



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

THIRD SESSION - FIRST MEETING

WEDNESDAY, 12 JULY 2023



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 11TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Wednesday, 12 July 2023

Parliament met at 1.59 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker, Ms Anita Among, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, once again, I welcome you to this afternoon sitting. Yesterday, I saw the momentum had gained and I am very happy that when I was entering in, my Sergeant-At-Arms said, “Madam, what you were talking about the other time on payment deductions stopped in the Seventh Parliament, but we can still resume.”

Therefore, Members you must attend House. Short of that, we will make a decision as the Business Committee on what should be done. Let us not waste taxpayers’ money. We are here but we only have one minister; you are most welcome. We also have the shadow minister.

Honourable members, this is a very serious issue. I wonder why we come at 2.00 p.m. while others come at 4.00 p.m. I thought 2.00 p.m. is 2.00 p.m. That is what we agreed upon in this House and we have agreed to work for our people. We agreed that this is a people-centred Parliament. We work for humanity and we should be able to do that.

Honourable members, yesterday, we talked about accidents. Hardly had we slept, there was again another terrible accident. The issue was a parked vehicle on the road. That is what we talked about.

I ask the Government Chief Whip that we should have a meeting since the Ministry of Works and Transport has failed to do its work. Can we have a meeting with the works ministry, Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) and the Uganda Police Force tomorrow, and then issue orders? *(Applause)* Let us have the meeting in my office at 8.00 in the morning. This is about a people’s lives and so, we must work because we cannot keep singing we should implement the Traffic and Road Safety Act, yet nobody is doing it. Let us hold some people accountable for all this. We should have that meeting tomorrow and we will report to the House what we would have agreed on the way forward so this is resolved.

We have both road and water accidents which are a very serious matters. You cannot have a truck parked on the road. One of the Members of Parliament told me when they were coming back from the east, they got eight trucks parked on the roadside. I got in an accident one time just in Mukono because a truck was parked on the road side.

We are losing people due to sicknesses; - the roads are bad, trucks are parked on the road and nothing is being done. Leader of the Opposition, kindly join us in that meeting tomorrow because we must come up with a

solution on what should be done. The meeting will be at 8.00 a.m. in my boardroom.

The honourable Minister of Local Government communicated to me on the issues of the Local Council system and he wants to be given time to make a presentation. I am happy the minister is here. I also contacted the same minister over a petition from Soroti and he has told me he wants to come with concrete evidence. Before we have the petition presented, he is going to Soroti. We have agreed that on the 20th, he should be in Soroti and come with all the information before we have that handled.

Once again, I would like to thank you. Yes, Anthony?

2.06

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Madam Speaker, yesterday, we talked about the accident. Like you said, this issue has been on the Floor of Parliament. I remember, at one point, you ordered that all the boda bodas in the country must not carry more than one person and should wear reflector jackets and helmets. At that time, the police plunged into action. But in less than two weeks, the whole thing went back to normal.

As we talk about implementation, the people who are supposed to take action only act in an ad hoc manner. Once it cools down – just two weeks – it goes back to normal. Therefore, if we want this issue to be sorted out once and for all, we must ensure that the ministry reports on a quarterly basis to us on the implementation of the Traffic and Road Safety Act in the country.

Otherwise, all of us are candidates of accidents on a daily basis. You know the commitment we have, as Members of Parliament – sometimes, you do not wish even travel at night but you find yourself travelling at night and these are common things that we always get on the way when travelling.

Madam Speaker, in that meeting, ensure that it is a must that they should be updating the House on the implementation of the Act. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, a quarterly basis is too long. Even Hon. Katabaazi survived an accident – it was also a parked vehicle. How long are we going to continue with this? Hon. Byamukama Fred, you are on your phone – we want action. You are the minister of state for transport.

Still based on my communication - I am happy “Mama Mabira” is here - I received a petition from the leaders of Aruu, Hon. Christopher Komakech’s constituency, on how one of the prison officers is busy cutting trees, burning charcoal and selling and using a gun to protect whatever is being done. We want to know what action you are going to take on that prison officer. Report to this House tomorrow. Tuesday is far – you can take action now. Do you have an answer? Do not worry because all of you are going to speak.

2.09

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT) (Ms Beatrice Anywar): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate the concern raised by my son, Dr Komakech –

THE SPEAKER: I am the one who has raised it. The petition was brought to me in my office.

MS ANYWAR: Thank you. I would like to get in touch because we have a Presidential directive. Therefore, there is no delay in implementing the Presidential directive.

Colleagues, if you have issues in your constituency to do with charcoal burning, wetlands, and forests, as per the Directive of His Excellency the President, do not hesitate to ring me even past midnight and give me that information so we can see how work on it.

As for the petition, Madam Speaker-

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the minister is saying that her phone is switched on 24/7- call her so she can handle the environmental issues. Unless you do not have her number, I can give it to you.

2.11

MS SHAMIM MALANDE (NUP, Woman Representative, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I respond to your communication, I would like to thank the honourable members of this House and the people of Kampala for the prayers sent me when I was undergoing treatment. Thank you very much. May the Good Lord bless you. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: And we want to welcome you back.

MS MALENDE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding your communication, I would like to request that in tomorrow's meeting, the issue of barricades on the road should also be looked into.

From experience - when you move on different roads at night, traffic officers leave those barricades and these, have caused several accidents and those roads have no lights. I beg that tomorrow that issue is looked into.

Madam Speaker, before I take leave, I would like the issue of boda boda riders, whose motorcycles are confiscated to also be looked into. As we speak, something is going on; boda boda cyclists are being brutalised. There is a replica of the Boda 2010 by the boda boda enforcement found on Martin Road. I pray that tomorrow, the police officers are questioned on that and action is taken.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members, can I guide you this way? Members from the Opposition side, if you have any issue concerning accidents, road and water usage, pass it on to the able Leader of the Opposition. On the Government side, we have a very young energetic Government Chief Whip - all the issues must be passed on to him; he will present it in the meeting. Are we together?

2.13

MS GORRETH NAMUGGA (NUP, Mawogoola County South, Ssembabule): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Much as you

have advised that some of the matters on roads should be taken to the Leader of the Opposition, I have something very important that the minister should hear it here on the Floor, since it is coming from the shadow minister.

Madam Speaker, everyone is aware of Katonga Bridge along Masaka Road. Ssembabule-Mbirizi is the alternative route for heavy trucks now, but the road is impassable- the dust is simply too much. Trucks from Congo and Rwanda use that route.

I advise that to avoid accidents, especially for school-going children, the Government should intervene by gravelling that road, not spot grading. I encourage the Government to kindly intervene otherwise, Ssembabule is in trouble.

The community is seriously complaining, businesses have been frustrated, boda bodas are no longer using that road, and all the light trucks cannot use the road. Madam Speaker, this is very urgent and so, I could not wait for the LoP to address this. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Unfortunately, you will not get the answer now. You will get the answer tomorrow after our joint meeting and it will be reported by the ministry.

2.15

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The matter I want to raise, which should be considered in your meeting, is that in Uganda, sometimes we want to respond only to crises. We have had very many issues; we had the issue of speed governors-

THE SPEAKER: It still remains a crisis.

MR SILWANY: Madam Speaker, what happens to the policies we make? We agree on something and when accidents reduce, then we keep quiet. We wait until there is another problem.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Commissioner -

MR SILWANY: The issue I want to raise-

THE SPEAKER: You are pre-empting tomorrow's debate. Before, the Prime Minister's Time, we shall have the issue of accidents.

MR SILWANY: Much obliged, Madam Speaker. I will come tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: Chairperson of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, you need to be in the meeting. Yes, Macho?

2.16

MR GEOFFREY MACHO (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia): Madam Speaker, you are a great lady (*Laughter*). I say so because the Kingdom Media House in Kenya, a political media house, voted four people from the East African Region as potential leaders who left a mark in the political legislation of the East African Region. You came out as number one, because of chairing the passing of the Anti-Homosexuality Bill. (*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, in Kenya, Hon. Macho is called "Lord Bishop". (*Laughter*)

MR MACHO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It is a blessing. But you make us proud in this region. In Africa, it is Uganda and Ghana that have passed that Bill- you have put our country on the map.

However, I stood to respond to your communication to agree with my brother, from Bugiri, Hon. Silwany that Uganda operates by crisis. Although the Minister of Local Government is going to talk about it, yesterday, we had people who failed to buy land in Busia-Sofia because the LCI feared signing because his term had expired.

This is an important matter and I think the minister should not come with lamentations but authority so that the local councils can continue working. As Government, we should stop working in crises. As I talk, there is almost a standstill in the whole country -(*Interruption*)

MS AMERO: Thank you, my colleague, for giving way. Madam Speaker, the information I would like to give this House is that, whereas we are talking about the expired terms of the LC chairpersons, this House has not provided money for their elections.

I do not know whether it would not be right since we still have the 3 per cent contingency to work towards that. Otherwise, the crisis is going to be worse than that. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Kabuusu.

2.19

MR MOSES KABUUSU (FDC, Kyamuswa County, Kalangala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Arising from your communication, the voters in Kyamuswa in Kalangala, asked me to raise this as a matter of national importance.

Since tomorrow, the management will discuss issues arising out of accidents on water and land - they are saying, when accidents occur on land, they have been seeing the President or senior political leaders, in your capacity, Madam Speaker, as the great leader - However, for people who drown in the lake, not even a single penny is sent to the families to manage or look for bodies or to transport the dead bodies or burial-

THE SPEAKER: The only problem we have; as senior leaders is that we never get information from our local leaders; the area Members of Parliament like Hon. Moses Kabuusu. Next time, if we get information, we will be able to support. Otherwise, condolences to the families. We will support when you give us information.

2.20

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO (NRM, Erute County North, Lira): I thank you for your communication. I also received communication from the Minister of Local Government regarding the tenure of our LC1 offices -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, how I wish you would debate about the LC I system when the minister is presenting his paper.

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO: No, Madam Speaker; I am just appreciating. I would like to make a request that perhaps we also need to look into the election of the women councillors, just like Hon. Amero said. The information we have been getting is that there is no money for the elections and this is causing a lot of crisis in the country.

THE SPEAKER: There are no crises; there is a crisis.

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO: Those were not my words, Madam Speaker. That is my concern and I thought I should raise it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Akello. First of all, I want to congratulate UPC for the win. *(Applause)* [Ms Alum Santa: "Procedure."]

MS SANTA ALUM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I rise on a procedural matter. It is good that the Minister of Local Government will come and address this Parliament. However, I have an issue of national importance to address to this House.

I sit on the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and the greatest problem we are facing as a country is that there is no money for the elections of Local Councils I and II. The minister in charge of this docket is the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

The procedural matter I am raising is: wouldn't it be procedurally right for the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Minister of Local Government to come and address this House so that we know the issue of money pertaining to the elections of Local Councils I and II together with the women councillors now that their term has expired?

Madam Speaker, I hope you will give me an opportunity to raise my issue of national importance.

THE SPEAKER: No, you have already spoken.

MS SANTA ALUM: Madam Speaker, I beg that the new league –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, didn't this House say we should extend the term of office for women councillors? Didn't the Attorney-General come here?

2.23

THE MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Mr Raphael Magyezi): Madam Speaker, yes, the Attorney-General did come but let me clarify that we are in consultations right now – *(Interruptions)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, order!

MR MAGYEZI: Honourable colleagues. We are in very serious consultations with the Attorney-General, Electoral Commission, finance and gender ministries.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Apolot, move and leave your friend's space. Do you want to carry Hon. Edakasi? *(Laughter)* Sorry, these people were making noise for the minister.

MR MAGYEZI: Madam Speaker, I can repeat. Right now, we are in very deep consultations with the agencies of the Government concerned, both for the local councils and women councils. I am talking about the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development; Attorney-General's Chambers; Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Electoral Commission and ourselves, chaired by the Rt Hon. Prime Minister. We are looking at this together and we shall give a comprehensive statement that covers both the LCs and the women councils.

Actually, the budget we are talking about is Shs 59 billion, which covers both. So, it is good you raised this point. Rest assured that when we bring that statement, we shall be covering the entire spectrum. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Allan Ssewanyana? Let us first give Hon. Allan a chance to speak; he has never spoken.

2.25

MR ALLAN SSEWANYANA (NUP, Makindye Division West, Kampala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I would like to thank Parliament for the support given to us while we were under incarceration. Thank you very much, brothers and sisters. *(Applause)*

Madam Speaker, as you have guided, I would not delve so much into matters of roads because I was about to mention Salaama Road due to its current state. Recently, women complained that because it is too bumpy, their breasts are beginning to swell because they move in an unstable way. I will leave that point to my Leader of the Opposition. *(Laughter)*

My point goes to the Minister of Local Government –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Allan -

MR SSEWANYANA: Yes, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: When you talk about a woman's breast, you are talking about your mother's breast and your daughter's breast, leave alone your wife's breast. There is no woman having breast issues due to the state of roads.

MR SSEWANYANA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It was a concern from my electorate. But my point was to –

THE SPEAKER: There is an order. That is an attack on women.

MS ANYWAR: Madam Speaker, as we welcome our brothers back from the school of technology and as you have guided, is the honourable member in order to demean the dignity of a mother yet road users are not only women? Both genders use the road.

