



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

THIRD SESSION - 14TH SITTING - FIRST MEETING

Wednesday, 19 July 2023

Parliament met at 2.00 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to this afternoon's sitting. During yesterday's debate on the motion for a resolution of Parliament to appreciate His Excellency the President of the Republic of Uganda for the clear and precise exposition of Government policy contained in the State-of-the-Nation Address, there were issues raised by the Leader of the Opposition, which we feel are very pertinent.

The Leader of the Opposition highlighted various human rights-related matters. Therefore, considering the seriousness of the matters that came up yesterday, we need the Government to give us a status report on them as well as the one that was previously presented to the Government. So, the Leader of Government Business should present the status report by Thursday next week. I will, therefore, invoke rule 52 to allow the Executive to respond to the other issues, especially on the LC I system. On human rights, they will come with the status report next week on Thursday.

We need the record cleared on what was raised and we need to know who is who, who is where and what should be done. Therefore, the Prime Minister should come to the House on 27th July and present a report on human rights.

Once again, I thank you. For now, we would like to hear from the Government on the issue of the LC I.

2.03

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Madam Speaker, we commit to inform and update this House on the issue of LCs I and II tomorrow, Thursday. The Prime Minister will be here to do it.

MR SILWANY: Madam Speaker, I rise on a procedural matter. Yesterday, during Plenary, you gave a directive, asking the Prime Minister to invite the Attorney-General to come and inform the House. The Prime Minister informed this House that the Attorney-General was on the way; he was only delayed, but was going to come during yesterday's session.

Is it, therefore, procedurally right for Hon. Bahati to come here today and tell us that we wait, again, until tomorrow, with all that is happening in the villages, where the local councils cannot operate and everyone is stuck yet a directive was given yesterday? Actually, I thought he had come with the document.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I got a letter from Hon. Kiryowa Kiwanuka. He is unable to be here; he is not well. The deputy Attorney-General also called and said they had a meeting at State House.

However, since the Prime Minister is around - the Prime Minister is the leader of all these ministers. So, we can still get a response. Yes, Hon. Akol?

MR AKOL: Madam Speaker, before the term of the LCs I and II expired, I came to the Floor of Parliament to alert the Government. It was the Deputy Speaker who was chairing the sitting that day. I think the Leader of Government Business would agree with me that I alerted the Government that this crisis was coming to the country.

As we talk, I have received a communication from my constituency that there are people who went to court to get bail, but they could not because they were supposed to have gone with LC I letters. This is the crisis in the country. Are we proceeding rightly, Madam Speaker?

Since this is a problem that affects everybody in the country, we could suspend Parliament and wait for them so we show the Government that this is serious. Otherwise, they are taking it for granted and we have been alerting the Government on this issue. Different Members have been raising this issue on the Floor of Parliament every day. If we do not show seriousness in this, we might not succeed. Thank you.

MS NAMUGGA: Madam Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity. Yesterday, Hon. Bahati was commended for coming here very early and my assumption was that he takes much attention to know what happens in this House.

Also, yesterday, the Prime Minister informed the House that the Attorney-General was coming to respond – actually, she said within two hours. I was very surprised to see the committed Hon. Bahati on the Floor, informing Parliament that: “We shall bring a report within two days.”

Madam Speaker, the Frontbench is taking this House for granted. Considering the importance of the LCs and the crisis this has caused, is Hon. Bahati in order to come and continue confusing this House?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, when you look at Hon. Bahati, he is a “sizemate” of Hon. Gorreth. (*Laughter*) That is why Hon. Gorreth is particular.

2.08

MR HENRY KIBALYA (NRM, Bugabula County South, Kamuli): Thank you, Madam Speaker. There is a crisis in the villages. The chairpersons in our areas have hidden the stamps. They are not operating because the community has threatened to grab the stamps.

The challenge is - I think these LCs were charged Shs 20,000. So, they are saying they need a refund of their money. The Government should come out and tell the public what is next.

In another incident, recently, we were somewhere at a function. They invited the chairman LC I to give an address and the community refused. They said his term expired and was no longer the chairman. This is where we are and these are the scenarios happening. Stamps are hidden and you can no longer get a letter from any chairman LC I because the community are threatening to grab them. So, we need a position.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from Hon. Santa, Hon. Nathan – still on LCs? I thought we were supposed to come up with a resolution.

Honourable members, we agreed that we need the LCs. Just like somebody said, you cannot stand surety for anyone in court because it is unconstitutional since their term of office expired.

