, poor and desperate. The earlier we fast-track the commitment of resources to pay the gratuity of these senior citizens, the more we will improve their livelihood.

Secondly, we have a duty to secure the health and well-being of the 350 million people in the East African Community. Diseases have no boundaries. The COVID-19 Pandemic taught us a lesson that within the East African Community, we have different approaches to responding to public health emergencies.

We urge the Ministry of East African Community Affairs to work closely with the ministries of health within the community to strengthen the East African Community regional public health systems so that we can respond to public health threats, particularly at the ports of exit and entry in our porous borders.

Thirdly, there is the portability of health insurance services. Ladies and gentlemen, within the East African Community, Uganda seems to be a loner in failing to provide its citizens with a health insurance scheme because Kenya, Tanzania, Rwanda, and Burundi have.

We look forward to ensuring that we fast-track the national health insurance through the Ministry for East African Community Affairs, the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA), the Ministry of Health, and this National Assembly. We also want to have a provision for portability so that when I fall sick in Nairobi, I will be able to use my health insurance card from Uganda.

Finally, the portability and mobility of labour; our young men and women in Uganda are looking for job opportunities. Studies by the World Bank and other institutions that have studied labour productivity look at our human resources - *(Member timed out.)*

2.06

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me also to thank the chairperson of the committee and the members for the report. Without repeating what my colleagues have said, I represent a border constituency where Kenya is a stone-throw away.

However, I would like to emphasise that even along the border corridor, the benefits of the EAC have not been appreciated very much. I request that we continue to sensitise our people, provide for *barazas* such that our people know that the benefits are for all of us.

That leads me to an issue of movement of people along the border. Many times when

we cross to Kenya and you are moving back casually, maybe with something in a “*kaveera*” but you are referred to as a smuggler by our Uganda Revenue Authority people.

The issue of how far someone can move within the borders is something that has been discussed time and again. It encourages brotherhood when you move, come back with a *kaveera* and the same happens with these people. That will continue to emphasise our relationship as we strengthen the EAC.

Honourable colleagues have spoken about Kiswahili. I spoke Kiswahili on the Floor here at one point in the past. It should start with us. In some instances, when you speak English and you are across the borders, those people are suspicious.

They think that it is only through speaking Kiswahili that they can appreciate what you are telling them. It is high time we emphasized this and continued to allocate resources so that Kiswahili can become a language appreciated by all of us and spoken freely, starting with us here. *Tafadha lituanze kuongea Kiswahili hapa.* It will help us strengthen this institution. Thank you.

2.08

DR ANTHONY OKULLO (NRM, Lamwo County, Lamwo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking the chairperson of the Committee on East African Community Affairs and the members for the good report.

I would like to comment on the border between South Sudan and Uganda, where my constituency is. About a year back, I took the Committee on East African Community Affairs to my constituency to familiarise themselves with the border issues of Lamwo and South Sudan. I would say we were lucky in the sense that we found the problem live.

When we were at what we thought was the border demarcation, we found South Sudanese coming inside Uganda hunting squirrels, antelopes and other animals with bows and

arrows and guns. Some of my committee members scampered in the minibus we came in until the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) calmed them down, saying it was normal. To many of us, including me, it was not normal.

One of my friends there can bear me witness that there is confusion about where the border post and the actual boundary are.

For us Ugandans, we go and stop at where the tarmac stops because we know that behind us is Uganda and in front of us is South Sudan. However, the Sudanese want to come up to the checkpoint at Apiriti, leaving behind several kilometres of the tarmac road, thinking that what is behind them is Southern Sudan and that the boundary is at the border checkpoint.

I would like the committee to try to work with authorities in charge to put some signposts indicating that you are entering Uganda or Southern Sudan. I beg to submit – (*Hon. Zijjan rose*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Member, you do not access a microphone without my permission, and whenever that happens, I do not accept any point.

2.11

MS MARGARET AYEBARE (NRM, Woman Representative, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to join my colleagues in thanking the committee chairperson for the report. Around April last year, the members on the Committee on East African Community Affairs came to Mbarara and met with the former workers of the East African Community about their arrears and gratuity.

Since then, I have never heard anything concerning their plight. I would like to know how that issue is going to be handled because very many people come to my place, meet me, and ask about their money.

Recently, they wanted to write a petition and bring it to your office. I thank God that the

chairperson presented the report. However, I did not hear any concern about those old people who worked for the East African Community. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Zijjan, you had a procedural matter.

MR ZIJJAN: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise under Rule 4 of our Rules of Procedure, which provides that the proceedings and debates of Parliament shall be in English. A Member rose on the Floor and made a submission in a foreign language – gibberish – (*Interjection*)- Members, I am referring to the rules. The rules are the Bible of our proceedings.

Mr Speaker, the Member rose and spoke in a language which is foreign to the House. Would it, therefore, not be procedurally right that you rule that what he submitted be expunged from the record of the House until such a time when it will be procedurally correct to speak a different language? It is the same as me speaking in Lusoga. As per the rules, can I speak in Lusoga?

I beg for your indulgence, as per our rules. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, whatever we do, whether it is in our rules or not, the Constitution is supreme. The Constitution provides for two languages. (*Applause*) So, we cannot align the Constitution to our rules, but we must align our rules to the Constitution. So, that is an anomaly in our rules, which we should correct. Otherwise, I do not want to come here and conflict with the Constitution when I am the presiding officer.

Although I must confess that I do not know what he said – (*Laughter*) - because I do not know Kiswahili. So, I should be among the people to go to school as soon as possible - and I am going to do that.

Hon. Hanifa -

2.14

MS HANIFA NABUKEERA (NUP, Woman Representative, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank you, committee chairperson, for your elaborate report. Mine is about the East African Community treaty. I need clarification on this. Is the treaty between the East African countries in operation? If yes, that treaty would help to facilitate the easy movement of people across the border and facilitate trade between these countries. It would also handle the issue of the tariffs.

So, the clarification I seek is whether the treaty is in operation or not. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have the Student Leaders Association of Ndejje University from Kampala Central and Luwero District, respectively.

They are represented by Hon. Muhammad Nsereko, Hon. Shamim Malende, Hon. Hassan Kirumira and Hon. Brenda Nabukenya. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me once again in welcoming them. *(Applause)* I am told they are friends to Hon. Frank Kabuye. *(Laughter)*

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery, we also have students and teachers of Ngogwe Baskerville Secondary School, Buikwe County South, Buikwe District. They are represented in Parliament by Dr Michael Bayiga Lulume and Hon. Diana Mutasingwa Nankunda Kagenyi. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Let us have Hon. Matovu and then Dr Apio.

2.16

MR CHARLES MATOVU (NUP, Busiro County South, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee for the report.

Mr Speaker, the chairperson alluded to numerous possibilities that the East African

Community is offering, among which are trade and security. However, there is a consideration that I want to bring to the attention of the committee chairperson: the harmonisation of the education system across the East African Community and the mutual recognition of the academic qualifications to aid in employment across the East African member states.

I would like the committee chairperson to think about the policies that could be drawn to facilitate Ugandans to compete for similar employment across East African member countries. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Dr Apio?

2.17

DR EUNICE APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also commend the committee for its work and for the very many recommendations that are well aligned to the NDP IV.

However, I have noticed that over the years, the community—in our case, Uganda—has committed to a number of important actions, commitments, and follow-up actions. However, in some cases, these commitments fall through.

In this case, I would like to draw your attention to page 13, where the committee rightfully underscores the importance of a joint committee that was agreed upon last year, in September – a committee that was meant to oversee the implementation of border policies, as well as the implementation of emerging issues across the borders.

However, I have combed through the report and the NPS – perhaps I was not very exhaustive of it – but I did not see any follow-up action. A joint committee was supposed to have been put in place or agreed to, and that would also help in addressing some of the emerging issues that colleagues have been mentioning - cross-border and peace issues and things like that. So, I would like clarification on that.

The last one is an appreciation for the committee's emphasis on addressing the issue of public engagement, support, and awareness. Mr Speaker, the only time that my constituents get to hear anything to do with the East African Community is when there are EALA elections. Short of that, everything is silent, and no one in Oyam is substantively aware of what we are discussing and what we intend to do at the East African Community.

I would like to commend the committee on that and urge that we give them adequate resources to do their job. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister – Hon. Magode – come and respond to Members' issues. Honourable Leader of the Opposition, forgive me on this. Let us have you on the next one.

2.22

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Mr James Magode): I cannot dare to speak in Kiswahili. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, yesterday, when the minister moved a motion to table reports from the committees, he gave me hope that he had covered most of our wishes and that he would answer some of the things that we were doing. I am saying this because, normally, he is the one tutoring me on the procedures of this House.

Today, I was a bit despondent. He seems not to have been here to prepare me for this particular meeting.

Nevertheless, I want to react to the report. First of all, I want to indicate that my ministry is in complete harmony with the chairperson's report.

Our most prolific debate would be to decide whether it is the ministry in harmony with the committee or the committee is in harmony with the ministry. *(Laughter)* We shall discuss that one with them. However, whatever report they have given reflects a lot of our sentiments.

Therefore, I only want to relate to a few remarks made concerning our ministry by honourable members on the Floor. I have already taken some notes, guided by my technical officers, which I will also refer to as part of the information flow.

First, there is the question of the vexed issue of payments or non-payment of pensions to the defunct former employees of the East African community. Part of the answer to this question has been the domestication of the Bill; of the agreements relating to the defunct East African community.

The mediation agreements which were made, which pertained – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Switch on, honourable minister.

MR IKUYA: The states are required to be observant of those rules. So far, of course, all the major assets have been given out as per the mediation agreement even without the domestication of the Bill.

However, because the law was non-domesticated, it meant that the employees of the former community were being treated differently from their counterparts in other countries.

Therefore, the fact that now we have enacted a law or a Bill - I do not know what it is, I have not yet advised –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is a Bill. We passed it here.

MR IKUYA: Okay, it is a Bill. But I do not know whether it is a law now.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, it is your duty to follow up with the President.

MR IKUYA: Okay, much obliged. We shall follow up on that law and make sure that once the law is in place, then it will be part of our obligation to ensure that the law is implemented fully.

Therefore, all problems relate to discrepancies — there are discrepancies regarding the employees, some of whom have died and some who are still alive. We hope that we will solve that in a final way.

Secondly, there has been a muted idea on whether we can have a common currency, but that is part and parcel of the intention of the East African community. The only issue is that it is supposed to be a process, and within that process, we expect a number of things to happen. So far, some have already happened by having what is going on as the community now enacted, but the common currency has yet to follow procedures which are underway. We are sure that over time, we shall be able to announce or celebrate the answer to that question.

Swahili programme: Now Swahili is, of course, a very important question for the Africans as a whole, leave alone us who are in East Africa, particularly Uganda, which has been very raw in speaking of Swahili. In some cases, there is even a claim that Swahili-speaking people are shunned by the people of Uganda.

Part of the problem is popularising it. Then, based on that, there is already a programme to ensure that our schools can also be educated in the language as much as you were educated in English, French, and all these other languages.

The apparent putting of resources differently in the Ministry of Education and Sports and the Ministry of East African Affairs is because of the different roles we are expected to play in this question. The Ministry of East African Affairs is about popularising the language, to make it acceptable. The ministry is for polishing it in the kitchen to make it of a quality which is required. Therefore, these are two different functions which I think can still go hand in hand.

The other issue that was intimated is border trade. I think the free movement of people, trade, and other things which go along with that is part of the Protocols of the East African Community that the border trade as a whole

can take place without much restriction as long as certain quantities of goods are not being carried. If I have not forgotten the actual figure — I was told at one time that the figure actually was, as long as the thing is not worth more than US\$ 2,000, you can move along without much rigorous requirement.

But be that as it is, it does not prevent us as the East African Community —

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, please go on.

MR IKUYA: Should I proceed? *(Laughter)* Thank you very much.

Now, border relations, relationships between border communities. Personally, I also come from one of those areas that border these areas called “colonial borders.” There are times when you must move between one border and another point, even to attend cultural events, burials, visits, and ceremonies.

Therefore, we do have programmes for harmonising community relations by ensuring that local entities, including local governments, can help with that. They should relate, and we make sure that border relations can be maintained and harmonised so that we do not have formal questions of conflicts.

The other one was about South Sudan. Our issue is where border points seem to be disregarded by either traditional communities, one community crosses into the other hunting or doing other things.

The issue is that the relations between states demand that every state exercises authority over all areas within its borders. Therefore, any people coming from outside should conform to the laws of one state or the other in a particular area.

Border points are not decided by communities. They are already designated by demarcations on maps, which are being reinforced by concrete mark stones showing where borders are. This is so that any member who is going

through the Democratic Republic of Congo or Kaseke, Uganda, will know where they are.

The other one was on the harmonisation of the education system. I entirely agree that in the interest of realising the community we envision, we must have an education system that expresses the same values across borders. We cannot have one area with a different education system from another. Later on, it will impact the freedom of workers to move, who will qualify, who will work where, how to be assessed, how to join the institutions of learning, and all those kinds of things.

Therefore, I agree that we must do that. Some consultations are already ongoing, and I am sure the education ministry will be able to discuss them.

Then lastly - not lastly. *(Laughter)* Lastly, let me just read to you what my technical people are telling me. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we need to hear what you are telling us here, not what your technical people are telling you.

MR IKUYA: Okay, I am guided that I should own the report. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, it is yours.

MR IKUYA: The report indicated that the projected budget for 2025/2026 is Shs 41.06 billion. This is what I heard. *(Laughter)* I heard without reading much into details. It is now confirmed that the projected budget that is approved by the ministry shall be Shs 45.6 billion. That might be a correction that the report can make.

Most of the other recommendations or observations made concern other ministries with which we interact. This is because we are a background group - cooks in the background who come and do the job. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister.

Honourable chairperson, do you have any comments?

2.36

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Dr James Nsaba-Buturo): Mr Speaker, sir, I thank the Members who participated in the preparation of this report, and I commend all those that have supported us.

The issue is about our survival as East Africans, and we think that the integration we are here to support is the answer to what we need. Our survival as a region depends on the extent to which the partner states are willing to be integrated. There are challenges, but I do hope with our support, Mr Speaker, we will get there.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Committee chairperson, I request that you link up with the minister because I do not know whether you considered the figure in the draft estimates. You need to go and check the draft estimates and harmonise this figure by the time you go to the budget committee. It is very important—the figure the minister has raised and the figure you have in your report, which is Shs 41.06 billion.

Honourable colleagues, I put the question that the report of the Committee on East African Community Affairs on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for Financial Year 2025/2026 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I refer the report, especially the recommendations, to the Committee on Budget for reconciliation, harmonisation and consolidation. That is where we shall handle the issue of that discrepancy in the figure.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery, we have the members of the Bagwere Students Association from Makerere

University, Kawempe Division South. They are represented in Parliament by Hon. Bashir Kazibwe Mbazziira and Hon. Shamim Malende.

They have come to observe the proceedings of this House - Makerere University. I made it very clear, the Bagwere in Makerere - and the very many MPs from Bugwere. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Can you stand up for recognition? Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery, we also have students and teachers from Brain Hill Senior School, Wakiso District. They are represented in Parliament by Hon. Paul Nsubuga and Hon. Betty Ethel Naluyima. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

Honourable colleagues, the House is suspended for 25 minutes exactly so that we can have lunch and resume with tourism.

(The House was suspended at 2.39 p.m.)

(On resumption at 3.19 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presiding_)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Next item. Hon. Sarah, do you have a procedural issue?

MS OPENDI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, I raised the issue of some police officers who have not received their salaries. Some have been unpaid for six months, others for two months or four months. The reason was connected with the Ministry of Public Service. I see the Minister of Public Service here. Can she explain why police officers have not been paid their salaries? These are people who are actually holding guns.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable minister.

3.20

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE (Ms Grace Mugasa): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I thank Hon. Sarah because she already alerted me.

I contacted the Commissioner in charge of Compensation. He said that “The Ministry of Internal Affairs is coming up with a paper which will be presented here by the minister himself, but tentatively he told me the problem was migration from Integration Personnel Pay System (IPPS) to Human Capital Management (HCM).”

If you are migrating from IPPS to HCM and you make a slight mistake, maybe on your Identification Card (ID) or papers and years, it is not easy to migrate automatically.

Therefore, they are going to align their documents to ensure a smooth migration. At the moment, I beg that we wait for the full report from the minister. I beg to submit, sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, what I may ask is, once that migration is done, will their arrears be paid? When do you think this can be expeditiously handled?

MS MUGASA: Mr Speaker, the areas will be paid, except that I cannot commit to a specific date because I need technical guidance on this.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MS MUGASA: I thank you, sir.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, please you and the Minister of Internal Affairs should expedite this. These are people with firearms, you know, they might run hungry and - Yes, and you remember how we lost our colleague from this House? Therefore, having a hungry person with a firearm guarding you, honourable minister, means you are not secure. You better expeditiously handle it. Next item? Honourable chair, you have 15 minutes.

3.22

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Ms Sylvia Nayebele): I thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to lay the report of the sectoral committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Ministry of

Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, and the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives for the Financial Year 2025/2026. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, allow me to lay the minutes of the meeting for the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry for the meetings that we held for that report. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, colleagues will read about the compliance of ministerial policy statements and relevant provisions of the law. There is a status table showing their compliance. I will go straight to the recommendations.

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that the ministry of trade should ensure that all votes and subventions fully comply with the provisions of the law and the requirements of the Ministerial Policy Statement (MPS).

Mr Speaker, on table two is the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities and the table below shows the status of compliance.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kindly, guide on the page; it is important.

MS NAYEBALE: Mr Speaker, it is on page 6. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Why don't we go to page 38?