Aware that the first dignity of a woman is the breast, and that we dress decently – we do not leave our bodies to hang, is he in order to attack a mother and a woman, the Chair of this House? Can he withdraw that statement?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Hon. Allan Ssewanyana stayed in prison for two years. Maybe he missed breasts and that is why he is talking about them. *(Laughter)*

MR SSEWANYANA: Thank you for the guidance, Madam Speaker. Let me go to my point about the LC 1 elections. Let the minister be informed that very many leaders are holding two portfolios in national leadership because of the lacuna of not electing LCs I and II committees.

There are Members of Parliament - I will not mention their names - who were previously LC 1 chairpersons but they are now LC 1 chairpersons and Members of Parliament. Some people were women chairpersons and they are now district Members of Parliament and chairpersons of villages.

We need to address this issue of electing new Members so we can streamline the leadership of this country.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. When we have an election - You cannot hold two political positions. That is common sense.

MR MAGYEZI: Madam Speaker, I have heard two points which are a bit controversial. A Member said the stamps have expired. Stamps do not expire; it is the term of office bearer that expires but the stamp is there.

In addition, to say that it is possible for a Member of Parliament to hold both the post of an MP and LC chairperson would be very controversial. It is not in the law and it is not allowed.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Semakula also had a procedural matter.

MR LUTTAMAGUZI: Madam Speaker, the issue I was going to talk about is related to ambulances – regarding the accidents, where you said that all Government hospitals along the highways should be equipped with ambulances. We should also look into the enforcement -

THE SPEAKER: The Leader of the Opposition is going to bring it up tomorrow.

MR LUTTAMAGUZI: Lastly, Madam Speaker, the issue of the welfare of your sons and daughters in uniform should be looked into. Until we look into the welfare of those police personnel, we shall be debating and wasting time. Thank you.

MS NALUYIMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to get back to the matter of local councils. Last week, we raised this matter of both LCs 1 and II, together with women councils. The promise was that we would have regulations and the fact that the Shs 59 billion was not there to fund the elections of these crucial posts in the -

THE SPEAKER: What is the procedural matter?

MS NALUYIMA: Madam Speaker, these are key administrative units in the country and their functions are well outlined, yet up to this day, these LCs are in abeyance – they cannot even tell whether they exist legally or not.

Wouldn't it be procedurally right that we get a timeframe such that we are able to explain well to our people out there and also guide them as we wait?

We are not in a state of war or emergency where we can have an extension of these offices. So, wouldn't it be procedurally right for the Government to look for money to ensure that these elections take place? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the minister said they are in consultation and that he will come and report to this House on Thursday next week.

2.33

MR RICHARD SEBAMALA (DP, Bukoto County Central, Masaka): Madam Speaker, thank you. First and foremost, as much as we have preempted the road safety issue, I am requesting that I talk briefly about the issue. I am not going to preempt, but only request that

the Minister of Health be included among the people that will be in your meeting tomorrow for emergency and enforcement, as my brother said.

Madam Speaker, about the LCs I -

THE SPEAKER: That is fine. We shall also invite the Prime Minister and the Minister of Internal Affairs.

MR SEBAMALA: Yes, Madam Speaker. About the LCs, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: I thought we are getting a paper on that on Thursday.

MR SEBAMALA: Okay. Madam Speaker, can we start the matters of national importance? *(Laughter)* Those are the only -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Members – Hon. Richard, there is just one Speaker at a time. *(Laughter)* Hon. Christine?

2.34

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I appreciate your communication in relation to accidents and humps. I respect your ruling, but on the issue of Tirinyi-Pallisa-Kumi Road -

THE SPEAKER: Give your information to the Government Chief Whip.

MS CHRISTINE APOLOT: Madam Speaker, allow me to hint on it. The Rt Hon. Prime Minister directed UNRA to put humps along that road. We are losing three or four people in a week and it has now taken about two years. Are the directives working or not? Surely, we need to save the people of this country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Government Chief Whip, take note of what Members are raising – kindly, follow the Government Chief Whip and give your issues to him.

There was another procedural matter there.

MR BASIL BATARINGAYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to appreciate you for your comment on the road carnage. However, to the two ministers who are here – one for the environment and the other for works – Katonga was closed for heavy trucks. However, at night, those vehicles carry sand and move along that route. As a result, they also cause accidents. This is an issue of concern and I would like to raise it so that these two ministers can intervene. Thank you.

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for allowing me the opportunity. Around 20 minutes back, you ruled on two issues: the issue of roads and accidents and the issue of the LCs. Twenty minutes later, Members are still presenting the same issues in different styles and languages. Are we proceeding rightly, Madam Speaker, yet our Order Paper has 10 more items to cover? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we will devote the whole afternoon tomorrow to issues of road accidents and matters of national importance. Can we go to the next item?

There is a procedural matter from the Leader of the Opposition (LoP).

MR MPUUGA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your indulgence. The first issue is a matter of law. In the absence of the learned Attorney-General to guide the Minister of Local Government on his statement that the stamps do not expire, but the office does, he did not proceed to inform the country that whoever engages a bearer of the stamp, engages in illegality ab initio. I thought that should be on record so that the population should not follow the minister's guidance that the stamp is valid. Whoever bears it, bears it -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable LoP, the stamp is valid but the signature is invalid. That is what the minister needs to correct – because you cannot stamp without a signature.

MR MPUUGA: Madam Speaker, I concur but the statement of the minister could easily

be misinterpreted to mean that somebody, probably, could pick a stamp with a stick and stamp on a document and validate it. So, we need to inform all and sundry that nobody has the force of law to use a stamp of an LC I chairperson anywhere. That should be on record, Madam Speaker.

Secondly, Madam Speaker, on the Order Paper, you guided on Item No. 3, which is the Soroti Market Vendors' petition, which you had gladly allowed the honourable member to present. Madam Speaker, you are dealing with politicians-

THE SPEAKER: I would gladly still - the same way I put it there is the same way I will keep it there until I have all the facts. At least respect the Speaker's decision this time around.

MR MPUUGA: We are here to seek your guidance when it is not so clear about a particular matter.

THE SPEAKER: We will have it on the Order Paper of 21st July, if they fail to resolve it on the ground.

MR MPUUGA: Much obliged.

LAYING OF PAPERS

(A) DELEGATION TO THE 78TH SESSION OF THE EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE AND THE 44TH CONFERENCE OF PRESIDENTS OF NATIONAL PARLIAMENTARY ASSEMBLIES OF THE AFRICAN PARLIAMENTARY UNION (APU)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, under Rule 33 of the Rules of Procedure, which governs the laying of reports of Parliamentary delegations abroad, the report is going to be presented by Hon. Nakut. She will give very brief highlights on the keynote lessons learned in the process.

2.41

MS FAITH NAKUT (NRM, Woman Representative, Napak): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I wish to lay on the Table the report

of the Uganda Parliamentary Delegation to the 78th Session of the Executive Committee and the 44th Conference of Presidents of National Parliamentary Assemblies of African Parliamentary Union held from 5 to 10 November 2022 at Victoria Falls, Republic of Zimbabwe. I will proceed to give a few highlights about the conference.

Madam Speaker, you nominated six Members to attend the 78th Session of the Executive Committee and 44th Conference of Presidents of the National Parliamentary Assemblies, and I was privileged to represent you, as head of the delegation. The Members are: Hon. Achia Remigio, Hon. Feta Geoffrey, Hon. Naluyima Betty Ethel, Hon. Apolot Christine, and Hon. Kibalya Henry Maurice.

I wish to thank you on behalf of those Members and for trusting us with this noble responsibility. Now, let me report about the African Parliamentary Union (APU) in brief.

The African Parliamentary Union, herein referred to as APU, is a continental inter-parliamentary organisation established in Abidjan in 1976 by the Organisation of African Union and the purpose is as follows:

1. To bring together the Parliamentary institutions of all the African states.
2. To bring together parliamentarians from African countries to generate consensus on common issues affecting the African people.
3. To cascade resolutions to inform legislation of their respective national Parliaments.
4. To contribute to the strengthening of the parliamentary institution in Africa, the promotion of democracy and the realisation of the objectives of the African Union for the establishment of lasting peace; and
5. To encourage contact among the African Parliamentarians so that they can be in touch.

The conference theme -

THE SPEAKER: Give us the brief lessons you learnt. You are not presenting. Follow rule 33(2).

MS NAKUT: Twenty-four Parliaments attended, and there were considerations made. I will list the most important ones:

1. There was consideration to accept observer statuses.
2. Applications were received; one of them was from the Duma State of the Federation of Russia, that is, the Parliament of Russia. They applied for observer status. It was granted. That means the Duma State of Russia will attend these conferences as observers.
3. The position of the Ugandan delegates was neutral because that is our position as a country because of the ongoing war between Russia and Ukraine, but the conference decided to accept the observer status.
4. The application by the African Association of Libraries and Information Institutions for observer status was deferred to the next conference.

We received reports; the report of the Ad-hoc Committee on Financial Contributions.

Madam Speaker, we wish to report and appreciate you and the Parliamentary Commission. The committee that was made to assess the contributions of member Parliaments reported that Uganda was up to date with its contributions. We were not embarrassed as delegates. We were able to speak with confidence. I wish to thank, commend you and the Parliamentary Commission. Keep it up for all the associations to which our Parliament has signed to.

We had an opportunity to do an excursion and we made it a learning excursion to inform our tourism sector. In Annex 7, we have highlighted what needs to be done and we seek

your indulgence, Madam Speaker, that these delegates table it to the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry so the good lessons learnt can be adopted in our country.

We had a meeting of the APU Committee on Women Parliamentarians. I wish to report that our three women on the committee participated well. We suggested four items to be taken on by African Parliaments and all the four were taken as a resolution of the conference. Let me read them.

1. Involvement of women in the negotiation of peace talks between warring factions. Where African countries are fighting, women should be there. We have seen delegations of men only.
2. The national parliamentarians should designate at least one hour, devoted for debate to address terrorism and violent extremism. This was adopted; it is important that we have this conversation for the peace of the continent.
3. The peacekeeping troops should have slots for women combatants because they can do that work.
4. We encourage inter-state, inter-regional and cross-border trade within the African continent using the local currencies to reduce vulnerability to terrorism and violent extremism.

Madam Speaker, all these resolutions were adopted and I wish to report that the women participated well.

Resolution No. 4 Number was re-echoed that in the East African Finance Summit, we must promote the agenda of trading in Africa with our currencies.

Since I am summarising, I would like to state that the next conference will be held in Niger.

During the APU Conference in Zimbabwe, we elected the President; the President of the APU is elected, giving priority to the hosting country

and the head of the Parliament of Zimbabwe took it.

Madam Speaker, with that, we wish that in the next conference, we propose Uganda hosts next year so that Uganda Parliament takes on the presidency of the APU. When we take the presidency of the APU, we will then anchor the interests of the continent. Uganda's interest is to see a continent that can trade fairly, freely, so that we are not threatened by foreign powers.

Madam Speaker, it is my wish that you allow that to happen; that we host next year. With those, I want to thank Members for doing a commendable job. They did not give me a hard time as their head of delegation. I hope I will get a second chance to represent you. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: I hope the head of the delegation did not give the Members a hard time. Honourable members, this year, we are hosting the Pan African Parliament (PAP). PAP will be sitting in Uganda in October and that is the time we shall be on recess but we can still join them.

We shall also be hosting all the Speakers and Presiding Officers. The leader of the delegation is Hon. Enos Asiimwe; that is, the Commonwealth Parliament Association (CPA). We will still host it from December to January; we are going to be a busy country. We will host APU, if you wish we do so. Next item.

Hon. Cecilia Ogwal *(Imat)*, you are most welcome and we want to thank you very much for defending us on anti-homosexuality. *(Applause)* Thank you very much.

(B) DELEGATION OF THE 17TH SESSION OF THE PARLIAMENTARY UNION OF THE ORGANISATION OF ISLAMIC COUNTRIES PUIC HELD IN ALGIERS, ALGERIA, 29TH – 30TH JANUARY 2023

THE SPEAKER: Regarding this item, to the best of my recollection, Hon. Hassan made a presentation on it. Not so? Use the microphone.

2.52

MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luwero): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: You actually went with Hon. Bashir.

MR KIRUMIRA: We went to Algeria, as the delegation of our Parliament. In March, we laid a report covering all the recommendations and resolutions we passed during the Algiers Conference. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Haji. Next item. Yes, procedure?

MR MAYANJA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Yesterday, you guided that the Minister for Energy and Mineral Development should lay on the Table the agreement Uganda signed with the Ministry of Energy from South Sudan.

I am insisting on this because Ugandans are eagerly waiting to see this agreement of Uganda selling power to foreign countries when Ugandans are suffering with darkness and limited electricity. So, I want to know the terms and conditions of that argument.

The Minister of Energy and Mineral Development was here but right now, he is hiding. We do not know where he has gone.

THE SPEAKER: I am trying to see whether there is any Minister for Energy and Mineral Development here. In the absence of the minister, the Prime Minister should be able to handle it. The Prime Minister is here.

2.54

THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja): Madam Speaker, the country has enough power; that should go on record. As we speak, the country has enough power and we have continued to generate more power. Therefore, we can help our neighbouring countries. We need to help the neighbouring countries which do not have access to power.

We even want to export to the DRC. We have been exporting to Kenya, Rwanda and we shall export to other neighbouring countries. We are an East African Community so we need to help each other.

