



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 10 OCTOBER 2023





## IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

### Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

#### THIRD SESSION - 4TH SITTING - SECOND MEETING

**Tuesday, 10 October 2023**

*Parliament met at 2.21 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.*

#### PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to today's sitting and from Kitgum where we had gone for the National Independence Day celebrations. I also welcome you back from State House where we had the National Prayer Breakfast.

I have advised Hon. Bahati next time to prepare the theme very cautiously, because the word "repent" scared most of you and you took off. Some of you told me that you did not have any sin to repent of while others said that they were still accumulating them. However, our able group led by Hon. Bahati, Hon. Esenu, the Member from Sembabule, Hon. Mary Begumisa, Hon. Edakasi, Hon Cecilia Ogwal and the rest, prayed for you. I made a declaration and repented on your behalf. I hope the ayes have it. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, on a very sad note, we lost the Undersecretary, Ministry of East African Community Affairs, Mr Collins Dombo, a brother to our honourable colleague, Hon. Emmanuel Dombo.

For me to first hold a government position of that magnitude in the Executive, it was Mr Collins, then the acting Permanent Secretary, Office of the Prime Minister who welcomed me as the Government Chief Whip. He was an amiable gentleman.

Last year, we buried their mother and I attended in person. We had developed a personal relationship but above all, he served this Government diligently. He was hardworking and I think it is in order for us to observe a minute of silence.

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

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Condolences to the family, Hon. Emmanuel Dombo, the people of Butaleja, Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, the Minister of East African Community Affairs together with the staff at the ministry.

Matters of national importance; yes, Hon. Muwanga Kivumbi, who is the acting Leader of the Opposition?

2.26

**MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I am standing in for two hours for the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Mathias Mpuuga.

As we are gathered here in this august House, on this good day, for the last couple of days and as we were celebrating our independence

yesterday, outside the very notions of our independence are being grossly abused and challenged.

We are expected to come here with decorum and debate the horror of what the police officers are doing. The other day, the leader of the National Unity Platform, Hon. Robert Kyagulanyi Ssentamu, was kidnapped from a plane and driven to his home.

Yesterday, the offices of the National Unity Platform were not only sealed off; national leaders were arrested from the Secretary General to the spokesperson, and hundreds of our youth, who are innocent because they love their country, are being held in custody without even the due course of the law.

Mr Speaker, we have had a date with destiny. We have always chosen a path of constitutionalism and the rule of law. When we had challenges with the Police Act, Section 32, subsection E; remember you and I at that time, were in popular resistance and uncomfortable. We went to the Constitutional Court and it overturned that provision as unconstitutional, giving powers of police to prohibit.

The Government came here and made a Public Order Management Act, trying to reinstate the power that they enjoyed in the other Political Organisations Act. I, together with a group of other civil society groups, went to the Constitutional Court and overturned that provision.

As we speak now, all that the Uganda Police Force can quote is just a resolution they make without any recourse to any provision of the law. It is becoming increasingly difficult for us to sit in this House with due respect to the decorum that is required, when the behaviour outside, mentality and abuse of the rights –

Every Member of Parliament is on oath to protect, uphold and defend the Constitution.

The Constitution gives us these rights. Therefore, it is extremely difficult for me to act as the Leader of the Opposition and sit down with these honourable colleagues, as if it is

business as usual. *(Interjection)* He wants to give information.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, even the Leader of the Opposition has a time limit. I do not want my generosity to be –

**MR BASALIRWA:** Mr Speaker, the information I want to provide my boss, is that over and above the Constitutional Court's pronouncements, this Parliament passed a law called the Law Revision Miscellaneous (Amendment) Act, with the effect of ensuring that all the restrictive provisions under the Public Order Management Act and the Police Act, are dropped from our law books. This was made about two months ago.

Therefore, as we speak now, the police have no legal justification to stop any political party or any person from conducting business the way they want. Even this Parliament made a pronouncement on that matter.

The information I would like to give my boss is that, not only did the court pronounce itself on the matter, but even this Parliament made the same pronouncement.

**MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI:** Mr Speaker, it is difficult for me to sit here as the acting Leader of the Opposition and lead this side into this House without a clear explanation from the minister concerned on what is taking place. The police are acting outside the law, yet this House is about respecting the law.

Until we receive that explanation, I will be very hesitant to sit with honourable colleagues on this side and be in this House with the decorum that it is required.

We have two suggestions;

- (i) Either we receive an immediate explanation from the Government for their actions and accountability or
- (ii) I will lead these honourable members outside this Chamber. Thank you. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, this House is a platform for you to express your views. As a Leader of the Opposition, to reach that level – I got most of this from you, my colleague, when I saw how you were handling issues.

You do not ambush the presiding officer that way, on the Floor, because you know how we usually do it. You reach this level after interacting with the presiding officer.

Come to the presiding officer and raise such issues, then I call the minister responsible, and I – Anyway, we have independence; let us celebrate by either agreeing or disagreeing.

I am giving you my style of doing things and the practice. Today I have been in the office from 8.00 a.m. I have received a few issues from the Leader of the Opposition, for example, I was informed that Hon. Kivumbi was coming in.

Usually my question is: Are there issues we need to consult over? Consulting does not stop you from continuing and doing what you want to do.

So honourable member, you have raised your case; let us give the minister time, he brings a statement explaining and then we will be able to handle the matter. I do not know what you think about this, honourable colleague?

**MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI:** Mr Speaker, the issues I am raising are pertinent and have been in the knowledge of everyone in this country. Either we receive a statement from the minister now, or I lead my troops outside this Chamber. That is our stand and you can do nothing.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, when we are in this House, Members are usually walking in and out freely. Nobody asks me for permission – nobody has given me a warning that “I am walking out.” So, whoever is comfortable to sit and handle business, should continue and handle business. Whoever is uncomfortable –

Otherwise, I have made my request; so, those who are uncomfortable can move and we have – Thank you.

*(Whereupon Members of the Opposition exited the Chamber.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Order! Honourable members, today we have free sitting; do not squeeze yourselves. Sit comfortably. Matters of National Importance; Hon. Clare Mugumya.

2.35

**MS CLARE MUGUMYA (NRM, Woman Representative, Isingiro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity to share with the House the problems we encountered a few days back when we were hit by heavy rains, thunderstorms and strong winds. A number of households were affected.

Up to a tune of 18 households were ruined and torn down by the strong winds and heavy rains in the parishes of Kagaga, Kabale in Ngarama Subcounty and Burungamu Parish also in Ngarama Subcounty. Then a number of villages that were also affected were Kasharara, Kikoma, Kyabahesi and Bahigi, plus Keminazi, all in Mbale Subcounty.

Some churches were also destroyed; Kagaga Catholic Church and the catechist’s house at the same place, Kagaga Pentecostal Church and then Burungamu Pentecostal Church. Also, a number of gardens were severely destroyed by the massive rains, rendering people in the –

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

**MS MUGUMYA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In light of the above devastation, I beseech the Office of the Prime Minister to come to the aid of these people by providing the following emergency supplies:

1. Iron sheets and other building materials to facilitate reconstruction of the damaged houses.

2. Supply of fast-maturing seeds and seedlings for persons whose gardens were severely destroyed.
3. Food rations and other domestic supplies if they can be available to support those households that are now running without food.
4. Lastly, we have a number of roads that were cut off because originally even the road network was not good; so, we request culverts to support the construction of those damaged community roads, most especially in Kyakabindi Village. Thank you. I beg to submit.

2.38

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I commit myself to deliver this message, knowing that it is a disaster that Government has to handle. The Rt Hon. Prime minister is going to mobilise the other sectors so that we come and rescue the people. Thank you.

2.08

**MS LUCY AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Amuru):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a very urgent matter of national importance regarding a very glaring headline –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** IT staff, can we have our screens on? I see our visitors struggling to see who is speaking. Go on, honourable member.

**MS LUCY AKELLO:** A very glaring and scary headline today in the *Daily Monitor* says, that, “Girls should get birth control from age 15 in the new plan.” This means we are revising the age downwards from 18.

Are we not scared of the effects the contraceptives will have on these young girls? Are we are no longer scared of the HIV infection?

My prayer is; where is that plan coming from? Have you done a study to find out the implications of contraceptives on young girls who have not given birth?

Even I, who have given birth, fear those things and I do not use them. What about young girls? *(Interjection)* I use the natural method; the one God gave me. *(Laughter)*

Can you assure us –*(Interjections)*– Yes, they are many and you know it; I am not going to tell you.

Can you assure us that our children are safe with this policy that you are coming up with? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister of Health. I saw the headline and it really scared me, to be honest. So, we want to first confirm whether it is true what the *Daily Monitor* has reported.

2.40

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (PRIMARY HEALTH CARE) (Ms Margaret Muhanga):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank you for this opportunity and thank the MP who has asked this question.

Today, I called the Director of Curative Services in the Ministry of Health and we discussed it. He said that he was suggesting it because we have very many teenage pregnancies but the *Daily Monitor* wrote as if it was already a policy.

Every man who is sleeping with these girls knows that they are young and he is defiling them, right? They are being married off to 65-year-old men. You know that in our societies.

So, he asked the audience that: “Should we lower the age for family planning to 15? What do you think?” He is a medical doctor; he actually weighed the options – let the children get pregnant and die while giving birth or let them access family planning services if we cannot avoid it because it is in the society?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, honourable minister, you are confirming that it is not yet an approved policy.

**MS MUHANGA:** It is not approved at all. He just gave a suggestion. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. – Honourable colleagues, please, I need order. Our prayer is that the devil does not find a way and such a thought should never even come into the minds of our people – because it is giving up. *(Applause)*

That is formalising defilement. That is clearly saying: “We have failed. Therefore, these people are defiled.” We should even know – because we would know the recipients who would be using those substances.

So, I really pray, honourable minister, that we rather strengthen the monitoring and ensure that we fight this vice than legitimising it by giving such services –*(Applause)*- and I am glad it is not yet a policy.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have students from the Faculty of Special Needs and Rehabilitation, Kyambogo University, which is represented by Hon. Joel Ssenyonyi and Hon. Shamim Malende. They have come to observe the proceedings of the House. Please, join me in welcoming the students. *(Applause)* Thank you.

In the public gallery this afternoon, we also have students and teachers of Hope Senior School in Mpigi District. They are represented by Hon. Hillary Kiyaga and Hon. Teddy Nambooze. They have come to observe the proceedings of the House. Please, join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you for coming.

We also have pupils and teachers of Green Hill Academy, Kibuli, who won the National Mathematics Championship, 2023. They are represented by Hon. Shamim Malende and Hon. Derrick Nyeko. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House – and they brought very many gifts for the Speaker and Deputy

Speaker. Please, join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Hon. Sowedi Kitanywa?

**MR KITANYWA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I had come to your office and you had advised me otherwise. I do not know whether you are now giving me permission to go ahead –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Macho? *(Laughter)* We still have honest people. *(Laughter)* Once a politician gets a microphone, they say he changed his mind. Yes, Hon. Macho?

2.44

**MR GEOFFREY MACHO (Independent, Busia Municipality, Busia):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Last week was a sad week for the business community in Uganda and Busia, in particular, that Kenya stopped the imports of cereals, particularly maize and wheat, from Uganda.

I call it a sad week because Kenyans, as our brothers, have kept shifting goal posts. They started by banning the export of milk, went for poultry and poultry products and they have now gone back to maize. Moreover, the Government of Uganda has just given people a lot of money through PDM and everybody is involved in farming.

Mr Speaker, since our brothers, the Kenyans, are shifting goal posts all the time, with the aim of punishing us and not promoting the spirit of the East African Federation, I pray that:

1. We pay them back the same way by banning the Kenyan agro imports that we import from their country so that they feel the pinch. As we speak now, Kenyan companies that signed contracts with Ugandan farmers to take the maize have cancelled the contracts.
2. The Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives should come and tell the Parliament of Uganda why the Government of Kenya shifts goal posts all

the time. They shifted from raw cane, to sugar, milk, eggs and now they have gone to maize. Moreover, they know Uganda has just given out money under PDM and everybody has bought the maize seeds and planted them.

3. Lastly, the Minister for East African Community Affairs should come to this august House and tell us the trade agreements that Kenya has made with Uganda. The people of Busia and other border areas do not know which agreements we have made with our partner countries.

Kenya wakes up and bans an export, South Sudan wakes up and bans, Rwanda – it is as if they are not part of the East African Community.

Mr Speaker, I would like to lay on Table a *Daily Monitor* newspaper of the 9<sup>th</sup> of October that wrote that Kenya had banned the importation of maize and wheat to its country –(Interjection)- Information –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

2.47

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (TRADE) (Ms Harriet Ntabazi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank Hon. Macho, who has raised this very important issue. Indeed, it is a very pertinent issue because we have agreements under the Protocol on the Establishment of the East African Customs Union, where we agreed to trade within the East African Community.

However, Kenya is a sovereign state and Uganda is also a sovereign state. The challenge that we have with our neighbours is that the climate is almost the same – we produce almost the same things in the same weather. So, when there is a bumper harvest to our neighbours, they sometimes tend to, first, finish off what they have produced – like any other country could do. However, the solutions

–(Interjection)- I am giving you a solution. Ministers are supposed to give solutions –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, when you are here, you address the Speaker. So, if you do not want to grant permission for clarification, you do not even hear; you just close your ears. Okay? It is your prerogative.

**MS NTABAZI:** Most obliged. Mr Speaker, the information that I have is that the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives has gone beyond the East African Community in search of markets. For products like milk, beef and eggs – things that were being blocked in the East African Community – we are now using them to negotiate for markets outside the East African Community.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the honourable colleague has raised the concerns of his constituency.

**MS NTABAZI:** It is a very important matter.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What you should assure the honourable colleague and the constituents about is that you are going to handle this matter and follow it up, as the person in charge of the docket. Then, if necessary, you come back and update us here. - No, let the minister finish.

Now, honourable colleagues, you have remained alone and you have become more stubborn. What if we had the other side also? (Laughter)

Honourable minister, first finish.

**MS NTABAZI:** Thank you. I have taken the guidance and I am going to build on the information I already had in the ministry to come up with a communication to this Parliament.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Report back to this House on Tuesday next week. Hon. William Chemonges?



2.51

**MR WILLIAM CHEMONGES (NRM, Kween County, Kween):** Mr Speaker, I rise on a matter of national importance concerning a matter that I have been raising since May 2021, when I came to this Parliament.

I have always raised the issue of consistent conflicts within the Mt Elgon National Park, that is in Kween, and in the entire Sebei Subregion. Three months ago, I stood up in this House when Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) officers destroyed the houses of people living along the boundaries of the national park.

Mr Speaker, I clearly put it that these people are not trespassers; these are people who were left there by the Government to wait for resettlement. They were people who used to stay deep in the forest, but when the forest was turned into a national park, they were brought from inside the forest to the boundary.

Mr Speaker, as we speak now, there are 40 families whose houses were broken down. Their maize and Irish potatoes were cut down and when I raised it in this House, you instructed the Prime Minister to handle that matter. The Third Deputy Prime Minister wrote a letter to the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities instructing them to act on the matter. That letter was copied to the Uganda Wildlife Authority.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Your prayers, honourable.

**MR CHEMONGES:** My prayer is that the Government should give us a comprehensive statement on what they intend to do with these people who have been staying in temporary settlements for almost 30 years now. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, this issue has been a really difficult one for the people of Sebei and Bugisu. It has affected them so much. I was personally invited sometime back, when I told you that I survived

*imbalu*. They had decided to do *imbalu* on me. *(Laughter)*

I met the people on Mt Wanale and we moved around. When you go through the boundaries which Uganda Wildlife Authority is insisting on, you will find that even Mbale City is in the national park. But in Uganda, we have a situation where we do not want to live in reality; you want to hold on to something on paper, yet physically you can never.

The reality is different on the ground, because I went there and if you are to go with the boundaries of 1964, even where Mbale is now is a national park. So you would have to send away the whole town to have the national park here. Is it feasible? So, why are you holding onto something that you know is not feasible?

People gave you an alternative by advising you to go with the boundaries of 1993 and then protect the park where it is. When you rejected that, people started encroaching and when you go, they will demand a boundary of 2023 because you were told to go with boundaries of 1993 to ensure the community does not go beyond but you did not take the offer.

Honourable minister, meet the area Members of Parliament – Sebei and Bugisu over this issue and on Wednesday next week, bring a comprehensive statement and we shall debate it.

Do not just go and meet with Uganda Wildlife Authority only. Hold a meeting with the leaders and the people on the ground and get the real situation and come and give us reality.

**MR MARTIN MUGARRA:** Much obliged, Mr Speaker. I think we were in Sebei as well for some time with the Members of Parliament. But let me go by your guidance, and we shall be here on Wednesday to present the statement.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Mutebi Noah.