MS NAYEBALE: I was going there, Mr Speaker. I just thought I would hint on this.

Mr Speaker, as you have guided, we go to page 38 for the observations and recommendations.

Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, MPS for Financial Year 2025/2026. Mr Speaker, below is the delayed implementation of new laws and the review of old ones. That is page 38.

Parliament, while considering the budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026, recommended that the ministry of trade be availed Shs 3 billion to operationalise the Accreditation Services Act and Sugar Act. However, this

was not done and the implementation of the two Acts has not been funded in the proposed budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Mr Speaker, there are other Bills below there that the committee also highlighted. I will go to the recommendation of the committee. The committee recommends that the Government allocates funds to operationalise the Accreditation Services Act and the Sugar Act. Government first tracks the tabling of the proposed Bills before Parliament for processing.

Mr Speaker, I will go straight to page 40. The committee recommends that the Government allocates funds to the ministry of trade to facilitate implementation of the Aforementioned Acts, as indicated in the Certificate of Financial Implications that accompany the respective Bills and expedites addressing the key policy issues identified above.

Mr Speaker, the committee further recommends that the Government expedite the enactment of regulations to support implementations of some Acts of Parliament that regulate the manufacturing programme.

There is a need to reduce the trade balance sustainably. Mr Speaker, the committee observed that the trade balance has been worsening over the last eight years in the country's exports, continuing to grow slower than the imports, except during the Financial Year 2023/2024. The balance of goods and services deteriorated by \$2.5 to 121 million in the Financial Year 2023/2025. Mr Speaker, allow me to go straight to the recommendations; colleagues can read that.

The committee recommends that the Government expeditiously implement its export promotion and import substitution strategy to sustain faster growth in exports while slowing down the growth in imports to reverse the trade in the trade balance sustainably.

Mr Speaker, the need to fund trade negotiations. The committee observes that Shs 3.5 billion has

been availed to the external trade department and the ministry of trade for various activities, including Shs 1.25 billion for trade attaches (one in Arusha for the East Africa Community and the other in Ghana for the African Continental Free Trade Area).

This left a balance of Shs 2.3 billion for other departmental activities, including trade negotiations.

Mr Speaker, the committee was informed that it has a funding gap of Shs 6.4 billion required to follow up the implementation of bilateral, regional, and international trade protocols at World Trade Organisation (WTO), Common Market for East and Southern Africa, East Africa, and the African Continental Free Trade Area, as well as access to the United States of America market.

The committee observed that the ministry of trade identified six key markets for deployment of trade attaches at East African Community, WTO, COMESA, the African Continental Free Trade Area, China, and India.

However, the proposed budget for the Financial Year 2025/2026 will only fund two, in East Africa and the African Continental Free Trade Area, in order to boost trade and investment opportunities and advocate for favourable trade relations. Mr Speaker, I will go straight to the recommendations.

The committee recommends that the Government allocate Shs 3.8 billion to facilitate the deployment of trade attaches in key markets at WTO, COMESA, China and India.

The committee further recommends that in order to support export growth, the Government allocate additional Shs 6.4 billion to the Ministry of Trade to prioritise the implementation of bilateral regional and international trade agreements and protocols.

Mr Speaker, the committee also noted the delayed verification of tobacco farmers. I will go to the recommendation.

The committee recommends that the ministry of trade expedite verification of claims by West Nile tobacco farmers to ensure that they are compensated by the end of Financial Year 2024/2025.

Mr Speaker, the stalled projects and the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System. The committee observed that prior to the rationalisation of Government agencies, which witnessed, among other things, the transfer of the functions of the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System into the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, the Uganda Warehouse Receipt System has embarked on a project to renovate selected warehouses to enable them to meet international standards and implement the warehouse receipt system.

Among the warehouses selected for renovation are Hoima District Farmers Association(HODFA) and Bunyoro Growers Cooperative Union, which the committee visited during one of its oversight functions in February 2025.

Mr Speaker, because of time, allow me go to the recommendations of the warehouse receipt system.

1. The committee recommends that the Government allocates funds to Ministry of Trade to enable completion of the stalled projects under the warehouse receipt system, so as to ensure value for money for investment carried out before rationalisation.
2. The committee notes that the process leading to project approvals, can take up to five years, yet the facilities for value addition keep deteriorating every passing year.
3. The committee further recommends that the Ministry of Trade only signs new MOUs with other groups after the projects have been approved by the development committee and a code given.

Return on Investments by Uganda Development Corporation (UDC)

UDC has established to promote and facilitate industrial and economic development in Uganda. As the Government's investment arm, UDC drives industrial growth by establishing subsidiary and associate companies, forming private partnerships with commercial industries or agriculture enterprises, promoting, facilitating and implementing public-private partnerships.

UDC also assists in financing and managing projects that promote industrial or economic development and conducts research into industrial development.

The committee observed that Government through UDC has been investing in various Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs)

The committee received information from UDC on the current impact of investment, which reveals that the investment has created over 2,000 jobs in the agro-industry and over 1,500 in infrastructure services. There is an annex.

The committee observed that the Government's investment in a number of UDC projects, as seen in annex 1, has supported the economy through job creation, export earnings, and tax revenue.

However, by December 2024, some investments had only contributed to job creation without any impact on export earnings or tax revenue. These include Budadili Arabica Coffee Mills, Atiak Sugar Factory, Nauzila Limited, Fine Spinners Uganda Limited, and Speak Resort Convention Center.

The committee recommends that UDC, as the Government's investment arm, ensure that private entities in which the Government invests funds have higher economic returns in terms of tax revenue and export earnings.

Inadequate Funding of UDC for investment

The committee observed that during consideration of the National Budget Framework Paper Financial Year 2025/26, 2029/30, UDC had a total budget of Shs 14 billion, only catering for Shs 11 billion wage and non-wage 21.

There were no funds to fulfil UDC's ongoing capitalisation commitments, such as to Abubaker Technical Services and General Supplies which is Shs 26 billion and new commitments to already appraised funds.

Mr Speaker, following Parliament's recommendation to capitalise UDC with at least Shs 361 billion for the various projects, Additional funding was allocated to UDC, increasing its budget to Shs 125 billion. This will enable it to cater for investments in some projects, though it will leave a funding gap of Shs 266 billion.

Below is the table of investment projects for the Financial Year 2025/2026, with its figures in billions. Colleagues can read.

Observations on UDC:

Mr Speaker, the committee noted that while some projects have more proposed allocations than indicated in the National Budget Framework paper, others receive less.

For instance, Biyinzika Enterprises received a funding requirement of Shs 28.9 billion but has a proposed allocation of Shs 39.77 billion in the draft budget estimates for the financial year 2025/26, while Investments in Grain Afrokai has a proposed allocation of Shs 9 billion against a funding gap of Shs 25 billion.

The Committee noted that Biyinzika Enterprise Limited was reported to be an integrated poultry enterprise engaged in the production and sale of day-old chicken animal feed.

However, by the time the committee prepared this report, it had not been furnished with sufficient information, to provide a basis for

appropriating Shs 39.77 billion to Biyinzika Enterprise Limited.

The committee notes that fine spinners received Shs 30 billion in the Financial Year 2024/2025 and that Shs 30 billion has been proposed in Financial Year 2025/2026, out of Shs 31 billion that was required.

Other projects, like Lira Spinning Mill, which required Shs 59 billion to purchase and revamp the factory and undertake the spinning of the farmers' cotton, have no proposed allocation despite a feasibility study being completed.

The committee notes that while enterprises like Bundibugyo Cocoa processing factory have completed a feasibility study, no proposed allocation has been made for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The ministry informed the committee that UDC lacks sufficient capitalisation and requires Shs 5 billion to fulfil its mandate.

Recommendations for UDC

The committee recommends that Government capitalises UDC with additional funding in the short to medium term to enable term to enable it invest in appraised projects.

The committee further recommends that the proposed allocation through UDC to Biyinzika Enterprise Limited and Fine Spinners be reallocated as follows:

The allocation of Shs 39.77 billion to Biyinzika Enterprise will be deferred as the committee undertakes due diligence on the proposed investment.

It was reallocated as follows:

1. Uganda Shs 6 billion should be reallocated to Bundibugyo Cocoa factory to support its start-up, promote the export of value-added cocoa as opposed to raw materials, and earn the country higher economic returns from the cocoa value chain.

2. Shs 4 billion should be reallocated to invest in a chlorine manufacturing plant, improving the country's trade balance through a reduction in the cost of importing chlorine, a key ingredient in wastewater treatment, pure water treatment, and disinfectants.

3. Shs 25 billion be allocated to Fine Spinners Limited to fulfil its obligation in a phased manner and enable investment in other projects. E, page 49

4. Shs 10 billion be reallocated to Lira Spinning Mill to initiate the purchase and revamping of the factory to undertake the spinning of farmer's cotton in Northern Uganda.

5. Shs 5 billion be allocated to Luwero Food Factory to start up investment since the feasibility study and the business plans were completed.

6. Shs 5 billion be relocated to Nwoya Fruit Factory to start master designs, environment and social impact assessment and geological studies and preliminary site preparation.

7. Shs 6.7 billion be allocated to the Iron Ore processing to save the importation of iron and improve the country's trade balance through a reduction in the cost of importation of iron ore.

8. Shs 8 billion, be allocated to Sanga VET to purchase active ingredients, special equipment and working capital for manufacturing of animal drugs and acaricides.

Management and Training and Advisory Centre (MTAC)

Recommendations of MTAC

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance and Economic Development ensures that MTAC's budgetary provision is

provided for in the Financial Year 2025/2026 to enable it to continue service delivery.

Below is the detail of inadequate funding for the Management Training and Advisory Centre.

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government should, in the short to medium term, support MTAC by funding the proposed interventions above.

Uganda Cooperative Alliance Limited (UCAL)

Revival of Uganda Cooperative Bank

I will go straight to the recommendations because of time. The committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 2.5 billion to UCAL to mobilise resources and conduct research to facilitate the re-establishment of Uganda Cooperative Bank.

Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS)

Retention of staff

The committee observed that the budget for UNBS for the Financial Year 2025/2026 increased from the indicative figures in the BFP, as summarised in the table below. Honourable colleagues can read through the table.

The committee observed—that is, on page 53—that in Financial Year 2024/2025, the budget for UNBS was Shs 59 billion, which has been increased to Shs 138.3 billion. While the wage component has not increased, the non-wage and development budgets have increased by Shs 46.7 billion and Shs 30 billion, respectively.

Mr Speaker, the committee takes note of the increase in UNBS's non-wage budget and development budget to address the decentralisation of UNBS' services, as recommended by Parliament.

However, the committee is concerned that the provision of an additional wage bill to cater for staff salary enhancement to match that of other scientists and retain staff has not been

implemented and may pose a challenge to implementing the budget, with no critical staff to execute it. Below are the salaries of other scientists in the other entities compared to UNBS.

I will go straight to the recommendations on page 54.

The committee recommends reallocating Shs 10 billion for non-wage component of UNBS, as follows:

- a) Shs 5.8 billion for enhancement of salaries for existing staff; and
- b) Shs 4.2 billion for recruitment of more staff.

Vote 110 – Uganda Industrial Research Institute

Inadequate funding for Uganda Industrial Research Institute

- a) The committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 9.8 billion to Uganda Industrial Research Institute to ensure that the above critical activities are undertaken in the short to medium term.
- b) The committee further recommends that the Government facilitate Uganda Industrial Research Institute's decentralisation of services across different regions of the country.
- c) The committee further recommends that incubators domiciled at Uganda Industrial Research Institute, Nakawa Campus, graduate in a timely manner to give new incubators an opportunity to showcase and build their capacities.

Uganda Free Zones and Exports Promotion Authority

Staff recruitment

The committee recommends expediting staff recruitment under the Uganda Free Zones Authority to facilitate the implementation of the Uganda Free Zones and Exports Promotion Authority's planned activities for the remaining part of the Financial Year 2024/2025 and the new Financial Year 2025/2026.

Local governments

Recommendations

Need to revise the formula for trade and industry grant to local governments

The committee observed that the increment in the budget from Shs 2.9 billion to Shs 8 billion for Trade and Industry Conditional Grants to local governments is a positive move towards enabling commercial officers to execute roles in their respective local governments, which include trade development and promotion services, cooperative mobilisation, supervision, education and extensional services, market linkage services and the like.

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government review the formula for distribution of the Trade and Industry Non-Wage Conditional Grants to local governments. The view is to increase the weight assigned to the fixed allocations to minimise disparities since the functions of commercial officers are the same. You can see the disparities in the table above. Different districts receive different amounts.

The committee further recommends that the Ministry of Finance sensitise all local governments on the procedures for accessing transitional development trade and industry grants so that other qualifying local governments can benefit from them.

Mr Speaker, on this one, we had noted that only Kibaale Local Government received Shs 790 million and no other district received it, so, the committee recommended as above.

Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities

Inadequate funding to the Tourism Development Programme

The committee observed that the current funding to the Tourism Development Programme is inadequate and unable to deliver on its mandate to the NDP IV, as well as the Tenfold Growth Strategy. The proposed budget for the programme is 77 per cent of the recommended budget for the programme in Financial Year 2025/2026.

a) The committee recommends that the Government adequately funds the Tourism Development Programme in order for the programme to contribute to the Tenfold Growth Strategy and double digit growth at the end of the NDP IV;

b) The committee recommends that the Government prioritises funding of the Tourism Development Programme in order to enhance marketing of Uganda as a preferred tourist destination to boost the country's foreign exchange and domestic economy, among others, while at the same time addressing the enablers for the long stay, especially upgrading the UHTTI to a tourism training centre of excellence and the UWRTI to a wildlife research and training centre of excellence.

Funding for review of programme policies and regulatory framework

The committee observes that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities requires Shs 2 billion to review existing laws, regulations and policies for comprehensive management of the Tourism Development Programme. The review will enable the ministry to develop a legal and regulatory framework to include the following – below are the different laws.

The committee recommends that the Government allocate an additional Shs 2 billion to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities to enable the review of the Tourism Development Programme's policy and regulatory framework.

Critical staffing gaps in the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities

The committee observed that the Ministry of Wildlife, Tourism and Antiquities is faced with staffing gaps, particularly at the level of commissioner, where it was noted that all four positions of commissioners for wildlife conservation, sites and monuments, tourism development, and museum services are vacant.

The committee noted that these vacant positions are crucial to the ministry's operation. However, these vacant positions are not in the ministry's recruitment plan for the Financial Year 2025/2026 but were in the recruitment plan for the Financial Year 2024/2025, which was affected by RAPEX and would, therefore, be filled later as guided by the Public Service Commission.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that the Public Service Commission simultaneously recruit staff to the vacant positions in the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities while handling recruitment for Government agencies that were affected by RAPEX to ensure that the ministry has staff to provide strategic direction and implement policies.

The committee recommends that, going forward, the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities should embark on new projects after concluding ongoing projects. Mr Speaker, that is picked from the need to complete ongoing projects before embarking on new projects.

I had skipped an observation on page 61. The committee had observed that the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities embarked on execution of new planned projects before the conclusion of earlier projects, for example, construction works at Katosi Martyrs Catholic Shrine, yet projects such as Napak Open Air Museum and Karamoja Museum were pending completion and funding gaps of Shs 5 billion and Shs 0.7 billion, respectively.

Uganda Wildlife Authority

There is a need to lift the ceiling of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) to address human wildlife conflicts. The Committee observed that incidents of human wildlife conflict constitute one of the major challenges faced by the tourism development programme. However, the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities has not been allocated adequate funds to address the incidences.

The committee noted that wildlife resources continue to be threatened by increasing human-wildlife conflict. A total of 6,999 incidences of human-wildlife conflict were recorded over the last year, which is much higher than the 2,000 incidents recorded five years ago.

The committee was informed by UWA that it has a funding gap of Shs 48 billion for the various activities, including installation of an electric fence as extracted in table 24 below. Those are the funding gaps where UWA desire to put electric fences in the different parks.

The committee, therefore, recommends that the Government lifts the budget ceiling for UWA from Shs 191.9 billion to Shs 240 to enable UWA to spend as follows:

- (a) Shs 38 billion to address incidences of human wildlife conflict in Kidepo Valley National Park, Murchison Falls National Park and Queen Elizabeth National Park, among others. For the nine activities in the table above.
- (b) Shs 6.2 billion to Uganda Wildlife Research Training Institute for completion of the girls' hostel.
- (c) Shs 3.8 billion to UHTTI for ongoing construction of the girls' hostel.

Accountability of local governments on UWA revenue shared

The committee recommends that UWA and local governments develop a framework to expedite accountability for the resources received from UWA for local governments and neighbouring wildlife protected areas in order to ensure timely remittance of the allocated funds.

Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute

Inadequate funding of Uganda Hotel and Tourism Training Institute to deliver on its mandate.

The committee recommends that affirmative action be undertaken to ensure that UHTTI is transferred into a tourism training centre for

excellency through the provision of required staff, instruction, infrastructure, as well as construction of dormitories for students.

The committee further recommends that the UWA budget expenditure ceiling be lifted to enable UHTTI to receive at least Shs 3.8 billion from the UWA wildlife fund to partly complete the construction of the new training hotel and continue with the construction of the girls' hostel.

Uganda Wildlife Research Training Institute

Inadequate funding of the Uganda Wildlife Research Institute

The committee recommends that the Government take affirmative action to fund the Uganda Wildlife Research Institute so as to transform it into a centre of excellence for wildlife research through the provision of required staff equipment and adequate funds for the construction of dormitories.

The committee further recommends that the Government lifts the budget expenditure ceiling for UWA so that at least Shs 6.2 billion from UWA wildlife refund is transferred to Uganda Wildlife Research Institute to facilitate construction of dormitories.

