



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

THURSDAY, 6 MARCH 2025





PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA  
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 21ST SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Thursday, 6 March 2025

*Parliament met at 2.19 p.m. at Parliament House, Kampala.*

PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to today's sitting. If you remember, on Tuesday, we agreed that the Minister of Internal Affairs would come and make a statement to the House today about incidents registered during the Kawempe North by-elections. I, therefore, would like to amend the Order Paper to provide for that item, and I need it to be called now.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE  
EVENTS DURING THE KAWEMPE  
NORTH NOMINATIONS

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, Minister of Internal Affairs. We shall have matters of national importance during the Prime Minister's Time.

2.15

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi):** Mr Speaker, first of all, I would like to thank you for adjusting the Order Paper so that we can make this statement regarding

the incidents registered during the Kawempe North by-election campaigns.

This statement has been uploaded late because we did not know that it would be allowed on the Order Paper, but I think members should have it now.

Several incidents have been registered in the course of the ongoing Kawempe North by-election-related activities. These involve, among others, skirmishes between NUP supporters and security forces, as a result of which 24 people were arrested and put in custody.

Those arrested include two honourable members of this House, namely Hon. Nyeko and Hon. Nkuningi. The details of the particulars of those in custody are attached to this brief.

The action taken so far:

A case file was opened at Wandegaya Police Station Vide SD Ref. 63/03/03/2025. Statements have been recorded from all those in custody to enable the processing of their cases for court. Those arrested were presented to court and remanded on Tuesday, 4 March 2025.

The Government intends to ensure a clean, transparent and safe by-election in Kawempe North Constituency. Towards this end, the various players including the Electoral Commission who organised the by-election, the contenders from the different parties and

their supporters, the general public as well as security have to exercise their different but complementary roles within the confines of the law.

Where we have infractions of the law, there are processes within the law on how to bring them to account, including guidelines on the lawful enforcement of the law. It is also the law, that for one to be charged with a criminal offense, that offense and the punishment thereof must be expressly provided for in the written law.

Those arrested are accused of various breaches of the law, including the alleged illegal use of military gear by some of them. Charges known to the law will be preferred for the courts to determine their cases.

In addition, working with the military and other security organs, it will be proposed to publish, for your information, gazetted uniforms and other gear ordinarily the preserve of official uniformed forces.

Also, working with the EC, guidance should be given to all the players regarding lawfully permissible conduct during this exercise.

Lastly, the rules of engagement and the Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) that guide the security forces in conducting public order management will be disseminated to the operating forces to enhance their awareness as they go about their duties.

Also, the background to this is unsaid, and I think we need to ask the hard questions. We need to have a candid, brutal conversation on what is reasonable and permissible conduct. I think we were all treated to that video that ran wild of people in military formations, and I knew it would attract consequences, both intended and unintended.

Going forward, we may need to engage security and all the players on how we go forward to ensure that we have credible electoral processes.

The Government commits to ensuring a clean and safe electoral process in support of the EC. Those arrested will be presented in court, and any excesses will be reported, investigated, and dealt with as appropriate.

The journalist, whose eye was injured, called Miracle, was in Nsambya Hospital and gladly discharged. I have been briefed by Hon. Bahati, and I want to thank him for visiting him. We shall meet the bills of his treatment. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Bahati, you promised us - I have heard the minister say that you visited, but I think we better hear from you because you have a debt with the House on that issue.

2.18

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. As Hon. Gen. Muhoozi has said, and as you instructed me, I visited the journalist called Miracle, who works with Top TV.

It is true he was injured, and there were some limited operations on his face. The good thing is that his eye, according to the doctor, was saved. He is out of danger as we speak and was discharged yesterday.

On behalf of the Government, I promised that we would clear the bills, though he also complained that his camera was damaged.

I extended our sympathies, and we continue to pray for his quick recovery. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, I would have loved – for example, in the case of the journalist who was not part of the people who made the parade - to see a commitment from you, investigating your officers and coming out clearly.

It would give confidence to other people who might be caught up in that fracas when they are not involved. Speak specifically on that before I call the Leader of Opposition (LOP).

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Yes, it is true, in all of this, there are always innocent bystanders. I wouldn't want to infer the guilt of the others.

Certainly, we shall verify, even reaching out to the journalist to find out how he was injured and who was responsible, and then taking appropriate action.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. Yes, Acting Leader of the Opposition.

2.22

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Minister of Internal Affairs for responding to the directives of the Speaker.

Allow me to also thank the Government for responding to the injured person by meeting his bill. You wouldn't have met it if you had not injured him. It is not enough. There are more than one who are in the same state.

I would like to inform Gen. Muhoozi, the Minister of State for Internal Affairs, that yesterday and as of now, there is a video making rounds of a Ugandan who resembles one of the JATT officers and people were almost about to kill him, thinking that he was the one who was beating people in Kawempe.

This is a common phenomenon in Africa; sometimes, people say that I resemble you and if you commit an offence, either I or you might fall victim. However, you are lucky that you have safety with your security guards. Otherwise, this is the situation we face, Mr Speaker.

The Minister for Trade, who was standing in for the Leader of Government Business, denied knowing anybody who was beating people. The process of bringing people to book and summoning them is within the hands of the Government, not the Opposition.

And if there is any offence committed by the members of the National Unity Platform (NUP), at any cost, it is you to bring them to book. However, here we are with soldiers beating civilians without sufficient cause.

There is a candidate in this race - you said we were going to cause a traffic jam - who was moving with a wheel loader, but that person was safer than those walking on foot. How do we handle that?

Members of Parliament - and I am repeating this because we are giving challenges to our Speaker - I thank you, Mr Speaker; you stated here that you are going to handle that matter - Members of Parliament are summoned through the Speaker of Parliament. If I am wearing a red overall that has national colours, what offence have I committed? If I am driving to a rally where there is a NUP or a National Resistance Movement (NRM) candidate, but you arrest me.

Minister of Internal Affairs, kindly - even the NRM - actually, parades happen everywhere. You must communicate, and when directives come out, respect them.

NRM has yellow overalls and berets because, as a trained soldier and lawyer, you know what is sanctioned under the UPDF Act that was brought back to Parliament.

Mr Speaker, why do they beat members of the press, which is the fourth arm? They are fully dressed in their attire, showing that they work, for example, Hon. Balaam's Radio and others - (*Interjections*) - I can take the information and conclude.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Sorry, colleagues, it is being worked on, but we can continue.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Thank you, Mr Speaker, and thank you, Hon. Ssewungu, for giving way. The events unfolding in the Kawempe North by-election leave all of us in a bad situation; those involved in the election, and even those other citizens, particularly the responsible members of this society.

When the issue was put forward for the Government to explain, I was deeply surprised that the honourable minister chose to tell us what everybody wished to hear. He told us the intent of the law and Ugandans' aspirations.

However, what is at stake now is that there are hoodlums. There is the Joint Anti-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT) and their core mandate is to crack down on terrorism.

And now we have an official campaign exercise, which was announced but the Government chose to deploy the Joint Anti-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT). Honourable minister, you could tell the country who deployed JATT and why? It is not difficult to find out. Even if there was some conduct of neighbours - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssekikubo, that is not how we behave on the Floor. You rose on a point of information - Leader of the Opposition, your time is up. I am sorry. You donated your time. Yes, Hon. Susan Amero

2.27

**MS SUSAN AMERO (Independent, Woman Representative, Amuria):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I heard the minister talk about paying treatment bills, but I did not hear him talk about compensating the person who was harmed because he is a breadwinner with so many people who depend on him. I want that to come out clearly.

The other thing is: for how long are the security forces going to take the law into their hands and walk away scot-free?

What are they supposed to be doing? If the police are supposed to keep law and order, yet they are using the gun, bat and everything, including the knife on the gun, to point at this guy who was not proven guilty, then what is that?

The situation is not good currently. We need to protect our people and follow our laws. I beg to submit.

2.29

**MS AGNES AMEEDE (Independent, Woman Representative, Butebo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to protest the manner in which security handles civilians in certain situations because I was a victim of that during the elections. It does not matter what political party you belong to but how the state security conducts themselves.

I am a mother, and once, I was very hurt, I almost shed tears seeing a small girl — these students of Makerere University — trying to protest, and the little girl hauled behind a pickup. I wouldn't want my daughter to be treated like that.

During the campaigns, it felt like the state versus Ameede. There was this colonel who was deployed in my constituency, and the soldiers were all over, intimidating people with uniforms and telling my supporters that they were going to disappear.

Please, in this century and as politicians of my generation, we want fair competition and accountability of security. *(Applause)* This is not fair. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I know that incident happened, but how is the situation now? Have we gotten other bad incidents? I am raising this because I want in our debate - if the situation has now calmed down, we should not fan the fire.

In your submissions, you should tell us what is going on. I did not tell you how the situation is.

2.31

**MR HENRY-MAURICE KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Every right-thinking Ugandan is asking how we reached here and what has caused this.

I remember that at the beginning of this Parliament, the Speaker then, the late Hon. Jacob Oulanyah, said that one day he would organise a day for us to debate on how we wish

this country to move. Maybe one day you will convene a meeting, either in the conference hall or compound, for us to debate.

It is ugly. Your question was: what is happening now? Is it any better? Yesterday, they showed a lady who was seated in a vehicle, and somebody jumped on top of it and pointed a gun at her.

The lady was saying, “Shoot”, and people surrounded the car. Who is in charge of campaigns in this country? Campaigns are not about going to the church to begin praying but about people chanting, moving and singing. Who is in charge of campaigns? Why do we behave like this during a campaign period? Honourable minister, we want you to restore hope in Ugandans by maybe saying that that is regrettable, uncalled for, and investigations are ongoing, and we shall do something better.

According to your statement, it is as if everything is normal and what is going on is blessed because you blamed the people who were arrested. You cannot even tell us those who participated in the beating. Why did you beat and pull a young girl from the road? Mr Speaker, it is very regrettable.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, I understand that you had a meeting with the Electoral Commission. I would like to hear from you. Was it you who attended or your people briefed you because both sides were invited? Do you have any information on what was agreed on?

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Mr Speaker, I was not privy to that meeting, but I will find out.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I saw the Director of Operations in the media. Okay, yes.

2.34

**MS ROSE OBIBAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I worked for the Electoral Commission, and the law is clear that in such an operation, honestly, the Electoral Commission invites the police, and if they are skeletal, maybe they can invite the army to support them.

What happened was like the minister slept on duty. If the Electoral Commission had a meeting, and he was not even in the meeting and so, he does not know anything, then what hope can he give Ugandans?

I would like to thank you for giving me room to debate this particular issue. *(Applause)* This morning, I was on a talk show. Literally, National Resistance Movement (NRM), if it will ever get any votes in Kawempe, it will be skeletal, the community is bleeding. Why have we decided to militarise something, which is for civilians? What is your fear? Why have we decided to make elections appear as if it is a war? Do we want to take this country into anarchy? We have had enough. Innocent people have been beaten.

Can you imagine - the media is the fourth estate but a member of the fourth estate has lost an eye. We can happily sit here and say; “the treatment will be covered.” Can you imagine? Really? Do you know the kind of pain a person who has lost an eye experiences?

Mr Speaker, this House is the only hope remaining for our community, especially when it comes to Kawempe. Please put your feet down firmly on this matter; it must stop.

2.36

**MR BOSCO OKIROR (NRM, Usuk County, Katakwi):** I would like to thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity to add my voice. Fortunately, I lived in an era when I saw anarchy during my early childhood. The memories of the 1980s, 86 to 90—we were victims, internally displaced persons (IDPs).

When you go to Teso, you are terrorised by the illegal guns and wars there. I am surprised that in this day and era - we thought we would run to Kampala for refuge. But the way things are being done and in broad daylight - honourable colleagues, we are the voices of the people. All of us have got to stand together to condemn these actions. *(Applause)* When the army spoke, they said they did not know those people. Security agencies have disowned some of these people. By now, in a normal situation, those people should be behind bars.

I would like to appeal to our forces, particularly the police - the Joint Anti-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT) falls within your docket. Kindly bring them to order. We want a fairground for all of us. We are ready to win elections in a clean manner but not in brutality. I beg to submit.

2.38

**MS JULIET BASHIISHA (NRM, Woman Representative, Mitooma):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. When this similar incident happened in 2021, Mitooma lost three young men who were not even part of the group. Two were hawkers of groundnuts, and they were buried in the Kabira. One was from Ijumo. It was during campaigns and I was almost lynched when I mentioned said, “*NRM Oyee*” because they were bitter with the NRM by that time.

I, therefore, request that we stop this because we are nearing the election period. What is going to happen when everyone is campaigning and nobody is here to stand for anything? Thank you so much.

2.39

**MS JOYCE BAGALA (NUP, Woman Representative, Mityana):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement, but I am very disappointed, especially as a journalist.

The rate at which journalists are being brutalised in circumstances like this is alarming. I would like to inform this Parliament that “*Miracle*” is not the only journalist who has been injured in situations like this.

Most of the time, the Government will try to compensate, replace a camera, or pay the bills, but what about other journalists?

Many other journalists have been brutalised and injured. Some of them will never be able to walk again. There has been Twaha Mukiibi of NBS Television, Yudah Musisi, formerly of BBS, David Lubowa of Daily Monitor, Ali Mivule, formerly of NTV and Ashraf Kasirye, whom everyone knows what happened to him. There was Joshua Mujunga, and the list goes on.

From my understanding, the Government takes journalists for granted because, first of all, you know that the pay for journalists is very little. When someone is injured, and then you go there and buy a new camera and pay the bills, you think that is enough. I do not think it is.

Secondly, I heard the minister the other day saying, “Oh, they should be taken to court as individuals”. But these people are in masks from head to toe. You cannot identify them. How do you go to court? How can they be accountable when you cannot even identify them?

It is very saddening and heart-breaking and I think the Government should reflect on the things that they are doing. Even the people who did not know about the brutality of this Government are angry. Some people are not talking but they are really boiling. And one day, Mr Speaker, this whole bubble will burst. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Hon. Kayemba-Ssolo?

2.41

**MR GEOFFREY KAYEMBA-SSOLO (NUP, Bukomansimbi South County, Bukomansimbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Then, Hon. Ongeirho.

**MR KAYEMBA-SSOLO:** I am Sollo, not “*Kasolo*”. (*Laughter*)  
So -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, stop using that name in the corridor then. Yes, Hon. Ssolo.

**MR KAYEMBA-SSOLO:** Mr Speaker, the NRM Government has often said that the opposition is spoiling this country’s image. They say that we have done a very big part in scaring tourists and other people who want to come to this country.

However, when you look at what is happening in our country, particularly what happened

in Kawempe, you can actually say that the police or this Government is opposing its own image. They attract the world to see whatever is happening here.

I was a victim of what happened in Kawempe on Monday. The JATT staff wanted to kick my private parts. Fortunately, I had a background in the Bwaise ghetto. If I did not have tactics, it would be another story for me now.

When you look at the clothes I used that day, you cannot believe that it is a Member of Parliament who was harassed that way. The ladies were in court on Tuesday with Hon. Nsamba Oshabe. When you look at the way they were beaten, some lost their backs - *(Interjections)*- yes, they did. Others, when you look at their faces, you see that they were brutally beaten. Why are we doing this?

The kidnaps going on; as we speak now, Mr Speaker, an American citizen called Charles Bukonya Muvawala, the Vice President of the Uganda North America Association (UNAA), was kidnapped on Tuesday night in Nakulabye. We do not know where he is. This country is experiencing many people leaving to seek asylum in other countries because of the way the security agencies are handling things. We want to know who is giving the orders and who is taking over, and at the same time, see tweets of the Chief of Defence Forces (CDF) saying, "I am going to crush these NUP people". We condemn that. This is our country; we were born in Uganda; and we stay in Uganda – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members in the public gallery this afternoon are students and teachers of Kabbo Seed Secondary School in Mubende District, represented in Parliament by Hon. David Kabanda and Hon. Hope Grania Nakazibwe. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. Afande, you can stand up. Thank you. There they are.

This afternoon, we also have in the public gallery students and teachers of Britanico High

School in Nakawuka, Wakiso District. They are represented by Hon. Charles Matovu and Hon. Betty Ethel Naluyima. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me once again in welcoming them, honourable colleagues.

Furthermore, we have students and teachers of Immaculate Heart Girls School, Nyakibale in Rukungiri District. They are represented by Hon. Midius Nantukunda and Hon. Elisa Rutahigwa. They have come to observe proceedings of this House. Please once again join me in welcoming them. Thank you.

2.45

**MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I want to also thank the minister for the statement.

I viewed some of the video clips, and I noticed something that I want the minister to take an interest in. There was a lady, a soldier, who was trying to pull her colleagues away from beating people. What came to my mind, minister, and that is why I want you to take an interest, was that if there was a single command, or there could have been two commands or various, how can you have a group that is so happy to beat people, and you have this other person who is pulling them away? That tells you that there could have been a problem.

Mr Speaker, one time on the Floor of Parliament, I stated that we are sending these policemen and soldiers out there, but we do not know what is in their hearts because from their training, some of the things they are sent to do, they do not like them. They know that it is not professional to be sent to do what they are being asked to do. One day, like my sister stated, if one of them gets annoyed, and that is why we also need to question whether some of them are doing it because they think they should do that or they are doing it to actually spoil the name of the Government. You never know.

Minister, you need to take interest because some of them may not be happy and they think

they should do something extreme in order to spoil the name of the Government. You need to look at all this if anything positive is supposed to come. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

2.47

**MS HANIFA NABUKEERA (NUP, Woman Representative, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for his statement, but I also want to thank you, Mr Speaker, for having brought this debate to the Floor.

I want clarification from the honourable minister. I want to talk about fellow members of Parliament. When you look at their charge sheets, and even for the others that were arrested, most are talking about a public nuisance, but I do not know whether you looked at the Penal Code to see the ingredients of the charge of public nuisance. I was with Hon. Nyeko in the same area, and then they came and grabbed him. Later on, in the charge sheet, you stated that he had committed the offence of a public nuisance. Do you know what the ingredients of public nuisance are?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Hanifa, you are going into uncharted waters; that is subjudice under Rule 73 of our Rules of Procedure. He has already been charged; these are not issues we can discuss here.

**MS NABUKEERA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to talk about the law; has the Government forgotten about the laws of Uganda? In this case, about the people who arrest civilians, there are procedures for arresting people. There are also procedures for arresting Members of Parliament, but these masked people - the JATT people - I do not know whether they know the laws and the procedures of how people are supposed to be arrested. I want clarification on that. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, let me clarify for you. Please do not get me wrong. If you are a member of Parliament and you are caught in the act, they do not need to leave you to go and then write to the Speaker summoning you.

There and then they take you and then we start following up –(Laughter)- yes. I want you to know that, and please, get me clear, just because you are a member of Parliament - we can also be thieves. You go to rob someone's home and when they come to arrest you, you say, "No, first go to the Speaker to get permission to arrest me". There are incidents when you are taken right away, but that does not mean - yes, I am telling you; that does not mean that I am saying that our MPs should not be arrested using the usual methods. I remember the Hon. Ssewanyana and the late Hon. Ssegirinya, were sent summons through here but where you are caught in the act, honourable colleagues, that will not apply. Yes, Hon. Mpuuga.

2.50

**MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** From Hon. Mpuuga, I will go to Hon. Kaberuka, then the Shadow Attorney-General. No, not the Shadow Attorney-General. Shadow minister for justice? Hon. Abdallah, you are the shadow minister for what? Internal affairs? Oh! The Shadow Minister for Internal Affairs is Hon. Nambooze. But she has just come. I will give the one who has been here the former. I know they talk to each other.

**MR MPUUGA** Much obliged, Mr Speaker. The Minister of Internal Affairs just read the statement, and he is one of the better-schooled military officers in this land. I am very sure that that statement was just dropped on his desk when he was rushing to come to this House. I decline to imagine that it is his statement; somebody must have written something, he was in a hurry, and he came to read it. Otherwise, how does Gen. David Muhoozi, whom I think I know fairly, make reference to the fact that some of these victims were part of an illegal parade, and therefore, their treatment seemed like an act of reprisal, revenge and retribution, which has no space in the laws of the land. That can never be a statement from the Minister of State for Internal Affairs that I know. Somebody simply dropped it on his desk.

He can probably explain whether the actions in Kawempe were a punishment in retribution and then probably educate us on their space in the laws of the land, given some illegal military parade alluded to in the statement.

Secondly, the honourable member, I forget the name, referred to the fact that if the EC is constrained and stretched, they can make requests for backup.