2.57

**MR NOAH MUTEBI (NRM, Nakasongola County, Nakasongola):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance.

On 25 September 2023 at 9.30 p.m., unknown assailants murdered three people in my constituency namely; Julius Mutimba, his wife Resty Nakayima and their daughter, aged six months.

These assailants used swords and killed these people who were coming from Nalubobya from their clinic, and were going back to their residence in Bamugolode.

Nakayima Immaculate was the woman councillor for Bamugolode Parish and she was the Secretary for Education and Health for Kalongo Subcounty.

The police arrested one suspect and they have the suspect in custody at Nakasongola Police Station. However, the suspect has not been taken to court since 26 September 2023.

My prayers: The police should investigate and arrest the remaining assailants and have them brought to book.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs should put police posts in strategic areas. For example, when you go to Bamugolode Trading Centre, it is equivalent to some town councils. It is a big town without the Police.

Mr Speaker, there are also some other outlets which these assailants and thieves are using. There was a police post in Kaleile, but it was removed. There was another one at Kalungi, it was also removed. There is also Ssezibwa Bridge which connects Nakasongola to Kayunga; that place is not secure. We need a police post there.

The Ministry of Internal Affairs should increase manpower. You go to a police post and find three policemen with three guns; there is a problem. I want to encourage the Ministry of Internal Affairs to take it up and add manpower. I beg to submit.

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

2.59

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The minister in charge is not in the House. I undertake to deliver the message to him.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. This is a matter which should be taken seriously for action. It is a matter for which you do not need to come back here; it is about what people need on ground. Encourage him to send a team on ground and address the concerns, honourable minister. Hon. Nyakikongoro?

3.00

**MS ROSEMARY NYAKIKONGORO (NRM, Women Representative, Sheema):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity to raise this matter concerning Nyakambu Bridge which is on the verge of collapsing. It serves various districts, and there is a lot of traffic carrying commercial goods along that place.

The Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) in its usual maintenance routine cannot manage that bridge. They had hoped that with the long-awaited upgrading of Bwizibwera-Nyakambu-Nsiika with a spur to Sheema-Kabwohe would work on that bridge.

Now during these rains, people find it difficult to pass there. Actually, it is going to result into loss of many lives of people who get tempted to pass there. It is equally becoming very expensive. If you are crossing to Ibanda, to Kashari, Mbarara, people have to pass through Kabwohe-Mbarara road and then to Ibanda road which is costly.

The Prime Minister met with the Ankole group Members of Parliament in March this year, and told them that the road was a priority and that it would be among the very first roads to be worked on.

Secondly, UNRA committed itself in 2021 that it is a priority road. It is not among the roads that were published in the newspapers recently.

My prayers:

- (i) The Government should work on the Nyakambu Bridge urgently to avoid loss of lives and property.
- (ii) UNRA should allow the people to use their land that had been demarcated for economic gain since evaluation had already been done.
- (iii) The Prime Minister should give us a message to take back to the people of Sheema and Greater Ankole at large on the commencement of the road. When she met with us, we were excited and told our people that the road was going to be worked on. They are asking us now and we do not have an answer to give them.

Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Nankabirwa, acting Chief Whip, please arrange a meeting between the Minister of Works and Transport and the Members of Parliament of the affected areas.

Honourable colleagues, I told you that the minister is to bring a ministerial statement next week on the preparedness of handling emergencies in the road network. We shall discuss it in detail.

3.02

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Mr Speaker, the Minister of Works and Transport is hereby directed to organise this meeting and go on the ground such that when he comes to give the ministerial statement, he will also inform the country about the preparations to save the people if this bridge is worked on.

UNRA is equally directed to make sure that the people use the land.

I will personally inform the Prime Minister that the people are waiting for her statement regarding the same.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I was waiting for the part of: "Failure to do so..." *(Laughter)* Hon. Godfrey Odera.

3.04

**MR GODFREY ODERO (Independent, Samia Bugwe County South, Busia):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I raise a matter of national importance regarding the fishing community in Majanji Subcounty, Busia. On 17 September 2023, Kenyan fishermen crossed the Ugandan border and took off with 14 boats and an engine. This has raised a lot of tension between the two communities of Kenya and Uganda.

As a leader, I have tried to intervene by involving leaders from both sides. We agreed unanimously that the boats and the engine that were looted by the Kenyan fishermen must be returned. These people came at 2.00 a.m. when the Ugandan fishermen were sleeping. They took our property and destroyed it –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, honourable member, you have already solved the problem. What are the prayers?

**MR ODERO:** Not yet, Mr Speaker. My prayers:

- (i) The Kenyan fishermen should be stopped from crossing over to Uganda to take our fishing gear.
- (ii) Kenyan fishermen who do not possess fishing licences as per the law should not be allowed to cross into Ugandan waters.
- (iii) The Ugandan boats and the engine that were taken by the Kenyan thieves should be returned with immediate effect. Failure to do so, we shall retaliate as a community because we have lost four weeks without carrying out any economic activity.

Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleague, I would like to advise you not to put a heavy burden on your head for nothing. The people might do things and it is said that they were mobilised by hon. Odera because he declared retaliation on the Floor. We follow order here and retaliation is not part of it. So, next time, use a politer language that can help you deliver the serious point.

3.06

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (FISHERIES) (Ms Hellen Adoa):** Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate that the incident happened as it has always been. As we are aware, Uganda, Kenya and Tanzania share the waters of Lake Victoria. The matter came to my knowledge and I directed the commander of the Fisheries Protection Unit to handle the matter with Kenyan security; he has not yet submitted any report. I want to pledge to follow it up and give feedback to the honourable members.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Point of order from Hon. Macho. Honourable minister, you can take a seat.

**MR MACHO:** In the last Parliament, we had the same issues. Now, in the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament, we have the same issues. Is the honourable minister in order to delegate a commander to handle issues that she once heard of and is hearing now? Moreover, she has never stepped on the waters of Busia where these problems are happening. She has never stepped in Sigulu, Kolwe and even Nekuku.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable member, in law, there is a very simple principle that usually applies to situations like this one: "He who comes for equity comes with clean hands." I have a situation – free sitting is not free roaming – *(Laughter)*

Just a minute ago, you were seated here; now you are standing that side. You keep smuggling yourself this side.

Honourable minister, thank you. We have taken note. Please follow up on the matter so that we can help our people.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON  
THE COMMEMORATION OF THE  
INTERNATIONAL YOUTH DAY

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister for Youth Affairs. This statement was presented; what we were left with was the debate. So, debate starts now.

Hon. Silwany, Hon. Aogon, Hon. Komakech and Hon. Aleper. Sorry, I had forgotten Hon. Aleper and Hon. Timuzigu. Hon. Aleper, let me allow you to raise your matter, which you brought to my attention. I am very sorry.

3.10

**MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii County (Kadam), Nakapiripirit):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance; a very urgent one. There is a dire security situation in my constituency, particularly in Kaiku Parish, Kawachi Subcounty.

There have been incursions in the past one week by the Pokot of Mount Kadam and they have killed one person and injured three others. This happened last night and as we speak now, the people have been displaced to the nearby communities. About 200 households have been displaced this morning.

While I was here, I received a WhatsApp message that said, "Hon. Moses, what are you doing; people are being killed?" I have stood on the Floor of this House for the last nine months, and this is the issue that I raised.

The last time we talked about bombs in this House, I particularly said that we should treat security with equity across this country. At that time, many people had raised issues about bombs and the entire country was abuzz. We have lost people in Chekwii, Nakapiripirit, and Karamoja, and we have always been told to wait. That is why I asked, "How many more do you want to die? Do you want Members of

Parliament to die before you can take action?"

My prayer is; let the institutions of Government, charged with security, marshal themselves, and go to assess this situation, in order to bring a lasting solution to this problem.

For those who were displaced –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I thought you had finished because you gave your prayers. When you finish with prayers, you stop there.

**MR MOSES ALEPER:** Since people are displaced, it goes without saying that they will need remedies from the Office of the Prime Minister. That is my second prayer. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

3.12

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Mr Speaker, it is unfortunate that we still experience incursions of bad people, and end up losing lives.

I participated in the disarmament of Karamoja, for eight years. This Government has really tried to make sure that Karamoja gets total peace. Recently, the President had to change the leadership of the UPDF in Karamoja, and there was peace installed. I shared with some of our colleagues in Karamoja and they were happy.

I happen to attend security meetings; so, I would like to take this opportunity to inform this august House that the Government always tries. We did not choose the neighbours that we have. When the Government tries to maintain peace on this side, unfortunately, our neighbours on the other side do not do the same; for instance, Kenya. They choose to move with guns into Uganda, looking for pasture and water.

I would like to assure this august House that I will deliver this message, and I hope that we shall follow up the culprits and see total peace.

Regarding relief, I undertake to inform my boss, the Rt Hon. Prime Minister, to look into her stores and see to it that we come to the rescue of the people. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, colleagues. We now have the debate to commemorate the Youth Day, and the Members I have picked to speak are enough.

3.14

**MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri):** Mr Speaker, I thank the minister who presented the statement on the International Youth Day –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Use two minutes.

**MR SILWANY:** I also congratulate His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda, on this important day.

Three days ago, I attended a graduation in Kololo of 16,797 young people. They graduated in areas of welding, tailoring – basically vocational skills. This is a type of graduation that I had never seen take place in this country.

If we gear up and give jobs to young people and do such training, we shall get young people moving very well, as we commemorate the International Youth Day.

The question I ask the minister is; how are we going to roll out this good programme throughout the country? This is because the graduates whose ceremony we attended in Kololo came from the Kampala Metropolitan Area.

Secondly, when are we rolling out the President's programme to different areas to reach as far as Terego? I always see my sister from Terego saying she is the most rural representative – when is the programme reaching that area; northern, eastern and western Uganda?

Otherwise, I thank this Government for starting to take care of young people. There will be stability and the country will move on perfectly well if we all embrace it as Parliament, and the

Executive does more for our young people to have jobs.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. For the record, the Member of Parliament from Terego represents a rural area, but she is not rural.

**MR SILWANY:** Mr Speaker, I did not say she is rural. I said she represents the most rural –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You said she is a rural representative.

**MR SILWANY:** I withdraw the part where I said, “She is a rural representative.”

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have already picked the colleagues to speak. After, I will allow the Youth Members of Parliament.

3.17

**MR CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH (Independent, Aruu County, Pader):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. First and foremost, I thank this Government for recognising the youth, as an important factor in the development of the country. It is well known that for any country to develop, the youth, who range from 18 to 35 years, play a very monumental role; this country is taking that on.

However, there is much more to be done than doing the passive part of it. In northern Uganda, we are faced with the problem of youth who suffered the LRA insurgency. They are locally known as “the *Agu* boys.” Years back, central Uganda was bombarded by the *Kifesi* boys. The *Agu* boys are a replica of the *Kifesi* boys, just that they have more military training because some of them are former child-soldiers.

These boys have been left to survive on their own. What they do is to go around stealing and doing petty jobs, which endanger their lives. They are a threat to the community and the community is a threat to them. Why can't this Government set up rehabilitation centres to demilitarise these boys from what they went through, and then train them?

Finally, why are we always dividing the masses? This same Parliament gave Shs 5 million – the honourable minister did that – when they were celebrating Women's Day. Women in every district got Shs 5 million for their celebrations – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Silas Aogon? The minister will clarify. What was important to note was why we have not given the youth the same money.

3.19

**MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is very important that we celebrate the youth, and it is very sweet to be a youth. However, there are questions that we have to answer, as a country.

For instance, the majority of those who graduate do not get an opportunity to get a job. How are we balancing this between regions? I say so because I am aware of it. These days, it is not easy for you to get a job if you do not have somebody to connect you. It seems there are some people who are already blessed. This is because before they go to level one or semester one of the university, they are assured of employment. However, they are many out there who do not have that opportunity.

Mr Speaker, what is the Government doing to cover this gap? Rt Hon. Prime Minister, what are you going to do? That is the big question for you.

Secondly, there is an issue. The graduates have not been properly prepared for the job market. When are we passing the Graduate Service Scheme Bill, because it is the responsibility of this House? We cannot just sit down, and get a salary, but do nothing about this. We are talking about the Start-Ups Bill; what are we going to do about it?

Recently, in my constituency, I discovered that within one ward there were 14 graduates, three of whom were lawyers by training, but no jobs. Mr Speaker, where am I going to take these people? I think one time I am going to bring

them to your office first, then we talk together, about what we are going to do, because it is amazingly bad. What are we going to do? (*Hon. Ameede rose*) Let me take that information because there is a persistent demand.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Since you have switched off, we do not take it. Because—First, listen, so that I help you. Information is within your time. You do not switch off the microphone because the moment you do; you have switched off the Member. You have rejected the request for information. However, let me allow the Member since she had already crossed over.

**MS AMEEDE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wanted to give the House information regarding the Presidential Initiative for Skilling the Youth. I am of the view that we could do better. It should be institutionalised, to create equity and fairness. For example, we have technical schools in constituencies run by the Government, but they are poorly facilitated. In my constituency, we have a community technical school called the Nagwere. I did present information here in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament that this technical school has heavy equipment that has been lying idle for lack of three-phase electricity—(*Mr Aogon rose*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No. Hon. Ameede is submitting on her own; you finished your time, Hon. Aogon.

**MS AMEEDE:** Then for lack of trained technical instructors, if this skilling is taken to the community, it will create more opportunity. The presidential initiative where we have a facility in Butebo only took in seven persons in the community. How will this translate into meaningful employment for the youth of the district? Thank you. That is the information.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, we have very many statements; so, I will be skipping some of you so that you contribute on others. We have many statements today. So, I want to pick Youth MPs.

3.24

**MR BERNARD ODOI (NRM, Youth Representative, Eastern):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. For the last two years, the International Youth Day celebration in this country has not taken place on the day that it is supposed to take place. One of the reasons is because of the budgetary issues. The question is; why can't we have the budget for this very essential activity for the core of our population?

I want to comment on the skilling project and appreciate the President. Currently, we have 18 youth skilling hubs across the country. The question is; when you have equipped these youths with very good skills, where do you leave them? Why can't we have a provision in our laws - the PPDA - that a certain segment of our contract, say below Shs 100 million or Shs 50 million, is a preserve for the youth? After we are skilling them, we are preparing them to be better citizens of this country.

3.25

**MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The International Youth Day celebrations were excellent, although there is still a gap in inclusiveness because majority of the youth leaders are left out. By "majority of the youth leaders" I mean those who are not members of the National Youth Council. The council only takes the chairperson of the district, the secretary for female affairs, and the secretary for finance, and it leaves out the rest.

My appeal to the ministry is to include these other youth leaders, who are the majority; at least they should take the nine executive youth leaders of the district council so that everyone is involved in celebrating this very important day for the young people.

Secondly, to add to Hon. Komakech's submission about the money that is sent to the district for the Women's Day celebrations; why is it that the youths are not considered in that programme, yet we are the majority in the country?

My appeal to the ministry and to the Government is, that they should also send some little money, even if it is Shs 5 million, Shs 3 million, or even Shs 2 million, so that the districts can also conduct these International Youth Day celebrations in their respective districts. Thank you very much.

3.26

**MR EDSON RUGUMAYO (NRM, Youth Representative, Western):** Mr Speaker, I want to express my sincere gratitude to you for allowing this item on the Order Paper despite the passage of time.

I also thank the Government of Uganda, for making sure that the resources were made available for the International Youth Day to be celebrated. I also thank this Parliament, and our esteemed Members for consistently appropriating money so that youth-led initiatives are funded. Thank you very much; we really appreciate it.

Mr Speaker, I commend the effort of the President of Uganda. He has been leading the drive to create jobs through launching various factories. Recently, you heard that he launched 16 factories but I find it crucial that every time these factories are launched, it is important that we communicate transparently how many jobs are created and which type of jobs. It is imperative that the young people of this country are filled with optimism that the problem of unemployment will be solved effectively.

Secondly, the theme for this year's International Youth Day was around green technical skills.

Mr Speaker, between me and you and all Members of this House, we already know that scholarships in universities play a vital role, but it is also evident that these scholarships go to benefit people from affluent backgrounds. The children of those who can attend Namugongo, Budo, Seeta High and the rest, get to benefit from these scholarships but the children of those from lower socio-economic backgrounds do not benefit.

I pray that this House finds it important that we put more incentives into technical and vocational education.

Lastly, on the issue of labour externalisation, I want to draw the attention of this House; it deeply saddens me to learn that as we sit here, many of our young people remain languishing in prisons in countries like Saudi Arabia and others. And yet, if this House chose and found it important to allocate only Shs 2 billion, we would provide legal aid to all our young people in those prisons.

I ask this House to find it important that we allocate this money and support our young people to leave the prisons so that they will feel part and parcel of this country. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I saw the finance minister nodding to that. *(Laughter)* You have touched his heart; with the Shs 2 billion for our young people- No clarification, because there is no one on the Floor. Clarification applies when there is someone on the Floor. *(Laughter)*

On the issue- please. Honourable colleagues, on the issue of education, I raised that issue and the President responded to me- honourable minister, maybe when you are responding it will be good if you update us.