Uganda Tourism Board (UTB)

The need to explore cost-effective strategies for marketing

The committee observed that UTB is taking a traditional approach to tourism, focusing on manual branding, expos, international meetings, advertising, and promotions, primarily focusing on using costly media platforms like CNN and BBC, despite shifting trends that favour more engaging updated tourism promotion and cost-effective marketing strategies, like the use of social media platforms, for example, TikTok, X, YouTube, among others, which are more interactive with the people.

The committee recommends that UTB adopt modern advertising methods that are more

cost-effective and interactive with the people. For example, they use social media platforms, such as TikTok and YouTube.

The committee further recommends that UTB utilise available spaces, such as Uganda Airlines and Uganda embassies and missions, to advertise Uganda, which would significantly reduce the cost incurred using expensive international media like CNN, BBC, Al Jazeera, and foreign commercial airlines.

The committee further recommends that UTB explore alternative results-oriented tourism promotion and collaborations with the private sector, such as social media influencers, to sell Uganda to the outside world.

The committee further recommends that UTB recruits destination representatives in key tourism markets with measurable output targets, so as to leverage on existing investments such as commercial airlines that support Uganda tourism development programme.

Local Governments (LGs)

Underfunding for Tourism Development in local government

The committee observed that the conditional grants to local government for tourism development amounts to Shs 1.9 billion in the Financial Year 2025/2026. The draft budget estimates for Financial Year 2025/2026 indicates that Shs 10 billion is allocated to each local government which transforms into quarterly allocation of Shs 2.714 million or 904,000 per month for tourism development intervention.

The local governments play a critical role in promoting and maintaining of cultural tourism as well as domestic tourism in various LGs.

The committee therefore, recommends that Government increases conditional tourism development grant in the short of medium term.

Mr Speaker, the committee considered the Ministerial Policy Statement of the Ministry of

Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, and Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for Financial Year 2025/2026, and recommended that the report be adopted with the following amounts of money allocated to the various votes as indicated in the table below. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable chairperson. I open up for debate, Hon. Nambooze, Hon. Enos, Hon. Christine, Hon. Sylvia, chairperson of foreign affairs, Dr Batuwa, Hon. Nkuningi and the tourism man, Kisoro.

3.56

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Chairperson –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Three minutes each, honourable colleagues.

MS NAMBOOZE: And the honourable members of the Committee on Trade for this report. Without wasting time, I want to go to the issue of UDC. We have heard that the committee has recommended that the funds that had been earmarked for Biyinzika be reallocated to other institutions, but she has not explained in detail why Biyinzika failed to qualify.

Biyinzika is a company that got into problems not because of mismanagement, from what we know, but because of the COVID-19 pandemic. This is a company that deals with our local people who are into chicken rearing, people who are selling their produce to be in Biyinzika, and it employs many of our people, both directly and indirectly.

There is also a mix up because I was following when the minister went to the committee; he told the committee that the company that was being talked about is Biyinzika, an international company. However, when you look at the ministerial policy statement, they are talking about Biyinzika, the poultry company. I would like to know for sure which of the two we are talking about.

Two, about the funds that were allocated, at one time, they mentioned Shs 289 billion in the budget framework paper and then Shs 391 billion in the ministerial policy statement for recapitalising the Uganda Development Corporation (UDC). I would like to know what the correct amount is and where the rest of the money will go.

Mr Speaker, it appears that when the Government comes to bail out companies, there are no clear guidelines that are used apart from favouritism from those who are giving the money. You will see that some people have been bailed out more than once, but others, even with very clear reasons like Biyinzika, cannot be considered – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I read this report and I was also asking myself about the same, Hon. Nambooze, in line with you. Number one, the company had a funding requirement of Shs 28.9 billion but now, in the draft estimates, the committee is saying they have given it Shs 39.77 billion. If it wanted Shs 28 billion, why are you giving it Shs 39 billion?

Number two, which Biyinzika, like you have said? I remember it was even reported in the newspapers that Biyinzika had been bought off by an investor. Has he formed a new one for which he wants the Government to buy shares in - where they want the Government to be an investor? I think this is the question for the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives. Where is the minister?

We know that Biyinzika was bought by an international company, which is doing well, by the way. Some of us buy their things. The main Biyinzika is doing extremely well. It was bought by the best breeder, the number one American breeder, and he has invested heavily. If, after selling, you form another company and say the Government should come in and buy more shares - we need to go deep. That is where you need to check on appraising. The committee should help us understand this.

Also, committee, I am fearing. You have started saying, allocate so and so the money in

terms of companies. Aren't we doing the work of the board of appraising? Who has appraised the companies we are saying should be given this money, which was for Biyinzika? The appraising process should be conducted by the board and should go deeper. Committee chairperson, you will need to clarify to us on the appraisal process and how you determined that this company should be getting this money.

Otherwise, we need that clarification between the two Biyinzikas. Like Fine Spinners Uganda Limited. I think we have done - tax holidays. Hon. Enos?

4.01

MR ENOS ASHIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is on page 7. The committee is showing us that the policy statements did not attach a certificate from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development regarding equal opportunities. This means that the policy statements do not conform to equal distribution.

A few weeks ago, we had a very serious debate regarding equity. Don't you think that passing these policy statements without that certificate, we will be failing ourselves?

Number two, on page eight, they are also saying that the policy statements do not meet the climate change responsiveness at a percentage of 46.7. Yet that is specifically manufacturing. I do not understand how we also pass a policy statement or budget where they are not meeting climate change requirements, with even the most recent floods in this city and all the climate change-related challenges. Mr Speaker, I do not know whether we should proceed to pass these two policy statements.

Number three, in case we decide to pass them, I also had an issue on page 43 regarding the stalled warehouse receipt system, formerly. The purpose of the warehouse was to help us stabilise the farm gate prices for our farmers in the grain industry. Right now, if we do not fund the warehouse receipting system, it implies that we are failing our farmers again on managing the farm gate prices.

Lastly, as much as my colleague had mentioned something to do with UDC having a policy guideline regarding who is selected to benefit from this. I think when you look at page 45 of the committee's report, it again tells us that the selection criteria is not well followed, to the point that it looks like they do not even have feasibility studies made on these companies. I think it is important that the honourable minister takes us through why it is so hard to have a policy guideline on who benefits from what, regarding the money we allocate to UDC. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Christine? Can the Government Chief Whip ensure that the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives is here? I do not know where he went.

4.04

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson and the committee members for the report.

First, I add my voice that the committee needed to give us more reasons for the diversion of the money. However, in the aspect of the cooperatives, we have seen that across the country right now, there is a need for us to support cooperatives. These, when many of us were young, used to do a lot for our farmers in terms of giving them guidance on when to buy, when to sell and also provided certain incentives.

Across the country, as in our case in the Teso Subregion, despite the fact that we have statements that cooperatives are registered, they are not very vibrant in the communities. I would like to support the committee by saying that we need to put in more money to support the running of the cooperatives.

When you look at underfunding in the tourism sector, and especially with reference to development in local governments, we have very potential areas in our local governments that can be developed to generate more money for the Government.

I want to share with this House that in the case of Kumi, we have Nyero Rock paintings that the primary Social Studies (SST) teachers used to talk about as they taught the children. Many people used to visit it, but for so many years now, not much has been done to do advocacy, advertise and develop the site so that more money can be generated for the Government.

I am aware that a certain percentage would benefit the local government, and the other would benefit the centre. How I pray that this funding is increased so that the local potential tourism sites can be equally developed.

Mr Speaker, I am happy about the statement on export promotion and import substitution. As a member of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources, the issue of *kaveeras* in this country is giving us a very big threat –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What is *kaveera*?

MS APOLOT: The polythene bags, Mr Speaker - the plastics. They are causing more destruction to this country. How I pray that as we look at the import substitution, priority should be given to such factories that will be –
(*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery, we have the Teso Students Development Association from Kyambogo University. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them.
(*Applause*) Thank you. Yes, Hon. Lamwaka.

4.07

MS CATHERINE LAMWAKA (NRM, Woman Representative, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join colleagues in thanking the Chairperson, Committee of Trade, Tourism and Industry and the team for the report tabled on the Floor.

I would like to thank the committee for their observation regarding the marketing strategies Uganda Tourism Board (UTB) is using and the recommendation that they made for UTB to adopt modern strategies in marketing tourist destinations.

Mr Speaker, when you look at Uganda, as a country, you notice that in the tourism sector, we have a lot of potential in terms of the tourism products that we have, compared to other countries within the region. But when you look at the marketing strategies and what other countries within the region are putting up, in terms of investment in marketing their destinations, it is quite a lot and amazing.

However, when you look at what we are putting, as a country, in marketing our destinations, you realise there is still a lot that we need to do. Mr Speaker, it is my humble appeal and prayer that the tourism sector, through the minister present here, focuses on strategic planning with our missions in the different countries with marketable destinations so that we can reap a lot more.

Our missions are trying to do a lot, but then based on our findings from the number of times that we have visited our missions, we have realised that there are gaps in terms of linkages between the sector of tourism and our missions abroad. So, it is my humble appeal that we get aggressive, as a country, in marketing our tourist destinations, and it is also important, as the committee stated, that we invest money in marketing our destinations for us to reap a lot from the abandoned tourist products that we have as a country. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Bahereira followed by Hon. Kwizera.

4.10

MS SYLVIA BAHIREIRA (Independent, Woman Representative, Kamwenge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the chairperson and the Committee of Trade, Tourism and Industry for the comprehensive report presented. I take note that Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) and Management Training and Advisory Centre (MTAC) are very critical institutions that, when allocated more funds, can introduce significant skills, equipment to our people. For example, some of us always endeavour to bring trainees to these institutions. When they have sufficient funds and these trainings are decentralised to

the districts, it will help these institutions train bigger numbers of people and we will reduce unemployment in our districts because they train in hands-on skills and immediately people start working. So, I also support the committee on their recommendations that Shs 9.8 billion be given to UIRI; it is worth it.

Mr Speaker, in the tourism sector and according to the committee, they have shown us that human-wildlife conflict is not well addressed, basically because of funding. If this sector does not have enough funding, people will continue to hate wild animals and see that the Government treasures animals over human beings.

For example, in my area, Kamwenge, elephants are encroaching on people so much, and people have continuously shifted to Kyegegwa, Kyenjojo, Bunyoro areas. It is so devastating in this century when we see people still shifting because of human-wildlife conflict.

The policy states that the priority are the grassland national parks like Kibaale National Park, which is a forest national park, but if we allocate more money to review their policies, then thereafter we can go for the forest national parks.

Lastly, the budget for tourism in local governments is insufficient because we have around 1,200 chimpanzees in – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Wa-Gahungu -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Can you use another microphone? Honourable colleagues, we are breaking off at 4.30 p.m.; we have the Archbishop here.

4.13

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity, and I would also like to thank the committee for their good work.

I will focus on tourism. Tourism would be starting with domestic tourism where – like

Members of Cabinet, if they visited one of the national parks, then tourism would grow or if Members of Parliament would find time to go and visit because it is unfair for tourism operators like us to be here, talking about tourism, mountain gorillas etcetera yet a number of these Members of Parliament and Cabinet have never spent Shs 10,000 to go and visit those national parks. So, before we look at foreigners coming here, let us go and visit these tourist sites.

Secondly, Uganda is now focusing on petroleum, but petroleum is time-bound, yet tourism is forever. I would therefore, appeal to the Government that as much as we are focusing on petroleum, which is going to last maybe 15 or 20 years, let us also see how we can promote and benefit from our tourism.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, we find that the Government focuses on tourism in the national areas, but when you look at the amount of money put in the national parks and the livelihood of the people around the national park, you notice that there is a big disparity. We would encourage the Government to focus on the national parks, they should also take into consideration the development of the surrounding areas.

Finally, when you look at the marketing of our tourism products, you notice that they need to be identified, profiled, and well-marketed. Marketing of tourism does not mean that we travel outside; we can also do it the Tanzania way, where we use our UBC machines to create a tourism channel that can also be accessed by the international community, and we spend less.

Mr Speaker, I think that if we do those things and put up infrastructure to promote tourism, are we having an efficient IT system in the national parks? Do we have good roads? Do we have telephone communications? So, otherwise, these policies are good, but also we want the same implemented. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from Hon. Muwadda and then Hon. Dr Batuwa.

4.16

MR NKUNYINGI MUWADDA (NUP, Kyadondo County East, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker and the committee chairperson for the report.

Mr Speaker and colleagues, I am concerned. The report talks about meeting our international trade obligations, especially in terms of treaties and agreements. It also talks about sending or deploying trade attaches. But I have looked through the entire report trying to internalise the Uganda National Bureau of Standards.

Part of the challenge we have is that you are talking about strengthening certification for imports. But our traders still face a challenge of certification for export. In most international markets, mostly in Europe, Ugandan goods, especially agricultural products, are being branded “made in Kenya or made in Tanzania.”

The report from the traders has always been a failure by UNBS to issue certification, especially for agricultural products, meant for international markets and mostly European markets.

Looking through your report, where is the empowerment? Why don't we also look at prioritising and strengthening UNBS so that it has the capacity to certify agricultural products?

The traders are meeting the cost of destruction for commodities which fail to meet standards, especially for European markets.

Now that we are in the budgeting process - many times the excuse has been that UNBS says it lacks capacity, readiness and the obligation to certify agricultural products. That has led to many of our goods being branded as made in nearby countries, mostly Kenya.

When you go to international markets, most of the agricultural products branded as made in Kenya are actually Ugandan goods. This denies us the opportunity of marketing Ugandan products and developing Ugandan traders. Let us look through the report and empower UNBS

to certify agricultural products locally. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Dr Batuwa.

4.19

DR TIMOTHY BATUWA (FDC, Jinja South Division West, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Through you, I thank the committee chairperson and members for a wonderful report. However, it gave me deep insight into Uganda Development Corporation (UDC), and especially the part the money for Luwero Fruit Factory, Nwoya Fruit Factory, Lira Spring Mill, Bundibugyo Cocoa Project and others is channelled through UDC to facilitate those particular industries.

At the beginning of this political term, in Busoga, where we are challenged with sugarcane growing, we sat as MPs, we are 42, including the first Deputy Prime Minister, the second and others, and resolved that Government should help us establish a sugar mill that is owned by the people.

The finance minister came and participated, and what we saw immediately was a release of about Shs 2.5 billion for a feasibility study. But even when that study has been done, I can see in this policy statement and in the report that the sugar mill that was promised to the people of Busoga is not there.

We know how serious the sugar business in Busoga is. Right now, there is a war between the farmers and the millers over how much sugar you can get from 100 tonnes of cane. Whereas the farmers say it is 10 tons, the millers say it is 8. This has implications on how much you pay for the cane.

These are serious things, for which the biggest solution would have been a factory owned by the people. Looking at the number of trucks that are supplied in Busoga, 2,000 trucks a day, each truck carrying 10 tonnes, if we are to charge just 5,000 shillings per tonne, we would generate Shs 100 million per day and in a year, Shs 36.5 billion would be generated.

The money we are requesting to put up this facility can be paid back from the farmers and with the minimum effort but it has not been included in the report.

You wonder what criteria is being followed for those regions that are benefiting. If it was population, the region is the second most populated. If it is tax - if you look at the 10 highest taxpaying companies, MTN being number one, on the list of 10, four are from the region.

You find Kakira, Bujagali Energy – if you allow me to give it perspective and say Umeme because it was closed, but to give it perspective, the power it is selling, of course, comes from there – and then the beer company.

Mr Speaker, we feel that we have been grossly neglected, to the extent that even the Shs 3 billion – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. For the record, the second Deputy Prime Minister does not come from Busoga, he comes from Adjumani, West Nile.

Number two, colleagues, I must tell you that we made very good progress with the farmers and the millers from Busoga. Dr Batuwa, you know this.

The progress and conclusion we reached in the last meeting, which I chaired personally - because I am not from there, I do not have any interests – but they harmonised, and on Tuesday, we shall sort the Sugar Bill.

So, if you want to consult them further - if they have changed position, please tell us. They continue in this same state. But after a long negotiation, which was very difficult, they reached a compromise with each other and shook hands.

I hope on Tuesday, we can sort the Sugar Bill so that the law we have can at last define a formula, and people start benefiting, because every day that we do not sort out the issue of the formula, it is the miller who is benefiting.

The farmer is not being helped in any way. LOP, you have strictly two minutes because the Arch Bishop has come.

4.23

MR EVANS KANYIKE (NUP, Bukoto County East, Masaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the chairperson of the committee and honourable members for their submissions. I have a few points to put across.

My area of concern is limited accessibility to affordable and inclusive financing. This point was elaborated upon in the report. I am trying to buttress it by alerting the committee and the country that we should also reconsider re-establishing the Cooperative Bank, which will provide accessible financing to our people.

The second point is the lack of prioritisation for the trade negotiations. As a country, we have ratified different agreements across the board, but we need to prioritise what we have ratified, especially in Africa. We have the African Continental Free Trade Area, we should prioritise trading in Africa because we have opportunities, and even remove the non-tariff barriers.

In East Africa, mainly, it is as if we are not in the EAC. We have restrictions on trading with even the people with whom we are in the same community. Therefore, our country and other East African Community (EAC) member states have to show commitment to the East African Community protocols.

Lastly, tourism is a big sector, but we do not give it priority. I was told that gorillas and chimpanzees in Uganda spend their day in Rwanda and back at night to sleep in Uganda because they have their homesteads in Uganda.

In Rwanda, to see a chimpanzee or a gorilla, you pay more than \$200. But in Uganda, I was told that we only pay \$100. We have what we do not use as a country. Therefore, we should invest a lot in tourism to expand our foreign exchange. Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity.

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

4.27

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Thank you, Mr Speaker and thank you, Chairperson and members, for this important report.

