



# PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

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OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 26 NOVEMBER 2024



PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA  
IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 1ST SITTING - SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 26 November 2024

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

PRAYERS

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

*The House was called to order.*

ADMINISTRATION OF OATHS

*The oaths were administered to:*

- Ms Grace Akifeza Ngabirano

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Hon. Akifeza, please sign; do not listen to –

Hon. Grace Akifeza, you are most welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament. - Can I have silence? You are most welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament. That is not how we behave; we do not always shout. I think they are only excited to see you.

You are most welcome to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament. This is a people-centred Parliament, where we believe we should take Parliament to the people and bring people to the Parliament of Uganda. I urge you to be a servant leader and serve the people of Kisoro. Start from where the late left off.

For you to effectively perform your duty, here is the Constitution, the supreme law of the land, and the Rules of Procedure of Parliament that you will use in your day-to-day work. I congratulate you for coming to the 11<sup>th</sup> Parliament.

Being an independent Member of Parliament, you will sit directly there or on the other side, but since you – *(Applause)*- As an independent, you are my Member of Parliament. You are independent; please, go and sit in the middle there, just next to Hon. Ssekikubo. *(Laughter)*

Honourable members, pursuant to rules 157(3), 158(2) and 161 of the Rules of Procedure, Hon. Grace Akifeza is designated to the sectoral Committee on Education and Sports and the Standing Committee of Public Accounts (Local Government). *(Applause)*

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** You are duly designated. *(Applause)* [Hon. Ssemujju: “Procedure”] Procedure on what?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, the independents are supposed to apply –

**THE SPEAKER:** To the Dean of Independents.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** No, they indicate to the Speaker, according to the rules, and then they are accordingly posted to those committees. As far as the rules are concerned - until a while ago, she was not a Member of Parliament. Did she indicate before swearing in, which committees she will sit on – *(Interjections)*- I am just drawing the attention of the Speaker to the rules. I know that as NRM, you follow no rules. That is why you are excited. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** He rose on a procedural issue.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Therefore, Madam Speaker, I am only drawing your attention to the rules that the new MP can only indicate her preferred committee after she is ushered into Parliament. Did she do it the NRM way that before you are sworn in, you apply to the committees? That would be irregular, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju, the rule was duly followed. That is why you do not see that I designated her first before she was sworn in. *(Applause)* Next item?

#### COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. As you may be aware, Section 9(5) of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015, requires the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to Table the National Budget Framework Paper by the 30<sup>th</sup> day of December.

We also want to request, if possible, that you present the National Budget Framework Paper earlier to allow Members to look at it extensively. As we draw closer to the end of the year, I implore the minister to ensure this process is handled as fast as possible because it is a festive season.

Honourable members, as we come to the end of the third term, a long holiday, this calls for effective parenting. Parents out there, urge your children to be in desirable and secure communities.

Honourable members, yesterday, the 25<sup>th</sup> of November, marked the commencement of 16 days of "Activism Against Gender-Based Violence." It is a period of reflection on the gains in the prevention and elimination of the gender-based violence.

As we are aware, both women and men are potential victims and perpetrators of gender-based violence. As leaders, we should continue to further the fight against it. A peaceful society begins with a peaceful family. I want us to ensure that we have a peaceful society by advocating for non-violence.

Last Thursday, the nation witnessed an incident of gun violence in the suburbs of Ntinda, Kampala, where two lives were lost. Aware that security is a vital precondition for meaningful social and economic activity, the security agencies should effectively tackle this criminality and bring those people to book. I urge the Government to interest itself in that issue. Thank you so much.

I also got a statement from Hon. Ibrahim Ssemujju that he would want to lay at Table. So, let us have his statement, and then, we will debate both of them. Hon. Aisha Kabanda-

2.14

**MS AISHA KABANDA (NUP, Woman Representative, Butambala):** Thank you so much, Madam Speaker. It is my privilege as a Member of Parliament to attend Parliament and deliberate on issues in the House. Given the opportunity, I want to convince my colleagues to understand the way I understand.

However, in the last parliamentary Sitting – *(Interjections)*- it is a matter on which she has to pronounce herself. So, she has to listen to me.

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Aisha, the Leader of the Opposition (LoP), has been disturbing me.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what transpired between you and my LoP. I will leave that to you. *(Laughter)* I was bringing to your attention that it is my privilege as a Member of Parliament to have an opportunity to attend Sittings and deliberate on issues on behalf of my people but in the last parliamentary Sitting, I was carried out of the House in a very brutal way. My dress was torn and I was actually stripped.

You have just spoken about gender-based violence, I would like to tell you that the way I was carried was dehumanising because I was being carried by men out of this House.

I was denied the opportunity to represent my people. At one point, men carried me with one leg on the right and another leg on the left, just

spreading my legs. My dress was completely torn.

When I was thrown out through the door behind you, I was held by *jack*. It is easy to carry a man by *jack* –(Interjections)- *jack* is holding someone by the pants - but carrying a woman by the pants — you know what it feels like.

Madam Speaker, two things:

1. I was denied the opportunity to stay in the House and represent my people.
2. My people were disenfranchised. I should have been here to speak for them. A hundred thousand people from Butambala were disenfranchised. You may not have known; it is not only me who was taken out of this House without your directive but even Hon. Charles Matovu from Busiro, who had not been suspended from this House, was also carried out, and his people were equally disenfranchised.

Madam Speaker, the point of privilege that I am raising is;

1. I am wondering why I was denied the opportunity to represent my people in this House at a time when they needed my voice most.
2. My dress was torn and I want to lay it at the Table for purposes of investigation. You have been speaking about gender-based violence; we must walk the talk. We should not only talk about things that we are unable to do.

This dress was bought that day when I was coming to Parliament from the constituency. I did not have time to go home to dress up, so I quickly went to the shops to buy it.

This tearing is at the breast part. If someone tears a dress at the breast part by this time, you can wonder where my breasts were, a Muslim woman who covers herself and only leaves out the face and the palms. This dress was also torn from the lower part, up to this point and all the thighs were spread out.

I want to lay this at the Table for you to direct an investigation on the people who laid hands on me in a way that was very dehumanising for a Member of Parliament, not outside Parliament but in this august House. With your permission, I beg to lay my dress.

**THE SPEAKER:** Do not lay it yet, because I have not - Honourable members, I made a statement in the last Sitting that I did suspend Members and I did not order for the arrest of any person - the Members left.

Hon. Aisha should bring a substantive motion to that effect on what happened that day. You do not have to lay it because you need a substantive motion on that.

As I said the other time, I left the Chambers — and I am happy you know that I left the Chambers. I came back but I do not know what happened.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Madam Speaker, I do not know what the motion would speak to. I only pray that your office investigates who else rules this Parliament other than the rules and yourself.

**THE SPEAKER:** That is exactly what the motion should say – that there should be an investigation into what happened. It is simple, *Hajjat*; bring a motion.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Okay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Hon. Macho?

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, I want to thank the Parliament for their prayers and your help. Two days ago, Hon. Odero Were, the Member of Parliament for Samia-Bugwe County South, got involved in a terrible accident where one person died.

Madam Speaker, I have risen to appreciate you. We called you at a time when we wanted help and you really –

**THE SPEAKER:** He is on procedure.

**MR MACHO:** I am on a procedural matter. Therefore, I really want to thank you on behalf of the people of Busia District and Uganda.

This, Madam Speaker, call on the Government to see that it pays attention to our roads. The state of the roads is very bad. This morning, I passed through Mabira, and it was really –

**THE SPEAKER:** *Hajjat*, first of all, before you go ahead, I feel what you feel and I must say that whatever happened to you, we are with you as women.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you very much –

**THE SPEAKER:** We are with you, as women, and whatever happened – I do not know who did it but I must say: sorry for whatever happened. As a woman, I feel what you feel.

**MS AISHA KABANDA:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker –

**MR MACHO:** Madam Speaker, as I summarise – I was still on the Floor – *(Interjections)* –

**THE SPEAKER:** No, it is okay. Let him finish.

**MR MACHO:** I was also going to sympathise with *Hajjat*. We are in a month of gender-based violence. The rights of the women of this country must be respected – in case it happened. It is true, the mother is the foundation of every country.

At the same time, I see that our Parliament has changed; it now looks like the House of Lords. This makes Uganda very proud. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. LoP?

2.20

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker –

**THE SPEAKER:** Before the LoP says something, honourable members, kindly,

remember that this is a festive season. When you are driving, just imagine that everybody out there is not okay; they are also rushing for something else. Let us drive carefully.

We almost lost a Member this weekend. The Member has been hospitalised.

**MS SSENYONYI:** Madam Speaker, I want to join you in commiserating with our colleague who was involved in an accident. Sadly, I learned that somebody passed on in that car. We pray that our colleague recuperates soon so he can rejoin us.

I also want to welcome you back as you welcome us back from a mini-recess of sorts. I see a lot has changed here. The lights are very bright. I hope that these are the kind of lights that cannot be switched off – *(Laughter)* – because the last time we were here, all of a sudden, it became dark and there was fire and brimstone. So, I am glad the lights are brighter. Hopefully, they will remain brighter and that they are the kind, which cannot be switched off.

Unfortunately, though, normally, I am able to see my friend, the Prime Minister, and we have some chats across. Now, there is a wall; I am not able to see the Prime Minister very easily.

Normally, I am close to the Speaker but now, the Speaker has been taken to the other side. There are lots of changes, which we are trying to get used to but I am glad we are back.

I also want to welcome back our colleagues, the media, who are part of us, as an institution. Rule 31 provides for the fact that the public ought to follow the goings-on here, because we deliberate here on behalf of the public and the only way they can follow is when the media is present. Last time, they were not.

Madam Speaker, I have two very quick issues for your ruling. They are slightly unrelated but I will make them quick. One of those is that I am seeking, through your office that the Government could help us understand something that is seemingly convoluted of late.

Ugandans travel within the East African Community — and it should be freely. However, the Government has been severely picking people who have travelled, especially from Kenya. The first lot went for training and they were picked and brought back.

Most recently, a senior Opposition leader in this country — your former leader, Madam Speaker — Dr Kiiza Besigye, was picked from Nairobi, Kenya, by Ugandan security operatives, who brought him here. Now, he is before the court martial.

Many things confused me, even as a lawyer, that I thought the Government would probably elucidate so that we have a good understanding. Even for those of us who are trying to understand the legalities, on behalf of the country, how this gets to happen — that it can be okay for people to continuously be picked from a neighbouring country -

I heard one of the issues they were raising was that he was found with a gun in Kenya. I kept thinking: jurisdiction-wise, that does not work. It should be Kenya to complain. So, there are many questions, yet the answers are too few. I thought the Government would help us understand. Has this become the *modus operandi*?

As citizens, we normally travel to these countries —

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable LoP, as I had already said, there is a statement to that effect coming from Hon. Ssemujju. He actually served it to my office.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Thank you. I am glad my colleague, who by the way just returned from jail —(Member rose)— I am on procedure, honourable colleague — and, procedure takes precedence, Sir. Thank you very much.

As I was saying, Hon. Ssemujju is a victim, so, he will have a lot to share with us. I thought I should throw that out, and my colleague will elucidate.

The second issue, which will be the final one, Madam Speaker, is that on the 6<sup>th</sup> of November, we were here deliberating on a couple of things for the good of our people. I made certain remarks, especially in reference to the remarks that you had made during the coffee Bill discussion. I said that in my considered view, the remarks, which had been made by yourself were tribal — in my considered view.

Madam Speaker, you said that you would only apologise — and you challenged me and I took up the challenge. You said that you can only apologise if I table evidence, showing that you made remarks, which were tribal, in my view. I thought: who am I to be challenged by the Speaker and I do not follow through?

Madam Speaker, I have some evidence, which I want to table. You will look at it and examine it. It is on CD and flash disk, which has videos of the remarks that you made.

**THE SPEAKER:** What is the origin of that?

**MR SSENKYONYI:** The origin is the national broadcaster, Uganda Broadcasting Corporation. However, Madam Speaker, you will examine them and you will give your ruling.

**THE SPEAKER:** My LoP, do not go on a fishing expedition.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** No, I am not -

**THE SPEAKER:** When you get what is being broadcast there, it is not what I have said. The broadcaster is broadcasting its own things. It is not — if you want — if you want, go to the *Hansard* and get it from there, it will be authentic. I can assure you that once you have it, and it is authentic, this country has my apology.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Most obliged. That is why I said - you see, even in court, we table evidence and then there can be a ruling on the evidence. When you ask me for evidence, I have just executed my duty to table it. You are going to examine it, Madam Speaker.

Finally-

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, incidentally, your statement that day was expunged from the *Hansard* because there was nobody to elaborate on it, and you had already left the House. Going back to the coffee Bill - you have gone back to the Coffee Bill?

**MR SSENKYONYI:** No.

**THE SPEAKER:** Actually, coffee prices have gone up. (*Laughter*)

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Madam Speaker, as I wrap up-

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, what Hon. Ssemujju wants to raise - first, give him time. It is a very serious matter.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Let me just wrap up, and my colleague comes on. I am just wrapping up with the final issue. You have mentioned what I wanted to say, that you expunged remarks from the *Hansard* about a claim that I made of security operatives raiding the chambers of Parliament after the media was chased away, lights switched off, and our colleagues, including women, were bundled up by men and all that.

I said, "Madam Speaker, who are these?" - who, in my view, were security operatives and you said that that was a defamatory statement because these are not operatives.

I said, "Well, good enough, the Speaker is our leader here. There are cameras here that can help us understand who raided this place and who manhandled Hon. Aisha and all the other people who were manhandled." I know that there are cameras in here but I said that I will still put it on the recording. I have a compact disk (CD) here and a flash disk of people who raided these, our chambers and manhandled people for you to examine and help us understand who they were.

Even right now, you have said that you do not know who these were. That worries me

the most because you are the head of this institution; you are our leader and our safety is, to a greater extent, your responsibility.

If my Speaker does not know who raided this place and manhandled Members of Parliament, I am very worried. I hope that you will follow up because the evidence is here, as I have tabled it, for you to follow up and help us understand.

If my Speaker does not know, then who knows? Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable Leader of the Opposition, that evidence is not admissible. What is admissible is an official report, that is under rule 228. What you could do is to write to the Clerk of Parliament and ask for all that happened in the precincts of Parliament on that day. Please, do that.

In the VIP public gallery this afternoon, we have Hon. Samuel Bitangaro, a former Member of Parliament of Bufumbira South. He is accompanied by his spouse, Barbra, and they are here to witness Hon. Grace Akifeza take an Oath. You are most welcome.

In the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of family members, relatives, and friends who have come to witness the swearing-in of Hon. Grace Akifeza, the Kisoro District Woman Representative. Please stand up. You are most welcome.