We need the LCs in place and Government has asked for only tomorrow. Can we agree to give them up to tomorrow? If we do not get an action report tomorrow, then we will see what

to do. Let us wait for a report tomorrow from the Government. (*Member rose*) Yes, we do not need an LCI to sit in the House. Now, stop saying we adjourn the House. Here we do not need an LCI, but we must legislate to have an LCI.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Madam Speaker, you are right –

THE SPEAKER: No, she was on the Floor.

MS ALUM: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for that wise ruling. I sit on the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs. We have also been waiting for the Attorney-General to appear before our committee, all in vain.

Now that you have given us up to tomorrow - Madam Speaker, in my district, I have even a bigger crisis. The LCIs for the newly-created town councils did not get their ex-gratia in the last financial year. The district wrote to the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, but nothing was done. One hundred thirty-nine (139) LCIs and even the LC III councilors have not been paid.

Therefore, wouldn't it be procedurally right that when the Government is coming, the LCs I and the LCs III of the newly-created town councils in Oyam District are included? We would like to know when the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will provide money for this.

THE SPEAKER: Let us solve the problems one at a time. Let us first have the system work. Once the system is working, then we can go back and say, "Okay, we need money for these people who have been working and have not been paid". Yes, Hon. Ssekikubo?

2.13

MR THEODORE SSEKIKUBO (NRM, Lwemiyaga County, Ssembabule): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Life is not starting tomorrow. Actually, life is every day. As we sit here, life outside is continuing. So, you do not have to say, "We shall wait tomorrow for one to

get a letter and stand surety for someone". We cannot say, "Wait tomorrow for you to transact where the LCs are required to put their stamps.

Madam Speaker, I rise to draw your attention to a tendency to take this House for granted. Once the Speaker summons the Attorney-General and the Rt Hon. Prime Minister-

THE SPEAKER: I thought I ruled on that.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Yes, but-

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssekikubo, you have just come.

MR SSEKIKUBO: You are right, Madam Speaker, but the impact of it is: how do we get from here outside-

MR SSEKIKUBO: There is a point of order.

MS ALUM: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. You are the Presiding Officer in this House and we have a crisis in this country, and you have made a ruling as far as the issue of LCs I is concerned. Is it, therefore, in order for the honourable colleague to continue dragging the House and insisting that we debate the same thing?

THE SPEAKER: The people who are insisting that we should stop working and adjourn the House and go and start thinking about LCs are the ones who like dodging. Hon. Ssekikubo has just come to the House; today is his second day. So, he wants to go back to the village.

Let us get a solution for the LC system from here. It doesn't need us to go to the village. Let us get a solution.

2.15

MR DAVID KABANDA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker, for your wise ruling. However, Rt Hon. Nakadama, on Tuesday, committed herself on behalf of the Government. Today, Hon. Bahati is committing on behalf of the Government. Tomorrow, he is going to be absent.

Government needs to be clear on this. Who is committing on behalf of Government today so that tomorrow when that person does not come, we know the person this House is supposed to ask –(Interruption)-

MR NIWAGABA: Thank you, honourable member, for giving way. The unfortunate thing is that we seem to be directing this question to the wrong person. This is not a matter for the Attorney-General. This is a policy matter which is the responsibility of the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, who has never appeared in this House ever since he was appointed, save for a few occasions.

In my considered opinion, you should direct the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to come and give the final position. If he is not around, then we can allow the Prime Minister to take charge. But forwarding this particular matter to the Attorney-General is not in order because the person responsible is the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the Government Chief Whip is looking for – (Laughter)-

2.17

THE LEADER OF THE OPPOSITION (Mr Mathias Mpuuga): Thank you, Madam Speaker. As he hobbles on the boda boda to look for the learned Attorney-General or the minister - we are leaders in this country and these corridors are awash with information as to why we are where we are. One such piece of information is the effect that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development did not make money available for this process.

The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is in the House. Can we hear from him, with your permission, whether he has made money available so that we can stop wasting time over matters in our space? Is the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development aware that money has been leased or found or being found for this process? That would save us some time too, because we are aware of what the issues are.

Madam Speaker, we should reject the overtures from the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. He should instead come and speak to the House. When you run the Government like a WhatsApp group, this is how you end. (Laughter)

The powers of financing returned to the Speaker; the Speaker presided over this House, we passed the Appropriations Bill and now the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is back to the Speaker for another Budget. Yet, the Speaker did her job with the House.