He said there is a commission he put in place that is doing a review chaired by the Hon. Amana Mushega and he said this is one of the issues they should look at. Therefore, when you are going to respond, it is one of the issues that we need an update on.

Scholarships are being given to the children of the rich. *(Applause)*

Honourable colleagues, it is our children who can – and yet there are many ways to reward students for hard work. For a student to come from Terego or Mitooma and score marks for medicine – you have left children of the poor to study courses like education and social sciences and that is why they cannot compete for jobs.



The Children of the rich study in good schools where they get good marks for medicine and engineering; we are widening the gap indirectly, honourable minister. We have to look at this deeply.

3.31

**MS HELLEN WANDERA (NRM, Woman Representative, Busia):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank the honourable minister –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, listen to the youngest Member of Parliament. This is her debate. *(Laughter)*

**MS WANDERA:** Honourable minister, thank you for the statement. I appreciate the Government of Uganda for the new curriculum.

Recently, I visited my child at a certain secondary school somewhere –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, to be a Member of Parliament, you must be above 18 years. So, why are you debating? *(Laughter)*

**MS WANDERA:** Honourable minister, I visited my child at school, but when I checked his report, I saw different subjects compared to what we studied. They have introduced a different curriculum and it includes handwork.

When I was in O'Level, I studied many subjects that did not benefit me. In my A'Level, I only studied three subjects; literature, economics and divinity. At university, I studied Economics – things that did not match. So, if the Government introduces this new curriculum today, it would support our children.

Secondly, honourable colleagues have talked a lot about unemployment, but let me talk about social media. Our children have been spoiled through social media. I have seen it on many social media platforms; *Tik-tok*, Facebook and *Instagram* – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable Minister for Youth and Children Affairs?

3.33

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS) (Ms Sarah Nyirabashitsi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I take this opportunity to thank my honourable colleagues, for raising very pertinent issues. I do not know whether I should answer one by one or just make a summary.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, just make a summary.

**MS NYIRABASHITSI:** Mr Speaker, I will answer a few questions and summarise the rest.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you have three minutes.

**MS NYIRABASHITSI:** On the issue of the Shs 3 million for the female Members of Parliament, it is for Women's Day and is sent to the districts through the National Women Council, once every year.

For the youth, every quarter, we send Shs 1 million to the districts to help the district executive committee for the youth to do their work. Therefore, we send Shs 4 million every year. Unless you want us to change this money for the youth day.

Mr Speaker, in the last quarter, we did not send anything because the finance for the National Youth Council was reduced by 80 per cent. Last financial year, they got only Shs 4 billion and this financial year, they gave us only Shs 800 million for the whole financial year. So, we were unable to send money to the districts in the last quarter. The issue of students who are in the Presidential Skilling Hubs –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, without interrupting you very much, Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, we need money for the National Youth Council.

The minister has told you about the subvention. I am aware that subventions have been reinstated. Most of us passed through

the National Youth Council and with youth Members of Parliament here, their subvention was reduced by 80 per cent. We need your honourable minister.

3.36

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):**

Thank you, friends, for raising this issue. It is not because we do not want people to do what they are planning, but I have told you many times, that the funds are not available for us to make sure that everybody gets what they want. It is not possible.

One time, I was before a committee and I said, “Show me how to increase revenue and I will give you all the money you want.”

Mr Speaker, the problem is the unavailability of funds to fund every project.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister in charge of youth, how much money have we given and how much do we need for the National Youth Council and National Women Council?

**MS NYIRABASHITSI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. They gave us Shs 200 million for the National Youth Council, last quarter, yet we were supposed to receive Shs 1 billion. We were supposed to get Shs 4 billion per financial year and that was the agreed position but we have not received the money.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What about the National Women Council?

**MS NYIRABASHITSI:** I do not have it off cuff, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I was moving with you very well. Honourable minister, sometimes we invite trouble for ourselves. When you look at the youth leaders from all over the country, including the young Members of Parliament here and they cannot defend Shs 4 billion –

Honourable minister, I like you for being honest but I am waiting for your 3 per cent supplementary and see where you will put money. You will ask yourself a question whether you could not get just Shs 3 billion to address issues to do with the 75 per cent of this population –(Applause)– do you get me, honourable minister?

Being included means a lot. This money does not have a very big impact, but the fact that you feel included and respected – You have youth council structures across the entire country. In the next election, we are adding seven million new voters who are young people. When you go there, they will say, “No, you Members of Parliament said that you could not get for us Shs 3 billion”. We look bad. I beseech you, honourable minister, to intervene. (Applause)

**MR KASAIJA:** Thank you again, Mr Speaker. Anything that touches the future of this country, touches our hearts. The children we are talking about are our future leaders. I will go back to the ministry and suppress somewhere – (Laughter)– so that the youth are facilitated.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. I have carried a lot of abuses; how could Parliament fail to get for us at least Shs 4 billion? I would like to thank you for rescuing us. These are your grandchildren and they are happy wherever they are. We thank you for that humility and approach. Honourable minister, continue.

**MS NYIRABASHITSI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Finance for that intervention. On the issue of our graduates from the Presidential Skilling Hubs, we are still taking very few but we believe that when the budget is there, we shall increase.

Recently, we were with the head of that skilling project and he said that if money is increased, they will increase the number of students they are getting from your districts.

However, as a colleague asked, we have trained them but what next? We are still negotiating

with the Ministry of Finance on “*Emyooga*” so that they can create a category for these children who are getting out of our technical schools and from the Presidential Skilling Hubs.

This can also be another category where people can borrow money from “*Emyooga*”, buy their equipment and move on, other than giving them free things.

Lastly, I would like to thank you once again and ask that the youth celebrations should always be considered in the budget, to avoid changing the dates. For example, we were supposed to have it on 12<sup>th</sup> August but due to - my senior minister there knows what he went through to give us that money; we had to shift it to 18<sup>th</sup> August.

However, we would like to thank you and pray that we are going to follow up on whatever I have not raised here. Thank you. (*Applause*)

#### STATEMENT ON THE ELECTRICITY SECTOR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** All statements that we captured will be addressed today.

3.43

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to make a statement on the electricity sector, as it appears on the Order Paper.

The electricity sector is very wide, but my technical people and I have tried to summarise it. We will not stop at this statement; I know that more information will be required; so, keep on giving more information, but the sector is very wide.

This sector moves from electricity generation - let me briefly mention how we stand on electricity generation. The capacity has increased from 1378.1 Megawatts to 1778.1 Megawatts, after the technical commissioning of four units of Karuma. Each unit generates 100 Megawatts, but Karuma Power Plant has a capacity of 600 Megawatts.

This increase came as a result of the synchronisation of 300 Megawatts from three units of the Karuma Hydro Power Plant. It is expected that by the end of this financial year, the total installed capacity will be 2,000 Megawatts.

While there were some evacuation challenges, following the vandalism that took place on the Karuma-Kawanda 400 KV transmission line where five towers were vandalised, these have been reconstructed and tests are ongoing.

Our policy is that when vandalism takes place on a line that has not been commissioned, the onus is on the contractor to make good the vandalised infrastructure. I have been assured by the contractor that this is soon coming on board.

Plans are underway, to update the feasibility studies for Ayago hydropower plant. It is expected to generate 840 Megawatts. Oryang will generate 392 Megawatts and Kiba will generate 400 Megawatts.

In order to increase electricity generation to meet our demand, we are mixing; we have smaller generation plants like Muzizi, which will generate 47 Megawatts and smaller plants.

However, we are also looking at other sources like solar power. Uganda’s capacity regarding solar is 10,000 Megawatts but the challenge on solar is the storage because at night, you will not have that power. So, when you put storage infrastructure, again, that tariff has to go up because it is expensive.

We are also looking at wind energy. We have a capacity of 4,000 Megawatts from wind, especially in the areas of Karamoja. We are also looking at geothermal. We have already identified sites for it and expect 1,500 Megawatts.

You have heard us talk about nuclear power. We are working with the International Atomic Energy Agency. We have been assessed and seen to be sound to begin the generation of nuclear power.

By 2031, we expect to produce at least 1,000 Megawatts of nuclear power; but the total capacity for nuclear potential of Uganda is 24,000 Megawatts.

The electricity transmission network increased from 2,364 kilometres in 2018/2019 to the current 4,142 kilometres, against the NDP III target of 4,354. This network is expected to increase once the ongoing transmission projects are concluded across the country.

For those who go to West Nile, from Karuma, you will see power lines that have passed Pakwach up to Arua and the substations in Nebbi and Arua are almost 95 per cent completed. That is the national grid and transmission network I am talking about.

On the other side where we have Mirama-Kabale, that line is completed. In Kabale District, the land was given to us for –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, Rule 52 of our Rules of Procedure does not allow us to do what you are doing. Your statement has to be read in full, as it is written. So, kindly read the statement the way you gave it to us and then you can explain later.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** My apologies, Mr Speaker. I had forgotten about that new rule. I am on (c) on electricity distribution.

Electricity distribution increased from 6,496 kilometres in 2005 to 16,532 kilometres in 2015 and increased to the current coverage of 59,038 kilometres. This network is expected to double, once the planned investments under the various distribution and electricity scale-up projects are implemented. Electricity access stood at 57 per cent, where 19 per cent is on the grid and 38 per cent is off grid.

The implementation of the Electricity Connections Policy has contributed to attaining 1,827,036 connections by 2022. This was largely on account of the slowed-down in the implementation of the policy for the last two financial years following the repurposing of the budget to address COVID-19 challenges

and indeed the 40 per cent budget cuts affected all ministries.

However, the ministry has secured funding from the World Bank, under the Electricity Access Scale-Up Project (EASP) – and I would like to thank this august House for the support. This will be utilised, partially, for free connections across the country. This is expected to increase connections by one million.

#### E. Subcounty connections

On the subcounty connections, Mr Speaker, the ministry had planned to connect 1,496 Subcounties. However, 1,063 have been connected and the balance of 433 will be connected in due course. We are implementing the Electricity Access Scale-Up Project – and this is a priority – to make sure that we connect the subcounties, which are lacking connection.

Mr Speaker, in conclusion, the country is targeting to achieve 100 per cent access by 2030. Given the progress so far, the sector requires funds to implement projects to take us to this target.

I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I also thank the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources for the support and the entire House for your continued support.

I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Now, honourable minister, you can see – *(Members rose)* Honourable colleagues, just a minute.

Honourable minister, every day, I receive a good number of honourable colleagues and the questions they are raising – for those who have ongoing projects in their constituencies – the poles have rotten; the wires – I do not know what happened; the transformers – including the one who is speaking here.

Some of these projects were loan-based. Therefore, it was not the issue of money, but performance.

Also, there is the issue of the TBEA loan, which the President promised. As Parliament, we did our part and we were even given lists of connections – where they would connect all subcounties– but nothing is going on.

Honourable minister, if you could, touch on that and then I open it up to the honourable colleagues because most of the questions are around that issue. (*Members rose*) Just let the minister first touch on it and then I open it up to you, honourable colleagues. We need your intervention.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** Mr Speaker, we have been moving around the country, commissioning some of those projects that were satisfactorily completed. However, some of them suffered vandalism when the country was locked down because of COVID-19 – I have received reports.

Some contractors ran bankrupt because of COVID-19 and I have already contacted the Solicitor-General to guide me – you do not just switch contracts before the Solicitor-General guides you.

What I can say, Mr Speaker is that most of those projects, which are in the constituencies, will be concluded by December this year. We have procured materials, for example, the metres that we will need. The last delivery of the remaining metres we need is expected by the end of December –(*Interjections*)- that is why I said “most”. I did not say “all of them”.

Of course, I will apologise because my report does not have every line in your constituencies; I could not generate this for today. I can only promise that I will handle region by region.

The prior information I gave you – honourable colleagues, you remember I told you how many connections we were going to do in each and every constituency. That information was circulated. Therefore, what is remaining – and I want to thank some honourable colleagues who have written to me to inform me of the kind of lines that they have.

I cannot stand here and deceive you that I know each and everything in your constituencies – at least not yet – for the few years that I have been in the ministry. However, I can promise that I can handle region by region.

However, it will be very helpful to me: if you know that you have not submitted those stranded projects in your constituency, submit them so that I can task my technical team to give me specific status on specific lines.

Otherwise, my report, Sir, has not captured that specific information and I apologise.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, I think it is very helpful when you say that. Honourable colleagues, if you have lines in your area that have lasted one, two or three years and they are still stuck, it is very important that you inform the minister.

This is part of your oversight role, which also helps her to go to her staff and say: “You are telling me A, B, C and D but the MP is telling me A, B, C and D.”

I will pick Hon. Itungo, Hon. Oseku, Hon. Enos, the Member from Kabarole, Hon. Mutiwa, Hon. Byanyima, Hon. Esenu, the Member from Kanungu, Hon. Naigaga – our champion – and then the Member from Kaberamaido.

No, for Namutumba, I have picked Hon. Naigaga; she should speak for Namutumba. Hon. Pacuto, the Member from Terego – I will allow, you, the chairperson of the committee.

For the islands, I will pick Hon. Migadde. I will then pick Hon. Kaberuka – Hon. Kahonda, do not mind; I am speaking for Mitooma (*Laughter*). Hon. Fox, Hon. Rwemulikya – for Bugisu, I am picking Hon. Nangoli - Acholi? Which area is Jonam? For Karamoja, I will pick Hon. Stella. Sebei? You had already spoken. Honourable colleagues, I am trying to see if there is any other MP from Sebei, who is around and has not yet spoken. Yes, I will pick Hon. Phyllis. From Teso, I will pick Hon. Okupa.

Honourable Colleagues, I want the minister to get a semblance of the whole country. I am going to pick one for each sub-region of Uganda. Hon. Itungo, you are going to speak for Ankole. You have got two minutes each.

4.01

**MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and colleagues. I want to thank the minister for the statement.

Now that I am speaking on behalf of the Ankle Region, Madam Minister, the first issue is about the connection fees you are talking about. You have not specified the time frame when this connection will be ready.

Secondly, in my constituency, I have a subcounty. There was a project that was going on under rural electrification. The project was completed, but before the handover, the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) was taken to your ministry. Up to now, the project has been stuck. No connection, nothing. Transformers are there, poles are there, but people are stuck with the connection. The line is there. When I went to REA, they told me to look for a contractor and I was not part of REA, so that is a very big issue.

Lastly, I have poles that were dumped on somebody's farm. The poles are there, just white elephants. No plan, nothing. The owner of the farm is now asking, "What are these poles doing in the constituency?" Kindly do something because the poles are there and they are disorganising the owner of the farm. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Pacuto for West Nile.

4.02

**MS JANE PACUTO (NRM, Woman Representative, Pakwach):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the well-summarised report, especially for giving us the potential for energy in this country.

Mr Speaker, if I may speak for West Nile and particularly for Pakwach District, the problem we have in Uganda with energy is not about generation, but it is about transmission and distribution. We have a number of mushrooming - upcoming town borders and town councils. We have now injected money into the Parish Development Model (PDM); people are producing. Very soon we shall have a lot of cassava, and maize harvested.

However, in the rural countryside, even where there is power, you find a whole town centre without power. Why? Because there is no transformer for them to step down the power to reach the secondary seed schools that we are building, to reach the health centres, and even add value to the crops.

Mr Speaker, I am glad that the minister mentioned that the loan that we passed here last November has now matured. How I pray that all subcounties be connected if we are very serious about PDM. That should be fast-tracked.

Finally, I was at the border of Malaba just last Thursday. That is our cash cow in terms of revenue mobilisation. But the time that we were there, the number of minutes or hours that power went off, I could not believe, that this country could do that.

Mr Speaker, I pray that all the customs points at every border post in this country get a dedicated power line so that there is no time for delay. There are 24 hours in which we can collect revenue to mitigate some of the challenges that we are having. Let me allow my colleague Hon. Kateshumbwa to raise a point of information.

**MR KATESHUMBWA:** Thank you, for giving way. Mr Speaker and the honourable minister, when we investigated one of the power producers, one of the issues - honourable minister you are aware of it - was that the production is 250 megawatts, but we are consuming 160 megawatts, and it is one of the reasons why the tariffs are high.

Secondly, your colleague, the Honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is aware that every year we have a budget to pay for dimmed energy.

Could you tell this House when we shall have a zero budget for dimmed energy and instead use that energy to connect all the households that we need to connect? That is the information I want to give. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I would want to propose that we use this time to bring issues to do with your areas in terms of the problems you are facing. When you start becoming general yet you have been here saying you have lines in your constituencies which have not been connected - transformers are down. I want the minister to get the picture so that she can go back to her staff. Hon. Mutiwa -

4.06

**MR GEOFFREY MUTIWA (NRM, Bunyole West County, Butaleja):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the statement. However, I have several poles that are lying in my constituency. We had several projects that were going on. Some of the projects were under the World Bank and also projects under TBEA.