She is now the Member of Parliament who was elected for Kisoro. Congratulations Hon. Grace. You are most welcome. Join me in welcoming them. (*Applause*)

In the Public Gallery, we have Rukoba United Group from Lower Madi Constituency in Madi-Okollo. You are most welcome. (*Applause*) They are represented by Hon. Ronald Afidra Olema and Hon. Joanne Okia Aniku and Hon. Isaac Etuka. Thank you for coming all the way from the West Nile.

Do you want to greet your people?

2.35

**MR RONALD AFIDRA (NRM, Lower Madi County, Madi-Okollo):** Madam Speaker, it is a great pleasure for me, together with my honourable colleagues, to take this distinguished honour to see my own who made me what I am and sent me in this House - *(Applause)*- being present to witness the proceedings of the House being chaired by you.

The group you see here is one of the young men and women who make ends meet by cutting used tyres, making them into different items; this is how they survive. They pay school fees and make ends meet.

It is out of that that they made their contributions to support me. I am so grateful for you. *(Applause)* This is the Parliament you sent me and the rest of the team to. I look forward to 2026 being sent back. *(Laughter)* You are welcome.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

2.36

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Let me also take this opportunity to welcome you and the rest of the colleagues from the short recess we have been in. In your communication, you indicated that you would like us to present the National Budget Framework Paper at the earliest opportunity.

I wish to inform the House that the preparations are underway and from our side, we should be able to lay the National Budget Framework Paper on Thursday, 12 December 2024. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, in the Public Gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation from Malera Subcounty, Local Council III in Bukedea District, composed of councillors, elders and technical staff.

They are represented by the Speaker of the LC III and the subcounty Deputy Speaker, Hon. Joan Alupo. They are represented here by Hon. Ikojo John Bosco- *(Applause)*- and me, my good self. *(Laughter)* Join me in welcoming my people. They are the reason I am here; bring me back unopposed. *(Laughter)*

Hon. Ibrahim -

2.38

**MR IBRAHIM SSEMUJJU (FDC, Kira Municipality, Wakiso):** Thank you, Madam Speaker-*(Interruption)*

**MR ENOS ASIIMWE:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I am seeking your guidance; Rule 54, Statements by Members. It says that any statement by a Member shall be presented on Thursday and today is a Tuesday.

Rule 73 talks about the sub-judice rule. We already have an intimation of what he is going to present, the case is already in court.

**THE SPEAKER:** Why are you legislating in anticipation?

**MR ENOS ASIIMWE:** Madam Speaker, the Leader of the Opposition mentioned a matter related to what you stopped him from concluding, and you said that Hon. Ssemujju is going to raise it.

The reason I wanted to raise that matter at that time was because it is in court. So, I wonder whether we are not against rule 73 of our Rules of Procedure.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable member, out of respect, let us listen to each other, and we will get a ruling to that effect. Let us not legislate in anticipation.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. The honourable colleague raising the point of procedure is a neighbour in my village and has not been able to shed the old habits of Resident District Commissioners. *(Laughter)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Give us the statement.



**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, this statement on the Abduction of Dr Kiiza Besigye from Nairobi, Kenya, on 16 November 2024” is being presented in line with rules 25(l) and (m), 59 and 64 of our Rules of Procedure.

Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye, the former President of the Forum for Democratic Change, four-time presidential candidate and now one of the promoters of the People’s Front for Freedom (PFF) was abducted from Nairobi, Kenya on November 16, 2024.

He had travelled to Nairobi at the invitation of Martha Karua, leader of the National Alliance of Kenya (NAK) political party and former Kenyan Minister for Justice.

Dr Besigye was scheduled to speak at the launch of Martha Karua’s book, “*Against the Tide*.” He and Hajj Obed Lutale Kamulegeya, a senior PFF leader, were abducted from a Riverside Apartment in Westlands, where he was attending a brief meeting before proceeding to dinner for Hon. Karua’s book launch.

He was then driven across borders by his captors. His passports, national identification card, wallet and other belongings remained at the Waridi Paradise Hotel, where he had been booked. Dr Besigye did not or was not made to undergo immigration protocols on the Kenyan or Ugandan immigration sides.

The news of his missing started circulating three days after his abduction on Tuesday, 19 November 2024. He was then miraculously arraigned before a military disciplinary committee, commonly known as the “Court Martial”, on Wednesday, 20 November 2024. Charges of possession of two pistols - which we learnt that day is a monopoly of Uganda People’s Defense Forces (UPDF) - were read to him and his co-accused.

They are also charged with holding meetings in Switzerland, Greece, and Nairobi for purposes of undermining the security of Uganda.

Madam Speaker, the abduction of Dr Besigye has been condemned widely by the United

Nations, lawyers, human rights defenders, democracy-seeking organisations and individuals. Even the Uganda Human Rights Commission has condemned this abduction and demanded his immediate release.

I call upon you, Madam Speaker and the House to join the world in condemning this heinous crime of abduction. Condemned because there are laws, both international and domestic, that govern extradition and deportation. In this case, the Ugandan, Kenyan and international laws were not followed. Only criminals can do this.

You may not be concerned with Dr Besigye but be concerned with the state continuing to act criminally. I would like to emphasise that point. You may not be concerned with Dr Besigye but you should be concerned with the state continuing to act criminally.

Madam Speaker, I raised the issue of the 36 PFF members that were abducted from Kisumu in this House. They were handcuffed and driven across borders in a similar manner. The three women who were part of this group were not allowed to ease themselves for 14 hours. When they were finally allowed, it was male soldiers who were pulling their knickers down and ordering them to urinate as they remained handcuffed. They were later charged with terrorism.

Madam Speaker, we are concerned with the continuing human rights violations by the NRM government, including ministers walking into jails and making people confess to crimes they have not committed and then getting the NRM chairman to pardon them. All these things concern us, and they should concern every Member of Parliament.

This Parliament should also demand an explanation from Kenya - even Hon. Chris was abducted, and I went to see him at Jinja Road. They had denied him simple things, including slippers - that giant you see there. *(Laughter)*

Madam Speaker, this Parliament should also demand for an explanation from Kenya - you

know, he was representing us in finding out how Hon. Nebanda died and they charged him with stealing body parts.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is that part of your statement? *(Laughter)*

**MR SSEMUJJU:** No, I was informing him to sit down and listen to the statement.

**THE SPEAKER:** Maybe he wanted to compliment on what -

**MR SSEMMUJJU:** I am sorry, Madam Speaker. We are concerned with the continuing human rights violations by the NRM government. This must stop. We demand for an explanation from the Government.

This Parliament should also demand an explanation from Kenya on whether it still subscribes to the East African Community brotherhood.

The Minister of Internal Affairs, who heads Immigration, and the Ministers of Foreign Affairs and Defence must be made to explain to this Parliament this incident and to the country. Thank you.

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

2.47

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obuga):** Madam Speaker – *(Member rose\_)*

**THE SPEAKER:** You will come, let him first respond.

**MR OBUGA:** I am alive to the fact that the issue substantially raised by Hon. Ssemujju Nganda is a matter before a court established through an Act of Parliament – The Uganda Peoples’ Defence Forces Act.

What I can confirm on behalf of the Government is what is already in the public domain: Col (Rtd) Dr Kiiza Besigye was arrested, produced in court, charged, remanded to Luzira Prison, and will be brought back to court on 2 December 2024.

On the call for condemnation, I wish to persuade my honourable colleague that it may be too early. The matter before court will be the subject of evidence and prosecution, and the outcome will definitely be known. So, it may be too early for us to condemn.

However, what I can also advise is that let us accept to always play within the rules. Hon. Ssemujju and I are sportsmen. We always play within the rules. At times, you invite the referee to warn you verbally, or you are given a yellow card. However, if you are a habitual offender, you are red-carded. Therefore, let us advise fellow countrymen and women to always play within the rules.

The question is - just like Balotelli scored against Manchester United and he pulled a t-shirt written on – “Why always me scoring against Manchester United?” Why always you and not me or her? Why always you? That must be a fundamental question. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes, Counsel? Not the junior one but the senior.

2.49

**MR ASUMAN BASALIRWA (JEEMA, Bugiri Municipality, Bugiri):** Madam Speaker, I thank you. I have listened to the response of the Government Chief Whip, and we are all aware that this is a matter before court. However, there are two fundamental issues that the Government should make a statement on and clarify; one that relates to our relationship with Kenya, especially in light of the fact that we have an extradition treaty with that country. How safe are Ugandans? Now, that is outside the purview of subjudice if you really want to hide under that.

Secondly, there is the element of -

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Basalirwa, the Government will make a statement without going into the merits of the case. The Government should come with a statement without going into the merits of the case.

**MR BASALIRWA:** I thank you for that because I did not hear the Government Chief Whip undertake to make a statement but as they come, they must also comment on the apparent illegalities of people, a supposed criminal or a suspect, as you want to prescribe him, being brought back into the country and does not undergo the due immigration processes of having their documents stamped by immigration officers - because that in itself is a crime under our laws.

Therefore, those are things you must comment on for the purposes of assuring the country that whatever happened was undertaken in total observance and adherence to the immigration laws and other laws as they exist in our region. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. The ministers of Foreign Affairs, Defence, and the one for Veteran Affairs will make a statement to that effect. Let us not discuss what is before court.

In the VIP gallery this afternoon, we have Hon. Ambassador James William Kinobe, a former Member of Parliament of Katikamu North, accompanied by his spouse, Mrs Mary Kinobe. They are here to witness the swearing-in of Hon. Grace Akifeza. You are most welcome. Thank you for coming. (*Applause*)

2.52

**MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (NRM, Lwemiyaga County, Ssembabule):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I have lived for a while in this country. I recently saw -

**THE SPEAKER:** The minister bringing a statement is not actually for Defense but for Internal Affairs.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Not so long ago, we had a case of one Jamil Mukulu who was arrested in Tanzania for terrorism, and the due process was followed for him to be brought back to face trial in the country.

Madam Speaker, not so long ago, we had a big problem in this country with our neighbour Rwanda, where the top police officers were

arrested and court-martialled for allegedly participating in the abduction of Rwandans who are in Uganda. That should form the framework for today's discussion.

How have we degenerated to that as a country? I do not know what is happening to those manning the security of this country. Why are the things that we thought would not happen now forming the headlines on BBC and the international media?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ssekikubo?

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Yes, Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** I had made a ruling on that to wait for the report and then we discuss it.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Most obliged, Madam Speaker. However, there are those that attack the innocent conscience of Ugandans that may not wait. If the Government was proactive, they would even have demanded to be placed on the Order Paper, but they have not. Once they keep quiet, we have no other option but to put it to the Government and those manning our security circles -

**THE SPEAKER:** That is why we have put it to the Government to bring an explanation to that effect.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Yes, but to show that even this side, we are not complicit with what happens. That abuse of the due process, Madam Speaker, should cut across the entire Parliament.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** We cannot see what is happening.

**THE SPEAKER:** *Mama* Mabira?

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Going back to what happened in the 80s and the -

**THE SPEAKER:** Yes.

**MR SSEKIKUBO:** Ministers cannot sit when this is happening – (*Interjections*) – Okay, then come and tell the country. (*Laughter*)

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You have already guided on the matter that the Government comes up with a statement without touching on matters of *subjudice*. Therefore, I think we can have a debate when that statement comes.

The reason I rose was to clarify; Hon. Ssemujju Nganda asserted that I was abducted by the Government because I stole body parts.

For the record, in the Ninth Parliament, our colleague, Hon. Cerinah Nebanda, died. May her soul continue to rest in peace. I was a Parliamentary Commissioner then. The Parliamentary Commission, family and police had a tripartite arrangement in establishing the cause of death.

However, in the process, the State thought that some of the steps we took, especially to send samples outside the country, which is a normal practice within the medical profession, were irregular and unlawful. Indeed, I was arrested. (*Interjection*) Yes, I was arrested together with other colleagues. We appeared in court for nine months and it ruled that we had no case to answer. (*Applause*) Hon. Katuntu was my lawyer. Therefore, I just wanted to clarify -

**THE SPEAKER:** Actually, Hon. Brenda was your surety.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** My surety, yes. I just wanted to clarify that I was not abducted but I was arrested. I did not steal. I told the State then that I was a medical professional and I knew what I was doing was correct. I went through the due process of court and I was declared innocent.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** Therefore, Hon. Ssemujju, from now onwards, just know I have no regrets. I am not angry or annoyed but I follow the due process of the law.

Like the Government Chief Whip has said, we all talk of respect for the rule of law. Since our senior brother, Dr Besigye, has been produced in court, leave the process to take its course without Parliament injuring it. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. LoP?

2.58

**THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Joel Ssenyonyi):** Madam Speaker, it is good you have ruled that the Government should come up with a comprehensive statement on this matter. I would like to suggest an addition to that statement. The Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary of Kenya, Mr Sing'Oei Korir, at a press conference, said Kenya had no involvement whatsoever in the arrest of Dr Kiiza Besigye. The Government should explain to us how it went to Kenya without their authorisation and picked Dr Kiiza Besigye.

This is because the Foreign Affairs Principal Secretary mentioned that. It will be important for that explanation to come through because Uganda cannot keep going wherever and picking up people.

Finally, Madam Speaker, you need to guide the Government on when to bring this statement. Otherwise, they might take donkey's years and not bring that statement conveniently.

**THE SPEAKER:** I have asked the Ministers for Internal Affairs and Foreign Affairs to bring the report. However, as of yesterday, I got a letter from Gen. David Muhoozi saying that he will be out of the country until Friday. So, can we have the statement on the Floor on Tuesday?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, did I hear you right when you said, Gen. Muhoozi, who is the state minister? There is a senior minister called Maj. Gen. (Rtd) Severino Kahinda Otafire.

**THE SPEAKER:** Can I hear from the Government? Maybe, they are ready to bring it tomorrow. Government, when shall you bring the statement?

3.00

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua):** Madam Speaker, your guidance is already on record. Permit us to bring the statement without injuring the substantive matter in court on Tuesday next week.

**THE SPEAKER:** Next item. Yes, procedure-

**MR MPUUGA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I love the fact that the Government Chief Whip talks about playing by the rules, which is a very good thing. I hope he is not rendering lip service to it.

In the House Plenary during the Third Session of the Second Meeting, particularly on Tuesday, 5 December 2023, the House debated and considered matters relating to a response by the then Leader of the Opposition on the subject matter of alleged enforced disappearance of persons.

From that debate, the House adopted four resolutions, that the House Committees on Human Rights and Defence and Internal Affairs investigate the violation of human rights in the various fishing communities across the country and report to the House.

Two that the learned Attorney-General reports to the House, in 30 days then, on the listed political prisoners and their continued detention without trial.

