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FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

TUESDAY, 11 MARCH 2025



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 22ND SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 11 March 2025

Parliament met at 2.28 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting.

As we enter into the budgeting period, I wish to remind you of the various timelines, as enshrined in our rules and the Public Finance Management Act (PFMA). As you may notice, some of the set timelines fall on the weekend. We shall receive those documents on the Thursday before that weekend.

I, therefore, expect all ministerial policy statements by 13 March 2025. Kindly, honourable ministers, check with your permanent secretaries and accounting officers to make sure that by 13 March 2025, their policy statements are laid. After that, we shall have a short recess so that the committees have time to concentrate on these policy statements.

If one thinks they will bring their policy statement next week, it will not happen because on Thursday, we shall be going into a recess. We also expect to receive alternative policy statements by 27 March 2025.

Consideration of the reports on ministerial policy statements will be done from 8 to 17 April 2025. This is to put to notice the committee chairpersons and Members that they should work hard to beat the deadlines. Please adhere to the timelines as stated in the Rules of Procedure.

Honourable colleagues, I will amend the Order Paper to allow the minister for finance to table the Supplementary Schedule No. 3 when we get to the item of laying of papers.

I received sad news from our colleague, Hon. Jackson Atima, of the demise of the late Hon. Haruna Adam Emaga, the first Member of Parliament in the National Resistance Council from Arua Municipality in the West Nile Subregion. That was in 1989.

He died on 10 March 2025 in Arua Regional Referral Hospital and burial is today in Lima Village, Koboko District. I kindly request that we observe a moment of silence in his honour.

(The House rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, Parliament is honoured to have a special guest today who is seated in the VIP Gallery; that is Hon. Andre Clifford Marcellino. He is from the Parliament of Seychelles and he is the chairman of the Committee on Defence. *(Applause)*

In a special way, he is also a Member representing the East African Region Bureau under the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

On a personal note, this is the gentleman who coordinated for me to become the President of the OACPS. *(Laughter)* The person who should clap most is Hon. Jonathan Odur because I managed to ensure that the dream of the late Hon. Cecilia Ogwal was achieved.

Thank you, Hon. Andre Clifford. It is always a pleasure for us to host you in this country.

Honourable minister, kindly take your seat. Thank you. When one stands up, especially from the Front Bench, I know that they are going to submit.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a group of students from Karamoja Students Development Association, Karamoja. They are represented by their patron, Hon. Moses Aleper. They have come to observe proceedings of the House. Please join me, again, in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon we have students of Light Senior Secondary School, Soroti East County, Soroti City. They are represented by Hon. Edmund Ariko and Hon. Joan Alobo. Please join me, once again, in welcoming them. *(Applause)* Thank you.

Matters of national importance - Hon. Biraaro?

2.35

MR EPHRAIM BIRAARO (NRM, Buhweju West County, Buhweju): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I rise on a matter of national importance that requires urgent attention. Mr Speaker, every year at the onset of the rains, Buhweju District usually suffers hailstorms, violent winds and landslides. On 16 February and 3 March 2025, hailstorms ravaged the subcounties of Kyahenda, Bihanga, Nyakishana, Nyakaziba Town Council, Engaju, and Rubengye, particularly devastating the parishes

of Runengo, Akarembe, Kiyanja, Katongo, and Kayonza, among others. A lot of crops were destroyed, banana plantations collapsed, and the roofs of schools and churches were blown off.

Mr Speaker, herewith is attached the detailed Chief Administrative Officer's (CAO's) technical report of the extent of the destruction.

My prayers are that we ask the Government to quickly address the situation and provide relief items to the affected families and communities, including food, seeds for planting and building materials.

Two, that Government provides building materials to the affected schools and churches to get back to their normal operations.

Three, we ask the Office of the Prime Minister to put Buhweju on its disaster radar because such occurrences have become routine over the years.

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

2.37

THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Justine Kasule Lumumba): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I thank the colleague who has raised the issue.

Mr Speaker, I report that as we talk, Hon. Lillian Aber is in Bundibugyo District to assess the same issues and tomorrow, she will be in Buhweju.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I have many issues to do with disasters. This is why I had requested, last time, that the minister for disaster preparedness gives us a plan. This is because we are coming to the rainy season and very many of these issues will be coming. Let me first handle those issues.

Procedure, Hon. Ssemujju?

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, we have one of our colleagues, the Woman MP for Soroti City, who, even as I speak to you now, is still

in prison. Because you are our leader, I thought you would brief us on the circumstances and conditions of our colleague – but it also falls, generally, under the deteriorating human rights observance in the country.

There has been a video of Hon. Muwada crying like a baby because of the way he was beaten by personnel of the Joint Anti-Terrorist Task Force (JATT). I do not want to go into the general issues but I thought, Mr Speaker, that, being our leader, you would let us know the conditions and circumstances under which our colleague ended up in prison because she was doing her work in her constituency.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, thank you for bringing that issue to my attention. Let me follow it up after the session.

2.39

MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. This is also a matter of national importance that needs urgent attention. On the 8th of March, Women's Day, in my district, in a subcounty called Kalamba, particularly in the villages of Kakonge, Gerenge and Suula, there was another strong hailstorm that affected 250 families. Plantations were completely destroyed, 10 houses were demolished completely and people have nowhere to sleep. There are families that had stocked new poultry birds that were killed. Cattle were also killed.

I am here to request the Prime Minister's office, particularly the minister for disaster preparedness, to attend to my people. For your information, my area has suffered such consequences three times in the past two years because a lot of forests have been cleared around that area, so, there is no cover or windbreakers. We probably also have to think about planting trees and reinstating the natural trees.

The prayer, particularly, is to urgently help the 10 families whose houses have completely collapsed and, also, to help the 250 families get

food and seeds for planting because they have nothing to survive on. I pray.

2.41

THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Justine Kasule Lumumba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the MP for reporting and I am sorry for what happened. I am going to report back to the office and we shall get back to you, in writing.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Has the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO) done the necessary, honourable member?

MS AISHA KABANDA: Mr Speaker, this was over the weekend and I am sure that by Monday, the disaster committee sat, because they were aware. However, I thought it was important that I update the minister. It is a matter that needs urgent attention because children have nowhere to sleep and families have put up tarpaulins as shelter. We shall get other disasters such as diseases if we do not respond urgently.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us pursue it on two fronts: the CAO and team doing their work but it has now also been brought to the attention of the OPM.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Most obliged.

2.42

MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. This matter is of national importance and relates to the Kanyamateke Bridge, which connects Bukimbiri County to Kisoro District. A contract was signed and executed but when they were almost finished, the budget was cut by Shs 900 million, which has caused a disaster because as a result, the river has displaced over 1,000 people.

My prayer is that the ministry for finance releases the money that was withheld, even against the certificates. Non-payment of the certificates has caused disaster in the place. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have a disaster and you know that we have a budget for emergency. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development might raise money and it goes to the ministry for works, but the works' ministry may not consider part of your area an urgent issue. Therefore, why don't you have a specific prayer so that your bridge can be worked on?

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: The specific prayer is that the contract should be executed in accordance with what was provided. It was supposed to be Shs 2.1 billion, they released Shs 1.2 billion and the ministry for finance withheld Shs 900 million. I would pray that the ministry for finance releases the balance of Shs 900 million. I so pray.

2.43

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First, the finance ministry does not withhold money but we manage our resources depending on the cash flows. When there is cash, we release and when there is no cash, we hold. *(Laughter)*

However, Mr Speaker, I have good news for Hon. Kwizera and other contractors who fall in this category that in the supplementary that I am about to lay – *(Laughter)* - there is a provision that will take care of some of those outstanding obligations so that our contractors are able to complete the work which has been outstanding for some time.

2.45

MS BRENDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luwero): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance regarding power outages. Luwero has spent one-and-a-half months without power. It comes for six or two hours and goes off, regularly.

On Sunday, I was in Kamira with the Bishop of Kasana-Luwero Diocese and he asked me: "What is the problem? What are we supposed to do?" We cannot run business on generators.

We cannot run health facilities – because they have vaccines and specific medicines that require being in fridges, but we do not have power.

It has been continuous and, even if there is maintenance going on, it cannot go on for four days a week, power returns for two hours and then it goes off.

Mr Speaker, electricity is not free; we pay for it. However, Umeme has failed to give us electricity and that is bad business. We cannot be demanding for a service that we pay for. They should make sure that we have electricity.

My prayer is that the minister directs Umeme – if there are problems – to work on them so that Luwero District can also be able to access electricity.

2.46

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa):

Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank my MP for having raised this important matter.

Mr Speaker, we are going through the tail end of the concession of Umeme – Actually, the concession ended on the 28th of February and we are now in the transition period. However, before that, the Government decided not to invest more in Umeme, so, Umeme reduced the investment. That means that we cannot respond spontaneously to calls of power outages, which could be caused by a failure in a transformer or a breakup of a line because a tree has fallen on the line.

However, I promise you that by 1st April, we will have gone through this, and the loan that is before Parliament, which has money for the successor company; UEDCL, will help us a great deal to prepare Uganda Electricity Distribution Company to be ready to respond spontaneously without going through the rigours of applying for money which would take a long time. This is going to be a short-term inconvenience and I would like Members and the country at large to bear with us.

I will crosscheck further to the places of Kamila to find out whether there is any other cause other than what I have explained so that we can try to come up and rectify it. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nelson Okello -

2.48

MR NELSON OKELLO (UPC, Maruzi North County, Apac): Thank you, Mr Speaker. My matter of urgent and national importance is the closure of the Karuma Bridge. Allow me to begin by thanking your good office for the wise ruling during the parliamentary regional sitting in Gulu where you directed for immediate repair of the Karuma Bridge –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Wait, I saw the Minister for Works and Transport around.

MR NELSON OKELLO: During that Sitting, works immediately commenced and Karuma Bridge was handed over partially, in December, to allow movement of light vehicles and buses, but leaving out some critical works. Due to the above, the Ministry of Works and Transport works has announced a second closure of Karuma Bridge, which should have taken place by yesterday, 10 March 2025.

As a result of this closure, traffic will now massively be diverted to use Rwenkunya-Masindi-Apac route. As I talk, we are at risk because the operators at the Masindi Port ferry have job insecurity, which hangs in balance. Initially, operators were being paid -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, can you give your prayers please? It seems you came up with a statement; I can see you are struggling with it. Prayers?

MR NELSON OKELLO: Yes, Mr Speaker, I wanted to give a narrative.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, state your prayers, honourable member.

MR NELSON OKELLO: My prayers are that one, because of the increase in the number of vehicles, the Ministry of Public Service advertised for the position of these operators, which are - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude your prayers. Kindly switch on the microphone.

MR NELSON OKELLO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My prayers are that the Ministry of Public Service, should immediately effect and consider reviewing of payments of the operators, including other ferry management teams because, at the moment, they advertise and give them only a payment salary of Shs 240,000. Mr Speaker, this is nothing. It is like Shs 4,000 or Shs 8,000 per day. A ferry which takes 10 vehicles costs Shs 9 billion -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, Hon. Nelson takes long to finish his points. *(Laughter)*

MR NELSON OKELLO: Secondly, the Ministry of Works should pay the two months' salary accrued because these workers were given contracts for three months but they have not been paid for January and February.

Finally, Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Public Service should show cause as to why they have not shortlisted the ferry operators because they advertised and only five workers have been solicited, yet they qualified. They have been working under UNRA but now only five have been shortlisted. Why? Public Service will show cause. I thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister for Works and Transport. After Works, Public Service will have to show cause. *(Laughter)*

2.54

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. There is indeed a notice that Karuma Bridge was supposed to be closed by yesterday.

The reason for the closure is that during the first phase, we worked on some spans which could accommodate the light vehicles and now, we got funds to fix the remaining spans so that we open the bridge fully.

Why we did not close it yesterday is because we wanted to avoid the past mistake when we closed it and we had issues on Masindi Port. Our Masindi ferry for Masindi Port is down and we had also a few challenges because we had not accessed the money but now we have accessed it. The tentative date is the 17th Day of this month. We anticipate that by that time; we shall have enough manpower to handle the passengers via Port Masindi. We are doing that not to punish you but to ensure the bridge is fully open to all vehicles. That is the short-term intervention which we have.

The long term intervention is that on 20th of this month, we are signing a contract with the Japan International Cooperation Agency (JICA) which have given gave us a grant to reconstruct that bridge.

Then the issue - Since Public Service is here, we know very well that the Bill was assented to and these people had no work. As Ministry of Works, through Public Service, we had to call them back on contract. When we gave them a contract, it stipulated the salary, which they are supposed to earn according to public service standing orders.

There is no way we could go beyond the Shs 240,000 you are talking about. The other side, they were on a contract, which expired. We gave them a contract depending on the directive and guidance from the Constitution through the Public Service. We have however paid them their salaries. Maybe if Public Service advises, we can increase it, depending on which law I do not know. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, this weekend, my phone was flooded with messages from workers of ferries. I even took time and called you over the same. This issue of RAPEX and how it is being handled, on the implementation, Minister for Public

Service, they are not putting into special consideration some of these technical jobs which were being done. To renew a certificate - and I received information which I shared with the minister - these workers told me that they require Shs 25 to 30 million.

Now you pay him money, which in a year will not facilitate renewal of a license. I think before saying that entities like UNRA were paying too much money, you should have asked yourself, why? There are unique situations. If these people decide to abandon you because they will not be able to renew licences, you will not have ferry operators. I heard you saying that they had no jobs. No! You can also say you had no operators. If they were to go away and survive on other things, would you have operators for these ferries?

This is an issue, honourable Minister of Public Service and I do not know how you are looking into it. You also have many issues to do with RAPEX, honourable minister, especially with staff whom you assured us when we were doing the job here, that they are going to be integrated. You have changed everything. People are on the streets, crying. They are looking at Parliament as evil. *(Applause)*

Honourable Minister of Public Service? *(Hon. Okeyoh rose_)* Hon. Okeyoh, do you want to add something? Honourable minister, allow me - it seems the MP from the island is facing the same issue and would like to add something.

2.58

MR PETER OKEYOH (NRM, Bukooli Island County, Namayingo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. The question of ferry workers cuts across all the UNRA ferries like the ones in Namayingo, Buvuma and other parts of the country.

As you have rightly stated, Mr Speaker, it takes time to train a ferry operator and much of it is done outside the country. Now, the honourable minister is saying he is going to pay them Shs 240,000. It takes between Shs 20 million and Shs 40 million for these people to renew their seafarers' licence and even for the specialised

training. Not anybody can pilot a ferry; it is training that is classified – *(Interruption)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a point of order. It seems there is no order in the House.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, when we were here presenting the challenges that the country was about to encounter, our colleagues went for a caucus. They came here and just supported everything, including him. They are now crying.

Is he in order to begin crying – *(Laughter)* – when, after a caucus meeting, they came here and supported every RAPEX Bill?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleague, I remember colleagues here had issues which they raised and the ministers responded to them. They were given assurances. His issue now is that the assurances which were given are not being implemented. Therefore, the Member is in order to raise this issue. *(Laughter)*

MR OKEYOH: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for that wise ruling, as usual. I also urge the Ministry of Public Service that there are people who do jobs that are specialised, especially the ferry pilots and drivers. Therefore, consideration should be made when we are giving these allowances and salaries. That is my prayer.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister of Public Service?

3.01

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Wilson Muruli Mukasa): Mr Speaker, I quite appreciate the anguish and concern of the honourable members who use ferry services because the services are not operating well due to RAPEX. You realise that we are still in a transition period; it is only a few weeks, I must say. Most of the money we need was actually transferred to the various Votes.

Mr Speaker, when we were discussing this matter, the RAPEX Committee agreed that

ferry operators, the people who run our graders and mechanics in the local government be treated as scientists.

What does that mean? It means that the Public Service pay scale of U8 will now not apply to them because these are technical people and are well-schooled in their field of operation. They are now being considered as scientists and salaries are going to go up so that they are better motivated to work. When they work, they do not spoil our machinery because it is very expensive.

Therefore, we are in close discussion with the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. We are looking at the savings which we are definitely going to incur, which will certainly go into raising the salary of the ferry operators. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: There is a procedural matter after, we will hear from Hon. Byanyima.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. My procedural matter goes to both ministers; of energy and public service. Where a human being cannot cross a lake, the legs they use are the ferries. There is no remedy you can justify to this Parliament that the process is still ongoing when the people who are supposed to cross a lake or a river using a ferry are not moving.

That is why when I raised my procedural matter relating to the Ministry of Energy. The transition from Umeme to this ministry was not known by Parliament. We will get several matters of national importance here relating to power breakage everywhere. The transition of these departments to mother ministries is supposed to take place while citizens of Uganda enjoy the benefits as before.

The procedural matter I would like to raise is whether it is okay for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to bring a full statement here on how they are transiting from Umeme, which has been making losses from its inception to date, so that we know what exactly will happen.

Mr Speaker, for us in the Kalungu and Masaka area, power is off every day and during peak hours when people want to cut their hair or prepare food.

Honourable Minister of Public Service, you cannot come before this Parliament and tell us that RAPEX is stopping people using ferries from going to their islands. That is very irregular and you deserve a punishment before this House from the Speaker. *(Laughter)* Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I wish I had that power. *(Laughter)* Honourable colleague, it is right. The issue of the transition from Umeme to UEDCL is something which we need to be informed about. That is very critical. I request the minister for energy to bring a statement when we return from recess and we handle it.

However, also for the record - because we are a House of record – I have heard Hon. Ssewungu say that Umeme has been making losses from the beginning. Umeme has been one of the most profitable companies listed on the stock exchange, giving dividends. *(Hon. Ssewungu rose_)* Please, Hon. Ssewungu, it is not an issue for debate.