I don't know whether this Government is a WhatsApp group and needs data. (Laughter)

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, what is the Leader of the Opposition (LoP) saying? LOP, there is a Government in place and the Government is in charge, and Parliament is here and working.

Honourable members, I was just making a simple inquiry. We passed a law that says we should just line up when you are electing an LC1. How much money do you need for that? I told the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development that if he gave each of my Members just Shs 5 million to go and have elections in their place, elections would be conducted.

Honourable members, the problem we have is exaggerating figures. Figures were exaggerated to Shs 56 billion. We cannot give that for the election. That is a lot of money. Let us have a realistic figure for the LCI elections.

2.21

MR LUBEGA SSEGGONA (NUP, Busiro County East, Wakiso): Madam Speaker, I want to thank you very much for that guidance. How I wish the side on your left was on your right. That would work. That is why I really felt for Hon. Musasizi.

If the sector minister, that is, the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs through the Electoral Commission, has not come up in a

timely manner with a reasonable budget, you cannot help. The firefighting in our Government has led us to where we are. Firefighting in a sense –(Interjections)- no, I do not want to talk about fishermen and women because they have their own way of doing things.

There is a Government, which is aware that there will be an election after a regular interval dictated by the Constitution. You only need the Government on your right, Madam Speaker, to get into this kind of crisis.

My view is that you, Madam Speaker, finds pleasure in directing the minister of justice and the minister of finance to sit down and come up with a realistic figure. What do you need the Shs 50 billion for, for people who are going to line up?

We have an electoral system that is decentralised up to the villages. We are only grappling with a vote of no confidence in our systems. It is simply that. Don't you have parish supervisors? What do you need? Paying the paltry Shs 20,000 you pay to these presiding officers and assistants? I think, Madam Speaker, you just need to give timelines. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, what we want is a realistic budget for the election of LCs I because it is purely lining. We do not even have to pay agents. We want a realistic figure. As Parliament, let us not be pushed into approving money anyhow because we are desperate for LCs I. Let us give money that is realistic.

People come here at the last minute asking for money - I am happy he has come –(Applause)– Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, the whole of the 11th Parliament has been here waiting for you. We want to know your position on the election of LCs I and II.

We are living in a country where you cannot even go and stand surety for anybody in court. An LC I cannot even sign anything because they do not have the powers. We want to know what the position is. Much as we had given you until tomorrow, we want to know how to proceed as a country.

2.24

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Nobert Mao): Madam Speaker, on Monday, during the meeting of the Cabinet, this matter was discussed. Like the 11th Parliament Members, the Cabinet is also concerned about the implications of this expiry.

I do not want, Madam Speaker, to pre-empt the rich menu, which will be presented tomorrow by the Attorney-General and the Minister of Local Government. I can only state that we have consulted widely and tomorrow, Parliament will be given the full briefing. I think it is better I do not present what is supposed to be presented tomorrow. (Interruption)

MR LUBEGA SSEGGONA: Madam Speaker, I want to thank my brother and the former president –(Interjections)– Yes. He is my former president. It is a fact.

I want to seek clarification from him now, in his capacity as Minister for Justice and Constitutional Affairs as we wait for –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, Hon. Mao was a former president in Makerere and was a former president to Hon. Ssegona.

MR LUBEGA SSEGGONA: That is correct before we both left. Madam Speaker, there is a Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs who is the policy head of the ministry. What we are grappling with is not a matter of interpreting the law because even people who never went to law school are able to understand the period of expiry for the LCs. That can only happen under the nose and watch of the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs.

Madam Speaker, we do not need the Attorney-General or the Minister of Local Government because the Minister of Local Government simply receives these structures. Therefore, may we know from the minister, how he came to sleep on the job? And that is not the like of Hon. Mao. The Hon. Mao, I know, is not a sleeping minister. May we know how he slept on the job for us to get to this crisis where we are?

THE SPEAKER: There is another clarification from the Member for Butambala.

MR MAO: I will take it.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Hon. Mao has once sat on the left and he knows what it takes for people on the left to be able to critique the right.

I look at this as a trick to let Parliament get into a supplementary expenditure because we knew in time that the five years would expire. We have just concluded a budget process so any sober person, like the honourable minister, would have planned and budgeted for this.

As I seek clarification from you, don't you see this as a trick by the Executive to get Parliament into a supplemental expenditure? Otherwise, they know that by all standards we need LCs. We shall certainly have them and they know it is a matter that Parliament will not afford to forego. How do you look at this matter presented to us as Parliament from the Executive?