May we know from the minister whether there is such a request from the Electoral Commission, and if so, whether they specifically requested personnel from the Joint Anti-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT) to support them, not any other security agency? They need to also explain to us the nature of the stress that compelled them to make that request.

Three, the people involved in the videos and on the ground are all hooded. May we ask the minister under what circumstances people enforcing the laws of the land would be hooded and hide their identity while executing a public duty? This can also help us advise citizens on their mode of hooding themselves to counter.

The point I am making is that we are running into a dangerous territory where purported law enforcement is being done by people without identification, which is why you have heard between police and the army, each denying knowledge of the hooded individuals.

So, may we know whether there was a mutiny in one of the security forces or whether the military is experiencing a mutiny, and therefore, some personnel are acting out of hand? If so, we can alert the nation that there are some hoodlums at large capable of harming the public because they have no identity; they have no identifiable command and control. They are like wolves on the street.

Very finally, Mr Speaker, Hon. Bashiisha, a very honourable lady, with pain, alluded to the fact that she had that experience in her territory during the last election. The three people, the victims, were not even involved. Nobody involved or not involved should ever be a victim of a civil - *(Member timed out.)*

2.54

**MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA (NUP, Mukono County North, Mukono):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I happen to be one of the victims who were subjected to inhuman treatment on Sunday. I was bounded into a “drone”; tortured, slapped, pushed under the chairs of the “drone” and told not to look in front anywhere until I was - I found myself having been dropped at Kawempe Police Station.

This happened in the eyes of only one person who I happened to identify; the Division Police Commander (DPC) of Kawempe. When I reached Kawempe, I was slapped in front of the camera at the reception of the police station. There is a camera. I was undressed of my red overall attire, and I was told that that is an army attire. I asked him to tell me when it became an attire.

Mr Speaker, everyone here can tell his or her own story. In my own constituency, Mokono North, I take it that I went through the worst election, and I was the last to be declared, after everyone else here. Why? Somebody tried to use Special Forces Command (SFC) and the army to abduct me. It is from my constituency that most of those people you are hearing about, who were abducted, came from.

It started like that, and this is what is happening in Kawempe. Muhammad Kanatta and Yudah Ssemppijja, who are from my constituency, have never been traced again - *(Member timed out.)*

2.57

**MR JAMES KABERUKA (NRM, Kinkizi County West, Kanungu):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I thank you for allowing this debate in the House. I also extend my appreciation to the Hon. Bahati on behalf of the Government and some semblance of appreciation for the situation from the minister of internal affairs.

When you look at the social media now, you cannot differentiate Uganda from DR Congo,

where M23 is fighting against the Congolese and vice versa. People are moving and are being held in Kyangwali. What is the cause of this? Dishonesty. The minister ought to tell this House who these people who beat Ugandans are.

If he is to restore hope in Ugandans, let him tell us who they are. If he has no time to enlist them, we can give him time to bring a list of those who beat *Wanainchi*. If we continue massaging this situation, it will escalate.

You know, someone said, “What is good for the goose is good for the gander.” This is not selecting Opposition; it is happening to the National Resistance Movement (NRM) as well. Some Residence District Commissioners (RDCs) have started —(*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Kaberuka, our behaviour here is that when the microphone is off because of time, you ask for more time. You do not switch it on, and then you continue business as usual. I actually saw that they gave you a little time. I would have added you, but because of what you have done, I am not able. Hon. Ndeezi?

2.59

**MR NDEEZI ALEX (NRM, Representative, PWD):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The constitutional mandate for managing elections is vested in the Electoral Commission. In the performance of its constitutional mandate, the Commission shall not be subject to the direction of any person or authority. The commission is autonomous. The Commission is independent.

Therefore, we have many questions to ask the Electoral Commission; unfortunately, it is not here. We talk about the police and the army, but the right party in charge of the situation in Kawempe that we are talking about is the Electoral Commission.

I think, at an appropriate time, we should find a mechanism for ensuring that the Election Commission is held accountable. If they have allowed other parties to hijack their functions,

let them tell us. If they do not have the mandate to make the elections, let them tell us. We allocate a lot of money to this Commission every year; if it has failed to use the money properly, let it tell us.

My humble request is that we need a mechanism for ensuring that we interact with the Electoral Commission to know exactly what is going on there. Thank you so much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Can we have Hon. Modoi and Hon. Opendi?

3.01

**MR ISAAC MODOI (NRM, Lutseshe County, Bududa):** Mr Speaker, I thank this House for reviewing and discussing this subject matter.

I was a returning officer —(*Interjections*)— yes in Uganda. For many years, I have been a returning officer. I thank Hon. Ndeezi for what he said; the mandate for elections in this country rests strictly with the Electoral Commission. When you have a nominated candidate, they become your official. They have the right to protect that candidate and ensure that whatever happens is within the law. You only request security to protect the process.

All of us, colleagues, are products of elections. You know, each one has a story. This has happened at a time when we should review what is going to happen and how it happens. It is very true that democracy defines a nation. It is a very serious programme that allows each citizen to see how their leaders are elected. The same is equally true that the leadership of a country comes about through democracy. The Constitution has to be upheld.

What happened in Kawempe could happen in other parts of the country. I think the Chairman of the Electoral Commission addressed people - I say “people” because he did not address the nation. He has to come out clearly to assure the nation whether we are ready for elections or what is going to happen. We have a friend whose child was passing by, heading in that direction, but she was badly beaten.

As I wind up, I want to talk about security. When I was in service, the coat of arms had to be respected at all costs. The goons who were beating people were wearing uniforms that had our flag. In my view, we have to be very frank, look at this issue squarely, and address it.

Honourable minister, on the idea of thanking you for going to consol the patient; it should have been the Electoral Commission because those are the ones in charge of this process. Thank you again and let us not lose hope. I think this is the time to review how we are going to proceed. *(Applause)*

3.03

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving time to this particular subject that has been disturbing my head since I watched the news; that a prospective Member of Parliament can come from nomination and is pulled off a motorbike and thrown onto the ground.

We have a history as a country; we cannot afford to see this happening in the NRM Government—*(Applause)*—where we all rejoiced and thanked the President for liberating the country. Who are these officers? When I heard the army spokesperson, Brigadier-General Felix Kulayigye, saying that they do not know these people - how can people have guns and sticks, beat up Ugandans, and nobody is arresting them and they even continued with this the next day? I have raised the issue of officers covering their faces. If you are not a criminal, why do you cover your face? *(Applause)* Why don't you want to be seen by Ugandans?

Mr Speaker, we moved away from the governments that were not democratic. Our Constitution obligates the State to ensure free participation by all Ugandans. They are free to participate in politics and elect the person that they want. If that is not the way we want to go, can we scrap these elections? *(Applause)* Can we go back to the no-party state and stand on individual merit instead of getting divided around parties?

If political parties are an issue, we are requesting constitutional amendments. Can we have constitutional amendments here before we go into elections? We are silent, yet the days are drawing closer. Can we discuss these matters – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, honourable minister?

**GEN. MUHOOZI:** Mr Speaker, I appreciate the cross-partisan views of Members. They feed into the Government's desire to have a peaceful electoral process.

The processes, roles, and balance of rights and duties that you have talked about feed the practical solutions we seek. It is good to have this engagement, but it is better to follow up with a more concrete engagement between security, the Electoral Commission, and all the players to talk and find solutions to these issues.

Every citizen has a sanctified life, so I disagree with my colleague, Hon. Joyce—it is not only journalists, but everyone—whether a journalist or not—should be treated fairly before the law. Therefore, I would like to allay your fears; there is no bubble, but in the unlikely event that it is there, the pressure points are being pricked by this discussion, and we shall together find a solution. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I would like to urge the parties to use their platforms outside this House, which are provided for under the Constitution, from the Inter-Party Organisation for Dialogue (IPOD) to all other parties, to engage on these matters, so that you engage on these matters with the principals.

What happened in Kawempe is undesirable. *(Applause)* I do not know how someone can be provoked to pluck someone who is from being nominated off a boda boda. In fact, I said, “Maybe this candidate is being indirectly campaigned for.” What happened there was very bad. So, I urge you to follow up on that. Next item?

STATEMENT BY MINISTER ON THE  
OCCASION OF COMMEMORATION OF  
THE INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister of gender? (*Hon. Ssewungu rose*) Honourable colleagues, under rule 52(2), I am not allowed to go beyond one hour on an item, so that time is gone; I cannot reopen that issue. Yes, honourable minister?

3.08

**THE MINISTER OF GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Betty Amongi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I have a 41-page statement that I have uploaded *-(Interjections)-* Yes, I wanted to give you a comprehensive statement, but I am going to give only the highlights.

Note that if you want statistics, details and accountability for all the Government programmes on women, they are contained here and uploaded, but I will give a synopsis.

In 1975, the United Nations declared International Women's Year and recognised 8<sup>th</sup> March as the International Women's Day, and all member states celebrate it as a global day. This year's celebration is anchored around priority areas of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action. The national celebration shall be in Kyankwanzi.

Mr Speaker, I would like Members to read page 2 and state that the theme is "Accelerate Action for Gender Equality". I will go to page 3, which deals with the progress made by the Government so far.

Under 4.1, I would like to discuss the legal and policy framework through which the Government has consistently ensured that gender equality and the empowerment of women are prioritised, and significant strides have been made in promoting gender equality.

On page 4, I want to articulate that Uganda is a signatory to international and regional instruments on gender equality and women's empowerment, including the Convention on

Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women, the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action which is 30 years this year, the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development with its attendant Sustainable Development Goals, the Protocol to the African Charter on Human and People's Rights on the Rights of Women in Africa (the Maputo Protocol), the Gender Policy of the IGAD Development Framework –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you have always told us that every year. You could go to what you have achieved, the theme and what you want us to do – something new so that we do not recycle.

**MS AMONGI:** Mr Speaker, let me allow Members to read the laws that have been put in place, which are articulated on pages 4, 5 and 6.

Part of page 6 deals with the policies that have been put in place. On page 6, we deal with the institutional frameworks in place for promoting gender equality and empowerment of women. We also have all the mechanisms in all the Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs), which take us up to page 8.

On page 8, we also have the National Women's Council and the Equal Opportunities Commission.

On page 9, we have all the institutional frameworks. Page 10 also has part of the institutional frameworks, which recognises Parliament.

The MDAs and what each of them is doing is on pages 10 to 13. You will look at what each ministry has done to establish a gender desk.

On page 13, we deal with the frameworks in supporting women's representation in public affairs. Let me just give this data and statistics.

The Government upheld affirmative provision in the Constitution and the laws, which provide quotas and that is why most women Members of Parliament – and, I am glad that

this Parliament integrated it in the election of Members of Parliament of the Pan-African Parliament (PAP), the East African Legislative Assembly and other bodies. The statistics currently show that in Cabinet, senior Cabinet ministers, who are female, constitute 44 per cent, compared to 36 per cent in 2016. So, we have made progress. (*Applause*)

Ministers of state are 50, out of whom 23 are women, constituting 46 per cent. We can note that out of 34 Permanent Secretaries, we have 17 women. Out of 39 Chief Executive Officers (CEOs) of commissions, 15 are women. Out of 37 ambassadors, 14 are women.

In the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament, there are 175 female Members of Parliament, 146 of whom came under affirmative action as district women MPs. The percentage of women in Parliament stands at 34 per cent. On this one, we have sort of regressed because, in the last Parliament, we were at 35 per cent. Surprisingly, at the local government level, women constitute 45.7 per cent of the elected leaders.

Mr Speaker, I will leave Members to look at the achievements under the social sector, education, and health, which are articulated from pages 14 to 22. You will get the data and statistics for water and environment, technology and engineering, and the whole social sector.

On page 23, we discuss women's access to land and property, one of the key areas instrumental in women's economic empowerment. We tell you about how the programmes under the ministry of lands have supported women and the land amendment Act.

On page 24, we deal with legal frameworks for dispute resolution and social protection.

On page 25, we deal with measures being taken to reduce the gender digital divide.

On page 26, we deal with legal frameworks and programmes for the economic empowerment of women. We tell you about the banks and banking products – financial products – that

are supporting women. For this, I want to congratulate specific banks that have initiated women's products with very low interest rates. Centenary Bank is implementing CenteSupaWoman. It is a financial product that is offering business loans to enable women to grow their businesses. DFCU is also operating a programme for the empowerment of women.

Finance Trust Bank is also there.

From page 27, we deal with programmes under the Government: the Joint Youth Livelihood Programme, Uganda Women Entrepreneurship Programme – the statistics of achievement are in there; Parish Development Model; Presidential Initiative on Wealth and Job Creation (Emyooga) Programme; Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW); Agricultural Credit Facility; Climate Resilient Livelihood Opportunities for Women Economic Empowerment; the NSSF HI-Innovator Programme; Deliver Women's Economic Resilience through Enterprise and Market System (DREAMS) Programme; and Reducing the burden of Unpaid Care and Domestic Work for Women programme.

Mr Speaker, on page 31, we deal with women's access to justice, which is vital. We now have the Administration of the Judiciary Act and partnerships to profile gender-based violence cases. We have a partnership with the Office of the Director of Public Prosecutions that profiles and fast-tracks all cases related to gender-based violence and also puts in place witness protection for women to testify in camera.

On page 33, we deal with employment and labour participation – and that takes us up to page 35.

On page 35, we also deal with the issue of prevention and response to gender-based violence. We articulate the statistics and what we have done. That enumerates the key achievements.

On page 36, we deal with the challenges – the persistent poverty, persistent discriminatory

and negative social norms and practices against women, resource constraints and data gaps

Under point 6.0, on page 36, we articulate the priorities for women's empowerment for the next five years – 2026-2030. You can look at them on page 37 – improving women's livelihood and economic empowerment; access to social services; strengthening governance and accountability for gender equality; mindset change for gender empowerment and women's empowerment; elimination of gender-based violence and promoting women's participation in public life and decision-making; strengthening women, peace and security agenda; reducing gender digital divide; and others.

Mr Speaker, on page 38, we note that the chief guest for this year's Women's Day is His Excellency, the President of the Republic of Uganda – and we invite you to attend the celebration.

Venue

I wish to notify you that the venue is in Bukwiri Church of Uganda Primary School, Butemba Town Council in Kyankwanzi District.

Preparation – we tell you about the preparation under point 9.0, on pages 38 and 39.

Conclusion

Mr Speaker, I wish to inform you and the honourable members that you are all invited to join us in Kyankwanzi to celebrate International Women's on 8 March 2025. *(Applause)*

Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Is the Shadow Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development around?

3.22

**THE SHADOW MINISTER OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Betty Naluyima):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am the Shadow Minister of Local Government, standing in

for Hon. Fortunate Rose Nantongo, who is the shadow minister for gender. She is officially away doing other parliamentary work.

Mr Speaker, as we respond to the matters that the colleague minister – *(Laughter)* – has raised, we are looking at the different frameworks that she has raised. We see that even though we have put in place and are signatories to several legal policies and frameworks – the Convention on the Elimination of all forms of Discrimination Against Women (CEDAW), the Beijing Declaration, the Maputo Protocol and many others, including the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda – talk about the Bill of Rights – what has been discussed here is evidence to what is being done to women.

We are seeing political violence against the women of Uganda. We see how women are being treated when we are administering different laws but ignoring entirely the legal frameworks that we have. There is evidence that women in this country were stepped on, tear-gassed and battered, moreover, not by women police officers. We wonder: has the gender ministry come in to advocate for a fair way of handling women in this country?

When we get to part 4.4.2, see how the women and girls' health is being handled; we still have a challenge. About the menstrual health of girls and young women in this country, have we thought about how best we can subsidise sanitary wear so that we do not continue losing the 22 per cent of school-going children due to matters of menstrual health?

As we handle the budget, as the Parliament of Uganda, could we plan and think of how best we can subsidise sanitary wear – how we can put off or levy very little taxes? Instead of a sanitary pad going for Shs 5,000, let us have pads that are at Shs 1,000 – something affordable, so that, that girl out there is in position to go to school comfortably as she goes through her menstrual days.

We also look at the Markets Act, 2023, which you have also cited here. I was among the few who were on the Committee on Public Service

and Local Government. Have you gone further to see that we have those regulations in place? Much as Parliament enacted the law, we do not see the regulations coming in. We do not see that commitment of having the minimum wage to our workers out there, who are not able to have that good salary and a minimum basic wage considered. Therefore, we ask that you get that in place.

Could we also consider the women on this side, where I stand – we discussed it last time – celebrating Women’s Day and having the comfort of choosing their guests of honour? The national one has been organised, and we are glad that it is in place. However, as we represent our people, there are several issues and dynamics whereby the guest of my choice will not be the guest of honour as far as the Resident District Commissioner (RDC) or District Police Commander (DPC) would wish. Could you think of women’s day celebrations where the other parties are also free to choose their own?

There is also interference in the women’s activities. We are in a multi-party political dispensation. If the Opposition or any other party - even the civic space, the Civil Society Organisations (CSOs) are also complaining about the same - put up a certain activity, can we see the ministry helping such that as long as it is a women’s activity, it is given due space and you aid it so that, continuously, we can see a fair ground and fair women’s celebration across all angles?

As I finish, all these times we have talked as a country, and there are several economic programmes that aid the women to come up, but has the ministry sat and highlighted the gaps – those very encumbrances that are continuously in place?

To this day, as we have the GROW Project, the Parish Development Model (PDM), and many other socioeconomic programmes, have we taken enough time to find out where the encumbrances are? Why are women in Uganda still poor? Is it a fair distribution, or is it because the quotas are not realised?

We appreciate you and pray that you critically look at these issues, but more so, stand up. We expect the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to stand up and condemn the discrimination going on. We expect you to come and see how women’s rights are not being observed at all in the ongoing campaigns. It predicts what women will go through in the upcoming elections. As we talk – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Uganda Women Parliamentary Association (UWOPA) has assigned the – after the shadow minister, I will go to the UWOPA – vice-chairperson.

3.28

**MS BREANDA NABUKENYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Luwero):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the minister for the report and the shadow representative for the issues that have been raised.

First of all, I would like to get back to the issue of freedom of association. It is very fundamentally enshrined in the Constitution of Uganda and the Bill of Rights. Every woman is entitled to the right to associate in any way they want. However, today, you find that women in the Opposition cannot even come out to speak or wear the colours of their parties.

Honourable minister, you are in charge of the women’s docket – the ministry. You need to come out and speak about this. We have seen brutality. These men in uniform, who are supposed to serve our country, are beating women. I represent all women in UWOPA, so even if it happened to someone on any other political divide, I would come out and speak. We need to protect women and see them associate wherever they want to be.

Mr Speaker, we have women in prisons. Those women do not access sanitary towels. I have met several who say: “When I am imprisoned and in my menstrual periods, it is until I get to reach my family that I can access sanitary towels.”

The gender ministry needs to visit these prisons and make sure that women can access anything they need because you have no control over that. We need to see that women can access sanitary towels in the prisons.

Also, we have many women who are in those safe houses. Women are different. If someone is put in a safe house for more than 48 hours – a woman! – without clean and safe washrooms, what do you expect them to go through? We need to hear the ministry speak about this.

You are going to celebrate the International Women's Day, but there are trailblazers – there are women who started this journey. If they were here, they would speak about these issues that affect women. We do not have to talk about economic empowerment or elective positions only, but also those issues that affect a woman – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let us have Hon. Faith Kunihiro, the Member for Kumi and then Hon. Melsa. Any man who is not a member of UWOPA will be in trouble today; I will not pick you. *(Laughter)*

3.32

**MS FAITH KUNIHIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyenjojo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the minister for the statement and for letting us know about the celebrations that are about to take place in Kyankwanzi.

Mr Speaker, last year, the minister invited us, as Members of Parliament, to a hotel to speak about the GROW project. We were very involved at its inception. However, at the moment, I do not know of any woman from my district who has benefited from this famous GROW project that I participated in at its beginning.

When we attend these workshops, we go back to our constituencies and tell women that there is an opportunity coming that will benefit them. So, it is sad that our women are applying to the bank for the GROW project, and the bank tells them to wait. Some of them have

waited forever and have not benefited from the GROW project.

I would like the minister to give us a clear statement on who is benefiting and getting the money from this GROW project, if not our rural women, who are very enterprising.

3.33

**MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I also thank the minister for the report. The minister made a statement last year on the funding that had been sent to districts, to support districts' celebrations. I expected details of the same in this year's statement. Could the minister update the women of Uganda on whether the Government is going to support them, as it did last year? *(Applause)*

Number two, it is also important that the minister writes to all districts so that all districts can update the country on how the women of Uganda are fighting poverty and improving their household incomes, following the various Government programmes across the country.