We take note of just a few points because of time. One is appreciation to the committee or the contribution of this sector to our GDP. This is mainly the industrial sector, which contributes 27.3 per cent, manufacturing contributes 16.5 per cent, creating 1.4 million jobs.

This has been because of the policy of import substitution. We can see that the products that we are producing here are replacing those that we used to import.

There are quite a few concerns that were raised, namely, on the funding by Uganda Development Corporation (UDC) to different companies.

One, I want to clarify on Biyinzika Poultry International Limited. Mr Speaker, it is an indigenous company, which is interested in investing in animal feeds. We thought that this sector, which is growing, should be supported by the Government.

The requirement that we need is Shs 45 billion. The amount of money that appeared previously was Shs 28 billion, but when we received the final figures from the minister for finance, the allocation proposed was Shs 39 billion. That explains the difference.

We think that by supporting this company, we are actually impacting on the import substitution of animal feeds, and growing this sector. We are of the opinion that this money should not be reallocated. Instead, it should be increased.

The second point is about Fine Spinners Uganda Limited. Mr Speaker, we have already signed an agreement, and we are investing more money in the cotton sector. I do not

know whether Members have visited the Fine Spinners Uganda Limited factory here in Bugoloobi, which is doing a fantastic job. We are investing Shs 58 billion. We have already paid Shs 28 billion to the company. The remaining Shs 31 billion is to import the factory lines.

We are of the opinion that reallocating Shs 5 billion to other companies that are not ready will just stop the importation of this equipment. Mr Speaker, I pray that as we go into the final arrangement to maintain the Shs 31.5 billion, so that we import the equipment and start the factory. If we do not do that, how shall we import part of the equipment? Unfortunately, you cannot import part of the equipment. You must import all the equipment that you need, and we are at the tail end.

Mr Speaker, I beg that as we finalise, we maintain this Shs 5 billion so that we can import the equipment. You are familiar with manufacturing. If you are ordering equipment, you cannot order 95 per cent of the equipment; it must come as a whole.

The other issue was about certification, and it was raised by the honourable colleague opposite me. I would like to inform you that the Ministry of Trade, working with the Ministry of Agriculture, has prepared a project to address all issues related to exports, including standards, radiation and all that.

A project of around €174 million will be coming to this House by the Ministry of Finance to address post-harvest handling and all these issues, including certification. Then, we shall impact on the exports that we have.

Finally, there was the issue about the sugar mill of Busoga - (*Interruption*)

MS NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, I want the minister to clarify how these companies are owned, because these are companies that are supposed to belong to investors.

Yes, we come in by way of a Memorandum of Understanding (MoU), but if we are funding - like for the Fine Spinners Uganda Limited,

we gave them buildings, tax holidays, and now we are talking about the most basic thing of importing machines. What are they investing? As investors, what do they bring? From the very word go, this appears to be a public company.

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

MR BAHATI: We are not giving them free money. We are buying shares in these companies. For example –(Interjections)- the benefit is creation –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you are the one on record.

MR BAHATI: The benefits are really many, because we are creating jobs and wealth for these people who are going to be growing cotton. We are buying 40 per cent of the shareholding in Fine Spinners Uganda Limited.

For every company that we get interested in, where we know that we are going to make money, we buy shares. The proceeds from this investment are for Ugandans. We are doing business with them. That is the point.

The last was about the sugar factory in Busoga. We are making good progress. We have purchased land and done all the feasibility studies. We need Shs 134 billion to start a serious sugar factory in Busoga. That is what we are proposing to have.

The second was on Lira Millers Limited, which I have seen that you have recommended. Lira Millers Limited is a private company. They want the Government to purchase it at \$8 million, before we do the assessment of the investment.

My opinion, Mr Speaker, is that when we reallocate and invest money, Shs 10 billion in Lira Millers Limited, when it is actually not ready to receive this money, it will not be a good decision. We would rather maintain the money where it is, and then prepare to get the resources to fund Lira Millers Limited. If Parliament says that we allocate it Shs 10

billion, when we have not yet purchased it, it will not be a proper decision.

Lastly –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, on that – honourable colleagues, please, we cannot do appraisals on the Floor. An appraisal is a long process. You cannot sit here and say this is the company that we need, it is a company from our area, and we have interests, it will help our farmers, and we say we have Shs 10 billion. No, there must be a very clear appraisal process. That is why there is the board of UDC.

Our focus should be on giving a certain amount to UDC, and then UDC appraises these companies to see whether they qualify or not. Otherwise, we are going to make mistakes here on the Floor.

How shall we ever do our oversight role when we are the ones who made mistakes on the Floor? Let us allow appraisal processes to go on well.

MR BAHATI: The last point, Mr Speaker, was about the cooperative bank. We are determined to form a cooperative bank. As you know, to form a commercial bank in this country, you need over Shs 100 billion. This might not be raised through appropriation, as we speak.

The strategy we are now employing is to have the co-operators themselves, and they are willing to start a fourth-tier microfinance institution, and then after that, they graduate slowly, because we cannot have Shs 140 billion at a go. We would rather start slowly and move forward.

Lastly, I would really like to thank Members for the support you give to this sector. This year, we received an additional Shs 14 billion. UDC has been allocated Shs 100 billion. As the Speaker says, it would be good to allow the board of UDC to make assessments of these companies, because they know them better. They understand this business. The point would be for you to fight for more capitalisation of UDC, so that we can find more companies.

I thank you, Members, for your support and your comments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for tourism?

4.37

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra):

Thank you so much, committee chairperson. I thank the committee and the committee members for the good report.

A few issues were raised, but the main one, really, is to do with human-wildlife conflict. I want to thank the committee for the good recommendation because they have requested that the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) ceiling be raised so that we can have enough resources to fence most of these protected areas. Maybe one thing that Parliament needs to understand is that we do not intend to get this money from the ministry for finance.

Uganda Wildlife Authority is a money-generating entity, and it spends its own resources. We have the money to fence mainly the three problematic parks, where we have done some work and where we have not started. Our request to finance is to raise our ceiling by around Shs 48 billion so that we can have enough resources to do the fencing. The issue is really about raising the funding.

Mr Speaker, I just want to conclude because the rest was mainly support. As the ministry for tourism, we work with the missions. We have so far given around 21 missions, a little money, maybe around Shs 100 million. We know it is not enough because of the small budget we have. That is what we can afford; so is the issue of the local governments. With time, when we have enough resources, we will increase our support.

In conclusion, the acting Leader of the Opposition (LOP) made a statement that sometimes the gorillas are in Uganda, sleep here, and they wake up in - these are natural resources. We tend to share them with our

neighbours. I just want to inform the House that no – (*Interjection*) - not necessarily.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, for a foreigner to track a gorilla in Uganda, it will cost them around USD 800 in just a day. It is slightly expensive on the side, but that is what we charge. And for Ugandans, it is around Shs 250,000.

Mr Speaker -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you should tell the LOP that it is, instead, the other way around. Gorillas come from the other side to stay in Uganda – yes, they cross over from the other side to come back and to look for the gorillas that have crossed.

MR MUGARRA: This side - we share these resources. As I conclude, Mr Speaker, this is a directive you can give. Hon. Kwizera suggested that Members of Parliament should take an interest in visiting these resources. As a ministry, we would be glad to host them. We will give waivers for Members of Parliament if they come in a group to visit our resources. I want to assure you that -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we want to pay. We do not want you to go and record on national television that you charge the rest of Ugandans and ask you to give us for free. So, please, do not cause us trouble.

MR MUGARRA: No, it is okay, you can pay, but sometimes we have a marketing strategy, but we have no problem. We will receive you and take you through.

Mr Speaker, and now maybe speaking to my brother, the acting LOP, and our brothers in the opposition, that despite whatever we do as a ministry of tourism, it does not matter how beautiful and how many resources and what we can showcase as a country, this beautiful Pearl of Africa has. If the message we are sending to the rest of the world is negative about this country, we are washing clean and hanging in the mud.

My request is: my brothers from the National Unity Platform (NUP), please, we are a sector employing almost two million Ugandans. Therefore, it is important that - (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Please, we are done. No, we are done with this. Sorry, honourable colleagues, I want to give this guidance. I have listened to the chairperson and I have read through the report. I have listened to the minister. It seems there was a gap.

Honourable minister, it seems there is additional information for which the committee requested clarification, but you never gave it. For them, they had to process the statement based on the documents they had. Okay?

Therefore, on the issue of Biyinzika, fine spinners, please, provide the committee more information and clarification, so that it is very clear before this money is redistributed, so that at the Budget Committee level, we can have it well harmonised. Okay?

Number two, I have seen and read through different reports and noticed that the committee on tourism has processed vote 110, committee on presidential affairs has processed vote 110. I think we need to start moving together as a Government. You see, this is - colleagues and members of the Cabinet, this is a matter of the law. Okay?

The law is here. The Uganda Industrial Research Institute Act, 2006, places it under the minister in charge of industry. I do not know how the Secretariat for Science and Technology works. I have the law here. Even if you go, I have the law here. The directors, the heads, are appointed by the minister in charge of industry.

Therefore, the interpretation in the Uganda Industrial Resource Institute Act, 2006, says thus: "*Minister means the minister responsible for industry.*" If you do not amend the law, you cannot work in anticipation. If you want

to change something, go and amend the law. If you do not amend the law, we will go with the existing law. Simple!

Therefore, the Committee on Presidential Affairs, please - I will not disturb you with Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI). I am even seeing discrepancies in figures. Let us - if the Government wants the institute to go under the secretariat, because it is not a ministry, the secretariat of science and technology, let them amend the law. They should bring a proposal. Otherwise, we shall look shabby here if we continue that way.

Honourable chairperson, do you want to make any clarification?

MS NAYEBALE: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I had a small clarification that you have ably put up. The Committee on Trade and Tourism supported the minister, though our hands were tied, especially with the Uganda Coffee Development Authority (UCDA).

I would like to request the minister to give us proper documentation on how Biyinzika was handled. Those were two different enterprises, as per the minister's submission and many others, especially under UCDA. I would like to thank honourable colleagues for supporting us.

I would like to thank members of my committee, and definitely you, Mr Speaker. Thank you so much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, you did not talk about the issues of compliance. Yes, compliance, there is no certificate for gender and equity for the vote.

MR MUGARRA: Mr Speaker, I inquired. The assessment was done, but the person who issued the certificate is the ministry of finance in collaboration with the Equal Opportunities Commission. The final mandate is not necessarily ours but we got an assessment of how we performed as regards those requirements.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You see, once you know it is a requirement as per the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA), you need to ask yourself how you can carry the MPs to Parliament without this?

MR MUGARRA: I request that we follow up and have it availed to the committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we can ensure that it is settled by the time of reconciliation with the budget. Therefore, pursue that and ensure it is settled.

Now, Honourable colleagues, I am going to frame this question in such a way - because it is very important that this money for Biyinzika and fine spinners remains the way it was, until we bring the documents, which prove it. The moment the documents fail, then they go with the position of the committee. That justification was very important to be put. This will be at the Budget Committee level, as per Rule 149(2) of our Rules of Procedure.

Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the committee on the committee on - I have very many reports.

Okay, honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026 be adopted with the proposed amendment.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The amendment is very clear. It is a stay. The money should remain as it is, until, honourable minister, you bring the necessary documents to enable the committee chairperson to go and present before the budget committee and justify your money. This is because it is the chairperson who will go there to justify it. If you do not, then, they will go ahead with the position of the committee.

The report, the recommendations and proposed amendments are referred to the Committee on Budget for harmonisation, reconciliation and consolidation, as provided for under rule 149(2) of our Rules of Procedure.

Honourable colleagues, House is suspended until 5.30 p.m. We shall resume at 5.30 p.m. Let us go and join the Anglican Chaplaincy for Easter Carols because it is very important and we come back here for work.

(The House was suspended at 4.49 p.m.)

(On resumption, at 5.59 p.m., the Deputy Speaker presiding.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kindly inform the ministers that we are back for business, like I said.

VI. COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the minister comes in, let the chairperson make the presentation. Hon. Angura, be the acting chief whip; get us the minister for ICT, who was around. Also, get us the one for presidential affairs and others.

6.00

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tonny Ayoo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to present the report of the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance on the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026. Before I present, I wish to lay on the Table this report, the minutes and other documents that were used for processing the ministerial policy statement. I beg to lay.

For purposes of saving time, I wish to go to the findings, observations and recommendations made by the committee. This report contains the Ministerial Policy Statement and budget

for Vote 020 - Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance, and Vote 126 - National Information Technology Authority.

Mr Speaker, the report contains the half-year performance of the sector, key achievements, the proposed budget estimates for Financial Year 2025/2026 with details. The committee looked at compliance with the law, gender and equity responsiveness, Sustainable Development Goals and environmental issues that are contained in the report.

Observations and recommendations

The ministry indicated a funding gap of Shs 5.7 billion for community mobilisation, sensitisation and awareness creation for increased uptake of development initiatives, and Shs 1.8 billion for implementation of a national civic education and adult literacy programme, with the emphasis on roles and responsibilities of families, communities and citizens, mainly by Department of Communication and National Guidance.

The committee recommends that the Government provides Shs 7.54 billion to facilitate awareness creation and popularisation of Government programmes for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Continuous automation and rollout of Government services

For Financial Year 2025/2026, the ministry indicated a budget of Shs 16.10 billion to undertake the intervention but available funding to the ministry is Shs 12.89 billion, resulting in a funding gap of Shs 3.21 billion.

The committee recommends that the Government allocates additional Shs 3.21 billion for the continuous automation of Government services for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Development and marketing of local innovations

While the ministry indicated a funding requirement of Shs 5.3 billion, the Government has provided Shs 1 billion, resulting in a funding gap of Shs 4.3 billion. The committee, therefore, recommends that the Government allocates Shs 4.3 billion for the development and marketing of local innovations.

8.2. National Information Technology Authority

8.2.1. Operation and maintenance of the National Data Centre

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance provides Shs 20 billion to NITA-U for operation and maintenance of the National Data Centre to ensure protection of Government and non-government data or information being hosted in the data centres.

8.2.2 Provision of ICT connection to 781 new sites on the National Backbone Infrastructure

The National Information Technology Authority – Uganda provided a funding requirement of Shs 48.468 billion, but in the allocation, only Shs 7.022 billion has been provided, leaving a gap of Shs 41.445 billion to cater for the service provision of these sites connected to the National Backbone Infrastructure.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development allocates Shs 41.445 billion to NITA-U for the provision of ICT services to 1,200 sites connected, which will enable Government ministries, departments and agencies, and also local governments to fully utilise the ICT infrastructure and reduce on the accumulation of arrears and eventual increment of the debt burden.

8.2.3 Operationalisation of the Data Protection Office

While NITA-U requested for Shs 4.455 billion in the budget, provision has been given for only Shs 100 million, leaving a shortfall of Shs 4.355 billion.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development allocates an additional Shs 4.355 billion to NITA-U for operationalisation of the National Data Protection Office.

8.2.4. Inadequate staff salaries

The committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 2.361 billion to NITA-U for the purpose of adequately paying salaries for the recruited staff.

8.2.5. Counterpart funding to facilitate Uganda Digital Acceleration Programme and Phase V project activities

While the funders have provided all the necessary funds to support the project, the Government is failing on its part to provide Shs 4.45 billion, which may lead to a breach of terms of the contract and, in turn, trigger a penalty for such failure.

The committee recommends that Government provides counterpart funding of Shs 4.45 billion under the UDAP and implementation of Phase V of the National Backbone Infrastructure.

8.2.6. Centralisation of services at the National Data Centre

The committee recommends as follows:

- i. In the spirit of RAPEX, the Government should initiate and implement a policy on centralisation of all data at the National Data Centres and recovery sites. This will enable the consolidation of funds currently being spread across various MDAs in the management and maintenance of these data centres; and

- ii. The National Data Centres and recovery sites are enhanced with the necessary resources, including the requisite finances, human resources, equipment and systems, to ensure that seamless connectivity is achieved across MDAs.

8.3. Uganda Broadcasting Corporation

8.3.1. Replacement of outdated studio equipment for radio and television

The Corporation requires Shs 15 billion to replace the obsolete television and radio studio infrastructure.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provides Shs 15 billion to Uganda Broadcasting Corporation to replace its obsolete and outdated infrastructure.

8.3.2. Procurement of an Outside Broadcasting van for television and simpler OB kits for each radio brand.

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provides Shs 12 billion for the procurement of the Outside Broadcasting van and kits for each radio brand.

8.3.3. Expanding the Digital Terrestrial Television (DTT)/Direct to Home (DHT) Free-To-Air Broadcasting Network

The committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 2.9 billion for expanding DTT and DHT free-to-air broadcasting.

8.3.4. Contract staff salary deficit

Mr Speaker, the committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 5.031 billion to Uganda Broadcasting Corporation for enhancement of the wage bill.

The committee further recommends this payment to be paid through the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance.

8.3.5 Procurement and installation of archiving system for television and radio

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development allocates Shs 14 billion to Uganda Broadcasting Corporation for procurement and installation of robust archiving system for television and radio content.

8.3.6 Implementation of the Presidential directive on UBC to be provided Shs 30 billion annually for five years.

The committee recommends as follows:

- i) The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development fully implement the presidential directive; and
- ii) The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance would follow up with the finance to ensure that the directive is implemented.