Three, the Minister for Internal Affairs reports to Parliament on the progress of the reported fresh investigations of the missing 18 persons; and

Four, the Uganda Human Rights Commission would reinvestigate the matter of the missing persons.

Madam Speaker, two issues from my procedure matter.

(i) That on issue two, the Government, by the prerogative of the President, released some political prisoners. I will not go into the nature of the condition thereof because

as a lawyer, that is a new precedent in our jurisprudence.

(ii) The Minister for Internal Affairs was supposed to make a report because they committed to investigating the 18 missing persons. It is 26 November 2024 but there is no report on the missing persons. The denial was debunked because I provided evidence of their existence and abduction.

May we get your guidance, on whether the Government vacated their former position and they are no longer the Government so that we can seek answers from another entity?

**THE SPEAKER:** Government -

3.04

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua):** Madam Speaker, we need to cross-check the records to affirm the House's decision. If we conclude that there are areas where we have not responded, we will call upon the respective sector ministers to respond. However, I remember, vividly, this subject matter being debated time and again, and to the best of my knowledge, we almost came to a conclusive end of it.

We shall look at the record and if the four decisions were of the House - I am happy that under two and three, you said some action had been taken. We must also applaud His Excellency the President because, upon conviction, he exercised the prerogative of mercy and granted mercy to the convicts because it is constitutional, and he exercised that right.

We will look through the record but we deliberated on this subject matter in my humble opinion to its logical conclusion. Maybe, if it is the House committees to report, then let them report on their findings.

**MR MPUUGA:** Madam Speaker, I quoted the *Hansard*, verbatim and I am surprised that my honourable brother does not have a record of what happened.

I desisted from debating the manner of release of the former prisoners because I did not want him to saunter into matters of law and how they were convicted. However, particularly on the missing 18 people, you do not have to have a bigger memory to remember that they are still missing and that there was a commitment to report on that.

The minister will probably have to recap, and there should be a timeline for him to respond immediately. It was the Minister for Internal Affairs who was supposed to report.

Now that he is coming on Tuesday with a statement, Madam Speaker, may it please you that you order him to come with both statements? This was a debate on 5 December, 2023. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Check the record and report to the House. Procedure-

**MS NAKUT:** Madam Speaker, while you were communicating about the 16 days of activism, I was reminded of a matter that rocked the media last week, of the utterances by the President of the Uganda Law Society, describing the Director of Public Prosecutions (DPP) based on her genitalia.

There are words I cannot say here for the record to capture *-(Interjections)-* described the DPP with her genitalia and referred it to her ethnicity. He added that “She is a pumpkin.” All my colleagues and I from Karamoja and all the women –

**THE SPEAKER:** It is not about a person from Karamoja, but every woman in this country.

**MS NAKUT:** Every woman has it. Madam Speaker, it is important that this Parliament pronounces itself before the practice of describing women using their genitalia becomes normal in our country. This Parliament must condemn it so that the Law Council takes-

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, listen.

**MS NAKUT:** Madam Speaker, the Members said that they did not watch the video, saying it was rumours. The President of Uganda Law Society, in describing the person of the DPP –

**THE SPEAKER:** I do not think you would love your children out there to hear what was said. Honourable members – Hon. Nakut, you finish.

**MS NAKUT:** Madam Speaker –[Mr Ssemujju: “Order.”]-

**THE SPEAKER:** On procedure?

**MS NAKUT:** I am on a procedural matter – and he is a senior Member of the House; he knows that when someone is on a procedural matter, you do not raise a point of order.

Madam Speaker, let this House pronounce itself on this matter. The president of Uganda Law Society cannot be left to say anything that he wishes concerning the person of the DPP or a woman in Uganda.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I am aware of the remarks that were made by the president of the Uganda Law Society. Uganda Law Society is established under an Act of Parliament. The Uganda Law Society Act, Cap. 276, Part IV, establishes a council and prescribes its powers. This matter can be better dealt with by the council that is established under that Act.

However, we ought to respect each other. The woman you are abusing today is either your mother, wife, daughter or your mother-in-law. Therefore, abusing a woman’s private parts that you used to come out through is very bad. And, the person you are attacking is somebody of a high calibre.

**MR SSENKYONYI:** Madam Speaker, I can see that you have clearly opened the can of worms. I, however, wanted to remind the Government, not on this issue – the can of worms that has been opened. The Government Chief Whip has come and said that the issue of political prisoners, the missing persons and the likes

came to an end. I just wanted to remind him that not long ago, when Hon. Balaam Barugahara was sworn in, he asked for the re-tabling of that list.

That time, I told him that that list was presented to the Prime Minister and that it was even in the Library of Parliament. He said: “You bring it again.” I said: “Okay, he might not know how we operate; let me get him another list.” He promised to give an update to this House. He should probably come and give an update to this House and tell us that: “Aah, what I did was to go and convince these people to accept and be freed.”

Then, he should also give us an update on John Bosco Kibalama, whom the Prime Minister conceded and said was arrested by the State.

Therefore, the Government needs to know that this matter did not end because you promised, through one of your ministers, Hon. Balaam, to give an update to this House. We still want that update, on the political prisoners and the missing persons.

Therefore, it has not ended, Hon. Obua; we are waiting for that update.

**THE SPEAKER:** It will come. Next item.

## BILLS FIRST READING

### THE FORENSIC EVIDENCE BILL, 2024

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I received a letter from the Minister of State for Internal Affairs, Gen. David Muhoozi, affirming that the Bill will be tabled by the Government Chief Whip. The Government Chief Whip will, therefore, Table the Bill.

*(Members rose\_)* Can we have the Bill, first? Hon. Katuntu, I want the revised rules in this House on Thursday.

3.13

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON RULES, PRIVILEGES AND DISCIPLINE (Mr Abdu Katuntu):** Much obliged, Madam Speaker. The report will be ready on Thursday.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. *(Members rose\_)* On what? You go ahead.

3.14

**THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua):** Madam Speaker, I move under rule 128 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament that the Bill entitled “The Forensic Evidence Bill, 2024” be read for the first time. The Bill is equally accompanied by the Certificate of Financial Implications, issued under Section 76 of the Public Finance Management Act, Cap. 171. I beg to lay the Bill on the Table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Pursuant to rule 129(1) of the Rules of Procedure, the Bill stands referred to the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs. The committee should process this Bill as per rule 129(2) of the Rules of Procedure. *[Mr Ssemujju: “Madam Speaker, you had allowed me to raise the procedural matter after the Bill.”]*

Yes?

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker –

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ekanya was first.

**MR EKANYA:** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Our Constitution and the rules establish protocols, and the President assigns the ministers tasks.

It is very strange, Madam Speaker, to find a minister of state directing the Government Chief Whip to table a Bill –

**THE SPEAKER:** Requesting.

**MR EKANYA:** ... and perform a task. Madam Speaker, I also find that the same Government Chief Whip, who is supposed to whip, including

the Prime Minister, has failed to do his work; he is now conducting the work of the Prime Minister and ministers.

Is the Government Chief Whip competent to perform his task, or is there something very strange that we do not understand?

**THE SPEAKER:** Hon. Ekanya, it is a collective responsibility in Cabinet. It is just you who has failed to work together with Katonga. *(Laughter)*

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, I thank you very much –[Mr Obua: Madam Speaker, Hon. Ekanya...”]- I am on a procedural issue, and I hope the Government Chief can also follow the rules.

**THE SPEAKER:** Let him, first, respond.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** But you allowed me first. He also needs to learn to be disciplined; he is just grabbing the microphone.

**MR OBUA:** Madam Speaker, Hon. Ekanya has gone on record, challenging the competence of the Government Chief Whip. I would like to state to you, my senior honourable colleague – because you came to this Parliament as the Youth MP for Eastern Region and I, equally, joined as the Youth Member of Parliament for Northern Region. My competence is not in doubt. I am competent 360 degrees – *(Applause)*- in all aspects. *(Laughter)*

**MR SSEMUJJU:** Madam Speaker, the procedural issue I am raising is that a while ago, when the Leader of the Opposition brought CDs and flash disks, you did not receive them. However, let me give a short background. We hosted the president of the Uganda Law Society, and he gave almost a 30-minute speech. Something was picked and posted on social media.

He had said that, actually, the reason he was bothered was that the DPP, instead of helping the women who were not allowed to ease themselves for 14 hours, and their knickers were pulled down by male UPDF soldiers –

instead their fellow women sanctioned charges of terrorism against them.

That is what the president of the Uganda Law Society was addressing. This Parliament must be much more serious than that. The procedural issue I am raising, Madam Speaker – *(Interjections)* A while ago, you said you were on a procedure – they cannot raise a point of order. You have forgotten quickly? *(Laughter)* The procedural issue I am raising, Madam Speaker -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I made a ruling to that effect. I made a ruling. We are not going to debate what we have already passed. I only requested us to have respect for each other. Let us have respect.

**MR SSEMUJJU:** I agree but it sounded like you were condemning the president of the Uganda Law Society, unheard.

**THE SPEAKER:** I did not condemn; I said there is separation of powers. They have an Act; they have a council – the law council. I did not condemn unless you are thinking of something else. Hon. Zijjan, welcome back.

## BILLS FIRST READING

### THE TECHNICAL AND VOCATIONAL EDUCATION AND TRAINING BILL, 2024

3.19

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (HIGHER EDUCATION) (Dr Chrysostom Muyingo):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I beg to move that the Bill entitled “The Technical and Vocational Education and Training Bill, 2024” be read for the first time in accordance to the Rules of Procedures of Parliament. I beg to move.

I also beg you that you allow me to lay on Table the certificate of financial implications and also lay on Table the gazetted part of the - I beg to lay. *(Laughter)*



**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, pursuant to rule 129(1) of the Rules of Procedure, the Bill stands referred to the Committee on Education and Sports. I urge them to report back within 45 days as per rule 129.

He has laid the Bill accompanied by a certificate of financial implications. Hon. Joan, I will allow you to speak. First sit. *Mukatuliki*, you will sit.

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE  
STATUS OF IMPLEMENTATION OF  
PHASE 5 OF THE NATIONAL BACKBONE  
INFRASTRUCTURE (NBI) AND UGANDA  
DIGITAL ACCELERATION PROJECT  
(UDAP) PROJECTS

**THE SPEAKER:** Pursuant to rule 52 of the Rules of Procedure, I invite the Minister of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance to present the statement. I hope the statement is uploaded.

3.23

**THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi):** Yes, Madam Speaker. We submitted it. Actually, this afternoon, I submitted an updated version of the statement and I hope the honourable members are able to access it on their iPads.

Madam Speaker, I am presenting a report on the status of implementation of Phase 5 of the National Backbone Infrastructure and the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project, which projects have been debated and approved by this House.

Number one; the Government of Uganda through the National Information Technology Authority - Uganda (NITA-U), which is an agency under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, is implementing the National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI) to:

- (i) Create a secure high-speed network connecting all government ministries,

departments and agencies; district local governments; municipal councils; hospitals; health centres; and schools across the country.

- (ii) To lower the cost of the Internet, hence the cost of doing business in Uganda.
- (iii) To deepen access to online Government services, as well as to attract investment in the ICT sector by private firms and individuals.

The National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI), is a critical component of Uganda's digital transformation strategy, providing the foundation for broadband connectivity across the country.

I will give you the status of the national backbone infrastructure.

- a) To date, we have had four phases of the NBI - that is why we are talking of Phase five. We have had four phases of the NBI, which have been successfully implemented, spanning a total distance of 4,298.87 kilometres of optical fibre cable, connecting over 1,567 government ministries, departments, and agencies; local governments; hospitals; health centres; schools; and target user groups amongst others.

I have provided Annex 1, which is a list of sites that have been connected to the national backbone infrastructure, showing the various districts and the agencies and departments which have been connected. The annex is attached to this report, which you should be able to access.

The National Backbone Infrastructure refers to the internet fibre, the optic fibre cable, which runs from Mauritius through the Indian Ocean and comes to Uganda through Kenya, and then we have been extending it to cover the whole country. When we talk of the NBI, we are simply referring to the internet fibre, the main source of internet. Because we are a landlocked country, we get it through Kenya and then we distribute to the rest of the country.

Madam Speaker, there are 53 district headquarters, which are currently connected to this national backbone infrastructure. I have also

provided Annex 2 gives a list of all the districts connected to the NBI. We have 146 districts, but we have so far connected 53, but the projects I am going to present are going to enable connection to the rest of the districts that have not been connected, which include Kanungu. Kanungu is not yet connected. That is where I come from.

I have provided a table, which summarises the various agencies and departments that have been connected- the MDAs, the local governments, the city councils, the municipal councils, town councils, sub-counties, universities, tertiary institutions, hospitals, and the other agencies. All these are in the annex, but here I have given a tabular presentation of the summary of these agencies.

- b) The NBI has been extended to 10 major border points of Uganda with neighbouring countries with Kenya at Busia and Malaba; South Sudan at Oraba and Elegu; the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) at Vurra, Goli, and Mpondwe; Tanzania at Mutukula, and; Rwanda at Katuna and Mirama Hills, respectively. We have connected this fibre optic to the neighbouring countries so that we are able to have seamless services at the border points facilitated by IT.

These border points have been connected to enhance access to services, customs clearance, immigration and e-visa applications, and communication at the border points, especially with the establishment of the one-stop border points at these locations.

There are 32 transmission NBI stations that have been built across the country. In addition to that, 300 Wi-Fi hotspot sites have also been implemented across the country. Madam Speaker, I have provided annex 3, which has a list of the last mile Wi-Fi sites across the country. These sites are where you can go and access the internet for free, and you are able to transact. I have a list of the various spots across the country where we have established these Wi-Fi hotspots.

The NBI is also currently utilised by 21 major internet service providers to deliver their respective network traffic. The sites connected to NBI are now able to access and utilise the various e-government services such as Internet Bandwidth, Integrated Financial Management Services, Data Centre Hosting Services, Human Capital Management System, e-government Procurement System, e-passport, e-visa, Health Management Information System, Education Management Information System, the Parish Development Model Online System, Building Industry Management System, and Unified Messaging and Collaboration System, among others.

Over the years, the cost of internet bandwidth has been reduced from \$300 in 2014 to the current \$35 per megabyte per second per month. That is the unit of measure we use. The Government, through our ministry, is committed to ensuring that the cost of the internet continues to get lower in order to create an environment where all of us can transact digitally.

I am sorry the map which was sent is black and white. It should have been coloured. I apologise. It should have been coloured to show this because that map is supposed to show the current connections of the NBI - because of the black and white - I had provided one which is coloured. I do not know whether the error was in Parliament or from my office, but I will endeavour to circulate a hard copy to all Members later, which currently shows where the NBI infrastructure is and what will be covered under phase 5 and what will be covered under the UDAP project. So, I apologise; the map there cannot be helpful because everything is dark.