Mr Speaker, the districts now look at Women's Day celebrations as a celebration for the women Members of Parliament, yet this is a national celebration. Could we implore the districts to take the lead as the women Members of Parliament go and support?

Many times, they say there is no local revenue. As I speak now, there is nothing clear about the Women's Day celebration in Kumi District. I would like the minister to support us in that area so that other districts do not miss out.

3.35

**MS MELSA AVAKO (NRM, Woman Representative, Yumbe):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join honourable colleagues to thank the minister for the statement, and I join the rest of Ugandans to celebrate Women's Day on the 8<sup>th</sup> Day of March. We are celebrating the acts of courage and determination of our ordinary women.

I come from Yumbe District, which is predominantly Muslim. Women have embraced Government programmes but still have barriers, especially in accessing some of the microfinance benefits that the Government puts in place, such as GROW.

Honourable minister, women say that some of the terms that you present to them are not beneficial. For example, in our cultural setup, rural women do not own land, yet you have put land as one of the conditions for them to access money for appropriate businesses. It is their cry that you review some of those terms and conditions. Thank you so much.

3.36

**MS DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong):** Thank you. Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the statement. However, just like my colleagues are already raising, there are critical areas. When we hear about Women's Day, we spend so much to organise Women's Day. As the day is just around the corner, I would like a confirmation from the honourable minister: is the Shs 3 million that is supposed to be received by the different districts already there?

We spend so much to transport women from different subcounties to the venue. We also spend a lot to organise, in various ways. Some women Members of Parliament are spending up to over Shs 30 million. We want this confirmation, honourable minister.

Secondly, honourable minister, the statement that you have provided is very informative and good. I know that, as a country, we have made great strides in gender equality and the empowerment of women and girls. However, we know that during the period of COVID-19, as a country, Uganda was hit by high rates of teenage pregnancies, and many girls dropped out of school. What are we doing as a country?

When you look at the higher education students' financing schemes, very few girls benefit. What are we doing to support the girls who dropped out of school so that they can also benefit from the Government programmes, besides the

GROW programme, which, in Alebtong, I do not know anybody who has benefited from? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Mourine Osoru and Hon. Flavia Rwabuhoro.

3.38

**MS MOURINE ASORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in commemorating International Women's Day. My question would be: honourable minister, how much do we usually spend on organising this event annually? Does the ministry do a review to know if this day impacts the lives of the rural women down there? In most cases, we just celebrate Women's Day for the sake of the celebrations, without knowing the impact.

Secondly, we had the Women's Parliament here the other day and women were recommending the Parish Development Model (PDM), which they are benefiting from. However, the GROW project has been a problem across the country. Therefore, we request you to lay for us on the Floor of Parliament – through you, Mr Speaker, let the minister come here with a list, district by district and city by city, for us to know how many women are benefiting from the GROW project. Or is the GROW project only for the rich?

Lastly, there are laws that the ministry needs to popularise, for example, the Succession Act, where women do not know that they have the right to inheritance of land. For some of these policies and laws that are in place, you must come out boldly to inform the women down there that, indeed, as you go for the loans in the banks, you have the right to the inheritance of land. It is not true that only men have the right to inheritance.

3.40

**MS FLAVIA KABAHEMBA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyegegwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to wish the women of this country and the whole citizenry a happy Women's Day.

I thank my minister for the elaborate statement, but the need to accelerate action requires us to swiftly and decisively take steps to achieve the gender agenda.

Mr Speaker, with the right actions and intentional support, we shall make appropriate progress. The number of child-parents we are registering every day, even after COVID-19, is alarming. If we have to speak about the actions, we need legislation on a child rights approach to reintegration assistance for child-parents to facilitate re-entry into school.

This should employ a comprehensive child protection and welfare system for them to actualise their right to basic education and ensure proper care for their children.

Mr Speaker, the more we delay the policy and the legislation to reintegrate child parents - I know there are even child parents among boys, so let us have a policy and legislation to cause a re-entry, which I know should be a process. Let us be deliberate and intentional.

Therefore, I would like to implore the ministry to develop a policy and, later, legislation for the reintegration of the child's parents back into school programmes. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Paska Menya, Hon. Stella Atyang and Hon. Kakande.

3.42

**MS PASKA MENYA (Independent, Woman Representative, Pader):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister for the report. Let me go straight to the matter concerning the girl child.

We have received reports showing that there are many girl child school dropouts, and among the factors causing them to leave school is the issue of sanitary pads.

Mr Speaker, I would like to recollect from the submission of my honourable colleague on supporting the girl child with sanitary pads. We

have senior women teachers in every school. Can we find a way of supporting these leaders in schools so that they can help our young children who are menstruating? *(Applause)*

We ask the Government to exert effort to reduce taxes on pads so that the young generation is not exposed to risks which would encourage them to leave school.

I would like to speak about the GROW project. In my district, people consider it to be for the rich. The people of Pader registered and opened bank accounts awaiting GROW funds. Unfortunately, they have not received this money, and they are disappointed because of the terms and collaterals that are required of them, yet they cannot afford them.

We pray that the Government adjusts the collateral requirements so that the local woman whose livelihood we want to improve can benefit from this project. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Stella Atyang?

3.44

**MS STELLA ATYANG (NRM, Woman Representative, Moroto):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me the way. I would like to thank the minister for the statement she made in preparation for the celebration of International Women's Day.

Mr Speaker, there are increasing cases of child marriages and defilement. Despite the fact that the children know the police referral process when they are defiled, there is a tendency for police asking for facilitation in terms of fuel to help them go and track the perpetrators.

Mr Speaker, these are children of incapable Ugandans who are unable to afford these monies. So, they end up keeping the girls for a short time. Now, since they cannot keep them for long, they release them into the community, giving the perpetrators the opportunity to take advantage of these children in desperate conditions.

I would like to urge the Government to facilitate the police so that they can do their work in tracing these perpetrators and bringing them to book to curb defilement cases.

The other issue is GROW. Mr Speaker, when you look at the last financial audit report, you realise that the reasons women did not access GROW funds even after being directed to go to the respective banks to receive these funds - the banks would tell them, "The money is done." This is because the finance ministry was not able to release the money in time.

Therefore, I would like to urge the minister in charge to always work hand in hand - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Juliet Kakande?

3.46

**MS JULIET KAKANDE (NUP, Woman Representative, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I also thank the minister for the report.

The annual reports from the ministry normally indicate the background of International Women's Day. I have previously participated in different national Women's Day celebrations. However, whenever I attend, the speeches, entertainment, and whatever information is always given tend to narrow the day to mobilising women to support the NRM party, yet it has a broad picture.

My request, Mr Speaker, is that this is the day we should sensitise women in the local areas to change their mindsets to be positive towards the reasons the day was initiated.

Another issue is what different Members of Parliament have spoken to about the Shs 3,000,000 we were given. In Uganda, there is always inflation. In fact, some Members have been frustrated because they might not even get that amount. We expected an increase to either Shs 5 or Shs 10 million. I, therefore, pray that the amount of money given to districts be increased. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Stella Isodo and then Hon. Hon. Nakayenze.

3.48

**MS STELLA ISODO (FDC, Woman Representative, Ngora):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the honourable minister for the statement, however, I would like to also implore the minister as she writes to districts about the Shs 3 million for International Women's Day Celebrations she should remind them that Uganda is under a multi-party dispensation.

In those districts, we have the Opposition women MPs who also need to celebrate with their women. Ngora District has never celebrated the International Women's Day. I hope this time, we shall celebrate. Therefore, I request the minister to write to the Resident District Commissioners who are blocking us.

On the GROW project, honourable minister, we need another meeting to review it. The conditions of the project do not allow the rural woman to get this loan.

I looked at the report the other day from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development and noted that so far, only 87 districts out of 146 have benefited, and Ngora is not one of them. This is because the loan has stringent conditions of a minimum of Shs 4 million, a land title - honourable minister, remember, we had a meeting, and one of the women in Kumi got a land title from her husband to get a loan for just a stationery business. Yet, you know they sell silverfish, tomatoes etcetera. So, why don't we meet to review this project to benefit the local women? I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Nakayenze and then Hon. Nabagabe.

3.50

**MS CONNIE GALIWANGO (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to add my voice to thank the minister for the statement. I only have a few questions for her.

Mr Speaker, can the minister – it is very good that the minister has given us statistics, especially on women leaders and their percentages, but I would like to know this: honourable minister, have you got any statistics on child workers, child mothers and women facing violence from the police? Do you have those statistics?

I happen to have been a victim of violence by police - and many other women. Has there been any moment where the ministry condemned such acts? Or, do they just watch women being brutalised? We need a statement at least to see that they are standing with women.

I would like to also find out if there are any statistics on how many rural women have benefited from the GROW Project. It has been aptly said by many of the Members here that land ownership is part of the requirement. Do you have statistics on how many women have land or have access to land?

Mr Speaker, many women have expressed this, and according to culture, many women have been suppressed - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Flavia Nabagabe and then Hon. Kirabo.

3.52

**MS FLAVIA NABAGABE (NUP, Woman Representative, Kassanda):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to appreciate –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Be cautious when you are interrupting women this week. *(Laughter)* Moreover, we are in the Lent period.

**MS NABAGABE:** I want to appreciate the minister for her statement. I think it is important for us as a country to take stock of what we have gained as we pave the way forward for what needs to be done.

Right now, we still have a backlash on some of the key pillars of the Beijing Declaration and Platform for Action report that we need to take note of, for example, Pillar 9: violence against women, especially violence against women in elections.

Mr Speaker, the cost of violence against women in Uganda currently is 15 per cent of the GDP of the country. About 18 per cent of women who have ever experienced violence usually end up committing suicide. This means that we have to do something about violence against women. When it comes to violence against women in elections and politics – tagging it to Pillar 4 on women’s participation in politics and the pillar on human rights of women - currently, I have five women in prison, five women that were battered under the National Unity Platform did not get any treatment, and they were remanded to Luzira Prisons without any treatment.

Hon. Hellen Namukwaya is a councillor for Makindye. She was battered during her participation in the Kawempe By-election campaigns. Ms Nanzara Zaitun’s head was injured, the woman you saw. She is a fish seller in a market. Because she was exercising her right to participate in politics, she now ended up in a hospital bed. Nabbose Prossy was battered in the back. We saw the woman who had all those – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Instead of debating, you are giving lists. You would give an example or two and then debate. Just conclude, honourable.

**MS NABAGABE:** Thank you very much. All these people, including Swabra Owomugisa, who was violated – *(Interjections)* – no, those are the women.

Mr Speaker, it is important that we mention the names of these people. Otherwise, when we just talk about numbers, sometimes we forget who these people are.

I would like us to adjust, as a country to, first of all, contribute to financing the eradication of gender-based violence because the cost of gender-based violence and violence against women is high in the country - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, Hon. Kirabo.

3.55

**MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also want to thank the minister for that statement.

Mr Speaker, believe you me such days generate and attract a number of debates. Very many Members rise up to comment. These are International Youth Day and the International Women's Day to the extent that the Parliament conducts a Youth Parliament. This week, on Monday, we had Women's Parliament.

My question to the minister is: where do the resolutions we get from the Youth Parliament and the Women's Parliament go?

Mr Speaker, I would like to request that you spare a day for us, the women and youth Members of Parliament to come and discuss these resolutions to pave a way forward for what comes out from those parliamentary sittings. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Member for Kiboga and Member for Oyam.

3.56

**MS CHRISTINE KAAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga):** Mr Speaker, thank you very much for this opportunity -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, number one, I am not giving an opportunity to any colleague who had already spoken on the previous matter; I need to give others a chance. Most of them know how I work. They can be different subjects, but let us do that to give everyone a chance.

Honourable members, it is approaching 4:00 p.m., which is the Prime Minister's Time, so let us hurry so that the Prime Minister can take over her time.

**MS KAAAYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to state that some of us, especially women in the Opposition are celebrating our International Women's Day here because we are not given the right and

liberty to celebrate this day back home. I am happy that I am celebrating Women's Day here, a place where we are treated equally.

When you look at the arrangement of the celebration, I do not know how politically and religiously it is balanced. You find that the day has become a one-political party women's celebration.

I request the minister to get into this and try to ensure that all of us, women of different shades, enjoy our day because we are women.

Right now, most of us are asked by our children whether we are terrorists or not. We needed the minister to come out clearly to confirm to the country and globe that women in the Opposition are not terrorists but are in the Opposition and that we are in a multi-party political dispensation.

Mr Speaker, I was in the hospital on Monday with the WASH Forum in Kiboga and the medical people told us that the mama kits were out of the medical supplies. These are mandatory items that we need as women. I do not know why condoms are everywhere, but items like sanitary pads and mama kits are in the supplies. We cannot run away from these reproductive health items. *(Applause)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Colleagues, let us have order. The Member knows that condoms benefit both sides. *(Laughter)* They are multi-purpose.

**MS KAAAYA:** Mr Speaker, I engaged the senior women teachers about the provision of pads to our children. They told us that they only give pads as an emergency, and only on the first day. A girl who was given an emergency pad yesterday cannot return for the next day, yet we are aware that there are more than four days for the action. Why should pads be given an emergency?

Mr Speaker, the women are – *(Member timed out.)*

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

3.59

**DR EUNICE APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the minister very much for her statement and acknowledge that we have come a long way, in terms of policy and legal reforms. It is the reason I am here on a directly elected ticket, albeit with a lot of challenges, because the ground is not yet levelled for everyone.

To me, it does not do us any good, as a country, to start arguing about doing away with the affirmative seats that bring a number of us in to the House and also at the lower levels of local government.

Today, my main concern is the poorly resourced extension service for social protection at the grassroots. I will draw the example of my district. Honourable minister, for a district of nearly 600,000 people, which you rightly resource to have, at the subcounty level, a community development office – at least I know that in all of my seven sub-counties and two town councils, I have a community development officer but none of them has been resourced to reach out to the grassroots. We do not have a single motorcycle, not even at the district level.

At the district level, we have, I think, only one motorcycle that was given three years ago, which is limping at the moment, and no vehicle at all. When we talk about accelerating action for women's equality, it beats my understanding because we do not have the means to preach the gospel to the grassroots. Also – *(Member timed out.)*

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

4.02

**MS SANTA ALUM (UPC, Woman Representative, Oyam):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker, for giving me this chance. I join colleagues in thanking the honourable minister for coming up with a very detailed statement.

Mr Speaker, we have very beautiful laws as a country, but the challenge is their

implementation. We have the Parish Development Model targeting women, a women's fund, and the Generating Growth Opportunities and Productivity for Women Enterprises (GROW) Project. However, when you go deep down to the villages, the women are crying because the money does not reach them.

Honourable minister, last time you made us smile so widely. This time, is there going to be Shs 3 million for the celebration, just like the national function? As the women Members of Parliament, this burden rests on our shoulders.

Mr Speaker, I add my voice to ask; who becomes the guest of honour on the Women's Day celebrations. In my district, I do not have a problem. However, I feel concerned when I see colleagues; women MPs being beaten on their day when they are supposed to be happy. Honourable minister, what do you have in place to protect the women Members of Parliament so that they enjoy and become the guests of honour on their day?

Finally, Mr Speaker, I will talk about strong action in relation to the theme of accelerating economic empowerment. We have a very serious burden, most especially the social barrier. Honourable minister, much as we are talking about very good laws and programmes, women normally find big obstacles in accessing money. When you talk about money in the banks, women do not own land - *(Member timed out.)*

4.04

**DR CHRISTINE NDIWALANA (NUP, Bukomansimbi North County, Bukomansimbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the honourable minister for the statement.

Mr Speaker, my concern is about the increasing number of maternal mortalities in Uganda. We were promised that every subcounty will have a health centre IV but in the – *(Interjections)* - Okay, III although health centres III have elevated to health centres IV whereby we expect each health centre IV to have a medical – *(Interjections)* - Okay. I sit on the health committee and I know what I am talking about.

The health centres III were elevated to health centres IV – *(Interjections)* –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, you need to be very cautious with some of these statements. Only health centres II were elevated. That did not mean health centres III were elevated.

**MS NDIWALANA:** Okay. Health centres III are supposed to have a medical officer. That is the statement I can make today. *(Interjections)* I sit on the health committee - you are finishing my time. They are supposed to have a medical officer as an in-charge.

The health centres III are few, especially in my area. We do not have medical officers. We do not have operating theatres, and maternal mortality is becoming so high. We have only one ambulance. We have poor road infrastructure, and the buildings are in a poor state.

Prime Minister, I request that in Bukomansimbi District, you help us reduce the number of mortalities by giving us at least four ambulances and work on our health centres III. Bigasa Health Centre III is in a poor state – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Christine. Hon. Jane Awich and I will conclude with Hon. Zumura.

4.06

**MS JANE AWICH (NRM, Woman Representative, Kaberamaido):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am just here to add to the voices of my colleagues. I am also here to urge the Government to try its level best to remove the requirement for collateral from the women.

In my district, very many women have applied for GROW funds but you find that only one woman can qualify for it. Majority are very poor yet they are the ones who hold most of the family responsibilities.

I pray that during the Women's Day celebrations, we take time to educate our girls.

Very many are still getting pregnant at early ages and very many are getting married when they are young. Very many look up to us as role models and if we talk to them, they may listen to us. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Christine Akello.

4.07

**MS CHRISTINE AKELLO (NRM, Erute County North, Lira):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am going to talk about justice for women.

Honourable minister, you talked about justice for women but I will call it, embarrassment of women. Mr Speaker, most women have been embarrassed in supermarkets and markets in public places. If you go to the jails, you find both women and men sharing space, as if the women are the only ones stealing in public. It has become a culture. When a woman is caught, they undress her. People are fond of beating the “central government” of women. I have never seen a man being beaten after stealing. *(Laughter)* I have never seen a man being undressed in public.

Honourable Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, what are we doing for our women? Much as we are advocating for them and we are going to celebrate Women's Day, it is really appalling. Someone is a suspect but they are undressed. I have seen the women - and I am not going to mention their names. *(Interjections)* Mr Speaker, I need protection.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleague, you are centrally protected. *(Laughter)*

**MS CHRISTINE AKELLO:** Thank you. Mr Speaker, women are advocating for economic empowerment but they are being embarrassed, especially the rural women. If somebody is a suspect, they undress the person; remove everything – knickers - and they beat the “central government” yet – *(Laughter)* - I do not know which law - why don't we, on that day – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, once someone is caught in such an act, even the local government should not be beaten. *(Laughter)* No government should be beaten. Hon. Zumura Maneno and then I will call Hon. Kisa to represent men.

4.10

**MS ZUMURA MANENO (NRM, Woman representative, Obongi):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. Allow me to join the rest of my colleagues to thank the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development for the beautiful report she has tabled today in commemoration of women's day in this country.

Mr Speaker, allow me to encourage the men in this House to also go out there and encourage the men in the villages to start taking their responsibilities as the men of their homes. Most of the women in this county are dying quietly. Men have left their responsibilities in the hands of women. Men have become donors of children to women. When the child comes out, the responsibility is left to the woman.

I am encouraging you, the men in this House, to go out there and teach men to be in position to take up their responsibilities: one, paying school fees; two, we need a roof over the women and children; three, we need homes for these women and children and; four, you need to dress up your women so that they also look nice, like the young girls that you admire outside there. *(Laughter)* Stop going for those women out there. Please Please try to empower your woman in your house so that she can remain admirable to you as your wife; as a woman in your house and as the mother of your children.

I thank you so much, Mr Speaker and my beautiful minister.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Kisa, come and speak for men. We are on the spot. Switch on.

4.11

**MR STEPHEN KISA (NRM, Luuka South County, Luuka):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker, for giving me the opportunity. I have two issues and one is a clarification I would like to get from the minister for gender.

Gender, by definition, is male and female. When the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development is planning and emphasising issues, they talk about women, youth and children. The men are not mentioned anywhere.

Now, when the honourable colleagues come here, they say women have taken over responsibility and the men are not doing their work. Where are we, as men, in the Ministry of Gender? When they talk about beating the central government, where is the local government in this issue? This is a very serious matter.

Therefore, I want to seek clarification from the minister for gender. Where are you planning for men in your ministry because you always talk about women, youth and children?