8.4 Uganda Communications Commission

8.4.1 Cost of Internet

The committee recommends as follows:

- i.
 - i) The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance through Uganda Communication Commission should update the guidelines to operationalise a National Broadband Policy and ensure infrastructure sharing, especially among internet service providers in both the private and public sectors. This would lower the cost incurred in the delivery of the service and create a trickle-down effect to the final consumer;
 - ii) Government should enhance and emphasise awareness creation through sensitisation of the citizens on the use of ICT, which will increase ICT intake and consequently reduce Internet cost;
 - iii) The committee further recommends that the regulator, that is, Uganda Communications Commission, should create an enabling environment that shall attract more Internet Service Provider Players (ISPs) into the

country, thereby posing competition that will bring down cost; and

- iv) Government needs to fast-track the revamp of Uganda Telecom Company Limited in order to create more competition in the telecom sector, noting that NITA-U, as a Government agency, does not have license to provide internet services to private players.

8.4.3 High-cost end-user ICT devices and services

The Committee recommends as below:

- i) Government reviews taxes levied on ICT devices to make them more affordable. This will enable more persons to acquire the devices and enhance their accessibility and penetration across the country, which will in turn lead to a reduction in the cost of the internet. The committee projects that this will not only increase uptake of ICT devices but also increase usage of data, resultantly creating a wider tax base; and
- ii) Government promotes the sale and use of locally produced phones and other gadgets in the country through Build Uganda Buy Uganda, and any other strategy that would result in people accepting to use the locally manufactured devices.

1.1.4 The digital divide across the country

The committee recommends that Governments should undertake to provide ICT skilling right from primary school to enhance ICT literacy in the country.

Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology (UICT) based at Nakawa

8.5.1 Insufficient staffing level and wage bill

The committee recommends that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development provides Shs 2.949 billion for UICT to enhance its wage bill and meet the staffing requirements

by the National Council for Higher Education.

8.5.2 Insufficient specialised ICT laboratory infrastructure

The committee recommends that the Government urgently provides Shs 1 billion to UICT for specialised ICT laboratory infrastructure.

8.5.3 Insufficient smart lecture rooms infrastructure

The committee recommends that the Government provides UICT with Shs 1 billion for the upgrade of UICT lecture rooms to smart lecture rooms.

8.5.4 Research and innovation funding

The committee recommends that the Government allocates Shs 2.25 billion to UICT specifically to fund research and innovation.

Two, the government creates a linkage between UICT and science and technology to create a funding line for innovation at the Uganda Institute of Computer Technology.

1.4 Posta Uganda

8.6.1 Under capitalisation of Posta Uganda

The committee recommends that Government provides the share capital of \$4.505 million dollars as per the statutory requirement, which translates into about Shs 19 billion to Uganda Post Limited to enable it to undertake the above investment projects that will provide the much-needed business agility and financial health for the institution.

8.6.2 Delay in implementation of national addressing and postal services

The committee recommends that Government allocates Shs 7.6 billion to Posta Uganda to implement the national addressing and postcode system.

1.5 Vision Group

The committee recommends that Shs 2.9 billion be allocated to the Vision Group to revive the vernacular newspapers of *Oromuri*, *Etop* and *Rupiny*.

The committee recommends to the House that the budget for the institutions, as highlighted below, be approved.

Vote 020 - Ministry of Information and Communication Technology and National Guidance, Shs 105,818 billion.

Vote 126 - National Information Technology Authority (NITA-U), Shs 257,784 billion.

The total appropriation for the two votes is Shs 363,602 billion.

Appropriation-in-aid.

These are entities that mobilise their resources and spend at the source.

- i. Uganda Broadcasting Corporation, the committee recommends that Shs 40.114 billion be approved.
- ii. Uganda Communications Commission, the committee recommends that Shs 262.73 billion be approved.
- iii. Uganda Institute of Information and Communication Technology –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Chairperson, you said that the budget for UBC is an appropriation in aid? Because appropriation in aid means that you are the one who generated all this money. It is like Non-Tax Revenue (NTR), and then we are giving it back to you. So, on UBC –

MR AYOO: I think UBC was just misplaced under the self - so let us remove UBC from among the entities for appropriation in aid.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR AYOO: Posta Uganda, Shs 19.66 billion

The total amount for appropriation-in-aid, that is UCC, Posta Uganda, totals to Shs 350.757 billion.

The total appropriation for the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, including appropriation in aid, that the committee is recommending to the House to approve is Shs 714,359,000,000.

Conclusion

It is, therefore, undeniable that a strong and effective ICT sector is critical for successful socio-economic development and transformation, and it is a crucial aspect of the promotion of a knowledge economy.

The use of ICT can transform society from a resource-dependent to a resource-based economy and can increase the per capita income of citizens.

The development of the ICT sector needs to be prioritised as a driver for regional economic competitiveness, a significant revenue maker, and an employment provider. The acceleration of the country's economy towards the digital era makes the ICT industry a high-speed field.

In light of the above, therefore, the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance recommends that the House adopts its report on the Ministerial Policy Statement and the budget estimate for the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance and its agency for the Financial Year 2025/2026. I beg to report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, chairperson and the committee, for the job well done. Debate starts now, with Hon. Mudimi, followed by Hon. Aleper, Hon. Aisha Kabanda and Hon. Mpindi Bumali. Three minutes each.

6.20

MR WAMAKUYU MUDIMI (NRM, Elgon County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the committee for the report. I have two or three issues and one is the issue of multiple investment by these

telecommunication companies. You find many of them trying to invest in infrastructure such as Internet, but you see three or four companies placing four different poles in one area. Is there a way they can share investments such that we avoid having poles everywhere?

There are also some investments where they normally dig across the existing roads. I have seen a point, here in Nsambya, where they are trying to create trenches to put wires but the road has been earmarked for expansion. They are within the bracket. One time, I stopped and said: "I have seen a red mark here but you are putting your thing here." They said: "For us, we are here to execute the work." Honourable minister, is there a way through which you can guide that process because a road is constructed and then tomorrow, these destroy it.

Recently, the Government made a statutory declaration on the capping of interest rate on borrowed money from, especially, moneylenders. However, for some of these telecommunication companies such as MTN or Airtel, I was told by someone from the village that they still charge 10 per cent per month. Honourable minister, do you also regulate that sector?

On the issue of the backbone infrastructure, sometime back there was a company called Marubeni, which started putting in place all that infrastructure. However, they are still digging across the highways. An old man called me and asked: "Is Marubeni still doing that work, which it started some 40 years ago?" We need to know if it is still the one. These are tough questions.

On the issue of computer misuse, it is still a challenge. Outside there, people still misuse the computer to harass others. A case in a point is where someone was harassing me and my family until yesterday when he came and I arrested him, by myself, from my office here at Parliament. A certain young man was harassing my wife, saying: "Unless you give me money, I am going to kill you." He came by himself and I got him. He is in custody. I said, "You come and I give you money" and he, courageously,

came. I ushered him in and he was arrested from my office. All that is still a challenge and we need to be supported.

Lastly, I have seen they are recommending additional funding. Is it within the budget? Someone said you cannot tamper with any budget figures that are given. Committee chairperson, where you say “additional funding,” where is it coming from in the budget? (*Mr Balimwezo rose*) – Information, Hon. Balimwezo -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have already exceeded your time. Hon. Aleper? Three minutes each.

6.24

MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii County (Kadam), Nakapiripirit): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to raise some very critical issues concerning telecommunication in this country.

I surely appreciate that we have made strides since the introduction of mobile telecommunication in this country, around 1998. However, the constituency that I represent is, up to today, not even connected beyond 15 per cent with mobile telecommunication. This has completely undermined service delivery, for example, in the areas of health. When there are emergencies, it is difficult to communicate.

There is even the critical issue of security. It becomes very difficult to co-ordinate security issues in the area because of lack of a mobile telecommunication network. This has completely undermined service delivery in my area. I wish to put this to you, the presiding officer and leader of this House, to use all the abilities and avenues to make sure that this is done, at least even before the NRM primaries.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR ALEPER: Lastly, there is the issue of additional funding to Posta Uganda. Inevitably, postal services are something that can never be done away with. They are the only courier services that have integrity. It has failed to be

done away with worldwide. What we have to do is to ensure that we fund and resource that institution for the delivery of a certain type of mail and messages in this country.

Therefore, I am strongly in support of additional funding for the resources that were not given to you Posta Uganda during the time they were rationalised and privatised. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. On the issue of the masts and connections, we engaged with the ministry and requested Members to register. It must have been passed on to the ministry. I know they have around 90 masts, so, they should be able to - the minister will respond - intervene in such special circumstances.

6.26

MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join colleagues to thank the chairperson and his committee. Allow me to make the following comments and questions.

Number one, to the minister, as we appropriate money for national guidance, are you aware that we have organisations that promote moral decay under the guise of entertainment? We have reached a level of having sex for entertainment on platforms. We create a theatre and people play sex, yet we have a full ministry that we are about to give a lot of money for national guidance. What have we done about such things that promote moral decadence?

Number two, I am happy that the committee is proposing to give more money to Uganda Broadcasting Corporation (UBC). Previously, the President put up a committee to go and study UBC and it recommended revamping it. This House sat recently and asked the minister why they were not implementing it.

I would like to know from the minister: why does it take the committee to remind you that the President said we should give UBC Shs 30 billion for some consecutive years for them to be able to recover? We are failing to use our own national media to broadcast things that

we think that are important. Instead, we force other private media houses to broadcast, even the President's statements, because ours is not selling because we have refused to invest enough money there.

Number three, to the committee chairperson, you are saying we should include ICT education from primary level. When we are failing to even provide computers at secondary school level, how do you think this can be implemented?

Finally, about the Vision Group, I have seen the committee recommending that we put in money to bring back publications in other languages such as *Orumuri* and others that have been mentioned. Are you aware that *New Vision* has been making losses for several years now? For the last two or three years, I know *New Vision* has been making losses.

Has the committee interrogated why *New Vision* makes losses? Have they made proposals to *New Vision* on how they are going to recover or we shall continuously keep feeding them like that. Have you thought about directing them on what to publish? Because what is happening now is that they brought the Government broadcasting entities have no breathing space. They are directed on what to publicise and what not to publicise - (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Okay, conclude.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. And many times the directive is against the market and if you want these Government media houses to survive, they have to behave in accordance with the market to be able to survive. Therefore, stifling the media actually – the ministry for national guidance should also protect media houses.

Private media houses are also crying because of being directed on what to publicise, especially things that publicly show how anti-human the Government is; where the Government is made to look bad over issues of human rights.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Mpindi?

6.30

MR MPINDI BUMALI (Independent, PWD Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Part of what I wanted to say has been mentioned by Hon. Aisha. In regards to the entities of Government, like media houses that are failing to perform despite the fact that they are being given a hand.

I have heard about UBC, Poster Uganda - when the Government gives UBC money but there is no improvement and yet other media houses that are struggling are showing some improvement. Is it the capacity of the staff or what?

The other issue that I wanted to mention, is this trend where every recommendation by the committees is recommending additional funding, that the Government finds money to top up different things but then the Government comes up with a budget ceiling that we can afford for the financial year.

However, in following my chairperson, I notice that in every line, he is recommending the money which the ministry came up with but on the other hand when you go to the Budget Committee or the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development, it has a budget ceiling.

Can we think of picking priorities and not necessarily recommending each and everything that the entity asks for because where the money will come from? The other committees also want 100 per cent of the proposals from the ministry but where will that money come from? It is important for us to engage and find means of picking those priority things that will help the budget committee when they are processing the budget to easily come out with the budget. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister? - On the Floor.

6.32

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (NATIONAL GUIDANCE) (Mr Godfrey Kabbyanga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank the chairperson for the report and I would also like to thank Members who have debated on this report.

Hon. Wamakuyu talked about sharing infrastructure. Indeed, sharing of infrastructure is embedded in the broadband policy and right now it has started working because - if you take note, in your areas, the masts are now shared by different telecom companies. Telecom companies no longer erect their own masts. They are being shared. It is only the internet which is still a problem, but we are also trying to see how it can also share poles and we are working with all service providers to resolve that. *(Mr Kasolo rose)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, honourable member, you do not access the microphone without permission. How many times do I tell you that?

MR KASOLO: But when I rise up to speak –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Today, I allowed you to speak. And it is not that every time you stand up, you must speak. You must catch the Speaker's eye. I will not tolerate that indiscipline here. And the day you switch on a microphone without my permission, I will not allow you to continue. I need you to understand that.

Any MP - I know the people I picked here are those who have not spoken since morning and how I work is that I usually know if I have not given anyone an opportunity, I first give them an opportunity when I have limited time. So please, there is a behaviour I do not want here.

Honourable minister, please, can you conclude?

MR KABBYANGA: I was saying that we are also working on sharing infrastructure of the internet. As the Government, we are expanding our national backbone infrastructure and

have decided to use concrete poles which are designed in such a way that any other service provider who will come will use the same pole, so that we do not have so many poles crowded in one area. *(Hon. Balimwezo rose.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, kindly take your seat. Honourable minister, continue.

MR KABBYANGA: So, I appreciate what the honourable Members of Parliament are suggesting but moving forward, we are going to ensure the re-sharing of infrastructure. On issues of destroying roads, immediately after construction, we are currently working in KCCA. The roads which are being rehabilitated are as a result of us working closely with the engineers to ensure that we have service channels where at least all utility companies can use them so that there is stoppage of destroying roads anyhow.

However, obviously, the old roads are not designed in such a way that we have enough service channels. However, all the new projects will have to have those service channels.

On Marubeni, I will find out what Marubeni is doing because I am not very familiar with it and you say it has been working for 40 years-

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable, what the Member put across clearly is, that people are concerned about the continuous digging of the roads for 40 years. Therefore, you think it is that traditional company still digging up to now?

MR KABBYANGA: No, I think we are trying to come up with new designs just as I have told you, Mr Speaker, because the old designs did not have those service channels.

They only had channels for storm water but now we are working together with the Ministry of Works and all other entities to ensure there are service channels for utility companies.

About computer misuse, it is very unfortunate that cyber bullying obviously exists, and as much as possible, we are trying to work with

the security agencies to arrest people who normally misuse computers because there is a law; the Computer Misuse Act. And if you report to us, we will assist you to trace for that person because we have technology which can trace.

However, we are yet to upgrade our technology to detect it before it is done. When you report to us, we work with security and UCC – there are very many people who have been arrested and arraigned in the courts of law.

Therefore, I encourage you, whenever you are harassed or your family is harassed, please come. We are going to assist you to trace the culprit with ease because we have technology which can trace such people.

My friend, Hon. Aleper, I think we have talked. It is true, his constituency is not well served. The new guidelines state that for any telephone company to seek renewal of license, they must have covered around 90 per cent of the whole country. 10 per cent will be covered by us as Government, our agencies. I am in touch with Hon. Aleper.

Just as the Rt Hon. Speaker has indicated, recently Parliament passed a loan, the Universal Digital Acceleration Programme (UDAP). We are going to build masts ourselves and we are going to serve those areas which most of the telephone companies do not want to invest in because of the market dynamics. We are going to and we have already asked MPs to give us those constituencies. We normally send technical officers there to pick the coordinates. We are going to start constructing masts in those areas so that now telecom companies can just come and switch on their technology and then you get network.

On issues of national guidance, Hon. Kabanda, I appreciate. What you are bringing up is true. There is moral decadence in this country and it is being disseminated through so many means. One of them is social media, TikTok and others and also TVs. There are TVs which have started airing some of that funny content. We are monitoring them. Do you remember

“*Uncut Kalakata*”? We stopped it because it was a bit inappropriate.

National Guidance has not been having a budget for the last two years, but this year we got a budget and we have been organising several outreaches and we are also on TVs.

I would also like to beg Members of Parliament – we have a national guidance hour on UBC. It should be a combined effort. Hon. Aisha, you can come, we will give you time, and you talk about morals in this country. We have to keep talking about it. Just as we talk about it every day in church and in mosques, we have to keep talking about moral decadence.

Otherwise, some of the sites get more publicity – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, is there anything very critical you want to add? Just conclude.

MR KABBYANGA: One Member said that we are investing money in most of these agencies and he does not see improvement. At least there is a lot of improvement with UBC. We have received some money in the last three quarters and I think there is a lot of improvement.

However, Posta has never received any money from here because most of the money which we think is going to Posta is paying the former employees of Uganda Post and Telecommunication. Posta needs a lot of assistance. That is why I am happy that the committee is recommending at least some money to be given to Posta Uganda. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. I hope you have given serious attention to the issue of free air television because that was one of the reasons we allowed digital migration, knowing that our people in the villages who cannot afford these subscriptions should not be denied an opportunity to watch television.

We gave you a supplementary. I do not know how far you have reached in terms of implementation, and also ensuring that going forward, the whole country is covered with free to air.

MR KABBYANGA: Mr Speaker, we have started importing equipment so that we can cover the whole country. I think in the next three months we shall have completed the technology.

An MP, Hon. Chemonges, has written to me about – I think he has been applying for a frequency –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance on the Ministerial of Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The report and recommendations, specifically recommendations, are referred to the Committee on Budget for reconciliation, harmonisation, and consolidation as per rule 149(2) of our Rules of Procedure.

Thank you, committee chairperson and honourable minister. Issues of applying for frequency – those are issues you handle on your own. We do not allow conflict of interest on the Floor. If you have a personal request or application, please link up with the minister. Just as you have written to him, it should remain between the two of you.

COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Chairperson of the Committee on Presidential Affairs, as you call the minister, we have many from the Prime Minister's Office, from the President's Office, including the Government Chief Whip.

Point of procedure, Hon. Asiimwe?

MR ENOS ASIIMWE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yesterday, you guided that we cannot process MPS when the ministers are not here. I do not see any minister from the President's Office.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, were you listening to me when I was calling the committee chairperson? No, I do not think you were attentive. Ask your neighbour from Gomba to update you. Thank you. Committee chairperson?

6.47

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS (Mr Alex Byarugaba): Mr Speaker, I beg to present the Ministerial Policy Statement on the following votes under the Committee for the Presidency.