Umeme's accounts are published in the open. We were giving them a return on investment of 20 per cent for every coin. *(Hon. Ssewungu rose_)* Hon. Ssewungu, is that walking to work? *(Laughter)*

3.06

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I think Ugandans must be treated with dignity. Hon. Muruli Mukasa, a senior cadre of the Movement and senior citizen, knows well that we are not in a transition - not at all. This Government is in full power and has everything at its disposal.

There was no point whatsoever, for example, to have machines packed, waiting for stock-taking all over the country - a transition. What you need to do is to have some money so that roads are maintained, as you put whatever you

want to put in place properly. You cannot put the whole country at a standstill.

Look at road maintenance on most of these roads; it is always done monthly. As we talk, Hon. Muruli Mukasa, they are conducting interviews and people do not know where to go. There is no release of money. The money we are talking about was released but to who? We wanted the beneficiaries to get the money and whoever does not have a job to go and do something else but people are stuck and we have a crisis.

I would love to see Ugandans treated - because you cannot tell anybody that the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) went to the Ministry of Works and Transport, Rural Electrification Agency (REA) – No, they want seamless service delivery. We are here with no answers and look like fools before the people.

I would have wanted the ministers to come out and say, “We are extremely sorry but with effect from next week, things will be in order.” Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Odur -

3.08

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank and congratulate you upon assuming the Presidency of the African, Caribbean and Pacific (ACP) - Ever since you were elected, this is the first time I am speaking and I have also read that you will be the co-chairperson of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS-EU). The good news is that now we can hold you to a higher standard by that elevation.

In my training and knowledge of how the Government is run, I thought the Government was an absolutely serious institution. Whenever I interact with the Government and hear from them, I take them very seriously but I must say that my experience here has taught me another lesson and I can say competently, I think that on this side, we can now run the Government. *(Applause)*

When the minister proposed the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) Bills here, one of the things we were convinced of is that when you pass this law, you will allow us a window and not put the commencement date because we need to go and prepare as and when we are ready. Then we shall issue the instrument of operationalising the law.

Now, we hear that the Government, in a very casual and unserious manner, is telling us that we got lost along the way and found ourselves in the transition. These are things within your control. If you are not ready, let them continue. No one from our side said, the Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) must stop today and transit. This is my proposal because I have also received communication.

This makes me reflect way back on how some of our parents - and I hope many of your parents too - When the retrenchment policy took place, many of our parents suffered as if it was a deliberate ploy, at that time, to purge some people out of holding some offices.

Now you remove people who are in UNRA, advertise their jobs and even refuse to shortlist them. Then you see other people, who do not have experience, ones being - *(Interruption)* - I humbly take - the Women's Day has just happened. Let me allow a woman to give information.

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to inform the current speaker on the Floor that we did very well in the caucus but the problem is when we came to the House to settle issues, they walked out. How can you expect those things to come and now you are crying? If you had not walked out, everything was going to be smooth. *(Laughter)*

MR ODUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. For the record, Hon. Christine Akello is my counterpart from Erute North. I do not want to spoil her mood of celebrating Women's Day. The point I am making is that the Government can review.

No one is pushing you to implement this law as it is. If you are not ready, please, hold on but the number of people who are complaining and who have been unfairly left out of this transition is alarming. You had assured us that you will transit some of those staff into the mainstream and now they see their names missing.

Mr Speaker, if it pleases you, a select committee or a committee of this House should re-examine all these matters together and report. Otherwise, we are headed for a disaster and every week we shall be entertaining the same matters. The Government can interact and find a middle ground that facilitates the Government to do its work but also ensures that the people we represent are happy about this service. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Jonathan. Colleagues, you receive painful calls and messages. They got people who did their jobs well and when they reached the other side, they want to give it to scientists.

In UNRA, people who are not scientists and have remained with jobs can be counted and these are people who have been working hard but it was as if the scheme has been designed to eliminate all of them and they are coming to us.

Honourable minister, you can shake your head but it is painful because when we were engaging these people, we counted on your word and a select committee at this stage is not helpful because it will take a very long time.

I propose that the minister brings a full statement, giving us an update on the implementation of RAPEX and clearly showing recruitment as its section, because there is a statement which you brought but we had said that we update and strengthen it. I need the minister's attention, please, when the Speaker is talking to him.

Honourable minister, update that statement, we look at recruitment and other challenges because you will find that some of them are budgetary in nature and there are lacunas in the law. You need our support so that we work it out together because in the end, we are accountable to the people. Therefore, honourable minister -

3.14

MR WILFRED NIWAGABA (Independent, Ndoorwa County East, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak. The minister should come up with a comprehensive status report. It should not only mention the recruitment process but also the status of service delivery for each entity that was rationalised.

For example, you should tell us if UNRA was looking after so many kilometres of roads, how are they now? For electricity, what is the situation? This is so that we get a comprehensive picture to enable us to answer questions from our various constituencies.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let the minister answer and then we see if we can –

MR MUKASA MURULI: Mr Speaker, I recall my ministry made a statement here about the status of RAPEX. We shall bring an update of that status; what has been done in RAPEX, especially the recruitment process and then we see where Parliament can join and how we can improve the process and remove this anguish which is there. Before I sit down, once again, I would like to assure you about my word. What is painful so far will very soon go away.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us take our senior elder at his word. Next item. Let me pick the final one, Hon. Migadde. Some colleagues have brought matters that are pending before committees, like Dr Otaala. Your issue is pending before a committee and these are issues which rule 80 cannot allow me to bring to the Floor.

3.17

MR ROBERT MIGADDE (NRM, Buvuma Islands County, Buvuma): Thank you, Mr Speaker. For the last two months, I have been raising issues to do with piracy on the lake. Whereas the Ministry of Defence and Veterans Affairs and Ministry of Internal Affairs have undertaken to handle this, nothing has happened. People continue to lose property in the form of boat engines and some are hacked.

Last week, I visited my constituency and established that there are two Marine Police detachments, which are under the Ministry of Internal Affairs. There is one at Libu Island and another at Samba Island. The one at Libu is headed by a one Okello Tonny and that at Samba is headed by a one Komakech.

What these marine officers do is to go deep on the lake, especially bordering Kenya and Tanzania. They confiscate fish from Ugandans and Kenyans and some from Tanzanians. The Tanzanians come back to take revenge against the Ugandans, at times hacking them or ordering them to drop their boat engines in the lake.

Mr Speaker, some of our people have started relocating from the far islands. Our prayer is that the Minister of Internal Affairs should come to this Parliament to, not only mention it but also, bring a statement on the status of security in Buvuma Islands and specifically, in Lyabana Town Council, as far as fishing is concerned. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The minister will be required to bring a statement. I will give a date after consulting on when we shall be resuming. Next item.

MINISTER'S RESPONSE TO URGENT QUESTIONS

3.19

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I wish to inform the House that these urgent questions go as far back as August last year. All of them have since been overtaken by events. However, I wish to lay on the Table the action, which was taken by the ministry, in response to the questions that were raised then. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Rule 45(4) says that a minister shall not take more than two weeks to respond to a question from a Member. These

are questions for oral answer. Therefore, I request that you make time, next time, because I can see here we received the response on 24 February 2025. We shall coordinate with the Clerk's office to ensure that we get a copy uploaded. Next item – let us first get a point of procedure.

MR NAMBESHE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Receive my belated congratulatory message on your ascendance to that much sought-after chair of the African, Caribbean and Pacific-European Union Group of States (ACP-EU).

Mr Speaker, the minister has not dispensed justice in the belated response to the urgent questions. Late though he is in making a response, it would have been much better procedurally if he took us through because I see the list is well summarised. I have noticed, particularly the other urgent question raised among a raft of those questions, which he is deliberately dodging to mention. It was on the National Population and Housing Census concerns, which were raised.

The minister made an undertaking. In fact, the ministry committed to furnish this House with a comprehensive report on the irregularities and gaps that were glaring in the report that was given by Uganda Bureau of Statistics (UBOS).

Mr Speaker, isn't it procedurally proper for him to take us through and even give reasons as to why he failed to comply or was he adamantly defiant to your direction?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, Hon. Musasizi has been very cooperative. He has been trying his level best and has worked very closely with us here on the Floor. I read through the answers. Indeed, most of these reports, which they have already submitted here – maybe, what I am going to do is request the Clerk that they be published. The questions and answers can be uploaded on the system for the benefit of Members. Thank you. Next item.

LAYING OF PAPERS

THE SUPPLEMENTARY SCHEDULE FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025, SCHEDULE NUMBER 3

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister for finance -

3.24

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 24 of the Public Finance Management Act, Cap. 171, which states that the total supplementary expenditure that requires additional resources over and above what is approved by Parliament shall not exceed 3 per cent of the total approved budget for that financial year without approval of Parliament; and whereas funds are expended under subsection (1), supplementary estimates showing the sum spent shall be laid before Parliament within four months after the money is spent, I beg to lay the Supplementary Expenditure Schedule No.3 for the Financial Year 2024/2025, amounting to Shs 4.255 trillion, to cater for Government commitments and obligations, which include the following critical expenditure requirements, among others:

1. The outstanding certificates to road construction companies;
2. Security-related expenditure under the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs and Uganda Police Force; and
3. Africa Cup of Nations (AFCON) 2027 related expenditure for completion of Hoima Stadium, construction of Akii-Bua Stadium, training facilities and operational expenses in preparation for the Africa Cup of Nations, 2027.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. It is referred to the Committee on Budget to be expeditiously handled and report back. These are some of the urgent issues that we have – *(Mr Nelson Okello rose)* - honourable colleagues, I guided you that before coming to

see the Speaker here, you need his permission. Kindly, if you are near the Speaker, go back to your seat. *(Laughter)*

The Chairperson of the Budget Committee, ensure that the schedule is urgently handled.

Honourable colleagues, I forgot to inform you that from the discussion we had here on Thursday, I followed up on the issue of the PET Scan Machine. I tried my brother, Hon. Musasizi who had already gone to the constituency but I managed to get his technical people. I was very happy they were already ahead of us.

In the corrigendum, they provided Shs 30 billion for the Positron Emission Tomography (PET) machine, but I reminded them that it is Shs 62 billion. Honourable minister, your technical people committed that they were going to work with you – they would be reporting to you – to ensure that the balance is provided for.

That is a very critical machine, which will help us to detect cancer earlier – before people go abroad when it is already late. The cries of the Minister of Health, here, were very loud. I hope we shall have the Shs 62 billion provided for that machine. Everyone is asking - going to Nairobi for the PET machine. I hope we can conclude this issue this coming financial year.

MINISTERIAL POLICY STATEMENTS AND BUDGET ESTIMATES FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2025/2026:

I) OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As the responsible minister comes, honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have students and staff of Christ the King Secondary School, Kalisizo in Kyotera District. They are represented by Hon. Fortunate Nantongo and Hon. John Paul Lukwago. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please, join me in welcoming them. Kindly, stand up for recognition. *(Applause)*

Honourable minister for general duties?

3.29

THE MINISTER, OFFICE OF THE PRIME MINISTER (GENERAL DUTIES) (Ms Justine Kasule Lumumba): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I beg that the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 003 – Office of the Prime Minister for the Financial Year 2025/2026 be laid.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Have you laid it?

MS KASULE LUMUMBA: Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Presidential Affairs.

II) MINISTRY OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister? Next.

III) MINISTRY OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure, Hon. Odur? Honourable ministers, please, that is not a working table. Please, as I begged earlier, this is the Table of Parliament; it is the table of authority.

MR ODUR: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I could have raised this issue at the end but I would like to raise it earlier so that you can guide us properly. Many times when these ministerial policy statements are laid here, except for the membership of the committees, they are not accessible to the rest of Parliament yet, at the end of it all, every Member of Parliament would like to follow it up. You cannot find a soft copy and you cannot find even a hard copy.

I would like to beg for your guidance, at the beginning of it all, on how the Members of Parliament are going to access copies of these documents for their processing. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: *(Mr Mwebesa rose_)* Honourable minister, there is a procedural matter that I need to guide the House on.

Hon. Jonathan Odur, I agree with you. On Thursday, I communicated, while on the Floor, and also to the Permanent Secretary/ Secretary to the Treasury (PS/ST) to inform the accounting officers to submit both hard and soft copies. I have been informed that soft copies have been sent. We are going to upload them on our Alfresco system so that we can access them virtually.

Honourable minister, please crosscheck. If there is any minister who has brought a hard copy without a soft copy, kindly avail us with the soft copy so that we can upload it on the system. Thank you.

Yes, honourable minister for trade.

3.32

THE MINISTER OF TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (Mr Francis Mwebesa): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I beg that the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 015 – Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives for Financial Year 2025/2026 be laid. It covers:

- i. Vote 015: Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives;
- ii. Vote 054: Uganda National Bureau of Standards;
- iii. Vote 168: Uganda Free Zone and Export Promotion Authority; and
- iv. Votes 601–935: Local governments.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Have you laid it, honourable minister?

MR MWEBESA: I beg to lay. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. You are begging to take it back home. *(Laughter)* The statement stands referred to the Committee on Trade, Tourism and Industries.

IV) MINISTRY OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: *(Ms Asamo rose_)* Honourable minister, you can speak from there; a colleague will help you.

Procedure, Hon. Kwizera – but we have a special case with Hon. Asamo; she cannot stand for long. Let her finish and then you raise your procedural issue. Hon. Pacuto, they have terminated your services; the minister has come herself. *(Laughter)*

I request, ministers, that you take those documents off the Table and share among yourselves. Pick what belongs to you to avoid standing around the Table. Sergeant-at-Arms, please get for her the document for equal opportunities so that she does not come back.

3.35

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DISABILITY AFFAIRS) (Ms Hellen Asamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to assure this House that I am very capable; disability is not inability. I thank the Speaker for his consideration but I do not know why Hon. Kwizera was standing up.

Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 018 – Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development for processing and report back.

V) THE EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES
COMMISSION

3.36

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (DISABILITY AFFAIRS) (Ms Hellen Asamo): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement of Vote 124 - Equal Opportunities Commission for the Financial Year 2025/2026. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Gender. Thank you. Hon. Kwizera?

MR EDDIE KWIZERA: Mr Speaker, there is a fundamental issue for your guidance on this matter. Under normal practice, when we are looking at the programme-based budgeting and also at sectoral committees, don't you think we should have harmonised it so that when we are looking at programme-based budgeting, we do not use sectoral budgets again?

In the same way, when we were at the end of the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX), we expected that the Government would be restructured because these ministers are finding it very difficult to move from different committees to answer for other committees. Don't you think there is a need for harmonisation to make sure that when we are doing programme-based budgeting, we also end in the committees that are corresponding? Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable, we discussed this issue extensively when we were handling the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) and I raised it myself because I gave an example of the time when I found Kampala Capital City Authority (KCCA) coming to four committees at once.

They were going to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure because of roads, Committee on Education because of schools, Committee on Health because of the health centres and to Presidential Affairs because of their operations as KCCA.

Remember that when we referred this issue to the Committee on Rules, Privilege and Discipline, it reported back and said we needed to first amend the PFMA. The Attorney-General and the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development came here and committed to amending the PFMA to realign the whole process.

The Attorney-General called me and told me that the draft Bill was ready. However, at that time, we also agreed that for the budgeting process of this financial year, we would handle it using the current law and rules then in the subsequent financial years, we will already have updated the law and I hope minister for finance, you are already working on together with the Attorney-General.

I do not know if you have any updates for us concerning amending the PFMA so that we realign programme-based budgeting with the law so that we are able to amend our rules. Honourable minister?

3.37

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I take note of your concern and that of the House.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item?

VI) OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

3.40

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR KAMPALA CAPITAL CITY AND METROPOLITAN AFFAIRS (Mr Kabuye Kyofatogabye): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13(13) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended and Rule 146 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statements for Vote 001: Office of the President, Vote 002: State House, Vote 23: Ministry of Kampala Capital City and Metropolitan Affairs, Vote 107: Uganda Aids Commission, Vote 112: Directorate of Ethics and Integrity, Vote 158: Internal Security Organisation and Vote 159: External Security Organisation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Presidential Affairs.

MR KYOFATOGABYE: Mr Speaker, in the same spirit, allow me to lay for Vote 122 - Kampala Capital City Authority. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that not under presidential affairs? They are all referred to the Committee on Presidential Affairs. Thank you. Next?

VII) MINISTRY OF EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, I thought that you were in Kawempe today?

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, those who went there were severely beaten. The procedural issue I am raising – I know it is very difficult to hold NRM to any standards but whether there is a standard for these policy statements or not – because if you look at the ones for the Office of the President, they look like they have just been taken to Nkrumah Road for binding while the others, like the one Hon. Nankabirwa is holding, looks – even before you read it. Do we have a standard or people can just traffic here anything and throw it on the table?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we have a standard on content not on design cover – *(Laughter)* We look for content not beauty in these statements. Honourable minister- Hon. Ssemujju, Hon. Nankabirwa has appreciated your compliment. She says it is the first one.

3.43

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EAST AFRICAN AFFAIRS (Mr Magode Ikuya): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13(13) of the Public Financial Management Act, 2015, as amended and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 021 - Ministry of East African Community Affairs for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, elder. The statement stands referred to the Committee on East African Community Affairs and Hon. Magode Ikuya says he has the most well designed statement. We appreciate you, honourable minister. Hon. Kyofa should learn from you. Next item?

VIII) MINISTRY OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

3.44

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13(3) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Votes 022 and 117 of the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, the statement stands referred to the Committee on Trade, Tourism and Industry.

IX) MINISTRY OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

3.45

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 011 - Ministry of Local Government, Vote 147 - Local Government Finance Commission and Votes 601 to 935 - all Local Governments in Uganda for Financial Year 2025/2026. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, the statement stands referred to the Committee on Local Government.