Number two, Mr Speaker, the minister gave statistics about the numbers being empowered, especially the women. I am a teacher and I have observed this very seriously. The number of girls who are becoming child mothers in this country is escalating, especially in rural areas. The minister has talked about the number of women in -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Conclude since you are talking for the local government.

**MR KISA:** The minister has given statistics of women Members of Parliament. In the rural areas, there are many child mothers who have not gone back to school, right from COVID-19 time. I wanted to get clarification from the ministry for gender. Which programme do you have to empower child mothers who are many in the rural areas and even towns?

Number two, can you give us the statistics about the child mothers who have dropped out

of school because of teenage pregnancies from the COVID-19 period to date and how best you have empowered them? Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister? You do not need to go to each and every question. We are late for Prime Minister's time. Let us use around three minutes.

**MS AMONGI:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Start with the issue of the local government and then the rest will come. Where are the men in your plan?

**MS AMONGI:** Mr Speaker, I want to note and thank all the Members because most of the issues are input into the papers. There are proposals that we will take on and I pledge that we will take on most of the issues raised.

I wanted to start with GROW, but since you said I start with local government, let me state that the ministry plans for everybody. Gender is women, men, girls and boys. We plan and ensure that those who are vulnerable; the women and men, girls and boys are pulled to reach the level of the other gender. Therefore, when you hear us talking so much about women and girls, it means in our data, the male gender is proportionately better than the female gender. All the yes - *(Interjection)*

All the programmes are meant to first lift those who are disempowered so that they come to your level and then we plan when we are together. When you look at my data, in this Parliament alone, we are only 34 per cent. Therefore, if I come here as a minister for gender and I say I want affirmative action, I cannot say I want affirmative action for males who are 76 per cent in this House.

I have to plan for the 34 per cent to move to 50 per cent and then I say, okay let us now plan for both genders.

That is why the local governments are still supposed to be planned for and localised,

while the central governments are pulled up. Once we are together, we can now see how to centralise both the local government and central government.

Mr Speaker, allow me to first talk about GROW. It is true that the GROW project was designed to pull women up who already have small and medium businesses. That is why the amount of money to be borrowed starts from Shs 4 million.

Now, most of the women who contacted you are women who would literally want to be lent Shs 200,000, Shs 500,000 and Shs 1 million. When we were justifying this programme, the ministry for finance conditioned us that since Parish Development Model (PDM) is already giving Shs 1 million per person and women already had 30 per cent reserved, we should not design the programme around start-ups because there is PDM, Uganda Women's Entrepreneurship Programme (UWEP) and many other programmes for start-up. That was why we designed it as a successor programme for growing businesses.

However, we have realised that because the programme is so popular, many women who are even wanting start-up businesses want this money. We have discussed it in the Cabinet and with the banks and they have indicated that under the World Bank system, we cannot review now. We can only review during mid-term. We are designing a proposal and justification for - *(Interjection)* - Let me finish with Grow then I get the clarification.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, you do not have time for that clarification. We need to conclude.

**MS AMONGI:** During the mid-term review, we can look at some of the proposals you have brought. On collateral, we have also realised that many women do not have collateral. We shall bring on board cooperatives and microfinance institutions because they have convinced us that they have already been lending without stringent collaterals.

By April, we will have the list of SACCOs. We have already profiled areas that are not getting much of the money. Maybe just for clarity, data and statistics - unless you ask me to bring data later, but when we realised that most of the money had been absorbed within the Greater Kampala and Central, we went back to the Cabinet and requested that we redesign the programme to allocate the money according to the subregions.

We now have an allocation for the 19 subregions and I have a list of how each of the subregions is going to get the money. The allocation that will come in April will be based on the 19 subregions. Already, I have the details of how much each subregion has been allocated – *(Mr Amos Okot rose)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Amos, please take your seat.

**MS AMONGI:** It will be difficult for us to go up to the district level but when we have a subregion - For example, so far we have lent out Shs 50.2 billion. However, out of Shs 50.2 billion -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, can I request that next week you bring a comprehensive statement on GROW so that we can discuss it?

**MS AMONGI:** Let me go to the Shs 3 million to the local government. Mr Speaker, this financial year, the budget under which we were remitting this money for National Women's Council was cut. Therefore, we are not sending that Shs 3 million, unfortunately. However, it was restored in the Financial Year 2025/2026.

On the issue of guest of honour and the clarity on who should be the guest of honour, being that women's day is an international day, we cascade and request districts to also honour it as an international day. We always request that you, the women Members of Parliament, should sit with your district local government officials and agree on a guest of honour. It is not our mandate, at the Central Government level, to agree on who becomes a guest of

honour in your district. As a woman Member of Parliament, you are supposed to take the lead, sit with your team and agree on a guest of honour.

Freedom of participation by women of other political parties

Mr Speaker, the Cabinet has constituted a subcommittee for human rights, which I sit in, and which is chaired by the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. The Attorney-General is a member. We are seven members and we had already agreed that we are going to engage leaders of political parties as we go to the next election.

Let me pledge that regarding all the issues raised by the women, I will make sure that in the next one month, we have this engagement with the women leagues of all the political parties and we meet the Electoral Commission and the security agencies under that framework so that we agree on how to ensure that the freedom of political participation for women is not abused.

Menstrual pads

This is a tax proposal. However, we examined the proposal of free sanitary wear with the envelope that we have and it was found to be unattainable as of now because of the economy. However, I will take the tax issue to the Cabinet and since the tax laws will come here, we will look at how to handle it.

Mr Speaker, there are other issues which we can now respond to but also integrate issues of justice, statistics on child mothers, child labour, gender-based violence - The gender-based violence statistics are in page 35 of your paper.

Regarding resourcing local governments, especially CDOs, women's health, and the issue of responsibility, we will handle it as input in our planning and execution. I want to thank you and pledge that we will bring a detailed paper on GROW. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, the *Hansard* is a document of record and remember, Hon. Dr Ndiwalana said maternal mortality rate is increasing and yet it is decreasing. Even the doctors have volunteered information here. In 2016, out of 100,000 children, we were losing 336 but by 2022, they had gone down to 189. In fact, now the rate is at 30 per cent. It is very important that we have this record clear.

I requested Rt Honourable to allow me around three minutes for an oral question and then we go to Prime Minister's Time. Otherwise, minister for gender, we appreciate you for this comprehensive statement. I will be really glad if you bring a statement on GROW because this is a good platform to update the whole country when people are watching all over.

I will be really glad if you could give us an update on GROW with a comprehensive statement so that we can have a debate over it and we handle it for the benefit of our constituents.

#### RESPONSE BY MINISTERS TO URGENT QUESTIONS

##### (I) RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The minister communicated to me and requested to do it on Tuesday.

##### (II) RESPONSE BY THE MINISTER OF WATER AND ENVIRONMENT

4.28

##### **THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WATER AND ENVIRONMENT (ENVIRONMENT)**

**(Ms Beatrice Anywar):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Yesterday, I responded to the question from the Member. However, the response was mixed up and I apologise because what was uploaded, honourable colleagues, was not proper.

Since then, I have gone back and brought even more details, recapping it with the oral question which arose from Hon. Christine Kaaya, the woman representative for Kiboga. I recapped it with yesterday's because her question was, what we have done to give an update for the farmers to act rationally. I have a detailed report to replace the one of yesterday and it is uploaded, but with more details of the weather forecast, effective March, April and May.

I want to draw the attention, as you guided, Mr Speaker, for Members to go into the details of this report, more so beginning from page 10, which identifies the implication for the forecast to different sectors, as requested by Hon. Christine Kaaya.

We have responded to different sectors: fisheries, beekeepers, livestock farmers and crop farmers. We have also advised on the water, energy and hydropower generation impact right to the Ministry of Health. Mr Speaker, you guided rightly that we give the information but the implementation is from different sectors.

Indeed, we have comprehensively given the impact of this forecast to the different sectors of Government and to our farmers. We pray that as we prepare to receive the rains mid-March, our farmers and other sectors will be accordingly advised. I beg to submit as you guided, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

#### LAYING OF PAPERS

##### (I) REPORT OF THE DELEGATION TO THE 29<sup>TH</sup> CONFERENCE OF PARTIES (COP29)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Christine?

4.31

**MS CHRISTINE KAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga):** Mr Speaker, thank you for the opportunity. I beg to share a statement concerning the recently concluded Conference of Parties 29 (COP 29) of the

United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change that was held in Azerbaijan, Baku on 4 to 22 November 2024.

In about five minutes, I will be through with the summary of this report but I would like to report that Uganda is part of the 197 countries that subscribed to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Parliament had representation there. I was one of them and the main objectives as to why we participated were to advocate for increased climate change finances and to strengthen our position in the global climate negotiations.

We also wanted to showcase Uganda's efforts in climate change management. As Members of Parliament, we also wanted to build our capacities in climate policy and law-making. We also wanted to seek networking options, especially internationally, in order to mobilise resources.

A number of issues were discussed but issues on adaptation, loss and damage - We had to also concentrate on the mitigation options. As Uganda, we have prioritised adaptation options but globally, we also need to think of how to reduce emissions. We also had discussions on climate finance, technology, development and transfer and capacity building.

As we celebrate this year's Women's Day, we want to stress that gender and climate change is one of the negotiation options under this arrangement. The most important is the Gender Action Plan that was developed, and every country was supposed to domesticate and implement some of these provisions, only that there were no implementation finances to enable this plan to go through and it has been referred.

We also discussed issues to do with agriculture and a number of initiatives have been put in place. We also had discussions on legal and compliance mechanisms for the Paris Agreement and related protocols. Uganda engaged in these negotiations under the G-77 plus China and also the African Group of Negotiations and the Least Developed

Countries (LDC). As we discuss over there, we always have to agree on which options we should advance as these groups.

There are a number of partnerships that were sought during the negotiations and I know the minister will update us in due course on some of these partnerships because as we conclude with the negotiations, sometimes the partnerships are not yet realised. They are just proposals so, I would like the minister to come and tell us afterwards, what the outcome of the proposals shared was.

We managed to share Uganda's climate priorities, what we have lost as a result of climate change and how we want transparency in the provision of funding to countries like Uganda.

Mr Speaker, we were also exposed to a number of laws that different countries use to ensure that climate change management is appropriate. We also had to look at a number of needed policies and instruments for us to realise this. It was very important that we were advised to earmark money; funding for disaster management under preparedness.

Different funding opportunities were stressing that every country should have something put in place to ensure that preparedness is financed in order to reduce the side effects that may come after disasters related to climate change have occurred.

We ended up in Azerbaijan, Baku with some of the recommendations and we are hopeful that as Parliament, we gained a lot and this will help in shaping all the proposed policies and instruments to help reduce the effect of climate change in Uganda. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. I will be allocating time to debate this report. Can you lay on the Table?

**MS KAAYA:** Mr Speaker, I beg to lay the report. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Next item.

STATEMENT BY THE RT HON. PRIME MINISTER ON GOVERNMENT BUSINESS FOR THE SUCCEEDING WEEK 11<sup>th</sup> TO 13<sup>th</sup> MARCH 2025 PURSUANT TO RULE 28 OF THE RULES OF PROCEDURE

4.37

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, I move under Rule 28 of our Rules of Procedure to present Government Business for the week of 11<sup>th</sup> to 13 March 2025 as follows:

1. The Income Tax (Amendment) Bill, 2025.
2. The Excise Duty (Amendment) Bill, 2025.
3. The statement by the Minister of Health on the status of health care service delivery in the country.
4. The statement by the Minister of Works and Transport on the progress of Karuma Bridge.

I beg to Submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Prime Minister. Next item.

PRIME MINISTER'S TIME

4.39

**THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja):** Mr Speaker, I got a written question from:

1.Hon. Afidra Olema Ronald (MP, Lower Madi County) "Rt Hon. Prime Minister, aware that RAPEX affected the different agencies including UNRA Ferry Services, Rhino Camp to Amuru Ferry was to be commissioned on 31st December 2024 by UNRA and a new ferry was supposed to be provided by Government.

Prayer 1

When will the Commission and provision of ferry services be done to enhance water transport for the people of West Nile and Amuru on River Nile?"

Response

Mr Speaker, progress of Phase 1 of the vessel assembly is currently at (85) per cent, pending the installation of the engine's Civil Component. Similarly, progress of construction of ferry landing sites at Rhino camp (Yikuriku) in Madi Oko llo and Amoor in Amuru district is at 72 per cent and operations will commence very soon.

Prayer II

"Last year on 11 to 13 Aprll 2024 during H.E. the President's tour of West Nile, he directed to consider Security/ Tourism Road from Panyimur-Pakwach- Rhino-Camp Obongi and Difule to be upgraded to tarmac. Works on Kia-Kai and Aringa bridges, Olionga to Ewanga swamps and Achaa Swamp have all stalled. When will these projects be upgraded, as directed by His Excellency the President?"

Mr Speaker, upgrading of the Panyimur-Pakwach-Rhino Camp-Difule Road (200km) has been considered in the NDP IV and will be worked on soon.

The second question came from Hon. Lawrence Songa, Ora County, Zombo District. His prayers are:

- i. "Does the Government have any plan to build a district hospital in the border district of Zombo and what is the progress?"
- ii. In the meantime, as we wait for the district hospital, can the Government provide full financial, personnel and infrastructural support to the Holy Family Missionary Hospital of Nyapea?
- iii. Why can't the Government make Nebbi General Hospital a regional referral hospital to serve the greater Nebbi?"

Mr Speaker, I wish to respond as follows:

- i. On the progress of a new hospital construction, the Government has recognised the need for a district hospital

in this region. Feasibility studies and site assessments are being conducted and plans are underway to secure funding and commence construction in the Financial Year 2025/2026.

- ii. On the support of Holy Family Missionary Hospital, given the critical role of the Holy Family Hospital in Nyapea in providing health care services to the people of Zombo District and neighbouring areas, the Government acknowledges the urgent need for infrastructure improvements.

In 2019, assessments condemned key facilities, including the outpatient department and maternity ward. The Ministry of Health is exploring interim support measures such as the feasibility of allocating funds for renovations and deploying medical personnel to bolster the hospital's capacity while plans for a new hospital are being finalised.

Hon. Gafabusa Muhumuza, Bwamba County, Bundibugyo says, "The Bundibugyo General Hospital is in a very bad state in terms of physical infrastructure, obsolete medical equipment and gross inadequate medical personnel.

The district leadership, including Members of Parliament, has raised this matter several times to the Government, but there has not been a satisfactory response. The X-ray machine stopped working last year and their people are suffering as they are referred to Fort Portal.

His prayers are:

- i. When is the Government going to do general rehabilitation of the hospital?
- ii. When will the Government procure and deliver the necessary equipment, including the X-ray machine, operating tables, operating trolleys and lamps, and instrument sets for different surgical procedures?"

Mr Speaker, my response is that Bundibugyo Hospital is currently facing challenges related

to congestion, dilapidated infrastructure, outdated equipment and understaffing. That is true. The Ministry of Health is currently prioritising expansion and rehabilitation of hospitals to match the new structures at different levels.

The Ministry of Health is currently assessing all the hospitals and facilities in order to come up with a comprehensive plan that includes the following:

- i. Infrastructure expansion and rehabilitation, increasing bed capacity and improving existing buildings to meet current health care standards and also reduce patient congestion;
- ii. Provide modern medical equipment;
- iii. Ensure that the utilities, that is water and power, are of quality in terms of reliability and stability; and
- iv. Recruiting additional health care professionals and providing continuous training to improve service delivery.

Mr Speaker, the Government is exploring funding sources to expedite the renovation process and address the pressing needs of Bundibugyo Hospital and many others like Masindi, Kagadi, Bugiri, to mention but a few.

The fourth question came from Hon. Dr Abdul Byakatonda, MP Workers and his prayers are:

- i. "What immediate measures is the Government implementing to mitigate the impact of the U.S funding freeze and ensure uninterrupted HIV treatment for 1.4 million Ugandans?"
- ii. What strategies are in place to prevent job losses or reintegration to get high-level skills among Uganda's 12,551 community health workers whose roles are now at risk due to the withdrawal of U.S support?"
- iii. Given that Uganda currently allocates only 6.5 per cent of the national budget to health, when will the Government fulfil its Abuja Declaration commitment to increase health funding to 15 per cent?"

- iv. Will the Government consider establishing an Emergency HIV Response Task Force similar to the COVID-19 response model to mobilise alternative funding sources and sustain HIV services?
- v. What is the readiness/strategy to locally manufacture all our supplies?"

Mr Speaker, my response is that the suspension of the USAID funding, effective 20 January 2025, has significantly impacted Uganda's HIV/AIDS programme. To address this crisis, an additional Shs 480 billion is required to bridge the funding gap and sustain essential services in our health facilities.

The Ministry of Health has prepared a Cabinet Memorandum to brief the Cabinet on this matter and acquire the Executive's guidance on how to source resources to bridge the gap in funding. The Government is also engaging with international and local stakeholders to mobilise resources and ensure the continuity of HIV/AIDS interventions.

The fifth question came from Hon. Samuel Opio Acuti, MP, Kole North County. He requested for an update on the enhancement of the salaries of district, city and municipal education officers.

#### Response

The Government approved the public service pay policy principles as well as a long-term pay plan covering every person paid salaries or allowances from the Consolidated Fund or out of money appropriated by Parliament.

The Government adopted a phased approach to implement the approved pay plans. The enhancement plan has been in the National Development Plan (NDP IV).

Additionally, the Minister of Public Service submitted to the Parliamentary Committee on the Budget (PACOB) the requirement to enhance the salary of 67 per cent of public officers whose salaries have not been enhanced since the Financial Year 2014/2015.

This will require Shs 695.3 billion in the Financial Year 2025-2026 and this will enhance the salaries of 251,682 public officers, including district, city and municipal education officers by at least 30 per cent of the approved long term pay targets, if considered.

6. Hon. Christine Kaaya, District Woman Representative, Kiboga raised an issue of the urgent concern regarding the closure of community radios in some areas of Kiboga and hence, inconveniencing the users.

Her prayer is, can the Government update on this matter?

#### Response

There has been a surge in the number of illegal operators of communication platforms, including ordinary radio operators and megaphone operators (*bizindalo*), sometimes referred to as "community radios".

In response to this, the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) has regularly undertaken enforcement exercises for the following reasons:

- a. Because of the public outcry where UCC has received complaints of noise pollution, misinformation, disinformation and hate speech. Some of these radios have also been found to be near schools and health facilities that require a serene environment or a quiet environment.
- b. Inability for UCC to monitor, control and regulate content aired on these community radios due to lack of appropriate technology.
- c. These radios are not licensed, hence posing a security risk.
- d. Competition with licensed radio operators; there is a large number of complaints from licensed radio operators who argue that these *bizindalo* have taken over their business, considering that they even do not pay license fees and are not subjected to regulatory requirements.

*Bizindalo* operations constitute illegal broadcasts under the UCC Act, Cap 103, and given the inherent risks to the sector and the security that pertains to this mode of communication, it is still a challenge to have the same legalised in our country.

7. Hon. Gonzaga Ssewungu raised the concern on delays by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development in releasing capitation grants to Government grant-aided schools, which were needed for procuring instrumental materials.

Response

Funds for the capitation grants are released during Quarters one, three and four every financial year to cater for school terms three, one and two respectively. No funds are released in Quarter two of the financial year.

The total approved budget for the Capitation Grant for the Financial Year 2024/2025 is Shs 490,298,083,550. During Quarter one, the ministry for finance released Shs 163,432,694,530 to local governments to cater for term three.

However, the Ministry of Education and Sports requested local governments to hold the transfer of these funds to institutions until they validated the enrolments, which was done, and authority to transfer the funds to the schools was granted.

Mr Speaker, for Quarter three, Shs 163,432,694,530 has been released to cater for the first term of the calendar year 2025.

8. The question came from Hon. Shartsi Kutesa Musherure, Mawogola County North, Sembabule District.

She said, "The GROW project, funded by the World Bank through the Private Sector Foundation Uganda (PSFU) and the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development was intended to support low to middle tier business women through access to low-interest loans."

Her prayer is: "Can I guide as to why the intended beneficiaries have faced challenges in accessing these loans? What steps are being taken to ensure that the project delivers on the promise of these vulnerable groups?"

Response

First, I remember you directed that a progress report be brought here by the Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development and I feel I should wait until that report comes here.