Therefore, the agreement he wants will definitely come because this Parliament has a sole stake in whatever we do as a Government. Thank you very much.

2.55

MR MARTIN MUZAALÉ (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Regarding the issue that Hon. Mayanja raised, I made a re-join on it regarding the power that is being generated and not evacuated to the national grid. As a country, we are paying close to Shs 140 billion. Can the Prime Minister make a statement on that?

THE SPEAKER: First of all, to the best of my recollection, what Parliament wants - and let it stop being Hon. Alan's issue. What Parliament wants is the agreement between the two countries. We do not want to go into a relationship like the one of Bujagali. We want to have the agreement on the Floor. That is basically what we want.

We have no problem exporting. We can even give it to any country. What the House wants is the agreement and the minister said he was going to bring it today. Let us have it because he said he would bring it today.

MR MUZAALÉ: Madam Speaker, mine is a different issue, which is also very important. There is no reason we should produce power without a plan to evacuate it. This has not just happened today. For more than 10 years, we have been paying a lot of money. We are talking about Shs 400 billion. Therefore, we need a report regarding that.

MR KIRUMIRA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I sit on the Committee on National Economy and we visited Karuma when we were processing a loan. The justification of that loan was the distribution of electricity in our country. As much as we have generated

electricity in Karuma and other power plants, Parliament passed a loan to the effect of distributing that electricity.

Therefore, the clarification we seek from the minister is how far they have gone with the implementation of the distribution of electricity.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, I would like to thank the Prime Minister for her endeavours. However, her communication with her ministers is very key. When agreements are laid before Parliament, they are not displayed on notice boards. They are given to Parliament and the Speaker. We shall demand from the Speaker to look at them internally. We do not display this information because some of it is confidential. What if I reveal whatever is in that agreement, it can be against me?

Therefore, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the issue here is: how do we get the agreement? Whether you are supplying power to Rwanda, Burundi, even to those who want it free of charge, it is in your own discretion as the Government. However, Parliament, with its powers, needs the agreement on the Floor. The Speaker must get it and Members should be able to access it confidentially.

Therefore, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, kindly cool down and enjoy the House. However, communicate to your ministers. Once they make a statement on the Floor - this is why the Speaker and Members insist on having them here. Thank you. *[Member rose]*

THE SPEAKER: Yes, order to whom? Who are you directing your point of order to?

MR KIMOSHO: To honourable –

THE SPEAKER: No, he is not on the Floor. We are only following up what was promised and the House wants what was promised. Honourable minister, you promised us the agreement. Is it ready?

2.59

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Madam Speaker, the agreement is actually ready and it is being delivered to me from Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited (UETCL).

THE SPEAKER: Okay, it will come.

MR OKAASAI: I will lay it on the Table when it arrives.

THE SPEAKER: Members, the agreement will be here.

MS NABBANJA: Madam Speaker, now that the agreement is going to be brought here, there is no cause for alarm.

Secondly, I would like to talk about dimmed energy, where we have dams that are not evacuating power. I have a directive from the President to that effect. Indeed, I feel that Parliament should get this information. Therefore, I am directing the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, Hon. Nankabirwa, to come here with a statement so that Members are also brought on board – *(Interruptions)*

THE SPEAKER: Let the Prime Minister finish her statement. Have you finished? When will we get the statement from Hon. Nankabirwa? On which date? On Thursday, we should be able to get a report from Hon. Nankabirwa.

Hon. Allan, as we wait for the – We will have the agreement before the end of the day. It will be today, not any other day. Let us go to the next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (COMMISSIONS,
STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE
ENTERPRISES) ON THE REPORT OF
THE AUDITOR-GENERAL ON THE
FINANCIAL STATEMENTS OF THE
HIGHER EDUCATION STUDENTS
FINANCING BOARD FOR THE
FINANCIAL YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE
2022 AND OTHER MATTERS

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, last week, the House considered and adopted part of this report as well as the one on Uganda Printing and Publishing Corporations, National Medical Stores, National Water and Sewerage Corporation and Kampala Capital City Authority.

COSASE made a report in regard to what has been read. This report was tabled and uploaded. According to Article 163(5) of the Constitutional, it has a timeframe of six months. I urge the committee chairperson that after presenting this, they need to go and work on all that is left so that they are able to present within the time that is prescribed constitutionally.

I now invite the committee chairperson to make his presentation. As the chairperson makes his presentation, there are issues that were raised and we said we shall wait for the report of COSASE. Those issues will be discussed alongside your report.

3.03

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (COMMISSIONS, STATUTORY AUTHORITIES AND STATE ENTERPRISES) (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to present the report of the Committee on Public Accounts (Commissions, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises) (PAC-COSASE) on the report of the Auditor-General on the financial statements of the Higher Education Students Financing Board for the Financial Year ended 30th June 2022 and other matters.

As I get started, I beg to lay on the Table both the report and the attendant minutes.

THE SPEAKER: Please lay. Did it have a qualified or unqualified opinion?

MR SSENYONYI: No, it was unqualified.

Madam Speaker, I will skip through a couple of things; the introduction and background. Maybe, I will read the methodology, just to emphasise who we met, as a committee. We met the management of the Higher Education Students Financing Board, the Board of the Higher Education Students Financing Board; that is the board of the entity, and officials from the Ministry of Education and Sports.

Findings, observations and recommendations

Implementation of the approved budget

Revenue performance

Performance of non-tax revenue

As I refer to the board, I mean the entity because the entity is Higher Education Students Financing Board so that is the board that I will be referring to.

The board budgeted to collect non-tax revenue of Shs 0.59 billion during the year under review. Out of this, Shs 0.75 billion was collected, representing a performance of 128 per cent of the target. In addition, the Board planned to collect revenue due to the revolving funds from recovery of loans amounting to Shs 0.98 billion during the financial year but only Shs 0.31 billion was collected, representing a performance of 31.4 per cent recovery of the target.

The accounting officer submitted that the low level of recovery performance was mainly due to the effects of COVID-19, resulting in low levels of economic performance. In addition, the Board was affected by the low levels of staffing, especially in the recoveries unit, with only three staff to follow up on more than 4,000 beneficiaries that have completed their studies and are in the repayment cycle.

He informed the committee that the Board had designed a number of strategies, including working with employers through the Federation of Uganda Employers, the Ministry of Public Service, the Credit Reference Bureau and other large database handlers in order to improve loan recovery.

The board - that is the entity - also profiled beneficiaries in the different cohorts and formed social media groups where beneficiaries are updated regularly on the status of their loan repayment.

The committee observes that the over performance of NTR collection was due to the increase in the number of applicants in the year under review, owing to the non-refundable application fee of Shs 50,000.

The board collected much less than what it ought to collect owing to understaffing and whereas there were strategies to increase loan recoveries, the rate is still low.

We recommend that the accounting officer should institute measures to ensure that more recoveries are attained to enable continuation of the fund.

Performance of Government of Uganda receipts

The board budgeted to receive Shs 32.3 billion, out of which Shs 16.9 billion was warranted, resulting in a shortfall of Shs 15.4 billion, which is 48 per cent of the budget. The Auditor-General further noted that the entity did not seek a revision of its budget and the work plan as provided for by Section 17 (3) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015.

The funds that were not warranted were meant for the implementation of the following activities - We have provided a table showing what this money was meant for:

- i. Loans and scholarships – that is for sponsorship of continuing students which is Shs 11.89 billion;

- ii. Operations of the board - Shs 3.11 billion.

The accounting officer submitted that the shortfall in funds released during the financial year created arrears on the part of the board whereby Higher Education Institutions submitted demand notes and invoices which the Board could not honour. The arrears were verified by the Ministry of Education and Sports Internal Audit Department and submitted to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development as domestic arrears. The Board was following up to ensure that these were prioritised and paid.

The accounting officer explained that the shortfall had a negative bearing on the fees to be paid to various institutions and the last release came in towards the end of the financial year. In the Financial Year 2022/2023, only 60 per cent was released and the challenge of arrears would remain. As a result of the budget cut, only 600 students had been sponsored whereas the board had planned to sponsor 1,600 students. Eighty five per cent of all the applicants are eligible, but not all of them can benefit from the loans because of budget cuts.

He stated that the board had made several requests for supplementary funding to the Ministry of Education and Sports, but the releases from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development were inadequate.

The committee observes as follows:

- i. The shortfall in Government funding significantly impairs the ability of the board to sponsor the planned number of students. As a result, many deserving students end up missing out on sponsorship; and
- ii. The board has domestic arrears in form of unpaid fees from the Financial Year 2021/2022 caused by a fall in releases.

The committee recommends thus:

- i. The Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should fully fund the budget of the board to enable it to clear

its outstanding obligations to the higher education institutions; and

- ii. The finance ministry should allocate funds to enable the board to sponsor all eligible applicants.

Absorption of funds

Out of the total warrants of Shs 26.19 billion received during the financial year, Shs 24.05 billion was spent by the entity, resulting into an unspent balance of Shs 2.14 billion, representing an absorption level of 91.83 per cent.

The unspent funds were retained to be used in the subsequent financial year. The funds that were not absorbed were meant for investment in fixed deposits, which was not implemented.

Also, the funds for salaries and gratuity were not used due to the non-recruitment of staff as planned, owing to a ban on recruitment by the Ministry of Public Service.

We observe that the delay in the procurement process regarding the fixed deposit investment led to the under-absorption of funds.

We recommend that the accounting officer should ensure that all procurement processes are initiated in a timely manner.

Accumulation of payables

A review of the financial statements revealed that the board reported under, the statement of financial position, payables amounting to Shs 15.33 billion compared to the previous year payable position of Shs 1.42 billion, indicating an increase in payables of Shs 13.9 billion (977 per cent) out of which 99.4 per cent relates to loan disbursements to beneficiary institutions.

In addition, the payables verification report by the Internal Auditor-General's office and the Ministry of Education and Sports was not availed for audit verification.

Observation

- (i) The presence of payables is attributed to the low release of funds from the ministry for finance;
- (ii) The payables are in the form of unpaid fees to institutions of higher learning, which impairs the ability of the board to perform its primary mandate and also cripples the finances of the institutions that the beneficiaries attend; and
- (iii) There was no evidence that the Office of the Internal Auditor-General and the Minister of Education and Sports had prepared payables verification reports.

We recommend that the Internal Auditor-General and the Minister of Education and Sports should prepare the payables verification reports to ascertain these payables.

Low loan recovery rate

Section 20(1) of the Higher Education Students' Financing Act, 2014 states thus:

"The scheme is only for Ugandan students seeking financial assistance to pursue an accredited course of study or programme of higher education in an accredited institution of higher learning recognised by the National Council for Higher Education."

A review of the statistics of students' beneficiaries from the loan scheme since its inception indicated that there was a decline in the current financial year in students' financing with reference to Note 21 of the Financial Statements.

The board had managed to finance only 25 per cent of the total demand by applicants, which was below-average performance.

Madam Speaker, we have availed a table that shows the different percentages in the different financial years.

The accounting officer submitted that the poor loan recoveries were partly due to the effects of COVID-19, which led to the lockdown of the entire economy resulting into closure of businesses and high levels of unemployment.

He further submitted that the majority of the loan beneficiaries were not yet into gainful employment and could, therefore, not make a substantial contribution or employment – *(Recording echoes in the Chamber)*

THE SPEAKER: Can we proceed, technical team?

MR SSENYONYI: He explained that several efforts, including working with employers, profiling the beneficiaries and using their leadership while at university to trace the beneficiaries were instituted and would continue in order to improve loan recovery.

The low level of staffing, especially in the recoveries unit, which has only three staff to handle more than 4,000 students in the recovery phase.

We observe that the low recovery denies opportunity to numerous eligible students who would benefit from the money ploughed back by the past beneficiaries.

We recommend as follows:

- (i) The accounting officer should institute measures to recover the amounts due and submit a report on the same to Parliament within six months from the date of adoption of this report; and
- (ii) The accounting officer should put in place a loan recovery policy within six months from the date of adoption of this report.

Lack of loan portfolio risk analysis (performance) reports

Section 9.1 of the Board Credit Manual provides that the board shall observe and comply with the principles and requirements of loan classification and provisioning according

to the International Financial Reporting Standards.

It further provides that the board shall also observe both the objective as well as the subjective criteria for establishing provisions, which shall be categorised into:

- a) Normal risk (Pass);
- b) Watch (Special mention);
- c) Substandard;
- d) Doubtful; and
- e) Loss.

The additional disclosure required at the review of the financial reporting framework, in terms of loan portfolio reporting for the receivable loan portfolio, was noted as inadequate and may not be informative to stakeholders and users.

It was noted that whereas management disclosed the loan portfolio investment of Shs 127.83 billion in the statement of financial position, there was no evidence to show that the analysis reports were made to ascertain the risk status and aging analysis of the loan portfolio.

Observation

The absence of analysis reports makes it difficult to ascertain the credibility of the reported figure of the loan portfolio investment of Shs 127.83 billion in the statement of financial position. It is, therefore, difficult to establish what is due for recovery.

We recommend that the accounting officer should put in place an appropriate credit manual for the institution and prepare periodic analysis reports regarding the risk status and aging analysis of the loan portfolio.