Mr Speaker, I have poles in about five subcounties, that is Busaba, Budumba, Busolwe Town Council, and Busolwe. All the projects in these subcounties are at a standstill. I also have a subcounty which does not have power completely. That is Nawanjofu Subcounty.

I have raised the matter with the ministry. One time we had a meeting with the state minister and they promised that work was going to resume by September. We are in October and nothing has taken place and the minister is telling us that still work is going to take place.

I request the ministry to focus on the projects that were ongoing because we are finding a lot of difficulties when we are moving around. She talked about vandalism. The reason is that these

poles have been there for a very long time. So, there are people who take advantage and they steal the wires and some poles.

In my particular constituency, even the contractors, when there was a shift from REA to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, some contractors came back and picked polls. When I try to follow up, they tell us we have not been paid and we have other pending projects where we want to take our poles - *(Member timed out)*.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Oseku.

4.08

**MR RICHARD OSEKU (NRM, Kibale County, Pallisa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

In 2021, under the Rural Electrification Agency (REA), we had some linings of power in our areas, but since that time, after they put the lines, they have not given us transformers. That is one of the problems, and people are crying. They are saying, "Why did you bring these poles here?"

Honourable minister, some contracts were given at that very time. In my constituency, for example, they allocated two lines; one to connect to the subcounty and the other was also allocated - the contract was given. But they only did this short one of about one kilometre, but the other one of 6.5 kilometres has not been done in Kibale County. I raised this issue to the Minister of State for Energy, but he was not able to respond.

Finally, honourable minister, we have been having engagements at regional levels with the Minister of State for Energy. We found that most of the things that you have planned to do are concentrated in areas where members of the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources are the only ones with the consequences that are captured. We proposed that you halt the plan to implement these projects and we sit and reorganise these projects. However, that proposal has not, yet come to light.

It is my strong appeal again, honourable minister, that you meet us and we realign –  
(Member timed out.)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Kaberamaido.

4.11

**MS JANE AWICH (NRM, Woman Representative, Kaberamaido):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is mainly about Ochero Constituency in my district. In the whole constituency there is no power. I have written to the ministry and talked to Hon. Okaasai but nothing has been done.

I pray that you take it as something very serious. Because each time I pass there I get a lot of pressure to answer questions.

Secondly, in my constituency, Kaberamaido; there are very many subcounties of Alwa, Kaberamaido, and Aperkira with transmission poles, but without Connections. I wrote to the ministry informing them of the several schools and health centres that are outside the power grid; I requested them for solar panels because the primary seven candidates cannot revise their books.

I pray that you try to plan for those schools and health centres that are outside the power grid; that will go a long way in helping us. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Okot Ogong. Colleagues, I hear you complaining, am I picking non-members –(Laughter)– advise me if I am picking strangers. I am picking one person per sub-region first to get a broader picture. Honourable, please switch off and switch on again so that your time counts.

4.11

**MR OKOT OGONG (NRM, Dokolo South County, Dokolo):** Mr Speaker, I have a few issues to raise to the Minister. In my constituency, we have lines that are passing over everywhere, but it is non-functional. There is no power. You have not switched on

power for the last five years. So why do you have those lines there, yet there is no power?

The second point regards the intermittent power supply. We have a very big town council, Dokolo Town Council. We have power twice a week. Maybe in two weeks, we can have power for only two days. I do not know why it is being done like that.

We need to connect from the Lira line, not the Soroti line. Connect us directly from Lira up to Dokolo because that line is more stable.

The third point concerns the high cost of electricity; the tariffs are too high. My people cannot afford it. You run your factory for one week; you pay Shs 20 million for power alone if you are running a factory. If it is a big factory, you pay over Shs 100 million and it is also affecting our businesses.

In addition, the small wooden poles, especially in Adeknino Subcounty, are very tiny. I do not think they will even last five years. I would prefer that you replace them with concrete poles because they are more stable.

We also have many trading centres in my district where the wire-line is only passing through. There is no step-down transformer in those trading centres. I would like to request the minister to procure more transformers so that –(Member timed out.)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Naigaga.

4.13

**MS MARIAM NAIGAGA (NRM, Woman Representative Namutumba):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. In the interest of time, I will go straight to my issues. Honourable Minister for Energy, my biggest issue has to do with the scope that is being worked on vis-à-vis the scope that was surveyed. We have realized that when your team came on the ground, they surveyed so many town centres, and schools and the contractor is just working on limited areas saying that is what is in the agreement.



We want to have the whole scope handled as it was surveyed.

In addition to what Hon. Okot Ogong has submitted in regarding the old lines, the wood poles are no longer sustaining the environment; they are falling every day. And when a pole falls, Umeme takes a month to reinstate the line.

The last point has to do with the transformers  
*-(Interruption)*

**MR AKAMBA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The information I would like to give to my Woman Member of Parliament is that Namutumba is constantly in load-shedding. The electricity is so intermittent to the extent that in a week, we can have power for two days and it is due to the power lines that need to be refurbished.

For instance, the lines that supply power to Namutumba go via Kaliro then to Namutumba yet they would have gone straight to Namutumba; and these lines are too old that they need to be refurbished. That is the information I wanted to give.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon Migadde

4.15

**MR ROBERT MIGADDE (NRM, Buvuma Islands County Buvuma):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I do not have any pending lines, neither poles, nor wires, but in the NRM manifesto since 2011, the President has been indicating that there are two districts without power and Buvuma is one of them. We are only separated by 1.8 kilometres, which requires a marine cable from Mayuge.

Mr Speaker, you will appreciate; I was with you on the Committee of National Economy and the Minister had pledged that he would not bring any other loan without the one of Buvuma. And we have approved many other loans. These loans are also paid by people from Buvuma. Of course, I am the chairperson, but at times we think that those in the kitchen are also thinking about us.

My appeal is - in the statement of the Minister; I saw they are projecting 100 per cent access yet they are talking about wires and poles. I would like to see a marine cable provided in that statement and I am sure the Minister knows Buvuma very well, having been the Minister of Fisheries. This is as well your constituency. My appeal is to have power.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. That was specifically from the islanders. Hon. Enos from Buganda.

4.16

**MR ENOS ASIIMWE (NRM, Kabula County Lyantonde):** Yes, I am from Buganda region. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Our issue in Buganda is not so different from others, specifically lines that had been worked on by REA and they were incomplete at the time of closure and up to now they have not been connected. Some of them have been vandalized. That is one of the major issues.

The second issue is about the electricity connection, mentioned by some of my colleagues. Some members said some of their areas are not connected. They have written to the ministry, but no response has come through yet; you can take note of that.

The other issue is a bit specific to Lyantonde District. We have a line that was brought down by rains almost two years ago, it is in the road. It has never been reinstated.

The problem starts with land issues. One of the farmers had the connection going through his farm; he refused the reconnection. Until today *-(Interjections)-* I passed on this information of course, and I thank the ministry for their effort because they connected me to the team, however, they still failed.

A few minutes ago, I saw the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development; Could you help us to bring an amendment to land law - because this is the only solution to this? *-(Interruption)*

**MR MUTEBI:** Thank you, brother Enos, for giving way. Honourable minister, you know what happened to the central region and we are a few members here. Mr Speaker, the Honourable Minister of Energy and Mineral Development has hinted on regional meetings. You have met other regions, but what about us in the central.

If you had met us, we would not have brought this problem here; we would have sorted them from the other meeting. Consider that meeting.

Secondly, honourable minister, there are several lines which were completed long ago like those in Nakasongola. However, some other areas are pending to be commissioned; we have written several correspondences to you, and nothing has happened; you are aware of this.

About those lines; where they were supposed to have transformers of 100 KV, they put 50. At the end of the day, another one-kilometre radius was also not considered. We wanted your team to come and ascertain exactly what is happening but it has not come.

Lastly, on compensation, trees were cut but people have not been compensated, and yet they always come to our offices to follow up on the compensation. Our humble appeal is that those people should be considered for compensation. I beg to submit.

4.20

**MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Honourable minister, there is electricity instability in Moroto District due to breakdowns. Electricity in Moroto is used for lighting houses. It comes only in the evening and in the morning, it goes off, and the reason they give is that the lines are being worked on. So, electricity in Moroto is only used for lighting houses but not for boosting the economy. Electricity is not supposed to be used for only lighting houses but it should help Ugandans to boost their economy. It should run workshops; it should run other businesses, other than only being used for lighting.

Honourable minister, lines are running across Moroto District, but people are not able to tap them because of a lack of transformers. For instance, you can find a line running over seven or 10 kilometres without transformers in between, and yet there are institutions like schools in the same area. I thought that when we were connecting those lines, the institutions should be given the first priority. These institutions bring the burden back to us, Members of Parliament, by asking us to give them solar power to enable the students study.

Mr Speaker, I wish you consider that so that these institutions are taken as a priority, including community members living along the stretch of around 10 or seven kilometres without power. There are many applications; for example, when you are in Moroto, from Nadunget, the airfield, beyond Hotel Africana, there is no transformer. It is only Hotel Africana –*(Member timed out.)*

4.22

**MR PETER OKOT (DP, Tochi County, Omoro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for bringing the statement. Every time a government official from the President downward speaks about electricity in the country, the entire population is appreciative. Why? It is because we are told that we are generating a lot of it.

In Tochi and Omoro District, we have electricity poles lined up towards every subcounty. When the pronouncement was made in 2017 that every subcounty would receive electricity, the Ministry of Education and Sports took that on and supplied secondary schools with computers with the hope that they would be used to promote science education. I tell you, until now, these computers are not being used, and so how useful is this.

Electricity is a pull factor. In the general Gulu City area, several industries have been shut down because of electricity. Today, it is there, and tomorrow it is not there; this makes the cost of doing business very high and it has brought a lot of unemployment. Once these industries shut down, the staff are sent home.

So, Madam Minister – I will allow information from my nephew over there – *(Interruption)*

**MR OJOK:** Thank you for giving way for information. Mr Speaker, the issues in Omoro are huge, especially around power. We have an entire subcounty without a single electricity pole; that is Orapwoyo Subcounty.

Secondly, we have issues with those who have investments and need a lot of power. Some are setting up radio stations, and they have had to shut them down until power stabilises. When a pole is cut down or damaged, it is down for almost a week or two and this means there is no power. So, it is a cross-cutting issue. I just wanted to give my colleague that information. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I am picking one person per region.

4.25

**MR JAMES KABERUKA (NRM, Kinkinzi County West, Kanungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the report and I want to say that Kigezi is a unique region. Hon. Matia Kasaija has been telling us how to get revenue, and Kigezi is well known for tourism, but tourism is suffering a great deal because of a lack of power. If we could improve the tourism areas by putting power, then, we would get more money in terms of non-tax revenue, which would supplement these other gaps we are talking about.

The whole of Bwindi, which accounts for 65 per cent of tourism revenue, has no power. In Mpungu Subcounty, the President opened a tea factory, but there is no power, and at the same time, it is a breeding area for tourism. The camps are in darkness. How are we synchronising tourism to boost investments and the economy of this country?

We want the minister to elaborate on the issue of SMEs to this Parliament; How will they benefit this country, and yet the factories do not have power?

Mr Speaker, on the electricity connections, we have investments through the Islamic Development Bank which was in 2017/2018. We also have financing from the African Development Bank, which was done in 2018/2019; as well as the World Bank financing. All these had components of connection of houses and other institutions but to date, nothing has taken place. What happened and yet we spent that money? Can – *(Member timed out.)*

4.28

**MR STEPHEN KAGWERA (NRM, Burahya County, Kabarole):** Mr Speaker, first is to appreciate the minister. She is one of those energetic ministers and listens very well.

The issue of commissioning is very important. We cannot afford to have alarms from where we do not have electricity at all, and even where we have invested money in the names of poles and wires. So, let us prioritise this, honourable minister.

When you go to Kabarole, you will find all the subcounties, save for two; Harugongo and Karangura - the rest are a bit connected but have no power.

Therefore, honourable minister, prioritise two things; commissioning and those areas that do not have electricity at all, so that they do not remain hopeless.

The other issue is about the surveys. Before the merger, the Rural Electricity Agency had made a lot of surveys, but I am surprised that we are repeating the same survey. So, the merger should not mean completely doing away with REA, because they had done their work.

Honourable minister, the issue of COVID-19 keeps on coming up in most ministries, but we shall not always list it because COVID-19 is almost gone. It should no longer be an excuse. Let us double our efforts. If you know we had COVID-19, we all know, we should now forget about putting COVID-19 as an excuse and double our efforts because the problem was there.

Mr Speaker, the other issue is on prices –  
(Member timed out.)

4.29

**MS PHYLLIS CHEMUTAI (NRM, Woman Representative, Kapchorwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the report. As for us in the Sebei Region, we have the main grid which crosses three districts – Kapchorwa, Kween and Bukwo. However, our main problem is the extension of power from the main grid to other areas. We need transformers and more poles to reach all the subcounties of Sebei.

In Sebei, we are blessed with a mini hydro-power station but our people have not accessed that power; it is produced from River Siti which lies between Bukwo and Kween.

At first, we thought it was the time for all our people to access electricity. However, the ministry connected it to the main grid. Therefore, we have no power right now in all the three districts.

When you look at the line from Kapchorwa Town to Teryet High Altitude Training Centre, the line (a main grid) is there but transformers are needed so that the power can be utilised –  
(Interruption)

**MR TWALLA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to add that some areas have been surveyed by REA. Areas of Kobil in Kawowo Subcounty, Kabeywa and Chema have not got power. I request that the minister follows up on what was surveyed earlier. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Kitanywa.

4.32

**MR SOWEDI KITANYWA (NRM, Busongora County North, Kasese):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. In Rwenzori, particularly my constituency, there are five mini-power plants. Unfortunately, 70 per cent of my constituency is not connected yet we produce electricity.

The other issue is about compensation where the major lines passed. For three years, the people in these areas have not been compensated. I request the minister to look into this matter because the people who ought to be compensated are thinking of vandalising the poles and the wires –(Interjections)-  
information from my Woman MP. (Laughter)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MS KABUGHO:** Thank you, my brother. Honourable minister, your ministry negotiated with Kilembe Rural Electrification to use its line to evacuate power from Rubiriha and Nyamugasana to Mubuku Substation.

You agreed that since you had used their line, you were going to pay around Shs 5.9 billion but you have not paid this money. This has affected the operation of Kilembe Rural Electrification Agency causing a lot of load shedding. The people are no longer doing their business as usual. I pray that this money is paid so that business can run normally. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Mujungu, I hope you have been covered. He is the former manager of Kilembe Investments- no, honourable colleagues, let us follow the rules the way we set them. Let me go to Hon. Nangoli from Bugisu. I am going to pick one person per subregion; that will be 18 people to get a picture of the whole country.

4.34

**MR GERALD NANGOLI (NRM, Elgon North County, Bulambuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to give some clarification to the minister that last week for about two days, I moved around with the Committee on Presidential Affairs, on the budget. We visited one of the power stations in Acwa, Pader. We discovered that the contractor did his work and power is ready to be produced but the challenge is with UETCL. They have not worked on the transmission lines for the last two years.

The challenge is on the side of the Government. When you look at the two power stations, they are supposed to produce about 85 mega-

warts. However, because they have simply put a temporary line of wooden poles, they are evacuating only 9 megawatts, yet the Government is paying as per the contract of 85 megawatts. Therefore, we have a big challenge.

Honourable minister, you need to go on the ground. I do not know whether your technical team briefs you when they come from the field in order to make a follow-up.

Two, - *(Interjection)*- I am going to give you, my Woman MP. Back to Bugisu, in Bulambuli, there are about 5 subcounties that were once on the network. The poles got rotten; the transformers broke down ten years ago. It last worked when Hon. Irene Muloni was the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development. I have written letters to the Ministry - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Kisembo.

4.36

**MS NOELINE KISEMBO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibaale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. My main concern is on the projects that were started with REA and have not been completed. I am particularly interested in getting an update from the minister on the ERT3 (Electricity for Rural Electrification) that was funded by the World Bank. We were informed that the project period expired, and there were project personnel due for compensation. It started but was not completed.

In my district, this project was launched in August 2020. I know many districts here are affected. We would like to know the plans for completing this project such that the people can get the electricity they desire. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Nakazibwe of Greater Mubende. In Buganda, we have three – Greater Mubende, Greater Mpigi and Greater Mukono and Central.

4.38

**MS HOPE NAKAZIBWE (NRM, Woman Representative, Mubende):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the honourable minister for the report, but there are a few challenges. I will speak on behalf of Greater Mubende as you have said.

We also have poles and wires that run around but without power. Whenever we pass by, our people ask us what the poles are for. For example, in Gomero, Kiyuni Subcounty needs to be connected.