I beg to submit. (*Applause*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, I have questions from Members that I had registered and who wanted to raise matters of national importance. I will first pick those and then I will pick the rest. I do not see some Members so I will not read their names but the ones I see are Hon. Martin Muzaale, Hon. Bernard Odoi, Hon. Ephraim Biraaro, Dr Isingoma Patrick, Hon. Atima Lee, Hon. Moses Kabuusu, Hon. Mourine Osoru, Hon. Yovan Adriko, Hon. Gilbert Olanya, Hon. Gabriel Okumu, Hon. Christine Akello, Hon. Patrick Aeku, Hon. Noman Ochero, Hon. Betty Naluyima, Hon. Medius Natukunda, Hon. Christine Apolot, Hon. Allan Mayanja, Hon. Elijah Okupa and Hon. Agnes Kirabo.

Hon. Martin Muzaale has moved out. Hon. Bernard Odoi? We shoot right away.

5.00

**MR BERNARD ODOI (NRM, Youth Representative, Eastern):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I raise a matter about the Central Forest Reserve located in the greater Mulanda in Mwelo subcounty, covering up to Nagongera. It measures 360 acres. This land has been a source of livelihood for our people and over 200 families have been using it. However, last month, eight individuals came with receipts showing they made an application to the National Forestry Authority (NFA) to use this land. These people have evicted over 200 families from the land where our people have been undertaking farm work and also grazing.

Aware that this is now becoming a security threat, the prayer of our people is as follows:

1. The security personnel that are already evicting people from this piece of land should be addressed so that our people can peacefully continue using this land.
2. In the National Resistance Movement (NRM) manifesto, the President, at the beginning of this term, offered an industrial park to Tororo. We have been grappling with where to find this land. Our people are saying 360 acres of land is sufficient to host the industrial park where they can benefit from the same. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, where you feel any minister can support, you can call on them.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, the question from the Member of Parliament representing the youth needs consultations. I request that he gives me time so that we can bring together the security ministry, the Ministry of Water and Environment and himself, so that we can come up with an amicable solution to the matter.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Martin Muzaale – Honourable colleagues, I told you that to come to this chair, you must first seek my permission because I need concentration. Otherwise, when a Member is talking to me and another is on the Floor, sometimes I start trying to get an answer but I cannot.

Secondly, if you know you have not been around - I had the questions so I marked. Some of you have started coming back because the Prime Minister has come in. We start Parliament at 2.00 p.m. I do not want you to attend Parliament for five minutes and say, “My issue is sorted.”

There is also an issue with the ministers. One comes and after their issue is handled, they go away. They leave the Government here. I usually have a few ministers who are diligently here. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, on top of the

Government Chief Whip, you need to give a medal to Hon. Rusoke, Hon. Bahati, Hon. Musasizi and Hon. Muhanga. *(Applause)* Hon. Ogwang has always been here but these days he is busy in the field. Thank you. Whenever Hon. Peter comes, he spends the whole day here. I have missed him for this week.

5.03

**MR MARTIN MUZAALE (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The matter here regards the ban on weighbridge operations along roads and trading centres in Busoga, Buganda and Bunyoro subregions by the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives as a measure to combat the alleged sugarcane theft and poaching in Uganda.

The same matter has a ministerial directive from the Minister of Internal Affairs, Hon. Kahinda Otafiire, directing the suspension and halting operations of the weighbridges, citing a judgment delivered on 7 January 2025 by Justice Issa Sserunkuma of the High Court in Masindi in which the court quashed orders of assistant registrar in Miscellaneous Application 0025 and 0026 of 2024. A copy of the minister’s directive is hereby attached.

Mr Speaker, for the minister to ban operations of weighbridges along roads and trading centres as a measure to combat theft and poaching and promote traceability is completely out of touch with reality in the sugarcane industry as these are not near to the issue – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, we use one minute to ask a question. We do not read the statement. What is your question?

**MR MUZAALE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern is one. These weighbridges that are along roads and trading centres have reduced the cost of lining of trucks at the milling factories and transportation of sugarcane. Before, a truck would cost around Shs 700,000, but today, because of those weighbridges, it costs around Shs 100,000 to Shs 150,000.

Secondly, it has brought competition –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable member, can I have your question. It is the Prime Minister's Question Time.

**MR MUZAALE:** Mr Speaker, it is a matter of national importance. Our concern is very simple – (*Member timed out.*)

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I will give you space as a matter of national importance and they will respond to you. Here, we use one minute to ask a sharp question. Do you want the weighbridges restored? Just ask the Prime Minister to restore them.

**MR MUZAALE:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Our concern is very simple. Let the letter be withdrawn by the ministry for trade banning operations of weighbridges.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Minister for trade?

5.07

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati):** We did receive some complaints about the weighbridges. To that effect, the minister wrote temporarily suspending them. We have also received counter complaints about it and we are going to have a meeting next week to review the decision of the minister.

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

5.07

**DR EMMANUEL OTAALA (NRM, West Budama County South, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. During the President's tour of Bukedi, we highlighted the issue of 22 parishes that are not receiving the Parish Development Model (PDM) money. His Excellency the President directed the Rt Hon. Prime Minister to make sure that these parishes are coded and given money immediately. Up to now, these parishes have not received the money. When is this going to be done?

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, as you are aware, those parishes were not coded so the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development could not send money to them. The Ministry of Local Government was directed to liaise with the Electoral Commission to make sure that we get harmonised so that those can maybe be accredited for the Financial Year 2025/2026.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, remember this matter indeed came up on Tuesday and we agreed that the minister will bring a statement to update us. Let us handle it then in detail. However, the answer the Prime Minister has given is consistent with what we were told on Tuesday.

5.09

**DR PATRICK ISINGOMA-MWESIGWA (Independent, Hoima East Division, Hoima City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My matter is to do with compensation of fuel station owners affected by the Kyaliwajjala-Kira-Kasangati-Matugga Road. This matter has been pending for the last three years and I think it has been brought on the Floor of this House more than three times.

Last Friday, the Prime Minister visited the area and interacted with stakeholders, including the contractor. Can the Prime Minister now brief us as to when the Government intends to compensate fuel station owners along this road?

**MS NABBANJA:** We have been engaging in a certain forum with my brother and I know that he is one of the interested parties. (*Laughter*)

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, I am one of the field officers and I was on that road last week. (*Applause*) We discovered the need for us to move faster but the petrol stations put an exorbitant - more than 100 per cent. There are about five petrol stations who want to be paid a lot of money and the cost of road construction went up. Therefore, the contractor cannot move.

We have agreed, as a Government, that we compensate according to the Chief Government Valuer and if anybody is aggrieved, they will go to court but the road must continue; it has overstayed. *(Applause)* Otherwise, we shall acquire those facilities in the public interest.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

5.11

**MR JACKSON ATIMA (NRM, Arua Central Division, Arua):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I have a matter of unprofessionalism and several technical issues associated with the -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Point of order? Honourable Member, use a microphone.

**MR OCHERO:** Mr Speaker, Hon. Patrick Aeku is a known Member of NRM but he has been comfortably seated on the side of the Opposition, masquerading as a shadow minister. I wonder whether he is in order not only to cross but to masquerade -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Where is he?

**MR OCHERO:** He has disappeared.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** That is the problem of warning and then you come to report. However, what Hon. Noman Ochero is very critical. I usually see even members of the NRM on the front bench. The front bench is for the shadow Cabinet and this is for the Government ministers. Hon. Atima -

**MR ATIMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. My concern was unprofessionalism and several technical issues associated with Misk Airline operating between Entebbe and Arua Airports. Last Monday, the 24<sup>th</sup> of February, this aircraft had a very bad landing in Arua. Passengers were terrified; one passenger fainted and on their return, people were wondering whether they were going to land well in Entebbe.

On the 3<sup>rd</sup> of March, this week, passengers who booked to fly to Arua were informed that there was no flight because the aircraft was

undergoing service, leaving the passengers stranded and without refunding their money.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, can that you direct the Ministry of Works and Transport to explain the circumstances under which this airline was brought to Uganda to operate between Arua and Entebbe.

Two, can these passengers who were left stranded be refunded through the Civil Aviation Authority? Thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I direct the Civil Aviation Authority, through the Ministry of Works and Transport, to investigate and make sure that airlines operating within our country meet the required safety standards for the good of our people.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. They will also handle compensation because the Prime Minister has directed on all issues if Civil Aviation Authority finds it viable. Hon. Eddie Kwizera -

5.15

**MR EDDIE KWIZERA (NRM, Bukimbiri County, Kisoro):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Other than Bukimbiri County being a tourism county, multiple companies are mining gold, wolfram and tin but the people I represent do not get royalties. I ask the Rt Hon. Prime Minister to prevail over the Government system so that they pay those humble peasants what is due to them. Thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I will cause a meeting with the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development to ascertain the issue raised by Honourable Member.

5.16

**MR MOSES KABUUSU (FDC, Kyamuswa County, Kalangala):** Thank you. Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, a serious storm hit Lujabwa Island, Mazinga subcounty, in Kalangala, leaving over 50 homesteads homeless.

Their houses are makeshift in nature and can be lifted by storms. These people are in dire need of food and any relief assistance to reconstruct their houses. Do you have any plan to aid these people? Lastly, Mr Speaker –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, it is one question. Let me call Hon. Agnes Kirabo before the Rt Hon. Prime Minister comes.

5.17

**MS AGNES KIRABO (NRM, Youth Representative, Central):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, I have the same issue in Bombo Town Council, Luweero District. We experienced heavy rains on Monday where several residential houses and gardens were destroyed. This is a Muslim community observing Ramadan; they do not have food and residents are now sleeping in churches and mosques.

Is there any urgent way you can assist them and also provide relief to the six schools that were affected? That is, Bombo Senior Secondary, Bombo High School, Nkokonjeru, Bombo Umea, Lukole Secondary School, St Mary's and Namaliga market.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I request Hon. Kabuusu, my friend, to write through the Chief Administrative Officer or the District Disaster Committee to the Office of the Prime Minister and we shall handle.

For Luweero, Hon. Muyingo had written a letter telling me about that storm in Bombo and mentioned the number of schools. We also advised him to go through the District Disaster Committee because that is the procedure and we shall provide the relief and necessary iron sheets because we have some iron sheets. The children are now back to school and we need to help those four schools.

5.19

**MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, last year, the Onduparaka and Elizu road was handed over to a contractor who was sent by the Ministry of Works and Transport.

He promised to return after two weeks but up to now, he has never returned and the road is in a very bad shape. What could have gone wrong with the contractor and when can that road be worked on?

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

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, once the road under construction is handed over to the contractor, it is the responsibility of the contractor to maintain that road as we wait for an upgrade. So, I will cause a meeting involving the Ministry of Works and Transport together with the contractor. I will also make sure that I go to the site in Arua so that we can have this worked on.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Adriko Yovan -

5.20

**MR YOVAN ADRIKO (NRM, Vurra County, Arua):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on matters of boundary conflict between Arua District, Madi-Okollo District, Terego District and Arua City. It seems no proper demarcation on the boundaries was done after the creation of the districts and city.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, my request is that you send the Minister for Lands, Housing and Urban Development to intervene and make proper demarcations on the district boundaries to avoid conflicts among the people. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Rt Honourable -

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, in 2022, the President directed me to handle the issue of boundaries in Arua, Madi-Okollo, Terego and many others and to some extent we have moved. The Ministry for Lands and Ministry for Local Government have been on site and we are waiting for the report. I believe that it will be respected by all parties.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

5.22

**MR GILBERT OLANYA (FDC, Kilak South County, Amuru):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am raising a very important matter concerning the National Forestry Authority (NFA) giving community land to a white man called Peter Scoff from Germany. Right now, the National Forest Authority is busy giving community land in Wiceri, Amuru subcounty; Got Gweno, Guru-Guru subcounty, Kilak in Pogo subcounty; and Labala in Pabo subcounty, in total 20,591 hectares to only one individual.

Mr Speaker, what is happening on the ground is that the National Forestry Authority is busy registering the communities living on their ancestral land with a target of carrying out an eviction so that the land is handed over to that investor. Our people are so scared and intimidated.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question?

**MR OLANYA:** We pray that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister directs the National Forestry Authority to stop giving community land to that investor who is coming to disorganise our people.

Two, let the soldiers who are moving and escorting those people who are registering the community be stopped and an investigation be carried out on that land because an individual cannot be given more than 20,000 hectares of land. The land does not belong - *(Member timed out.)*

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, you are aware that the National Forestry Authority was rationalised and is now a department in the Ministry of Water and Environment. So, I request that you put this in writing so that I can harmonise and get coordinated with these other departments that are now in place.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Nebanda Florence -

5.25

**MS FLORENCE NEBANDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Butaleja):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Following my submission last month regarding school fees increment, the Government is currently engaged in the formulation of the Universal Primary and Secondary Education policy to provide a holistic framework that will guide free basic education to children.

I am interested in knowing how far the approval policies by the Ministry of Education have gone and if there are any policies in place to guide and guard against school fees increment and exorbitant requirements requested by the schools.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Minister for Education help the Rt Hon. Prime Minister.

5.26

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION (Mr Peter Ogwang):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Through the Prime Minister, on matters of fees increment, allow me to bring a statement here on Wednesday to specifically answer that question. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Okay. Procedure, Hon. Isingoma -

**MR ISINGOMA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am rising under Rule 82 (b) of our Rules of Procedure. There is an Honourable Member in this House; Hon. Osoru, who is wearing something and we do not know whether it is a rope or a cloth around her head. Can you kindly guide if we are proceeding well with such a Member or if that attire conforms to what is provided for under Rule 82(b) of our Rules of Procedure.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, women fashion is - *(Applause)* In fact, I have been admiring how she is dressed. *(Laughter)* She is a woman of class; it exudes class and is matching very well.

The problem is that you are seeing her when she is seated but when she stands up, you will clap. *(Laughter)*

5.28

**MR GABRIEL OKUMU (NRM, Okoro County, Zombo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to applaud the Minister for Education for the reforms in the education subsector, especially the implementation of the new competence-based curriculum with the pioneer A-level students enrolled in the curriculum and yet the universities are still training on the old curriculum.

Through the Prime Minister, can the Minister of Education and Sports update Parliament on how prepared the National Council for Higher Education and the universities are to absorb these learners? I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister?

5.29

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang):** Thank you Mr Speaker. First of all, I would like to inform my colleague that consultations took place before we agreed to go into the competence-based curriculum. Actually, universities were more concerned and emphatic on us going on to the competence-based curriculum.

For the purposes of our children who are joining A-Level, all training for our A-Level teachers has already taken place. So, we are now moving in terms of clusters and I want to guarantee that the Ministry of Education and Sports is prepared to guide the country in the new journey for purposes of us having children who get out of these universities adopt skills to acquire jobs. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

5.30

**MS CHRISTINE AKELLO (NRM, Erute County North, Lira):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, last year we raised an

issue on Aler-Kwari Rock. Aler is in between Lira District and Kole District.

The project affected persons rented their land to the Government and the Government Chief Valuer approved the evaluation report. However, to our surprise, Lira District, in November 2023, titled the land. As we talk, the project affected persons have been told to evacuate the land by next month; April and yet it is customary-owned land.

No action has been taken. Despite the community serving a caveat to the district land board and the Lira land zone, they went ahead and titled the land. My prayer is, the land title that Lira District local government is claiming to be freehold land must be cancelled.

Two, people are suffering. They do not have where to cultivate and are requesting to be given maize and bean seeds to plant because life is really hard. *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable, you said that they have nowhere to cultivate but they need seeds. *(Laughter)* Rt Hon. Prime Minister -

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I was wondering how – they have no land and yet they need seeds. All the same, our communities sometimes find it difficult when the districts start titling their land. It is not only in Lira, it is almost countrywide. We have a number of land tenure systems and those on public land have fallen victim.

I request the honourable colleague to put this in writing so that I can get details from the district and maybe we can use the Ministry of Lands, Housing and Urban Development to deregister and cancel the title. This is a very important question.

5.33

**MS BETTY AOL (FDC, Woman Representative, Gulu City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, my great friend, on road safety, we all know that if we talk about the rate of death from non-

communicable diseases, you will find that death on the roads is actually the highest.

Joe Walker walked from Kampala to Gulu advocating for road safety and they arrived yesterday. Pedestrians and cyclists are not catered for and yet we have school children who cross the road to go to school.

On Monday, a four year old boy, Joshua, was knocked by a vehicle. Akena a 12 year old from Gulu was also buried yesterday - *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Just ask the question.

**MS AOL:** My question to the Prime Minister is, do we have a plan and budget to expand roads and provide signage like zebra crossings for our children and everybody else's safety on the roads? Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Someone was telling me that a taxi driver knocked a person on a zebra crossing and when they complained, the taxi driver asked, are you a zebra? *(Laughter)* I think we also need sensitisation of these drivers because they do not even know what a zebra crossing is.

**MS NABBANJA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. You are spot on. Honourable members, since 2021/2022, Government came up with a policy and that is why you see that all roads now under construction have a pedestrian lane or a walk-away. That will maybe reduce - but we still have to sensitise our drivers and road users.

Hon. Betty Aol and I were both district councillors. She was a district councillor in Gulu and I in Kibale. She is my close friend.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** So, she is your OG. *(Laughter)*

**MS NABBANJA:** We used to attend workshops in Masaka and Jinja. They used to take us to Mbarara in Pelican Hotel. So, I would like all of us to take this as our responsibility and sensitise our communities to avoid these accidents.

5.36

**MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Some of my voters who were at the Fisheries Training Institute, Entebbe brought it to my attention that they completed their education and exams which are conducted by the Uganda Business Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB), way back in 2021.

However, to date, they have never been awarded certificates and they are finding it difficult to get jobs. All they have are transcripts and you know that a transcript alone is not final.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister why is it taking long for the Government and the government examination body to release certificates for graduates? Thank you.

5.38

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS)**

**(Mr Peter Ogwang):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. With permission from the Prime Minister, can I make one or two phone calls so that I can answer this straightforward?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Patrick Aeku, followed by Hon. Noman Ocheru. Hon. Aeku, we do not know what you are up to. *(Laughter)*

5.38

**MR PATRICK AEKU (NRM, Soroti County, Soroti):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I am confused, let me first raise this matter of cattle compensation which is very serious and I am happy that the able Rt Hon. Prime Minister is here.

Court ruled on this matter, the Executive has "blessed" it and Parliament has budgeted for it. I have two prayers only:

- 1) Can you avail us with the list of people who have been paid and how much have they been paid?
- 2) If we have not budgeted, let us budget and kill this thing. I have grown up hearing about cattle compensation for the last, I think, 30 years.

As I speak to you, I request one more favour; my colleagues are demonstrating tomorrow. Please direct the police not to disturb them.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** How did you know? Did you organise the demonstration?

**MR AEKU:** The Opposition is organising a demonstration of, "No cow, no vote". It is about compensation.

Our prayer is that you give us this information of how many people have been paid and who has been paid so that we are able to counter and give information to the people that these people have been paid. If they have not been paid, budget, give us money, pay these people and then we can proceed. Before I give you – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister? Not during the Prime Minister's time. You know the procedure for it. It is a one-minute question.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I thank Hon. Aeku. The fact is the Government decided to pay cattle compensations in a phased manner. So far, a number of people have been paid in a number of subregions. I will direct the Attorney-General to bring a comprehensive report of who has been paid, how much and where.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, it would be prudent for the Attorney-General to have a meeting with MPs from the affected areas so that they can ask questions relevant to that, other than us spending two to three hours here handling issues, which we sometimes do not know much about.

5.41

**MR NOMAN OCHERO (NRM, Labwor County, Abim):** Mr Speaker, reliable information reaching me is that recently, you won an election that made you a leader in the whole world. You are a leader. I must congratulate you. I cannot escape that. I was very excited, Mr Speaker, but I am not surprised at all, for two reasons. One, you are very able.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question?

**MR OCHERO:** Number two – *(Laughter)* - the question is coming. Number two, last year, remember when the helicopter attacked you, God made a ruling that you will still be here in this world. We said, "aye".

My question is, for the last three and a half years, in my district, farmers have been in conflict with wildlife. The wildlife has destroyed all the gardens in six subcounties, constantly. Members have been filling forms for compensation. Every time they filled the forms, they would come for them and review them in Kampala and say that they had failed. They would say that a name begins with a small letter instead of a capital letter. The old woman in the village has failed. They have become some sort of examination board.

My question is, Parliament gave them money to go and compensate people but they have not compensated them. Did we send them as an examination body to mark the villagers or to pay them?