The NBI is vital for ensuring that all regions benefit from the digital economy. Last mile connectivity, the final segment connecting the NBI to end users, is essential in achieving comprehensive access to e-government services.

What the map was basically intending to show - and I will share a copy later - is that we have

covered half of the country – 53 districts. The projects I am presenting are now going to enable us to cover the rest of the country. So, if our districts and communities are not yet on NBI, through these projects, we shall now be able to reach all the districts. In the annexes which I have given, you need to check and see whether this NBI has reached your district or not. If not, then we shall be able to extend the NBI in these two projects.

Madam Speaker, I now come to specifically answer a question, which was raised by Hon. Tom Aza because he was asking when these projects will reach West Nile. It is the basis for this statement that I am giving. I am now on page 5 of the statement.

The Government of Uganda, through NITA-U, under the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance, is currently in the process of implementing two major information and communication technology projects to achieve the digital agenda of the country, as enshrined in NDP III and now NDP IV which is being developed, the Digital Uganda Vision and other Government planning frameworks.

Like I said, we discussed these two projects in Parliament here because they are financed with external resources.

- a) The Uganda Digital Acceleration Project – (UDAP Project), and
- b) Phase V of the National Backbone Infrastructure Project.

The major aims of these two projects is to expand the National Backbone Infrastructure to the underserved and unserved regions of the country to deliver secure e-Government services to Government administrative units such as ministries, departments, agencies, local governments, parishes, sub-counties and other Government service centres such as schools, universities, hospitals and health centres, among others.

This is intended to deepen access to affordable e-Government services such as internet bandwidth and also spur the development and

adoption of online Government services, as well as attract investment within the ICT sector by the private players across the country. So, this is the major aim of Phase V.

On the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP), we report that Cabinet, on 29 August 2022, approved the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project. This project is being funded by the International Development Association or World Bank to the tune of US\$200 million, of which US\$60 million is a grant and US\$140 is a loan. The project was declared effective on 17 May 2023 and is currently under implementation.

The UDAP comprises three key components, as detailed below. I have presented the major components of this project supported by the World Bank in table form.

- a) Expanding digital connectivity. Under this, we shall also construct the National Backbone Infrastructure to the tune of 1,500 kilometres, and we should be able to connect up to 20 districts and towns.

We shall also do last-mile connectivity to 2,900 Government administrative units and service centres, and also create Wi-Fi hotspots to enable digital transactions.

The reason why we establish these hotspots is because you have centres like markets where our people, women, young people and Ugandans transact business using digital services. You have places like hospitals and universities where they need internet, so we provide free Wi-Fi in these spots.

So, that component is on digital infrastructure, including constructing 130 masts. There has been a concern about the lack of network in the parts of our constituencies. Through this project, we shall construct up to 130 masts to supplement what the private sector is providing. We have private companies whose business is to construct masts, but we have the National Broadband Policy, which requires them to cover 90 per cent of the areas where they work and 10 per cent is covered by the Government.

So, you will find there are areas which probably do not make business sense to them, but as the Government, we must provide a service to the people. Therefore, these masts, plus also what we support through the Uganda Communications Commission (UCC), are supposed to cover those areas where the private sector may not easily be attracted. Sometime back, I requested Members of Parliament to submit areas in their constituencies which do not have network. Many of you submitted, and we are processing these. I am presenting to you that we are going to work through this project – *(Interjection)* - No, I am saying many of you submitted areas in your constituencies which do not have network and we are working with the private sector, but also through – *(Interjection)* - Just hold on, do not say no. You are not the minister. *(Laughter)*

I am saying we are working because there are two major private players that are in the business of masts or towers; there is one called ATC and another one called Ubuntu. I have said that the National Broadband Policy mandates them to cover up to 90 per cent because they have national licenses. Then, the Government covers the 10 per cent. Usually, the 10 per cent is where they do not find business sense; maybe people are sparsely populated, and there are national parks. In that case, the Government has to come in because if the area is sparsely populated, the Government must provide a service.

Therefore, we are working with those private companies to provide masts in those areas, but also we have this resource that we are going to supplement and reach the constituencies that we have not reached. Basically, that component is on infrastructure.

We are also going to establish regional electronic waste collection and management centres. A question had been raised here earlier on e-waste management, and we are going to establish centres.

The second component of this World Bank supported project is to enable digital transformation of the Government to strengthen

e-government services. Here, we are going to expand the government system integration platform to an additional 20 government entities and also scale up e-government services like e-procurement and this will help us to curb corruption, which is largely facilitated by the procurement systems in this country.

Support the Government unified messaging and the collaboration system

We are addressing the digital authentication and electronic signatures platform, the e-payment systems and many other government transactions.

Here, basically, what we are saying is that we want to digitalise all government transactions so that we have a paperless Government that does its work through electronic systems.

This component is supposed to support the Government in strengthening e-government in all disciplines and all aspects of government work, as well as strengthening cyber security, data protection and privacy. We shall establish systems, tools, frameworks, standards and the security operations centre to address the downside of technology through cyber security and data protection.

The third component of this project, like I said, \$60 million out of the \$200 million is a grant. These days, the World Bank attaches grants, especially to address concerns of refugee-host communities. Therefore, component three of this project is promoting the digital inclusion of refugee-host communities. Many of you who represent communities where there are refugees will be getting support in this area so that we address issues of digital inclusion.

The project will also provide connectivity to support the government initiatives at grass-root levels, including PDM, the local government structures, health centres, institutions of learning, tourism sites and expansion of connectivity to support security initiatives like CCTV surveillance cameras to enhance and scale up the Government's efforts to combat cybercrime as well as protect the country's

cyberspace. Under the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP), connectivity will be extended to the Albertine region to support oil and gas exploration.

In terms of the updates, where are we with this project? If I start with UDAP, the project value, as I communicated earlier, is \$200 million, 60 million of which is grant funding.

The project received the first disbursement from the World Bank on 26 December, 2023 and commenced active operations in January 2024. Over the last 10 months, approximately \$94.67 million out of the 200 has been fully programmed and initiated, representing 47 per cent of movement on the project. Of the \$94.67 million, \$17.01 million worth of contracts have been signed and some have been fully implemented, especially supplies for project office.

Up to \$61.6 million worth of procurements are currently at the final stages of evaluation and the contracts are expected to be signed by March 2025, while \$16.06 million at NITA-U level review and should be awarded after March 2025.

Approximately \$105.33 million has been initiated and is being fast-tracked, of which \$72.85 million will be informed by five key upstream studies that have already commenced. Basically, what I am saying is that in the last 10 months, since the project started, NITA-U has been undertaking procurements. Maybe it is an issue we shall discuss again in the Parliament. The procurement processes still remain very lengthy in accordance with our procurement law. It is an issue that we may need to review as a Government and Parliament.

Madam Speaker and honourable members, the largest procurements, approximately 31 per cent of the overall project value, that is NBI extension, data centre upgrade, Bulk Internet, UGHub expansion, and e-services development framework, are part of the key procurements currently under the technical evaluation review stage and are to be contracted by the end of March 2025.

Additionally, five of the six key upstream studies informing the downstream procurements, valued at \$72.85 million, are under contract implementation, with the sixth to be signed soon, and transition to implementation. The technical committee is now reviewing and approving the new Section 2 concepts, and these should be concluded within the next two months.

NITA-U has internally optimised the procurement workflow process to between 45 to 50 per cent, which means processes that originally took 7.3 months will now take between 3.5 to 4.3 months to complete. That is from concept initiation to contract signing, etc. This will greatly impact positively on the project in terms of fast-tracking the implementation.

I have summarised this in a table which shows the set of activities which have been accomplished and the amount of resources that are to be expended and also the number of entities or activities involved.

I also provided information on the progress towards the achievement of effectiveness conditions, following the fulfilment of the conditions precedent highlighted in the table below, the World Bank declared the project effective on 17 May 2023.

I have also provided a table which shows the various effectiveness conditions as per the World Bank requirements and then the status of effectiveness condition.

For instance, condition number one is that the World Bank or IDA should be satisfied that the Government has an adequate refugee protection framework, and in the second column we show that there is that satisfaction.

The second condition is that a subsidiary agreement has been executed on behalf of the Government and the project implementing entity, and I am also showing when this agreement was signed by the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the relevant departments.

Condition number three is about the project's operation manual. It has been prepared and adopted by the Government and the project implementing entity in the form and substance acceptable to IDA, and this has been done.

I also provide information on progress toward the legal covenants of the PAD and show the activities like the activity of recruiting the project management implementation unit, the various specialists who have already been recruited to implement the project.

The table also shows the other activity of establishing and maintaining a project steering committee and technical committee, the responses are in the third column.

All the required preliminary activities, like preparing and furnishing the World Bank with the annual work plans and budgets, have been done. I think the honourable members can read that table to see the various activities and what has been done.

Under this project, we are also going to procure laptops to facilitate digital transformation. The status is that the process was going on but the individual who had tendered was dissatisfied with the decision. He appealed to PPDA and the Tribunal. And the Tribunal found merit in the appeal.

Now, NITA-U has appealed to court, so there is a court process regarding that procurement. This is common in this country, where people always seek court redress and appeals. This is part of the delays that occasion most of these procurements.

That is where we are in terms of the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP). UDAP, like I have said, has three components: building digital infrastructure, strengthening e-government systems, and addressing digital inclusion for the refugee-hosting communities.

The other project in the National Backbone Infrastructure(NBI)Phase 5 project is the optic fibre extension, which is supported by the

Export-Import (EXIM) Bank of China, to the tune of \$150 million.

This is a key Government project that seeks to further expand the NBI across underserved areas of Uganda. As I said earlier, this is Phase 5, funded to the tune of \$150 million. We expect to extend this internet fibre to the rest of the country so that communities that are not yet hooked on this NBI can get connected.

Under Phase 5 of the NBI/EGI, the following activities will be undertaken.

- a. Expansion of the backbone. We intend to extend and build up to 5,845.75 kilometres of optical fibre cable, covering an additional 63 districts across the country. There are other districts which will be covered by the other World Bank supported up to 20 and when you add what is already covered, we should be able to cover the whole country.
- b. We shall also build 21 NBI transmission sites across the country.
- c. We also do what we call last-mile connections. Last-mile connections mean that you have the main transmission routes, like, say, Kampala-Masaka-Mbarara; that is the main transmission route. But there are roads that lead to districts and communities. We shall be building the main transmission optic fibre but also do last-mile connections to districts, health facilities, schools, and other public installations.
- d. We shall extend connectivity to all sub-counties across the country and
- e. Expand the Wi-Fi coverage by an additional 1,754 public Wi-Fi sites across the country and also install solar power in all the new NBI transmission sites as an alternative source of power, upgrade the network monitoring system and environmental management system for the entire network.
- f. We shall also build a data centre in Namanve, so that we upgrade the existing data centre,

- g. Purchase service access equipment for special interest groups, target user groups, to access e-government services.

Madam Speaker, this project was presented to the Cabinet on 14 August 2023, it was presented to this House by the Committee on National Economy, approved on the 6 December 2023 and Parliament also cleared it.

However, there have been back-and-forth discussions to conclude everything. The China Exim Bank issued the Notice of Effectiveness Certificate for the loan on 18 September 2024, declaring the project to be effective.

Much as we approved it in December last year, the processes which followed could only enable us to have the bank clear the project in September this year, just a few months ago.

In accordance with the financing requirements for the loan, NITA-U procured and signed an agreement with the contractor who will implement the project. NITA-U and the contractor have already commenced preparatory activities to commence the implementation of the project.

His Excellency, the President is expected to be in Karamoja just next week, and according to the schedule that we have, on the 4<sup>th</sup> of December, we shall be officially launching this Phase 5 project of extending the Backbone in Moroto, in Karamoja.

Therefore, the NBI/EGI Phase 5 project is planned to be implemented within four years from the effective date of the commercial contract between NITA-U and the contractor.

Madam Speaker, we are just beginning the implementation of this project. We want to interest members to keep in touch with our ministry to ensure that all our districts get connected. We shall connect all the districts, but just to update you on the progress so that we move together. I will regularly be coming to the House to give updates so that our communities can get connected for internet.

The final part of my presentation just speaks to the expected benefits of these two projects. I will maybe just read the headings without going into too much detail. The expected benefits from these projects include, but are not limited to, the following:

- i. Increased network coverage and regional connectivity. As we all appreciate, Madam Speaker, the future is digital, and we cannot run away from digital services now.

So, once we conclude the implementation of these projects, we should be able to have better network coverage across the whole country.

- ii. Reduction in the cost of internet bandwidth. The challenge we still face, as a country and the developing world, is that, yes, as we go digital, you find that some of these services, including the internet – the data bundles – are still expensive for ordinary Ugandans.

Once we expand the infrastructure and get many people hooked onto these services, this, plus other measures, will enable us to see the cost of the internet go down so that we have a favourable ecosystem that can enable all of us to transact, digitally, in this country.

- iii. Improved efficiency of digital service delivery in the public sector. As I have indicated, strengthening e-government services is one of the components of the Uganda Digital Acceleration Project (UDAP).

We are steadily moving from analog and manual processes to digital services. I am sure some of you have gone to, say, process a land title or get a driving permit. You appreciate that systems have now improved because you can be served in a much shorter and more efficient way and, maybe, with less risk of corruption.

We believe that if we can digitise all our systems that is one way of curbing corruption because we minimise person-to-person interactions when Ugandans are seeking services.

- iv. We hope to get increased investments from the private sector because connectivity and the digital ecosystem is one aspect that attracts the private sector and investors to come and invest in this country.
- v. Once we address this expanded connectivity, we shall have increased innovation, especially from our young people. Under our ministry, we have an innovation fund that we provide to those who are interested or are competent in the field of Information and Communication Technology (ICT). Our young people are coming up with innovations, and we must support them through connectivity.
- vi. The other benefit is having a centralised data centre hosting and disaster recovery services. Through these projects, we are going to construct data centres and are also preparing another project to build what we call a “government cloud.”

Data centres and clouds are basically like stores for data. In ordinary language, a cloud is a much more advanced way of storing data. Through these projects, we are going to build data centres and hope that in the near future, we shall also have a government cloud so that we can store all our data and information domestically.

You find that some governments store their data outside - even agencies here – yet we are speaking of digital sovereignty, where we should protect the information and the data so that it is stored within the country.

- vii. The last benefit, as I conclude, is that these projects will enable us to have cyber security enhancement and data

protection and privacy, which are very key components in the digital transformation.