X) MINISTRY OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS.

3.46

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (Mr Jacob Oboth): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

As required and guided by the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 and the rules of this House, and the Second Budget Call Circular issued on 13 January 2025, this policy statement highlights the key half-year performance of the Financial Year 2024/2025, the planned outputs of Financial Year 2025/2026, with their corresponding required financial resources, the annual and quarter work plans, and the challenges the ministry faces in implementing the plans.

Mr Speaker, I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs.

Honourable colleagues, you have seen how lawyers submit.

XI) MINISTRY OF PUBLIC SERVICE

3.48

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Muruli Mukasa): Mr Speaker, in accordance with Section 13(13) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, the Ministry of Public Service has prepared the ministerial policy statement for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

The statement is aligned with the National Development Plan IV, Objective 5, which aims at strengthening good governance, security, and the role of the state in development. The National Resistance Movement Manifesto and the Public Sector Transformation Programme Implementation Action Plan 2025/2026 to 2029/2030.

Mr Speaker, I hereby beg to lay, in this august House, the Ministerial Policy Statement and Budget Estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026 for Vote 005: Ministry of Public Service.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Public Service and Local Government.

XII) MINISTRY OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

3.50

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (WATER) (Ms Aisha Sekindi): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13(13) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 019: Ministry of Water and Environment, for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and Environment.

XIII) MINISTRY OF JUSTICE AND
CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

XIV) MINISTRY OF AGRICULTURE,
ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, if the statement is not ready, you do not need to go on record. You have a deadline of up to Thursday. Next?

XV) THE INSPECTORATE OF
GOVERNMENT

3.51

THE MINISTER OF STATE, OFFICE OF THE PRESIDENT (ECONOMIC MONITORING) (Ms Beatrice Akello): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13(13) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 103: Inspectorate of Government for the Financial Year 2025/2026 be laid.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

XVI) MINISTRY OF HEALTH

3.52

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR HEALTH (PRIMARY HEALTH CARE) (Ms Margaret Muhanga): Mr Speaker, in line with Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended and rule 146(1) of the Rules of Procedure of this House, I beg to lay Vote 014: Ministry of Health, for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

Mr Speaker, I also beg to lay the ministerial policy statement for the Uganda Cancer Institute, Uganda Heart Institute, National Medical Stores, Uganda Virus Research Institute, Health Service Commission, Uganda Blood Transfusion Services, all national referral hospitals and all regional referral hospitals.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, for the record, those are votes, not statements. You called them statements. Thank you.

The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Health. Next.

XVII) THE PARLIAMENTARY
COMMISSION

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable commissioner? The minister for finance is a commissioner.

3.54

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay, on Table, the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 104: Parliamentary Commission for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

XVIII) MINISTRY OF FINANCE,
PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT

3.54

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 008: Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning, and Economic Development.

XIX) MINISTRY OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS

3.55

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I have just received a notification from the Ministry of Internal Affairs that the statement will be ready tomorrow afternoon.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister.

XX) MINISTRY OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS

3.55

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (HIGHER EDUCATION) (Dr John Muyingo): Mr Speaker, pursuant to Section 13 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, as amended, and Rule 146 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of the Republic of Uganda, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for:

1. Vote 013: Ministry of Education and Sports headquarters; Vote 111: National Curriculum and Development Centre;
2. Vote 128: Uganda National Examinations Board;
3. Vote 132: Education Service Commission;
4. Vote 164: National Council for Higher Education;
5. Vote 165: Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board;
6. Vote 166: National Council of Sports;
7. Vote 301: Makerere University; and
8. Vote 302: Mbarara University.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Why don't you refer to public universities?

DR MUYINGO: Public Universities for the Financial Year 2025/2026. I submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Education and Sports.

XXI) OFFICE OF THE AUDITOR-GENERAL

3.57

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay, on the Table, the Ministerial Policy Statement for Office of the Auditor-General, Vote 131 for Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Before I refer this statement, the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament and we were thinking that his budget should be consolidated with that of Parliament in the policy statement, handled through the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs.

Should this be a matter that we discuss outside? He is part of Parliament, facing funding challenges, and he has been crying out, saying, "But I am part of you. Then you push me to the other side, and I start roaming around." Honourable minister, what would be your view on that?

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, it is true that the Auditor-General is a staff of Parliament under the National Audit Act of 2008. However, there are two things;

1. In terms of governance, for Budget and other policy matters, the Auditor-General has been reporting to Parliament through the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development; and
2. Whereas the Auditor-General is an officer of Parliament, his operations are independent, and the independence of the office of the Auditor-General must be upheld.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The independence is safely guarded in finance; it cannot be in Parliament.

MR MUSASIZI: Auditor-General does not report to us. In this case - it means even Parliament - because I have just presented your ministerial policy statement -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: As a commissioner -

MR MUSASIZI: Also, you are a vote -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable minister. My point is that the Parliamentary Budget is a statutory budget - Hon. Oboth, do you want to comment on that because you have run the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs for a long time.

MR OBOTH: Yes. In the last Parliament, myself and Hon. Musasizi, now the Minister of Finance, were chairpersons of committees, one on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs and Finance. What the Auditor-General designated by the able Government Chief Whip, now Dr Canon, Hon. Ruth Nankabirwa and Hon. Musasizi knows, I said, why don't you tell the Speaker the truth?

The Auditor-General is an accountability institution that falls under Parliament. Even if you check the vehicles they drive, they are not finance vehicles; they are parliamentary vehicles with "H". The governing body that we used was both the chairperson of the Committee on Legal and the chairperson of the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

Mr Speaker, if that has been brought to you, it is in the right place. The laying of these estimates here could have just been a procedural matter, but the independence and being an accountability, institution should check everyone, and that is the role of Parliament. that checks the Executive if there are any excesses.

I think they are in order. For purposes of budgeting, there should be a need to harmonise. They should not be under the ambits of the finance ministry. In fact, the finance ministry should stay far away from them. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Oboth. We have discussed this with the Auditor-General, at the hand of the former Auditor-General, he raised it as a serious issue of concern and to kick-start the process, I am going to refer the policy statement to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs as we harmonise with finance on how we can have their budget under Parliament for purposes of further support.

XXII) MINISTRY OF LANDS, HOUSING AND URBAN DEVELOPMENT

4.03

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR URBAN DEVELOPMENT (Mr Kania Obiga): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the Ministerial Policy Statement for the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development in relationship to votes 0120 of the ministry and 156 of Uganda Land Commission for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Honourable Minister. The statement stands referred to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure.

MINISTRY OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT

4.04

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table the Ministerial Policy Statement and approved budget estimates for the Financial Year 2025/2026 for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, which is called vote 017 and also vote 139 of the Petroleum Authority of Uganda.

This is pursuant to subsection (13) of the Public Finance Management Act and Rule 146(1) of our Rules of Procedure. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Natural Resources and Environment.

XXIII) TREASURY OPERATIONS

4.05

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker and colleagues, I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for Vote 130: Treasury Operations for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

XXIV) THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION

4.06

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Muruli-Mukasa): Mr Speaker, I beg your indulgence. The statement for the Public Service Commission is still yet under preparation. It will be ready tomorrow.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, we have eight policy statements remaining. I think we are doing fine. I thank you, ministers, for beating the deadline we set. I am confident that the rest will submit theirs by Thursday. From what I have seen today, we will have all statements. Next item.

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS ON THE BENCHMARKING VISIT TO NAIROBI CITY COUNCIL IN SEPTEMBER 2024

4.06

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE ON PRESIDENTIAL AFFAIRS (Ms Flora Natumanya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. In line with Rule 33 of the Rules Procedure of Parliament, allow me to lay a report of the Committee on Presidential Affairs on the Benchmarking Visit to Nairobi City Council, September 2024. Permit me, to briefly go through the observations and recommendations.

The committee visited the Dandora dump site in Nairobi, the designated waste collection area for the entire city. The committee found that, like Kampala and, by extension, the whole of Uganda, Nairobi and Kenya as a whole are faced with the challenge of proper waste management. Like Kiteezi, Dandora was declared full close to 20 years ago, but it is still in use.

The committee was informed that several attempts have been made to run the dumpsite in an environmentally suitable manner, but these have had little impact. In recognition of the urgent need to address the challenge of waste, the Nairobi County government resolved to build a modern waste-to-energy management plant and sought bids from various developers.

A successful bidder signed a public-private partnership agreement. The agreement grants a 25-year concession to the investor, who is obliged to construct a plant and produce 45 megawatts of electricity that will be sold to the Kenya Power and Lighting Company, which operates the national grid. The plant is expected to employ Kenyans, especially those whose lives depend on waste management.

On city cleaning, the committee observes the city's efforts to clean up, and they employ hundreds of young people between 18 and 27 years of age as cleaners, referred to as the "green army." The move helps address the rising levels of youth unemployment in the city while also ensuring the city is clean. The Green Army has pensionable jobs with insurance and a monthly salary of Kshs 25,000, equivalent to Shs 750,000.

Air pollution management: The Nairobi County government has installed solar-powered air quality monitoring sensors in Nairobi. These sensors measure the quality of air in various parts of the city. The information generated is accessible via the Internet on various devices, including mobile phones, through a mobile application.

The Nairobi City County Governor has also made giant strides in lowering pollution

through other means, most especially through tree planting and river reclamation.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that:

1. Kampala Capital City Authority should construct a modern waste-to-energy plant that enables the daily consumption of waste generated in the city. This will save money for the decommissioning of the Kiteezi landfill and establishing another landfill;
2. Work in collaboration with public institutions such as the Uganda Industrial Research Institute and Kira Motors Corporation, among others, to design the bodies of garbage trucks, which is much cheaper than importing the trucks;
3. Ensure the segregation of waste at the point of collection to enable segregation at disposal and encourage recycling;
4. Scale up tree planting in the city to counter the effects of environmental degradation and the climate;
5. Embrace technology with regard to air pollution sensors in various parts of the city and use the data generated to inform policy action towards countering air pollution;
6. Increase the number of garbage collection equipment and make the same available in all areas of the city; and,
7. Engage in mass sensitisation and engagement regarding proper waste management, and incentivise city cleaners by providing them with enhanced pay and permanent employment to ensure increased garbage collection and enhanced welfare.

The committee also visited the education sector in Kenya's county governments. Nairobi City County runs 211 primary schools, 216 early

childhood development education centres, and 193 secondary schools. Whereas Education in public schools in Kenya is free, feeding the learners remains a challenge -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Procedure?

DR APEA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. On our Order Paper this particular item is actually laying of the report, but what I am hearing is most likely that it is a presentation of a report. Are we really proceeding right, or the Order Paper is not accurate?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, we are proceeding very well, Rules 33(2) of our Rules of Procedure: Reports of delegations abroad; they are supposed to give a summary of the highlights and recommendations, and that is what she has been doing. She is giving us recommendations.

MS NATUMANYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. It was also noted that malnutrition as a result of lack of school meals made the children vulnerable to the negative consequences of poor feeding.

To address the challenge of lack of meals, the Nairobi City County Government developed an initiative to provide subsidised, nutritionally balanced hot meals, for all learners in the early childhood development centres in primary schools in Nairobi County City.

This was done through NGOs, the Food for Education Kenya Fund, the Government, parents, and 15 donors.

Recommendations

The committee recommends that a school feeding program for all learners in Government-owned and Government-aided primary schools be implemented.

The committee also visited the health sector, particularly Mama Lucy Kibaki Hospital. The hospital has five levels and 1,287 staff, 6,000 outpatients, CT scans, an ICU, oxygen plants, and the use of ICT at a hospital.

The recommendations of the Committee on Health were as follows:

1. The committee recommends that the Ministry of Health should change the management of health facilities from medical superintendents to Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) and hinge on the renewal of their contracts on measurable performance targets.
2. The Minister of Health, Kampala Capital City Authority, and other administrative units in charge of health facilities should upscale the use of ICT and employ artificial intelligence as far as practical in health facilities to bring about efficiency in the health sector.

I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee chairperson. As required under our Rules, I will appoint a time for debating these reports. Clerk, please check through. We have several reports that we have not yet debated and adopted. We do not need to keep them hanging that much. Next item.

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS
TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL
GUIDANCE ON THE UGANDA
COMMUNICATIONS UNIVERSAL
SERVICE AND ACCESS FUND

4.16

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE ON ICT AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tonny Ayoo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mr Speaker, allow me to first congratulate you upon being elected as the chair of the African, Caribbean, and Pacific-European Union. *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, as Parliament –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I am a full president. *(Laughter)* Just add “Joint Parliamentary Assembly”.

MR TONNY AYO: ... Joint Parliamentary Assembly.

Mr Speaker, we would like to congratulate and thank you because that raises the bar for this Parliament and the country very high. We wish you good luck as you deliver and ensure that the opportunities for the African, Caribbean and Pacific states in funding and development are achieved during your term. Thank you.

I stand to present the report of the Committee on Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance on the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF). Before I proceed, I wish to lay the report of the committee and the minutes on the Table. I beg to lay.

Mr Speaker, in accordance with Rule 189(e) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, which mandates sectoral committees to monitor the performance of Ministries, Departments, and Agencies, the Committee on Information, Communications Technology, and National Guidance undertook a field oversight visit on the implementation of Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund (UCUSAF) by the Uganda Communications Commission and now begs to report.

I wish to give the House a background to the UCUSAF project at UCC. The Uganda Communications Commission was established under the legal framework of the Uganda Communications Act No.1 of 1997 and the Electronic Media Act, of 1996. It operates as an integrated regulatory body, overseeing various sectors, including telecommunications, data communication, broadcasting, postal communication, radio communication, and infrastructure services throughout Uganda.

In partnership with the World Bank, civil society, and the private sector, the Uganda Communications Commission established the Rural Communications Development Fund (RCDF) in 2001 as a semi-autonomous entity functioning as a department, in accordance with the Uganda Communications Act, 1997.

The fund was majorly set up to contribute to the realisation of universality in access and use of communications services in Uganda through establishment of communications projects in areas that are non-commercially viable or left unserved or underserved by market operations. Since its inception, it has increased ICT connectivity and accessibility, improved affordability and ensured equity.

The fund has been implemented over three five-year phases, with RCDF I from 2002 to 2003, extending voice access to unserved and underserved areas; RCDF II from 2009 to 2016, which extended voice and basic internet access to underserved and unserved rural areas; and RCDF/UCUSAF III from 2016 to 2023, which promoted the use of ICTs through broadband connectivity and access, content mediation and research, and advocacy.

Mr Speaker, the goal of UCUSAF is to bridge the digital divide and ensure that everyone, regardless of their socio-economic status or geographical location, has access to safe and affordable communications services.

The fund aims to increase broadband access, enhance the usage of digital devices and services, promote ICT applications and services, facilitate knowledge and informed decision-making, and enhance multi-sector collaboration.

The UCUSAF project has reported the following achievements:

1. Integrated ICT in education programmes, which has improved performance in Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEMs) due to better access to diverse content and its incorporation into the secondary school curriculum;
2. Increased ICT for agriculture, which has positively impacted growth in the subscription and usage of virtual distributed call centres for agricultural extension services and growth in agricultural support for online content for farmers;

3. Increased internet connectivity with educational institutions and customs border points, bringing down the cost of internet for educational institutions and support to customs e-government services, as well as to less-served communities through the provision of subsidised internet to school ICT laboratories through the Research and Education Network Uganda (RENU), and the installation of free Wi-Fi hotspots at border points;
4. Increased research support, which identified the most pressing gaps and developed interventions that are tailored to the specific needs of the targeted communities. This entailed the development of innovative solutions and the identification of research needs and priorities related to ICT development and digital transformation, leading to more impactful interventions, and
5. Analogue to digital migration, with the installation of 18 DTTs, including a content aggregation and multiplex system, leading to increased creation and consumption of local content and growth in telecom infrastructure from the digital dividend, resulting in more localised community content countrywide.

Regarding the project's performance, Mr Speaker, the committee received reports of inadequate budgets, lack of sustainability, new licensing regimes, which have slowed down infrastructure development, and challenges in unreliable and, at times, unavailable hydroelectricity.

Upon this background, the committee undertook a field visit to assess the performance of the UCUSAF project.

Mr Speaker, I invite you to paragraph 5, under observations and recommendations. I will skip the objectives to save time.

5.1 Extent to which the UCUSAF project has promoted access to communication services

5.1.1 Computer distribution and connectivity support in schools

UCUSAF seeks to provide learners with digital skills, promote creativity and innovation through collaborative usage of ICTs, integrate ICT in mainstream disciplines, and raise awareness of the importance of ICTs for sustainability –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, I need some clarification. How was this initiated? Was it initiated by the committee so that it is your field visit report?

MR TONNY AYO: Yes.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Clerk, I think this was captured wrongly. It should have been “laying” and then they give us a summary and I give a date for discussion. So, let us amend this so that it is “laying”. You will continue from where you had stopped; just give a summary of recommendations.

LAYING OF PAPERS

REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE ON THE UGANDA COMMUNICATIONS UNIVERSAL SERVICE AND ACCESS FUND

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, I am giving you two more minutes.

4.25

THE CHAIRPERSON OF THE COMMITTEE ON INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Tonny Ayoo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We beg your pardon. We thought this was part of the committee’s oversight work in overseeing the performance of the sector of ICT. All the same, the recommendation is going to be –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable chairperson. You do work according to the Rules of Parliament. So, when you do your

oversight field visit, it is a committee’s field visit report, which is provided for under rule 34.

Rule 34(2) says: “34(2) Upon laying of the report under sub-rule (1), the chairperson or the member shall present a summary of the report and highlight the key recommendations contained in the report.”