THE SPEAKER: As I was telling you, that should not be for Hon. Mao. When a supplementary comes here, we will evaluate whether that amount is sufficient to have the LC1 system. We will not approve anything. It should be money used for the lining up in the LC system. They are not going to print pictures.

MS AISHA KABANDA: Madam Speaker, I did not talk about the amount at all. I look at the expenditure of a particular item missing –

THE SPEAKER: Obviously, a supplementary will come. Take it or leave it.

MS MALENDE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Mine is directed to the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. We know that tomorrow –*(Interruption)*

MR ENOS ASHIMWE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Rule 80 talks about anticipation. The honourable minister was very clear that a report related to LC1 elections will be here

tomorrow but now we are seeking clarification over the same matter. Don't you think we are anticipating what they are going to present tomorrow?

Wouldn't it be procedurally right that we move on with today's business as we wait for the report tomorrow from the Prime Minister and her team? Then, we can raise all the questions related to the matter that will be brought.

MR DAVID KABANDA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I think the honourable Member from Kabula was not following when Hon. Sseggonna was making his submission. The Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs clearly stated that the Minister of Local Government is going to come here tomorrow and make a statement on this issue. Hon. Sseggonna emphasised that the Ministry of Local Government has absolutely nothing to do with the elections of LCs –

THE SPEAKER: He is a recipient.

MR DAVID KABANDA: Exactly. Therefore, this Parliament only wants the Government to commit itself and know who is coming tomorrow to make a statement on behalf of Government, not the Minister of Local Government, because he has nothing to do with these elections. Is he, therefore, in order?

THE SPEAKER: But there is also another aspect. Yesterday, Hon. Nakadama made a commitment and today, it was Hon. Bahati. Now, Government is here. Government, can you make a commitment that tomorrow we shall receive a report?

2.32

THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja): Madam Speaker, I bring you greetings from our sisters and brothers from Rwanda, where I have been; I came this morning.

The NRM Government, headed by the able President is going to handle this matter and there is no crisis. Tomorrow, we shall come

with a statement – [Mr Lubega-Sseggona: “Order?”]

THE SPEAKER: She has left the Floor. Honourable members, we may pretend, but let us have this completed. I have heard of a number of people coming here; they have been to court and they have rejected their letters from their LCs because the LCs do not exist anymore.

MR LUBEGA SSEGGONA: Madam Speaker, you are presiding over a House of record. Even when I put a question to my brother, Hon. Norbert Mao - which may seem to be a heavy one - I request him to be on record and a response because generations will condemn him, when we are not here to defend him. I said, “He slept on the job” and that is unlike Hon. Norbert Mao; he has always been alert. May you grant him the opportunity to wake up and answer?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Mao, just give a response that you either slept on the job or not.

MR MAO: Madam Speaker, the Member for Busiro East is extremely provocative. I thank him for the expectations and confidence he has in my ability to stay alert. I want to simply state we encourage what we call “a whole of government approach.”

At the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, we have three ministers, and you, Madam Speaker, also know that we have put on record a request that at any given time, one of us will be available when Parliament is sitting so the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs is always represented.

In this specific matter, the law is non-negotiable. Therefore, there is nothing like interpreting the law to mean what it does not. When this august House passed that law, its intentions were clear; to fix the term of office and that term remains fixed.

All that is required is for Government to come and announce the plan to deal with the problem that the country is facing. We are not here to

bury our heads in the sand like the ostrich. We are admitting that this is a verdict - a problem that demands a solution. The reason the Minister of Local Government is coming is because he supervises those units; the LC I and LC II. However, alongside him will be the Attorney-General.

We have assigned the Attorney-General from the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to come and speak on that matter. However, the actual solution will come from all the organs of Government, including this august House. As you know, the Electoral Commission needs resources and I believe their position will also be in that report.

Madam Speaker, I assure Hon. Sseggona and this august House that I have all my three eyes open.

THE SPEAKER: So, where is the third eye? (*Laughter*) Honourable members, let us go to the next item. We will wait for a report on that tomorrow and then we will be able to make a decision based on the report that will be presented.

MR KATUSABE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. About three times, you have directed the Minister of Health, who is in the House, to pay the benefits of the late nurse, Peter Baluku, who was burned to ashes in a hospital ambulance on 11 May 2023 in Kicuucu Village, Kicuucu Parish, Kisomoro Subcounty in the Bunyangabu District.

Every time I get to the community, I find the widow with five children crying and weeping. Madam Speaker, you have directed, over three times, for the Government to ensure the benefits of this nurse who died on duty is paid.