Failure to approve the loans recovery policy

The board established a loan recovery department composed of a recoveries manager and two senior recoveries officers. A review of the loan recovery report prepared by the recoveries manager for the period ending June

2022, indicated 3,025 student loan beneficiaries owing a total of Shs 48.056 billion, had completed their courses and grace period and were due for recovery over the next 10 years.

However, it was noted that there was no approved loan recovery policy to guide the recovery process of the due amounts from the 3,025 beneficiaries.

The draft policy has been in place since 2019/2020, but had never been approved by the board hence, cannot be used as a guide for recovery operations.

Observation

The committee observes that the absence of a board for a long time hindered the approval of the loan recovery policy.

We recommend that the new board should expeditiously approve the loan recovery policy and management should report to Parliament on the same within three months from the date of adoption of this report.

Staffing gaps

The approved organisational structure for the entity provides for 65 approved permanent staff positions. However, the board had a big staffing gap despite the increase in its activities.

In the current financial year, out of the established 65 positions, only 28 positions were filled (43 per cent), leaving 37 (58 per cent) positions vacant.

Some of the unfilled positions are senior and the Auditor-General was not shown a recruitment plan to fill these positions. We have a table there showing the staff structure and which positions are filled and which ones are not.

The vital positions included manager loans and manager scholarships, under the directorate of operations, while the directorate of finance did not have the manager, finance, manager, human resource, manager, procurement, manager planning and manager, monitoring and evaluation.

There were 15 officer positions that were vacant since three officers were promoted to senior officer level and one loan officer's contract was not renewed and replaced hence four extra positions in addition to the prior 11 positions.

We observed as follows:

- a) The low staffing levels, especially the absence of middle-level managers, significantly affects the functioning of the board; and
- b) The low levels of staffing have impaired the ability of the board to recover loans and this affects the continuity of the loans scheme.

We recommend that, notwithstanding the ban on recruitment, the board should recruit officers for key positions to enable it execute its mandate.

Governance of Higher Education and Students Financing Board

Section 6.4.2 of the Financing Policy of 2012 indicates that the board will be composed of nine members who shall be appointed by the Minister of Education and Sports, to play an oversight role over the secretariat. Their contracts shall be for a term of four years, renewable only once, on satisfactory performance.

The following anomalies were, however, noted:

- a) The position of the representative from the Uganda National Students Association (UNSA) had not been filled for the last nine years; and
- b) The term of the Board of Directors expired in March 2022 and renewal of the new board had not been undertaken by the time of the audit.

In the absence of a fully constituted Board of Directors, the oversight functions may not be

performed and the board could lack strategic direction.

The committee observes that whereas the board was fully constituted by the minister with effect from 1 December 2022, the failure to fully constitute the board in time by the minister hampered the functioning of the institution.

We recommend that the minister should always ensure that the board is fully constituted and that vacant positions are expeditiously filled.

The mandate on managing existing grants

Section 42(1) of the Higher Education Students Financing Board Act, 2014 states thus:

“(1) All scholarships currently offered by the Government of Uganda, including bilateral scholarships, and existing immediately before the commencement of this Act shall vest in the Board; and

(2) The Central Scholarships Committee of the Ministry of Education and Sports existing immediately before the commencement of this Act shall cease to exist on such a date as the minister may, by Statutory Instrument, publish in the gazette.”

Contrary to the above requirements, the mandate for management of the scholarships by the Government of Uganda has not been handed over to the board. This is a violation of the Act and could result into duplication of roles and mandate.

The Manager in charge of Finance and Administration explained that the board had continued to engage the Ministry of Education and Sports regarding this critical mandate of the board.

However, following the issue of mergers of Government entities, it was said that the Student Loan Scheme would be mainstreamed under the Department of Higher Education, which also manages scholarships.

The committee observes thus:

- a) Whereas a law was enacted to streamline the management of all scholarships in the country, this has not been adhered to, to date; and
- b) The statutory instrument for the cessation of the activities of the Central Scholarships Committee was not gazetted and therefore, has no force of law. As such, Section 42 of the Act was not implemented.

The committee recommends that the Minister of Education and Sports should operationalise Section 42 of the Act within six months from the date of the adoption of this report.

Risk management

Absence of fraud prevention mechanisms

Section 4.5.1 of the Higher Education Students Financing Board Risk Management Policies and Procedures Manual, 2020 indicates that the board shall establish a mechanism of independent, ongoing assessment of credit risk management. All facilities shall be subjected to individual risk review at least annually and monitoring of the various types of risks to be able to come up with risk registers.

In addition, Section 2.1 of the Policies and Procedures Manual indicates that the risk management process/cycle should entail a detailed process of identification, assessment and management control.

The committee observes as follows:

- a) The lack of a fraud prevention mechanism could result in fraud and errors being undetected and causing loss to the institution; and
- b) The understaffing of the Internal Audit Unit makes it difficult for the board to detect and prevent fraud.

The committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should put in place a fraud

prevention mechanism within six months from the date of adoption of this report.

No risk assessment and management reports and policies.

Let me move to the observations. The committee observes that the lack of risk assessment and management reports and policies, may expose the board to risks that could have been detected early enough and mitigation measures put in place had risk assessment been done.

The committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should put in place risk assessment and management policies within a period of six months from the date of adoption of this report.

Monitoring and evaluation of board activities

The lack of a joint monitoring team

Section 3.4.1 of the Monitoring and Evaluation Procedures Manual, 2022 states thus, *“The Executive Director shall from time to time constitute a joint monitoring team composed of representatives from departments and units, as well as staff with expertise in Management and Evaluation to undertake monitoring and evaluation of activities, and will be responsible for carrying out routine monitoring activities at the board and reports will be submitted to the Executive Director outlining challenges and suggested solutions and/or recommendations.”*

On the contrary, no joint monitoring team was constituted in the period under review, hence monitoring and evaluation was not adequately performed as per the procedures in place. It was submitted that the board is severely understaffed and the monitoring and evaluation unit has only one staff.

The committee observes as follows:

- a) In the absence of a joint monitoring team, the board may not be in position to assess and evaluate whether it is effectively delivering on its mandate and achieving its strategic objectives; and

- b) Understaffing impairs the ability of the board to carry out joint monitoring.

The committee recommends that the Accounting Officer should put in place a joint monitoring team within three months from the date of the adoption of this report.

Lack of data quality control strategy

Section 3.4.6 of the Procedure’s Manual, states that to ensure that data and data sources related to the assessment of performance are objective and reliable, the Management and Evaluation Unit will implement a data control strategy.

On the contrary, the Auditor-General noted that the monitoring unit did not set up or implement the data control strategy to enable data quality assessment.

The committee observes that:

- a) The understaffing of the board made it difficult to develop and implement a data control strategy; and
- b) The absence of a data control strategy may affect the quality of data and in turn, performance measurement may not be accurate and reliable.

We recommend that the Accounting Officer should put in place, and implement a data control strategy within three months from the date of adoption of this report.

Non-operationalisation of the five-year resource mobilisation strategy

The board developed a five-year resource mobilisation strategy for the period of 2019 - 2025. However, despite the expiry of the three financial years, there was no evidence to show that the board had started implementing the strategy, which could partly account for the low rate of students’ loan financing and could curtail the board from achieving the intended objectives of the scheme.

The Accounting Officer submitted that the strategy was to help reduce reliance on Government funding and increase intake. One of the areas was to increase skills of proposal writing. In the Financial Year 2022/2023, the board developed at least two fundamental proposals to be submitted to different funders. A proposal was submitted to St. Augustine and the board received 20 scholarships.

However, understaffing presented severe challenges, as most of the vacancies for the relevant staff were unfulfilled. This was a consultancy firm.

We observed that understaffing had severely impaired the operationalisation of the five-year resource mobilisation strategy. We recommend that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should provide funds to the board to enable the recruitment of critical staff and consequently, the operationalisation of the five-year resource mobilisation strategy.

Management of Information Technology Investments in Government.

Planning and budgeting for Information Technology system acquisitions

I will move to the findings - there is a table, which shows the comparative years. Comparison of the budgets with the actual funding revealed shortfalls of Shs 3.84 billion out of the total budget for the three years of Shs 4.77 billion, implying that the board could not procure the necessary software and this impacted service delivery. There is another table there showing budget shortfalls.

It was also noted that the funds to the tune of 0.917 billion for IT systems acquisition was released and 0.929 was spent and none was diverted to other activities but 0.012 billion was diverted to ICT acquisitions. There is another table there shows how the funds were moved.

We observe as follows:

- a) The budget of the board relating to ICT services did not get released in its entirety

which adversely affected the smooth implementation of IT systems, planned upgrades and equipment acquisition, and may compromise information systems security; and

- b) Diversion of funds not only contravenes the Public Finance Management Act of 2015, but also negatively affects the service delivery and negates the purpose of budgeting.

We recommend as follows:

0. The Minister of Finance should provide the funds to the board to ensure that it can acquire the requisite equipment; and
 - ii. The accounting officer should ensure that funds released are utilised for the strict purposes for which they are meant.

ICT governance

I will just move to the observations for want of time. The committee observes that the absence of ICT governance structures hampers the formulation of appropriate ICT policies, strategies and real-time upgrades of ICT interventions. In addition, it may lead to the misalignment of IT investments with the overall entity's strategic objectives.

The committee recommends that the accounting officer should institute governance policies, structures to effectively manage ICT investments in consultation with other stakeholders within 3 months from the date of adoption of this report.

General observations

Madam Speaker, this is the last bit. The committee observes thus:

- (i) There is a lack of regional balance among the beneficiaries of the loan scheme. The committee found that whereas the loan scheme was meant to aid students from underprivileged backgrounds, the vast majority of the beneficiaries of the scheme, according to the information from the

board, were from districts that are not as underprivileged. On the contrary, districts from predominantly underprivileged regions, such as Karamoja and Sebei, are not well represented among beneficiaries;

Madam Speaker, we have attached an annexure, which shows how the different districts benefited. You will find some districts have one, and others have 400, or 300, which is what we are referring to here as regional imbalance;

- (ii) The school infrastructure in underprivileged regions such as Karamoja is a reason for concern. These regions have few schools and even fewer schools with A-level, translating into fewer learners studying up to A-level. As such, students from such regions stand at a disadvantage when it comes to selection for loans.
- (iii) The committee found that the bulk of the beneficiaries of the loan scheme is those pursuing science-related courses at high institutions of learning. The committee was informed that at present, the board was also providing loans to students pursuing tourism-related courses. The committee found that awarding loans to major learners pursuing science-related courses was unfair and not based on evidence, because development requires knowledge from all fields. The bias towards sciences means that many worthy beneficiaries are left out; and
- (iv) People with Disabilities. The committee found that there was progress regarding support for persons with disabilities. According to the board, all PWD applicants who qualify get awarded. However, the committee was concerned that PWDs have other challenges which the board has not taken care of.

The loans provided to PWD beneficiaries, for example, do not separately cater for assistive devices. The PWD beneficiaries, therefore, find that they have to pay interest on the money they use to buy

assistive devices. In this way, the scheme has not been as beneficial to persons with disabilities as it ought to be.

Our general recommendations

The Committee recommends as follows:

- (i) The Board should adopt a district quota system where each district is allocated slots to ensure equitable access to the scheme;
- (ii) That the board opens up the scheme to both arts and sciences;
- (iii) The Ministry of Education and Sports should establish schools in all districts in accordance with the government policy that provides that every sub-county should have a secondary school; and
- (v) The board should specifically provide a grant for PWD beneficiaries to cater for assistive devices and personal aids.

Conclusion

The committee notes that the Higher Education Students Financing Board has not received the support it requires to fully execute its mandate. This is manifested through the lack of adequate funding for the approved budgets, as well as the failure to enable the Board to control all scholarships as provided for under the law. It is imperative to provide the requisite funding to the board to enable it to recruit the staff needed so as to execute the mandate for which it was formed.

Additionally, the regional imbalance in granting loans to beneficiaries ought to be addressed as soon as possible. Students from different regions of the country should benefit equally.

Madam Speaker, I will add that we got news on the Floor of Parliament last week that the Board had outed a statement cancelling this program for this financial year and the Minister of State for Education and Sports was here and

confirmed the same, which also bothered us as the members of the committee. Of course, this happened after we had produced this report, so I thought I should mention that as well.

Madam Speaker and members, I beg to move.
(*Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, honourable chairperson, of the committee, for the exhaustive report. When you hear that report, it is a very disturbing report, especially where there is an aspect of lack of national character. Alebtong may not have one person, Bukedea has 10.

Then the discrimination in terms of the courses, that if you are only doing sciences is when you can only get the funding.

Then the other issue is the selection of these persons. How is the selection done?

And the aspect of the quota system is a very important system. I want to repeat this, we are putting little money into the loan system, but we are putting a lot of money into Government sponsorship. The children we are sponsoring on Government sponsorship are children of rich people. (*Applause*)

The rich people take their children to the best schools and these best schools produce the best students and those are the students who go on government sponsorship. Now, would you really want to pay fees for a kid of a Member of Parliament? Because it is Members of Parliament who can take their children to Kisubi and others. Why don't you give this to all the schools? How I wish the Minister of Education and Sports was here when we are discussing this issue.

Government Chief Whip, do you need to guide us, because these are crucial things and I do not want you to take responsibility.

We need the Minister of finance, the minister of education - it does not matter; a minister is a minister. The Prime Minister is here, but the Prime Minister cannot handle it alone. Advise us on how should we continue.