“34(3) The Speaker shall appoint a time, not exceeding forty-five minutes, for debate.”

“34(1) The Chairperson or a Member acting on behalf of the chairperson of the committee which travels to the field to conduct parliamentary business shall lay at the Table a report containing activities of the committee’s field visit. Therefore, this is what we are doing, and we have to re-align so that we are smarter. The problem is ours and we should have guided from the onset.

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the guidance. Now, going to the observation, which also provides the summary –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now, you go to recommendations because the rules do not allow you to go into observations. You are lying, and you no longer have the luxury of reading a report.

MR TONNY AYO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am glad that I had already laid the report initially, and I want to give the summary and the recommendation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Read an outline of recommendations.

MR TONNY AYO: Mr Speaker,

The committee recommends that:

1. Government through the Uganda Communication Commission (UCC) increases funding allocation towards ICT in education, specifically computer supply, maintenance, and infrastructure in schools. The program should be increased to cover the secondary schools to ensure that many other schools

- benefit from ICT as opposed to the current arrangement where very few schools are supported. The list of the schools that have benefited has been attached;
2. Government through UCC should extend broadband connectivity to all secondary schools. This will eliminate the cost being incurred by schools under the program for providing and meeting the cost of internet connectivity. I think this is being covered under the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP phase 5);
 3. Government should extend a national electricity grid to schools in the rural areas if they are to benefit from the program like their –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please switch on and continue.

MR TONNY AYOO:

1. Government should consider the introduction of ICT programs and lessons in primary schools to ensure that students have fundamental digital skills before enrolling for secondary schools. This can be done in consultation with the Ministry of Education and Sports to develop age-appropriate curriculum;
 2. The committee also recommend that the Government increase investment in ICT infrastructure, to extend connectivity. This should also include enhancing public-private partnerships to boost funding for ICT infrastructure;
 3. The prosecution of criminals involved in theft and vandalism of telecommunication equipment be enhanced even further. The sentence pronounced on offenders who vandalize telecommunication equipment should be severely punitive and deterrent;
 4. The committee further recommends that investment in telecommunication equipment should be undertaken to enhance quality service assessment of operations to ensure that measured performance
- more closely aligns with the subscriber's experience;
5. The committee also recommended that the Uganda Communications Commission should consider supporting and reinforcing the extension of the electricity grid to all towers, sites and mast, which would reduce the cost of purchasing diesel from sites and construction and contracts for regular transportation of fuel to the sites for the generators, which reduction in cost would reflect in payment of customers' costs;
 6. The committee also recommended that the Uganda Communications Commission should engage regulators from the neighbouring countries to manage the network frequencies within the borders and avoid overlaps of frequencies into Uganda space; and
 7. The Government should also develop a standardised and streamlined regulatory framework for permitting of new telecommunication infrastructure.

Mr Speaker, on the last item in the report, the committee recommends Government should increase funding to programs to ensure that the number of youth who benefit from this training significantly increases. This funding can also be enhanced through partnership and collaboration with the national and international organisation to secure grants and donations in the form of funding to equipment such as computers, cameras, and editing software.

We are talking about the multimedia skilling of the youth that was contained in the report.

The key challenges that the committee identified, the committee recommended the following on the challenges:

- a. Expansion of Internet connectivity to private consumers by extending and expanding the fibre optic network would be crucial towards making it more accessible and affordable for all Ugandans through

- affordable pricing, offering competitive pricing; and
- b. Due to the fixed internet cost charge on National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI), some consumers have opted for connectivity from internet service providers including Airtel, MTN, Roke Telkom and Research and Education Network for Uganda, who provide flexible connectivity at more affordable prices determined by volumes consumed.
 4. Government should enhance and emphasise awareness creation through sensitisation of the populace on the use of ICT, which will increase ICT intake and consequently reduce internet costs.

Conclusion

UCUSAF has ensured that communication service consumers in Uganda receive quality and reliable services in as well as regulated environment. The program has facilitated enhanced use of communication services, provided a platform for the attainment of an inclusive digital economy, and promoted digital transformation.

However, there are still glaring gaps in ensuring that this desired outcome is achieved. This is partly due to a lack of universal access to ICT products and services, inadequate technological advancement, tax regimes, and institutional weaknesses.

The committee recommends that the Government reduces the cost of ICT devices and services by revisiting the tax regime and that the Uganda Communication Commission and other players in the ICT space be fully empowered to improve universal access to ICTs across the country, by increasing penetration and the use of ICT services for social and economic development, which will then create more direct jobs in the ICT arena. Mr Speaker, I beg to report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Tonny defied my directive and decided to continue reporting. It is on a light note, honourable member. Since he has given us details, honourable colleagues, and we are going into processing the ministerial policy statements, these are resolutions, which help the committee and the sector. I think we have got substantial information on this issue. We should debate now and conclude it so that it can enable the committee to do its work diligently during the process.

The question for debate will be that a motion for adoption of the report of the Committee

The committee recommends that:

1. The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance to ensure that Internet connectivity on NBI is expanded to private consumers at a rate just like Government MDAs. This will reduce the cost of the Internet and enhance the adoption of the digital agenda;
2. The Ministry of ICT and National Guidance through the Uganda Communication Commission should put in place guidelines to operationalise the national broadband policy to ensure infrastructure sharing especially among the Internet service providers in both the private and public. This would lower the cost incurred in delivering the service and would trickle down to the formal consumers. As of now, Internet providers Canal Box and MTN are constructing their lines, putting their poles, and running to homes. You will find there are 10 poles and 10 lines going, and yet with NBI, only one line can deliver all this, and this is why the committee is calling upon UCC to take on this;
3. The committee also recommended that there should be a deliberate inter-program coordination between digital transformation and the energy development program to ensure that electricity is extended to all areas where there are ICT installations in the country as a measure to address the lack of access to electricity in some areas of the country that are spiked because of the Internet; and

on Information, Communication Technology (ICT) and National Guidance on the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund, be passed. Debate starts now with the doctor, I go to Hon. Esenu, Hon. Edakasi, a Member for Adjumani and I also pick this side, then come back here. Each one, three minutes.

4.37

DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the committee chairperson and the members for the report. The report discusses access to information and communication technology and services as a fundamental right.

There are observations that have been made that allude to, instead of having universal access to ICT in this country in general, and the project sites that have been visited in particular, we still see digital divide - a gap between regions, districts, and communities that have access to ICT services and those that do not have.

We appreciate that, very recently, the Government and Parliament approved some resources that were intended to boost investments in both hardware and software to improve access to ICT, particularly for those who are left behind. The Parish Development Model (PDM) programme envisages that we have a parish development management information system that is digitally driven. There are many parishes and subcounties in this country, including districts that have not accessed the fibre optic network and broadband assets. That denies them the right to ICT services.

As we adopt this report, I pray that the Ministry of ICT provides this House with a status update on efforts to fast-track the extension of ICT hardware and software to parts of this country that have not been served, especially my constituency, Obongi constituency, and district. Thank you.

4.40

MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso): Mr Speaker, I have a motion under rule 64 that we adjourn

consideration of this matter and discuss a matter of definite public importance. The Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) has just announced that he has deployed our military in South Sudan to protect the capital. Mr Speaker, you know that deployment can only happen with the approval of Parliament.

The motion is that you adjourn the debate and I raise this matter. The good thing is that we have the Minister for Defence and Veterans Affairs here. We also have a Uganda People's Defence Forces (UPDF) representative. The minister for defence, a very good lawyer, was my chairperson of the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. Let him tell us how this deployment has been done in total violation of the Constitution.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Well, it is an interesting motion. However, I do not know whether you got this news when we were here or earlier on. Rule 64(2) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament requires that you write to the Speaker two hours before plenary begins. Or, if it is extremely urgent where you have to satisfy the Speaker, then I have to consider very many issues at stake. I do believe this, indeed, is a critical matter, but it can be discussed on another day.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I agree that I have to satisfy you. This is also a security matter. Deployment of a national army cannot be casually done. That is why, in the Constitution, it must be done with the full authority of Parliament, even if it is deployed for an hour.

Mr Speaker, if it pleases you, you can appoint another time. If you allow the minister for defence, he can give us a five-minute status report, and then you can give us an opportunity to be properly briefed on this matter.

There is an announcement in all international media. Uganda is listed as having deployed the military to protect the capital of South Sudan. Since this is an international story, you cannot prolong it further than, maybe, tomorrow. Therefore, I beg you, Mr Speaker, to allow it.

The minister can brief us, and then we can have it raised formally on a date and time that you have appointed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member, I will not allow a matter because it is an international story. I can only allow it because it is critical. However, let me first hear from the minister for defence. Do you have anything you want to say about this? Have you deployed before I can rule on the matter?

4.44

THE MINISTER OF DEFENCE AND VETERANS AFFAIRS (Mr Jacob Oboth):

Mr Speaker, I was following a motion that was being considered, listening attentively to the debate that had just ensued. Whatever Hon. Ssemujju is saying, as a journalist, he could access information that, as a lawyer, I may not be able to access. To me, information has to be very formal. I do not rely on social media. That is the difference between the two professional bodies - (*Laughter*) - I am not aware of any formal communication that has been made.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. As a result of that, it becomes difficult for me to put a question on this motion – Hon. Jonathan, do you want to support him in satisfying me?

4.45

MR JONATHAN ODUR (UPC, Erute County South, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. With due fairness to the minister, but also without prejudice to the submission of Hon. Ssemujju, if it is true, it is a serious matter. As I mentioned, let the Government show us that they are working. It would not be difficult for the minister to verify if there is a Government running.

Since it is a very important matter - you know under section 39, I believe, deployments outside the country for peacekeeping missions can only happen with the approval of Parliament, it goes on to say that if Parliament was in recess, it would be recalled and constituted for that purpose.

It is an urgent matter and the Government seems to be in control; unless they are saying they are not in control of this particular Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) that he can deploy without the knowledge of the Government. The minister can verify this information and bring it here because it has implications in terms of resources.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, this is a Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs, and I am very sure that with the deployment of this nature, he should be involved because, in the end, he is the one who will come and report to Parliament.

Now, when he says that he has not participated in any meeting authorising or confirming deployment, it becomes very difficult.

However, like Hon. Jonathan Odur has said, honourable minister, in case you have done that or are planning to do it, please follow the law, come and update the Parliament, and then seek the support you would expect from Parliament. Honourable minister -

MR OBOTH: For the benefit of doubt, like I said before, unless the deployment happened while I was here. I will have to verify and then inform the House. That would be comforting to my good friend from Kira Municipality.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR SSEMUJJU: Mr Speaker, I agree with your guidance and like Hon. Jonathan Odur said, sometimes we sympathise with you. The other day, when the Joint Anti-Terrorist Task Force (JATT) was deployed, the Uganda Police Force said they did not know them.

The military spokesperson said that they did not know JATT. The CDF thanked them for a job well done, and the spokesperson came the following day to own them.

So, we sympathize with you, but we have a duty to the country. I will take your guidance, Mr Speaker. We wait for the lawyer. Lawyers,

as he said, take long to learn things. For us, we learn of them as they happen.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I can see different professionals clashing on how effective they are in terms of execution.

MR OBOTH: For the record, the future readers of the *Hansard* may wonder whether there was a lawyer in the House when Hon. Ssemujju was making that serious allegation on how we take so long to learn. It is well known, and with due respect that there is a difference.

We verify and get needed proof so that we are sure of what we are talking about, but journalists can make up anything, and that is Hon. Ssemujju for you. *(Laughter)* *(Hon. Ssemujju rose)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssemujju, there is no one on the Floor. Thank you. I have been reminded that lawyers learn for five years and journalists for three years. That is the difference. Let us resume the debate. Hon. Esenu-

4.50

MR ANTHONY ESENU (NRM, Kapelebyong County, Kapelebyong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join in appreciating the committee for a very good, well-researched and submitted report, together with their recommendations.

The committee devised a plan to upgrade the infrastructure for ICT across the country, particularly highlighting schools and other public facilities to be targeted.

However, because of the summary – the challenge that we have is, and I hope that the committee has been able to link up with the education ministry because of the infrastructure that we have across the country.

Most schools in rural areas do not have the facilities that can be able to house either power facilities in terms of electricity or even have the type of laboratories and buildings to house ICT equipment and infrastructure.

Therefore, the suggestion that is being made is very good and seems to be devoid of the status and the challenges of putting up these facilities across the country.

While I agree with their recommendations, I would be happy if, in addition, we request that their views are cross-referenced with the plan of the Ministry for Education to roll out appropriate infrastructure for schools across the country, and for electricity, it should be linked up with the ministry for energy. Otherwise, the ideas are very good but need to be put into the context of our infrastructure. I beg to submit.

4.52

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I thank the committee for the work well done. My prayer is that the Government should prioritise equipping all our secondary schools with computers. Imagine a student from a rural area finishing senior six without touching a computer. It makes our people lag behind and it is an embarrassment.

On the issue of connectivity, the Government of Uganda went ahead to universalise all services through a computer system, especially under the ministry for health.

I was on the Floor of Parliament when people got stranded at our general hospital because the connectivity was down. I am praying that priorities go to service points like the health centres so that what the Government has started can be implemented effectively.

Lastly, there are private service points; people have got companies like radio stations but for us to get connectivity throughout is a problem. Now that the honourable minister for ICT is here, my prayer is that all the service points where we have radio stations, be boosted so that we can be able to disseminate information to our people. Thank you.

4.53

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me also join everyone in thanking the chairperson

for the report. Many years ago, I went to Bukedea Secondary School, and I remember in my S.1, we did not have a Bunsen burner and it is part of the reason why I failed to become a scientist.

That situation has not changed with computers. Computers remain a mystery for rural schools. This year, my only school, Kaberamaido Secondary School, took a computer exam for S.4, but we had to hire computers. This should stop. We cannot talk about a competency-based curriculum without equipment like a computer.

I hope that the ministries responsible can take this seriously so that these computers are available to our young people so that they can be very creative. The closest our young people have gotten to computing is using a phone. All the creativity we are talking about in a competency-based curriculum is in computing. I think the committee was spot-on.

Related to that is the issue of electricity, and I couldn't agree more that most rural schools are having problems with access. Power is there once a week, and the teachers are labouring. Even where there are computers, they cannot do anything because the cost of running generators, which most of the schools do not have, remains a challenge.

They were also spot-on on the issue of taxation. I think the tax regimes have to be reviewed to allow - there was a time in this country when we were allowing computers to come, and that enabled them to come free and access increased. If we could go back to that just because of this curriculum that we are implementing so that schools can access more computers.

The committee did not say anything about the integrated health system, which is also now computerized - that doctors can access information which is available at the centre, even from the rural areas. This relates both to the internet and access to computers. I thank the committee and hope that the responsible ministries can take it up. Thank you, Mr. Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Dr Bwanika and Dr Opio.

4.56

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera, Masaka City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for a good report. I just want to emphasise the issue of electricity. As we talk about connectivity in terms of computer and broadband, the two should run concurrently with power connectivity.

Unfortunately, the minister for energy has moved out. We need to hear from the minister for energy about dedicated power lines to schools, hospitals, and public places that provide services to the people of this nation. There should be dedicated power lines that do not just switch off because these are crucial entities.

Secondly, there should not only be dedicated power lines but there should also be lines that have a subsidy rate. The tariff for schools should be a subsidised tariff so that those rural schools can afford it. Areas like the far-to-reach, where we want these services to be utilised; if they have these subsidised tariffs, it will help to utilise this infrastructure in terms of the broadband and computers that are given.

Therefore, I want to propose that the recommendations be amended to include dedicated power lines and subsidised tariffs to places, which provide these services to the people of Uganda. I humbly submit.

4.58

MR BONIFACE OKOT (NRM, Youth Representative, Northern): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for this report. I am cognisant of the fact that the Government intends to expand the economy of Uganda tenfold by 2040.

However, allow me also to say that in the contemporary world order, any country that intends to grow its economy significantly with very limited investment in ICT is simply daydreaming or even thinking wishfully.

Secondly, poor government planning on account of inter-programme or even inter-ministry

miscoordination is becoming unbearable day in and day out. You hear about computer labs without electricity and value-adding machines without electricity and water. Mr Speaker, I beg that the Government is put to task not to undertake any new programmes without committing to concluding these particular programmes that are already underway.

Thirdly, it is time for us to shift our ICT approach from box-ticking to meaningful impact in our communities. For example, how do we have multimedia training for five days? It is unacceptable. Uganda, by all standards, has a much better comparative advantage in terms of providing employment opportunities for its youth using ICT. I wonder why we do not invest in this particular area where we have a significant comparative advantage.

Our youth are generally more skilled in -
(*Member timed out.*)

5.01

DR SAMUEL OPIO (Independent, Kole North County, Kole): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to take this opportunity to thank the committee for the report. It really comes down to our ICT strategy, and we need to see ICT as a tool for fighting corruption, through e-procurements, e-trade, e-recruitment of persons in public service, and e-health.

We have been rolling out electronic medical records as the Ministry of Health. The facilities that have utilised them have shown increased availability of medicines, reduced drug stock-outs, and minimised diversion of drugs and services.

However, we need to prioritise it because as much as the Ministry of Health is rolling it out, we have an unfunded priority of Shs 6 billion. For the last two to three years, it has been an unfunded priority that there is no money to roll out these electronic medical records down to the health centres IIIs and IVs. As we look at ICT, let us look at it comprehensively, ICT for health, ICT for trade, but also ICT to fight corruption and ensure more transparency in our Government systems. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Santa, Hon. Ssekitooleeko, Hon. Geoffrey Okello.

5.02

MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson for coming up with this report. I would like to first address myself to the minister in charge of energy. Honourable minister, are you aware that we still have schools without connectivity to the electricity grid? For example, in Oyam, we still have secondary seed schools without connectivity. I have walked to your office many times but with very little help.