We have maize milling machines that were given by His Excellency the President in 2016 to the youth that cannot be put to use due to lack of electric power. So, it is such a long time yet they could have been procured on loan but not used. There are also coffee machines, for example, in Kasambya Constituency led by Hon. David Kabanda.

The other issue is in Kanyogoga Parish, which I know that Hon. Nankabirwa knows very well because we passed through it together when we were moving with His Excellency the President during the trek. He emphasised that they should be given power.

We have issues with free connections. We have always told our people to apply for them but whenever they go to Umeme, they are told they are not the right people to give them the free connections.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Naye bale for Greater Mpigi. Members, when I say two minutes and you say information and you switch on, you get another two minutes, you and cheat other regions. So, it will only apply when you are use using the same microphone, so that we continue to counting the same time. Let us be transparent.

4.40

**MS SYLVIA NAYEBALE (NRM, Woman Representative, Gomba):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Most of the issues have been raised by honourable colleagues and. I have about two concerns.

I would like to hear from the minister, on the Government's plan for about the unused energy. The Government has spent Shs 87 billion on that commitment, yet that money would have been used for something else.

Going back to Gomba, I have an electricity line of 120 kilometres stretching from Butambala to Gomba, which was supported by the World Bank. It is a World Bank line to Gomba. We have been lucky that some lines have been productive while others have are not, due to the halt by Rural Electrification Authority (REA). Mr Speaker, I would like the minister to commit. We have areas in the district where they connected power but they have not commissioned it. So, the locals have are taking it upon themselves to get connected. *(Laughter)* Recently, we had an accident where a child died because of an illegal connection.

Therefore, it would be very important for them to connect and commission the line so that the locals can use power.

4.41

**MR EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for her statement, which was succinct and it has clearly given us a roadmap of where the ministry is headed in the electricity sub-sector.

However, allow me to say one major thing that I identified from the submissions of most of the honourable colleagues. All these submissions centred on financing and I must say that as the Chairperson of this committee, I am greatly honoured to have chaired it for three years now. However, I want to assure this House that without adequate financing to this sub-sector, we are not going to move forward. Worse still, when we were passing the budget for this financial year, we made a fundamental mistake of removing the Shs 100 billion. This money was meant –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, you cannot stand on the Floor of Parliament and accuse the House to which you belong. A decision that was made but because you did not agree with it, you call it a “mistake”.

Please, take your seat.

4.43

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me start with the issue of financing. We know that this money was coming from African Development Bank (ADB), World Bank, Arab Bank for Economic Development in Africa (BADEA) and Islamic Banking. Have these bodies stopped giving the money? They keep raising money issues.

In the previous parliaments, we passed money for power connection to every subcounty. Have these financial institutions stopped paying money? We need a clarification on this, before we go into anything new. What has that money done?

Secondly, honourable minister, you need to help us; why does the ministry want to now ask us to do surveys afresh? REA had done surveys; I can speak for some parts of Teso. For example, the entire Serere District was surveyed. I have a big book, which has all the details on that. Why would you carry out another survey? This is not only limited to Serere District but Teso because other regions did it. Is this not wastage of money?

Thirdly, for the areas where power was supposed to be connected, we see the lines but the contractors have not connected power to all the institutions.

They have mentioned the issue of schools but there is also the issue of Health Centres III and IV.

The Government has provided equipment, which is supposed to use electricity but it is redundant. People are stealing this equipment. In the end *-(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, the Members are saying that you should publish the status of electrification per area and show the affirmative action you are taking, so that some of the Members of Parliament are not accused

of being unable to lobby while others lobby for electrification.

Honourable colleagues, I would like to advise you; even when you disagree with a decision of the House, there is a better way to address it. The minister was cheering you but when she disagrees with the decision of Cabinet, she cannot come here to complain because it is collective responsibility. Some of you may try to look like you did better and others failed you; no.

Secondly, the honourable minister knows it; I had raised it with her and I know she is going to work on it. Committee and the chairperson, if you take it up, – some of us have concerns with loans we supported strongly but the performance has been bad. *(Applause)* I remember how we suffered with the loan for Tebian Electric Apparatus (TBEA) Company Limited project. We suffered with TBEA and the President moved around the entire country. We went into the general elections saying that it was sorted. unless Parliament fails him. As Parliament, we did our work. Some people here doubted and warned us but we went ahead and did our work. However, to-date, we have not got any updates on the project. All we get is a request for new financing.

Committee chairperson, I assign you as a Committee, to look through the loans, which we gave the ministry; see how they are performing and report back to this House in two weeks' time. You will then understand the concerns of this House.

I know that Hon. Nankabirwa has tried her level best, she has moved up and down but she also needs our support in terms of doing oversight role, like she said; "Tell me what is happening in your constituency."

Honourable colleagues, there are some places I was following up in my area but in the system of REA, they are marked as completed, yet on the ground, it is zero - not even an electric pole has been erected.

The minister receives a report from the technical people saying that the work was completed and you cannot blame her because she cannot go to each and every village in the country. I request you to check your areas and raise the issues with the minister so that she is able to take on our people.

Honourable colleagues, I have never faced a situation like I have today. You all want to speak and I know the issues, which you have are very critical. However, I have an Order Paper to run and as the Chairperson of this important meeting, I have to address other issues on the Order Paper. That is why I decided to pick one person per subregion, to get a picture of the whole country so that the minister gets an idea. The committee will then take it on from here.

Honourable minister, please, respond to these issues so that we go to other items.

4.48

**THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I sincerely thank you for this opportunity, which you have given this House, to discuss matters of electricity. These are matters of life.

I know that the period we are going into is a period of accountability and I know the importance of delivering electricity in your constituencies. I would like to promise that where the issues, which have been raised, are of a technical nature, I will sit with my technical people to produce a response to them.

Secondly, I have captured issues that are almost similar in the constituencies;

- (i) There is the issue of subcounties, which are not yet connected. 433 subcounties are in my report and I promise that that is going to be a priority.

I have captured the issue of a few districts that are not yet connected, that is Buvuma and Terego or Maracha. We are working on extension of power to the districts that do not

have power because that is a Government policy.

Connection to the district, from the district to sub-counties, from subcounties to the parishes that host value addition infrastructure, social infrastructure like schools and health centres.

Otherwise, we are not yet connecting from village to village, we are not yet there but we will pick on parishes that host those infrastructures. So, I have captured that.

- (ii) I have captured the issue of the surveys that Rural Electrification Authority (REA) did. Why is it that we are repeating them? First of all, we have to appreciate why we do surveys. We do surveys to get the project-affected people the (PAPs), and to what extent we are going to compensate.

When you do surveys and take years without implementation, new developments take place. If you go by the old surveys, you will run short of monies to compensate people. However, when you take time, a school will have come up and you did not capture it but this does not mean that all the surveys that were done have all the new developments.

I will take this to my people and we look through. Where we need to do the survey again, we will do it. Otherwise, Ugandans are developing. *-(Interjections)-* Just give me time because I am trying to summarise the issues the way I captured them.

- (iii) The other thing is the issue of the poles that are lying down. Leave alone those that have been erected with lines but have no power - there are those, which were dumped. Honourable members, those who were around during the time of REA, you know very well how we they used to go and bench people at Kamwokya and to plead for poles. We would plead with them to at least drop poles so that people know that power is coming, without a plan. Let me say the truth here.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, now we are saying, please, raise the poles.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** I am now inheriting this because I cannot stand up and say, "these poles were dumped without plan." I am inheriting this and I am trying to implement.

So, what happened during REA that made it to be mainstreamed in the ministry? Some little tiny poles that were procured and transformers that burst all the time. The officers that were responsible were investigated and you know how it ended. I am now grappling with all these problems; lines that started in 2016, 2017 and I am telling you that we cannot tantalise people, "*Kokonyo.*" They put drop poles, but again, do you go and remove them because they were not distributed on plan? No.

We have to make sure that those lines are done. They are *-(Interjections)* hold on, please. There are lines, which are completed, you are waiting for commissioning but commissioning is not done. There are types of commissions that we do;

The first one is a technical commission. We do this with the contractor. You never know, a transformer maybe vandalised or removed. When you go and just commission without doing technical commissioning, lines will burst. So, sometimes we delay to commission, to do the political commissioning, because the technical commissioning has not been done.

Colleagues, you know that I have been to your constituencies and I have invitations, numerous invitations, some of them are personal. You want Hon. Nankabirwa to come to your constituencies and do the political commissioning and I have promised most of you that I will be coming. I have visited most of your constituencies.

On commissioning lines that are completed, you are going to now going to see intensified activities. We have agreed with my colleagues, the ministers of state, to divide the country.



I take this direction, they take another direction and we commission. Otherwise, we can no longer hold the pressure for commissioning from the constituencies.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, if you could take the route of seed schools. I remember I was still a member of Cabinet at that time, where we shared responsibility and gave different ministers and in around one week, you commissioned seed schools in the whole country.

We need you here to address concerns and not to be moving in the whole country. If you could work with your ministers and draw a schedule and you distribute the ministers to different parts of the country, then you can come in to commission.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** Yes, I have done that, Hon. Musenero is one of those that I normally request to do that. I will do that and I hope I will get the money because commissioning also requires a small budget to allow the technical people to go on the ground but we will make sure we do that.

So, that is one area that I captured a situation where the poles are up, and some of them do not have wires, while some have wires, but no power.

On that one and, especially where many of you have requested for transformers, we have part of the work that we are going to do under ESP as intensification, densification and densification. Intensification means that there are those lines that were done when the population was small but now, there are many more people who have come up who need consumption; meaning that the low-capacity transformer that we gave in the first place can no longer hold the demand.

So, under intensification, we are going to remove the small transformers, take them to the small populations and put a bigger transformer for that place. That is what we call intensification under ESP.

We also have densification under ESP, which is going to take care of pertinent small lines

that were left out, a line connecting to a seed school, to a maize mill, within that area. That is what we called densification.

This ESP and other monies that come from the World Bank require that you have to satisfy the PAPs. This brings me to another area that I captured, where compensation has been delayed.

We have suffered under World Bank projects because there are PAPs who refuse the value given by the Chief Government Valuer. Two people can cause us pay for dimmed energy because we cannot raise a pylon because of that person who chooses to refuse the value that the Chief Government Valuer has given. I have approached the Attorney-General and I have written to the Minister of Lands, Housing and Urban Development: I want to switch to compulsory acquisition. *(Interjections)* Compulsory acquisition is in the Constitution, for public interest. You cannot cause the country to lose money. We borrowed the money but cannot move because you have said you do not want to move away.

The Attorney-General has guided me on the procedure. We shall gazette 14 days and I will compulsorily acquire that area, deploy security, erect the pylon and people will get electricity. This is not *-(Interjections)-* you are not at liberty to –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, let us listen to the minister. This is provided for under the law – and that does not take away your right to compensation; you can still go to Court. Now, imagine a situation where we lose Shs 200 billion in deemed energy because someone is saying “a line cannot pass here”. We had a situation, I think – was it on the expressway, Hon. Katuntu? – where someone said: “You cannot pass through my area. I have a rock; I need Shs 48 billion.”

So, when the Government bypassed the rock and passed somewhere else, he was again suing the Government: “Why didn’t you pass through my land? I was waiting for you to pass through my rock and you pay.” *(Laughter)* So, this is an abuse.

When you look at the money we have lost on that – is it Aswa Dam? I think we have lost over Shs 200 billion now because every year, we pay Shs 87 billion. Shs 87 billion is paid every year because someone was refusing a line to pass here.

I had to organise a meeting between an MP and UETCL – honourable minister, sometimes we do your work – because a certain MP was mobilising a community over that line of Acholi, connecting to Lango. I called the MP, we sat down and went through these issues and the MP went and told the people to calm down and the line was allowed. Now, imagine how much people would be losing. So, honourable minister, involve leaders. Sometimes, the leaders are under pressure from the community.

When we involve the leaders and they know they have your backing, they mobilise the community. Otherwise, the community thinks - but your people go in without even informing an MP. An MP hears: “Land cruisers and double cabins were in your area, measuring, doing this and that.” You do not know anything. He says: “No. I am not part of them.” So, let us take that route and ensure we help our people.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. We have tried to involve leaders and I want to appreciate the MPs who helped me, especially in the area of Nwoya where Hon. Lokeris, together with MPs from West Nile, went and negotiated with the Project-Affected Persons.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** And Hon. Awany.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** Yes, Hon. Awany. I want to appreciate him. He worked with our elder, Hon. Lokeris and he is the one leading us on negotiations. In Tororo, I worked with Hon. Ekanya and my committee chairperson. We also had an issue with PAPs.

Mr Speaker, I am a student of conflict management. I always involve people and end up solving the conflicts. However, there are those stubborn ones who will push me to go into compulsory acquisition – I am going to summarise.

The issue of intermittent power or power outages has come up. Sometimes, there are different factors that cause power outages, but, like Hon. Kateshumbwa mentioned, some of the lines need refurbishing – and we have started. We have changed some old poles, for example, on the Soroti line from Opuyo up to Tororo. That line is now metallic. I am just remaining with Tororo-Mbale. It is a small stretch, which we are also going to upgrade. We are doing the upgrading to reduce intermittent power.

On the tariff, what can I say? I am under instruction by the President to make sure that the tariff goes down, especially for industries. However, you know the factors that contribute to the high tariff. If you do not invest money, especially in generation, you will raise the tariff by 60 per cent. That is why we keep on saying that when we finally commission Karuma, the 600 megawatts will be sold at 4.7 kilowatt hours per unit.

For Nalubaale and Kiira, where the Eskom concession ended and it is UEGE now managing it, 380 megawatts will be sold at 1.2. When you take the generation mix, those two sources will reduce the tariff. That is why we are yearning to commission Karuma. However, generation contributes 60 per cent. If you use borrowed money, power will be expensive.

The other thing that we will reduce on the tariff is to improve the conductors that we use so that we reduce power losses. When you lose power, then, you pay for nothing and the tariff will remain high because we have to sustain the sector. Many of you are concerned about the tariffs. I am equally concerned and hope that one day, we shall see the tariff getting managed.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Please, conclude, honourable minister.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** I want to conclude, Mr Speaker, first of all, by thanking those MPs who have written to me. I am one person who normally responds. I always tell you what we are going to do. I have promised you that I have my hopes in the electricity access scale-up

project. *(Interjection)* oh, the free connection? Free connection is very important. Let me mention something, Mr Speaker.

We started free connection at the time when we were going for elections. Free connection is in quotes. The Government has to get money to buy the connection materials. You need metres, you need – so, the budget went up and Umeme was demanding money. This free connection was free to the recipient, but not free to Government.

So, this time round, under ESP, we have included it because you passed the loan. Effectiveness started on 20 July. We are almost done with the scoping. That is why I have been encouraging honourable colleagues to check on us to make sure that we have included priority lines that you submitted to us. So, the free connection policy is now going to be reinstated with the ESAP. This is very important.

However, Mr Speaker, we negotiated with UDB and they gave us a loan. This was championed by ERA, which is helping people to pay less money. Those who do not need a pole – we call them “no pole connection”. If you have a pole already near your house, we are connecting you at Shs 200,000 cash, instead of Shs 750,000.

This is being implemented. However, our people from Umeme were misinforming the community by demanding for sureties and titles. I involved ERA and this has been rectified. You do not have to pay any surety. So, that connection has been simplified by people paying only Shs 200,000 cash and then Shs 270,000; that is a loan to be paid within eight years. As these other projects come on board, there is also that one, which is going to see more connections being done.

Mr Speaker, there are other questions of a technical nature, which I am going to go through with my technical people, and I will provide the answers. Thank you very much for the opportunity. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, before you sit down, you have missed

several deadlines for connecting West Nile to the National Grid. *(Applause)* I remember even in June, you missed another one. West Nile leaders are always in our offices. When are you connecting West Nile to the National Grid and what problem is there to warrant extending deadlines? *(Applause)*

**MS NANKABIRWA:** How I wish that I get access to what I want, to be able to connect West Nile. First of all, my apologies for the many deadlines that I give. These are not deadlines that come from my head.

When I visit, for example, Nyagak III – I have gone there four times. I am told that by June, the 6.5 Megawatts will be done and they require Shs 28 billion, and the President directs someone to provide the Shs 28 billion. I jump and say, “We are going to get the money” but I do not get that money up to now. What should I do?

Otherwise, Mr Speaker, let me inform the people of West Nile that there is light at the end of the tunnel. When you see pylons going up to Arua, and you see Arua and Nebbi substations getting completed, and you see a line from Olwiyo taking power to West Nile, there is light at the end of the tunnel. We have come from far.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, beyond Nyagak, we have electricity that is redundant.

**MS NANKABIRWA:** That is Olwiyo, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, when are we moving on that, since you have money for it?

**MS NANKABIRWA:** I am working on the infrastructure that transports electricity. There is no other alternative, other than transmission lines. It is not by boda boda or bus; it is through a transmission line, which we are working on, Sir.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, do you have a new deadline?