In conclusion, Madam Speaker, I want to state, on behalf of the ICT sector, that we appreciate the support Parliament has continued to give us and also request that we continue working together because, like I have said, the future is digital. Technology is what is facilitating transformation all over the world.

We still have a digital divide between the developed world and the countries in Sub-Saharan Africa, and we are doing all it takes to see that we build the infrastructure, address digital illiteracy and create competence in the population so that we can be able to go digital – so that the digital transformation can be able to drive the development and transformation of our society.

Thank you. We will be ready to answer any questions for clarification.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, honourable minister. Can we hear from the shadow minister?

4.05

**THE SHADOW MINISTER OF INFORMATION AND ANTI-CORRUPTION (Ms Helen Nakimuli):** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank -

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, after getting both reports, this is what will help the sectoral committee on ICT in its oversight role. Yes, Hon. Helen?

**MSNAKIMULI:** Thank you, Madam Speaker, for this opportunity. I thank my honourable colleague for the elaborate report, only that a few aspects have been left out. Since this side, where I stand, is supposed to check you, I am obliged to do so.

He gave us a good report but left out some that I am going to throw more light on. One, I thank you that you are going to connect all the districts, inclusive of the islands because our



network connection is really bad. We thank you for that and we believe it is going to happen soon, for security purposes.

Madam Speaker, allow me to read this verbatim. We have very many challenges when it comes to this phase –

**THE SPEAKER:** You read your document.

**MS NAKIMULI:** Thank you. I am going to read the challenges or the emerging issues from his report.

Before the COVID-19 pandemic, the United Nations Trade and Development, which is an intergovernmental organisation within the United Nations Secretariat that promotes the interests of developing countries in world trade, warned about the climbing debt burden of the low developing countries, honourable minister, and it also states that it undermines the service delivery, especially when it comes to education and health issues.

Their debts have not only grown - that is, the debts of the low-developing countries – but they have also become costly and riskier. Between 2011 and 2019, developing countries' debts service tripled to \$33 billion, which represents between five per cent and 13 per cent of the value of their exports.

The pandemic has exacerbated the situation with LDCs debt repayment set to hit \$43 billion in 2022. Such a burden will jeopardise their COVID-19 recovery efforts and sup the public funds needed to fight poverty and invest in essential infrastructure such as roads and hospitals.

Honourable minister, we are very much aware that Uganda's history, when it comes to debt repayment, is not as good. Even when we get loans – when this Parliament passes loans – we do not use them accordingly; we mismanage these funds.

I am not sure if we are going to use that loan properly in this phase. I invite you, honourable colleague, to make sure the ministry uses this money appropriately to best serve Ugandans.

There is also an issue of insufficient staff. Now that the NITA-U has been rationalised - this project is very big and yet you have limited staff - I would like to know - from this side, how you are going to handle this project with limited staff because it looks huge and yet it is going to serve the entire nation.

Then, there is an issue of confusion between Uganda Telecommunications Corporation Limited (UTCEL) and Soliton. How have you managed to handle and get to Phase Five without solving this issue of UTCEL and Soliton? I need you to give us that information.

Honourable minister, there is lack of coordination and linkage with other regional institutions. You will find that the National Identification and Registration Authority (NIRA) will have information about a Member of Parliament but when you want to access it elsewhere, you may not be able to because there is no interconnection.

You also talked about 300 Wi-Fi hotspots. Madam Speaker, we are aware that we have about 580 Wi-Fi hotspots, said to be functioning operationally - but they are not. I implore you, honourable minister, to get your phone - if you can and look for "MYUG". It is one of those networks you say are functional and are operating.

I would like you to help me get your phone, access "MYUG" and see if you will get connected. You will not and yet this is supposed to be in the urban centres – it is supposed to - we are saying we have 580 hotspots that are connected, but they are not working.

How sure are we that the 300 will be connected and our people will get connected to the required service? I need you to clarify that.

There is also an issue of lack of coordination among the different ministries. For example, if the Ministry of ICT wants to connect the National Backbone Infrastructure (NBI) Project, they will have to dig and go through the roads. You find a road has just been constructed but now they want to put a line through it. Why don't you coordinate with the other ministries

to see - I mean, there is no coordination between, for example, the Ministry of Works and Transport and the Ministry of Information, Communications Technology and National Guidance. You will find that we are destroying a road – last time, my car got an issue because I hit a hump that was installed and I was not aware of it because there was an optic fibre passing through it.

I think the ministries should be able to work hand-in-hand, such that the people of Uganda get the service required.

Madam Speaker, with that said, I would like to thank you for giving me this opportunity. And I request the minister to give me a response. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable minister, could you first respond to that? First respond so that you do not repeat what has been responded to.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** Thank you, honourable shadow minister and I would like to confirm that she shadows me very well. *(Laughter)*

She has made a number of points, which I would like to quickly respond to. Firstly, she said that the history of using loans in this Government is known to be poor and bad but that is not true.

We have always - especially through the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development - accounted to this House how the loans which we approve are utilised and we always appear before the various committees of the House to explain.

Committees have always gone to the ground to check where the money that you approve is expended. We, therefore, have a good record and are not listed among the countries that are highly indebted or unable to pay back the loans. We are actually paying back these loans – we have never reached the threshold which shows the red light or surpassed it. We are within good limits of paying back the loans.

You raised the issue of insufficient staff. First of all, we appreciate Parliament because when we were debating rationalisation - because of these two major projects which are being undertaken by NITA-U. We gave them three years - we rationalised it, but said that commencement shall be three years after the law has been gazetted. This is one of the reasons why we requested Parliament to approve that - so that they are able to implement these projects and are not disrupted.

Therefore, on the issue of staffing, I indicated in my report—especially under UDAP—that NITA-U has recruited a project management unit. I listed a number of expert staff members who will work with the existing staff of NITA-U to implement the projects. They are also supported by the ministry, which has other agencies like Uganda Communications Commission (UCC) and Posta Uganda, and they work collaboratively.

If we see any human resource gaps, we will definitely be able to recruit additional experts on contract to implement these projects.

The issue of NIRA having information about US citizens, which is not available in other agencies, is going to be resolved through the citizen registration undertaking that NIRA is preparing.

I think the Minister of Internal Affairs briefed the House earlier that the Ministry of Internal Affairs is procuring kits and equipment that are going to enable NIRA to undertake a major exercise to register all citizens in this country. In this registration, we are going to capture details - including fingerprints for biometrics, the iris and facial recognition. What we expect is that NIRA will process a new identity card that will have all these features and will be an e-card. We are working with them so that if you have that card, and you go to Mulago Hospital, they do not have to ask you what your name is, where you come from or how old you are.

By inserting that card in the system, we should be able to get all this information. If you are at the airport, present the card and they should be

able to get this information. That is where we are going to through the project which is going to be undertaken by NIRA.

Yes, so true, at the moment, we have not reached there, but that is where we are going; so that you do not have to be asked questions everywhere you go for a service. The system should have your information.

Whether the Wi-Fi hotspots are not functional - you present as if a hotspot is the whole town of Kampala. No, they are specifically designated hotspots, and you must know where the hotspot is. That is why I have provided a list of where they are - but I will cross-check. I have not been to all these hotspots so, I will cross-check and if they are not working, then we should make them functional, as we have said.

Finally - the Speaker is saying I have little time. I must summarise to enable other Members to make their comments. With leave of the Speaker *-(Interjections)-* the Speaker has already cautioned me to summarise. Okay.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Thank you, Madam Speaker and the honourable minister. While in Kisoro, we were friends, though both of us lost miserably. Now, with the information, you are refusing.

Madam Speaker, the information I am giving the minister is that, yes, hotspots are there, but there is still another challenge. Normally, when you want Wi-Fi, it should not come to my phone directly if I have never requested it.

What is happening now is that whenever we go on our phones to do something, this Wi-Fi comes and asks for passwords. So, I pray that they upgrade the system so that someone can access it as he demands and when he wishes to have it. That is the best way. Thank you. I hope you have got me, honourable minister.

**THE SPEAKER:** You must differentiate between open and secure Wi-Fi. Do you get it? For example, when you reach Entebbe, you will find one that is free, but if you go to a place like Parliament here because we pay for it, you

will be required to put in a password.

**MR SSEWUNGU:** Madam Speaker, what I am saying is actually what you are also confirming.

**THE SPEAKER:** So you want a free one?

**MR SSEWUNGU:** There are so many which are demanding passwords, which we do not have, but they are on their system. The minister is accepting that they can work on that challenge. It is just about improvement, and you move on. He has got it. Welcome back from -

**THE SPEAKER:** Free access to the Internet.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** I am not sure whether Hon. Ssewungu is IT-savvy. I will have to sit with him and check. The government's Wi-Fi hotspots are not supposed to ask for the password. This is free Wi-Fi, but I will cross-check if there are any corrections we must make.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you very much. Hon. Kateshumbwa - I thought you had finished responding.

**DR BARYOMUNSI:** I had given way. Okay, since the shadow minister is comfortable with my response, I can rest my case.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, as I said, they are giving us an update. If you want to get more, go to the sectoral committee and do oversight and make a follow-up on what has been done and what is yet to be done because he is telling you this is what we are going to do. They have not done it. So do your oversight.

4.19

**MR DICKSONS KATESHUMBWA (NRM, Sheema Municipality, Sheema):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the honourable minister for the statement. I would like to say that as you extend the internet, there are areas which you hinted at, honourable minister. For example, the tourist sites. You know that some of the challenges

that we have in these sites is that for you to erect a mast in a protected area, they have to pay another Government entity rent for the year, which sometimes becomes another issue.

Therefore, if you want to have access, you must make sure that you coordinate as Government and ensure that you do not have people who are interested in making money and not interested in helping your ICT sector to serve the purpose.

Madam Speaker, as the minister presented, 47 percent of the loans he has talked about have been spent. What I noted, honourable minister, is that your report is largely a procurement activity that has been done. As Parliament, we would like to be interested in the impact because this is a loan we have to pay back.

Therefore, in your next update, you need to tell us - you have spent 47 per cent, but what does it mean in terms of access, the areas that have been covered, in terms of the cost but also in terms of affordability - not the procurement activities, the project management teams because these are not the core purpose for which this loan was acquired.

Finally, we are extending the Internet to Ugandans. I do not know whether your ministry has done a study to understand what Ugandans use the Internet for. The Internet should be an enabler in production, a key factor in production. So, we have to sensitise our citizens.

We have seen in some countries like Australia where they are bringing laws to curb the misuse of social media, especially by minors. As we extend the internet all over the country, we must be aware of the risks, misuse, and maybe encourage Ugandans to use this internet productively. Thank you very much.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, I have said we are going to have this at the sectoral committee level. I do not even know what you are discussing. In the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of head teachers from inter-government fiscal transfer operational seed schools. They are here to

observe the proceedings of the House.

As you are aware, we have a petition. My office has a petition where the head teachers in seed schools have been there for a longer period. When the schools are now completed, they are chased and transferred, not even recruited.

Honourable minister, that item is going to be on the Order Paper tomorrow—the issue of transferring the head teachers from where they have been. You could not remove them when the schools were not finished, but now you have decided to remove them because people want to put their own. Thank you for coming.

Next item - You have very serious matters to handle.

## LAYING OF PAPERS

### I) THE ANNUAL BUDGET PERFORMANCE REPORT FY 2023/2024

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, Section 18 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 requires the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to report to Parliament at the end of October and February on the performance of the Budget. However, the end of October this year coincided with our recess hence delaying the tabling of the Budget Report. Now the minister is here to lay it.

4.25

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay on the Table the Annual Budget Performance Report for the Financial Year 2023/2024 - Vote 020 to Vote 163. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, pursuant to Rule 173(2)(h) of the Rules of Procedure, this stands referred to the Committee on Budget.

**MR MUSASIZI:** Madam Speaker, in the same vein, I beg to lay the Annual Budget

Performance Report for Financial Year 2023/2024 - Votes 163 to 617. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Referred to the Committee on Budget.

**MR MUSASIZI:** Lastly, I lay on the Table the Annual Budget Performance Report for Financial Year 2023/2024 from Votes 001 to 020. I beg to lay.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Please, lay, and I refer to the Committee on Budget. Is it possible to circulate electronic copies to Members?

**MR MUSASIZI:** Madam Speaker, we have the soft copy version, which we shall send to the Committee on Budget.

**THE SPEAKER:** Send it to the committee so that the Members get to understand it.

II) THE ANNUAL MACROECONOMIC AND FISCAL PERFORMANCE REPORT, FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/2024

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, just as I said previously, Section 18 of the Public Finance Management Act, 2015 also requires the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to report to Parliament on the macroeconomic and fiscal policy of the economy.

Honourable minister? Hon. Gorreth, your “size-mate” is not here today. *(Laughter)* Where is Hon. Ogwang?

4.28

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING, AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. I beg to lay on Table the Macroeconomic and Fiscal Performance Report for the Financial Year 2023/2024.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. This is referred to the Committee on Budget.

III) THE HEALTH SERVICE COMMISSION ANNUAL REPORT FOR THE FINANCIAL YEAR 2023/2024

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, Article 170(4) of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, requires the Health Service Commission to report to Parliament, annually, on the performance of its function. I invite the parliamentary commissioner to table the report.

4.29

**MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri):** Madam Speaker, I beg to lay on Table the Health Service Commission Annual Report for the Financial Year 2023/2024.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. It is referred to the Sectoral Committee on Health.

Yes, Hon. Oguzu Lee?

**MR OGUZU:** Madam Speaker, thank you so much for the opportunity. The commissioner just laid the annual report for the Health Service Commission. Earlier on, I rose and sought your indulgence on a number of annual reports that have not been brought here.

The law is that by the 30<sup>th</sup> of September, we should have received the annual reports from all the Ministries, Departments & Agencies (MDAs), which are required under the law to bring them here. We are already getting into budget performance. I do not know how we will proceed without getting these reports.

For example, the Physical Planning Act requires that the minister must bring an annual report on how local governments have complied with the physical development plans in various areas. That would inform us in determining whether we must give them money or not, but these reports are not here, and so we are a little bit constrained in doing our work. I, therefore, invite you to issue another directive so that we have all the annual reports here.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable minister, are you listening?

**MR OGUZU:** Otherwise, if we do not do that, nobody will accept to comply with the law. In that case, we must suspend the laws and make them irrelevant. Thank you.

**THE SPEAKER:** Actually, we will not budget for the Parliamentary Commission if they do not bring their report.

## BILLS SECOND READING

### THE NATIONAL TEACHERS' BILL, 2024

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, you recall that on Tuesday, 6 August 2024, the Minister of Education and Sports tabled the National Teachers' Bill, 2024. The Bill was referred to the Committee on Education and Sports and the committee is ready to report.