3.38

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): Madam Speaker, when we debate this report, of course, the ministry is represented. The Government Chief Whip is standing in for the Minister of Education and Sports; the Prime Minister is represented and finance -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Magyezi is there -
(*Laughter*)

MS NAKADAMA: Finance is not represented, but the Prime Minister is around. This report has a time frame within which we are supposed to respond. As we debate, everything that is going to be captured will be responded to at an appropriate time. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we will continue with the debate. The good thing is we will want the action-taken report under rule 220. So, we can continue with the debate the issue and let me start with the 'royal guards'.

3.39

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for a very good report -

THE SPEAKER: Two minutes each, just go to the point.

MR ANGURA: Thank you, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: First of all, it is a good report.

MR ANGURA: Yes, it is a good report. Madam Speaker, this morning I received a call when I was coming here - and I think this report is timely - from a student who completed and graduated. This student is now looking for any opportunity to get employed and so he can start repaying his loan. Unfortunately, he cannot access his transcripts.

As a Committee of PAC, this afternoon we had a meeting with Mbarara University and I

raised this issue with the accounting officer of the university, together with a few colleagues. What he said is: the shortfall in NTR that they are experiencing is partly because of some of the money that Government has not remitted to them arising from the student loan scheme and other obligations that Government has.

And he said, they cannot release the transcripts because that is all they are holding on to. In one of the general recommendations - I want to plead with this House that what the government has not released to these institutions be considered as part of their debt stock and that government should have obligations to pay. The students have gone through and we want these students to get jobs in order to start repaying.

Some of them are competitive enough and they would take the first call –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, this money is supposed to be paid upon one getting a job; it is more of a revolving fund. When you pay, another student will be funded. If you keep the transcripts, how do you expect these people to get jobs?

MR ANGURA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your guidance. All accounting officers of universities are facing a problem with NTR and partly because of this money. Let Government commit itself that the universities that have students that have completed or even those who are yet to complete, be allowed to graduate, get their transcripts, get jobs and be able to pay. *(Interruption)*

MR TWESIGYE: Thank you, Madam Speaker and my colleague, for giving way. I want to give information on the issue of repayments of the student loans. Section 23 of the Higher Education Student Financing Board Act, 2014, says that a person who has received a student loan shall start repaying the loan with the specified interest at least one year after completing the higher education for which the loan was given.

When you go to subsection (2), it says, “*For the avoidance of doubt, subsection (1) shall*

apply whether the person is employed or not.”

Madam Speaker, I just want to inform the honourable colleague and Members that as a committee –

THE SPEAKER: Give us a section, which says that the school can retain the transcript as long as the fees have not been paid.

MR TWESIGYE: Madam Speaker, I was completing this then I come to what he was stating. There is no law anywhere, which specifies that the transcript be retained but I also want to add that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development should release the money that was reinstated on the budget as quickly as possible so that it can be remitted to the universities so students can receive their transcripts. There is no excuse for that because the money was provided.

THE SPEAKER: What we are saying is, Finance should release the money and the transcripts should be given to the students for them to look for jobs.

MR ANGURA: In conclusion, the accounting officers - and I want this to go on record. I intended to come to your office to request for an opportunity to raise this as a matter of national importance. The accounting officers requested that if they can get guidance from this House and from Government that the commitments will be paid and that they should go ahead and release the transcripts, they will not hesitate.

THE SPEAKER: When you look at what happens in Kenya, they have the same process but they retain the student’s ID particulars and continue monitoring you using your ID. They do not retain the student’s transcript.

MR TWESIGYE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the team led by the chairperson for the good work done. I have been on Committee for Education and Sports since the 10th Parliament and we have been interacting with public universities. I want to give this information. In the last interaction, the National Council for Higher Education gave us the statistics of the universities that we have.

As per that date, we have nine public universities and around 40 private universities. Therefore, we are talking about 50 universities, both public and private. One of the universities, Gulu University – *(Interruption)*

MS SANTA ALUM: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Itungo is a member of the committee and signed the report.

THE SPEAKER: We are negotiating for Hon. Santa Alum's constituency that is disadvantaged and has no people getting bursaries and loans, is the one complaining. Hon. Itungo is not on the Committee of Education and Sports. He is in COSASE?

MS SANTA ALUM: He is a member of the Committee on COSASE.

THE SPEAKER: He said he was giving information.

MR TWESIGYE: I am giving information. Gulu University is on record that every academic year, 2,000 students drop out of Gulu University. If you look at the 50 universities that we have –

THE SPEAKER: Did you include that in the report?

MR TWESIGYE: This is the background of education, Madam Speaker, because we have been meeting these institutions. I am trying to show the magnitude of the dropouts we have and the only leeway has been the loan scheme. When you remove the loan scheme, you are going to create more trouble because more students are going to drop out of these universities because the reason for dropout was nothing but school fees.

As we debate this motion, know that the high rate of dropouts is another time bomb on our side. That is the information I wanted to give, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the information was good.

3.48

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Apart from this scheme being used to meet the needs of students who are not able financially, Government should do a needs assessment for those courses that are vital for the economy, but are not manageable by students because of their costs and because they are not likeable.

There are those courses, which are very vital for the economy, but are not likeable or are very expensive.

Part of this money should sponsor those courses that are crucial to drive the economy of Uganda. That is very vital if we are going to use education as a driver for economic growth. I beg to submit, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

3.49

MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii County (Kadam), Nakapiripirit): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to add my voice to the ones of those who have thanked the committee for the good report. I have two issues and the first is about the skewness of the scheme to science education. The truth is that this particular financing board was initiated to finance higher education, not specifically science students. So, there should not be a way of skewing this.

When you go to places like Karamoja, where some of us come from, it is difficult to get students who can compete fairly on the science arrangement because the schools that are there cannot afford you a platform to compete on a science scale. Therefore, I am in support of ensuring that we cover all students who go for either arts or sciences. *(Applause)*

My second concern is about the financing cover. When you look at this scheme, it covers tuition only. You find that most of these students are not able to pay for hostel, books and other educational materials. So, this still leaves them disadvantaged and hinders their

ability to concentrate during their studies as they have to move around asking for assistance here and there.

So, my concern is that when the cover is made, it should take care of the tuition and all other requirements – accommodation and all that is included. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the issue is on discrimination. Let us not discriminate against these students on the basis of the courses they offer. However, at the same time, will the Government do everything? Let us get the dependence syndrome out. If we are giving you tuition, do you even want money for buying - those other ones? *(Laughter)*

Hon. Solo?

3.51

MR SOLOMON CHELANGAT (NRM, Too County, Bukwo): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to join the colleagues in thanking the committee for the wonderful report that they have given us. I draw your attention to the skewness of the quotas for every district.

I come from Sebei and I concur with the committee report on the fact that Sebei Region has never benefited so much from this programme -

THE SPEAKER: How did you know that it has never benefited?

MR ALINGA: I have been moving around, Madam Speaker. I have even requested for the beneficiaries for Sebei.

THE SPEAKER: You say you want Sebei Region to benefit; you cannot say “it has never benefited.”

MR CHELANGAT: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the correction. I feel that Sebei should also be considered because it is a disadvantaged subregion. We have had a lot of conflicts with our neighbours and the people

are just starting to get back to normalcy. Therefore, I wish to support the committee that we should have a quota system so that every district can benefit.

Secondly, I support the issue of removing the students’ - what is this? *(Laughter)* I mean supporting the government-sponsored students at institutions of higher learning; we should support students from marginalised and underprivileged families. We cannot support children -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, what Hon. Solomon is saying is that the Government sponsorship of students at university should not be for rich families only, but also from poor families. Unfortunately, the poor families cannot afford to send their children to schools where they can excel for them to get government sponsorship. That is his point.

MR CHELANGAT: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. In Bukwo District, our schools cannot get students who can come on merit. That is my contribution. I thank you for giving me the opportunity, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us have Hon. Akol, Hon. Laura – *(Member rose)* - Please! You are all standing! *(Laughter)*.

3.54

MR ANTHONY AKOL (FDC, Kilak North County, Amuru): Madam Speaker, first, I thank you for making this committee more active. This is the second week we are getting good reports from COSASE. I thank you for the pressure you put on the committee.

Madam Speaker, I am actually confused. I want the committee chairman to clarify. He said that there was money for recruitment but that the recruitment did not take place. At the same time, the chairperson said that they were lacking staff in the board. What is the problem? They had the money for recruitment, but at the same time they don’t have the staff in key positions to make sure the implementation takes place.

That means there is a problem that needs to be corrected in that board.

Secondly, we suffer a lot, as Members of Parliament, in terms of demands from people who are poor and are not in position to get scholarships. I struggled for a student – you very well recall – whose father is dead and the mother is crippled – to make sure they could get the scholarship. The student even dropped out of KIU. The student was doing medicine. That makes me wonder: what are the criteria that this board considers in the process of selecting those who are supposed to benefit and those who are not supposed to benefit. That should come out clearly.

We want to know the criteria. If we do not know it, then we have to go for the quota system. I strongly agree with that and it should be the position of Parliament.

Also, I agree that if possible, the Government sponsorship money that we give should all be removed and put on this loan system. That will help not only those who are bright, but those who are poor. We should not create classes in the country. What is happening now is that we are creating two classes. For those who can afford, their children get into good schools and also get scholarships and everything. So, it will help a lot. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: So, are we saying that the Government should make sure that the money for the loan scheme is availed?

MR AKOL: The money for the loan scheme should be availed and if possible even the money for government sponsorship should be taken to -

THE SPEAKER: Is that seconded? You know there was a statement that there is no money for the loan scheme for this financial year. Now, the House is saying we need money for the loan scheme because it is only that loan scheme that helps poor children to be able to go to school. So, we need that money to be provided for.

MS KANUSHU: Madam Speaker, you had given me the opportunity after Hon. Akol.

THE SPEAKER: I was not seeing you. *(Laughter)*

3.58

MS LAURA KANUSHU (PWD Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the committee on COSASE, especially for raising the issue of students with disabilities.

Madam Speaker, while you said that you want the Government to pay tuition and other things, I want to say that for students with disabilities, for example, the blind, a braille machine is about Shs 6 million -

THE SPEAKER: The students with disabilities are exceptional.

Ms KANUSHU: Yes, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: For the rest, you cannot say that you want -

MS KANUSHU: Yes, Madam Speaker, also for the deaf, you know how much you pay the sign language interpreters for Hon. Ndeezi. I know that a poor disabled student cannot afford a sign language interpreter -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Laura, there is a difference between people with disability and the normal people. You are not going to tell Government to even provide books.

MS KANUSHU: Madam Speaker, I am not talking about books because the information I have, as a person who represents people with disabilities, is that even the report has mentioned that students have benefited, but they fall out because they cannot afford the braille machines for the blind. They also cannot afford to pay for sign language interpreters and this is what I am putting across. I am not talking about books because -

THE SPEAKER: I think the report is saying that they should give a grant to persons with disabilities to cover all those other things.

MS KANUSHU: Yes, Madam Speaker. I thank the Members with disabilities; Hon. Mpindi Bumali and Hon. Acan Joyce, because I know they did a good job in bringing that into the report regarding students with disabilities -

THE SPEAKER: No, you should thank the whole House because it is in support.

MS KANUSHU: I thank you and I thank the whole House, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ibanda, the pro-poor.

4.00

MR IBANDA RWEMULIKYA (Independent, Ntoroko County, Ntoroko): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I also thank the chairperson and the committee members because this is a very wonderful report.

Madam Speaker, I do not know if Government attaches a lot of value to the issues of education. This scheme was meant to help the poor. If these people have made their budget, and you find that out of Shs 32 billion, they are only giving Shs 16 billion, resulting in a shortfall of Shs 15 billion, my question is: is Government attaching a lot of value? It is not attaching value at all.

Madam Speaker, I would like us, as Parliament, to reign over the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. If there is money that is supposed to be paid to these people, why don't they pay it? It is very disturbing. I call upon Parliament - if there is money meant to help the poor people; the poor students, this money should be given.

The second is on staffing gaps. We find that they lack critical staff like; the manager for loans and manager, scholarships. When you lack such staff in an entity, how do you expect the entity to operate? I think the Ministry of Public Service should give these people a go-ahead so that they recruit for the smooth running of this scheme.

Lastly, on selection; I usually see the sons and daughters of rich people getting sponsorship, which is disturbing. You find a son and a daughter - like my son or daughter - being sponsored. Whereas we have poor people in Uganda whose children are willing and have the heart of studying they do not have the means; they do not have the money. This should also be streamlined so that those who are intended to get these services, especially the poor families, get them. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much.

4.03

MR BARNABAS TINKASIIMIRE (NRM, Buyaga West County, Kagadi): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I thank honourable colleagues who have raised the voice of the poor people in this House. This Government is committed to transforming this country. That is why they have set in motion the Parish Development Model to transform the ordinary person; the poor people who live in rural villages.

I am proposing that these schemes - Government Sponsorship Scheme and the Government Loan Scheme - should follow the Parish Development Model, where Government increases the number of students it is sponsoring to go to every parish, such that we avoid a situation where, for example, you have people in Kaabong never benefiting from this scheme; where you have a situation of people from my place missing a complete year with no student benefiting from the 4,000.

For the benefit of this House, honourable Members need to know that the number being sponsored is very small because every year, they are sponsoring 4,000 students. If you multiplied it by 20 years, that is a laughable number. If you talk about those who are benefiting from the loan scheme: 1,500 - that is a laughable number.