Before I do that, I wish to lay on Table the minutes and the report accordingly. The report contains the budget performance of the various sectors. These are 11 in number. They have proposed budgets. They also contain the alignment with the National Development Plan IV objectives and activities to be undertaken. All that is contained in the report.

The committee oversees the Office of the President under Vote 001.

Vote 002 is State House. Vote 003 is the Office of the Prime Minister.

Vote 023: Ministry of Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs.

Vote 107: Uganda AIDS Commission.

Vote 110, as guided, was supposed to be under the presidency, but until we get the clarification from the appointing authority who had directed that it goes to Science, Technology and Innovations, I leave that to your discretion.

Mr Speaker, we have Kampala Capital City Authority under Vote 122. The Directorate of Ethics and Integrity is vote 112. Vote 158 is the Internal Security Organisation. We also have vote 159, External Security Organisation. We also have Science, Technology, and Innovations.

I will not go into the solid details of the methodology, the basics, and the mandates. They are very clear cut. You will read them. I am sure they have uploaded them on your iPads.

Under Vote 001, Office of the President, we have the following observations - That is on page 6.

We observe that there is inadequate office accommodation. The committee recommends that an additional Shs 2.8 billion be made available to Vote 001, annually, to enable the Office of the President to construct at least five offices each financial year, so as to mitigate the challenge of office space for Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) in the medium-term.

You realise that out of 146 offices of RDCs, only 16 have been constructed, and that is where we have accommodation. The rest are renting.

Under the same Vote 001, there is a big issue of Cabinet support and policy development, where we observed a big gap that needs at least, as a recommendation, Shs 1.976 billion to be provided to this vote, to facilitate interventions of Cabinet support and policy development. What they do, you can read above.

Another key result area is the development and maintenance of National Leadership Institute (NALI), Kyankwanzi, where all of you have been. It has been under constant refurbishment and improvement to make life easy there for whoever wants to make use of it.

They, however, have a shortage or big gaps. They had a budget of Shs 10 billion, and only Shs 2 billion was made available. We, therefore, recommended that an additional Shs 7.5 billion be allocated to vote 001 to facilitate the development of NALI, that is, Kyankwanzi.

Under key issue number 274, that is facilitation for Resident District Commissioners, the offices - I have already talked about this. It is almost the same. Office and accommodation are the same. One is for office and one is for residence.

We recommend that Shs 12.424 billion be provided for the facilitation of RDCs and that the size and nature of the districts – I am sorry. Can I take you back right, Mr Speaker?

I want to go a little bit into greater detail on this one. I am talking about facilitation for the Resident District Commissioners. The committee observes that uniform facilitation to RDCs without consideration of the size and the nature of the districts, among other factors, does not ensure equality and allocation. Such districts include Wakiso - you all know Kasese, Isingiro, Ntungamo, Tororo, Sironko, and a few others.

The committee is of the strongest view that providing facilitation to RDCs while considering the size of districts served, the distances covered from Kampala, and those hard-to-reach areas, should improve on their roles and therefore their take-home as far as fuel and other related facilitations are concerned.

The committee recommends that at least Shs 12.424 billion be provided to facilitate RDCs and that the size and nature of the district be among the factors considered for allocation of this facilitation.

Another issue of concern was support for the Afro-Arab Youth Council headquarters construction. The Afro-Arab Youth Council was formed by the youth of the African and Arab world –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, I gave you 15 minutes, you have used five, and I can see you still have a huge document.

MR BYARUGABA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

These are the 11 pages. Eleven are very many, compared to the 2 that we just had. Mr Speaker, I beg that you allot me at least five more minutes, but I am going to summarise.

There is a shortage, and therefore, the committee recommends that at least Shs 5.4 billion be provided to vote 001 to expedite the construction of the Afro-Arab Youth Conference

headquarters, including the acquisition of land. The land has already been acquired, 27 hectares, but we need 50. The remainder, which was pledged by His Excellency the President, has not been accomplished hence the need for this Shs 5.4 billion Uganda shillings.

I will remind you of the fact that the Afro-Arab Youth Conference will be convened here during the course of next financial year; actually towards the end of this calendar year. It is going to be headquartered here in Uganda, therefore, the urgent need for this money.

Vote 002: State House

The State House is quite clear. We have to support the graduates of the skilling programme. We have 19 hubs, but we need to expand. On that, we recommend that the Government provides the State House a start-up support for skilling programme graduates, and also expedite establishment of a SACCOs where the skilling programme graduates can submit proposals to access funds to expand their enterprises, in the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The committee further recommends that the Government explores the possibility of expanding the industrial hubs to have a national outlook.

Poverty alleviation model villages; we have 36. We need many more, and to expand them, we have recommended that the Government provides Shs 6 billion to enable the State House to effectively roll-out 10 more model villages, to other parts of the country.

Uganda AIDS Commission

Uganda AIDS Commission is currently going through dire straits, because of what you all know regarding funding from the United States of America and other donor agencies. They have sort of halted their support, and they are getting it a little bit hard.

The committee established that the dissemination of HIV prevalence messages is inadequate and therefore needs more funding.

We recommended that Shs 18.2 billion be provided to vote 107 to facilitate packaging and dissemination of HIV prevention messages in the whole country.

The committee further recommends that Uganda AIDS Commission considers repackaging the HIV prevention messages for dissemination that depict the true dangers of living with HIV/AIDS and also adapting other new methods of communication.

Vote 110: Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI)

We have been guided, but it is clear there. I will not go into those details.

Ethics and Integrity is doing quite some good job but is very poorly funded and has funding gaps, which we identified here.

We recommended that Shs 3.935 billion be provided to Vote 112 to facilitate the retooling of the Directorate of Ethics and Integrity. They do not even have computers and their desks are completely worn out. It is a sad story in that office.

Internal security organisation: That is Vote 158. The details are very clear there. We only identified one important issue, and that is enhancement of technical infrastructure.

Given the current trend of technology, the organisation needs to upgrade their technical capacity and they need Shs 50.06 billion but only Shs 2.5 billion has been made available.

We therefore recommend that the excess gap of Shs 49.06 billion be made available to enable internal security organisations to move with the times. The threats and mandates are clear. I would not waste a lot of time taking you through those details.

Vote 159: External Security Organisation (ESO).

Their mandate is derived from the External Security Organisation Act. They do a lot of

work for us, our security and the security of this country. They have gaps in their budgets regarding foreign intelligence management and retooling.

We observed that the identified funding gaps of retooling of ESO constrains the organisation's ability to address the ever-changing security environment where the new intelligence threats call for immediate responses.

This of course necessitates enhanced technical capability in the form of acquisition of modern technical and transport equipment, as well as classified assorted assets for foreign missions and strategic deployments. You all know the details because you are Ugandans.

The committee recommends that:

Shs 29.184 billion be provided to enable ESO to acquire modern technical and transport equipment as well as classified assorted assets.

ESO has also another - I skipped this because of time, but it is all about where their offices are. If you know where it is, it is now engulfed between towers. I do not know how they keep their secrets in that place. There is a big hotel over there and a multi storage building on the other side and up.

Therefore, they are requisitioning that something be done, especially with some money to start at least on that structure. The money needed is put in there.

The committee recommends that at least Shs 31.324 billion be provided to Vote 159 to kick-start the construction of the External Security Organisation headquarters.

They already have land, the approved plans and the bills of quantities are already done. They only need Shs 31.324, those of you from the Budget Committee and Ministry of finance, partake of this very important information so that we secure our security as a country.

Vote 167: Science, Technology, Innovations; Is a fairly, moderately well-funded area and just

very recently under the recent corrigenda they got some extra funding and it was very well allocated to the various sub programs.

- (i) Facilitation to innovation fund. There is also inadequate funding for the Uganda National Council for Sports. Those are gaps.
- (ii) There are also gaps in priority setting in science, technology and innovation interventions but the rest are adequately funded.

However, on inadequate funding for the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology, the committee recommends that Shs 9.98 billion be provided to Uganda National Council for Science and Technology to undertake research registration, monitoring of STI in the country and also coordinating the regulations of STI.

The mandates are clear cut.

Sericulture

There is another important programme and that is budget provision for trade or commercialisation of sericulture. Allow me to go a little bit on this because it is sensitive to some of the colleagues here in this House and they demand that the rest of the Members in the House should at least appreciate this.

The committee under this particular subheading established that the project has faced significant challenges primarily stemming from financial constraints and legal complications and yet a lot of money was sunk into this particular project. It is currently being implemented in Kween, Chepskunya and partly in the Sheema districts.

The President himself is so committed to this program and recently wrote to the effect that some funding be made available to restart this very important program.

The committee observed that the directed reduction in scope has created new financial obligations, including compensations for

stakeholders whose resources were committed to broader initial scope and the humanitarian.

Under humanitarian considerations for families of deceased staff members who went unpaid. It was much wider, and the ministry found it necessary at that time to reorganise and only operate in two districts.

This caused a lot of losses to families and employees who were employed. We need about Shs 10 billion to ameliorate this menace.

The committee recommends, therefore, that during the next financial year, Shs 23 billion be provided to fund the Tropical Institute of Development Innovations interventions under commercialisation of sericulture project and avenues be explored to fulfil other obligations and commitments in the medium-term.

Vote 023: Ministry of KCCA & MA

Mandate

KCCA was lucky that they got a project funding to work on the infrastructure and most of - *(Member timed out.)* They only need retooling.

On retooling, we recommend, therefore -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Committee chairperson, being a chairperson does not give you audacity not to respect time. You must get used. You have been here for long and you have seen how others were behaving. You have three minutes to conclude. Switch on the microphone. You see, we cut you off automatically. So, you were just going to continue talking when not on record. *(Laughter)*

MR BYARUGABA: I am very sorry, Mr Speaker. I thought it was on. I always see people come and just talk.

Vote 122: Kampala Capital City Authority

We looked at one major problem here and that was solid waste management.

We are recommending that Shs 78.3 billion be provided to Vote 122 to enable KCCA to deliver on its mandate in as far as solid waste management is concerned. You all know the issue of Kiteezi – all those details are put there.

We further recommend that the management of Kampala Capital City Authority explores the possibility of investing in sustainable waste management through recycling, like it is done in many other modern countries.

Vote 003: Office of the Prime Minister

Office of the Prime Minister is quite a wide one, but we do not have very many recommendations on this. We only request that, one, the budget enhancement for the Office of the Prime Minister, Deputy Prime Minister, Government Chief Whip and minister for general duties be enhanced by at least Shs 12 billion.

Finally, we also talked about northern Uganda, Karamoja affairs, Luweero Triangle and Busoga affairs portfolio. We put our recommendations very clearly.

In conclusion, Mr Speaker, the committee appreciates the total funding gaps that have been indicated in all the MDAs under this jurisdiction, but it is also alive to the challenges associated with the resource envelope constraints.

The committee, therefore, calls upon the Government to consider enhancing allocation to the presidency, KCCA and Office of the Prime Minister in interventions it has deemed critical as highlighted in this report. I wish to report. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. Do you have a minority report?

MR BYARUGABA: Mr Speaker, about an hour ago, a document was brought to me. I even put the time when I received this document. Actually, I only received a notification that there would be a minority report.

As for the document, the minority report itself, I received it when I was already seated here. Here it is.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us be accommodative and try our level best to listen to all sides.

MR BYARUGABA: I have no problem with it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Balimwezo, you have five minutes.

7.13

MR RONALD BALIMWEZO (NUP, Nakawa Division East, Kampala City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to correct something. When he signed, he told me to take the document to the office of the Clerk and I did that. Let me go straight to the areas of dissent.

In accordance with Rule 205 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of Uganda, the minority members of the committee dissent from the opinion of the majority committee, on the following grounds;

1. Failure to lay on Table the Ministerial Policy Statement of the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Rule 146 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, each minister responsible for a Vote, ministry or head responsible for a Vote shall by the 15th day of March submit to Parliament a policy statement for the preceding financial year for the ministry or Vote.

To that fact, Vote 167 and Vote 110 – Science, Technology and Innovation and Uganda Industrial Research Institute, respectively – failed to lay on Table their Ministerial Policy Statements for the Financial Year 2025/2026. They acknowledged this before the committee, that they were unable to table their Ministerial Policy Statements on time.

2. Concerns regarding the proposed increase in the facilitation budget for RDCs in six

districts – as named in the observation of the majority report

The majority report, on page 8, recommended that Shs 12.424 billion be provided for facilitation of Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) and that the size and nature of each district be among the key factors considered. The districts are; Kasese, Isingiro, Ntungamo, Wakiso, Tororo and Sironko.

Based on the recommendation, each Resident District Commissioner is expected to receive Shs 2.071 billion, annually. This is twice the budget of the district road fund. Each RDC is supposed to receive that – if you compute – annually, which translates to Shs 172 million per month.

To put this into perspective, this is an amount equivalent to the annual roads maintenance budget for a typical township. A case in point is that Wakiso District currently has five Deputy RDCs, each assigned to oversee a specific area. Entebbe has a Deputy RDC, Kira has a Deputy RDC, Kasangati has a Deputy RDC, Makindye has a Deputy RDC, Makindye-Ssabagabo has a Deputy RDC and Nansana Municipality also has a Deputy RDC.

In addition to these RDCs, there is an overall RDC for the district. Furthermore, the President recently appointed five Assistant RDCs in Wakiso, bringing the total number of appointees in the RDC's office to 11 individuals.

This level of staffing in a single district raises concern of overstaffing, especially at a time when the country faces numerous critical funding needs in essential sectors.

The proposed allocations, if implemented without efficiency checks and accountability could divert substantial resources from priority areas such as health, education and infrastructure.

What do we propose? We propose that additional funds should not be provided to facilitate the RDCs, based on the size and nature of the districts. In fact, the number of

RDCs should be downsized. You can read the other recommendations.

3. Undetailed budgetary allocations, resulting into wasteful expenditure by State House - Vote 002

The total annual budget allocations to the State House have progressively increased from Shs 497 billion in 2019 to Shs 857 billion in 2020, and Shs 1.02 trillion in 2021.

In April and October 2020, the State House received two supplementary budget allocations worth Shs 90 billion and Shs 450 billion, respectively. The latter was on top of the Shs 407 billion that the State House had been allocated hardly three months after the start of Financial Year 2020/2021.

Mr Speaker, there is a lack of a detailed breakdown of State House budget allocations. This intended loophole gives State House leeway to secretly spend the allocated monies on non-priority activities and then runs to Parliament of Uganda, requesting for supplementary budgets to cover the actual priority activities. These non-priority activities are feared to include the so-called bonanzas and impulsive donations which are non-productive activities, and have no long-term returns to the economy.

For instance, in table V4, summary vote estimates by economic classifications, item 282; current transfers not elsewhere classified, was allocated Shs 136.54 billion in the MPS. This money is neither explained nor broken down.

As the minority committee, we recommend that the minister gives us a detailed breakdown on the budget allocations for the State House for Parliament to know the actual funded activities to avoid wasteful expenditure.

Mr Speaker, I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, honourable chairman. I would like to clarify one issue of failure to submit policy

statements. If you remember, the Speaker adjourned *sine die* on 13th of March and made a pronouncement that for entities which had not submitted by 13th of March, they would submit to the Office of the Clerk and be referred because the 15th was on a Saturday.

Therefore, I have clear evidence here that Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) submitted to the Clerk on 14th of March and the Speaker referred it to the Committee on Presidential Affairs right away. That was a technical issue on our side and thank you for that observation, honourable member, but it was sorted out.

7.23

MS NOELINE KISEMBO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibaale): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the committee chairperson and members for the report, and also the Member who has presented the minority report. I stand in support of the majority report and I am going to address two issues.

One is on the facilitation for the Resident District Commissioners. We have RDCs, Deputy RDCs and Assistant RDCs appointed in our districts, but they lack transport facilitation. In my district, the Deputy RDC and Assistant RDC want to do their work, but do not have transport.

I strongly recommend that we support these people, so that they do a good job. They are very hardworking people - at least for my district - but are limited in their work because of transport facilitation. I support the committee that we provide them with that transport.

Secondly, on State House – *(Member timed out)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have three minutes; it has been the standard. That was one minute. Please, ICT, I know you might be tired but set three minutes for Members.

MS KISEMBO: Thank you, Mr Speaker for your wise ruling. On State House model

villages, I propose that these are rolled out to at least have one in the officially known regions of the country, so that we facilitate access to learning. We are in a campaign to bring people to the monetary economy through PDM and all that.

If we have these model villages spread across, then members of the communities can move easily and learn because we say seeing is believing. So, I support the model villages and I pray we roll them across the regions of the country. *(Applause)* Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. To get more Members, we will give two minutes each.

7.25

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is the Innovations Fund. The Government of Uganda should have a policy on how a Ugandan can access the Innovations Fund; it should be made clear. At what stage that does innovation get commercialised? Does it mean that every innovation should be funded to be commercialised?

I was privileged to be in the Budget Committee that did oversight on the Tropical Institute of Development Innovations (TRIDI) project on sericulture in Sheema District. When you physically see everything that is going on in that facility, it does not deserve the Shs 23 billion for which this committee is saying they are ready for commercialisation.

We were also informed that TRIDI used some of the money of the Innovations Fund to buy land for the company, not for innovation.

Mr Speaker, as a matter of policy, it should be clear how a Ugandan can access this Innovations Fund for fairness in the country.

Also, at what point do we put commercialisation? Not every innovation should be commercialised. Some should be dropped when there is no value seen in them and they cannot yield any money. It is not fair

for the country to continue to sink in money simply because we have invested in it before. I submit.

7.27

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido):

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to draw your attention and the House to the Uganda AIDS Commission. We all remember before the Trump direct order, the Uganda AIDS Commission was receiving up to Shs 1.9 trillion in different aspects of funding. I can see on our line up there that it is Shs 18 billion.