With the coming of this report, I want to believe that my good friend, the honourable minister in charge of energy, will this time around see us and make sure that we have connectivity because when we are talking about electricity and ICT, they move together.

Secondly, we also have schools – this is to the minister, Hon. Chris Baryomunsi; we still have schools without computers. For example, in my area, we have Acaba Secondary School; I have just received a letter from the headmaster. A school of 1,600 students has only 10 computers, but we are talking about ICT universally.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, reading the report, we still have a challenge with local governments who are taking a back seat. ICT plays a very crucial role in effectiveness and efficiency in service delivery. If we do not have local governments on board, then we are going to achieve very little because these people are at the grassroots. When we talk about awareness, these are the people who are supposed to help us work with the system and make the local communities aware of the services that help in service delivery.

Finally, there is the high cost of connectivity and bandwidth. If the cost is still high and yet we need this system, then we are failing at the onset. I want to thank you, and I would like to believe that since we are in the budget cycle when the report comes back – when we are

handling this – we have to correct some of these problems. As Parliament, this is where we have to ensure that we help ministries to get internet connectivity. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.05

MR ROBERT SSEKITOLEEKO (NUP, Bamunanika County, Luwero): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

When you come here with such an initiative – Information and Communication Technology (ICT) is now the order of the day. It is the talk of the town. If the Government is pushing for the best interest of Ugandans, it would need to implement - because when such a committee comes out with a good report like that, the Government should just pick it up, immediately.

However, it is as if the Government researches and the private partners take it. You were talking about UCC. We are putting aside or forgetting about Posta Uganda. It should just give us, at least, on maximized prices. Now, it is as if you have given the opportunity to MTN and private individuals to enjoy the efforts of such good work.

Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance, this is a challenge to you, and the ball is in your court. We want Ugandans to live in a modern world. When you go to other countries, you find Wi-Fi everywhere, but when you go to the airport in Uganda, you cannot access Wi-Fi. These are issues that we want to be resolved.

When you go to a medical facility and you look around, you cannot even see – I think it is now a challenge to you. Instead of putting emphasis on community radios, this is now the right time to emphasize such. This is the way to go. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.07

MR GEOFFREY OKELLO (DP, Nwoya East County, Nwoya): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have waited for more than three weeks to say congratulations to you. Congratulations! *(Applause)*

Mr Speaker, about 10 years ago, some cables were laid and we were told that they were for broadband internet connectivity; the basic infrastructure to make the internet cheaper, and faster and increase its capacity. I thank the chairperson for raising these matters. Although not exactly, it has helped us to recall – and I would like to know from the ministers: what happened to that project?

Number two, Mr Speaker, the world has moved from second, third, fourth, and now fifth generation (5G) wireless cellular technology. In our country, we have a capacity of 4G now, but the equipment only supports 2G and 3G. Can we also have an appraisal on how that will be dealt with, so that we deal with the capacity that we have, and get compliant equipment?

Mr Speaker, that brings me to computers that were dumped at some schools, 10 years ago. In some secondary schools, there was no electricity. In one of them, in my constituency, Alero Secondary School did not have electricity. When it was finally extended, it was too weak. I contacted the area and regional managers and the best answer I got from them was that at installation of the line, it had been compromised.

I asked: what does it mean for a line to be compromised at installation? I was told that it means substandard equipment was used in some places. I asked: how and why? One of them explained to me that when contractors are not monitored, they buy fake things – they take the Government things to their shops, but bring the fake things and connect. The lines are there – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude your issues of having powerless power.

MR GEOFFREY OKELLO: I will abandon that point because the next is more important.

The committee recommends the extension of computers to primary schools. Given the constraints I see in this House; we need to think about applicable things.

I propose the introduction of tablets in primary schools because they are cheaper; they cost between Shs 300,000, to Shs 400,000 per piece. Many parents can afford them, and the Government can just give out some. That may kick-start computer usage for our primary kids. Thank you very much.

5.11

MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson and the committee for the work well done.

Article 41 of the Constitution talks about access to information. I agree with the committee that, indeed, we should have access to information. I just want one clarification from the chairperson and the minister, now that he is here.

Committee chairperson, I would like to know whether, during your field visit and benchmarking tour, you looked at the agreements or the terms and conditions of these licences that these companies have. I want to know whether it is possible, in the terms and conditions, that these competing companies can share certain facilities or services to serve our people better.

Mr Speaker, I remember Hon. Bagala had a motion, to urge the Government to make sure one person has one line or one SIM card. The minister, who was here then, said that he wanted to look at the terms and conditions of these companies and see whether it was possible for these companies to share services.

Finally, Mr Speaker, you gave the honourable minister an assignment, to find out why some companies are still issuing SIM cards that are not registered. It means that there could be a problem in the terms and conditions under which these companies operate. Honourable minister, I wish you could clarify that.

5.12

MS BETTY ENGOLA (NRM, Woman Representative, Apac): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also thank the chairperson for the report.

I agree with their recommendations, but I was wondering why they left out agriculture, yet it is the backbone of this economy. We need to expand ICT to that sector.

I would like to know why agriculture has been left out and they are focussing on education only. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.13

MS NOELINE KISEMBO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kibaale): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Allow me, also, to congratulate you upon ascending to the presidency of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States. You have done us proud.

Mr Speaker, I appreciate the committee for the report. As we talk about connectivity, there is a need to have proper coordination between our ministries.

Last evening, I was watching a programme on UBC Television and our honourable minister for energy rightly put it that the energy sector is the engine for all the other sectors.

In our communities, we have schools where the Ministry of Education and Sports has done very well. They have put up seed schools and supplied computers in a bid to enhance connectivity for our students. However, these schools have no power connection. It becomes difficult for the schools to have connectivity when there is no power.

Mr Speaker, you will recall that, last year, while you were presiding over one of the sessions, we talked about power connection to agricultural processing plants. You even directed all Members who had such plants not connected to power to write to you. I am one of those who wrote. I have two units that are not connected to power to date. Why don't we have proper coordination in our ministries, so that when the Government undertakes to put in place infrastructure, it is complemented and then put to the right use? I thank you.

5.16

MR RICHARD WANDA (NRM, Bungokho Central County, Mbale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to also congratulate you upon ascending to that prestigious position. I thank the chairperson and the committee, for the report. The country we are in has a growing inequality where you find that if our children do not study from certain schools, they will have limitations in the future. The issue of ICT tries to mitigate that kind of inequality. If we can have our children introduced to computer usage and the language of ICT early enough, we will have done a great job in securing their future and ensuring equity.

Mr Speaker, the drivers to national development are also embedded in e-governance. We have been grappling with the issues of governance, budgeting, and duplications here and there. It is with ICT that we can have the Government integrated into one unit where ministries speak to each other. For example, internal affairs communicating with finance. All ministries should be connected using ICT and we will avoid a lot of duplication and bring about development.

There is a lot of slack that is built into our budgeting system because of the lack of communication between ministries and departments. However, with all this, we need power, as my colleague put it. Some schools have received donations of computers, but they cannot put them to use because they do not have power. In that line, I will add my voice to the request for power in our rural areas, so that people can engage in ICT usage.

Let me end by saying, let us do the small things today and they will account for great achievements in the future. Thank you.

5.18

MR MOSES ALEPER (NRM, Chekwii County (Kadam), Nakapiripirit): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to say that when I read one of the theme words in that report, “Universal”, I noticed that it involves everyone. That actually baffled me. As the

chairperson was reading the report, I was completely lost. You are talking about the national backbone. I have even failed to get just a mere telecommunication connection in my constituency. I have moved to the Ministry of ICT, I have met Hon. Baryomunsi, I have gone to UCC, and this has fallen on deaf ears.

Are we really serious about this universality or is this just a fallacy? We come here and we make reports that are so colourful, and this dupes Ugandans and they think that we are moving together. This is not acceptable. I am on this side of the Government, and we talk of universal access to ICT. We have ministers who cannot even move with us, and they help us achieve this and we have letters in their offices.

What I am trying to say, Mr Speaker, is that before we reach there - you are talking of national backbone but some of us even do not have telephone connectivity in our constituencies and it is creating problems in health service delivery, because we cannot even get access to some of these lower health units, so that we get to know that there are people who need urgent care or first aid or ambulance services.

We have problems of insecurity and we cannot coordinate this with the security structures that are in place. Before we talk like this, and if you want us to move with you, you first put the basics down and achieve them. You cannot start flying in the air when we do not even have bicycles. How do you talk about flying in an Airbus? That is a joke.

To me, Mr Speaker, with due respect, I cannot subscribe to such a report when we are just left moving around on our own. As we speak, I have even used my own resources to make sure we get people who can survey a place where we can put telecom connectivity.

Then, I go to power, which is an enabler for this. You cannot have – *(Member timed out.)*

5.21

MR ENOS ASIMWE (NRM, Kabula County, Lyantonde): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to restrict myself to two issues. The first is the issue of NITA-U not selling to private operators. I would like to seek clarification from the honourable minister, on why NITA-U cannot sell to private operators. Possibly because the report is telling us it could make it cheaper for private users.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, is the resistance from the communities, mostly on network towers and mast installation companies. I have witnessed this in my constituency when these companies just come in and start building during the night because there is resistance within the communities mainly because they do not sensitise communities. They do not have meetings with communities but just come in, buy land, and start construction without any consultation with the people around the community. I think the honourable minister should take it upon himself to also work on this.

Lastly, Mr Speaker – (*Interjection*) - before I give you information, I would like to seek guidance through you to the Minister, if you can also help us understand what happened to the satellite project. We had started an alternative source of Internet by funding the satellite project but along the way, we do not hear about it anymore – (*Member timed out.*)

5.23

MS LAURA KANUSHU (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I congratulate you on your newly deserving assignment. The report talks about the fact that ICT is a right and I want to believe that that right is a right for everybody. It also talks about universality, meaning that nobody should be left behind.

I have heard colleagues talk about computers that were dumped in their districts or schools, but I want to speak about students or learners with special needs, particularly students with visual impairment.

In the ICT world we are in today, there is a software called “JAWS” that students or learners who cannot see can use ably but I am sure that none of these computers has that software.

My appeal to the Government is that since this is a right, at least for every computer that is taken to a school, can we have one that has that software so that students who cannot see - first of all, they cannot write like us on a piece of paper. The only way that can aid them to catch up with the rest of the world is access to the computer, which they can use easily and be able to do their work and everything else just like any of us.

I want to appeal to the Government not to leave out learners with disabilities because it is a software that all over the world is being used and I think that Uganda should not leave out learners with disabilities behind. I thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, the unfortunate bit with reports of this nature is that I am limited in terms of time for debate. I am only given 45 minutes. We have exceeded our time so I will call on the LOP. These are your rules; rule 34(3), if you check it out. I am limited by the rules you set. Yes, LOP.

5.25

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me add my voice to the voices of colleagues to thank the committee for a good report.

However, Mr Speaker, for those of us who live near the border – I am looking at the – I am highly doubtful of the honesty on the part of the recommendation by the committee that UCC should engage the telecom regulators of neighbouring countries to help nip in the bud, the challenge of overlaps in frequencies. We have different codes, for instance, in the partner states of East Africa: Kenya uses +254, Tanzania, +255, Uganda uses +256 - actually, I was even looking for South Sudan, which is

+211, Burundi uses +257, and Rwanda uses +250. The new entrant, Somalia uses +252.

We are almost over 10 years into this integration but we have failed in allowing free movement; removing those restrictions that allow free movement of capital, labour, goods, services, name it. How will this entity, UCC, with my very powerful good friend superintending over it, prevail over the telecom companies, if they cannot integrate or harmonise the different codes to have the regulators of the telecom companies cooperating to ensure there are no overlaps of frequencies? I think this would be a toll order.

Another challenge is the topography; the hills, mountainous places like where I hail from in Bududa. The manifest of obstacles to radios and TVs has presented huge challenges in connectivity. Therefore, I really do not know because I have even seen that the report raises the challenge of tall buildings. Moreover, with the advancement of technology, I am sure countries have gadgets that now ensure that these tall buildings are no longer an obstacle to connectivity. It affects - I know because here in Uganda, we still have the challenge of tall buildings affecting effective communication because of blocking the internet signal propagation.

Mr Speaker, I applaud the idea of enhancing the ICT infrastructure, particularly in rural settings, but there is a challenge of unreliable power supply in these rural areas by Umeme.

You know very well - and the minister is here - that we still grapple with the challenge of intermittent power flows, mostly in rural areas. This is one obstacle that is hampering the functioning of the telecommunication infrastructure. The minister should make a response to this; I do not know how. What strategies do they have in place? This is a challenge that the country has grappled with since time immemorial and there does not seem to be a solution in sight - (*Interjection*) - okay, I tone it down.

With those, I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, I would like to know whether you have been engaging the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development on the RCDF money. I do not want to go far but last year, I think the money was at Shs 110 billion yet only Shs 55 billion went to UCC.

They usually say to the people of finance that when money goes to the Consolidated Fund, it loses colour and is not easy to trace. However, I think the major aim of creating this fund was the traceability of money meant for rural areas and; the improvement of communication services in rural areas.

For example, UCC helped us a lot in the digital migration and out of that, we also had Signet. However, Signet has only been available in Kampala yet it is supposed to mainly help the rural poor up country. I know we brought some money in the last supplementary to help Signet but how sustainable is this? Shall we continue with the supplementary?

Therefore, honourable minister, we need you to strongly engage Finance on this. If money is meant for rural communication infrastructure, that business of saying we only give you 50 per cent, and then 50 per cent goes to the Consolidated Fund - some of us who come from rural areas will be cheated and we will not be able to get help.

Honourable minister, come and respond to the issues raised by members. Honourable minister, I said the debate ended so I cannot allow any further questions.

5.32

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Hon. Kaberuka is urging the Speaker - I will speak for him since we are from Kanungu.

Mr Speaker, I also add my voice to congratulate you on your recent election. I would like to thank the committee chairperson and members of the

Committee on ICT and National Guidance for a very good report. I also appreciate the honourable members, for the support they have expressed towards the ICT sector and the many progressive comments they have made, which I have taken note of. They will help us to improve how we run the sector as we provide services.

As the honourable members of the committee and the Members of the House have said, the future is digital because all over the world, technology is now driving socio-economic transformation. We cannot hide our heads in the sand and hope that the technology revolution will just pass us. We have to be part and parcel of that revolution. Therefore, as a minister for ICT, I appreciate all the comments made by Members of the House and the support that you have expressed.

Our ministry was established to spearhead that digital transformation, and maybe what I can promise is: that I can prepare a comprehensive report regarding the update; how far we have gone as a country, and we can have - time allowing - a robust debate. This is because this report is just focusing on a fund managed by UCC, but I could hear the comments touching on the bigger area of digital transformation. I pledge to prepare a comprehensive report to come and update the House and then we can have a debate touching all aspects of digital transformation.

Nonetheless, permit me, briefly, to respond to some of the issues, which have been raised, and maybe the Minister of Energy and Mineral Development, if you allow her, can make a comment because the voice has been that we must move hand in hand. In that wherever we extend ICT services, power must also go along.

Mr Speaker, when we passed the UCC Act, 2007 and amended it in 2013, there was a provision that permits UCC to levy 2 per cent of the monies paid by the licensees. Of this 2 per cent, 1 per cent goes to the Consolidated Fund and the other 1 per cent is retained as Appropriation in Aid by UCC. This money is meant to extend technology services, especially

in rural areas. So, this is the fund we are talking about.

The major challenge, which the committee has highlighted is that it is inadequate because we hear the appeal that all the schools should access computers. That is correct but the limitation has been on the resources.

I visited one school in my constituency and asked them, "Do you have computer studies?" They said, "Yes." "Do you have computers?" They said, "No". This is in Kihanda Subcounty - Hon. Kaberuka knows it. "Do you have a computer?" They said, "Yes, we have a computer, but it does not function."

What happens is that the teacher puts it there and says, "If it was functioning, you press here, then this is what happens on the screen."
(Laughter)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: So, they are studying by rumour, from a teacher. *(Laughter)*

DR BARYOMUNSI: I am using this to demonstrate the point that the ministry needs to be supported with resources to support all the schools in the country so that our learners have access to computers and computer studies as early as possible. Many of us never had that opportunity, but now that the technology revolution is on, we must enable our learners to do that.

The Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has been using that fund to extend services and one of the areas they support is equipping schools with computers. I was surprised by the report when it said that there is a school, which has computers without power because when computers are extended to school, we also provide solar services where the national grid is absent.

So, I would like you to check your constituencies and if there is a school, which received computers but they do not have power, we have to put solar power there before the national grid arrives because it does not make sense to provide computers and you put

them in the store. You would rather give them to a school where there is power.

I do not know how it happened that UCC could have given computers to a school but then did not provide solar power. So, I will follow up with that school, which was reported in Arua. But if you have any other school in your constituency, alert us so that we immediately work with either the Minister of Energy to extend power there, if she can or in the intervening period, we support that school with solar energy, in order for the computers to work.

The other area that UCC has been supporting is building towers – *emilongoti*, as we call them in vernacular. The masts are largely built by the private sector and there are two major companies, American Tower Corporation (ATC) and another called Ubuntu. They are the ones, who largely build these towers on a commercial arrangement.

However, the reason there is this fund at the UCC is that there are areas, which do not make business sense for some of these private sector actors. The Government then comes in because there are people who need a service.

The licensing conditions for all these actors is that once they are given a licence, they must cover up to 90 per cent of the area within five years.

For instance, if you are given a licence to build the towers like ATC, then within five years, you must extend to 90 per cent of the coverage area. The Government Then does the 10 per cent.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is that for telecoms or tower building companies?