**MS NANKABIRWA:** I am not going to give a deadline now. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, let us move on. Next item?

STATEMENT ON THE FINANCING FOR  
THE HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS  
FINANCING BOARD

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** After this, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will give us an update on South Sudan. I wanted the statement on financing for the higher education loan scheme to be tabled when he is still here.

Honourable minister of Education and Sports?  
It is also the finance ministry.

5.13

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (HIGHER EDUCATION) (Dr Chrysostom Muyingo):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much. This is the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development business and the minister is on his way. Thank you. Minister, you can use mine.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister, you can use my copy. I hope I have given you the right document.

5.13

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** It is the right document. Someone has disorganised my papers.

Mr Speaker and honourable members, this is a statement on the Higher Education Students Financing Board (HESFB). This arrangement was established in February 2014 by an Act of Parliament, the Higher Education Students Financing Board Act (No.2), 2014, with a mandate to provide loans and scholarships to Ugandan students to pursue higher education.

The HESFB is intended to provide loans and scholarships to Ugandan students who have qualified to pursue accredited courses of study or programmes in recognised high education institutions in Uganda, but are unable to support themselves financially. The HESFB implements the students' loan scheme. In Financial Year 2022/2023, the HESFB provided loans and scholarships to 625 students.

Budget performance

Mr Speaker and Members, since its establishment, the Board has received Shs 123.76 billion and supported 28,155 students. In the Financial Year 2022/2023, a budget of Shs 29.520 billion was appropriated to support 3,764 students. However, on account of revenue shortfalls, only Shs 23,100,000,000 was released.

Taking into account the total number of new students, ongoing students and the operational expenses to be funded, the total funds required for Financial Year 2023/2024 are Shs 44.9 billion.

However, on account of limited resources that were available at the time of concluding the Financial Year 2023/2024 budget, only Shs 31.007 billion is available to the Board, leading to a shortfall of Shs 13.958 billion that includes funding for new students and arrears, as listed in the table below.

Mr Speaker, I do not know. Should I read this table? Oh, it is on our screen.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The document is uploaded.

**MR MATIA KASAIJA:** Please, you can look at the screen and see the figures.

To address the issue of funding shortfalls, we are organising a supplementary budget to be submitted to this House at an appropriate time.

## Performance of the Board for Financial Year 2023/2024

The Board has received Shs 14.545 billion in the first half of this financial year, equivalent to a budget outturn of 52 per cent of Shs 27.521 billion, appropriated by Parliament.

Mr Speaker and colleagues, that is the end of my statement. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. This is very critical information. What I picked is the issue of the new students. Honourable minister, this loan scheme is some sort of equaliser. *(Applause)* It is a debt of some sort. This is the only opportunity where a student from Karamoja will go for Medicine *-(Applause)-* and especially critical courses.

I was checking the list. For example, regarding the students you have given me, for Government sponsorship in Mitooma, I only get courses like Education and Social Works and Social Administration (SWASA) and Social Sciences.

I try to check – No, that is under district quota because every district gets. - I try to see whether I can have a student for Medicine - never.

I try to see whether I can have a student for Engineering, never and these are the courses for which you are rewarding people handsomely, as a Government, by saying “Scientists are going to be well paid.”

Then, courses for our poor people, you have made it a policy, they have to wait until you get more money. However, these courses are being taken by people who are well-off.

Therefore, this is the only course where I know that I might not get marks of Makerere, but I will get for Kampala International University (KIU) and I study Medicine, that I get or for Ndejje and I study Engineering. This is why you see us, - honourable minister, this is very serious.

However, I am concerned by your statement where you are saying you will bring a supplementary. Have you reached out to these institutions to say, “do not chase our students, we are going to give you the money”? The students have been chased out of school, the new ones are stuck; they have not been admitted, what are you doing about it?

Number two, you are allowed to spend money under three per cent and you report to Parliament. Why don't you consider this as a very important priority?

You use the three per cent supplementary, you release money and then, you will come here and we give you approval.

Honourable minister, last time - when we are interacting with you, we interact well and we like each other so much. We show you where you are clever - Very critical items, which they know cannot fail to pass through this House, are put under supplementary for prior approval while very questionable items are put under three per cent; you come here when you have already spent.

However, you look at Hon. Kasaija saying that you refused to approve Shs one trillion. You say, “even if you refused, we will pay back the Shs one trillion?” It is a practice year after year.

On this where our students are being chased and not allowed in schools, why don't you utilise the three per cent since you have committed to the supplementary?

Let me just pick a few colleagues. I am going to pick the Members from Karamoja, Teso, Bunyoro and Youths representative, Hon Esenu, Hon. Kyooma, I pick - Which district is that one? Hon. Dorcas. I have taken long without seeing you, honourable. Those ones I had already picked today, who know my policy *-(Member rose)* No, wait a bit. I will pick Hon. Kangwagye, Hon. Rwemulikya, the Members from Terego, Bungokho and Sebei. Hon. Katuntu, the Members from; Jonam, Lango, Bukedi, Kabale and Dr Opio.

I am going to pick you honourable colleagues and we should do it quickly.

5.23

**MR REMEGIO ACHIA (NRM, Pian County, Nabilatuk):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate your statements to this House today with regard to this Higher Education Scholarship Fund.

It is not the first time you have mentioned but also, on national television about the idea of revising admission to some of these universities - because it rewards those who are better off; those who have paid fees for their children in better schools.

However, for people largely from the rural areas, who struggle there, it is a tug of war. I want to attest to you and to this House, Mr Speaker, that last year when this scheme was running; it was able to support 65 students from Karamoja.

A number of them are doing Medicine in Mbarara University, Bushenyi Campus, and a good number are doing Information Technology here in ISBAT University along Lugosa bypass.

It is an equaliser for many parts and when the Chancellor invited me, I found that there were a number of students from Acholi, deep in Kisoro, who were there. I said, "this is great."

This is helping because for you to qualify, it is just enough to be admitted to a recognised institution of higher learning and then, you get the fund. Let us put affirmative action on this initiative. It is helping a lot of young boys and girls from across the country.

Mr Speaker, this is October and those children already had admissions. What are we going to do - because not many universities take children in January? Can we understand the numbers that will be -

Should we go out immediately and inform our young people that there is a window of or an opening and who have got admissions from any

organised university in the science area, can we collect these numbers and prepare them for the January intake? That is the further clarification I want to get from the minister. Thank you.

5.25

**MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi):** Thank you. Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to add my voice to applaud you for your consistency in the need to support the children of the poor with these Government programmes. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, first, I think as Government, we need to make a follow-up of even the graduates that have been supported by the loan scheme. This is a loan scheme where the Government is supposed to recover some money.

What effort do we put in to follow up those who qualify and they get jobs so that we can recover the money. ? I think, as Parliament, we need to be updated on such progress.

Secondly, when the minister tells us that the budget is Shs 44.9 billion, but only Shs 31.007 has been released, I thought we know that education is the foundation and backbone to the development of Uganda hence a priority.

Why would the ministry really provide Shs 31 billion and leave out the rest? I thought all this Shs 44.9 billion would have been provided to support this scheme.

Finally, about the supplementary, the minister says that it will be brought here at an appropriate time. That is being open. We know the schedules of the admissions in the universities, time for graduation and everything.

Let the minister tell us the specific time when he will bring the supplementary on the Floor of Parliament so that we support, other than bringing late supplementaries, which do not benefit Ugandans. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, hon. Christine, I guided very well. This is a supplementary and the minister has authority to spend up to three per cent from July and report by December, that is for four months.

Therefore, we are saying that instead of this money being under the supplementary, which needs processing by the House that takes long, let him spend within three per cent and then we shall approve when he brings it here.

On this one, once he decides, even tomorrow, we can release the money. Honourable minister, he is itching to say something about that.

5.28

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** I am not a minister! Is it he in order? Honourable colleagues, this is a serious matter, which cannot wait until you approve the three per cent.

The good thing is that the law allows me to spend under three per cent, and then I come and explain to Parliament to approve my expenditure. Therefore, we shall do what is necessary. (*Interjections*) Listen, please, come on. We shall provide under the per cent as per the law. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable, we miss you. You should come more often because you solve very many problems. Now, honourable colleagues, I do not know what we contribute when he has provided money because we have other critical items. Apart from going on to the *Hansard*, let us first handle item No.4.

#### LAYING OF PAPERS

PROPOSAL TO BORROW UP TO USD  
295 MILLION FROM THE ISLAMIC  
DEVELOPMENT ASSOCIATION (IDA)  
AND UNITED STATES DOLLARS  
30 MILLION FROM THE OPEC  
FUND FOR THE INTERNATIONAL  
DEVELOPMENT FOR THE UPGRADING  
OF THE NATIONAL ROADS PROJECT IN  
UGANDA

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, it is on the Order Paper.

5.28

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to propose to borrow up to \$ 295 million from the Islamic Development Bank and \$ 30 million from the OPEC Fund for the International Development Association for the upgrading of National Roads Projects in Uganda. I beg to lay.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. The request is referred to the Committee on National Economy and the relevant sectoral committee, as per Rule 155 of the Rules of Procedure. Please, report back in time. This business of saying we have delayed reporting back because of benchmarking and all that. Please, report back in time. Thank you.

#### LAYING OF PAPERS

PROPOSAL TO BORROW UP TO  
\$325 MILLION AND RECEIVE A  
GRANT OF UP TO SDR 19.5 MILLION  
EQUIVALENT TO \$ 25 MILLION FROM  
THE INTERNATIONAL DEVELOPMENT  
ASSOCIATION OF THE WORLD BANK  
GROUP TO FINANCE THE UGANDA  
CLIMATE SMART AGRICULTURAL  
TRANSFORMATION PROJECT

5.30

**THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Matia Kasaija):** Mr Speaker, I am bringing a proposal to borrow up to \$ 325 million, and receive a grant of up to Special Drawing Drawing Rights, 19.5 million equivalent to \$ 25 million from the International Development Association (IDA) of the World Bank Group to finance the Uganda Climate Smart Agricultural Transformation project (UCSARTP). I wish to lay.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. The request is referred to the Committee on National Economy to be processed as per Rule 155 and the relevant sectoral committee. Please, report back in time.

Let us go back and handle the statement for all the older persons. Hon. Okupa, do you have a point of clarification? Thereafter, we shall hear from Hon. Oseku.

**MR OKUPA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for your indulgence. On the first loan proposal, the minister has laid on the Table here for upgrading national roads. For purposes of equity, we have had issues here. Whenever the finance ministry brings loans here, in order for Members to understand this properly, they bring them with him specific roads mentioned. This time, I do not know why he has changed to generalise that the loan is for upgrading national roads, without going into specifics.

We have had outstanding issues on some roads that needed upgrading, which the President has kept missing like Kumi, for example, Kumi - Serere, – Kasilo - Kagwara Road, and Serere- Soroti Road. It was in the programme but it was moved out. Apart from that, there are others in other regions. So, it is very important for other areas to equally benefit. I remember at one point, they shifted money –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Okupa, these are the details that the committee will handle and report here. The way the minister has brought it is the way they captured it, when they were negotiating. So, let us wait for other details. It cannot be approved without coming to Parliament.

**MR OKUPA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was using the historical way we have been approving loans because he has always come up with the specifics. However, if that is the case, let the Committee on National Economy handle but I have put my case on the Table for us to take note. Thank you.

**MR OSEKU:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I seek clarification from the honourable minister over the statement on the loan scheme. His report indicates that in the Financial Year 2022/2023, they were able to provide scholarships to 625 students.

However, when he goes down to talk about the budget performance, he indicates that in

the same financial year, they had planned to support 3,764 students and use Shs 29 billion.

However, he states that there was a shortfall and they received Shs 23 billion, meaning that the Shs 23 billion supported the 625 students, and yet the shortfall is only Shs 6 billion.

So, what was the magic that was supposed to help finance 3,100 plus students using the shortfall of Shs 6 billion? That is the clarification I wanted to seek.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, honourable, I am not going to re-open that. The committee is processing the supplementary budget, this is one of the issues they can take note of and handle. Okay? Honourable colleagues, let us move.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE  
INTERNATIONAL OLDER PERSONS DAY,  
1<sup>ST</sup> OCTOBER 2023

5.36

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR, AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (ELDERLY AFFAIRS) (Mr Dominic Mafwabi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise to brief you about the just concluded commemoration of the International Day for Older Persons, as it happened during our recess, more or less.

Mr Speaker, the purpose of this statement is to provide information to Parliament regarding this year's International Day for Older Persons that took place on 1 October 2023, in Kyegegwa District.

Mr Speaker, the United Nations General Assembly, under Resolution 45/106, designated 1 October the International Day for Older Persons. Uganda commemorated this for the first time in 1999, and throughout the world, it was on 1 October 1991.

The International Day for Older Persons is a day for raising awareness of the needs and concerns of older persons. Furthermore, in Uganda, this day is used to take stock of the achievements made during the year towards



service delivery to older persons, reviewing challenges faced and mapping out strategies to address the challenges.

Mr Speaker, between 2017 and 2050, the number of older persons in the developing world is predicted to increase from 652 million to 2.1 billion.

By 2047, there will be more older persons than children (UNHS 2017). The Uganda National Household Survey 2019/2020, indicates that the population of older persons increased from about 1.7 million in 2016/2017 to 2.2 million in 2019/2020.

Mr Speaker, this increase in population, is as a result of improved life expectancy among older persons, in addition to improved health-seeking behaviour, among others.

The Government is committed and prepared to address the concerns and needs that come with an increased older person's population by eliminating all forms of neglect, abuse and violence as provided for under Article 32 of the Constitution, while promoting recognition of their contribution to national development.

This year's International Day of Older Persons brought together stakeholders across Ministries, Departments and Agencies, (MDAs) given the multi-sectoral nature of ageing issues. Most importantly, the day brought together older persons in the celebration of their achievements and contributions to national development while highlighting emerging challenges and identifying solutions to them.

Mr Speaker, the objectives of this statement therefore are to:

- (i) inform Parliament that Uganda joined the rest of the World to celebrate the International Day of Older Persons on 1 October, 2023.
- (ii) inform Parliament that the theme for the International Day of Older Persons, 2023 was "Healthy Ageing a Call for Action".

(iii) inform Parliament that the venue for the National Celebrations was Humura Primary School Playground, Kyegegwa District.

(iv) inform Parliament that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda, Ms Robinah Nabbanja presided over the celebrations.

The theme for the International Day for Older Persons, 2023 is: "Healthy Ageing a Call for Action" The theme was derived from the United Nations Decade of Healthy Ageing 2020/2023, which envisages a world where everyone can live a long and healthy life.

Colleagues, the Government has progressively advanced in enhancing access to health for Ugandans as evidenced in the increased life expectancy from 45 years in 2000 to the current 64 years in 2023.

It should be noted that as people age, their intrinsic and functional capacities decline. And the environment where older persons live determines their capacity to enhance their functional abilities.

For instance, older persons can effectively access health facilities if they are physically accessible with ramps, and staffed with health workers skilled to handle old age diseases.

Mr Speaker, several studies indicate that older persons aged 75 years and above report the highest number of sick days, an average of 11 days in a month.

Indeed, the ageing process increases vulnerability to certain Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs), which include heart disease, cancer, arthritis, dementia, eye disease, diabetes, and hypertension, among others.

Unfortunately, the requests from lower health facilities, especially Health Centre IIIs for drugs from National Medical Stores, do not include supplies to manage these old age-related complications.

Many older persons are forced to travel long distances to Regional and National Referral Hospitals with associated high costs to obtain these services, while others remain in their homes to die due to lack of medical supplies for the major old age-related diseases in their localities.

The challenge older persons face in accessing specialised healthcare is also evidenced by the lack of geriatricians in our national health service structures, with only one stationed at Mulago.

Therefore, majority of older persons do not receive specialised health care needed, in addition to negative perceptions where older persons are in most cases perceived to be “suffering from old age.”

Honourable colleagues, in 2021 H.E the President directed my ministry to develop Guidelines on Healthy Ageing to guide the community workers on how to support older persons live healthy lives.

The guidelines that were developed in partnership with the ministry and World Health Organisation are ready.

The President had also directed the Ministry of Health to ensure that old age-related diseases are provided for in the requests for drugs by lower health facilities, that old age medical specialists (also known as geriatricians) are recruited, and that awareness on diagnosis for old age diseases is prioritised.

This year's theme enabled the Government to understand the unique health needs of older persons and plan how to provide inclusive health services for the improved well-being of older persons.

Mr Speaker, during the commemoration, key achievements, challenges and advocacy actions were reported in relation to upholding the rights and welfare of older persons.

The reported status was as follows:

(i) Under SAGE, the Senior Citizens Grant for Older Person Persons above 80 years was sustained. Parliament appropriates a total of Shs 121 billion, and this programme is now fully funded by the Government of Uganda.

Over 300,000 older persons continue to receive their monthly social pension and this has been transformative in their lives. Bi-annual progress briefs to honourable members will be shared.