There are three aspects of this programme that are critical to Ugandans; treatment, diagnostics and relevant critical staff. I am not sure whether the Shs 18 billion will be enough. I have read in the report that the Shs 18 billion will go for information but there are labs that we have been using that will not have kits.

As I speak to you, we still have stock from the previous funding, but when that stock gets exhausted, we will start to feel the impact of this order more than we are doing now. The first line of treatment is cheaper, but once we are not able to get our people on the first line treatment, they will go to a very expensive treatment of almost US\$ 75 per month. As a country, we will not be able to afford that.

I remember when we had an opportunity to interact with the President, he said he would find at least Shs 300 billion to deal with treatment, critical staff and diagnostics. I had expected the minister to put that in this budget. Unfortunately, I do not see it.

Second - if I have one more minute - is the issue of the skilling programme. I think it is a very good programme, but we need funding for tools for the graduates of this programme. Otherwise, just rolling it without issuing these young people start-ups will not add value.

Finally, on the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs), in Kaberamaido, RDCs are number two to Local Council I (LC1s) in fighting crime and dealing with issues of land grabbing,

monitoring the Parish Development Model (PDM) and government programmes. In fact, we should be giving them more money. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I had allowed Hon. Stephen Kagwera, then Hon. Keefa, then Hon. Bahireira.

7.29

MR STEPHEN KAGWERA (NRM, Bura-hya County, Kabarole): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is about the RDCs. Do we need the numbers that we have? We already had an RDC and a deputy RDC. We are now bringing in an assistant RDC, and yet we cannot facilitate these people correctly. The qualifications of the RDCs have made it a dumping ground. Whoever fails in politics goes and becomes an RDC. I think it is not the right thing to do.

About the size and the population, yes, we have done poor planning – some districts are much bigger than others and the equity is not there.

The other issue is on poverty alleviation. I do not know if the committee chairperson visited those villages. If so, maybe you can give us the highlights. In my view, poverty is growing and we are doing it the negative way. Why am I saying this? Go to our villages and look at the levels of poverty. If we are to be sincere to ourselves, people are selling their pieces of land to the rich and the gap between the rich and the poor in this country has increased. What evidence do we have?

Mr Speaker, I saw you at one time trying to see how the children of poor people can access university education. I felt good that there is someone who can talk sense in this country to that level. Why am I saying this? When we were still young, we would go to the same schools as the children of rich people. I am lucky that I came from a moderate family. Today, my child cannot go to the same school as the person in my local village. That shows that instead of alleviating poverty, the gap is increasing.

What we are seeing in this country is economic growth, but there is no economic development. With growth, you can see buildings going up and many vehicles, but the people who own these buildings are the same people who own cars. The poor are getting poorer and the rich are getting richer.

We need time, as Parliament, to be sincere with ourselves that what we are saying, in most cases, is not in our minds. Go to your village and see - people are poor and they cannot access medical facilities. Is it not true that children are dropping out of school? Out of the said one million that go to school, be sure that only 20 will reach primary seven (P7). Let us be sincere - whatever it costs us - let us tell the truth of what is on the ground.

Therefore, committee chairperson, regarding poverty alleviation, I do not know if you visit – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Keefa, then Hon. Bahireira.

7.32

DR KEEFA KIWANUKA (NRM, Kiboga East County, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The House may need some guidance from you. I am surprised that some of the priority areas that have been presented by the chairperson have not been budgeted for: the RDCs, Internal Security Organisation (ISO), External Security Organisation (ESO), AIDS treatment and AIDS prevention. Actually, on that one, we have discussed it before, as the honourable member mentioned.

There was a feeling that if the worst came to the worst, we should have some pay cuts in order to fund that, but I am surprised that they have not been budgeted for.

However, there is another element - even as other committees were presenting - that there has always been the expectation that Parliament will identify certain priorities and budget for them and that is why they try to convince the various committees. I think, traditionally, that is what we have done.

We have looked at the Budget as an Appropriation Bill and looked at areas which have been over budgeted for, and there is always a tendency to lump money where they can have room to manoeuvre, and then left others because they will also be prioritised by Parliament.

Now we have a problem that the Executive has insisted that once the Budget is tabled here, we should not do anything about it. We should not reallocate any money and we should leave it as it is. What are we trying to do? Has that changed? Has there been some discussion that we should have a different approach to it or are we going with the issue as it has always been? Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Chairperson, the Executive did not say that we should not make recommendations or proposals. What the President and the Executive emphasised was the harmonisation of our recommendations. We would go, change things, allocate money, and it ends up being suppressed, or we interfere with critical areas. What we are going to do at this level - and that is why the rule is very clear - is reconciliation, harmonisation and consolidation when we are referring the recommendations to the Committee on Budget.

All these proposals will go to the Budget Committee which will reduce them into actionable and implementable proposals, looking at the resource envelope and where we recommended to cut and add. Then, we shall hold several meetings with the Executive and present them our proposals through the Budget Committee and say, these are the recommendations we are making, and have an engagement.

I think you have seen and heard, for example, in the United States (US) about the bipartisan negotiations and talks over the budget. That is the approach. Therefore, the issue was not each side acting unilaterally, but both sides coming together and consulting each other before they came up with the final document. That is what we are going to do. Hon. Bahireira, then Hon. Christine.

7.36

MS SYLVIA BAHIREIRA (Independent, Woman Representative, Kamwenge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for the comprehensive report.

My comment is on HIV prevention. It needs funding because prevention is better than cure. HIV/AIDS is a silent killer; it is a chronic disease. Chronic diseases are more dangerous than acute diseases. You would rather get a disease which comes with severe signs, conditions and symptoms that you can know how to handle.

However, this is a condition that attacks people silently and the incidence rate keeps on increasing silently. You cannot know if someone is HIV positive or negative, so the way to go is to fund prevention and sensitisation so that at least we can get low new cases and save on the curative part. The less the incidence cases, the less expenditure on HIV/AIDS.

The Rwenzori-Luwero Triangle is one of the dockets that have been underfunded for the last three quarters and yet this triangle partly takes the corridor that protects us from being invaded by rebels from Congo through Kasese and Bundibugyo. We need improved funding for this docket so that all the programming of this region can go on and we make sure we do not get rebels attacking us from Congo to this side. We have been getting peanuts in this Rwenzori-Luwero Triangle – *(Member timed out.)*

7.38

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the presenters of the majority and the minority reports.

Following the proposal of the chairperson of the majority report that there is need to increase facilitation for the Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) *vis-a-vis* the statement made by the presenter of the minority report, Mr Speaker, you saw that in the calculations from the minority report, there was an indication that each RDC would be paid about Shs 176 million – *(Interjections)* - per month. That is what the minority report presented.

I want some clarification for purposes of the *Hansard*. Is that calculation right? Could the presenters of the majority and minority reports sit and give us a clear picture because really I do not think there is a civil servant in this country who is paid that amount of money per month.

Mr Speaker, I also have an issue on the Shs 3.935 billion for re-tooling the ethics and integrity department. I thought maybe the chairperson would have gone ahead to identify for us key activities. Are we going to continue having budgets every financial year on retooling? If there is retooling, it should be a smaller percentage and then more money should be given to activities like that sector across the country. We have a wider challenge on moral degeneration across the country. We could have that as one of the activities.

On Science, Technology and Innovation (STI), there is need for us, as Parliament, to give money. The pathogen economy needs more money.

I also expected a statement on the buses or motor vehicles in this country. The presenter was limited in that case. When you look at science on vaccines – Recently, we have heard about the malaria vaccine, we are having issues of gene drives to produce genetically modified mosquitoes. I feel that we need to have more money for research in our country so that whatever we have is of quality – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member, on that issue of pathogen, we have always agreed that they need money. The problem we have with that group is accountability. They do not want you to ask them about anything. They appear very powerful. When you ask, they rush to the President. They bring a letter. You want Members here to give you money but you do not want to answer their questions. What do you want them to do?

That is the challenge we have with that group. Otherwise, it is a very critical sector. I think

they only need to maximise on cooperation with the institution of Parliament.

7.41

MR BONIFACE OKOT (NRM, Youth Representative, Northern): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to join colleagues in thanking the committee for this report. I just want to comment on two issues, the first one being the presidential skilling hubs. If there is a major threat to our national and even personal security and our socio-economic stability then it is the high unemployment rate of our young people. The future of employment is solely in skilling and granting them employable skills.

I am particularly in support of the recommendation of the committee that we should offer a start-up or tools for our graduates from the 19 presidential skilling hubs. However, I wish we could also expand the programmes in these skilling hubs because I have noticed that there are three highly employable skills that are not yet in these hubs. That is, motor mechanics, plumbing and electrical. I have had conversations with many young people and they are very interested in those particular programmes.

Also, the presidential skilling hubs are still too small in capacity. For example, in Lango, you find that they can only take in a maximum of 200 students yet we have close to 500,000 young people who ideally meet the requirement of skilling in these hubs.

Mr Speaker, there is also a concern of the effectiveness of youth programming from many young people. Why I say this is that when you listen to budgets like this one of the Presidency, you realise that they are also taking some of the youth programmes. The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development also has a host of them. The scattering of these programmes sometimes does not make us effective enough.

You will notice that we put in a lot of money and yet at the end of the day, the impact is very low. How I wish this Parliament considered sitting and having a candid conversation on the

issue of unemployment of our young people so that we discuss all these programmes across board.

Finally, on the Afro-Arab Youth Council, I am in support that we should give these people the Shs 5 billion they need to have the headquarters of this council here. We have 51 countries. Apart from – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude. I know that is a most critical point from your people.

MR OKOT: We have 51 countries, 34 in Africa and in the Arab world, we have 17 countries. Apart from headquartering this Afro-Arab Youth Council in Uganda offering economic benefits to our young people, I believe that this will also offer us some diplomatic benefits. Uganda, as a country, is at the centre because it is the second youngest country in the world. We cannot afford to lose this opportunity to headquarter this council in our country. Thank you.

7.45

MR ATKINS KATUSABE (FDC, Bukonzo County West, Kasese): Thank you, Mr Speaker and the committee chairperson for that very wonderful presentation. I will support the majority report.

I wanted to see the accommodation of presidential pledges. The President has been to Kasese multiple times. Amazingly, every time he goes there, he has to give a pledge. A public university, an international airport, tourism roads, a revamp in our industries, water for production, safe and clean drinking water - a lot of those things amazingly.

On 19 April 2019, I had the opportunity to host the President and took him to my community. There are some pledges that have been fulfilled and I want to appreciate Government for that. However, if I look at the graph and place it on a pie-chart, I would say probably that five per cent of those presidential directives or pledges have been enforced.

Committee chairperson, I do not know whether it is late for us to accommodate some of these longstanding presidential pledges that the President has made to the Kasese community and I really believe, to other communities. For instance, we had COVID-19, Mr Speaker, you remember. The churches, at the Executive Order, had to shut down. Schools, supermarkets, stores; everything literally shut down.

If a word of the President can shut down even churches, schools and mosques, why can't we use the same word that comes from the President to have all of these presidential pledges that he has made to Kasese? That is the reason why we, as a community, will come back to this House with a countless list of presidential pledges we want funded and accommodated in this Budget. I really want to appreciate you for the opportunity. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Santa and then Hon. Allan Mayanja.

7.48

MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to start from the issue regarding the RDCs. Honourable chairperson, you mentioned some districts including Kasese, Nsingiro, Tororo, Wakiso and others - about six of them but I urge you to have a national lens -

Honourable Alex, I am talking to you but you are engaged elsewhere. *(Laughter)*

Why didn't you have a lens towards the northern part of Uganda? A case in point is a district that I represent; Oyam, which is very big and my RDCs are really suffering because of the big size of the district.

Mr Speaker, the number of the RDCs that we have now is enough. For example, we have four who can traverse the entire district if they are fully facilitated.

Secondly, I would like to add my voice to the Youth MP's voice about the Afro-Arab Youth Conference, which our country is about to

host next year and yet we do not have money because it is about Shs 5.4 billion.

Granting us the opportunity to host this conference is big confidence that has been bestowed on our country, Uganda. I would like to urge Members of Parliament to find space and give this Shs 5.4 billion to support and give a good recommendation to our country.

The issue of drainage and management of solid waste has been mentioned with a budget of Shs 78 million. I get worried because solid waste and flooding in this country is a very serious issue and we cannot come before this Parliament and say that there is no money -

Look for money to find a solution to the issue of solid waste and floods in this country -
(Member timed out.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Allan Mayanja -

7.50

MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. My concern is also on the Shs 12.424 billion which has been allocated to only six districts. The report was very clear and it mentioned Wakiso, Kasese, Isingiro, Ntungamo, Tororo and Isingiro, meaning others have been left out. I therefore recommend that this Shs 12.424 billion be reallocated to other –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, this money is not available. It is an unfunded budget so let us not fight over it because I doubt that it will even be gotten. Sorry.

MR MAYANJA: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the clarification. My next concern goes to the Luwero Triangle – Rwenzori affairs. I concur with the committee to recommend the Shs 15 billion, because for instance in Nakaseke, Nakasongola, Luwero, and Kiboga districts, our grandmothers and fathers fought during the war of 1981 to 1986 but those people were not paid.

We have bad roads and hospitals. Sincerely speaking, this area needs to be considered. I therefore concur with the committee in allocating the Shs 15 billion to this area. Thank you

7.52

MR DAVID ZIJJAN (Independent, Butembe County, Jinja): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is regarding the RDCs. I have no issue with the existence of RDCs and their number if it is warranted and they are facilitated to execute their duties. My only issue is with regard to value for money.

In my own observation, the appointment of RDCs is rather indiscriminate. I do not know what the minimum qualifications of an RDC, Deputy RDC or Assistant RDC should be but a case in point is Jinja which has got an assistant RDC who does not even have a Primary Leaving Certificate (PLE) and is marauding as a representative of the President who has zero regard for the order of precedence.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, he is representing those who are not educated.

MR ZIJJAN: When you get to events where he is, he has the courage and audacity to intimidate everyone there. “I am the representative of the President” and demands that he submits last because he is representing the President.

So, if we are advocating for enhancing their rewards and emoluments and harnessing a better working environment, what are Ugandans receiving in return? And what training are these assistant RDCs receiving in order to ensure that we benefit as Ugandans?

They might do mobilisation work for the party in power but they are not RDCs for a party. These are RDCs for everybody and everyone should benefit across board. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

7.54

MR WILLIAM CHEMONGES (NRM, Kween County, Kween): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the committee for this report because it has spoken to our hearts. Mine is about the construction of offices for the RDCs, which is equally very important because we have seen them suffer, renting small houses.

We need offices and residences because sometimes we need them at night but you find them holed in small houses and different gates and you cannot get to them.

On the issue of recruitment of the assistant RDCs, they are doing great work. The only problem is recruiting people who are not professional enough and then not facilitating them to do what you want them to. These people have no transport, motorcycles or facilitation and they end up doing what is not expected.

On the issue of skilling hubs in the sub-regions, Members, let us agree that the money that is invested in building does not relate to what we are getting because you will find that in the entire sub region like Sebei, one intake takes like 200 youth. What is the percentage of 200 youth from the entire sub region? This does not add up and after training, we pass them and they go back to their normal life.

When you do not have power, even if you have trained someone to be a carpenter or a welder and they are going back to their normal life in their villages where we have no power, it means that what we invested in training them is wasted and we have all confirmed this.

This has happened in my own district and constituency. All of them are loitering. So, I want to support that we give them tools although tools without power is again useless.

We need to put money there and make sure that at least every training centre has got power so that these people get where to work and make use of the training they have done. *(Member timed out.)*

7.57

MR JACKSON ATIMA (NRM, Arua Central Division, Arua City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also join others in thanking the committee for the good report. My point is on the presidential pledges, as my colleague Hon. Atkins alluded. In Arua City, His Excellency made several pledges and this is time for politicking – it is time for elections. I really feel that without fulfilling some of these presidential pledges, it will be a big challenge –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, this is the time for budgeting. *(Laughter)* We are doing budgeting and budgeting is not driven by politicking. We have an obligation.

MR ATIMA: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. However, it is at the back of our minds that out there, we are going for something. Aware of that, I really wanted this committee to look at the presidential pledges so that the name of the President is saved, and some of us who support those presidential pledges are also saved. This is so that they do not remain empty tins surrounding the constituencies.

Two, I support the proposal to give remuneration for the RCCs, RDCs and Assistant RCCs. Arua City has nine RCCs, with deputies and assistants and there is no space for those nine people to sit. You find all the Assistant RCCs packed in one room. When people who need the services come, you have nowhere to put them. The population that needs the services from these offices have nowhere to sit.

Therefore, I urge the committee to look at that so that office space can be given to these Assistant RCCs and their deputies.

Lastly, these industrial hubs are doing wonders in the regions and constituencies, but the manner in which these youth are selected is not clear. You realise that people have already been taken for the training, but when you come back to your constituency – in your wards or parishes – you find that the youth were left out. I also wanted the committee to look at that. As we support the industrial hubs, we should have

clear criteria on how we select these youth so that they benefit across the constituency the district. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister? *(Mr Kanyike rose)* LOP, I got a minority report from the Opposition. Why didn't you cover them in the minority report? No, these are your Members. I am giving you one minute.

8.00

MR EVANS KANYIKE (NUP, Bukoto County East, Masaka): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will use the two minutes that you have given me to talk about the development and maintenance of the National Leadership Institute, Kyankwanzi. It was allocated Shs 7.5 billion.