I am aware that the committee has a minority report and pursuant to Rule 130(1) of the Rules of Procedure, I invite the Minister of Education and Sports to move a motion for the Second Reading of this Bill.

Honourable minister?

4.33

**THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (HIGHER EDUCATION) (Dr John Muyingo):** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

Madam Speaker, I beg to move that the National Teachers' Bill, 2024 be read the second time. I submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Is it seconded? (*Members rose*) It is seconded by Dr Baryomunsi, the Prime Minister, finance, commissioner, Hon. Ogwang, Hon. Ayeku, Hon. Obua, Hon. Alanyo, Hon. Rwakajara, Hon. Nekesa, Hon. Brandon, Member for Luuka and by the whole side, including Hon. Komakech, Hon. Aniku, Hon. Timuzigu, and Dr Apea.

Honourable minister, can you justify your motion? Give us the object of the Bill.

**DR MUYINGO:** Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. The object of this Bill is to give effect to the National Teachers' Policy, which was adopted by the Cabinet on 1 April 2019.

The Bill embeds the new policy direction and arrangements in the legislation by professionalising and demanding the teaching profession, in order to improve the development and management of teachers generally.

The Bill also ensures that the policy changes in the teaching profession are brought about by ordinary processes, and that the system of education is made to comfort the new requirements placed upon it by government policy.

Over the years, however, there have been problems of teachers' absenteeism, ineffective teaching, low qualification and lack of standards for teachers, weak institutional leadership, unethical behaviour, lack of teacher regulation, and limited professional development for teachers.

The Government has established - and there is no framework for professionalising and standardising the teaching profession - through effective legislation, licensing accreditation of teachers, and implementation of the innovation framework, and the reviewed schemes of service.

Madam Speaker, these are the issues we intend to address and I submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Can we now hear the report from the chairperson of the committee? Both reports. We shall start with the major report.

4.36

**THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr James Kubeketerya):** Madam Speaker, I have a report from the Committee on Education and

Sports on the National Teachers' Bill, 2024. These are the minutes of the proceedings and the report. I lay it on the Table.

**THE SPEAKER:** Please lay.

**MR KUBEKETERYA:** There is also a minority report, which was signed by two members. Madam Speaker, I would like to present the report.

Introduction

On Tuesday, 6 August 2024, the fourth session of the Seventh Sitting of the First Meeting of Parliament, the National Teachers' Bill was read for the first time by the Minister of Education and Sports for Higher Education, Dr Chrysostom Muyingo.

The Certificate of Financial Implication was laid on the Table as required by Rule 118 of the Rules of Procedure of Parliament, and the Speaker referred the Bill to the Committee on Education and Sports.

In the background, the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary, Post-Primary) Act, CAP 247, is the law that provides for the development and regulation of pre-primary, primary, and post-primary education and training. Part five of the act provides for the registration and licensing of teachers.

The Ministry of Education and Sports informed the committee that the Act does not, however, provide for the overall regulation of teachers by mandating responsible bodies to regulate the teaching profession.

Therefore, the National Teachers' Bill seeks to regulate the teaching profession and promote, maintain and protect the ethical standards of the teaching profession. As the Minister has alluded to, the objectives of the Bill are;

- a) To promote, maintain and protect the ethical standards of the teaching profession.
- b) To regulate the teaching profession.
- c) To provide for an institutional framework for the implementation of the policies,

decisions and directives issued by the minister regarding teachers.

- d) To promote the continuous professional development of teachers.
- e) To provide for the career development of teachers within the teaching profession.
- f) To establish the National Teachers' Council.
- g) To provide for the powers and functions of the minister in relation to teachers and the teaching profession.

### 3.0 The Methodology

3.1 We used desk research, and the committee reviewed various legislations, these included:

- a) The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda in 1995,
- b) The Education Act 2008, CAP 247,
- c) The Education Service Act, CAP 85,
- d) The Insolvency Act, CAP 108,
- e) The Local Government Act, CAP 243,
- f) The Oath Act, CAP 19,
- g) The Uganda Citizenship and Immigration Act, CAP 66,
- h) The Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, CAP 262.

The Committee reviewed the National Teachers' Policy of 2019 and the legal framework on teacher professionalisation in other jurisdictions, including Tanzania and South Africa.

In the meetings, the committee published notices for public hearings invited 22 stakeholders, held meetings and received memoranda from the Ministry of Education and Sports, National Curriculum Development Centre, Uganda National Examination Board (UNEB), Muni University, Mountain of the Moon University, Kabale University, Busitema University, Lira University, Soroti University, Makerere University, National Council for Higher Education, Education Service Commission, Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU), UPTU.

Those abbreviations are basically labour organisations namely; Central Organisation of Free Trade Union (COFTU), National Organisation of Trade Union (NOTU), Uganda National Institute for Teachers Education (UNITE), National Union for Disabled Persons of Uganda (NUDIPU), a disability association, Home Education Schooling Parents, then cluster of Directors of Private Education Institutions and Uganda and Education Advocacy Network (EAN).

The committee had a benchmarking visit to Ghana where it interacted with different stakeholders in the education sector, including the National Teaching Council and the Ghana National Association of Teachers.

#### Findings, observations and recommendations

In the application of the Act, the committee perused clause 2 of the Bill on application and interacted with the different public universities in Uganda, and the universities indicated that the Bill should extend to teacher educators and those who teach at tertiary institutions as well.

The extension of the application of the Bill was supported by Busitema University, Mountain of the Moon University, UNATU, Muni University, Lira University, Kyambogo University, UNITE and EN.

UNITE informed the committee that paragraph 5.8 of the National Teacher Policy of 2019 indicates that the policy targets all teachers involved in providing education at various levels.

The education levels are categorised as below;

- a) The early childhood development programs,
- b) Primary education level,
- c) Secondary education level,
- d) Business, technical and vocational education institutions,
- e) Teachers in other tertiary institutions; and
- f) Teachers in universities.

So, the Minister of Education and Sports informed the committee that the teachers targeted in the Bill are those prescribed under Part 5 of the Education Act, that is the pre-primary, primary and post-primary in CAP 247 and not lecturers in universities and other tertiary institutions.

#### Committee observations

The committee perused through this National Teachers' Policy of 2019 and agrees with UNITE. However, it observed that the legal regime under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act CAP 262 covers the regulation of universities and other tertiary institutions.

As such, the application clause of the Bill should only stretch to pre-primary, primary and secondary levels as it is in the Bill.

#### Recommendation

- The Committee therefore recommends that-
- (a) The application clause should not include universities as they are covered under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, CAP. 262;
  - (b) Clause 2 be maintained as it is in the Bill;
  - (c) The Committee recommends that the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, CAP. 262, should be amended to provide for the regularisation and professionalisation of university educators.

#### 4.2 The National Teachers Council.

The committee notes that Clause 5 of the Bill, establishes the National Teachers Council as a body corporate.

Clause 6 provides for the composition of the council. The council shall consist of seven (seven) persons, two of whom shall have experience in teaching, leadership, and management of education institutions but not actively teaching.

One of whom shall be female, one teacher with a disability, representing teachers with a



disability, four members of the public, two of whom shall be teachers and one advocate with at least 10 years of experience in legal practice.

In the committee's interaction with Kabale University, they indicated that the composition of the council negates enough representation of professional and experienced teachers, given that the business of the council mostly relates to teacher education.

The UNITE informed the committee that in its current form, the Bill leaves out the teacher trainers from the National Teachers Council. Teacher trainers play an important role in the preparation of teacher trainees, providing them with the knowledge, skills and values required to function in the teaching profession in general. So, leaving them out will create a gap between the council and teacher trainers and, ultimately, the teacher training institutions.

Uganda National Teachers Union (UNATU) stated that the condition of not being engaged in active teaching should be removed so that membership is not limited to those who have retired. They also stated that there is no need for members of the public. They proposed that nominations should be done by the teacher labour unions to represent the collective interests of the teachers, whom they represent. This would also result in better decision-making that reflects the needs and concerns of the teaching community.

Another labour organisation, COFTU, indicated that the council should be representative of the teaching professional strata, namely pre-primary, primary, secondary, and tertiary. This is to minimise a particular category of educationists or even none at all dominating and hijacking membership and decision-making.

The committee interacted with Busitema University, which proposed that teacher educators should have more than five years' experience in management in a teachers' college or faculty of education.

Mountains of the Moon indicated that the number of years for teachers on the council should be increased to 10 years as it is for the advocate of the council.

Makerere University also indicated that the composition of the council needs to be explicit on the different levels of a teacher so that all levels are represented – pre-primary, primary and post-primary levels.

In the conduct of the committee's desk research, the committee noted that Tanzanian Teachers Professional Board is comprised of nine members – a chairman who is appointed by the president from among registered senior professional teachers, eight qualified members to be appointed by the minister from the following institutions: a representative from the ministry responsible for education; a law officer representing the Attorney-General's office; one representative nominated by teachers' organisation; one representative from the private sector; one representative appointed from among persons with requisite qualifications to assist the board in the discharge of its functions; a representative from regional administration and local government; a representative from the Teachers Service Commission; and a representative from the institutions responsible for training of teachers.

This is approved or provided for under Section 5 of the Tanzania Teachers Professional Board Act, 2018. So, that was just a leaf that we borrowed.

The committee also perused through the Council for Educators of South Africa Act, 2001, and found out that the South African Council for Education is comprised of: the chairperson; 14 educators and four lecturers collectively nominated by the organised profession; five persons nominated by the department of education; two persons nominated by the national associations representing schools governing bodies; one person nominated by the council for higher education; one nominated by the councils; one person nominated by the national bodies representing independent or

private institutions; and the chief executive officer of the council.

The committee, during its benchmarking visit to Ghana, was informed that the composition of the Ghana teachers' council is comprised of critical stakeholders to the teaching profession. The council is composed of the following:

- (a) a chairperson with at least 10 years' academic and administrative experience;
- (b) one representative from;
  - (i) the ministry, not below the rank of director, nominated by the minister; the National Council for Curriculum and Assessment below the rank of a director, nominated by a council for curriculum and assessment.
  - (ii) the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education Training, not below the rank of a director, nominated by the Commission for Technical and Vocational Education and Training.
  - (iii) the National Schools Inspectorate Authority, not below the rank of director, nominated by the National Schools Inspectorate Authority.
  - (iv) the universities involved in the professional teacher education and rotational basis, nominated by the universities.
- (c) Two representatives of teachers' associations nominated by the teachers' associations on a rotational basis;
- (d) Two representatives of the heads of pre-tertiary education institutions, nominated by the heads of the pre-tertiary education institutions on a rotational basis;
- (e) Two educationists, one of whom is a woman; and
- (f) The registrar of the council.

Committee observations

The committee observes that;

- i) the council is composed of more persons who are not engaged in active teaching, as opposed to those engaged in active teaching. Only three out of seven members of the council are involved in active teaching.
- ii) The council membership does not include representatives from the Ministry of Education and Sports, which is the line ministry responsible for education.
- iii) The council membership does not include a representative from the National Council for Higher Education and the National Curriculum Development Centre. These two agencies are critical to teacher education, and clause 10 of the Bill, specifically, speaks to collaboration with the National Council for Higher Education.
- iv) The council does not include a representative from the teachers' unions and associations.
- v) There is an omission to designate one member of the public under clause 6(1)(c), yet the clause speaks to the nomination of four persons.
- vi) The Bill ties the representation of women to only one position on the council.

The committee further observes that, indeed, the council, as it is in the Bill, is not representative of the key stakeholders in the teaching profession. So, the membership is tied to teachers who are not in active teaching and is open to members of the public, as opposed to teachers who understand the aspirations and challenges of the teaching profession. So, the examples of Ghana, Tanzania and South Africa present a representative council which can ably handle the affairs of members of the teaching profession.

## Recommendation

The committee recommends that:

- (a) The council membership should provide for the different categories of stakeholders concerned with the teaching profession;
- (b) The requirement of female representation to the council should cut across the entire council and not to only one representative to the council.

### 4.2 Continuous professional development for the teaching profession

Clause 9(g), (h) and (i) of the Bill provides for the functions of the council. The Bill provides that the council shall develop or cause to be developed continuous professional development programmes for teachers, accredit providers to offer continuous professional development for teachers and conduct training of trainers of continuous professional development programmes.

The Bill goes ahead, under clause 45, to require every teacher to undertake continuous professional development and, under clause 45(4), to provide that the council may suspend the practising licence of a teacher who fails to undertake continuous professional development programmes.

The committee interacted with the National Teaching Council of Ghana, which informed them that teachers in Ghana are required to do continuous professional development courses throughout the year.

They further stated that the teachers in public schools in Ghana are given continuous professional development allowances by the Government. The National Teaching Council deducts the funds required for continuous professional development directly from the source.

### Committee observations

The committee observes that clause 9(i) indicates that the Council shall conduct

training of trainers of continuous professional development programmes. This presupposes that the Council shall conduct these trainings by itself, as opposed to hiring providers, which contradicts the provisions of clause 9(h).

## Recommendation

The committee recommends that:

- a) The Government should motivate teachers to carry out continuous professional development as part of their professional development, which enables them to comply with licensing requirements under the law every four years; and
- b) Clause 9(i) should be recast for purposes of clarity.

### 4.4. Collaboration with the National Council for Higher Education

#### 4.4.1 Exclusion of other Government agencies

Clause 10 of the Bill provides that the Council shall collaborate with the National Council for Higher Education.

In their submission to the committee, the Mountains of the Moon University stated that the National Teachers Council collaborates with UNEB, UBTEB, and the National Curriculum Development Centre in addition to the National Council for Higher Education.

Another body that came and interacted with us, National Private Schools Teachers Association (NAPSTA) also submitted that the Act could also point out the collaboration of NTC with other departments like Education Standards Agency and Education Service Commission.

The National Council for Higher Education indicated that the Bill does not include other organs like ESA and NCDC that have bearing with education matters like standards, quality and curriculum development.

The Education Advocacy Network (EAN) stated that collaboration with the National Council should provide for collaboration in training of trainers and accreditation of CPD programmes for the teachers.

Committee observations

The committee observes that the clause stands to leave out other critical agencies such as the National Curriculum Development Centre, which are critical in the teaching profession.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that clause 10 should be amended;

- a) To include collaboration with other Government agencies; and
- b) To provide for collaboration in the training of trainers and accreditation of continuous professional development programmes for teachers.

4.42 Conflicting mandate with the National Council for Higher Education

The committee noted that the Bill provides for conflicting mandates between the National Council for Higher Education and the National Teachers Council.

The National Council for Higher Education is amended under section 4(m) of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, Cap 262, to certify that an institution of higher education has adequate and accessible physical structures and staff for the courses to be offered by it.