Secondly, when the President came to Karamoja in December for the Parish Development Model (PDM) tour, he said he understood the problem of the people of Abim who suffered under the government militia and the Lord's Resistance Army (LRA). He directed that this year, they would be included - at least a small token - they would begin with something small. Therefore, this year, they would put them in the budget for compensation. However, when they presented the Budget Framework Paper, there was nothing. How could the President tell the people - and we are budgeting for the President - and there is nothing on the table. Thank you very much.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, the President directed me and we have a meeting tomorrow. Remember, Parliament last week, under the Speaker, directed that we have a meeting involving the districts of Kitgum, Abim where he comes from, the other district that was carved out of Kitgum; Agago, with the Ministry of Tourism, Wildlife, and Antiquities so that we can come up with solutions.

I request the Member, tomorrow, to come to my office at 10.00 a.m. We shall have the meeting. The caucus meeting is after.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Rt Hon. Prime Minister and the honourable minister, we have shared on several occasions that the biggest problem is with the requirements and that form. The other day I told you that the people who are usually affected by those animals are from very rural areas. However, you bring them a form which is very complicated and some clever people in the village start extorting money from them. They help them fill the form and it goes out to the district, and everywhere.

These people are not interested in compensation. Their interest is safety of their crops and homesteads. If we could protect them against animals, they would not want that compensation because it is never enough. We need to focus on that.

Honourable minister for tourism.

5.45

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Indeed, we have captured the challenge and we are reviewing the guidelines to make it very easy for people to access compensation. We should be done with this in the next three to four months. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Since we have reported to the Prime Minister, this will be sorted. Hon. Betty Naluyima and Hon. Robert Kasolo - Hon. Peter Ogwang wants to give us an answer first on the issue of certificates.

5.46

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang):** Mr Speaker, I confirm that I have spoken to the Executive Director of Uganda Business and Technical Examinations Board (UBTEB) and he has confirmed to me that they have issued all certificates for all candidates who qualified up to 2023.

I ask Hon. Opendi to help me with the name of the student who has not been given the certificate so that I can verify. I thank you so much.

5.46

**MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso):** Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

My issue concerns the fatal motor accident that occurred yesterday at Kagoma, Mayanja valley that killed five people. Over 21 people were injured and it involved nine vehicles.

Mr Speaker, you may recall that around late October, we had the Kigogwa fire accident. This is along Kampala-Bombo Road, much as Wakiso area is always affected.

My question and plea is that - we had a thorough discussion on 13 July 2023 and it was initiated by your office to ensure how best we could have road safety in this country. The *Hansard* indicates what we discussed. Could we know when the Government will implement both short and long-term matters we agreed on and regulations for the Roads Act, 2019?

Can we also have the initiation of compensation for all those people who are affected, given that many times insurance companies do not have due consideration for third parties?

Can we have heavy – *(Member timed out.)*

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, first, I condole with the families that lost their dear ones in that fatal accident. Please take our condolences from the Government.

Secondly, Members, as I told you earlier, it is a similar question. The Government is implementing our recommendations in a phased manner. Since 2022, when we had this comprehensive debate here, we all agreed, and the Government is implementing the same.

As I told you earlier, we also need to continuously train and sensitise road users, especially truck drivers. The other long-lasting

solution we are implementing now is removing heavy trucks from the roads by constructing the Standard-Gauge Railway (SGR). It is going to take some time, but once we have it from Tororo, where Hon. Ekanya comes from, to Kampala and from Kampala to Gulu and the rest of the country, the road accidents will definitely reduce. It is long-term. These other immediate measures are continuous sensitisation.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Kasolo?  
5.49

**MR ROBERT KASOLO (NRM, Iki-Iki County, Budaka):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, the government constructed the state-of-the-art seed school in one of my subcounty and completed it. However, about seven months ago, the contractor denied the students access to study in that facility, claiming that it has to be commissioned by the Ministry of Education and Sports. The students are now studying from the verandas. This has caused anarchy and a very big issue in my constituency.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you know this place well; Mugiti Seed School, which was fully completed.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, if they are waiting for the Government, I and the minister in charge of education are here. We shall go and commission the school. That is all.

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

5.52

**MS MIDIUS NATUKUNDA (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukungiri):** Thank you, Mr Speaker -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You can even declare it commissioned from here, and we –  
(Laughter)

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, there are a number of reasons why we commission.

1. To make sure that the defects, if there are any, are rectified.
  2. To make sure that there is value for money. You know, some people do shoddy work. Those are the major reasons.
- We shall go and commission.

For example, in my district, there is Birembo Senior Secondary School which was constructed in 2021/2022. When I went there to commission it, I found it had defects. We delayed commissioning it because they had to rectify those defects. We recently commissioned it.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Consider that one to be commissioned next week. I am sure the Rt Hon. Prime Minister will arrange.

**MS NATUKUNDA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Rt Hon. Prime Minister, my matter is also about the wildlife attacks in Rukungiri District. Since the beginning of this month, between the 2nd and 5th of March, a herd of elephants has been coming every day, attacking gardens, coffee plantations, banana plantations, animals, cows, and goats. People are not sleeping.

I have heard you talk about the districts of Kitugum and northern Uganda that you have called address, but Rukungiri is nowhere.

We have Queen Elizabeth National Park, where these elephants come from.

The last time I talked to the minister of tourism, he was heading to Kanungu on the side of Bwindi while Rukungiri continues to be neglected. People need a quick response about this matter.

You have also talked about the electric fence several times. Kanungu and Kasese have been fenced. Rukungiri is in the middle of these districts, but it has been left out.  
Can you give us-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** And Mitoma.

**MS NATUKUNDA:** Mr Speaker, Mitoma as well, because you are my neighbour. Rt Hon. Prime Minister and the minister of tourism, what sustainable response can you give to the people of Rukungiri so that they are not neglected when it comes to wildlife attacks in the district, especially in Bwambara Subcounty, Kikarara, Kakoni, Nyarwimuka and other surrounding areas?

I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the Prime Minister has requested your answer.

5.53

**THE MINISTER OF STATE OF TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra):** I want to thank my sister for raising the issue. We will go there and talk to the communities. We have done some fencing around the Queen Elizabeth National Park area, covering around 150 kilometres. We should be doing around 50 kilometres this financial year, and we will make sure that we have some consideration for the Kanungu stretch *-(Interjection)-* Sorry, Rukungiri stretch.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** What about Mitoma, whose Member of Parliament is seated here? He is seeing you making promises and-

**MR MUGARRA:** Mr Speaker, now that we are in the budgeting process, we shall come up with one of the unfunded priorities to do with fencing.

My prayer is that - once we are supported, even Mitoma will definitely be covered. Mr Speaker, since it is your area, I am sure you will give us better consideration.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You are now going to a dangerous area. *(Laughter)* Hon. Apolot Christine.

5.54

**MS CHRISTINE APOLOT (NRM, Woman Representative, Kumi):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I first want to

thank the government for enhancing science development in the country by having the students' loan scheme.

In my district, we have a number of beneficiaries who have completed their training. They have been on our necks about the Government's plan to accommodate them. I want to find out from the Prime Minister what plans you have to accommodate all the students' loan scheme beneficiaries who have accomplished their courses and are ready to give back to the Government in terms of employment opportunities.

Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister? Hon. Peter Ogwang, do you have jobs?

5.55

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (SPORTS) (Mr Peter Ogwang):** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, this is not mine. I want to be thanked for having completed my part as a minister of education. For the purpose of information, we must appreciate the reason why the government was emphatic on science-based courses for passing the students' loan schemes. We were aware that for science students, it is easier for those who complete to get jobs and begin to repay this money. However, we opened up, and now we also have arts students. This is where I would request the Rt Hon. Prime Minister to come in and guarantee on how the Government is going to work with us to see how those students will be employed.

I thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, Uganda has moved *-(Interjection)-* Yes, we are moving on very well. We are currently one of those countries that are industrialising. Through industrialisation, we shall definitely create jobs for our children. The process is ongoing. Repayment will be easy for these children once they get employed. That was why we emphasise science-based subjects.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Ndiwalana Christine, followed by Hon. Okupa.

5.56

**MS CHRISTINE NDIWALANA (NUP, Bukomansimbi North County, Bukomansimbi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable members, during the Prime Minister's time, we do not have clarification-

**MS NDIWALANA:** Rt Hon. Prime Minister, Bukomansimbi District, was affected by heavy rainstorms, which affected many households, including two government-aided schools. (*Text expunged.*)

I then wonder why the government-aided schools have had poor building infrastructure for the last 28 years. By today people would have been very happy about the buildings.

My question is, what interventions can you put in for us in Bukomansimbi North County to have better buildings for Universal Primary Education schools?

Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister for education, the Prime minister needs you to answer this.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, the honourable Member from Bukomansimbi is my close friend. She already came to my office and told me about these issues. We are in the process of procurement.

Like we agreed in my office, my sister, we shall handle.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Yes, Hon. Okupa followed by Hon. Muloni and Hon. Itungo.

5.58

**MR ELIJAH OKUPA (INDEPENDENT, Kasilo County, Serere):** Yes, thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to say this before I ask the Rt Hon. Prime Minister the question.

Mr Speaker, in 2023/2024, you directed the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to go and verify the payment by the Attorney-General, but to date, this particular committee has not brought that report. The issue which was raised would not possibly be raised again here. If the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs had brought that report as you directed them in that financial year - maybe it is the right time for you to ask them to bring it because they went on the ground and saw what was happening.

As I ask the Prime Minister now, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you did great work in Naguru when you went for the ground-breaking for the Uganda Heart Institute specialised hospital, but Phaneroo Ministries has blocked access for the contractor to do the construction. You remember the challenges we had with Phaneroo that he had fraudulently got that land. It is now giving a hard time to the heart institute for the contractor to access it.

Please, can you reign over this pastor and his team? Even KCCA has told us that they are constructing without approved plans. Please, we needed the Heart Institute Hospital yesterday, but these people are sabotaging a government programme to move as fast as you expected. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**MS NABBANJA:** Thank you so much, my brother. I direct the Ministry of Internal Affairs to give the contractor security so that he can access the construction site.

Mr Speaker, I had ignored the submission from Hon. Christine Ndiwalana. I request that it be expunged because we have never given rotten food to the people of Bukomansimbi.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I think, colleagues, there are statements which are very unfortunate. Clerk, please, expunge that from our record.

6.01

**MS IRENE MULONI (NRM, Woman Representative, Bulambuli):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for this opportunity. I want to start by thanking the Rt Hon. Prime Minister for her

commitment and support towards the landslide resettlement of people in Mount Elgon.

Since we started the exercise, Rt Hon. Prime Minister, you flagged off the verification exercise, and since that started, in the Bulambuli District, we have 16 subcounties which have been mapped as affected, where the verification exercise was to be carried out. As I talk now, they have only finished three subcounties, and two of them, that is, Namisuni and Sisiyi in Elgon North and Simu in Elgon. They have now moved to the fourth subcounty, which is Guluganya, where the landslide actually occurred last time, and here they had only verified four villages out of the 19 in that one parish, but Buluganya has 57 villages. Only four have been verified, and I was surprised to hear that the exercise of verification had stopped. We know the rains are commencing soon, mid this month, and we expect our people to be verified and relocated to safer ground. I would ask for your urgent intervention that your team from OPM continue with verifying the remaining subcounties in the Bulambuli District so that our people can be relocated before the rains commence.

Secondly, Rt Hon. Prime Minister *-(Member timed out.)*

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I remember giving an update here. I left the verification exercise behind, involving all stakeholders; the local leaders, the Uganda Wildlife Authority, and my office. The people who are at high risk, according to the reports we got, are already verified. The Government gave us Shs 50 billion, and we want to start paying next week. Those that are verified as people who are highly at risk. I do not think we can verify everybody. I request that we do not politicise this. According to the people we sent, they have verified. Maybe we need to investigate again, but I know we have verified and now we are going to pay, and that is next week.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Muloni, you can visit the Prime minister and share more information.

6.04

**MR NATHAN TWESIGYE (Independent, Kashari South County, Mbarara):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Rt Hon. Prime Minister, mine is just a free kick and will not take a lot of time.

Colleagues, the minister for environment was here predicting that the rains are likely to begin mid-March. I want to know from the Rt Hon. Prime Minister whether the government is providing planting materials for the farmers or not.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, in 2022/2023, Parliament and the Government, after the introduction of PDM, all agreed to let this money be put in the same basket so that our farmers can buy these seedlings themselves. However, we are realising - the President recently directed me - we are equally realising that the rate at which farmers are getting is not commensurate with the number of farmers on ground. Next financial year we may change the policy. What I know is our President who is able all the time, will definitely change that policy.

6.06

**MR ALLAN MAYANJA (NUP, Nakaseke Central County, Nakaseke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Madam Prime Minister, in Nakaseke Central, we have increasing land wrangles or conflicts in almost every parish of the constituency. People's houses, gardens, and livestock have been destroyed through land wrangles.

Madam Prime Minister, as the Executive, can you establish, through the ministry for lands, a land conflict resolution task force to handle all these issues, specifically in Nakaseke Central, Kikamulo subcounty, Kito subcounty, Butalangu Town Council, and Kiwoko Town Council? There is a lot of tension in the constituency. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker and honourable members, let the truth be told; the conflicts are among family members. Some unscrupulous family members, usually sell their family land to big people. Eventually these big people

come to evict and that is the major cause of conflicts- The family members themselves, and this is what we have discovered. We thought the local governments who have – we have the local government court to manage land conflicts at the subcounty level; we have the Parish Land Committees and the local leaders who are supposed to help, but sometimes they find themselves also mingled in the same because of corruption. A big person pays them peanuts, then they give - It is a complex matter. Members, can we come up and amend the Land Act to address such issues once and for all? I beg that we needed to - as a government and you Members of Parliament - to handle this squarely. Thank you so much.

6.08

**MR PAUL OMARA (Independent, Otuke County, Otuke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This Tuesday, I chaired Otuke District Roads Committee meeting, and we noted two very important things. One, the contractor has already been given a contract under the Oil Seeds Road programme to clear some roads in the district. The contract sum is Shs 1.7 billion and it is supposed to cover 16 kilometres only.

Prime Minister, last financial year, we used Shs 1 billion, which is given to every district by the Government, to clear 196 kilometres of road. In this particular one, under the Oil Seeds Road Programme, a contract of Shs 1.7 billion is going to do 16 kilometres only. That means a kilometre will *-(Interjection)-* it is murrām -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question, Hon Omara?

**MR OMARA:** Which means, that a kilometre will be at Shs 106 million, yet the Ministry of Works and Transport's indicative figure is Shs 9 million. For us, in Otuke, we use Shs 5.1 million to do a kilometre.

How do we arrive at these figures? With Shs 1.7 billion, we can cover more kilometres of murrām roads in the district. Would the Prime Minister be able to explain that?

Secondly, we need *-(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. No, we ask one question. Prime Minister, the question of Hon. Edakasi was related to the same. *(Member rose\_)* No, no, no. I have your question here. Prime Minister, you can respond to Hon. Omara.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I thank Hon. Omara. We sometimes also feel that there is need for all of us to come in. We need to use less and gain much – use less and score more. Hon. Omara, your question is so valid that I want to get more details.

*(Ms Rusoke rose\_)* I wanted her to answer. This project is under their office *-(Interjection)-* yes, it is under their office. I wanted to use my office to audit. A forensic audit must be *-(Interjection)-* yes, so that we stop this kind of thuggery.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Amos Okot?

6.12

**Mr AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago):** Thank you, Mr Speaker – *(Ms Rusoke rose\_)-*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The Prime Minister has already answered. When I heard “forensic audit” – all those issues should be answered in the audit. If she has a quick answer – use one minute, honourable minister.

6.12

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Victoria Rusoke):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. There is a syndicate. This morning, Hon. Baba came to my office – this is from Koboko – and gave a very shocking revelation similar to what our colleague has just given.

Out of 169 kilometres that were supposed to be done – fortunately, it is even in the bill of quantities – the contractor did only 16, almost reflecting Shs 50 million per kilometre. So, I do side with you. I rejected a request of the commissioner heading this project, who said: “I can send our staff to investigate.” I said:

“No, we do not need to investigate. I want to report to the Prime Minister.” Imagine the same thing is coming up.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Amos Okot?

**MR AMOS OKOT:** Mr Speaker, Agago District Pensioners’ Association -

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable colleagues, we need order. Don’t you think such people need court martial?

**Mr AMOS OKOT:** Mr Speaker, this is also one of the critical questions that the Prime Minister should pay attention to. Members of Agago District Pensioners’ Association, for the last three months, have not been getting their money.

Two, for some teachers from Agago, their salaries are being deducted on the basis of loans, yet they have not taken any loan from any bank. They are trying to call here and there so that they are *-(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Question?

**MR AMOS OKOT:** My question is: can these anomalies be investigated and corrected – with this deduction of the salaries of the teachers? For the pensioners’ association, when will their money be paid?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, I request that he puts that valid question in writing so that I can come up with a comprehensive answer.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Let us have Hon. Edakasi and, finally, Hon. Joyce Acan. *(Members rose\_)* Honourable colleagues, the Prime Minister is also a human being. I monitor – here, we communicate; she has been over stretched. She was from a long programme, but she has taken around 30 questions; it is very impressive.

6.15

**MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank you, Rt Hon Prime Minister, for your time with us.

Just before I ask my question, I would like to add to the information that Hon. Omara gave. Even in my district *-(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Your time is up, honourable member. *(Laughter)* Yeah, if you are diverting by starting to give information – you ask your question.

**MR EDAKASI:** The question I have is that, Prime Minister, you put in money – I think in Financial Year 2019/2020 – to do a theatre at Kaberamaido General Hospital, but it was not completed. It needs just about Shs 700 million. In fact, I have been told that if the UPDF does it, they will even do it for less – to finish and furnish it.

As I speak to you now, all our caesarean section cases are taken to Soroti.

We need just a little bit of a push to complete the theatre and for it to become functional. I thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** I request that he puts it in writing so that I can direct the Ministry of Health to budget for the same.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Joyce Acan?

6.16

**MS JOYCE ACAN (NRM, PWD Representative):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for allowing me to speak on behalf of my people. I would like to raise the issue of employment for persons with disabilities (PwDs) and the way they are not helped during the course of their work.

Mr Speaker, we have the Persons with Disabilities Act, 2020. The Act says that the Government shall provide supportive social services to persons with disabilities, through

the acquisition of assistive devices or personal assistants.

Mr Speaker, public service has employed some competent persons with disabilities, but their personal assistants are not being assisted or given allowance –(Member timed out.)

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

**MS ACAN:** Mr Speaker, I want to give the evidence of Jean Longo, a Community Development Officer (CDO) in Arua; Apai Babiku (blind), a Town Agent in Koboko; Amina Namukasa (blind), a CDO in Masaka; Stephen Kiyimba (blind), a rehabilitation officer in Wakiso; and Margret Nazziwa (blind), a CDO in Wakiso.

Mr Speaker, these people, despite the Act that is there, are not being assisted.

My prayer is that the Minister of Public Service tells us why this Act is not being enforced.

I thank you.

**MS NABBANJA:** Mr Speaker, this is a matter of the law. I direct those ministries or departments and districts which are employing these people to comply with the law.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I request the Government Chief Whip to always pick out these directives because they are raised here, and MPs come back to us, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. When you ask the people at the agencies, they say: “That was in Parliament; we have not received it in writing.”

So, it is very important that the Government Chief Whip works closely with our Clerk to get these directives and communicate them to them. I know he has been doing much, but this is another request on top of what he has been doing.

6.20

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obuga):** Mr Speaker, we are always on Standby Class 1 for all directives made in

the House, whether by the presiding officer or the Rt Hon. Prime Minister. All of them are normally taken into consideration, and we communicate accordingly.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is now Standby Class 1+. (Laughter) Thank you. Leader of the Opposition? (Hon. Gafabusa rose) What is the procedural matter, Hon. Gafabusa?

**MR GAFABUSA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. On the directive of the Prime Minister, I need your guidance. Wouldn't it be proper that it also goes to the Ministry of Public Service?

If the employed PwDs need to be helped through their assistants, the structures need to provide for this. The local governments do not have a structure where they can employ helpers of PwDs, and they will find it difficult.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable member, that is an administrative matter. What we do is to put a high voltage line. Then, the low voltage line, for distribution, is done from there.

6.21

**THE SHADOW MINISTER OF EDUCATION (Mr Joseph Ssewungu):**

Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the Prime Minister for responding to all the issues, including mine. I have picked out a few issues and I hope she will give them attention.