Madam Speaker, if we have to address the issue of poverty, you must accept that education is the highest driver of chasing away poverty in our communities. *(Applause)* I want to give

an example; that my father would not even talk about raising Shs 10,000 - I remember I was going to do sciences; Physics, Chemistry Biology/Mathematics at St Leo's College, Kyegobe, but my father could not afford to pay the fees of Shs 90,000 by then. He opted for me to go back to the seminary where I was going to pay Shs 20,000 and I do arts. That is what happened. It changed the course of my career – *(Interjection)* – that was not my wish.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members -

MR TINKASIIMIRE: I would want that we adopt an education system that works for everyone, including the poor people like my father, by then.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, your father helped you by taking you to the seminary. *(Laughter)*

MR TINKASIIMIRE: Much obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I want to refer you to the Higher Education Students Financing Act, 2014. When you look at Section 20; the eligibility in the scheme, it talks about the regional balance, gender, socio-economic need and equity.

If we are talking about the Parish Development Model, then we will need to do an amendment on the law. We are talking to you; that if you want to use the Parish Development Model to determine the eligibility of students, then you need to amend the law. For now, let us look at what is specified in the law and use it judiciously. Yes, Susan?

4.07

MS SUSAN AMERO (Independent, Woman Representative, Amuria): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I support the report from the committee. I was privileged to serve on the Committee on Education and Sports at the time this law was being made. We did a lot of benchmarking where we thought the law was going to help the people.

However, there is one thing that this House needs to sit back and rethink. We have scholarships, Government sponsorship, and this law. I think, as Ugandans, if we are to have a balanced country, we need to go in and put our feet on the ground and say that everybody should go for a loan scheme. This is because with the way things are happening, the children of the rich are the ones who are given scholarships to go out of this country. Nobody has come here to tell us how many scholarships we get.

When it comes to sponsorships in the universities, it is the children of the rich that go to good schools who get those sponsorships. The loan scheme is left to the poor.

Madam Speaker, the Government has given us the opportunity of UPE and USE where our children are studying for free. Why don't we make it uniform for everybody to pay for university education?

If the children of the poor - *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: There's an order.

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, Hon. Amero is informing the country that we have free education. Can she give us a list of those schools that give free education in Uganda? And is she in order to lie to this country that we have free education?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Namugga, I thought you were a beneficiary of UPE. At least I know you as a beneficiary of UPE. Hon. Amero, do not mind. Hon. Namugga is a beneficiary of UPE. *(Laughter)*

MS AMERO: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your protection. I was saying that if our children are going to the university, and if we are to have equity. Let everybody go in for a loan scheme so that everybody can pay because otherwise, it is the poor people down there who are paying while the people who are okay, like us who can sponsor our children, are benefiting from the scholarships because we have access to those offices.

Madam Speaker, I am proposing that we amend the law so that everybody goes for a loan scheme to access university education, and that Government should be ready; we all pay equally so that the country is balanced. Otherwise, as it is right now, it is still the poor people who are paying and not the rich.

4.10

MS VERONICA NANYONDO (NUP, Woman Representative, Bukomasimbi): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Many deserving students are left out -

THE SPEAKER: Whoever has spoken will not speak. Let us give everybody a chance to speak.

MS NANYONDO: Many deserving students are left out because of the process of getting the loan scheme. The process is not clear, more so to the people in the villages. For example, in Bukomansimbi, many students have tried, I have also tried for them, but we have both not been successful.

I am also disturbed by the process where only the science students are catered for, yet there are many art students that can become important people in this country if they are helped. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, so much.

4.11

MR GEOFFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomasimbi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee of COSASE for the report. The Government should create more awareness of how people can access this service. For example, in our area -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members – Hon. Tinkasimire, get out of there. Stop spoiling our army officers, come and sit in front. What Hon. Solo is talking about is very important; creating awareness, because most people do not know about this loan scheme. When you ask hon. Mwijukye here, can he tell

you anything about the loan scheme? He does not know. We need to create awareness about the loan scheme. You go ahead, Please.

MR KAYEMBA-SSOLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Due to the failure of the beneficiaries to know, many conmen have turned out as brokers of the loan scheme. They go into villages and tell parents, if you need to access this, you need to pay this and that. At the end of the day, parents lose their money and this is due to the Government's weakness of not creating awareness. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, this is due to our weaknesses, as leaders. We ought to give out information to the people outside there that there is a Government program, in terms of a loan scheme, and this is how it works.

You are the voice of the voiceless. You are here to represent the people of Bukomansimbi and give them information on what you get from here. Not all of them will be able to come here, and not all of them are able to watch TV or listen to the radio and so, you need to take information to them.

4.14

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are talking about the children of the poor but you will be surprised to learn that this scheme is benefiting mainly the children of the rich because they are the ones who know how to go online and fill out the forms and everything.

A number of our children from the villages do not know how one goes online. Personally, I have distributed brochures from the board about how people can apply. They will read that brochure, but for them to go and look for an internet cafe and fill online is not easy.

We have also been talking about equity. If we do an analysis of the government sponsorships and other forms of sponsorships that we may not talk about here - because I want to believe

that they are there - you find that it is extremely skewed. We are talking about children of the poor, but let us also talk in terms of regions.

If you put the loan scheme alongside the government sponsorship and then you map it against the regions of the country, you will see the kind of imbalance we are talking about.

Number two, about the recruitment of staff. Madam Speaker, I still think not recruiting them is deliberate. Why? It is because quietly, I think somebody is trying to *-(Interjections)* - for me, the fact that they have not been allowed to recruit yet some money has been put there, for me, I think it is deliberate. It is just that some people want to phase out this board slowly and quietly without people noticing. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.14

MR MILTON MUWUMA (NRM, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Edakasi, did you want to say something before you leave? No, he has just lost somebody on a motorcycle, so he wanted to leave.

4.16

MR ANTHONY ESENU (NRM, Kapelebyong County, Kapelebyong): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My name is Esenu Anthony, MP Kapelebyong. Last evening my workers rammed into a stationary truck and died on the spot. I just got information that even the second person has also passed on.

But having said that, I want to just add that this scheme needs to be worked on seriously. I saw that in Kapelebyong, only seven people have benefited. But I am sure, if you checked the seven people you may find that they come from other districts.

I want to confirm and affirm the committee's recommendation that quotas should be put in place. And information - I was asking my colleague about how to access the loans. Where is the desk you go to?

I agree with you that we should have information made available for the whole country. Thank you very much. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Our condolences to you.

MR MUWUMA: Thank you very much. Madam Speaker, yesterday we were in Alebtong District celebrating the World Population Day. Before that, we interacted with a number of youth and discussed the causal factors of high school dropouts. The youth in those meetings revealed to us that one of the key issues is the failure to access loan schemes that are nationally provided for.

A number of senior six dropouts are idling without getting access to what we are discussing now. One of the key issues that came out was the lack of transparency by the Board in selecting the beneficiaries of this scheme.

Last year, I had two candidates from Iganga who applied. One of them did BCM, got 16 points and applied for medicine at Kampala International University. After getting the admission, they tried twice, but failed.

These are orphans but they failed to access the loan scheme. They were advised to appeal, which they did, but there was nothing positive.

As we discuss the general principles, the issue of transparency needs to be addressed because it is leaving out very many Ugandans who would be benefiting from this programme. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR SEKABIRA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I am rising on a procedural matter relating to the subject matter before us.

One, the Minister of Education and Sports just affirmed on the Floor of Parliament that there is no money allocated for the programme and we are barely 12 days into the new financial year. Are we proceeding well to debate how we can cure the defects of the scheme when there is no money?

Two –

THE SPEAKER: No, do not go to two. Do you know the institution that has powers; that does the appropriation? If there is no money, the appropriation is done by this House and that is why we are making an order that we need money for this process.

MR SEKABIRA: Madam Speaker, what justifies my submission is that the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is not here. Two, the same minister has said that there is no money for –

THE SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is here. Honourable members, when you come in late, you need to understand where we are coming from because this is something that was addressed from the beginning. We had to reach a consensus on whether we should proceed or not because of what you are raising. Otherwise, we cannot stop working because you do not see Hon. Musasizi.

4.21

MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I support the recommendation of the committee. I have only two comments.

One, the chairperson of the committee reported to the House that there is no loan recovery policy, which has been put in place. I noted that the loan scheme has been in place for nine years. It is totally inconceivable that after nine years, we don't have a loan recovery policy. No wonder the institutions are just holding the transcripts of the students who have not yet fulfilled the payments. Can we have that policy put in place?

Secondly, the inequity about the loan scheme is also appalling. I have noted that for the last nine years, the people of Otuke only were able to send 35 students while Ntungamo sent 488 students. I am wondering what criteria has been used. Is it poverty, academic prowess or population?

Madam Speaker, there must be clarity in terms of the criteria of selecting those students. The recommendations, which we are going to adopt is on the quota system so that we can determine the fate of students like those in Otuke who qualify for higher education. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: You sent 35 students?

MR OMARA: 35 students in nine years are very few.

THE SPEAKER: Those are very many. *(Laughter)*

MR OMARA: Compared to 488 students from Ntungamo and others that are on the list, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, there are places that did not send any. Can I have Hon. Museveni?

4.23

MR WILLIAM MUSEVENI (Independent, Buwekula South County, Mubende): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I need your protection. The Chief Whip is asking me whether I am the original Museveni.

THE SPEAKER: Give us your point.

MR MUSEVENI: Madam Speaker, my concern is on the retention of the transcripts of the beneficiaries. I ask myself, if the transcript is retained, can one get a job?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable ministers, the issue is on retention of the transcripts. Can you give an order for these institutions to give the transcripts to the owners as they demand their monies from Government?

MR MUSEVENI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. That was my major concern on this issue. Since you have ordered, I rest my case. Thank you.

4.25

MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luwero): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The notion of equity is of paramount importance, especially when it comes to rurality and rural education. I therefore, support the report because it calls for providing funds for the disadvantaged communities.

However, much as we are discussing that as leaders and politicians, as an economist, my biggest worry is the element of the revolving fund; that, that money must be paid for other students to access it.

We all know that in Uganda, we are still challenged by the levels of unemployment, especially post-education. I am looking at a scenario where students have graduated and are sitting home due to lack of jobs. My biggest question is the continuity of the students' loan scheme. Are we going to be in position to carry on with the scheme, given that learners who graduate sometimes get difficulties in accessing employment? Thank you, Madam Speaker.

MR MAYANJA: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Allan Mayanja, you are becoming wiser. What procedural matter do you have?

MR MAYANJA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. The list which has been given in the report shows that in 2022, Nakaseke had only –

THE SPEAKER: Is that a procedural matter?

MR MAYANJA: Yes, we have only three students who benefited. However, I am not so sure whether these students are there. In this list, there might be “ghost students” who are benefiting from this scheme.

Therefore, wouldn't it be procedurally right to lay the names, villages, districts and even the schools on the Table?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Hon. Esenu talked about “ghost students” and I think he has a point because if you are saying the three students are from Nakaseke, can we have the list of those students laid on the Table for us to be able to confirm and make a follow-up?

MR ALLAN MAYANJA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that wise ruling.

THE SPEAKER: Committee Deputy Chairperson?

MS LUCY AKELLO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before Hon. Allan talked about it, I was sharing with my Chairperson that it is important for us to lay on Table the full list of all the beneficiaries for the nine years because it was actually supplied to us.

I have asked our technical team to bring the book – it is a big book – which we will lay and Members can peruse. By the way, Madam Speaker, I took time to consult my district officials about the list of Amuru students and I was shocked that some of the students were not from Amuru.

THE SPEAKER: What about Bukedea? *(Laughter)* Honourable members, Hon. Hassan had a very good point. As an Economist, what is the continuity of this project? This is meant to be a revolving fund. Much as we are giving out this money, how are we recovering it for transmission to other people, to build the number of people who are going to benefit from it? That is food for thought.

4.29

MR CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH (Independent, Aruu County, Pader):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Before I thank the committee, I would like to thank you. In Pader, people are rejoicing and birds are being slaughtered. It is not always usual that speakers from Pader District come to the Parliament of Uganda and meet the Speaker. You do not know what you have done to Pader today. *(Applause)* I thank you very much.

I am sure our voters are watching and, indeed, they will do the needful when it comes to elections tomorrow.

THE SPEAKER: Therefore, the voters of Pader should bring back Hon. Paska, Hon. Komakech and Hon. Santa. *(Applause)*

MR KOMAKECH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. On the same note, I thank the committee for the good work they have done. There is a report that shows that out of every 10 people in Uganda, only one works in the formal sector. We are taking our children to school but where are the jobs? These are children of poor people. In Uganda, to get work, you need to have connections. Do not expect Ojok from Pader to know a commissioner or a permanent secretary to give you a job connection. It is that hard. These children are meant to pay back that money and it can be straining.

We thank the Government for UPE but these children have grown into men. What plan and policy does the Government have? Why don't we pick these children who have performed well and employ them? They will use the salary we are paying them to pay back part of the loan and use the other part to take care of their old ones.

This is my only deliberation. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.31

MR ALEX NDEEZI (PWD Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will be very brief. I am trying to build from the point raised by the committee in relation to assistance to students with disabilities.