DR BARYOMUNSI: Even telecoms.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is because tower building companies will only build towers on requisition by telecom operators that are going to use it.

DR BARYOMUNSI: No, like if MTN gets a national licence to provide telecom services in the whole country, the licence condition is that within five years, they should have covered 90 per cent of the country.

So, if you get a regional licence to cover a particular region like the central region, then within five years, you must cover up to 90 per cent, then the Government does the 10 per cent. This is where UCC uses this fund, for instance, to build towers where MTN, Airtel and all these service providers probably do not have interest because of business arrangements.

I was surprised when Hon. Moses Aleper said that he has moved everywhere and is not being supported. The telecom operators have withdrawn from building masts, which are now built by those two companies, ATC and Ubuntu. And where they have no interest because of business, then the Government comes in using this fund.

Sometime back –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, can we request that we put a desk with our officer outside here for members of Parliament who do not have a network in their areas to register with their contacts? (*Applause*) In fact, you can put your officer there.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Actually, as a way of updating, I made that offer here in the House and requested the honourable members to write, indicating areas where there is no or poor network and many members wrote. I am now giving you an update but I agree with you; they can still write. We shall put a desk here and put those letters –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not letters - I am sorry for the interruption, honourable minister, but I would like to make it very easy for you. Bring your officer here; I am going to instruct the Clerk to provide the desk here.

We can even do it on Thursday or tomorrow and members register, so that your officers are able to ask for details they need. And our MPs

register so that you receive the information straight and discuss it with your technical officers.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Yes, Mr Speaker. Tomorrow, beginning at 8.00 a.m., the officer will be here in the lobby *-(Applause)-* then you indicate the areas. This is important because we passed a loan here in this House, which is being implemented by NITA-U, supported by the World Bank. We have up to 180 masts, which we are going to build under that project.

Two, under this fund, UCC is also building 53 masts this year. I have spoken to ATC, the lead private company, and they are also doing 130 masts.

So, the importance of registering, especially for those who never wrote, is for us to discuss with NITA-U, UCC and private providers to capture all these areas.

I will take special interest in Hon. Moses Aleper's revelation that he is even using his money to erect masts. You should not. So, I will engage with you even if it requires me or my technical team to come to your constituency, I will send them so that they check and get the coordinates and we include you in these arrangements – *(Interjection)* – Time is not on my side, let me conclude by – oh, we have time? *(Laughter)* In terms of connectivity –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you have allowed the coup?

DR BARYOMUNSI: Someone is taking over the chair and giving me more time –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please conclude, honourable. There is another item I want us to handle.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Mr Speaker, this Parliament has been supporting the sector by approving resources to construct what we call the National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI). In simple terms, the internet fibre is the cable, which extends the internet and we have done four phases but covered only 57 districts in Uganda. We have passed two

loans - I gave an update sometime back; I need to prepare another update. One is supported by the World Bank - the one I have referred to - and the other is supported by the Exim Bank of China.

The World Bank project is going to extend the fibre to 20 more districts, and then the Chinese loan will extend to the rest of the country. In the next two years, we should be able to have all districts in Uganda connected to the National Backbone Infrastructure. We also have a component of doing what we call last-mile connections, which means you extend the main route for the main line but also connect the institutions like district headquarters, subcounty headquarters, schools, and health facilities. That component is there in the money, which we passed.

The Chinese loan is mainly for NBI and other forms of infrastructure, whereas the World Bank loan covers infrastructure, data centres and automation of Government services - what some of you were raising is that there should be better linkage and the provision of e-services within the Government structure. They are being addressed, but I will prepare a comprehensive report to give an update on how far we have gone, and how these projects are being implemented.

I think Hon. Enos raised the issue of the satellite; yes, there were two issues. There was a satellite developed by students in Japan under the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation. That one was not addressing technology and ICT; it was on issues of weather and so forth. However, the East African countries are in advanced discussions to procure and launch a regional satellite.

There was a meeting two weeks ago in Juba by the technical people, so there is an arrangement. We did not want to go at it alone as a country because of the expenses, but we have agreed, as a region, to have a regional satellite to supplement all these other sources of connectivity that we have been discussing. That will help us in the mountainous areas, like where the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) comes from and my place, Kigezi, where you

get areas with only internet shadows. Once we use satellite, we should be able to cover those areas, on the lakes and the other areas where this infrastructure like NBI may not easily be extended.

Hon. Laura, yes we have computers, which have that software for learners with disability. The computers are there. I just have to check how many have been given through this arrangement.

Lastly, I think the Leader of the Opposition raised the issue of whether we can engage with the neighbouring countries. Yes, that engagement is there. There is what we call the one network area; if you have been moving to East African countries, for instance, two years ago, it was very difficult to be in Tanzania and use your mobile phone to call Uganda. This, however, has been worked out with Kenya and Tanzania, and we continue to work with the other neighbouring countries.

Even the National Backbone Infrastructure - the reason the cost of internet has continued to come down is that we continue to connect it and hook it to East African countries. The main route has been Kenya because we are a landlocked country; we get this fibre from under the Indian Ocean through Kenya, but we have since linked it with Tanzanian, Rwandan, and DRC networks. We, therefore, have that regional integration effort to ensure that in the areas of technology, we work together.

Since I have pledged to bring a comprehensive update to the House, I think in the next two or three weeks, I will prepare a comprehensive report that touches on all aspects of digital transformation and if you give us an opportunity, we can have a bigger debate on where we are and how far we have moved.

I want to thank the honourable members, for the positive comments you have made. Our challenge is resources, and since we are now in the budgeting process, we are engaging with the Ministry of Education and Sports to quantify what we need, in terms of providing computers to all the remaining schools. We

want to determine what can be funded through the Ministry of ICT and what can be raised through the Ministry of Education and Sports so that we do not create inequality.

Right now, because of financial challenges, some learners have access to computers but some learners do not have access yet they sit the same exam. I beg that through the budgeting process, we address that gap so that our learners have the same opportunities across the country.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister - his time is up - he is no longer on the Floor, please. I think it will be difficult for you, to be honest, considering the period we are in and the schedule we have, to bring here a comprehensive statement. What you should do is present it to the committee so that it can help in processing the ministerial policy statement. Let them have a detailed discussion with you. Otherwise, even if I promised you now, space on the Order Paper will be very difficult because of the budgeting period - no, that one I will do later; just wait.

I am happy you are here, and your policy statement is ready so after adopting, I will give you space to go back.

Minister for Energy in 2 minutes - because these are general issues you do not have to go into specifics.

5.52

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is true that Uganda is not yet at 100 per cent access to electricity, so my sister, Hon. Santa Sandra, my brother, Hon. Okello, and the rest of the Members of Parliament who have raised the issues of their areas and schools not being connected, it is because of that. We still have that percentage of Ugandans who have not yet gotten access to electricity.

Three or four years back, access to electricity was 57 per cent. On the national grid, it was 19 per cent. We have just reached 60 per cent,

where 28 per cent is on the national grid and the rest is on other sources, mainly solar. The good thing is that we have been moving together year in, year out. You are the people who have been supporting the budget, you know how much money we appropriate.

Today, we have laid the ministerial policy statement in which we have our proposed budget. We shall go through it, and you will see what the ministry has prepared. We are not lamenting; you helped us to amend the Electricity Act of 1999, where you opened up for private sector investment.

We are now calling upon private people to invest in independent power transmission and independent power generation so that instead of relying only on the National Treasury, we have the private sector investing in the sector where they will be paid back through the tariff, but again, we are obliged to maintain or even reduce the cost of power.

We have been moving together and I am aware that there are subcounties, which are not yet connected yet our policy is to go beyond the district, and subcounty and load centres.

Health centres, seed and technical schools are part of the load centres, which we are supposed to connect.

We shall discuss the Ministerial Policy Statement and the budget to see what we can do, within the limitations that we have. It is not that we do not mind, but it is because of the limitations. Right now, we talk about 60 per cent access. There is hope. Once the economy improves – I know my docket is one of the key priorities because it spurs development of other sectors.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you for the continued support and that of the Members of Parliament.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. I now put the question that the report of the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National

Guidance on the Uganda Communications Universal Service and Access Fund be adopted with proposed amendments.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Congratulations, committee chairperson and honourable minister for ICT, honourable minister for energy and honourable colleagues, for handling this matter expeditiously, so that these issues are considered when appraising and processing the Ministerial Policy Statements.

Honourable colleagues, since the minister for ICT is here, and today we are receiving the Ministerial Policy Statements, he had asked me, earlier, for permission that he would be coming in late. I would like to allow him to present the Ministerial Policy Statement.

LAYING OF PAPERS

MINISTRY OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, honourable minister?

5.57

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to lay the Ministerial Policy Statement for the Financial Year 2025/2026 for Vote 020 – Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance; and Vote 126 – National Information Technology Authority, Uganda, under Section 13 of the Public Finance and Management Act.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The policy statement stands referred to the Committee on Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance for processing.

Honourable colleagues, I have seen that there is a meeting tomorrow between the mover of Item No.6 (The Contract Farming Bill, 2023), the Attorney-General and the committee chairperson for reconciliation purposes. I met them today and they requested that we wait for them to, first, reconcile a few issues to do with the Bill.

I checked through Item No.7; the report is short. I want us to receive and debate it so that when we resume, I think on Thursday, we can go to the committee stage. Next item.

BILLS SECOND READING

THE ENGINEERING PROFESSIONALS BILL, 2024

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister – I received a communication from the Minister of Works and Transport, requesting that the minister for ICT and national guidance stands in for him. Honourable minister, move the motion.

5.58

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024” be read the second time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? Okay, it is seconded by the minister for energy, the state minister for local government and the committee chairperson for ICT. Among Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) representatives, I have Afande Alanyo and Afande Hon. Dr Nekesa. I also have Hon. Dr Kagabo, Hon. Ritah, Mzee Abdu – he has no back –(Laughter)- Hon. Dr Bwanika, Hon. Goli, Hon. Itungo and many Members of this House, including Hon. Bataringaya.

Honourable minister, would you like to justify the motion?

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024 is meant to regulate the engineering profession. Professions are usually regulated, whether you speak of medical doctors and other health workers, lawyers and media practitioners.

There has been a law called the “Engineering Registration Act”, which has been largely to enable registration of engineers, but it has been limited in a way. This new Bill repeals that old law and provides for the entire engineering sector, touching on engineers, technologists and technicians – because there is a difference. You find that many people hold certificates or diplomas and call themselves “engineers”. This Bill comprehensively covers those different cadres within that profession.

The Bill basically seeks to regulate the technologists and engineers who are the other cadres of the engineering profession, aside from the engineers. It is also meant to provide for the licensing of engineering professionals and provide for a code of conduct and ethics, which is very important. It is also to provide a mechanism for inquiry into the conduct of an engineering professional who contravenes the code of ethics.

Mr Speaker, like I have said, the law, which has been in place – the Engineers Registration Act – has been limited just to registration of engineers. This one is broader and provides for an institutional framework on how the engineering profession will be properly regulated.

In brief, I appeal to the House to support, overwhelmingly, this law because it will help us to regulate the profession of engineering. I thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. Committee chairperson, I understand you processed the Bill and have your report ready.

6.02

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON PHYSICAL INFRASTRUCTURE (Mr Tony Awany):

Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Allow me, also, to add my voice in congratulating you on ascending to that prestigious position.

In accordance with Rule 130(2) of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I hereby present the report of the Committee on Physical Infrastructure on the Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024.

In accordance with Rule 219 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, I beg to lay the committee's report, together with the minutes of the committee's meetings.

The Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024 was read for the first time on Wednesday, 28 August, and referred to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure, in accordance with rules 128 and 129 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament for consideration and report to the House.

I am not going to get to the object of the Bill because the honourable minister has highlighted it. In the interest of time, allow me to skip the methodology and go straight to the committee observations. The committee observes that:

1. The Engineers Registration Act, CAP 271, regulates aspects of engineers only and does not provide for the regulation of other engineering professionals, including technologists and technicians;
2. The Act provides for registration but does not provide for the licensing of engineering professionals;
3. The current Act also does not provide for a code of ethics or any other mechanism for inquiry into the conduct of an engineering professional who contravenes the code of ethics, hence the need to regulate the technologists and technicians who are the other cadres of engineering professionals, aside from engineers;
4. The medium-term revenue and expenditure projections for the Financial Years 2024/2025, and 2028/2029 indicate that the Engineering Professionals Board will operate efficiently and has the potential to achieve its goal of financial self-reliance, supporting its operations and regulatory functions without relying on external funding sources, as illustrated in Table 1.
5. There will be direct costs in terms of board remuneration, staff salaries, regulatory functions, office running, and capital expenditure. Given the net savings, this will free up fiscal space to fund other Government priorities and reduce the burden on the overall resource envelope. The implementation of the Bill is projected to generate cumulative revenues of Shs 9.56 billion over the medium-term Financial Years 2024/2025 and 2028/2029, resulting in cumulative savings of up to Shs 1.72 billion over the same period. I invite honourable members to go through table one;
6. Clause 6(2) determination of membership; advocates for any member of the institution other than an honorary member who chooses to qualify for membership, chooses to be a member of the institution and a member whose name is struck off the register of engineering professionals or is suspended from practice shall be deemed to have been expelled or suspended from the institution. This goes against the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, which advocates for the right to just and fair treatment and rights to apply for redress;
7. Clause 7(2), Council of the institution; advocates for three vice presidents to comprise the 15 members of the council. This is a large number, given that the three vice presidents do not represent any particular or specific constituent or branch of engineers. This is also bound to create

unnecessary bureaucracies that are well known to be time-consuming;

8. Clause 19(1) provides that the board shall appoint a registrar of the board who shall be the head of the secretariat, responsible for the day-to-day operations and the administration of the Board. Clause 19(6) (C) further provides that the registrar shall choose to hold office when she or he is removed from the board. This affects the independence of the registrar to perform his or her functions, given that he or she is appointed and can be removed by the board. The registrar's office is that of a public officer and should be an independent, competent officer exercising independent judgment without external influence; and
9. Clause 44 - Other offenses and penalties, sub-clause (6)(C), require any person who qualifies for registration under sections 22, 23, and 24, who fails or neglects to register in accordance with the section's commits and offense, and is liable on conviction to a fine not exceeding 50 currency points or imprisonment not exceeding two years or above.

The committee further observed that the forced registration may infringe on individuals' right to freedom of choice. This infringes on the rights of retired professionals, non-practicing individuals, and those who have chosen alternative career paths.

Committee's recommendations

1. The committee recommends an amendment that is aimed at aligning with constitutional principles of respecting an individual's autonomy, and freedom of choice while accommodating diverse career paths and life choices;
2. The committee further recommends the limitation of vice presidents to one to reduce unnecessary bureaucracies and further notes that a reduced number is easy to maintain and quorum is easily achieved; and

3. The committee recommends that the Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024, be passed into law subject to the proposed amendments.

The proposed amendments of the Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024.

Mr Speaker, this is the brief report of the committee.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. It is not a brief. It is a full report.

MR TONY AWANY: It is a full report, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, do you have a minority report?

MR TONY AWANY: There is a minority report, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minority report is part of the main report; so it is you to invite your colleague. It is a way of fairness and conceding that we work together. You should always acknowledge that a certain Member disagreed on certain issues or recommendations and therefore wrote a minority report, and you invite them to present.

MR TONY AWANY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Like you rightly noted, there is a minority report that an honourable member has, and I would like to invite him to present.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Who is that Member?

MR TONY AWANY: Hon. Moses Kabuusu, I invite you to present the minority report.

6.11

MR MOSES KABUUSU (FDC, Kyamuswa County, Kalangala): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank Hon. Tony Awany for leading us through the meetings and the discussions of the committee through which both the majority and the minority reports were generated.

Mr Speaker, under Rule 205 of the Rules of Procedure, I beg to lay a copy of the minority report, I beg to lay.

I want to be brief. We have a few areas of dissent and specifically relate to - I will skip the object of the Bill, the introduction, and the methodology and go strictly to our areas of dissent.

Mr Speaker, the minority observes that the long title of the bill provides for the registration and licensing of engineers, technologists, and technicians.

The minority view is that we did not group engineers who have completed a Bachelor of Science degree in engineering together with technicians and technologists who have only done a diploma in engineering because their training is very different from the others, and the majority of reporters have considered them as "cadres".

This is like grouping advocates, lawyers, law clerks, paralegals, and bailiffs are the same law, especially where an institution is binding them. This would not work because all categories have different levels of training and cannot co-exist harmoniously.

Mr Speaker, let us compare with other professions.

The medical profession

It has the Medical and Dental Practitioners Act which establishes the council responsible for regulating the registration, licensing and other related activities. There is also the Uganda Medical Association, which brings together registered medical doctors only.

There is also the Allied Health Operations Act, which covers all other roles in the health sector, including nurses and midwives, public health practitioners, medical laboratory technicians, technologists and others.

The legal profession

There is an Advocates Act for lawyers who have completed a Bachelor's degree in Law and a Post-Graduate Diploma in Legal Practice. There is also a Uganda Law Society Act, which regulates or brings together professional lawyers and provides for their elections, mandate, and all that.

Paralegals, law clerks and bailiffs are not provided for under the laws that provide for the professional lawyers. They do not have the same legal training and cannot be grouped or banded together as advocates.

The surveyors' profession

In Uganda, surveyors are regulated by the Surveyors Registration Act. They also have the Institution of Surveyors of Uganda, which brings together professional surveyors from different disciplines, including land surveyors, quantitative surveyors, valuation surveyors, and others.

Other groups with surveying skills from tertiary institutions or those with diplomas in surveying are not recognised under the laws of the association.

The minority report, therefore, recommends that professional engineers should not be grouped with technologists and technicians under the same law. Parliament should consider enacting another law to regulate categories with skills in engineering, including technicians and technologists, craftsmen and merchants, but not to be grouped under the professional engineers.