The first one was under rule 41(9) – that is where I am proceeding from. The Holy Family Mission Hospital is non-profit-making. You find that in most of these districts, which were created, there are many missionary hospitals, which have better facilities. Some time back, the Government was working with them and giving them support, but now –(Interjection)- Madam Prime Minister, let me lay my issues clearly.

I wish that if you are doing so, you increase the support a little. Normally, I do not go into the specifics for my area, but make it a general issue. A hospital like Villa Maria, in the area where I come from, handles over six districts. When you go to Kalungu, Villa Maria Hospital

has better facilities than the health centres IV that we have.

Why don't we send doctors on secondment to Holy Family Hospital in Zombo, Kitovu Hospital and others everywhere? They are very few –(Interjection)- we shall maybe get statistics, Madam Prime Minister, but according to what the honourable member stated, there are still some challenges. They can accommodate doctors and have facilities. So, give them more support.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, regarding salary enhancement for education officers – the issue of inspection in schools is alarming. Inspection in a district - even yours or mine - is given Shs 2 million in a financial year; that is challenging.

The matter I raised yesterday is still the same and the Minister of Education Sports has moved out – he is around, but not sitting in the front row. We need to agree, Madam Prime Minister: this is factual. Training of A' Level teachers is not yet done and, according to what we know, what is being stated in the schools –(Interjection)- Mr Speaker, the minister is going to respond, if you permit. Let me state my issues –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No. Rule 41 is very strict. Only the Leader of the Opposition has a right to respond. If the minister feels that something is not factual, he can clarify. Honourable minister?

**MR OGWANG:** First of all, Mr Speaker, with due respect to my brother, who is the Shadow Minister of Education, he is aware that we trained teachers for the A' Level curriculum. I can confirm, even on this side of the Government, that there are colleagues who even opened and closed some of these trainings, which took place across the country. A case in point is Hon. Victoria Rusoke here; she did it in parts of the Rwenzori subregion.

Is he in order to continue misleading this House that we, as the Ministry of Education and Sports, have not trained these teachers?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssewungu, when a minister comes here and confirms: “We have done this...” Maybe, once you doubt it, you should ask that minister to bring evidence, but not say that such a training has not taken place.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Mr Speaker, let me repeat it. As we talk now, the A' Level curriculum, for Senior Five, was sent online, to schools. Sending them online makes it very expensive for secondary schools to print out for all teachers.

Let me repeat this: for the A' Level students, who reported on Monday, the teachers are meant to be trained for five days – only five teachers, for every secondary school, to roll this out to the other teachers, but it is not yet done. However, we shall come back next week and disprove each other.

Mr Speaker, I would like to find out from the Prime Minister – because there is confusion between radio stations and *bizindaalo*. When you go to the dictionary, the definitions of “radio station” and UCC are a bit different. I am insisting on this because, in our villages, we have trading centres where you find that someone owns a small megaphone, which is used to announce someone who has died – because this person cannot afford to pay for an advert at the radio station. We need that kind of assistance.

I have two other issues and then I conclude. On the issue of cattle compensation, as the then vice-chairperson of the government assurances committee, I went to Gulu District – we were with Hon. Bright. We have all the documents in that committee, which I left, showing how people were compensated.

What we were seeking from Parliament was to allow us to provide the compensation lists to all these districts for them to display the lists at the district headquarters, and confirm whether those people got those cows, as stated.

Wherever we went, these people were saying, “We never got the cows”, but there were a lot

of records showing that someone got a hundred cows and another one got one cow. We were asking how this happened.

However, Mr Speaker, I could not, as vice-chairperson, take out parliamentary documents without the approval of Parliament when we were in those districts such as Agago and Erute. This is so that Members take these lists; they were brought by the Attorney-General. However, they were disputed wherever we went and the names of those who got those cows were not known.

Rt Hon. Prime Minister, these are documents from the Cabinet, given to us as the Committee on Government Assurances and Implementation. Allow the new committee members or Members of Parliament to access these documents, take them to their constituencies and read out the names of those people to confirm if they got cows. If they get them, that would solve that challenge –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** But, Hon. Ssewungu, who has stopped them? Once you bring it here, on the Floor, it becomes the property of Parliament? A Member can pick that document and share it, unless they were taken back or when you get guidance from the Speaker that these are restricted documents.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** What happened is that we were doing our work, as a committee, based on the assurances given by the Government. So, these documents were brought by the Attorney-General. Once they come to the committee, before presenting a report on the Floor of Parliament, we do not have the right to give them out –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, but it was presented and concluded, wasn't it? So, it is a public document.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Let me raise my last two issues, Mr Speaker, as I conclude. We have the issue of land wrangles. Madam Prime Minister, we need to carry out civic education. Where we have the biggest challenge of land wrangles and relatives selling property is when

people die intestate. When they die intestate, some relatives sell property without getting appointment as the administrators of the estate. What we have to do, as the Government, is to put money in place to go and educate people. Should they make wills? How do they prepare their children? They need to know that when you sell land, where there is no administrator after the death of your father, then, you are acting outside the law. Our land laws have almost everything. If that is done, it will give a lot of solutions.

Lastly, the issue that I want to ask, as the Leader of the Opposition, is only one. The Constitution of Uganda, under Chapter 2, defines the citizenship of Ugandans. In this current situation, Madam Prime Minister, through the Speaker, we are seeing several people, basically from Eritrea, who have come to stay in Uganda. They have established a lot of businesses. Actually, the prices for houses in Kabalagala have gone very high, which is good. However, could we know under which legal regime these people are entertained in the country?

This is because it is not easy for Ssewungu to leave Uganda to go and stay in Rwanda or Kenya, without getting the necessary documents required to stay there as a citizen. Can you help us to know that?

Otherwise, I thank you for coming – and, Madam Prime Minister, - through you, Mr Speaker – kindly, come every day, from Tuesday to Thursday.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, you moved under rule 41(9). Under that rule, you can only comment or reply; you do not ask the Prime Minister questions, because they would have concluded. So, the Prime Minister will answer you at her discretion.

Thank you, Rt Hon. Prime Minister. We appreciate – you have given us enough time.

I have Members – some of you registered your questions, but I was not able to reach you. The

Prime Minister is also a human being and she is always considerate. I know she has another very urgent meeting today evening.

Now, honourable colleagues, there is a very interesting motion, which I would request that you allow us to conclude now. Since we are going into the weekend and there is a lot of traffic jam outside, we can give it 30 minutes. It is an interesting one – by Hon. Joyce Bagala.

However, I request that we all stand for a minute.

*(Members stood and stretched.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Today, we were at a memorial service for the late Rt Hon. Eriya Kategaya and we were told that sitting is more dangerous than smoking. So, you should always stand up and stretch a little. I think that is enough; we can take our seats and address this small motion.

MOTION FOR A RESOLUTION  
OF PARLIAMENT URGING THE  
GOVERNMENT TO URGENTLY  
IMPLEMENT A MOBILE PORTABILITY  
LICENSING FRAMEWORK PROVIDED  
FOR IN THE BROADBAND POLICY  
2018 AS A CONSUMER PROTECTION  
MEASURE

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Joyce?

6.33

**MS JOYCE BAGALA (NUP, Woman Representative, Mityana):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. This is a motion for a resolution of Parliament, urging the Government to urgently implement a Mobile Number Portability licensing framework provided for in the broadband policy, 2018 as a consumer protection measure, moved under Rule 56 of the Rules of Procedure of the Parliament of Uganda.

*“WHEREAS the National Broadband Policy, 2018 requires that mobile number portability forms part of the licensing conditions/framework;*

*AND WHEREAS the Telecommunications (Interconnection) Regulations, 2005 entails mobile number portability as a facility that allows a customer to keep his or her telephone number in circumstances where the customer would have to change it, and it includes the operator portability where a customer keeps his or her telephone number after changing telecommunication operators when the customer buys his or her telecommunication services forms if he or she remains at the same geographical location;*

*AWARE THAT in other jurisdictions such as Kenya, the regulator implements Mobile Number Portability, a service that allows the user to remain with the exact number even after porting it to another operator;*

*FURTHER AWARE that, save for Uganda, other jurisdictions break the barrier, for instance, 077 being strictly for MTN, a user can port the exact number to Airtel. The threat of losing customers by the operator guarantees the acceptable quality of services for fear of losing the previous customers, hence a consumer protection measure;*

*CONCERNED THAT the customers are not protected and cannot switch from one service provider to another service provider, without changing the telephone numbers;*

*FURTHER CONCERNED that customers are not empowered to choose their service provider without the challenge of changing telephone numbers;*

*NOW, THEREFORE, be it resolved by Parliament that -*

- 1. Mobile subscribers retain their numbers when changing network operators or when changing geographical locations;*
- 2. The regulator, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), urgently implements Mobile Number Portability as a consumer protection measure; and*
- 3. The Government fully implements the National Broadband Policy, 2018 to*

*enhance network accessibility and reduce the cost of connectivity.”*

I beg to move.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Is the motion seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by Hon. Ssewungu, Hon. Amos Okot, Hon. Paparu, Hon. Noman, Hon. Kaberuka, Hon. Hillary Kiyaga – and many Members of the House. There is also Hon. Esenu, Hon. Tumwine, Hon. Tom, Hon. Atima, Dr Bhoka and Hon. Mamawi.

Honourable member, would you quickly justify the motion?

**MS BAGALA:** Thank you, Mr Speaker. The motion was conceived out of the challenges that many users go through, especially without the licence to port the same number. When I have a number, for instance, on MTN – first of all, if I do not use that number for some time, or if I travel, when I come back, I find that the number has been given to another person, which is very inconvenient. That mobile number, because you have bought a SIM card, should be personal property, just like you buy other things. Therefore, you should be able to use your number even when you change the telecom operator services.

From this background, I think we need to implement this portability broadband policy. If only the telecom companies knew that I could use that same number when I change, even dropped calls would be reduced. The quality of service will improve because all the telecom companies will compete to provide the best services so that they do not lose customers, and it would also be very convenient for the users.

Mr Speaker, this also leads to an increase in customer churn, which pushes operators to invest in the quality of service, enhanced coverage and general reduction in service charges. Right now, of course, data and airtime are expensive, but if an operator knows that this person will use the same number with another operator, believe me, the cost will be reduced. It will also result in increased penetration and

affordability of the services, which are crucial for any government including ours. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I was somewhere and someone said it is only in Africa where people carry two phones. Sometimes, they are carrying six. Unlike us, the Members of Parliament, people will demand; the Members of Parliament, people will demand, “We want Airtel and MTN.” “We want UTL,” so you carry all of them. In other countries, your number can serve all telecommunication networks at once and even bank accounts. You find that you have an account in this bank, that and the other. What they need is just a reference or a code such that when they are dealing with it, they know this is the code for Airtel or MTN.

Also, there is the issue of fees. You may find that it is more expensive to call MTN using Airtel. That is why people demand it: they want it cheaper. When I am calling MTN on Airtel, why should I be charged extra?

Honourable minister, you will be responding to these issues. I think we had seconds. Hon. Juliet Kakande, three minutes.

6.40

**MS JULIET KAKANDE (NUP, Woman Representative, Masaka City):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. Communication is a very influential service to almost each and every sector. It can boost, as well as lead to decline in performance of various sectors. That is why we need to lay a legal foundation such that Ugandans can use whatever benefits that can be found in such influential services.

As far as the mobile number portability is concerned, normally, the earlier known contact number of a person, be it institutions, is always of great importance. Many times, it is the one that is widely known, which needs to be protected.

In Uganda, there are some circumstances where you find that switching to another network is inevitable. Let us take an example of those who operate mobile businesses. It is almost coming

to three decades since the establishment of mobile telephone network in Uganda. However, in many areas, you may find that the network is still poor. Sometimes, you find areas that do not possess mobile telecommunication networks. Whenever these people who operate mobile businesses go to such areas, they have to switch to other networks, yet we do not use the same numbers on different networks. This implies that they must always have, let us say, two phones. You find them getting connected to different operating networks, which many times, has its own inconveniences.

Another thing, Mr Speaker, we have to accept is that mobile telephones, as a business, needs a huge amount of money to invest in. That is why in Uganda, it is mainly dominated by foreigners. As Ugandans, we are mainly consumers. Being consumers, it means that we are always being exploited. Therefore, as Parliament, I think it is our duty to always cover up all the loopholes, which we expect Ugandans to face.

Mr Speaker, another reason – *(Member timed out.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Switch on and conclude.

**MS KAKANDE:** Mobile telephone networks, like any other business, always experience healthy competition. Whenever there is competition in business, you expect creativity and innovativeness. Such institutions normally try to set up motivational strategies, which Ugandans could be benefiting from. However, they cannot do so because they always have to change from one network to another. If they want to benefit from that, it means that they have to change their contact.

With that, Mr Speaker, I felt that I should support the motion to implement a mobile portability licensing framework in Uganda. I beg to submit.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable colleagues, with that, I put the question that the debate for a resolution

of Parliament urging the Government to urgently implement a mobile number portability licensing framework provided for in the Broadband Policy, 2018 as a consumer protection measure be adopted.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Debate opens now. Those who have spoken, first sit. I will start with Hon. Esenu, Hon. Tom Bright, Hon. Lillian Paparu and Hon. Baba – for victims, we shall see how to compensate them. *(Laughter)*

6.45

**MR ANTHONY ESENU (NRM, Kapelebyong County, Kapelebyong):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to support the motion. My contribution to this is that the mobile phone system is one of those few services whereby when you get a SIM card, you do not seem to have the ownership. It is as if you have just rented it for the time – *(Hon. Feta rose)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Do we have a new Sergeant-At-Arms? I want to understand. *(Laughter)*

**MR FETA:** Mr Speaker, I am seated there so I am waiting for him to submit so that I can be able to –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, please. Honourable member, take your seat.

**MR FETA:** Have you promoted me here?

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** You can go up. There is space there.

**MR FETA:** Thank you. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Feta Geoffrey is not usually stubborn, but sometimes he is.

**MR ESENU:** Mr Speaker, I think the motion should emphasise the fact that these companies should not, at their own will, decide to switch off people.

Number two, the motion should enforce and demand that these companies, whether you go out of the country and take whatever time, be compelled to at least get in touch with the owner of the SIM card before they switch you off.

The third one is that this issue of connectivity across the country should also be a requirement so that as they give out SIM cards across the country, they are be compelled to make sure that there is connectivity to at least half of the districts, linked to any of the networks since people are asked to buy their various SIM cards.

Therefore, I support the motion and add that they should be compelled to make sure that they do not disconnect the subscribers without their permission. I thank you.

6.47

**MR BRIGHT TOM (NRM, Kyaka Central County, Kyegegwa):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I support the motion because once you travel out of the country for four months, come back and find that your number has been switched off and given to another person, it has caused a lot of confusion in families. You might be a man and your number has been given to a woman - your wife calls and asks, "Where did you leave your phone?" You find the issue of family violence and homes have been split because of mobile operators.

Mr Speaker, there is also another issue of mobile money. You might have mobile money on your number but you find that the number has been transferred to another person. There are very many cases, which are involved.

It is a very good motion because it will also help with our security in the country. Many people buy lines, commit offences and throw away the lines. However, if you know someone has got a number; it is for Tom Bright from day one, it is easy for monitoring, tracking and it saves the country. Thank you very much. I support the motion.

6.48

**MS LILLIAN PAPARU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I stand to second this motion. Some companies have become so relaxed in expanding services to other rural areas just because they know we can crisscross. Some rural parts of this country still have difficulties accessing networks. When we do this, every company will want to struggle to be connected to many parts of this country. That way, our connectivity will improve.

The reason we do not transfer these numbers to the other networks - Mr Speaker, you said we end up buying very many contact numbers and this has increased the level of corruption or trickery. You find somebody with a particular contact number and he or she misuses it because they can go and get another contact number. This is why people have been cheated; mobile money stolen and others have gotten into problems because other people use those contact numbers.

Mr Speaker, if Hon. Lilian Paparu has a number that cuts across networks, it will be easier to track what she does and it protects her from getting into problems that are caused by another person. That way, there will be sanity.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Baba, Hon. Gafabusa and Hon. Sowedii?

6.50

**MR JAMES BABA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko):** Mr Speaker, I also support the motion. The mobile telephone is now a very useful, convenient tool. It makes work and reachability easy. It is something that we should acknowledge to be in existence.

Mr Speaker, these SIM cards are not free. We buy them. When I buy my item from a shop, it belongs to me. It does not belong to the shopkeeper. In this free-market economy situation, I should be able to transact it in any other mobile network I need to do. So, I support the motion largely for that reason.

As Hon. Lilian Paparu said, there are many areas of this country with no network at all. You may find Airtel has network in some parts of Koboko - I have an MTN mobile line that I cannot use. Therefore, I should be able to migrate my MTN number to Airtel so that I can communicate with the rest of the world.

Mr Speaker, this is a very useful motion. We should support it. Always come with very useful motions like this instead of wasting our time in other motions. *(Laughter)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Gafabusa and then Hon. Sowedi.

6.51

**MR RICHARD GAFABUSA (NRM, Bwamba County, Bundibugyo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank my honourable colleague for bringing this very good motion. I stand here to support the same on two fronts mainly. The first one is the issue of consumer protection.

Mr Speaker, this is an area where we still have a gap. We do not have a substantive consumer protection law in this country. This motion brings a component of consumer protection. These are our SIM cards and we pay for them. Whether I use it or not, it is mine. If I want to give it out, it is still mine.

The other issue is the privacy and the security because we register them using our National Identification Numbers(NINs). When I do not use it for some time and then MTN or Airtel decides to give it to another person - we do not know whether it is deregistered. Otherwise, tomorrow, the person they have given it to can use it to commit a crime yet, I will remain responsible because I registered it using my NIN.

On the cost- the reason I have an Airtel line is because there are areas in our place in the mountains where MTN does not reach. When you are there, you switch to Airtel. This means you need to buy Airtel airtime and data even when you have airtime and data on the MTN SIM card. Once we do this, we can be able

to switch and the operators will know they are losing out. They will compete and the consumers will spend less.

Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you. I strongly support the motion. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Sowedi Kitanywa.

6.53

**MR SOWEDI KITANYWA (NRM, Busongora County North, Kasese):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank the honourable colleague for bringing this innovative motion. I support it on two grounds;

One, in Uganda, we have had a problem of con men and con women of phones. Someone uses a phone because they are sure they will con someone and throw the line away. That causes a big problem. After four months, if someone purchases the same line, the person may be tracked as the one who conned someone. Therefore, I support this because it will help –

Mr Speaker, I was trying to explain that once this system is implemented, we will be helped to reduce instances of people conning others using phones.

The second reason I support the motion is the issue of guaranteeing ownership of the lines. We will know that Hon. Kitanywa is the owner of this line, therefore, it is going to be his forever. That will help people who dodge. Someone may say, I have been offline, yet he or she was online. We will know that if you are in an area where there is Airtel network, you can still pick up you phone calls even if you are on MTN network. Therefore, the connectivity with the consumers will be easy. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Goli, Hon. Bhoka, Hon. Timuzigu.

6.55

**MR MOSES GOLI (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that motion. The motion sounds very good for

consumers but we need to be cautious for the investors in that line. We need to appreciate and know if continuously leaving those lines causes a problem to that investment. If so, then we should look at situations where the taxes that we pay are used to manage that overflow in investments. Therefore, we should be careful and see the side of the investor.

Mr Speaker, if you have gone to Bugisu as my uncle here mentioned, there is Airtel - Airtel will have invested more and would wish to be compensated for that. Let us look at the side of investment as we look at what we prefer as consumers. Thank you.

6.56

**DR GEORGE BHOKA (NRM, Obongi County, Obongi):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the mover of the motion for a good motion. I support the motion on three grounds, that is, simplicity, customer convenience and cost-effectiveness.

Mr Speaker, I have three concerns that I need to raise to the mover of the motion as well as the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance.

One is the legal and regulatory framework implications. There is a current law that provides that leverage for us to be able to do that.

Number two is the technical complexities associated with mobile number portability. Have you interrogated them?

Number three is related to the demand side of the service, which requires creating awareness within the user community.

Last but not least is the issue of service provider competition amongst the industrial actors; the telecom companies.

Finally, Mr Speaker, this is a motion that can be extended to international mobile number portability within the East African Community, Africa and globally. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon Timuzigu?

6.58

**MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the mover of the motion. When you look at the money that people spend to get back their phone numbers, it is so expensive. I once lost my line and discovered later that it was in Iganga. I had to give that person transport to bring the line to Kampala and I was just lucky that the person came to Kampala. Some even refuse while others charge a lot of money to give back the phone number.