As I speak, the deceased left an incomplete house. His five- orphaned children are out of school. Therefore, it pleases you, Madam Speaker, I want to put the minister on notice that the next time I get to community, I am going to come with the widow and her five orphaned sons and daughters, and bring them to the minister’s office, if she cannot take action.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Atkins, we sympathise with the family for not getting their benefits. However, as leaders of this House; learned leaders, I expect you to know how to handle death and retirement benefits. It is a process.

You need to advise the family on the procedure they should go through to be able to get that money. It is not just a matter coming to this House and saying, "Hanifa, pay". No; there is a procedure that must be followed.

MR KATUSABE: Madam Speaker, my -

THE SPEAKER: This is not for a discussion. Please sit. Go and advise the widow.

Honourable members, something was mentioned yesterday by the Leader of the Opposition about the regulations and it was also in my communication. I expect the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, in the absence of his Attorney-General, to have come with that list. Can we have the list laid on the Table?

MR MPUUGA: Madam Speaker, as the Government gathers itself, you made another instruction yesterday that the Ministry of Defence and Veteran Affairs comes to this House to make a statement on their plan to privatise the UPDF. May you find it befitting that they make the statement before we go any further?

THE SPEAKER: I gave them until Tuesday. Are you ready?

2.43

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR DEFENCE AND VETERAN AFFAIRS (DEFENCE) (Mr Jacob Oboth): Madam Speaker, I was in the House but I think the honourable Leader of the Opposition only wanted me to - He has been missing me for a while. You directed and we are compliant. On Tuesday, we shall be ready. Even if we are ready now, we shall wait for Tuesday.

THE SPEAKER: I gave them until Tuesday and they will come here on Tuesday. Can I have

the list of all the laws we have passed with the attendant regulations that are operationalising them? Tell us how many laws were passed and the regulations.

2.44

THE MINISTER OF JUSTICE AND CONSTITUTIONAL AFFAIRS (Mr Nobert Mao): Madam Speaker, you guided the Attorney-General on 18 July to give this House a statement with the list of Acts of Parliament assented to and whether regulations have been put in place to operationalise them. The Office of the Attorney-General has compiled a chronological index of a total of 280 Acts of Parliament enacted by this House from January 2010 up to 17 July 2023.

Under all the Acts of Parliament, this House has delegated the power to make subsidiary legislation, by way of rules or regulations, to a minister, Board, or other entity. I now wish to lay the list of Acts and subsidiary legislation that are contained in this document on the Table. I beg to lay, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Out of the 280 Acts that were passed, how many have regulations?

MR MAO: Madam Speaker, I have not tabulated that, but they are in four categories that we can tabulate. There are those with regulations, there are those which do not have regulations, there are those which do not require regulations, and then there are Acts that were simply repealed. We will present an annex that can help Members follow the categories that I have named.

THE SPEAKER: Can we agree that all those that need regulations should be presented with the regulations in this House within two months, with the exception of the Road Act? We gave them one month for the Road Act.

MR MAO: Madam Speaker, we undertake to do that but I ask you to also amplify, through the Prime Minister, your directive so that ministers speed up the processing of regulations. We do not initiate the regulations ourselves -

THE SPEAKER: The Prime Minister is in the House.

MR MAO: I think it is up to the Prime Minister to whip the ministers to ensure these regulations are initiated. *(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: Let the shadow Attorney-General speak first.

MR NIWAGABA: Thank you, Hon. Mao, for giving way. When making Acts, we ordinarily provide for three scenarios. There are specific Acts where we categorically state that the minister shall make regulations and lay them on the Table.

There are other Acts where we provide that the minister may make regulations. Then, there are those Acts where we do not even provide subsidiary registration in form of regulations.

Would you be kind enough to notify the House on those particular Acts, where we have directed the minister to make regulations and bring them here and those Acts where we have given the minister the discretion to either make or not make?

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Niwagaba, he has a list of 280 Acts. He says they have tabulated. It is now our responsibility to forward that to the Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to ensure they find the Acts that need regulations, which ones say “shall” and which ones say “may” or without.

We will forward it to our Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs to do that as we receive the regulations. All the same, even if we are forwarding it to the committee, we still need the regulations in two months, for those that say “shall” or “may”.

MR SSEKIKUBO: Madam Speaker, there is a formal way of laying papers and once papers are laid, the person laying them must speak to the papers.