Another area of dissent is the fusion of professional institutions with regulatory bodies.

The minority report notes that the Bill proposes to create, as governing bodies, the Uganda Institution of Engineering Professionals, in part two of the engineering profession and the Engineering Professionals Board.

The minority notes that while the Engineering Professionals Board will register engineering professionals and regulate their practices with a membership that is appointed by the minister, as suggested by Section 14(3) of the Bill, the Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession, on the other hand, is a professional association with the Council that shall be elected at a meeting of the Institution as proposed under Section 7(3) of the Bill.

The minority notes, with concern, that creating Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession as a government body will not only contradict the Government's policy on rationalisation, but also bring about governance challenges and may limit or restrict participation of other professional institutions that are recognised by the board.

Mr Speaker, we took a comparative study in Malaysia and Singapore, for example, where the Ministry of Works and Transport purportedly benchmarked. The institution of engineers in Malaysia is not established in the Registration of Engineers Act and Professional Engineers Act, respectively.

In South Africa, besides other professional bodies, for example, the Biomedical Engineering Society of South Africa, Clinical Engineering Association of South Africa and the South African Federation of Healthcare Engineers, are all properly established and duly regulated by the Engineering Council of South Africa.

In Uganda, associations like that of the Ugandan National Association of Medical and Hospital Engineers, for example, risk being restricted or compelled to associate with others, yet they are also recognised by their different fields and associations. In Kenya and Tanzania, the equivalent of Uganda Engineering Registration Board exists separately with the institutions independent of the Act but regulated by the Act.

To ensure that the law is enacted in such a way that institutions exist independently and that members do not feel restricted or compelled to

associate with a particular group, the minority recommends that the Bill ought to only refer to the institution and make part II form part of the regulation that ought to operationalise the Bill by customising its contents into a generic description of what the typical institution should look like. This will further protect the freedom of association as enshrined under Article 29(1)(d) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda.

Registration under the Uganda Institution of Engineers Professionals and the Engineering Professionals Board

Clause 22(a)(i) provides that for registration as an engineer under the Engineering Professionals Board (EPB), one must be a member of the Uganda Institution of Engineering Professionals.

If the Engineering Professionals Board has the mandate to register, therefore, only registered engineers should be able to join the association or institution. It should not make sense for one to first join the association and then later register.

Also, that kind of operation can affect one's registration in case they are frustrated by the Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession. If someone faces any frustration from the Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession, their application to register with the Engineering Professionals Board cannot go forward, thus, they cannot achieve the goal of becoming registered engineers.

The minority observes with concern that it makes Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession look more exceptional than other recognised institutions I have mentioned above. Yet, these recognised institutions are also able to vet their members for presentation to the Board of Registration.

The Uganda National Association for Medical and Hospital Engineering is one example of the established body that was formed in 1993. The body caters for the specific needs of healthcare engineering professionals. It is recognised by the World Health Organisation

as the Health Care Engineering National Association of Uganda. It is affiliated with the International Federation of Health Engineers and the International Federation of Medical and Biological Engineers as well as the Federation for East African Healthcare Engineers.

We, therefore, as the minority, note that restricting such a recognised body to vet its members will be rational. The minority recommends that this should not be the case. Parliament should refrain from enacting a law where the Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession is made part and parcel of the law. The participation of other professional institutions that are recognised by their boards ought not to be restricted.

The second last area of dissent, Mr Speaker, is membership of the board.

The minority observes that when it comes to vetting engineering professionals for registration at the board level, clause 14(d)–(g) looks at the Uganda Institution of Engineering Profession as part of the vetting process, whereas other institutions are not made part of the vetting process, except for the Uganda Association of Consulting Engineers.

The minority notes that this creates inequality in institutions where only Uganda's Institutions of Engineering Profession and the Uganda Association of Consulting Engineers are the only ones represented. The law should also provide a level where other institutions are also brought on board to participate in the vetting of members of the institution to represent them on the board.

The minority recommends that a provision be made for other institutions that are or will be recognised by the board when defining the composition of the board in section 14, to also nominate a member or more members to represent them on the board.

Non-regulation and non-licensing of engineering firms and manufacturers
The minority observes, with concern, that besides the requirement for individual

engineers to be licensed, there is a need for the engineering firms to be regulated and licensed to offer the goods, works, and services that they are qualified for, in compliance with occupational safety, ethical and professional standards.

We took a comparative study in South Korea. The deliberative committee registers engineering consultancy firms, where the board in the proposed Engineering Professionals Act, registers only individual professionals.

The minority observes that it is crucial to urgently reflect on how the engineering business ought to be regulated, with a view to regulating the market, facilitating the growth of the local engineering businesses, and protecting the professionals who carry out their practice in conjunction with the engineering business.

There is also a public outcry amongst engineering professionals on their business/practice environment, which exposes them to exploitation by foreign capital and construction companies if unregulated.

The minority recommends a mode for regulating this business using another law, an Act of Parliament. For instance, taking a comparative study in Zambia and Lesotho, and other Southern African Development Community (SADC) countries, in addition to the Engineer Institution of Zambia Act (for Professionals), there is also the National Council for Construction Act, which regulates business operators in the engineering industry.

Under this framework, local contractors are guaranteed Government projects and other business support, and in exchange, they are obliged to train and mentor young engineers and prepare them for professional registration.

Mr Speaker, the last area of dissent is forced registration.

As a matter of emphasis, clause 44(1)(c) of the Bill penalises any person who qualifies for registration under sections 22, 23 and 24, who fails or neglects to register. The person is liable

to a fine not exceeding 50 currency points or imprisonment not exceeding two years or both.

This provision is not only unfair but also infringes on the rights of retired professionals or non-practicing individuals and those who have chosen alternative career paths; they should not be forced to register. The minority finds this provision unconstitutional.

In conclusion, the glaring pertinent issues identified here above, possibly due to lack of extensive consultation by the ministry when coming up with this Bill, the minority is constrained to adopt or approve the object of the Bill in its totality and implores the House to reject the Bill in its totality.

The current Engineering Registration Act – in its current form – is sufficient to regulate the engineers. What is needed is effective implementation of the current law, and enacting another law to regulate, probably, categories of skilled people in the engineering profession, who were not included in the Bill. These include technicians, technologists, craftsmen and masons. I submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I am going to open this up for debate – How I wish the Attorney-General was here. This is because the process of the Government drafting or processing a Bill seems to be extremely long, to the extent that you end up with conflicting proposals coming in different laws.

A very good example – I consulted with my brother, Hon. James Kubeketerya earlier. We just processed the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2025. That Act, under section 4, establishes a council and in functions of the council; section 5(1)(r) is, to “register and regulate artisans, craftsmen, technicians and technologists.”

This is a law we just enacted the other day and now you bring another law and you want to also regulate – Chairperson, I do not know whether you considered and asked the minister why it is this way.

MR TONY AWANY: Mr Speaker, we put that particular question to the minister; one, on whether there was extensive consultation, to which he said “Yes.” That issue was also raised and like you rightly put it, at some point we needed the guidance of the Attorney-General. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: This is the Engineering Professionals Bill, 2024 and the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act, 2025 – from the same Cabinet.

Honourable colleagues, I propose that we have a general debate on this. Tomorrow, I am going to ask to meet with the Attorney-General, the Minister of Works, Minister of Education, the committee chairpersons and we will reconcile a position. Who does the Government want to regulate the technicians?

Hon. Jonathan Odur, do not cause me problems; Dr Baryomunsi did us a noble duty of helping out to move a motion. This time, let us start with the Leader of the Opposition. He is very eager and might be rushing to Kawempe.

6.31

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr John Baptist Nambeshe): Thank you. Mr Speaker. I take your guidance on this matter but with a pinch of salt. If there are contradictions and the Attorney-General’s opinion that was much sought after was not secured –

However, the Attorney-General is not here, and given the contradicting proposals from the same Cabinet, I am of the view that instead of debating in tongues, where there is a conundrum from the same Cabinet, you defer this debate to a date of your own choice as we await the considered legal opinion of the –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, Hon. Nambeshe. It is only in one clause, that is number one. Number two, we are not making a resolution. Number three, at the Committee Stage also, you will have a debate.

I wanted a general debate and conclude it, so that when we come back, we go to Committee Stage where we will continue with the debate of these issues and get guidance at that time.

MR NAMBESHE: Most obliged. However, I thought that even if it is only one clause, it may affect the flow of debate.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The debate is not conclusive. We could get views that may help him when he is giving his guidance. Sometimes, we prolong these issues; I want colleagues to go and read through this report, so that on Thursday, we finish this.

6.33

DR TWAHA KAGABO (NUP, Bukoto County South, Lwengo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I must congratulate and applaud the committee, most especially the Members who have come up with that robust and candid minority report. My observation is that the minority report looked lengthier and more detailed than the main report, something that makes it more lucid and that surely, the contestation is valid.

My observation is that when you lump different sectors or strata in the engineering sector, you are causing a very big problem that is very hard to decipher. Take a point: If you want to lump engineers, technicians, and technologists and subject them to a single ethical code of conduct, it cannot work. It would be analogous to having a veterinary doctor assisting a cow in delivering, subjecting him to the same ethical codes and principles as a gynaecologist or midwife. It is something that cannot work. It is important that we stratify these people into their categories, given that their levels of education, practice, and apprenticeship are different.

Ladies and gentlemen, this has a scientific background. When we talk about engineers, technologists, and technicians, these are scientists. And in science, we work basically with apprenticeship and facts. I think this Bill is a mayor's nest, and we have to strongly impugn it until very clear improvements are made. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. He was bordering on speaking in medical terms. *(Laughter)*

6.36

MS RITA ATUKWASA (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbarara City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank both the chairperson and the minority team for the elaborate presentation. Mr Speaker, a while ago we were talking about programme-based budgeting and budgeting based on sectors. This Bill equally falls in that category. We have situations in different legal frameworks where you find an entity or an institution is subject to four or three different lines of authority. You would want to say an institution can handle it, but individuals of the calibre of technicians, artisans, to be subjected to that kind of line, will be stretching too far. They are going to pay double dues, and you will find that they will have multiple registrations.

We are already seeing it in the case of cooperatives where you find a cooperative is required to report itself to the registrar within the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Tourism; and then you find they also have got to go to the Microfinance Support Centre. In the spirit of aligning that we are looking at in the PFMA, in the context of this law, now that we have been able to catch it at this level, we should leave it at that.

I also want to applaud the minority report. I have found it very detailed and useful, providing items that seem to have been left out by the main report. Imagine the issue to do with the training and mentorship – if indeed it was left out in the majority report – it is very important that we can have engineers and contractors being compelled to provide training.

The other day, during the commissioning of the Kibuye roundabout road (Kampala flyover project), I saw them presenting two gentlemen who have been trained to undertake the construction of bridges of that nature. If the majority report lacks this clause of training and mentorship, I think it should be adopted.

Lastly, the issue of progressive training for professionals is very important to capture. You find that an engineer last went to school when they graduated 10 years ago, but they are

not mandated within the laws to have, every year, certain hours of training. I would implore the committee and the House to borrow such clauses from the minority report to come into the majority report, which I think the minister will not have a problem with. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.39

MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson for presenting the report. I want to support this Bill because it seeks to regulate the engineering profession.

Mr Speaker, many times we have Ugandans who are masqueraders. We have so many people out there who claim to be professional engineers, yet they are not. Just look at the quality of work and the services they provide. However, if you go to events, especially in the construction sector, there are genuine professionals and indeed, the quality of their work is superb. Some are just there for survival; you may find that they will also come up and claim to be professionals. At the end of the day, when you look for value for money with what you have put into the project, you may find that you wasted a lot of money when it comes to using people who claim to be engineers, yet they are not. This Bill will address this, Mr Speaker.

I support the Bill such that we do away with people who are masqueraders. Things to do with professionals should be left to qualified professionals. If you do not reach that level, please study and acquire the necessary qualifications. Go slowly until when you get fully qualified. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.41

MR MAXIMUS OCHAI (NRM, West Budama County North, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I want to thank the committee for their report. In the report, the committee recommends and calls upon Parliament to consider their recommendations and approve the report, and ensure that the Bill is enacted into law.

First things first; following from the experience of RAPEX Bills, I want us to address the strength of the Certificate of Financial Implications. This has bothered us so much over the past two to three years that I have been in this House. Mr Speaker, the committee attempted to appreciate the Certificate of Financial Implications and found that it was wanting, to the extent that it did not tell us the economic impact of the Bill when enacted. Yet the law provides in section 76(2) and (3), that every Bill coming to Parliament must be accompanied by a Certificate of Financial Implications. The contents of the certificate are that; it must demonstrate the medium-term projection of inflows and outflows, and potential impact on the economy.

The certificate merely indicates theoretically that regulation of the engineering professionals will most likely attract investment, but it does not indicate the magnitude of the investment that will be attracted.

In that case, therefore, I believe that the committee should have ventured outside, done some research themselves, and given us an economic impact of this Bill. That said, Mr Speaker, maybe the committee should be able to clarify to us so that we can move forward. Thank you.

6.43

DR EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to add my voice in thanking the chairperson of the committee for his report. More importantly, I thank Hon. Kabuusu, who presented the minority report, for his in-depth analysis of the matter.

Mr Speaker, this matter is being presented by my senior brother, the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance. I am just wondering how this thing could skip his mind, based on the fact that the matter we are dealing with actually needs national guidance. *(Laughter)*

I wonder why we are dealing with similar matters in totally different ways. In the medical

profession, for example, we clearly have the medical and dental practitioners' council to regulate doctors and dental surgeons, at that level. We also have other Acts to regulate the lower cadres.

My point is that when you bundle professionals of different qualifications together, you run into a very big risk, as some of my colleagues have already pointed out. In the medical profession, you would run the risk of what we call "associating with unqualified people". As a medical doctor, if you get a medical assistant and you work hand-in-hand with such a person, you run the risk of empowering them to do what they are not supposed to do.

Mr Speaker, this matter would require scrutiny, but it also arouses my thinking about what Hon. Mourine Osoru pointed out just a minute ago, where unqualified people masquerade to be professionals. This is even discouraging learning in school. People can ask: Why should I bother to go to a technical institution to learn this skill when I can actually do it without going to school?

So, we need to separate the different categories and regulate them differently, based on their competencies and qualifications.

Mr Speaker, this Bill needs to be revisited and the issues separated. Additionally, you rightly pointed out that we passed the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) law. Why are we, again, bringing another Bill to regulate the same people whom we are already regulating under a different law?

Mr Speaker, my proposal is that this Bill goes back for proper scrutiny. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You see, honourable member, we can rectify it by dropping some of these conflicting proposals. Okay?

6.47

MS DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee

for this report, especially the minority report, which I found to be very informative.

I would like to seek some clarification from the chairperson of the committee, especially on forced registration. What is the reason behind penalising somebody, who qualifies to register but for some reason fails to register? We know that there could be people who are not practising engineering as a profession – maybe they opted to switch to another profession. However, here, we want to penalise them. What is the reason behind this? Thank you.

6.48

MR JAMES KUBEKETERYA (NEM, Bunya County East, Mayuge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the chairperson of the committee and the mover of the minority report.

Mr Speaker, the TVET Act, which we passed in November last year, solves the problem of the minority report, that there is a council for all the technicians. First of all, the TVET Act respects all categories. If you are semi-literate but can be innovative, you are catered for. I would be of the view that, instead of bundling the technicians with the engineers in law, they can be catered for under the TVET Act.

On the other hand, I would like to urge Members to ensure that our punitive measures for the masqueraders are very tough. This is because these days, we have masqueraders. You find somebody who is a technician and repairs boreholes, but calls himself "engineer".

So, we should make it in such a way that for whoever masquerades as an engineer, the punishment is harder. The masqueraders are all over and that means our children will know that after all anybody can be called an engineer. A person who masquerades unabated can eventually be taken on by somebody, thinking that he is an engineer.

Otherwise, Mr Speaker, the TVET Act solves the problem highlighted in the minority report. Honourable minister, during the committee stage, you could concede to that and make sure that we are all at par. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.50

MR MOSES OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the presentations made by the presenters of both the majority and minority reports. I particularly like the majority report, because it works to regulate the profession. We must regulate the engineers. However, I equally appreciate the fact that there is a little bit of clean-up that is required.

Mr Speaker, you mentioned that we needed the Attorney-General to help us to clean it up because most of the issues which we are talking about – the TVET law – are all issues which the Attorney-General should help us with.

I urge that we go ahead with this, but request the Attorney-General to guide appropriately. Thank you.

6.51

MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee, which has just presented the report. I thank the committee, particularly for trimming the extravagance of the Bill. In the Bill, they were proposing many vice-chairpersons of the council, but trimming them to one is a credit that we should commend.

Secondly, there is an issue of collecting revenue, which the committee is concentrating on. The chairperson reported the amount of money that we are expected to receive, as a nation, through revenue. When we are regulating science and innovation and we are thinking about money, we might forget the purpose of science and this country might lose out through this Bill. With science, we have to be very careful. When we think about money very much and forget about the quality of the scientists and the quality of the work, we will lose, as a nation.

Therefore, I propose that as we make this law, let us not concentrate on money, but on the quality of the scientists and the quality of the work.

Lastly, the committee did not talk about innovators who do not even go to school. What

I know about innovation, as a visual artist, is that innovation starts as madness – someone starts something and you look at him and think they are mad. Those people cannot get licences; they cannot be registered. At the end of the day, they will be arrested for working without licences or being registered.

We need to cater for those people who innovate because what I know is people get ideas in their minds and start them. Remember, the first teacher was not educated at all and that teacher became a teacher and taught people who are now teaching, meaning someone can innovate even when that person has never been to any school.