Mr Speaker, when that phone number is given to another person - Imagine a phone number belongs to a politician like me, people will call that person - the person who gave me back my SIM card, gave it after being stressed. He was very stressed; he even switched it off. When I looked for the phone number - In fact, by chance, someone called him and asked, "Why are you picking honourable members' phone calls?" He left it switched on for a week until I was able to get him and he gave me my Sim card.

Mr Speaker, the amount of money we spend can actually save our people by eliminating that problem. So, I thank you for the motion and I support it. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Feta, Hon. Mawawi, Hon. Mujungu, and Hon. Ndamira. I will have covered this side.

7.00

**MR GEOFFREY FETA (NRM, Ayivu Division East, Arua):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I would like to thank the mover of the motion. This motion is likely to resolve the right of ownership of a SIM card.

During the 2020-2021 campaigns, I lost a phone with a SIM card but because of the campaign crisis, I could not renew the phone number. Now, by the time I wanted to renew

it in February 2021, the telephone number had been allocated to another person.

Mr Speaker, this is a telephone card you buy with your money. This means, by default, you are the owner. However, the service provider decides to allocate that telephone number to a third party without notifying you. This means the consumer's rights are being exploited in absolute disregard. This matter can only be resolved through a legal framework like this. Short of that, consumers will be exploited and their rights will be abused.

Today, I looked for a friend I had not talked to for about a year. When I called the person, a different person from Kasese picked the phone call. I asked, "Is this Fred?" They replied, "No, I am not Fred". Again, I asked, "When did you become the owner of this telephone number?" He said, "Six months ago". That means there is a lot of confusion going on.

Mr Speaker, if the telephone number is registered in the names of Feta with MTN and the same with Airtel, it becomes easy to track him if he has abused his rights.

You will realise that the people who change telephone numbers and register new ones, left, right, center are actually criminals. They use, abuse and drop because they know next year, MTN will have allocated that number to another person. So, tracing criminality becomes a challenge.

Mr Speaker, that is why I support the motion, and I know Hon. Joyce Bagala means well, unlike the other times when Hon. James Baba said other things. In this particular one, I know she means well. (*Laughter*) Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Hon. Mamawi?

7.02

**MR JAMES MAMAWI (NRM, Adjumani East County, Adjumani):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join colleagues in supporting the motion moved by my colleague.

Mr Speaker, I would like to talk about the customer perspectives. We have been complaining in the House about issues to do with data, where sometimes you put the data but before usage, it is gone, and I think the suggestions in the motion are going to solve the problem.

Mr Speaker, as a customer, I choose the best offer in the market in terms of price and quality of networks. This is going to also encourage price competition among the operators. If you charge a high price, I will not use your services; I will go to another service provider. Therefore, this motion is very important. It is actually going to help our poor farmers who are in the village in terms of network accessibility and cheap network they can easily access. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Mujungu?

7.03

**MR THEMBO MUJUNGU (NRM, Busongora County South, Kasese):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I realise that this motion is a bipartisan issue. Members across the House agree that this is the right motion and I would like to thank Hon. Bagala for this innovation.

Mr Speaker, the most important thing I admire about this motion is that my phone number will be identical to mine henceforth. Otherwise, to date, I have a unique name; I have a bank account, and I have a national identification number, but the phone number has been interchangeable, so the controller of the system can choose to withdraw it from me. Henceforth, if it can even work across the networks, I will have one identical phone number to Thembo Gideon Mujungu.

Therefore, I support this motion seriously because my MTN number, which I acquired 25 years ago, is now going to be permanent maybe until Jesus Christ comes back. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Ndamira?

7.05

**MS CATHELIN NDMIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kabale):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to join colleagues in thanking Hon. Bagala for the long-awaited motion. Having one line across all the networks strengthens brand identity by maintaining a single voice and tone across all the channels. This will curb thieves, who have become rampant through mobile lines.

Mr Speaker, another thing I would like to tell you is that having two or three lines is very expensive. I am a Member of Parliament, and I own one line, but because of too much demand, I have been forced to carry two simply because I wanted to entice and make those voters happy. However, the cost that I have incurred – I do not think that a low-income earner will manage this. I, therefore, want to thank Hon. Bagala for the motion she has brought. Thank you. God bless you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, Dr Musa Noah?

7.07

**DR MUSA NOAH (Independent, Koboko North County, Koboko):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking Hon. Joyce for this motion. I think this is a motion which the House should entirely support.

Apart from making life very easy for the customers, improving quality of services and ensuring fair competition among the telecom service providers, one of the most important things for this motion is that there will be no need to have a number of SIM cards or even phones. This will reduce e-waste and as a country, we do not have a good strategy to manage. This is, therefore, a very good motion and I want to join my colleagues in supporting it and thanking the mover.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am going this side. Let me pick four Members.

7.08

**MR PATRICK OCAN (UPC, Apac Municipality, Apac):** Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. A mobile telephone number is largely considered a form of identity, given the mandatory requirement to register a SIM card using your valid national ID number and that makes your telephone number directly linked to your personal information for purposes of verification.

However, Mr Speaker, on the other side of the operator, once we acquire these SIM cards, we have only acquired a platform for communication, not an item to own, because the entire control is with UCC and the telecom operator.

Number two, there is no business sense in owning a SIM card and making it dormant for four, six, or eight months. It is like renting your house to a tenant who gives you consistent money for one year and eventually disappears and there is no more income coming.

Probably this motion would cure that because there are two sides; to the operator, there is no business because the operator is after profits. Thank you very much.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** If we can have something which can help me stop carrying two or three phones. It is a burden to be in countries, and they say, “It is only in Africa.” And they ask, “But you, why do you carry –” We go for international duties, and they ask, “But why are you carrying three phones?” (*Hon. Noman rose*)

Hon. Noman do not cause us more trouble. Hon. Noman might give us information from Abim – the problem is how he packages it.

7.09

**MR DENIS NYANGWESO (Independent, Samia-Bugwe Central County, Busia):** Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me join my colleagues to thank Hon. Joyce for the motion. Mr Speaker, you are right. When you get out of the country and attempt to buy a handset and require one that carries more than one line,

you are definitely identified with Africa. They keep on asking, “You want a—the others will always take one line, but for us, we need a lot of networks intertwined.”

This motion is very timely, and I want to share my personal experience. Two weeks ago, I attempted to operate my mobile money, and I realised I was deregistered. I kept on asking, “Why do I get deregistered when I have mobile money?” For the last two weeks, I have been rotating between Lugogo Forest Mall and Kingdom Kampala Airtel Service Centres. Many times, I have been assured that I should give it 48 hours.

On Tuesday, I was told to give it 24 hours. Yesterday, I was told by 4 p.m. I have not been able to redeem my mobile money on the number that is in use on my WhatsApp. I am just lucky because I was told that very soon, the number was going to be given to another person. In fact, they were wondering whether I still had the line. They asked if I could confirm that I had the line, and I did.

This is a very good motion, such that a customer’s details can be tracked to them. Good enough; we have the honourable minister here. I have been asking the service providers under what law they were working to deregister me. They have not been able to tell me under what law they deregistered me. They were only telling me, “Give us 48 hours, and we are going to reactivate your number.” I want to thank you for the motion. Thank you very much.

7.12

**MR NELSON OKELLO (UPC, Maruzi North County, Apac):** Thank you, Mr Speaker.

I support the motion in the sense that during the years 1996 to 2000, most of the telephone companies cheated Ugandans a lot. I remember those days there were big phones, Ericssons, Motorolas and name them. We had no control. In fact, we were charged service fees, air time and a number of other charges.

However, today, with this motion, which proposes that a member or a person have only a single line, I think we shall be saved from these unnecessary charges.

the second is on the issue of security. In a number of cases, when I lose my phone and it probably lands in the hands of a wrongdoer and the number is confiscated, this motion can trace it and give the number back to me rather than getting another number. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

7.14

**MR GEOFFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo North County, Tororo):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I want to thank Hon. Joyce for the motion.

The minister of ICT in charge of communication needs to do much more. He needs to examine the Act, the policies, and other international commitments.

About a week ago, I lost my phone; it was grabbed. Between 4 a.m. and around 7 a.m., there was a SIM swap, and money was swept from my account. I was not receiving messages. I have raised a complaint, and the matter is still being investigated. The telecom company has insisted that I was receiving messages, yet I have shown them. I went that day and took screenshots—messages were not coming.

Many people are suffering. I am going to take this matter to a higher level. The problem is bigger. To what extent can a SIM swap take place, and if a client is not aware, the telecom company can defend itself that there was no SIM swap?

Besides that, the International Telecommunication Union and African Communication Union recommended One African Network Communication. The minister needs to report to us here on how he is implementing the policy.

Secondly, the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance operates a silo ICT policy in this country, despite the recommendation. We

do not have integrated ICT systems. Every government department buys software that will not communicate and link.

As I speak, Mr Speaker, there are several government agencies that cannot access the URA portal system to pick the fees people are paying. For example, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development. I engage in certain things. You pay fees, they keep sending wrong reports, URA gives different reports. The Ministry of Works and Transport – the number plate system. They have different reports, URA has a different system.

I, therefore, want to propose that the ministry for ICT brings here a report. In our last budget report, we recommended integrated software systems for all government departments and not having silo budgeting.

In the report that the Ministry of Finance, Ministry of Finance Planning and Economic Development and Economic Development has brought, the Budget Framework Paper, they have still brought requests with every government department having silos – Therefore, the matter in that Ministry of ICT and National Guidance is bigger than just the SIM card.

We also recommend that when we are working on the ID, that we should have a national ID with the same number, driving permit, telephone number, and number plate.

All this that you have said, may I request, through you, Mr Speaker, that the minister for ICT responds on how he is integrating all this data that the House adopted. Thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. That is really interesting. When I was listening to Hon. Patrick Ocan, he raised a very important issue on the business side and the redundancy. What is more important is the issue of portability. That would sort out the issues Hon. Nelson Okello raised.

On this one of the Government - like on education, universities - all public universities.

I remember when I was at Makerere University, and I was the chairman of the finance committee, Mr Keith Muhakanizi brought it up and insisted - we want to know what all of you are doing. Now all public universities share the same system. Before that, one university would buy a system from the UK and another from South Africa, and there was incompatibility. Expenses were so huge because you could not easily put a value on a system. They insisted on having one system.

One thing that was interesting, when I became the Government Chief Whip - and of course with the business background - some of the things would shock me when it came to how the Government works. I asked for the ministerial policy statements for all ministries, so that I could go through them, as a Government Chief Whip, know how to prepare, and follow up on issues.

When I wrote the letter, they told me that I had to deliver it to each ministry. I said, really? We do not even have one email of all accounting officers that I can just send to because of the cost of running to every ministry with the “Received letter” - anyway, the speed at which we are moving as young people might not be compatible. It is very important.

Honourable colleagues, for those who have spoken, I have concluded on that. Hon. Peter Ogwang, I will not allow you because you are a former minister, and there is a minister now, who is in charge. Maybe after he has finished, and he leaves there something, I will allow you to talk.

I am not picking colleagues who have already spoken, but I have a Commissioner of Parliament. He is a boss in the House. I will only give him special consideration as a leader.

7.20

**MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Divison, Masaka City):** Much obliged, Mr Speaker. Thank you.

Mr Speaker, there are three or four things, quickly, one raised by Dr Bhoka, and the

other by the honourable - I have forgotten the honourable member, I beg your pardon - relating to the legal framework.

The motion largely speaks to property rights because a SIM card is personal property. It is never property of the telecommunications company, and that should be resolved.

Secondly, it speaks to anti-competition, because we lack anti-competition legislation in this country. The telecommunications industry is largely an oligopolistic industry, highly controlled, and therefore, the customers are susceptible to abuse. You must deregulate through Parliament and try to legislate by motions and resolutions that anti-competition behaviour.

I want to assure Dr Bhoka that the legal framework is safe, because of the Uganda Communications Act and the attendant regulations – that is where the motion actually picks up from. Therefore, there is no digression from the legal framework.

Thirdly, if our Government - this is a revenue liberalising motion. It actually democratises revenue collection, because when this motion is moved and the Government acts, you are going to see competition. More venues are going to emerge. The legal battles you see in court between the telecommunications companies and Uganda Revenue Authority will reduce, because they will go for efficiency. They will have competition. Therefore, I do not see a problem with that.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, the mover of the motion should be smarter, because this is not a compelling motion. It is an urging motion and our rules are very flux on that. If I were the mover, I would go ahead and prepare a question in a few days, for the minister to find out the extent of implementing the parliamentary resolution. This is because this motion may not compel the minister.

They need to act and probably respond to some of the issues Hon. Ekanya has raised, in implementing a very clear legal framework

to which we are – actually, in the region, we are the only pariah. Kenya and Tanzania have it, and we are looking on as though we are incapable of doing anything in this region. Of the original three East African nations, we are the laggards in this area. I thank you.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Mpuuga and Hon. Joyce do not need to bring a question. We shall compel them under rule 220. They will bring an action-taken report on this matter.

On the issue of lack of a law on competition, we passed the Competition Act, 2024. The only issue is whether the committee has been well established in the ministry for trade, to enforce the law. That is why some of us, from the beginning, had wanted a commission, so that we align with the rest of The Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). However, the Government said that because of rationalisation and all that, we should have some kind of neutral budget at the ministry for trade.

The question was that the Government itself is engaged in business, so if you get government officials to be the ones to enforce – so, because it carried that issue of the commission, and had a charge on the Consolidated Fund, we could not proceed with it. We were stuck. Hon. Gafabusa, Hon. Tom Bright, and Hon. Mwine Mpaka put up a spirited fight on that front.

Leader of the Opposition, this is a motion from your Member. I thought you sorted it out in the Shadow Cabinet.

7.25

**MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu County South, Kalungu) :** Mr Speaker, I need to thank the Member, as well as the former Leader of the Opposition, because he also used to allocate me time to be Leader of the Opposition, during his absence. I have enjoyed this seat very much in an acting capacity. *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, I thank Hon. Joyce Bagala, very much. As we talk, you cannot transact money

from MTN to Airtel mobile networks, yet they have been there for some time. One time, we were –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable, you cannot do what?

**MR SSEWUNGU:** As we talk now – *(Interjections)*- for me, it failed. Even when you got to –

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** It is very smooth. It used to be very costly. Now, it costs the same.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Mr Speaker, maybe it is about writing an application to the companies. I have been sending money through my MTN contact to Airtel.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Upgrade your phone.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** When I went to the mobile money agents here, who help us, they said they had the same challenge.

However, I drive my point very fast because the Speaker has allocated me some time. We used to scratch airtime vouchers to load airtime on MTN and Airtel. As we talk now, for all networks, you have to give in your number, and they will load airtime on your mobile line.

The honourable member in the corner over there, stated the legal issues just like Hon. Mathias Mpuuga. You can keep your mobile network line on for the whole year without loading anything. It will continue working. However, once you switch it off, that is when these issues come up. I have a line of a mobile network operator in Ghana, and whenever I go there, I do not need to buy any other. It stays on. I have done that in many countries.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, these people are interested in getting better mobile numbers. I remember when I was getting my number, the Indian who sold it to me asked if I wanted a simple one. However, because of his English accent, I never understood what he said. I told him to give me anything. Later on, I discovered that I

had a very hard number to master in my head. People are taking people's numbers in that way.

However, we need to address one issue in this motion. If it is allowed, it can be an amendment. If Ssewungu dies, what happens to his mobile line? If I die, my family wants the mobile line. Can there be some legal procedure for my son to take it on, with the mobile money on it? *(Interjections)*—It is my estate, as he stated.

Those are the issues we want to address, otherwise I thank you very much. Honourable minister, the issue of the 2018 policy is within your hands. Whatever the honourable member has stated, you are supposed to implement. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister?

7.28

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION AND TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Mr Godfrey Kabyanga):** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

First of all, I would like to thank Hon. Joyce for coming up with this nice motion. It is a concern of very many people in the country. I, therefore, thank you for that one.

The number portability issue is not really for Uganda only. There are several countries which have tried it and it is working. There are also other countries which have tried it and it has not done very well. Even Kenya, which you quoted, has tried, but they have not yet achieved the desired target.

As a ministry, we are going to look at all those possibilities. Let me first of all say, the national portability implementation relies basically on the central database and this can be either by a third party. Another company can come in to set up the central database. It can also be controlled by a consortium of telecom companies. They can decide to come together and set up a central database.

It can also be managed by the regulator, Uganda Communications Commission (UCC). For instance, Uganda Communications Commission. We can also, as UCC, manage the central database. You must set up a system. It takes some bits of money to set it up. It can even take around \$2 million.

Therefore, it is not something which you can just start just like that. You must really prepare for it-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** No, but honourable minister, telecoms which can afford to pay a license of \$100 million, okay? - Compared to this, when you forced us to buy Electronic Fiscal Receipting Invoicing Solution (EFRIS) machines. You said the small business must have an EFRIS machine. What about telecoms coming together-

I think it is just a matter of will. This can be budgeted to make it a regulatory issue. Simple.

**MR KABYANGA:** Mr Speaker, I am still coming-

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** The problem is how you came - *(Laughter)*

**MR KABYANGA:** Mr Speaker, yes, that one can happen, but you need also to agree. Those telephone companies need to agree.

Mr Speaker, this one might also require - number portability might also require looking at the regulatory landscape because there are licensing requirements which need to be looked at. Some need to be updated because the current licensing requirements may not be compatible with the true number portability. For instance, we have the national telecom operators; we have the public infrastructure providers, which may need to be updated so as to mandate number portability. We also need to look at that.

The licensing requirements should also ensure infrastructure parity because all these telecom companies are not at the same level of system updates. For number portability, at least all

the telecom companies should have network parity. So, all those are things that we need to look at.

Obviously, we shall also need to harmonise the regulation of Interception of the Communication Act and then the National Payment System Act which must also be well aligned. Yes - *(Interjection)* - You know the broadband policy is mainly on the internet. Yes, it is-

The broadband policy actually handles mainly internet connectivity.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, the worry we have got is the willingness to even try. I think you can assure us that you will go- that was why the motion has urged you - You will go and study it and - I now have a fear that Hon. Kabyanga might leave this thing on the day before -

Hon. Kabyanga might “*Kubyanga*”

**MR KABYANGA:** Mr Speaker, as a ministry, we are going to study it and then - *(Interruption)*

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

Is it not procedurally right that the minister be granted time, go back, sits with his technical people, and brings a comprehensive response to this motion next week?

I seek your guidance.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I am just fearing Hon. Kabyanga. And you know, he is a very straightforward gentleman. I love him so much. I know when he likes something and when he does not. This one-

Honourable, I think it is very important. You see, this motion is urging you. It is not forcing you. If you fail, you will come back to the House and you say, we got these impediments, okay? However, for the sake of the Parliament, which has supported you so much as a sector, we need you to start from a positive note. And then we build on that.

**MR KABYANGA:** Mr Speaker, I also need one SIM card. That one, there is no doubt. I would like to assure Parliament that we are going to handle this and we shall come back with a comprehensive report. I want to assure you on that one.

Otherwise, nobody in this country would like to carry ten telephone sets. Regarding all these things I have talked about, updating the regulations and the legal framework, Parliament will assist us where need be. We are coming back with a comprehensive report on this.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable. I now put the question that the motion for resolution of Parliament urging the Government to urgently implement a mobile portability licensing framework provided for in the broadband policy 2018 as a consumer protection measure be approved by this House. Thank you.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** I direct the clerk to extract this resolution and a copy of the *Hansard* and pass it on to the minister so that you can take the necessary action.

Honourable minister, how long do you think you can give us some action taken in regard to the time frame.

Can I give you three months? - Would three months do?

**MR KABYANGA:** You can give us three months, Mr Speaker.

**THE DEPUTY SPEAKER:** Yes, three months, then we will look through it. I will look through it again. If there are gaps, we will be working with you.

Honourable colleagues, I want to thank you for this week. We have covered some good businesses. Hon. Ssewungu, I want to thank you as the acting Leader of the Opposition (LOP) for a week. Yes - And the Government Chief Whip for the job.

Honourable colleagues, thank you for being patient. It is coming to 7.40 p.m. and you are still here conducting business. I really want to thank you so much.

For our Muslim and Christian brothers and sisters who are fasting I wish you very well. Further communications to do with the Speaker's privileged position. Thank you. House adjourned to Tuesday at 2.00 p.m.

*(The House rose at 7.37 p.m. and adjourned until Tuesday, 11 March 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)*