(ii) Makerere University School of Public Health commenced on the post graduated curriculum for a geriatrics course. The course is expected to build a cadre of doctors to transform health service delivery in terms of proper diagnosis for older person's health conditions.

(iii) The Government of Uganda approved the ratification of African Union Protocol on the rights of older persons. This is a fundamental tool in terms of concretising African solidarity in the protection of African values and restoration of respect for older persons in Africa.

(iv) Amendments of the Parish Development Model procedures to ensure access to 10 per cent by older persons groups exclusively was achieved, as earlier highlighted by the chairperson. This was highlighted where we had the International Day for Older persons in Kyegegwa.

However, some few PDM SACCOs in some local governments are still not allowing older persons to form their exclusive groups due to ageism mentality. We appeal that this negative mentality changes.

(v) Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGOP) was sustained to support vulnerable older persons who cannot benefit under SAGE or other wealth creation grants due to poor health conditions.

A total of 566 groups of older persons were supported last financial year across the country. 800 groups are expected to benefit this Financial Year 2023/2024. Annual progress briefs will be shared with honourable members showing the breakdown per local government.

#### Issues of concern to older persons

(i) Amendments for *Emyooga* programme to include older persons as category 20 is pending; the Ministry in charge of Micro-finance is yet to address this matter. We hope this will be fast tracked through further engagements.

(ii) Waiver on correcting errors on NIRA cards hence payment exclusions under SAGE due to age understatement

This needs urgent attention and discussions are under way with Ministry of Internal Affairs.

(iii) The ministry is studying the proposal from the Chairperson of Members of Parliament for Persons with Disabilities forum on lowering of the SAGE target to 60 years for older persons with disabilities since they are very few. A position will be taken and communicated soon.

(iv) Development of inter-ministerial national guidelines for meaningful inclusion and affirmative action for older persons in all sectors. These would address the moral issues where service providers and the public no longer give space to older persons on public transport systems, in banking hall queues, health facilities and shopping malls, among others.

(v) The special Enterprise Grant for older persons' funding was supposed to be Shs 10 billion but only Shs 5 billion was appropriated. With your support, efforts will be made to bridge the gap next financial year.

Mr Speaker, this year, the following activities were conducted during the commemoration at

Humura Primary School Grounds, Kyegegwa town:

(i) Launch of a manual on appropriate enterprises for older persons. This is expected to support older persons in the selection of viable enterprises.

(ii) Provision of dummy cheques for older persons groups in Kyegegwa, Fort Port City, Kabarole and Kyenjojo were carried out.

(iii) Gifting of 20 oldest older persons. The oldest was 134 years from Fort Portal City.

(iv) Mobilisation for the pre-event and D-day activities, including a health camp for older persons, SAGE payments and NIRA registration.

I would like to thank the MPs for older persons and MPs from Kyegegwa District, especially Ms Flavia Kabahenda, for the excellent mobilisation. I also want to thank all our people who were involved in this mobilisation. We had an estimated attendance of over 2,000 people out of the targeted 1,500 at the venue and the majority were older persons.

(v) A total of 260 older persons were examined during the three-day health camp and treated or referred for further management.

(vi) A total of 20 radio talk shows and six TV shows were aired raising awareness on healthy aging.

Venue and chief guest for the national celebrations

Mr Speaker, since the inception of celebrating this day, Uganda has been organising the day on a regional rotational basis. Last year, the day was hosted by northern region (Nebbi District).

The venue for this year's celebrations, according to the rotational matrix, was western Uganda (Kyegegwa District) at Humura

Primary School Playground. The chief guest for the national celebrations was the Rt Hon. Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda.

#### Conclusion

Mr Speaker, I wish to acknowledge and appreciate the honourable Members of Parliament for their efforts in enacting legislation and budget allocations towards older persons' empowerment. I thank the Members of Parliament who joined us in Kyegegwa District for the national commemorations.

I urge Members to continuously interact with older persons in their constituencies to better understand their concerns as we are all destined to the same end. I beg to lay the paper I have read. Thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, some Members might not reach the old age. *(Laughter)* Hon. Kasaija, we still need you. We are discussing issues of the elderly.

**MR MAFWABI:** Mr Speaker, during our celebrations, we blessed all the current Members of Parliament to reach at least 90 years.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister, and congratulations on that task you performed excellently. He happens to also be the Chairperson of the NRM Elders' League and a Member of Parliament for the elderly.

**MR MAFWABI:** Honourable members, I am committed to the strategy of older persons and my tenure is only two terms. After that, I will retire.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is an indirect way of asking for another term. *(Laughter)* Honourable minister, I want to make a humble request and I hope my honourable colleagues will support it; that Parliament makes special arrangements of bringing this person who you have said is 134 years and is the oldest person in the country to Parliament and we pay tribute to him or her.

**MR MAFWABI:** Mr Speaker, she is actually frail; she is from Fort Portal City and the journey is long.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I have said special arrangements and that would be with the Speaker, if it is possible.

**MR MAFWABI:** Mr Speaker, it would be honourable, acceptable and we shall look forward to it. I thank you in advance.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, this is a very big record. Someone who is 100 plus years and older than Hon. Kabanda - Hon. Kabanda, you need to learn the trick of living up to that age.

Secondly, honourable minister, regarding the activities, I am concerned because you said you provided dummy cheques and yet you are complaining about money. Were they matched with money?

**MR MAFWABI:** Mr Speaker, I did not complain about money. What I said – First of all, I thanked you for whatever you had given but at the same time, it was inadequate.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, did the people you gave dummy cheques also get money?

**MR MAFWABI:** The people we gave dummy cheques are under the Special Enterprise Grant for Older Persons (SEGO) and we wanted them to know that the Government is doing something since they had come from the entire country. We made sure that those districts in the western region got the dummy cheques.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** A dummy is a dummy. I am interested in real cash.

**MR MAFWABI:** What I am saying is that they got real cash but we wanted to -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, you have sorted me because one can stop at the dummy. Honourable members, I want to give you a chance. There were colleagues that I had picked earlier. Do we have some elderly

Members of Parliament? I will start with Hon. Ongiertho and request the young ones like Hon. Kinyamatama to be seated.

I will allow you, honourable colleagues. Let us do a quick round and if you have already spoken, please take your seat. Save me so that I pick. We have a doctor and doctors help so much. Music also helps older people so much. These are tactics of growing older.

I have a nutritionist here who ensures - Then we have Hon. Biraaro, an elder, Hon. Ogwal, another elder and Hon. Muheesi. I will do a round.

6.00

**MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Government for two things that it has done for the elderly persons. One, I would like to thank them for the fact that this financial year, there is going to be no anxiety created in the money for SAGE and other elderly programmes.

I say this because last financial year, we created a lot of anxiety in our elderly persons because their budget was cut and they were worried about what was happening. It took a lot of pleading, particularly from the forum, to make sure that the budget was reinstated. I would like to thank the Government that this year, there is no such anxiety.

I would also like to thank Government for this day. Last year it was in Nebbi and I can tell that you could see how happy the elderly persons were to celebrate their day. Of course in Nebbi, there was the disappointment because we got to know that very day of the celebrations that His Excellency the President would not come.

Otherwise, the people were very prepared and happy. Due to that happiness and since we cannot take all the elderly people to the venue of the national celebrations, I request that, if possible, we have the day rotated in the districts every year.

I would like you to know that, that is the only opportunity that some of these elderly persons have to come out of their homes. They are always in their homes and if an opportunity comes to move out, it *-(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, as you might have seen on social media, I visited one of our senior elders; Hon. Rhoda Kalema. I encourage all female MPs to visit *Mama* Rhoda Kalema who is considered a mother of Parliament. She is one of the people who have served this country diligently and has written a very good book. I encourage you to read it and also engage with her.

One thing I have noticed is that these elderly people are lonely and need someone to talk to and share with. They have very interesting ideas. She shared with me issues about the girl-child and took me through the women's emancipation campaign in which I am sure Hon. Naome Kabasharira equally played a critical role because she was in the CA and she was a minister.

She took me through issues on education and you could see that she has a deep passion for it. As we are still hungry for worldly things, these elderly persons are concerned about where they are leaving the country: "Where am I leaving my children? Where am I leaving my country?" Therefore, whenever you have an opportunity, reach out and check on these elderly people because it really means a lot to them.

6.04

**DR ELISA RUTAHIGWA (NRM, Rukungiri Municipality, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to thank the Minister of State for Gender, Labour and Social Development (Elderly Affairs).

He has mentioned a number of challenges and one of them is equitable access to healthcare. He mentioned a number of diseases and as somebody who has been in service delivery, I know how painful it is to go to a facility and you cannot access medicine.

Recently, His Excellency the President gave a directive on recruitment of doctors at the level of health centres III. That would solve a lot of problems because the availability of certain medicines at certain levels of care depends on staffing.

Since the Minister of Health, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Minister of Public Service are here, they need to effect the President's directive quicker than they are doing. Otherwise, the doctors are available and once they are recruited in health centre IIIs, service delivery will improve. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I was sharing with Hon. Achia here. The doctors are there, the medicine is there, but there is the issue of affordability. Where is the Health Insurance Scheme?

Honourable minister, you need to update us because that is what the elderly need - Actually, not only them but all of us, including the Members of Parliament. If the Health Insurance Scheme could cover - Dr Rutahigwa, I am sure you would triple the number of doctors you have in your clinic because you would expand it, employ people as you get more revenue.

Therefore honourable minister, as we are handling responses, touch on this issue of health insurance and update us.

6.06

**MS RACHEL MAGOOLA (NRM, Woman Representative, Bugweri):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I would like to thank the minister for the statement he has made. Because I am taking care of an elderly mother, one thing that I have noticed is that there is only one geriatrician in Uganda. There may be many doctors in Kampala but I know of only one who has specialised in taking care of older persons. If there is only one in Kampala, what is happening in the rest of the country?

We really need to speed up the process and train people to start taking care of older persons.

When we prepare activities in the social development programmes in our communities, there is nothing for older persons. They are lonely and suffer more from depression than real diseases. I request that, that is looked into so that our older people get better care. Thank you.

6.07

**MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of State for Elderly Persons for the care he has for the elderly. Last year in Nebbi, there was a good turn-up and he was very passionate.

Regarding this year's theme; healthy aging, there is no better way of aging than ensuring good nutrition for our elderly. Unfortunately, due to budgetary constraints, it is not something we can take on, as a Government; to monitor what our elderly persons actually eat. However, if there was a way, this would go a long way in ensuring that our elderly persons live a healthy life.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, one recent study showed that there was an 89 per cent prevalence rate of abuse towards our elderly persons. This ranged from mental abuse to, sadly, sexual and physical abuse. I urge that the Village Health Teams (VHTs) increase the number of times they visit the elderly persons, just to have a word or two with them.

Lastly, on the issue which was mentioned in the report in regard to National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA), most elderly persons suffer a lot when changing their details, especially their age. NIRA should organise special workshops for the elderly so that those issues are tackled with special consideration. Thank you.

6.09

**MS JENIFER ABAHO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kazo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Thank you, honourable minister, for the elaborate and good report. I also thank you for all you have mentioned concerning the older people.

On the issue of geriatricians, we could even focus on the nurses, especially the VHTs, so that they are trained to take care of the elderly. These old people cannot move - like the one you mentioned who is 134 years old - from their homes to the nearest health centres.

On the issue of Parish Development Model (PDM), in Kazo District, the old people have been denied PDM and *Emyooga* funds.

The other issue is the lack of medication for the elderly at the health centres. Those elderly people have conditions such as high blood pressure, diabetes and other related health conditions –(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Dr Kamara and then Hon. Alyek.

6.11

**DR NICHOLAS KAMARA (FDC, Kabale Municipality, Kabale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the good theme: “Healthy Aging; A Call for Action”.

Elderly people are especially exposed to non-communicable diseases. As you age, you get many complications and one such complication, which is obvious, is reduced mobility. A disease like diabetes is the leading cause of amputations and blindness. Hypertension is the leading cause of stroke. Therefore, this is a big call to improve on rehabilitative medicine –(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude, honourable member. Don’t switch it back on quietly. (*Laughter*)

**DR KAMARA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me more time. We have talked about geriatric medicine. On top of not having geriatric doctors, we do not have courses in universities and a department of geriatric medicine at the Ministry of Health. Therefore, we must create courses at all medical schools in universities in Uganda and, at the same time, create a department at Ministry of Health for geriatric medicine. Thank you.

6.12

**MS JUDITH ALYEK (NRM, Woman Representative, Kole):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for his great report. I see an improvement in life expectancy in this country.

In this report, he indicated that by 2047, there will be more elderly persons than young people. I do not know whether that will happen in Uganda, considering the fact that there is a high fertility rate and we have teenage mothers who are producing many children in this country.

Mr Speaker, one time we brought here a report about the age limit of older persons who should be considered for the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE). It was 70 years for the men and 65 years for the women. This report was approved by this Parliament and I would like to ask the minister if this is an action-taken report by sustaining 80 years for everyone and reducing that for persons – (*Member timed out.*)

6.13

**MS MARGARET MAKHOHA (Independent, Woman Representative, Namayingo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the minister for the report.

However, my concern is on the elderly persons who are begging on the streets. We have known about the street children, but it is becoming common to see elders on the streets of this country begging. That signifies a big problem and it is our duty to sensitise our communities to learn to take care of these old persons.

In addition, the Government should come up with homes for the elderly so that instead of someone dying on the streets like a dog, they can have some hope of being catered for by the Government –(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, calm down. When you start putting me on pressure through signs and whatever, my feeling is that you want to speak and go. If a session is still going on, why panic?

It is not a must that every day that you come here, you must speak. There are days you will not speak and I want to put that on record. If I were to pick the same people every day, other people would not speak. So, sometimes when you see me trying to look around, I want to give opportunity to other honourable colleagues to also go on record because they also have views of their constituents.

In addition, if I do not pick you, do not take it personally. *(Laughter)* If you sat in my seat here and you saw – because on average, if I am to pick 20 people to speak, it means that one hour is gone, and yet I have an Order Paper to finish. You must know that I will accept your punches and anger but I try to balance the boat in whichever way possible.

Let us have Hon. Nyakikongoro and Hon. Ogwal.

6.16

**MS ROSEMARY NYAKIKONGORO (NRM, Woman Representative, Sheema):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the minister for the report and also appreciate the Government for providing SAGE money and other grants.

However, I have realised that this money does not necessarily benefit the elderly people. They look after their grandchildren and do not take care of themselves to the extent that they no longer eat well. The elderly are ignored and neglected – Actually, hunger is going to kill them. When you go to the villages and interact with them, they do not have food.

As Government, I do not know what we are going to do. They worked hard and have their land but their children are struggling for their land and want to kill them – *(Member timed out.)*

6.17

**MR GOLI OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you for the presentation, honourable minister.

One of the major issues you raised, which I would like to re-emphasise, is on the age requirement for SAGE. You clearly mentioned that the life expectancy is 64 years. So, if you say 80 years, who is going to be alive to enjoy the SAGE fund? Consider reducing it as we recommended.

The other issue is on the Parish Development Model (PDM). Mr Speaker, I consulted with some of the elderly and their perception was that under PDM, you have to refund the money and they have seen how people have been handled while trying to pay back loans. They asked me, “Are you planning to steal our land because we have seen the way they go for people who have not paid other loans?”. They are confusing the two, yet they have challenges.

My recommendation is for Government to consider if some other incentive could be given. Even if they are giving them PDM, they should just pay the principal without interest. Thank you.

6.18

**MS FLORENCE NEBANDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Butaleja):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to join my colleagues in thanking the minister for the good statement in commemoration of the International Old Persons Day.

As Government, we need to plan very seriously because many older persons have suffered abuse and exclusion in their communities and in their own families. I would like to recommend and ask the Ministry of Health to work together with the Ministry of State for Elderly Affairs and set up care homes. We shall then get people who will be trained to look after these people from these care homes.

There are people who have their pension but they do not know where to spend it. Their children are fighting for the same pension, and like Hon. Nyakikongoro has said, they are spending the money on their grandchildren. They have been – *(Member timed out.)*



6.20

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the minister for coming up with this statement.

My first question to the honourable minister is, you talked of bringing a report here soon about reduction of age from 80 years because people of this age are not there. When is this report coming because this is one of the questions that we face in our constituencies?

Mr Speaker, I went to two countries: China and Mauritius where they value - they call them the centenarians; people who have reached 100 years. There are places where they are taken over the weekends and you really enjoy looking at them and they enjoy life.

On top of all these things that we are putting forward, if we could come up with some idea where they are valued and relieved from that kind of loneliness - because this is where we are all going. These are the people who have made tremendous contributions to this country and to the world. We are because they did something very important for us. I want to thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Biraaro -

6.21

**MR EPHRAIM BIRAARO (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister very much for the good and elaborate report.