The committee made a very good recommendation in relation to provisions or setting up of a grant to assist students with disabilities to access personal assistance and mobility appliances. It is very good but there is a problem: the recommendation does not say when.

Therefore, Madam Speaker, I propose an amendment to the recommendation of the

committee to the effect that this grant be established with effect from next financial year.

Secondly, issues to do with the empowerment of people with disabilities are constitutional requirements under the principle on affirmative action. So, today, we have noted that our people have not been benefiting. We want to set a quota for the number of students with disabilities.

According to the last housing and population census, 12 per cent of Uganda's population are people with disabilities. The quota I am suggesting is a mere 10 per cent.

Madam Speaker, to be specific, I need your support in including two points on the recommendations in relation to students with disabilities *—(Member timed out)*

THE SPEAKER: Switch on the microphone, Hon. Alex.

MR NDEEZI: The grant proposed by the committee should take effect from next financial year.

Secondly, we should set a quota for beneficiaries with disabilities and say 10 per cent of students shall be students with disabilities. Thank you.

4.33

MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee for the very good report. The bias on sponsoring sciences is in line with our National Development Plan (NDP) III. As we know, there is no society that has sustainably transformed without focus on science, technology, engineering and innovation. However, having said that, I propose that there be a quota system for that loan scheme so that if District A does not raise sufficient numbers in Sciences, they should not be locked out. If they have Arts students, they should be taken as well. *(Applause)* That is the equitable proportion that is envisaged and enshrined in the policy and the Act.

Secondly, Science students get easily absorbed into the job market and so, they pay the money faster. However, Madam Speaker, education as a service, strategic as it is, should undergo regular modernisation or review. It does not have to be higher education only. Why don't we extend and take it to technical and vocational education? *(Applause)*

This is because those students get easily absorbed into the labour market and are able to pay the loan faster. They also form the basis for our workforce for the development of this country.

I so propose, Madam Speaker.

4.36

MR JULIUS TUSIIME (Independent, Rwampara East County, Rwampara): Thank you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Wilson, I would like to interest you in looking at the Act. The Act does not specify Sciences, much as there are directives that we must emphasise Sciences. Let us act as per the law in place. It is not doing Sciences that made me the Speaker. *(Applause)*

MR JULIUS TUSIIME: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Today, we celebrate 3,025 Ugandans who would have never got an opportunity to study at university. When I was at university in 2004 – I was doing Social Sciences at Makerere University – I was paying Shs 450,000. When I do the mathematics here, it means Government has spent about Shs 15 million on each of the 3,025 students. That money would not have been afforded by a person from a humble family.

I commend the scheme board for the work done and we should give them total support. Madam Speaker, Government policy is not cast in stone. To-date, many things have changed. We are looking at the Parish Model Development, equitability in the district quota system and Government scholarships on other schemes. Is this the right time for us to review this scheme so that we cascade it down for all parishes to equitably benefit? Is this the right time when we

need to support fully the scheme to establish a robust monitoring evaluation unit? If we did, I believe, we would be getting in real time some of the observations we are raising here. It is my humble prayer that we support this scheme but also review –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, as you look at this, Government needs to tailor the beneficiary criteria to ensure the needy students are sponsored, not students who are able to afford. Let it be a priority area. This should be followed by establishing what the committee has recommended; the district quota system. Once you have that and a clear monitoring system, then you can be able to achieve it. Once you are monitoring, the aspect of saying the people coming from Nakaseke are from Kalangala will stop because you are able to monitor.

4.39

MR JAMES MAMAWI (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I thank the committee for the opportunity.

I am aware that one of the criteria for a students to apply for this loan scheme is that you must have an admission from any of the universities in this country. To me, that is one of the areas where those students who applied have all the qualifications because if you do not qualify, you may not get a university admission.

After getting all that, the best thing the scheme could have done is to say, who is the vulnerable to benefit since all of them qualified to join university? If we go by that, we shall be able to ascertain those who need support from Government. If we do not go that way, there is going to be a lot of challenges. Where I come from in Adjumani East, hardly one or two students benefits from these schemes. We can give money for this scheme. What we are saying, Madam Speaker, is that we need this criteria to be addressed and money can be given. No one in this House –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mamawi, you are saying that you need the district to be involved in identifying the students?

MR MAMAWI: Exactly, Madam Speaker, because my district knows very well that this person comes from this area and this place can benefit once he or she qualifies. That is the only way we can – we do not refuse to give money for this scheme totally. We agree that money be given but we need this to be streamlined. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Catherine?

4.41

MS CATHERINE LAMWAKA (NRM, Woman Representative, Omoro): Madam Speaker, I want to thank the committee for the report presented. I agree with the proposal of the district quota system in the selection of the beneficiaries for the Student Loan Scheme, if it could be done that way, it would save us a lot.

Secondly, we have been discussing institutions withholding certificates of beneficiaries. Madam Speaker, I have a case of a student who is doing Petroleum Geoscience at Makerere University and for two years, he has accumulated over Shs 7 million. He is a beneficiary of a loan scheme and the student is equally worried on whether he will graduate.

You have made a directive to the Ministry of Education and Sports to attend to the issue of withholding certificates. I see us heading to the next stage of institutions stopping students from graduating if the arrears are not paid. Madam Speaker, I strongly recommend that we avail money for this loan scheme to proceed.

Thirdly, Madam Speaker, I would like to comment on the criteria for selection. When you look at the loan scheme selection process, the advert and applications are mostly online. This puts students in rural areas at a serious disadvantage. I agree with the proposal that the districts should be fully involved in this process, especially at the stage of advertising for the loan scheme. Secondly, at the stage of application - if the districts get involved in receiving applications for the students and submitting them to the board of the loan scheme.

These are areas that would sort this mess. Otherwise, it is crucial that we provide funds for the loan scheme to continue. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I think we need to provide, as Hon. Catherine is saying, funds for this – mindful that most of the schools are privately owned. You get institutions like Kampala International University (KIU) and Islamic University in Uganda (IUIU), all of which are privately owned. If it was only Government schools, there you would think – even if they were Government schools, they have operational costs that they have to meet. This money should be paid to the owners.

4.44

MR JOAB BUSINGE (FDC, Masindi Municipality, Masindi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I will start from that point; that the minister making the institutions to release certificates when they have not been paid, is unfair. This non-payment is cumulative –

THE SPEAKER: There is a contractual obligation between the university and the ministry.

MR JOAB BUSINGE: The ministry has not met its obligation.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, they will meet it but what matters is the aspect of time. Yet we also want these graduates to get jobs.

MR JOAB BUSINGE: I am also wondering why this non-payment has become cumulative. Is it true the ministry has not had money year in and year out?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mbwatekamwa, you can go and make your telephone call from out. Do you want to start barking from here? *(Laughter)*

MR JOAB BUSINGE: Secondly, Madam Speaker, I also support the view that local governments be involved in the verification. Local governments cannot be involved right

from the time of application and so on, but once the students have applied, and they have got admission letters, then they can be sent to the districts for verification, just like it is with the district quota system.

Otherwise, as it is, the intention is to cater for children of the poor, but I have information that today, children of civil servants are benefiting from this scheme. This beats the purpose.

I do not agree with the Member who said that the other scholarship scheme of Government sponsorship be scrapped completely.

First of all, it is not entirely true –

THE SPEAKER: You cannot scrap it.

MR JOAB BUSINGE: This is what I heard a Member insinuate. It is not entirely true that children from rich families are the only ones benefiting.

THE SPEAKER: The Member is entitled to his own opinion.

MR JOAB BUSINGE: I am also bringing my opinion, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: It is not one of the recommendations so, it is not something you can challenge.

MR JOAB BUSINGE: Okay. Much obliged. But what I am saying is that the districts should be involved in verification and I do not know whether somebody who is already employed by the Government and earning a salary should still benefit from this scheme of the poor.

Finally, I feel that Government should have a way of ensuring that these children are given priority when it comes to employment. They can go for national service in the armed forces and even in the local government. Yes, because when it comes to recruitment to these forces, it is also not easy. Yet, we have given Government money to these people and we need to recover it from them. So, where there is employment, they should be given first priority because we

need money from them. I beg to submit.

4.48

MR BONIFACE OKOT (NRM, Youth Representative, Northern): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I salute the committee members for their report. It is agreeable to all of us that if the students' loan scheme fails, the consequences are dire, and our People-Centred Development Agenda that we strive for as a Parliament will be at stake.

Madam Speaker, our country has come too far in implementing educational programmes that support underprivileged children at all levels, for us to slide back right now. I just have two quick concerns. One is on equity and awareness. They say information is power and certainly, this should be an integral part of this student loan scheme. However, I also support the recommendation of the committee that there should be equitable distribution of these loan schemes through the district quotas.

Secondly, it is on the issue of the continuity of the loan scheme and timely disbursement. I raised a matter last year regarding this scheme - that the students who are receiving this support normally go to university way too late and some of them end up missing examinations. This is a matter that must be addressed. The continuity of this scheme should be non-negotiable.

Finally, Madam Speaker, I support the recommendation of the committee calling Government to action that we need to find the necessary resources to resuscitate this particular scheme so that our young people can get the education that will enable us to drive our socio-economic transformation agenda. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Benjamin.

4.51

MR BENJAMIN KAMUKAMA (NRM, Ruhaama East County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. Before I go on, I would like to comment on the issue of Ntungamo District. By 2021, the population of Ntungamo District was 550,000

people and the one of Otuke is a mere 120,000 people. Therefore, it would be unfair to have the same number of students at the university benefiting from that scheme. Nevertheless, just last week, we were talking about Government policies; the best policies Government developed but it is failing to sustain. We are talking about the issue of failure to pay medical interns. Right now, we are talking about the issue of the loan scheme, which is a very good policy.

Last week, I talked to a student who missed joining a university on a medical course by a mere 0.5 points. He hoped that he would maybe join the university on this scheme but his dream is being shattered by failure to provide the money for this loan scheme.

Therefore, my recommendation would be that the House and the Government find money to put into this loan scheme so that this programme and good policy continues to be sponsored in this country. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Government should find the money for the loan scheme and the interns. Interns still remain a pain.

4.53

MR EPHRAIM BIRAARO (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Like everybody is saying, I felt touched and cheated when I discovered that Buhweju was not benefiting from the scheme. I put in time and visited the council and met the Executive Director.

I thought that at that time he educated me correctly because he told me the selection criteria does not involve any direct human input. He told me the list is computer generated and that if the computer detects anything like anyone from a wealthy family, it knocks that person out. That is what I was told, Madam Speaker. *(Laughter)*

Now, when I come here and find these details out, I get surprised that the process is being abused and the system is being manipulated. Buhweju comes from the western part of

Uganda and we have not benefited at all. Even though there are numbers, they are very minimal.

Madam Speaker, I would suggest the following: One, there should be a thorough audit of the selection system. Is it computerised or manual? - the manual man could be having influence.

Secondly, the council should interface with Parliament and educators so that later on, we take them at their word. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Biraaro, next time, do not write an article on MPs. *(Laughter)* Yes, Sarah.

4.54

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Committee on PAC-COSASE for this report. I will get to some missing issues in the report after I have raised the following; I am not going to repeat what has already been said, but if you look at this report, on the performance of the Government of Uganda receipts, the committee informed us that Shs 11.89 billion was not released and this money was for continuing students. Where are these students? Money was not released and yet, these were continuing students.

I remember raising this matter on the Floor during Financial Year 2021/2022 and urging Government to avail money so that continuing students can complete their education. This has remained pending. How I wish we looked further and knew what has happened to these students.

Secondly, while we may blame the Board or the management, Shs 3 billion for operational funds was not released. How do we expect the Board to operationalise its activities and even follow up on the students when money for operation is not released?

Thirdly, while we talk about the district quota, there are districts and sub-counties that have secondary schools, but do not have A-level.

There are no A-level schools in some sub-counties. I have them in my own district. So, as we look at the quota, can we first ask the Ministry of Education and Sports to ensure that all schools have A' level?

Additionally, there are schools without laboratories. Even as Government tries to consider Science subjects; there are schools and districts that do not have laboratories to support Science studies.

Lastly, Madam Speaker, this committee report is mixed up. In paragraph 5; low loan recovery rate, Chairperson of the committee, I do not know if you read your report; the heading is, "Low – "

THE SPEAKER: What did he read?

MS OPENDI: He read, "Low loan recovery rate" and he tried to give us - When you look at –

THE SPEAKER: What is different is the heading but the table gives you –

MS OPENDI: The table is on statistics of student beneficiaries from the loan scheme. Since inception, it indicated that there was a decline. You have given us this information and we appreciate it, but where is the information on the loan recovery that was in the heading?

Committee Chairperson, I request that next time, please, critically look at these reports because this is prepared by the clerks. However, I expect you to read this report together with the committee members that signed this report before it comes here. Thank you, Madam Speaker.

4.58

MR PETER OKOT (DP, Tochi County, Omoro): Thank you, Madam Speaker. If you look at what Hon. Sarah was commenting on and go to the table, you will notice that in the last nine years, the scheme benefited about 12,000 students. We have been talking about loan schemes versus Government sponsorship scholarships. If you look at the amount, which

Government spends per student through the loan scheme and you look at the amount of money Government spends per student through the sponsorship, you will find that one Government sponsored student could pay four students through the loan scheme.