Therefore, we need to cater for innovators so that when someone starts to innovate, they can get a provisional licence and can be supervised as their ideas pick up slowly or become interns to such engineers. Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

6.54

MR GODFREY ONZIMA (NRM, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to thank the committee for both the majority and minority reports. I also support this Bill, which is aimed at regulating the engineering sector, particularly to promote ethical and professional standards. We hope that when this is put in place, it will promote quality in the engineering sector. We will have minimal cases of houses collapsing and the rest.

There seems to be an area of controversy, particularly in combining technicians, artisans and technologists together with the engineering sector. When the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Bill was debated and also passed, I was around. If my memory serves me well, that Bill seems to have resolved the issue of registration of schools and institutions that provide issues to do with those other categories.

Therefore, in my opinion, if these are brought together and put under the law of engineers, it may not cause any harm because most of these

cases that people have cited are to do with people masquerading. Even in the villages, a person who has been constructing walls for maybe five or six years calls himself an engineer and even poses as one.

Since this law is aimed at regulation, for those who seem to associate as engineers when they are not, their punishment should also be enshrined in this law –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What about those who want to stand and even before nomination, they demand to be called “Honourable”? *(Laughter)* They even put it on posters.

MR ONZIMA: Yes, Mr Speaker, you are right. Actually, most of those who intend to stand also refer to themselves as “Honourable so-and-so”. They have forgotten that you are only honoured when you have won elections. They are still doing it; these are in the same category.

My thought is that these groups of people who are builders and others tend to associate with engineers. This law is supposed to regulate the activities and actions of these engineers. If you behave and pretend to be an engineer, you should then be handled by the law. Bringing them under the same law, to me, does not cause any harm, but as you have said, the Attorney-General can give us better guidance. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.58

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO (NRM, Erute County North, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am going to talk as a former teacher. I sat here and was listening very carefully, and would like to give an independent view. I listened carefully between the two presenters of the majority and minority reports. Let me start with the majority report.

Looking at it, they were considering finance, security and discipline, not knowing that engineering is life. What we can talk about is the competence and safety of the people like road users and also kickbacks, which are affecting services in the engineering sector.

Most of these people are qualified, but the problem is kickback. When you look at the bridges, they construct them today but before commissioning, the bridges collapse. I have two bridges in my constituency that were constructed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries but they collapsed immediately.

When I listened to the minority report, it was a bit detailed. There is one thing we should know: There are people from Jonathan’s constituency who trained on jobs. They did not go to school; they dropped out but they doing wonderful work like fabrication –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is Jonathan a teacher in your area?

MS CHRISTINE AKELLO: Hon. Jonathan- There are people we call *ongura*. These are people who are doing fabrication. They can even make machines for grinding; they are doing it, people are buying them and they are of high standard.

When you come to the medical field, there are people who did not go to school. They have money but are using somebody’s certificate to perform the work – including engineers in construction – but they are doing wonders. Now, where are you going to put those people? Those who went to school know the theory part, but those who did not go to school can do the practical bit better.

Therefore, I disagree where the report says they are going to be arrested. Something must be done and there must be some guidance, not arresting them because you are going to destroy the economy. Much as you are looking at the money, we also need to look at how they are going to survive. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I would like to give guidance because I am hearing that this report was more detailed than the other. When you are doing a report on a Bill, it depends on whether you agree with the clauses in the Bill or not.

If the committee agrees with the clauses in the Bill, it does not need to write about them. Therefore, they focus on those they do not agree with because the other ones are provided for and are clearly standard. That is why the one who had the more clauses was disagreeing and had a more detailed report.

Therefore, it is not that the committee just did a very short report without details; those are the details. That is why I clarified to the chairperson to say that this is not a brief report; it is your report. That is what you have assessed and felt you should comment on, as a committee.

7.01

MS CATHELIN NDAMIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also stand to appreciate the reports submitted by both the minority and majority members.

We need this Bill. It will improve professionalism and the ethical conduct of technicians. There has been too much malpractice. You find that these technicians overcharge, give misinformation and use low quality materials, which means they lack guidance.

We need national security and infrastructure protection in sectors like ICT and electrical engineering. We have seen unregulated technicians, which has caused a lot of cyber security risks. It is for this reason that I support both reports. We, therefore, need professional bodies to oversee ethics and training. What of the laws and penalties that will help in these sectors? We badly need this Bill. I submit.

7.03

MR WILLIAM CHEMONGES (NRM, Kween County, Kween): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I support the majority report and would like to add onto Hon. Onzima's submission. I agree that we should regulate the engineers together with the technicians at the same time because engineers cannot execute their work without the technicians. If you regulate the engineers differently from the technicians, you have gone far from the truth

because the engineers only spend one hour – even 30 minutes – on the site but the people who do the work are the technicians. By this, I mean the plumbers, masons, carpenters and the electricians. I think we need to regulate these people within the same body and have the same conditions.

Take an example of the doctors – the doctor explained – before you operate, the people who prepare the patient are the nurses –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are they regulated under the same body?

MR CHEMONGES: In fact, we have a lot of problems in their sector because we have many people who are operating drug shops and clinics, and they call themselves doctors. Sometimes, they do work and people fail to identify who is the right doctor.

As a technician, I agree that the engineers should be regulated together with the technicians. Maybe, we can set conditions that can change depending on the level of education, but let us have them under one umbrella.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Chemonges, I want to understand from you: Being under a body that oversees your training and understands you very well in your smallness and uniqueness versus being under a body that is way above you and does not appreciate the nitty-gritty of what you go through in your training, what do you think would help these people?

MR CHEMONGES: That is a good question. Even within the same body, we still need to have different people at different levels of that regulation. For example, when you are building, and you entrust your site to a person who has finished a degree, a Bachelor of Science in Civil Engineering, without a person who has done a Diploma in Civil Engineering, I can tell you, you will not get what you want.

Within the same breath that I am supporting that we regulate the engineers, we need to have people who understand the work of technicians

and engineers – (*Interjection*) - I take the information.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, you have your substantive submission. Hon. Tonny Ayoo?

7.08

MR TONNY AYOO (NRM, Kwania County, Kwania): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee chairperson and the Committee on Physical Infrastructure for their report on the Bill as well as Hon. Kabuusu, for the minority report.

Ordinarily, we were supposed to deal with the two reports; the main and minority reports, and dispose of one and move by one. This is what the rules would require us to do as we process this.

However, I am seeing a situation where there are issues in the minority report that we need not ignore. I seek your guidance on how to proceed because if we are to dispose of them, then we would vote out the minority report or the main report and proceed with one. This is where I need your clear guidance; on how we proceed.

My concern is, when you look at the object of the Bill, the Engineering Act was only looking at the professional engineers – those with either a degree, master’s or a doctorate – leaving out these technicians, technologists and artisans.

Nonetheless, we are aware that the technicians, artisans and technologists have been covered under the Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act.

Mr Speaker, I would like to believe, like you rightly said, that they understand themselves best. Once you bulk them under the engineers, those who have got a lot of experience, their degrees, masters and PhD in engineering, and you put them with these other people of diploma, we will be doing them a lot of disservice because those people would not care so much.

Having them under TVET is okay, except if we are going to repeal the TVET Bill and then bring it under this new Bill and pass it as an Act. Maybe, the committee or the ministry would solve the problem, but if it is not there, then, I think we leave this other group handled by the TVET Act, and then we deal with the issues of engineering law.

I want to pose a question; don’t we have them under the Engineering Act? Are they not being regulated? Is there no ethical conduct code required for them to do and fulfil while they do their work? The question of masqueraders, I think, would only be handled by the extent to which we are implementing the regulation and the law in identifying and dealing with the people who masquerade.

Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance: We need the minister, together with the Attorney-General and Hon. Kabuusu, to sit – because I want to ask the committee chairperson; what happened that you were not able to resolve some of these pertinent issues? We need to have them together so that when we pass the law, we do not come back to regret some of the issues that are coming up on RAPEX. This is where I think you should come and guide and we do not rush so that we get a solution for this country while we deal with this.

There are also engineers that are doing technical work; the construction engineers and all that. Then the generics, those who are doing science, seed and all that, so I do not know whether all these are together because this law will cater for all that. I want to ask you that we move slowly, harmonise and get a proper way of dealing with and disposing of this so that everybody is catered for. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, you seem to have something burning you want to guide the House on.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have perused the Technical and Vocational Education and Training Act. Yes, it makes a provision for the regulation and licensing of

technicians and technologists, as far as training is concerned; so they license a technologist or a technician who is going to train. That is the gist of the TVET Act.

The Bill we are handling is regulating the practice. For instance, in the medical profession, we have laboratory technicians and laboratory technologists.

There is a law – the Allied Health Professionals Act – which regulates the practice of those technologists. What this Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training (BTJET) Act refers to regulating those technologists, who want to train, because it is the training Act. Therefore, there is no contradiction at all.

This can stand the way it is, because it is licensing and regulating the training aspect while this one talks about regulating the practice of engineering. I do not see a big problem even if one law caters for engineers, technicians and technologists.

In the medical profession, we have three or four separate laws. There is one for medical doctors and dental surgeons – the Medical and Dental Practitioners Council. We have the one for nurses and midwives, then the allied health professionals – these are the laboratory technicians and radiologists – all these other allied health professionals. Then there is also one for the pharmacists.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Dr Baryomunsi, by the time I raised that issue, I had received protests from the Ministry of Education and Sports. The minister was in my office, saying, “No, these are under Technical and Vocational Education and Training (TVET) Act.” This is your fellow minister.

DR BARYOMUNSI: I will invite the minister to read and understand his own law. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The Attorney-General will come with the Minister of Education, the Minister of Works and Transport – who is the sponsor of the Bill, the committee chairperson and the mover of the minority report; then we will reconcile our positions.

DR BARYOMUNSI: That is okay, Mr Speaker. We can get back with the Attorney-General and the relevant ministers to harmonise this position so that the Parliament is guided properly on the issue, but that is my understanding of it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Sure. – Committee chairperson, I wanted you to come at the end because we are about to conclude. I want to pick those who have not yet spoken. Hon. Allan Mayanja and then the veterinary doctor will represent.

7.15

MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. My concern is about the forced registration of engineers. Unfortunately, the minister who brought the Bill is not here.

However, we need to know the essence of this because we have retired professionals and non-practicing individuals. Maybe, the essence was to get those who masquerade. We need more explanation on this because it even talks about the imprisonment for two years and fine of 50 currency points. Thank you.

7.16

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. This Bill seeks to regulate the profession and the key words are “engineering profession”. That means, any category of anyone practising engineering must be regulated. This Bill is not about just the word “technicians”, but about the profession.

There are several categories that practise engineering. There are those who are called “engineering technicians”. Differentiate them from, for instance, what the minister has been talking about – the laboratory technicians.

We even go further. In the veterinary profession, we have those we call “veterinary laboratory technicians”. Those are regulated under the Veterinary Practitioners Act because this is a professional issue.

In South Africa, their Engineering Professional Act regulates the engineers, but they qualify the technician and call them “engineering technicians” and “engineering technologists”.

The Bill failed to qualify the technicians. Not every technician is an “engineering technician”. We just need to differentiate. There are technicians that are simply in the laboratory. There are those that are doing different work.

Therefore, this Bill should qualify the technicians. That these are engineering technologists but they must be regulated.

In the medical area, you are missing it; the best way is to lump everyone who is practising medicine together. The reason we have many problems in the field is because we have stratified them; we are calling them “nurses”, or “allied health professionals”.

That is why someone walks and opens up a clinic and says, “I’m a doctor,” and nobody is going to verify it. The best way is to have the profession regulated under one law.

Mr Speaker, your advice is right: We have the Attorney-General here and the line ministry that is going to house this law so that we understand the rationale.

I hope that the committee interfaced with the professional engineers. They would have told you that every category must be regulated and this is the law. It is very different from just lumping every technician together.

Lastly, I heard one of the honourable members talk about gynaecology as being exclusive to human medicine. In veterinary, we study veterinary gynaecology and obstetrics. It is not exclusive that when you talk about the word “gynaecology”, it simply means “human”. We study and practise it. We have veterinary gynaecologists and we do obstetrics. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Committee chairperson?

MR AWANY: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the honourable colleagues for the arrays of concerns raised in respect to this report. Like you rightly noted, we agree to most of the issues raised in the clauses.

However, I can assure honourable colleagues that at the Committee Stage, we have justification for some of the amendments that we have proposed. Honourable colleagues, the meat of this majority report will be evident at the Committee Stage.

Hon. Tonny Ayoo was inquiring whether the Engineers Registration Act, Cap. 271, also offers some regulation in this respect.

In the first observation that the committee made, the Act regulates aspects of engineers only. It does not provide for the regulation of other engineering professionals, including the technologists and technicians that we are talking about here.

Also, the current Act does not also provide for a code of ethics. That is why the various stakeholders that we engaged with all agreed that as far as the penalties are concerned, they should be very tough and punitive measures that should be meted on all those offenders.

Like you rightly guided, we need to get the guidance of the Attorney-General on the issue of TVET. I thank the honourable minister, Dr Baryomunsi, for trying to explain this. I think his explanation will be buttressed better by the Attorney-General. Thank you.

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, I want a brief clarification from the committee chairperson or the minister. From the explanation I am hearing, the engineers are one set of profession, technologists another and so are technicians.

That is why the justification for bringing a completely new Bill is to include the engineers and add two other professionals. The question I wanted to ask is, if a technician is a separate professional, and a technologist is also separate and distinct, why is it that the Government cannot bring a Technicians Professional Bill

and a Technologists Professional Bill for separate Acts?

I have also looked through the draft Bill; it means those are three different things. Otherwise, if you think technologists are kind of a subset or a sub-skill of engineering, then you have to explain it that way. As it is now, it does not point to that path.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Thank you very much, honourable member for raising that issue. This Bill is about the engineering profession, then you have professionals at different levels. A technician has an ordinary diploma in engineering, a technologist has a higher diploma in engineering, and an engineer has a university degree.

The words technician and technologist cut across the different professions. That is why Hon. “veterinary doctor” was saying we should qualify it and say “engineering technician” or “engineering technologist”. Then you have a graduate engineer. This Bill is to regulate the profession, and you have different cadres in that profession. It is okay to have one law that regulates all those cadres.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Chris, where the law is explicit, you do not take corners. The same law that you are referring to – I think you are going for the main objective. If I may read the functions of the council: It says, “*Register and regulate artisans*”, not trainees, not training institutions. – These are people who are already qualified. “*Register and regulate artisans, craftsmen, technicians, and technologists,*” not trainees. These are people who have already qualified.

DR BARYOMUNSI: My understanding is that the craftsmen, artisans, and technologists who want to train, for instance, you are starting a training –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, you cannot be a technician when you have not yet been trained to qualify.

DR BARYOMUNSI: My understanding of that law is that you train as a technician or technologist, and now you want to train others. The council in that BTVET is about training.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, those are instructors, not technologists. This law is explicit; it is very clear, honourable minister. That is why I raised an important point of this being a Bill for 2024, meaning it delayed in the Cabinet. This one came later and passed through. This is 2025.

The Bill is given a year in which it was first gazetted. The problem was that this came first, but we did not complete it; it was delayed. Then this one came, and it overtook it. That is why it is still a Bill, and the other is a law.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Mr Speaker, the Attorney-General will guide, but there is no way the Ministry of Education will license you to practise engineering.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, it is not a ministry; it is a council.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Still under the Ministry of Education. That law we passed, The Business, Technical, Vocational Education and Training Act (BTVET) is under the Ministry of Education.

Therefore, the education ministry cannot license you to practise engineering. The licensing and regulation they are talking about in that law is about training. For instance, if you start an institution, you want to train technologists, that council will license you to go and train technologists.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Chris, if you give the Ministry of Education powers, it will use it, and this is what you did under this Act. It is very clear. When I was training as a lawyer, this is what we studied in “Introduction to Law” at the law school. We do not even need to go far.

What is very critical is that you can see it is a miscommunication within the Government.

The Minister of Education, accompanied by the head of legal in the Ministry of Education were in my office in the afternoon. He was very clear that they were intentional about it when it was being considered. You passed it from the Cabinet because, at that time, you never had a law regulating these people.

Let us handle it with the Attorney-General. Hon. Jonathan Odur wanted to conclude.

MR ODUR: Mr Speaker, the Government should reflect on defining what a professional is. My understanding is that even being a medical doctor is not about the four years at medical school. You need something extra. *(Interjection)* Yes, you do five years, but where do you do one? The same goes for lawyers.

You will do four years, but for you to be called a professional – to be called an advocate – you have to go for a separate and distinct training that handles that professionalism. When you start bringing someone who has done a certificate of one or two years and you say, “This is a professional,” I get worried. That is why I was interrogating your definition of technician, technologist, and the rest.

Let us be intentional because there is a minimum standard for that professional qualification; it is over and above the regular qualification that you have.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Odur, you have sealed this. This is a Bill for professionals; it also looks at artisans who are not professionals but are still fighting hard to become professionals.

If you get an artisan and you call him a professional, you will not be different from these people who, before even getting nominated, they call themselves the “right honourable”.

They are not just “honourables”; they are “right honourable”. I saw one poster where someone put his name and then down he put “honourable minister”. *(Laughter)*

This is the kind of problem you will get.

Honourable colleagues, what is beautiful about this is that we are not putting the question. We are stopping here with the debate. Before we go any further, we shall ask the Attorney-General to guide on this matter. I am going to brief him after here. That is when we shall put the question on whether we proceed for the Second Reading or not.

The House is adjourned until tomorrow at 2.00 p.m.

(The House rose at 7.31 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 12 March 2025, at 2.00 p.m.)