Mr Speaker, I also want to thank you for suggesting that the oldest person be brought here. May you allow me to also ask that the oldest 20 people in the country be brought here? It would be a very nice day for us to see them and enjoy with them.

Mr Speaker, our health centres leave a lot to be desired. May I propose that when our elderly people, say above 60 years, reach a health facility, they are given special attention; a special desk to receive and give them treatment?

Lastly, in my area, the elderly are killed by stress. There are a lot of thieves who come and steal their sheep and goats and whenever they report to police, it is business as usual. Can there be special tribunals to try people who stress the elderly? Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Kasolo -

6.22

**MR ROBERT KASOLO (NRM, Iki-Iki County, Budaka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to appreciate the report of the minister. It was very catchy because he highlighted most of the issues.

My colleague has just hinted on one of the challenges that the minister forgot; that these old persons have a challenge of being deprived of their properties. When you look at the news, both print and electronic media, you see there is a problem. Honourable minister, you need to go an extra mile and save the elderly.

They are usually deprived of their property by their clans people, sons, and other relatives. It is a general problem and the trend is worrying. This is an old person who had property but people are fighting for the property and they want him to be killed. Honourable minister, that is *—(Member timed out)*.

6.24

**MS JULIET KYINYAMATAMA (Independent, Woman Representative, Rakai):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Thank you, honourable minister, for this wonderful report. Since the central region could be the next in line to host the elders' day, we request that Rakai District host it next.

Secondly, depression and unfitness are the major cause of the non-communicable diseases that we have. I am thinking that if we have our Village Health Teams (VHTs) trained and we create village clubs for our elders to always go, maybe every Sunday or Saturday, for an exercise like dancing - We have had some of these activities and the elders get very excited.

You could treat the non-communicable diseases (NCDs) in the process, and also include sports.

Secondly, we do not have easy access to NCD treatment or drugs in our health centres. Therefore, we request that the Government looks into this - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, switch on the microphone and conclude.

**MS KYINYAMATAMA:** I conclude by requesting that there should be an update of the elderly that are not yet on the beneficiary lists. This is because even for the previous ones that were there, when they reach 80 years, National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) does not update the list. Thank you.

6.25

**MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to appreciate the Government for the Social Protection Fund, which has brought our elderly from very far. Most of our elderly have grandchildren who are abandoned by their parents. Instead of being a grandparent, you now become a babysitter. It is really bad.

I think we need to go the extra mile, especially the district officials in the probation department that is under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development, and help the elderly. Some of their money is taken away. As if that is not enough, the elderly are beaten over land. They are forced to give up their land that they hoped to apportion among their children. They need love and protection from us.

Lastly, the Forum for Social Protection of Parliament has tried to negotiate with NIRA to see to it that they stop using fingerprints when they are taking details of the elderly persons and this is working well. Maybe some districts do not have knowledge of this but it has really helped them. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.26

**MR IBANDA RWEMULIKYA (Independent, Ntoroko County, Ntoroko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank

the honourable minister for the report; it was a really wonderful report.

I also want to thank His Excellency the President for the peace in Uganda because should there be war, I know the elderly are the most affected people. I thank His Excellency the President and our mighty UPDF who have kept this country safe. The elderly are assured of life because some of us who stay near countries that have war like Congo have seen how elders are killed because they cannot run, they cannot fight, they are just left behind and killed. So, I want to thank him for that.

I agree with the minister on the issue of age. 80 years is too much. At least 70 years can work.

Lastly, I agree on the health insurance scheme. When these elders grow old, many diseases set in and they did not have the capacity to take medication and take care of themselves. Therefore, the Government should operationalise the health insurance scheme which will take care of these elderly persons in the country. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Kahonda -

6.28

**MR DONONZIO KAHONDA (NRM, Ruhinda South County, Mitooma):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The other day when we were commemorating World Teachers' Day, the talk was: "We are what we are because they are." Regarding our parents and grandparents, we are what we are because they are.

The other day I was in my constituency and the elderly were going to get SAGE money. Most of them came back frustrated because they were not captured. When I tried to interrogate, I found one of them who was 94 years with a baptism card but he was captured on the National Identification Card as having 60 years.

Therefore, as a committee of -

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

**MR KAHONDA:** As a Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs, we interacted with the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) to address this matter. I implore the minister responsible to get in touch with the Minister of Internal Affairs so that the elderly can be given affirmative action.

In case one loses their identity card, they must go through the same process. Probably, these negotiations can try and cure some of those concerns. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. I had picked Hon. Lagen.

6.30

**MR DAVID LAGEN (NRM, Agago County, Agago):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the minister for the report. My concerns are on medical insurance. I understand that in the 10<sup>th</sup> Parliament, there was a Bill brought here but the President did not assent to it and it was taken back. It is my humble prayer and appeal to the minister to follow up that the Bill so that it is brought back because it will be very important for elders to have free medical health care.

For example, one of the elders that was mentioned here as having 134 years may find it very difficult to get money for medical services, transport and others. If the Government can come up with an initiative for free medical care, that would be very useful.

I also pray that the Government strengthens the institution of the traditional leaders, especially the clans because these elders stray in the community. If the clans' capacities are built and Government empowers them, they will be able to take care of these elders. Some of these elders are homeless, are widows and widowers and need proper care. The Government can support clans so that these elders live a very good life.

I also pray that Government creates a conducive environment, especially recreational activities at regional basis, where annually or quarterly, these elders are brought to perform some

activities which give them joy and happiness. This will create a life transformation in them and they will live for a longer time. I thank you and I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Busiki, Hon. Muwuma and Ntungamo.

6.32

**MR PAULAKAMBA (NRM, Busiki County, Namutumba):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the elaborate report. The issue of the elderly in this country needs to be given more attention. In health centres III, Government does not distribute medicine for Non-Communicable Diseases (NCDs) yet as you grow older, some of these NCDs set in. We need to give it a serious attention.

Secondly, as we promote patriotism in this country, we also need to deliberately sensitise our younger generation to respect the elderly and prioritise them in all aspects, especially when it comes to accessing social services.

I would also like to add that it is as if SAGE guidelines are cast in stone. For those elderly who cannot access the distribution centres, there are no provisions made even for their relatives to go and receive such money on their behalf. I propose that there should be exceptions to the requirement that elders should go physically to pick their money. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Muwuma -

6.34

**MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga):** Thank you, very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the President of the Republic of Uganda for being alive to affirmative action. The other day when he talked of fishermen and women, one of the dockets that he addressed - For the time that I served on the Appointments Committee, we kept appealing to the President and requesting him to consider having a Ministry for Elderly Persons and another for the disabled. I am happy that Hon. Gidudu is in the right docket and the statement is communicating volumes

because he appreciates his docket very well. I thank him for that.

Mr Speaker, the issue of district registrars under NIRA needs to be given special attention. There are districts which are –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude, Hon. Muwuma.

**MR MUWUMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There are districts which do not have registration officials. In Arua, we made a benchmark study where the district registrar of Arua is the one handling Arua City, Madi-Okollo and the neighbouring districts.

Therefore, elderly people are inconvenienced when going to update and validate their particulars so as to benefit from these services. We appeal to the Government to review the ban that was slapped on recruitment because NIRA needs special attention. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, in the VIP gallery this evening - I have other colleagues coming in. Yes, let me have just one. I had allowed Ntungamo.

6.36

**MS JOSYLINE KAMATENETI (NRM, Woman Representative, Ntungamo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank our minister for the compressive report. I thank the Government for taking care of older persons by giving them SAGE money and a special grant for older persons.

Mr Speaker, if we are to help older persons, especially regarding health care, we should make a deliberate effort and carry out outreach at health centres II and III. For example, in my district, you find health centres III are very far from the parishes because our sub counties are very big.

We can also help them by providing some medicines, especially for high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer, especially prostate cancer

for older men. I ask the Government and Parliament to provide this so that our older persons live a happy life. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, colleagues. I am excited to introduce our guests. In the VIP gallery this afternoon we have the Hon. Silvanus Osoro Onyiego, the Majority Whip, National Assembly of Kenya. *(Applause)* He is the equivalent of the Chief Government Whip at the National Assembly of Kenya and our very good brother.

He led a delegation from Kenya to come and work with us during the National Prayer Breakfast and went with us to Kitgum yesterday and attended the Independence Day celebrations. *(Applause)* We are glad that you are here.

There is also Dr Lillian Gogo of the Orange Democratic Movement. *(Applause)* You can see how matters of the nation are matters of the nation. She is also a Member of Parliament at the National Assembly of Kenya and she has been with us. They had a very big delegation which joined us for the National Prayer Breakfast.

We also have Ms Mary Mulinde who works with World Vision in Kenya. *(Applause)* She was part of the delegation. I was supposed to join them this afternoon to pay a courtesy call to His Excellency the President but Hon. Bahati did a good job.

We welcome you, colleagues, and thank you for joining us. We are brothers and sisters with Kenya. I wish they were here when Hon. Macho was raising issues to do with Kenya. However, I will pass on the issues we raised this evening.

I will pick Dr Opio, Hon. Nambozo and Hon. Yeri Ofwono. I am going to give you a chance, honourable colleagues.

6.39

**DR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Most of us were former youths but we are all

upcoming older persons. In Uganda, many people fear to become older persons and yet in developed countries, people are happy to be older persons because they pay less taxes, get better medical care and better access to social services. I pray that we will be able to achieve that dream in Uganda.

I would like to thank the minister for the proposals made on health, specifically in terms of better access to health facilities. When you look at the private sector in Uganda, if you are above 70 years, you do not qualify for medical insurance and yet that is the age when most medical help is required.

When you look at the public sector, in terms of the NMS drugs, we have a budget line for ARVs. We have a –(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude, Doctor.

**DR OPIO:** We have a budget line for anti-cancers but no budget line for geriatric medicines. Mr Speaker, I would like to recommend that since today is a day for a call for action, can we also have action, as Parliament of Uganda?

The action I propose is that the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development looks into the status of older persons in this country. The Committee on Health should also look into the status of geriatric medical service in this country. They should come up with strong recommendations and we have action-taken reports. That would be the call to action that we would have heeded today. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, some of these are issues which can be handled through appropriation. You will find that the ministry has proposals but no appropriation; no money is allocated.

Therefore, I advise that when we are processing the Budget Framework Paper, consider and track some of these issues so that at the appropriation stage, we give them due attention.

6.41

**MS FLORENCE NAMBOZO (Independent, Woman Representative, Sironko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues to appreciate the honourable minister for the report about our elderly people. I look at this report as something that should inform us of a conversation that should start from the youthful age where we refer to older persons as institutional memory. When you look at how they live their life, it is unlike today where we are living in panic and living a reactionary life.

I think it is a very good report that we need to take back. We should start with the youths and spark a conversation on how one needs to live their life. When we talk about them being lonely, it speaks volumes –(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Can you conclude? Honourable members, I do not want to add you more time; we need to conclude this.

**MS NAMBOZO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. About their health, I have a father-in-law who gets this money. More life was added to him when he knew that he was supposed to get this money. He cannot walk; he is actually carried on the back to go and get this money. I really appreciate the Government for it.

However, honourable minister, you talked about PDM and *Emyooga*. I look at it as insecurity to these people since we have youth who have chosen not to work but want ready money.

I also suggest mobile clinics to these people because they cannot move. We should probably empower the village health workers to start mobile clinics to visit these people at their homes because some of them are actually staying with (*Member timed out.*)

6.43

**MR APOLLO YERI (NRM, Tororo Municipality, Tororo):** Thank you very much. Mine is on the policies. Banks and insurance companies do not want to attend to the elderly -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** But you have been getting money. (*Laughter*)

**MR YERI:** This is what is happening and we should raise their hopes. When you do not give someone a bank loan, he will say, "I am gone. If even insurance companies cannot cover me then I think it is..." (*Laughter*) These are things which we need to talk about to these companies and see how they can handle them so that we can raise their hopes that they are still alive.

If you go to –(*Member timed out.*)

6.44

**MR JULIET BASHIISHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the minister for the good presentation. I have a concern in my constituency. You find that when these elderly persons are getting their money, sometimes the money is misused by their grandsons and other people who take care of them. I suggest that some of the money be given in kind, say blankets because when you visit them, you find that their welfare at home is wanting.

Secondly, I request that in case the money delays - In most cases, the money delays and very many people die because they are elderly. I really do not know where that money goes and yet it has been budgeted for. It can maybe be used to pay those people who have been left out because of documentation or any other thing. Thank you very much.

6.46

**MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for the opportunity. The youth of today and the youth of yesteryear are the elderly of tomorrow. It behoves us, therefore, to plan better for that life because we are transitioning to it.

I have heard the challenges listed by the minister and I would like to make the following propositions:

1. That Makerere University gives preferential admission to students doing geriatric medicine and the Ministry of Health also does that, in as far as recruitment is concerned;
2. Most of these elderly people are moving encyclopedia but society has not paid attention to capturing that knowledge for posterity's sake. I propose that the ministry puts – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude.

**MR KAJWENGYE:** Thank you. I propose that the ministry brings up an idea for a facility to capture the memories of these aging nationals for a better tomorrow. It helps us to read their minds and what they have gone through. It shapes society and posterity. I submit.

6.47

**MR DENIS NYANGWESO (Independent, Samia-Bugwe Central County, Busia):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and the honourable minister for the statement. I want to thank the minister for serving his community; the older persons with a lot of passion. He was in my constituency to visit elders at their homes and that is Hon. Gidudu here.

The Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) programme started while I was at the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and I remember the pioneer districts which we started with included the Nebbi, Kyegegwa and Apac, and others totalling 14.

Last year, the celebrations were in Nebbi while this year, the celebrations are in Kyegegwa and these are the districts where a lot of advocacy has been done. The purpose of these international days is to create awareness and advocacy for action.

Therefore, my appeal to the ministry is to rotate - like as my colleagues have already said - such that other districts can have a feel of this kind of advocacy such that when it is time to call for action, we have been advocated and everybody

has been made aware of the need for action for older persons. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

6.48

**MS KENNY AUMA (UPC, Woman Representative, Kwania):** Thank you, Mr Speaker and the minister for the statement. My name is Kenny Auma, a Woman Member of Parliament for Kwania district. I want to thank the minister for sustaining the Social Assistance Grants for Empowerment (SAGE) that is going on throughout the country.

This has enabled our people to improve on their lives as older persons because they also have responsibilities. The concern that I have is that what you they are getting is very little. Why don't we increase the amount from Shs 25,000 to Shs 50,000? That money would help them to improve their lifestyles because they also have dependents.

This money has helped the older persons to increase in age and live longer. Whenever they receive this money, you see them *—(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Members from Kumi, Bushenyi, Ibanda, Bundibugyo and Soroti.

6.50

**MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi):** Mr Speaker, I have a few issues to raise. One, my request is that we organise mobile doctors, specifically for the elderly. They can be trained geriatricians - scientists know these terms - physiotherapists and nurses who are trained in that field.

If we agree on a specific age, for instance above 70 years - they are few in that bracket - we can then say, just make a call and a doctor will come where you are. It should not be them to follow the doctor. Rather, the doctors should be the ones to follow them. I think that is something workable if we are serious about our country. These are the people who bless us and if we do not bless them with this kind of

action, they will curse us and yet we are also going there.

I see what is happening between Israel and Palestine; the people who are suffered the most are the older persons.

Mr Speaker, the issue of the age *—(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** One minute.

**MR AOGON:** We said that by lowering the age each year, we can achieve 60 years in the future. Where is the road map? We should follow it because we can achieve it. We are giving corrupt people money yet there are people who should be given this money. Let us decide and help these elderly people.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Silas. Hon. Baryomunsi -

6.51

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the minister for his passion because he is always moving all over the country and advocating for the elderly.

I want to make one comment in response to some of the issues raised; that our life expectancy has increased from 43 years to 63.3 years. That means that if you give birth to a child today, because of the prevailing conditions, that child is expected to live for 63 years, on average.

However, it also means that the expectation of life at every age has increased. So, if you are 70 or 80 years, you are now likely to live longer. When you look at the demographic structure of the country, the older persons are increasing in number.

From the Government side, that planning is already being integrated, like the issue of introducing geriatrics as a course in medical schools. Engagements on training doctors in

geriatrics are ongoing but also, without flouting the rules, I can tell Parliament that the minister has already brought a Bill on older persons in the Cabinet, which we have cleared, and it will be coming here.

Therefore, hopefully, when the law comes, we should be able to put together whatever we can so that we protect and support our older persons in Uganda. I just wanted to make that comment, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, you will capture the issues raised by the Members. The Committee on Gender should follow up with you on these issues because most of them are to do with appropriation and realigning.

I read through your statement; it sounded like a petition and that is why I was happy because you are an activist in that area. Follow up with the committee.

Honourable members, I can see that my time does not allow us to continue. The House is adjourned to until tomorrow at 2 o'clock.

*(The House rose at 6.54 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 11 October 2023 at 2.00 p.m.)*