If Government sponsors 4,000 students per year and that is converted into the Student Loan Scheme system, Government will be able to pay 4,000 times four, which means 16,000 students would have been sponsored through this loan scheme.

We have been saying here that even those who get Government sponsorship are children of the rich. Why not put everybody through the Student Loan Scheme so that the number goes up?

Madam Speaker, you will notice that over 200,000 students sit senior six every year. The absorption rate of Government is 4,000 plus the 1,500 through the Student Loan Scheme. This means Government can only take 5,500 students. How about the over 200,000? Where are they going? Something needs to be done here. *(Member timed out.)*

5.00

MS CECILIA OGWAL (FDC, Woman Representative, Dokolo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I just want to highlight two issues, which I think are very critical. I do not even know why we are wasting our intellectual analysis on this because the committee has done us a favour by exposing the problem of this fund.

First of all, we cannot be talking about continuing with the scheme before we sort the issue of corporate governance. There is a Board, which cannot function, a Board without proper policy and without proper supervision. There is no loan policy. What is the fund doing? Who is managing it? These are some of the issues we need to deal with.

Secondly, for nine years, we have seen that this Government has spent money on this scheme. Who benefited from it? Who authorised it? We

do not have a legally functional Board that can take a decision that it can be accountable for. The professionalism of the management of finances is not there; it is non-existent. So, who are we talking about?

Madam Speaker, this institution is the oversight institution. We need to take action now. If you were to ask me to give my opinion, we have to halt this scheme until we re-evaluate how it has been managed.

I was looking at this and I thought that maybe, I am not reading well in terms of the Ugandan record. There is this district called Madi-Okollo. In nine years, it got four people. In nine years, there is a district called Mbarara, which got 416 students. I think there is another one; Obongi, which got four students. In nine years, Ntungamo got 488 students. This cannot be happening in Uganda.

In the Parish Development Model, we have already identified 39 per cent of the population living below the poverty line. Where do you find the 39 per cent? (*Applause*) Let us first show - Somebody is not thinking about the policy and how to properly manage this country economically. So, let us rethink.

Madam Speaker, I am very sorry; I am not criticising anybody but I am saying the people we have put in charge are not in charge. You cannot bring this report before us. We have a record of 39 per cent of people living below the poverty level. Where are their children going to school? Who is sponsoring their education?

The fathers of this nation diagnosed three challenges to drive this country forward. Whether you are talking about Korea, you have to look at the three pillars; disease, ignorance and poverty (DIP). You have to structure around those three. We then added "S" for security.

Madam Speaker, I am saying that we need to fix corporate governance. We need to halt this system until we have put our priorities right. That is my contribution. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the issue of corporate governance is very serious. We need to ensure that corporate governance is fully implemented and that we have a fully functional board, then, of course, increasing the staffing. The report mentioned that there were staffing gaps and a need for better planning for the fund.

Imat is a great grandmother who does not have any child going to school but there are those who have school-going children and need this loan. Therefore, cancelling this loan affects those who are benefiting from it.

5.06

MS BRENDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luwero): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I also thank the Committee Chairperson and the committee members for this report.

A lot has been said and I am in support. On page 9 -

THE SPEAKER: First of all, on what Hon. Cecilia Ogwal said; that we cancel the project, is that correct? Is that what we want? She said that we should halt the project. Will education ever wait for anybody? Will age wait if we halt the project?

MS NABUKENYA: Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: That justifies what I am saying. Miss Uganda is a great grandmother; a *Jajja*. Please, can we finish? We have actually spent over one and a half hours on this debate.

MS NABUKENYA: Madam Speaker, in regard to stopping this loan scheme, I do not think that we should do it because we have continuing students. In the 2023/2024 budget, there is a provision for the continuing students of Shs 27 billion – although the scheme required Shs 34 point something billion, only Shs 27 billion was allocated and it was earmarked for the continuing students, wages and the day-to-day running of the entity.

The scheme lacks Shs 4.5 billion for new applicants and the months of June and July are

gazetted for applications. Selection happens in August. So, if this Parliament resolves that this scheme should continue and that this money be allocated, the applications can go on.

However, Madam Speaker, I also support that we need to clean the entity. There is a lot lacking and we also need to amend the law because although the law provides for regional balance, it never happens. That law is a creation of this Parliament; it must be brought back and we rethink it; all Ugandans should benefit. I would go for the district quota system.

Madam Speaker, I would also like to inform this Parliament that in the 2021 secondary school academic year, the districts of Nakapiripirit, Napak and Madi-Okollo did not get any student. *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: There is a motion - but we have not heard from the minister. Honourable members, 40 Members have debated this report.

Leader of the Opposition?

5.09

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Madam Speaker, in the Ninth Parliament, Government brought this law because there was a big argument that there were State House-sponsored students with no clear selection criterion. There was also a lot of dropout of students from universities.

Parliament sent the Committee on Education and Sports to Tanzania and Kenya to study how the loan schemes were running there. Let us go back and read about the Kenya and Tanzania's loan schemes, which are very strong because these funds are returned as revolving funds.

It is failing here, Madam Speaker, because Government has failed to respect the law as it is.

In the Higher Education Students' Financing Act, everything we have talked about here is captured. Actually, as a committee, we reached the extent of telling the Executive of the Board

that whenever they were going to recruit, they should write letters to Members of Parliament and district councilors for everybody to be in the know of the recruitment of these young people.

There is no Government that will defend itself when they are paying Shs 70 billion to students from well-to-do families and failing to pay Shs 6 billion to cater for students from poor families.

Madam Speaker, look at the universities that are taking the students under this scheme *-(Interjections)-* I do not know whether I am proceeding badly, but -

THE SPEAKER: The LoP is speaking.

MR SSEWUNGU: When you take a keen interest, you will notice that Makerere University, which is charging highly, has a very low number of students under the loan scheme. When you go to KIU, which has decided to take students at lower costs, the biggest number is there.

The only answer that we need - we sat on the Committee on Education and Sports and the chairperson is there. We invited the finance ministry, the Loan Scheme Board and the Ministry of Education and Sports to mitigate and get funds for this loan. We said that we should look at wasteful expenditures and get the Shs 6 billion so that this loan continues running but we failed.

Then PS/ST confirmed to the committee that they were going to look around for this money so that the loan scheme does not collapse. The moment you do not give this money, it means the Government must come back to Parliament and we repeal the law because it will be non-existent.

Madam Speaker, even where you are talking about scientists being given priority, it was because the loan scheme failed to get money to cater for all courses. However, the law is very clear: it does not segregate against anybody. Both a lawyer and a teacher should study. I am

here to attest – give me 10 students who have finished teaching courses and see whether I fail to get for employment in this country. The absorption capacity is there.

Even these low staffing gaps shown by the Auditor-General, in different ministries, is because they are failing to employ people. If the loan scheme itself has only three people who are supposed to follow up those who have not paid, can they manage 4,000 people all over the country?

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, let us look at how many students apply for this loan scheme. There are more than 10,000 and at the end of the day, they take only 1,000. All these are challenges.

As I conclude, let us agree – we pass a law – that all the money that is given to different schemes, including those coming from Cuba and other countries, must all be encompassed within the loan scheme. Then, the loan scheme should be supervised to cater for all our people.

Otherwise, if Parliament does not act, you will still get challenges every morning in your homes from children coming to look for school fees from Members of Parliament. Everybody can attest that they have felt this pinch. The loan scheme was a very good remedy.

We ask you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, kindly, go back and sit as Government and look for the Shs billion so that we continue and correct the mistakes.

We cannot halt this loan scheme as suggested by Hon. Cecilia Ogwal but we can correct it based on the law, which is in place.

Madam Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: As we look for the money, we should also scale up the recovery since this is a revolving fund.

MR SSEWUNGU: Madam Speaker, if you direct and wish so, as our boss, let the Loan Scheme Board give evidence of how they

are collecting these funds – students were paying back. However, when we went into the COVID-19 lockdown –

THE SPEAKER: We need to have an audit of the recoveries of the loan scheme amount. We also need a thorough audit on the numbers of 480, five and three - I have just learnt that Bukedea has only three. We need to make an analysis and see why. We are going to have the list laid on Table.

Government?

MS NAKADAMA: Madam Speaker, as I said in the beginning, we have noted everything that has been raised by the honourable Members of Parliament.

I thank the chairperson of the committee for the good report. Every Member of Parliament is concerned about the poor students who are not being sponsored.

Madam Speaker, the law cannot be repealed, like the LoP was suggesting.

THE SPEAKER: The LoP did not say we repeal –(*Mr Ssewungu rose*)- no, the LoP does not behave like that (*Laughter*). I have said the LoP did not say we repeal the law.

MS NAKADAMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: It is not cast on stone; where it is necessary, we shall amend.

MS NAKADAMA: Madam Speaker, the Government is in charge and the Shs 6 billion will be provided so that our students continue with this loan scheme and study, especially those we say come from poor families. (*Applause*)

According to the law, equity, gender, and regional balance have all been catered for. It is there in the law. So –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, what the minister is saying is that the law has

provided for regional balance, gender, socio-economic need and equity. However, if it is not being practised, implementation is another issue but provision of the law is provided for. You made a good law.

MS NAKADAMA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that guidance. I am saying that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development together with the Ministry of Education and Sports will be here on Tuesday, to make a clarification on the certificates of the students that graduated and have not yet got their certificates.

Secondly, after the stipulated time, all the questions will be answered by the Ministry of Education and Sports.

THE SPEAKER: Mr Okema, let that be a substantial item on the Order Paper on the issue of certificates retained at universities.

MS NAKADAMA: The Ministry of Education and Sports will be here to answer those questions at the time that is given to them by the Speaker. I thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, you have heard from Government. Since children are going back to school, we will want a Treasury Memorandum on this particular report within two weeks. So, can you lay it on the Table?

MR SSENKYONYI: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For starters, I want to lay the press release, which I talked about; a communication from the Board cancelling all applications for request of funds because that is what the Government is meant to act upon, as you have directed, to avail the resources.

THE SPEAKER: It is dated when and signed by who?

MR SSENKYONYI: It is dated 8 July 2023 and signed by Michael Wanyama, the Executive Director of Higher Education Students Financing Board. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Now that you have said we should continue with the process, can you direct them to continue with the advertising and recruitment? - No, the money will always be found. Let the people be shortlisted. If we are not going to do that, then we are halting the business, as Hon. Cecilia Ogwal was saying. Yes, you people don't distort me.

MS NAKADAMA: Madam Speaker, I am going to direct the Ministry of Education and Sports to continue with the process of advertising and recruiting the students.

THE SPEAKER: Clarification, *Hajjati*; you are directing the minister.

MS NAKADAMA: Most obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: So, direct. (*Laughter*)

MS NAKADAMA: I am directing the Minister of Education and Sports to continue recruiting and advertising for the Students Loan Scheme.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Please, lay the document on Table.

MR SSENKYONYI: Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on Table the Higher Education Students Financing Board list of loan beneficiaries from 2014-2015 to 2022-2023. I beg to lay.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, Honourable members. I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Public Accounts (Commission, Statutory Authorities and State Enterprises) on the Financial Statement of the Higher Education Students Financing Board for the Financial Year ended 30 June 2022, be adopted with amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE SPEAKER: Can we have the agreement laid on Table? Hon. Allan Mayanja, are you around?

5.23

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (ENERGY) (Mr Sidronius Okaasai): Madam Speaker, now I have a power sales agreement for the sale of power at the Uganda South Sudan border towns of Nimule and Kaya. An agreement, which was signed between the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, Uganda and the Ministry of Energy, South Sudan.

The agreement was signed by Uganda Electricity Transmission Company Limited and on behalf of South Sudan, the South Sudan Electricity Corporation signed the agreement on 12 July 2023.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us receive.

MR OKAASAI: I said on 12 July 2023. Yes, that is the date which is here. *(Laughter)* Yes, please, crosscheck.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, an agreement is a process - one person signs today and another one at a different time. It has to be taken to – no, it is a process. Don't just fault the dates. Let us look at the agreement and then, we will come out with what we want to find out from what has been signed.

Honourable members, I am sending the agreement to the Committee on Environment and Natural Resources to scrutinise it and report back to the House.

MR OKAASAI: I lay it on the Table.

THE SPEAKER: Please, do. Do you have something else to lay?

MR OKAASAI: Madam Speaker, yesterday, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development brought here Biofuels Regulations 2022. I am ready to lay them on the Table.

THE SPEAKER: That is arising out of which Act?

MR OKAASAI: Madam Speaker, this is arising from Biofuels Bill, 2018, which was assented to by the President on 4 June 2018 and gazetted on 28 August 2020.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Please lay.

MR OKAASAI: And now the regulations were gazetted on 16 December 2022. Now, I wish to lay on the Table the Bio-Fuels Regulations, 2022. I beg to lay. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR OKAASAI: But I also wish to lay. *(Laughter)*

Okay, I lay *-(Interjections)* - to me, laying is *-(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, if the Member wants to lie there, it is okay. *(Laughter)*

MR OKAASAI: So, I am laying also-

THE SPEAKER: The regulations are referred to the Committee of the Environment. Yes, you continue. Do you have *-(Laughter)*

MR OKAASAI: I will withdraw the Act, 2020. So, I have laid *-(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: It is because you are disturbing. *(Laughter)* Honourable members, we adjourn the House to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 5.28 p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 13 July 2023 at 2.00 p.m.)