Kyankwanzi was turned into a party facility, especially for the party in Government. I do not know why we burden Ugandans with all this money to modernise and rehabilitate Kyankwanzi – *(Interruption)*

MR ATIMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to put the Leader of the Opposition on notice. As I talk, the Town Clerk of Arua City, whose party subscription I do not know, is undergoing a leadership training in Kyankwanzi. That leadership institute is for every Ugandan.

Therefore, is the Leader of the Opposition in order to say that, that institute only belongs to one party? Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Maybe if I could seek clarification from him. Honourable member, has your party written to the – Why is Hon. Batuwa nearly – *(Laughter)* Has your party written to the responsible office to request to be given an opportunity to train their leaders from Kyankwanzi and it has not been granted?

MR KANYIKE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. You can hardly see any other political party, apart from the party in Government, in Kyankwanzi. My brother –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I asked a question. It was a simple question to guide me because I must rule. When there is a point of order, I must rule. I wanted to hear from your side. Have you ever applied – you belong to NUP – to train your leaders from Kyankwanzi?

MR KANYIKE: Mr Speaker, there was a day when we were celebrating four years of the existence of NUP and we wrote to the Government to allow us to use Kololo Airstrip – *(Interjections)* – I am building my point. Please, listen.

The response we got from them was that they were doing rehabilitation. However, after a few days, we saw a Government activity taking place there. *(Interjection)* I am coming to your question, Mr Speaker. I beg for your protection.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You are protected, honourable member.

MR KANYIKE: After receiving the letter in which they said that Kololo was under rehabilitation, we saw a Government activity going on there.

For the question that you have asked, Mr Speaker, have we ever applied to use NALI? Yes, we have but they have never replied to us up to now. We have that letter with us at the secretariat. At a good moment, I will bring it to your office.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, on Tuesday, bring me a received copy of the letter.

MR KANYIKE: I will bring it to your office.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Then I will be able to rule on whether you were in order or not.

MR KANYIKE: Much obliged, Mr Speaker.

Lastly, as a country, we are concerned about the wasteful expenditure, especially in State House. There is duplication of roles in State House. We have Ministries, Departments and

Agencies, but you find units in State House, which are doing the same job as the ministers are. *(Applause)*

We are allocating a lot of funds to facilitate these units, yet we have able ministers here who can do the work. Actually, you find ministers constrained. These units are more powerful than even our ministers.

Lastly, there is the issue of the supplementary budget which goes to State House. This financial year, Parliament has allocated Shs 400 billion plus but in January and March, they brought in supplementary budgets, which amount to –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Did we approve it, as Parliament?

MR KANYIKE: Let me wrap up, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, I am asking you.

MR KANYIKE: Yes, Parliament approved it and –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, our rules do not allow us to come here and disagree with the decisions that we have made, as a House, in the same Session. Those are our rules.

What State House brings here is a proposal. The moment we approve it, you do not blame State House. We own it.

Honourable minister? *(Eng. Balimwezo rose_)*
Hon. Balimwezo, I will allow you because there is a specific issue.

8.06

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Denis Obua): Mr Speaker, let me start by thanking the Committee on Presidential Affairs that oversees a very huge sector with very many MDAs for burning the midnight candle and ensuring that this report is ready. I also thank the authors of the minority report.

May I respond to the issues raised as follows: Issue number one is on the office or offices of the Resident District Commissioners – their facilitation, qualification and offices. Honourable members, as long as Article 203 of the Constitution that mandates the President to appoint Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) is part of our legal framework, and as long as Section 72(1) of the Local Government Act that mandates His Excellency the President to appoint deputy resident district commissioners and assistant resident district commissioners is still part of our legal framework, the hands of the appointing authority, in principle and by law, are tied to appoint RDCs, deputies and assistants. This is because he or she is compelled both by the Constitution and the Local Government Act.

The qualification for a Resident District Commissioner is any Ugandan qualified to be a Member of Parliament. This is Article 203(2) of our Constitution. However, under Section 72(1) of the Local Government Act, the qualifications for a deputy resident district commissioner and assistant are not prescribed in that provision. Whatever is not prohibited is allowed. That is the principle of law.

Innovation fund. Do we have a framework? Do we have a policy? Do we have guidelines? Yes. In 2019, the Cabinet of Uganda adopted the National Research and Innovation Programme. This was approved as a framework for guiding Ugandans to access the innovation fund, which is currently under the Science, Technology, and Innovation Secretariat, the former Ministry of Science, Technology, and Innovation. That framework exists, and it is currently under review. We may not call it a policy, but there is a framework approved by the Cabinet in 2019.

There were concerns raised under the Uganda AIDS Commission. Mr Speaker, the Government of Uganda has committed to fund critical aspects of what we have been receiving under the USAID. A case in point is funding the HIV and AIDS drugs.

I want to clarify that the Uganda AIDS Commission is not an implementer. The

mandate of the Uganda AIDS Commission is to coordinate multi-sectoral HIV-AIDS response in Uganda, with emphasis on HIV prevention. All we are talking about, including anti-retroviral (ARV) drugs, will be handled under the Ministry of Health.

On the presidential skilling hubs, honourable colleagues, every journey starts with one step. It should be appreciated that His Excellency the President has established 19 presidential skilling centres in the 19 subregions of Uganda. That is journey number one.

In all those, young people are recruited, although the number may not be as significant as it ought to be, or as we wish it to be, but at least we can appreciate that young people are recruited through the district local government, in every subregion.

There are calls for widening to handle motor vehicle mechanics, plumbing, and electrical. As of now, what is being offered in the presidential hubs is training in welding, carpentry, tailoring, shoemaking, bakery, block laying and concrete practice, and hairdressing.

What has been done is that State House is forming SACCOs for all the young people trained in our different subregions, from each and every district, city, and municipality, as we speak. These young people will be supported through the budget we are providing to the State House. I can give you that assurance.

There is also a consideration for the future because currently, subject to the availability of funds, these young people are trained but not equipped. In future, funding allowing, the State House would want to fund them. In principle, the issue of the SACCOs is to enable them to get money and buy equipment and pay back the SACCOs. The State House will not be using that money. That money will remain at the district, in a SACCO for the trained youth.

On the issue of presidential pledges, honourable colleagues, presidential pledges are on two fronts. Some pledges fall under the different programmes. The President will

come to Alebtong; they will say they do not have a district hospital. He will say, okay, our policy is to have a hospital per district. We do not have seed schools in the newly established subcounties. He will say, okay. When that is done, these are programmes that are supposed to be implemented by the respective mother ministries.

The second front is what we are calling person-to-holder. You have seen, it is now the norm that when a bishop is being consecrated, His Excellency the President provides transport to that bishop. That one is person-to-holder. For those that fall under programmes, the handlers of the President are supposed to extract that commitment of the President. If it is about a school, they write to the Minister of Education and Sports. If it is about a bridge, they inform the Ministry of Works and Transport. That should be the practice.

We will not stop Ugandans because they see him as the highest authority. When they come, they want to pour out all their problems. Even Members of Parliament do so when they see the President. When your *wanainchi* see you, they know that the alpha and omega has arrived. They will pour out all their societal problems to you.

The Afro-Arab Youth Conference - Mr Speaker, you and I are products of Afro-Arab Conference – (*Interjections*) - yes. When Uganda hosted the Afro-Arab Youth Conference, when the late President Gaddafi was still alive, all of us were youth leaders, I and the Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker. We both attended it in Munyonyo. I still remember how that big giant arrived with these - how he used to move.

If a commitment was made to the Afro-Arab Youth Conference, first of all, Uganda accepted. There exists an office of the Afro-Arab Youth Council in Uganda. If there was any commitment made, honourable colleagues, it was made at the highest level and it shall be fulfilled. If there are no funds provided, I believe that funds will still be provided, whether through a supplementary, and it will come through this Parliament. If that commitment is made, there is no cause for alarm.

The National Leadership Institute, Kyankwanzi, is not a National Resistance Movement (NRM) Leadership Institute. We call it “NALI, Kyankwanzi.” NALI is an abbreviation that stands for the National Leadership Institute. That means it is meant for all Ugandans.

Again, when we were student leaders under the Uganda National Students Association (UNSA) - the Deputy Speaker is here - we were in the cohort of 1998-99, during the time of Major Kakooza Mutale. I went to Kyankwanzi in 1998, and we met with the Deputy Speaker. We were still young student leaders, and over the years –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Very vibrant.

MR OBUA: Very vibrant, under the Uganda National Students Association. I was a member of the NRM.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: FDC was not there. *(Laughter)*

MR OBUA: He was also NRM. There was no FDC. We were all subscribing to the ruling government then. When political parties came, somehow he dashed to the other side. I remained here but you can see after testing the waters on the other side, he has come back. I, therefore, invite you friends on the other side to please join the Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker from where he has come.

If the National Unity Platform and Forum for Democratic Change want to access and use that facility, I do not think so - Please make the best use of the offices here. The Rt Hon. Deputy Speaker is here; I am here. You can have your training and you will benefit from the facilitators – *(Interruption)*

MR ZIJJAN: Thank you very much for granting me time. Mr Speaker, I am just requesting for clarification because in the philosophy of other political parties, their party heads are their presidents, and they refer to them as, “His Excellency” and their offices as “State House”, etc.

When they come to the National Leadership Institute (NALI) - this clarification will help us as the Opposition. When we come or our political party goes to NALI, will you allow us or them to conduct their business and affairs without interference? Will you allow us and them to recognise their leaders as their excellences while there? Will you allow them to also do parades like they did in Kavule, which brought pandemonium in NALI, uninterrupted? I beg for clarification. Thank you.

MR OBUA: First and foremost, every institution and game has rules and regulations. The rule of any institution, including this Parliament - We have just had the Archbishop of the Province of the Church of Uganda for the Easter Carols. If there were no rules, after the Easter Carols, he would access, come and sit anywhere and start debating. However, because the rule of this House only allows a Member of Parliament access, it is only Members of Parliament who are here.

Therefore, in the same vein, the National Leadership Institute has rules and regulations. The moment you enter, in the first session, you are taken through the rules and regulations of that institution. The rules and regulations of the institution will apply to you from the time you enter until you exit.

Now, if there are political parties referring to their party leaders as president, the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda recognises only one President of the Republic of Uganda, who is President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni for now. He is also the National Chairman of the National Resistance Movement political party.

Under our Constitution, whoever is the President of the Republic of Uganda is the Commander-in-Chief of the Uganda People's Defence Forces, and there is only one Commander-in-Chief. He or she is also the Fountain of Honour.

Now, if you have a party leader - depending on the name, the Democratic Party (DP) calls their party leader “President General.” Nobody

would stop you from calling Hon. Mao, President General of the Democratic Party.

If the National Unity Platform (NUP) calls their president the president of the National Unity Platform, that will still be president of a political party called the National Unity Platform. It can be referred to as such, but he is not the President of Uganda. There is only one President of Uganda. I hope I have clarified that. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker there was an issue -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Chief Whip, I thought you would conclude that point by requesting that they should open up their institute at Kavule for people to volunteer and train from there - I meant the NUP institute. They can share with others.

MR OBUA: Mr Speaker, there is no political party that has opened a leadership institute because opening one would also require going through the different approval processes. Therefore, let us make the best use of the National Leadership Institute that we have.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, I have been informed that it is illegal and has no license. Therefore, it is not an institute.

MR OBUA: Mr Speaker, the last issue I want to respond to was an issue raised by the acting Leader of the Opposition, referring to State House as having wasteful expenditure and duplication of roles. I wish to invite the acting Leader of the Opposition to come and listen to the testimonies of young people without hope, who are normally trained under the presidential skilling centres; just listen to their testimonies, where they have been picked from and where they are.

Therefore, if constructing for the 19 would constitute a wasteful expenditure - where they are constructed - then the young people, who are Ugandans and are recruited from the different districts, cities and municipalities would constitute wasteful expenditure. Then, you will draw that conclusion.

If donating transport means to our Lord Bishops in our different dioceses is wasteful expenditure then that conclusion can only be drawn by you. The day that expenditure is off, you and I will bear the burden of collecting money to buy transport for your Lord Bishop and for my Lord Bishop. Therefore, if the President of Uganda has taken that burden away from you and me, I believe he deserves to be thanked and congratulated, in my humble opinion.

Duplication of roles, I can agree with you to some extent, but you also know that there are so many young people. If, in his wisdom, he has decided to put centres for training young people who have no hope - because those young people without hope will come to your home and mine. Remember hope is a poor man's income which is only sustainable during the day.

A poor man who has no hope will come to your home and my home in the night. This is because when he woke up in the morning, he had hope for breakfast and there was nothing. That hope turned into lunch. Time for lunch came and there was nothing. Around this time, he will wait for you as you drive back home and will break your windscreen. However, the President has decided to pick, take them through a process and train them. In a nutshell, he is helping you and me because these are Ugandans, for all intents and purposes. Therefore, this is how I see it, my dear brother, but I also want to thank you.

In my culture, Mr Speaker, there is a saying that, "When you see a non-pagan within the society quoting verses in the Bible then he or she is about to accept Jesus as his/her Lord and Saviour."

May I take it that the acting Leader of the Opposition is now really preaching, "State House" because he is about to join us on this side? This is because the main resident there is the chairman of our party. What about that? Think about it. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I think that last statement might cause withdrawal of his temporary appointment. Hon. Balimwezo, kindly make clarification on this.

MR BALIMWEZO: Mr Speaker, budgets should be realistic, clear, and comprehensive. I pray that they display the recommendation to facilitate the Resident District Commissioners. You will see that it is only six districts that will benefit from that, when you read the language.

Secondly, the amount is Shs 12.424 billion. If you divide that by six, you will get Shs 2.07 billion for every RDC. If you divide that by 12 months, it is 172 million per month, per RDC.

We cannot, unless if you change the language that you have used in your recommendation. Even then, we pray that we reduce - You cannot think about facilitating 11 RDCs. When you talk about Wakiso for instance, with the five deputies, five assistant RDCs, then a full RDC, it is quite big, and every RDC, every deputy RDC, is assigned an area in which he should operate. He has the mandate of representing the president in those areas. Therefore, it will be very bad for us to spend all those monies wastefully.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But honourable, let us be realistic, isn't it? Parliament is the House of record. When you go to page 8 and you read what the committee has, it gave these districts as examples. It showed you the funding gap for the whole country, but then it said, when they are distributing this money, they should also consider districts which are bigger, instead of uniform distribution. This was just -

MR BALIMWEZO: Mr Speaker, maybe as a lawyer, you can read us the statement about those areas.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It says, the committee was informed that the Office of the President requires Shs 34.604 billion to provide facilitation to the RDCs, but only Shs 24.18 billion is provided for in this financial year, resulting in a funding gap of Uganda Shs 10.424 billion.

The committee noted that the inadequate facilitation - I can jump that, but it says, "The committee further noted that the uniform facilitation to the RDCs without consideration of the size and the nature of the districts, among other factors, even beyond size, does not ensure equality in allocation. Such districts include; Wakiso, Kasese, Isingiro, Tororo, and Sironko." This is page 8.

How do you now say that the money they are asking for is only for these districts? Oh, okay - If that is the interpretation, Hon. Balimwezo has understood it but for the record - I know you are someone who is usually - you do not put too much politics in things. Honourable, this is plain, why don't you -

MR BALIMWEZO: Mr Speaker, I pray that we are clear. In my first statement, I said the budget should be clear. When you say, "these include" and you mention the number and you conclude, then you are actually considering those. Unless if you put, "and others".

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: By the way, Hon. Balimwezo, it is you who has concluded. No, no, let the record of Parliament be clear. Please, *Hansard*, let the record of Parliament be clear. We do not want this to mislead - This is a House of record, which is used for research and all that. Two things which stand out: one, they talked about size, among other factors, meaning beyond size, also look at other factors such as hard-to-reach, insecurity, population and all that.

Number two, they have said, "such as" meaning there are others. Yes, there are others. We want our record to be very clear so, the record is very clear that the money the committee is proposing is for all districts in the country but they should consider factors, which make it fair for distribution of this money. Okay, let the *Hansard* capture that clearly.

Chairperson, just one minute. I think your things are clear.

MR BYARUGABA: Thank you, Mr Speaker and the honourable colleagues and everybody

present here. I just want to say that if words of man can stand by words of appreciation, I therefore want to use a huge, big word called thank you for having showed wonderful interest in this sector.

I thank everybody who made contributions to our report and enriched it further. We did not want to put in very complicated words, semantics of the English language like my honourable colleague, the shadow minister, wanted me to do, otherwise we were all very clear from the word go, that all was going to be well. I, therefore, want to finally say, kindly, adopt this report. I beg to move. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Presidential Affairs on the ministerial policy statement and Budget estimates for the Financial Year 2025/26 be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The report is referred to the Committee on Budget for consolidation, harmonisation and reconciliation.

I, thank you, honourable chairperson. This is a very complicated policy statement report but we tapped into the experience of a senior legislator, Hon. Alex Byarugaba. He was in the Constituent Assembly (CA) and you can see the kind of historicals we have here.

I am telling this to the new ones so that sometimes when you want guidance, you reach out to such seniors and they are always willing to mentor. Mentorship does not mean that it has to be one from this side or the other side. I remember, I could easily go here and there. He is one of the most senior legislators we have here; from CA, you can imagine and a former Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) of a district, a former accounting officer. You can see that kind of experience. He was a Chairman of the Natural Resources Committee in the 10th Parliament, he was a Chairman of the Presidential

Affairs, I think some time back - no, Foreign Affairs.

Honourable colleagues, I really thank you very much. I think we have pushed. We have pushed, we have had time to discuss and I am sure once we continue like this - because I want us to handle at least two Bills before we break off next week and allow the Budget Committee to do harmonisation. House is adjourned until Tuesday at 10 a.m.

(The House rose at 8.35 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 15 April 2025 at 10.00 a.m.)