The National Council for Higher Education informed the committee that granting the National Teachers Council power to inspect any training institutions to ensure compliance creates a conflict with the role of the National Council for Higher Education to monitor, evaluate and regulate higher education institutions.

Committee observations

The committee observes that clause 11 of the Bill gives the Council powers in regard to training institutions. The word “training institution” is defined under the Bill to mean a tertiary institution, other degree awarding institution or university, as defined in the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions

Act. By giving the National Teachers Council this power, the Bill is going beyond the scope of the application clause.

The committee further observes that clause 11 of the Bill gives the Council power to call for the production of books of accounts, plans or other documents of the Council. The clause requires the Council to call for its own records. This is an administrative function which can be done between the Council and the registrar without putting it under the law.

The Bill provides, under clause 11(e), that the Council shall have powers to enter and inspect any training institution to ensure compliance with this Act.

Clause 11(e) also conflicts with the functions of the National Council for Higher Education under Section 4(m) of the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, Cap 262. The power should extend to only educational institutions.

Recommendation

The committee recommends that:

- a) Clause 11 should be amended to provide for the correct terminology of “education institution”. Clause 11 provides for training institutions which are not in the purview of the Bill. The Bill is going beyond the scope of its application clause (clause 2) and thus conflicts with the mandate of the National Council of Higher Education;
- b) Clause 11(d) should be deleted because it is an administrative function which can be done without inclusion in the legislation; and
- c) Clause 11(e) should be amended to provide for the inspection of education institutions, which was inadvertently left out.

Committees of Council

The committee notes that clause 16(3) of the Bill provides for the number of members who can form a committee of the Council. The

Uganda National Teachers Union informed the committee that clause 16 of the Bill is ambiguous on the types of committees to be formed under the National Teachers Council.

Clarification is therefore necessary to specify the types of committees; for example, the committees that handle grievances, ethics and professional development. This would ensure structure and transparency in the Council's operations.

The committee's desk research revealed that in South Africa, the South African Council for Educators is mandated to form the following committees: the executive committee, registration committee, professional development committee, disciplinary committee, and any other committee that the Council may deem necessary.

The committee, during its benchmarking visit in Ghana, found that the Ghana National Teaching Board is authorised, under section 62 of the Education Regulatory Bodies Act, to form the following committees; finance and administration, research, monitoring and evaluation, licensing and registration, disciplinary, professional development and examinations committee, and any other committees which the Board may deem necessary.

#### Committee observations

The committee observes that the different types of committees that the Council may form need to be specified so that critical committees are not left out. The Council will still be given powers to form other committees as may be deemed necessary.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends that clause 16 should be amended to specify the different types of committees of the Council.

#### 4.6 Registrar of the Council

Clause 18 of the Bill provides for the Registrar of the Council. The clause, however, does not provide for the qualifications of the Registrar, which is a critical role in professionalising the teaching profession.

The Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) submitted to the committee that in order to ensure proper checks and balances, at least two names should be recommended to the minister for these positions. This ensures a more democratic and transparent process and prevents the minister from having unchecked power in appointing a Registrar.

They also stated that clause 18(3) is not specific on how the Deputy Registrar is appointed. According to UNATU, it is key that the Deputy Registrar is also appointed by the minister on the recommendation of the Council and must have similar qualifications to those of the Registrar.

The Education Service Commission stated that the Registrar and Deputy Registrar should be appointed by the minister on recommendation from the Education Service Commission and not the Council.

The National Private Schools Teachers' Association (NAPSTA), on the other hand, indicated that the Public Service Commission should advertise and appoint the Registrar and other technical persons.

The committee, during its benchmarking visit, was informed that the Registrar and the Deputy Registrar of the National Teaching Council are senior professional teachers with 10 years' experience and knowledge in matters relating to the teaching profession, law, management and administration.

The committee reviewed the Tanzanian Teachers Professional Board Act, 2018 and established that the qualification for the Registrar is a senior professional teacher with five years experience and knowledge in

matters relating to the teaching profession, law, management and administration.

#### Committee observations

The committee observes that it is pertinent that the Bill provides for qualification of a Registrar and a Deputy Registrar of the Council.

The committee further observes that the Bill should provide for the appointing authority of the Deputy Registrar.

#### Recommendation

The committee recommends that:

- a. The Registrar should have a qualification of at least a post-graduate degree and 10 years' experience and knowledge in teaching, law, management or administration.
- b. The Deputy Registrar should have five years' experience and knowledge in teaching, law, management or administration.
- c. The Deputy Registrar should be appointed by the minister on recommendation of the Council.

#### 4.7 Requirement of Competence Test

The committee notes that clause 27(3) and (4) of the Bill provides that the Council may require a person applying for registration to do a competence test.

In the committee's interaction with Busitema University, they indicated that the competence test is not necessary since it will call for establishing another body to carry out the competence test. The competence test is a no-confidence test on the training institution.

They further stated that if there are any checks and balances, they should be at the level of accreditation of institutions and their programmes.

Kabale University stated that it is unrealistic to expose a teacher to a competence test prior to

registration, yet their entire training is aimed at exhibiting the competencies required of a professional teacher.

Uganda Private Teachers Union (UPTU) informed the committee that whatever may be tested at this stage should be included in the teacher training packages, and upon passing, a teacher should be registered automatically. A qualified teacher from an accredited institution cannot be examined again by a body whose role or core role is not explicitly to undertake competence examinations.

UNATU indicated that competence tests are not necessary and should be removed from this provision because one has already qualified by the time of seeking registration and the appointing authority has already done its job in testing the competence of the teacher during the recruitment process.

NAPSTA proposed that registration should be automated immediately after the university and internship, and that there is no need for competence test immediately after qualification, but it could be necessary during renewal of license.

NOTU stated that clause 27(3) and (4) should be deleted from the Bill as it undermines the credibility of teacher training institutions and also may be stressful to a teacher.

The Ministry of Education and Sports clarified to the committee that competence tests will be given to teachers from foreign jurisdictions who intend to teach in Uganda.

#### Committee observations

The committee observes that the provision as it is in the Bill is not specific to foreign teachers and thus should be clearly set out in the law if the ministry's intention was for it to apply to only teachers from foreign jurisdictions.

#### Recommendations

- a. The committee recommends that clause 27 should be amended to provide clarity that

the competence test shall be applied only to teachers from foreign jurisdictions who intend to teach in Uganda.

- b. The Bill should provide for the requirement of a competence test for foreign-trained teachers.

#### 4.8 Requirement of a degree in education

Clause 28 of the Bill provides that a person is eligible to be registered as a teacher if he or she possesses a degree in education. Clause 65 requires teachers to comply with the requirement under clause 28 within 10 years of the amendment of the Act.

The stakeholders had the following submissions in regard to the requirement of a degree.

Kabale University indicated that the Bill should incorporate the qualification of a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) among the eligibility requirements for teacher registration.

Busitema University proposed that the pre-primary teachers should not be required to have a degree to be eligible to register as teachers and the gradual phasing out of primary and lower secondary teachers without degrees was done with Grade II primary teachers of the 1970s and 1980s.

The Education Service Commission stated that the extension or expansion of the eligibility for registration should be expanded as follows:

- i) Degree in education
- ii) Relevant degree and Post-Graduate Diploma In Education and
- iii) Diploma in Education, i.e. Grade V Teacher who acquires a relevant degree qualification.

NOTU indicated that clause 28(1)(a) should be amended to provide for only a qualification in education. It is their view that we do not need the same teacher academic qualification to handle varied education levels like nursery, primary, or secondary levels. Instead, emphasis should

be put on necessary skills at particular levels, for example, early childhood development, skills for nursery teachers.

UPTU informed the committee that graduates with BA (Arts), BSC (Sciences) with a Post-Graduate Diploma in Education (PGDE) will automatically be disqualified as the provision of the Bill is very specific with a degree in education.

They further stated that in practical terms it is unproven and unnecessary to require a nursery teacher to possess a degree instead of the required Early Childhood Development skills as until now no clear nursery education curriculum has been put by the ministry except for the learning framework which is still on the experimental version.

UPTU further stated that considering the deplorable working conditions and especially the salary levels of most teachers in private schools, it is practically impossible to assume that they must conveniently acquire the degree qualification required except when issues of their welfare and particularly salary levels are well answered.

Accordingly, the Government should start by seconding salaries for private teachers to develop their abilities to attain the requirements. Otherwise, this is exclusively intended to exclude low-paid teachers from the teaching profession. That was UPTU.

Muni University proposed that there is need to define the degree in education to include a postgraduate diploma in education and a postgraduate diploma in teacher education.

The directors of private institutions in Uganda under Nakawa Urban Council indicated that the eligibility requirement for a person to have a degree and be registered as a teacher is very ideal since it aligns with Sustainable Development Goal 4 of quality education by 2030 through increasing the number of qualified teachers and improving education facilities with equal access to affordable vocational training and higher education for all.

They, however, stated that all costs from the above processes should be removed, identifying sustainable funding sources to support the initiatives outlined in the Bill.

EAN proposed that a provision be inserted to include a degree in any discipline and a post-graduate diploma in education as a requirement for eligibility for those without bachelor's degrees in education in clause 28(1)(a) and to cater for paragraph 5.8(1) for teachers at higher institutions of learning under the National Teacher Policy 2019, but have other degrees in other fields but want to teach at any level.

The Ministry of Education and Sports informed the committee that the National Teachers' Policy 2019 requires teachers to possess a bachelor's degree. The ministry indicated that there is a need to standardise the academic qualifications of teachers in the long run. In the long run, teachers will help the Government progressively remove the differences among them that are linked to salary scales and disparities.

They also stated that the degree requirement is in compliance with the global teaching requirement in policies and sustainable development goals, SDGs.

The committee, in its benchmarking visit to Ghana, found that all teachers in Ghana are required to have a degree qualification. The committee was informed that the public servants in Ghana are paid at the same salary scale upon attaining a bachelor's degree.

#### Committee observations

The committee observes that the Bill intends to ensure that the teaching profession is regularised and standardised, and the requirement of a bachelor's degree for a teacher will go a long way in achieving this.

The committee, however, observes that persons who have done or are doing a bachelor's degree, which has a component of teaching subjects and opt to teach, are not covered under the Bill. These persons go ahead and do a postgraduate

diploma in education and are eligible to join the teaching profession. Therefore, the Bill should thus cover this category of persons.

#### Committee recommendation

Clause 28 should be amended to provide for eligibility for registration for teachers as a degree in education or a relevant degree and a postgraduate diploma in education for a pre-primary, primary and secondary teacher.

#### 4.9 Intern teacher versus student undertaking school practice

The committee notes that the Bill provides for an internship programme under clause 29. The internship programme will last one year as provided for under Schedule 3. The Ministry of Education and Sports is responsible for the entire programme. The Bill also provides for school practice under clause 41 and in the interpretation section.

In its interaction with the stakeholders, the following issues were raised under clause 29:

Lira University informed the committee that the Bill does well to introduce internship instead of school practice. This will give interns more time for practicals instead of the eight to 12 weeks currently dedicated to school practice. The internship will take a whole year, and this is excellent.

They, however, noted that the new arrangement will have implications on budgeting and resource allocation for internship as an academic professional programme, and the time the teacher takes in school, because internship is part of the academic life of a teacher. It also has implications for universities and other training institutions since there will be no school practice. Faculties of education in the universities must plan to establish demonstration secondary schools for their own, to provide better practical training for teachers. That was Lira.

Kyambogo University stated that one-year training needs to be reconsidered because



universities and other teacher training institutions, through increasing the number of school practice from two to three can adequately ensure that the teacher trainees get adequate hands-on practical skills under the supervision of competent staff that enable them to qualify as competent professional teachers.

They need to review their teacher education programmes and have school practice in each of the three years of the education degree trajectory. Kyambogo University further questioned if the ministry will have the financial ability for the management of the supervision of the teacher trainee internship programme. This is because most primary and secondary schools lack the basic facilities and equipment needed for effective teaching and learning to take place.

There is a need to look into the facilitation and motivation implications of regular teachers and head teachers and the ministry officers to carry out supervisory roles and responsibilities in a sustainable manner.

Busitema University proposed that internship placements should be left entirely to the training institutions. They also raised questions regarding the ministry's preparedness to handle internship placements, citing its current challenges with the placement of intern doctors.

KOFTU wondered what motivated the change from school practice to internship. They stated that industrial, commercial, scientific and social works establishments prefer this term. They were not certain that the head teacher can manage being the supervisor supposing the head teacher is incompetent or has lower moral turpitude. They proposed involving third parties such as the district education officers and universities. That was their view.

Soroti University indicated that the Bill does not include teachers' welfare during the internship. That was their view.

EAN made a proposal for recognition of prior learning experience and equating these other present qualifications they hold to equating

and equalising or substantial reduction of the 12-month requirement for internship in the third schedule in the event that the same consideration is missed in the regulations.

Therefore, according to EAN, it is inconceivable to have a person already teaching at higher institutions of learning with a master's degree or a PhD to do a 12-month internship teaching.

The committee's benchmarking visit to Ghana revealed that the Ghanaian government has compulsory national service for all students who complete degree programmes from any profession. The Government caters for all costs of the students under National Service Commissions or programmes. *(Applause)*

#### Committee observations

The committee observes that it is not fair for a teacher to undertake internship as well as school practice. The Ministry of Education and Sports failed to show the committee how school practice has been ineffective for a teaching force. *(Applause)*

The committee observes that the period of one year is too long after a teacher has completed a degree and is subjected to another year of training in addition to school practice. Teachers should only be required to do teaching practice and school practice, which is the same.

The committee further observes that the Government is facing considerable challenges in handling intern doctors in the medical profession. Given the resource constraints that always affect the internship requirements in the medical profession, it is thus questionable if the government will effectively handle the compulsory internship for teachers.

#### Committee recommendation

The requirement of internship for teachers be deleted from the Bill but in the alternative, teachers should be required to do school practice in each year of the teacher training course.

4.10 Issuance and cancellation of certificate of registration

Clause 31(1)(c) provides that the council may cancel a certificate of registration if it is in the opinion of the council and it is in the public interest to cancel the certificate.

The National Organisation of Trade Unions (NOTU) informed the committee that clause 31(1)(c) is a subjective provision that is prone to abuse and should be deleted.

The Uganda National Teachers' Union (UNATU) stated that the phrase "public interest" is too vague and open to misinterpretation, resulting in inconsistent or unjust decisions.

There should be an established specific criterion to guide the Council in determining when it is working in the public interest, and it should be transparent.

Without a clear definition of what amounts to "public interest", this section can be abused and weaponised. For example, "public interest" would be determined by court.

Committee observations

The committee observes that clause 31(1)(c) may also be prone to abuse because it is difficult to establish what public interest amounts to.

Recommendation

Clause 31(1)(c) should be deleted.

4.11 Teacher training

Clause 43 of the Bill provides for teacher training, requiring a person teaching a degree in education or in a training institution to possess a relevant qualification.

NOTU indicated to the committee that the clauses are adequately addressed in the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, Cap 262 and the enabling regulations thereof. Therefore, it may not be very necessary to have it here, rather than the Act in question, which

may be reviewed for strengthening in case of any new stronger proposals.

National Council for Higher Education (NCHE) proposed that clause 44(2) be recast to provide that the minimum admission requirement referred to in sub-section (1) shall be determined by the National Council for Higher Education in consultation with the council, as this is in line with the NCHE's mandate, in Section 4(d)(ii) of the Universities and other Tertiary Institutions Act, Cap 262.

Committee observations

The committee observes that clauses 43 and 44 are going beyond the application of the Bill provided for under Clause 2. The Bill does not stretch to regulating lecturers in the training institutions.

These two provisions are providing for a conflicting mandate between the National Teachers Council and the National Council for Higher Education.

Recommendation

Clauses 43 and 44 should be deleted because it has a conflicting mandate with the National Council for Higher Education under the Universities and Other Tertiary Institutions Act, Cap 262.

4.12 Schedule 2

Paragraph 2 of Schedule 2 of the Bill provides for the quorum for a meeting in the Council.

Committee observations

The committee observes that the quorum of members of the Council should be amended to two-thirds as opposed to setting-a specific number.

Recommendation

The quorum of members of the Council should be two-thirds.

## 5.0 Conclusion

The Committee understands the pertinent need to professionalise the teaching profession and the Council also appreciates the establishment of the National Teachers Council to enable the professionalisation of the teaching profession.

The committee recommends that Parliament adopts the committee report and passes the Bill subject to the proposed amendments. I beg to submit.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you, committee chairperson. You still have a report. Invite your-

**MR KUBEKETERYA:** Madam Speaker, according to my honourable colleague, he has his counterpart, Hon. Muyingo, but let me take the honour of inviting the shadow minister to present his minority report.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you.

## 5.33

**THE SHADOW MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr Joseph Ssewungu):** Thank you, Madam Speaker. Allow me to thank my committee chairperson, with whom we have worked together for some good time.

However, I have a minority report signed by three members: Hon. Kayemba Solo, a Member for Bukomansimbi; Hon. Joseph Gonzaga Ssewungu, the Shadow Minister of Education and Sports; and Hon. Irene Linda, a Member for Fort Portal City.

The background of the Bill has been stated. Let me go to points of dissent. The grounds of dissent are in the following areas.

- a) Clause 5 of the Bill proposes to establish the National Teachers' Council as a body corporate with the power to do all things, a body corporate may lawfully do including to sue and be sued.

This is against the Cabinet policy to rationalise Government agencies so as to reduce Government expenditure. *(Applause)*

- b) Clause 45 of the Bill requires all teachers engaged in teaching to undertake Continuous Professional Development (CPD). This is unfair for teachers, given their meagre pay, unless the Government intends to cover the cost of Continuous Professional Development. *(Applause)*
- c) Clause 33 of the Bill provides for licensing of teachers and clause 36 provides that teachers will be required to renew the license after every four years. The teachers will also be required to pay for the license and their renewal.

This is quite costly for the teachers. The current licensing regime is favourable for teachers and we appeal that the status quo is maintained. It is online and free of charge.

- d) Clause 28 requires every teacher to have a degree in education in order to teach at the levels of pre-primary, primary, and secondary education. However, the current law provides that pre-primary education is run by private agencies or persons and not under the Government's structure.

## 4.0 Findings and recommendations

### 1.1. National Teachers Council

The Bill proposes to establish the National Teachers Council under Part II. The Cabinet adopted the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) on 22 February 2021 as a step to reduce Government expenditure.

Parliament has rationalised several Government agencies in a bid to reduce expenditure and tough decisions had to be made to rationalise the agencies. It is inconsiderate for the Government to rationalise agencies on the one hand and the other hand create new bodies.

Furthermore, the Ministry of Education and Sports was not able to demonstrate to the committee the importance of establishing a council and, therefore, the establishment of the National Teachers Council is against the policy of rationalisation.

What is our recommendation, as the minority? Instead of creating a council of seven members, the Government should direct those funds to the districts, particularly to the inspection department, to oversee and supervise the performance of teachers in schools. This will enable the proper evaluation of the performance of teachers, as opposed to the establishment of a council to carry out their role – and, most likely, they will be living here, in Kampala.

#### 4.2. Continuous professional development

Clause 9(g), (h) and (i) of the Bill provides that the council shall develop or cause to be developed continuous professional development programmes for teachers, accredit providers to offer continuous professional development for teachers, and conduct training of trainers of continuous professional development programmes.

The Bill goes ahead, under clause 45, to require every teacher engaged in teaching to undertake continuous professional development. Furthermore, clause 45 (4) provides that the council may suspend the practicing licence of a teacher who fails to undertake continuous professional development.

The Ministry of Education and Sports informed the committee that, just like other professions, teachers should meet the cost of their continuous professional development programmes.

We note that similar requirements for continuous professional development exist in the Advocates Act, Cap. 295, under section 10, which provides that the committee shall conduct and promote continuous legal education for qualified legal practitioners.

Section 3 of the Uganda Law Society Act Cap. 305 provides that the law council shall exercise,

through the committee, general supervision and control over professional legal education in Uganda, including continuous legal education for persons qualified to practice law in Uganda. In practice, Uganda Law Society requires advocates to pay fees for different continuous legal education trainings throughout the year. These fees range from Shs 100,000 for online courses up to Shs 500,000 for physical courses.

Following a benchmarking visit to Ghana by some members of the committee, the members interacted with the national teaching council of Ghana, which informed the committee that teachers in public schools in Ghana are given continuous professional development allowances by the Government.

The requirement for continuous professional development for teachers raises questions on affordability of continuous professional development programmes for teachers, considering their monthly pay. Unlike other professionals such as advocates, accountants and surveyors, among others, teachers are not well remunerated. For instance, a primary teacher earns about Shs 400,000 per month, and a nursery teacher earns around Shs 200,000 *-(Interruptions)-* which does not cover most of the basic needs of a teacher.

#### Recommendation

Hon. Muyingo is looking at me. The Government should fully cover costs of continuous professional development for teachers. *(Applause)* If not, it should not be a mandatory requirement for teachers, which causes cancellation of licences.

#### 4.3 Licensing of teachers

Clause 33 of the Bill provides for licensing of teachers and clause 36 provides that teachers will be required to renew the licence after every four years. The teachers will also be required to pay for the licences and their renewal.

The current regime is favourable in that a teacher is not required to pay for the registration or licensing. However, the Bill gives the council

power to prescribe a fee for teachers to be licensed every four years. This is quite costly for the teachers. In addition, this proposal will further affect a number of persons who will be desirous of pursuing the teaching profession.

Uganda Private Teachers Union informed the committee that there is already a deficit in the number of teachers in the country, as shown below in this table.

For primary schools, the approved staff is supposed to be 172,531 in Uganda. The existing number is 138,008 teachers. The deficit is 34,523 teachers.

For secondary level, the approved number should be 82,782 teachers. The existing staff level in Uganda now is 35,950 teachers, and the deficit is 46,842.

The current situation in Uganda does not favour –(Interjection)- Madam Speaker, I seek your protection. The current situation in Uganda does not favour teachers, and therefore, many teachers are leaving the profession through early retirement or fully to pursue other businesses such as boda boda riding, to mention but a few.

#### Recommendation

The status quo should be maintained as in the Education (Pre-Primary and Post-primary), Act. Cap 247. Teachers should not be required to pay for registration or licensing.

#### 4.4 Degree requirement

Members should be very careful on this one. Clause 28 of the Bill provides that a person is eligible to be registered as a teacher if he or she possesses a degree in education. Clause 65 requires teachers to comply with the requirement under clause 28 within 10 years of the commencement of this Act.

Section 11 of the Education (Pre-Primary, Primary and Post-Primary), Act Cap. 247 states that pre-primary education is run by private agencies or persons. While the Government provides for universal primary and secondary

education, it does not cater for pre-primary. That implies – the emphasis is mine; I bolded it – that it does not recruit teachers for pre-primary. Basing on this, the Government should not impose a requirement of a degree on an area where they do not have a hand.

The committee interacted with Uganda Private Teachers Union, (UPTU) which indicated that it is unproven and unnecessary to require a nursery teacher to possess a degree. Instead, they require more early childhood development skills, as no clear nursery education curriculum has been put by the ministry, except for the learning framework, which is still an experimental version.

Madam Speaker, additionally, UPTU submitted that, considering the deplorable working conditions and salary levels of most teachers in private schools, it is impossible to assume that they may conveniently acquire the degree qualifications required, except when issues of their welfare, particularly salary, is well answered to. Accordingly, the Government should start with seconding salaries for teachers in private schools to build their ability to attain their requirements. Otherwise, this is exclusively intended to exclude the low-paid teachers from teaching career.

Furthermore, during the benchmarking visit to Ghana, the committee members were informed that all teachers in Ghana are required to have a degree qualification.

However, all public servants in Ghana are paid at the same salary scale upon attaining a bachelor's degree. In contrast, in Uganda, teachers who have a bachelor's degree are still paid the same salary as a person who has attained a lower qualification (Grade III Certificate). I will not talk about science teachers.

It would be unfair to require a teacher to have a minimum of a degree without a salary commensurate to the degree. Madam Speaker, most stakeholders did not agree with the degree qualification and their views are as follows: –(Interjection)- This is a six-page report.

Busitema University; This is the institution where they are taking teachers for degrees - proposed that pre-primary teachers should not be required to have a degree to be eligible to register as teachers. Propose gradual phasing of primary and lower secondary teachers without degrees as was done with the grade II primary teachers of the 1970s to the 1980s.

ESC; Expansion of eligibility for registration as follows:

- a) Degree in education.
- b) Relevant degree and a postgraduate diploma in education
- c) A diploma in education that is a Grade V teacher who acquires a relevant degree qualification.

NOTU; clause 28(1)(a) poses a qualification in education. In this regard, it is our view that we do not need some teacher academic qualification to handle varied education levels like nursery, primary or secondary levels. Instead, emphasis should be put on necessary skills at particular levels for example Early Childhood Development(ECD) skills for nursery.

#### Recommendations

- i) Madam Speaker, teachers should not be mandated by law to have a degree to teach. However, the Government should encourage teachers to upgrade their qualifications gradually.
- ii) Where the Government requires a degree, it should provide a salary commensurate to degree qualification.
- iii) The Government should put in place programmes for the gradual upgrade of teachers to acquire the degree qualification and the cost should be borne by the Government because these are their civil servants already teaching.
- iv) Government should improve the working environment for schools as most structures

are dilapidated. Teachers lack teaching materials, and the student-teacher ratio is high.

Madam Speaker, in this one, as I conclude, you are requiring me to have a degree, but you are taking me to a class which is dilapidated. The floor is smeared with cow dung. The environment, the rooms are condemned, then the teacher is having a degree in a nice suit like Ssewungu is putting on but going into a class with no teaching aids and everything not put in place. That alone cannot suffice.

Madam Speaker, as I conclude, I want to thank the members and you, Madam Speaker, in particular. The ministers who came before us, the Attorney-General and in their own submission, this is what they stated, members. There is a slide.

Therefore, the National Teacher's Bill 2024 is the guarantee for translation into action the intent of the National Teacher's Policy of 2019. The Bill is to facilitate the regulate the regulation of the teaching profession by allowing certain courses of action, coercion - look up that word on your phones, kindly google it -through requiring or prohibiting certain behaviours of teachers and certain institutions.

I pray, honourable members, through the Speaker, that we use the divine intervention - that is why I moved with this nice rosary with me, with the word of God - that you support our minority report with the powers of the Pope since I am from Rome and Vatican. Madam Speaker, this one, just a divine intervention will come to you and you accept the minority report and this Bill will eventually collapse. Thank you Madam Speaker.

**THE SPEAKER:** Thank you. Honourable members, of course these reports are informative. They help us in making amendments to the clauses. That is the role of the reports. You have heard both the major report and the minority one. I will stand over the debate.

Item 8 - What is wrong with you? Hon. Goretta wants to become the Speaker of Parliament. This size mate of yours. Yes, minister, do you have something to say?

**MR OGWANG:** No, Madam Speaker. Like you correctly -

**THE SPEAKER:** No, they are talking with size mates.

**MR OGWANG:** Madam Speaker, you have correctly guided that my colleague made it on record here that I am the size mate. I do not know whether she now wants to take over a different size which I did - *(Laughter)*.

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we stand over the debate on this report. Let us go to-

5.52

**MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala County, Butambala):** Madam Speaker, but the members who are present this late evening should be given priority when the debate ensues.

**THE SPEAKER:** I know all of you. I can see all of you. I see Hon. Hassan, Hon. Jimmy, Hon. Hajjati, I see- I am seeing all of you. Honourable members, there was a report – Item 8

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE  
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON  
PUBLIC ACCOUNTS (CENTRAL  
GOVERNMENT) ON THE AUDITOR  
GENERAL'S REPORT ON TREASURY  
OPERATIONS AND CONSOLIDATED  
FINANCIAL STATEMENT OF  
GOVERNMENT OF UGANDA FOR THE  
YEAR ENDED 30TH JUNE 2023

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members, we stood over this report because we wanted a response from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and when the minister came there was a contrary review from, I think, Hon. Jonathan Odur and he said what could be done is to get a response

in terms of a treasury memoranda and we can only get it after we have adopted the report.

I now put the question that the report of the Public Accounts Committee - Central Government on Auditor General's report on the Treasury Operation and Consolidated Financial Statements of Government of Uganda for Financial Year, 30th June 2023, be adopted by this House.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

*Report adopted.*

**THE SPEAKER:** We also have reports that have not been completed, that have not been presented to this House. Since we are going into a budgeting time, we have to adopt those reports too for us to complete the accounting cycle.

I put the question that the recommendations of Auditor-General on financial statements of all entities that were not reported by Public Accounts Committee - Central Government for financial year ending 30th June 2023 be adopted by this House.

*(Question put and agreed to.)*

**THE SPEAKER:** Honourable members there was a motion in this House that was brought by Hon. Nathan Nandala where at the end of the financial year - the only thing we allowed the Hon. Kivumbi to continue with is the projects. What we are adopting are the reports that have not been brought here but the time has passed. We will continue with the debate on this report of *Mukatuliki* and the Education Bill tomorrow. The House is adjourned to tomorrow.

*(The House rose at 5.55 p.m. and adjourned to Wednesday, 27 November 2024, at 2.00 p.m.)*