I have listened very attentively - it would have been the duty of the honourable Minister

of Justice and Constitutional Affairs to tell us exactly – Madam Speaker, you directed yesterday, and the import of your directive was that we have passed laws whose regulations we do not know. He has gone ahead to give us from 2010, but the import was: which laws have been enacted by this House for which the regulations have not being availed and laid before this House?

That is why, if I were Hon. Norbert Mao, I would have come up with at least a list of those laws for which they are still writing regulations and those which regulations have already been written, for purposes of speaking to them as he lays them on the Table rather than the bulk that he says he is laying before this House. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: We asked for all of them, we will take all of them and wait for what regulation is going to come. Hon. Mao, the two months?

MR MAO: Madam Speaker, though I left this House in 2006 and only came back last July, I think I still have institutional memory of how things are done in parliaments. What the honourable member expects me to do is to read the entire list and I think that would go beyond the time you had directed for –

THE SPEAKER: I did not ask you to read; I asked you to lay. That was my instruction. The other is the Member’s instruction.

MR MAO: Madam Speaker, we are obedient at the Ministry of Justice and Constitutional Affairs. I appeal to you to reign in Hon. Ssekikubo with a tight leash so that he does not attack the Minister of Justice and Constitutional Affairs, again. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Chairperson, Committee on Legal and Parliamentary Affairs, we have this list so I want you to verify whether it is among the Acts that have been passed and whether the regulations are there. They may tell us we have regulations when the regulations are not there. *(Mr Ssekikubo rose_)* Are you looking after cows in the House or what, Hon. Ssekikubo?

MR SSEKIKUBO: Where a Member uses unparliamentary language –

THE SPEAKER: Stop moving around as if you are looking after cows. No. Please, sit. Hon. Ssekikubo, go and sit. *(Laughter)*

MR SSEKIKUBO: Most obliged, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: That is how Hon. Ssekikubo is. Next item.

Honourable members, we have a lot of work on the Order Paper.

MR MPUUGA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your patience and indulgence. Yesterday, while addressing the House, I did remind the Government that health workers had given the Government a notice of 15 days to lay down their tools on account of non-employment of medical interns and other challenges. It is a full bench, with the Prime Minister, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Minister of Health.

Would it please you, Madam Speaker, that they answer to this ultimatum before we plunge into a crisis again and return here like we have, over the LC crisis, as if the Government is in exile?

THE SPEAKER: Government, that issue remained pending yesterday.

2.54

THE PRIME MINISTER AND LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Ms Robinah Nabbanja): Madam Speaker, the issue of interns has been on since April. We have had a number of meetings to address this issue. The Ministry of Health came here the other day and gave a statement.

The Government that I know is able and will handle this matter. The only issue we have is the lack of money.

MR MPUUGA: Madam Speaker, we can hear the Prime Minister informing the country that, actually, the Government shutdown –

THE SPEAKER: Is that what the Prime Minister said?

MR MPUUGA: Madam Speaker, for the Prime Minister of the Republic of Uganda to come and declare that the Government has no money and then she sits! There is a warning that doctors are going to have a sit-down strike.

Secondly, the same Government knew there would be medical interns in this country and the same Government made a budget. We have had statements here and the Prime Minister is aware, as well as I do, that 60 per cent of health workers in these hospitals are actually interns all the time; their cycle never breaks.

Should we regard the Prime Minister as representing the spirit of Government by her statement, because that does not sound like a government? That the Government is stuck and, therefore, we should all sit and mourn with her? Can we hear from somebody who is in charge? That is not the statement from somebody who is in charge.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the person who has spoken is the person in charge; she is the Prime Minister of the Government of Uganda.

Honourable members, we are going to have a stakeholder's engagement involving the Office of the Prime Minister, Ministry of Health, Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and the Leader of the Opposition will be involved. Let us get a solution. Members, at times, you cannot give what you do not have. Let us discuss and see how to handle this.

At the end of the day, we shall have to pay. Let us not just discuss it here. Let the Prime Minister first give the background.

MS NABBANJA: Madam Speaker, the Government committed to paying interns in the Financial Year 2019/2020 when the students were 360. The President directed that we give them Shs 2.5 million. In the Financial Year 2020/2021, the number of students rose to 600.

In the Financial Year 2021/2022, the number of students rose to 900. In the Financial Year 2023/2024, as we speak now, the number of students is 1,903 – against the same budget. By Financial Year 2024/2025, the number of students is projected to rise to 2,600.

Madam Speaker, I thought I should give this background so that all of us move in unison because all of us are part of the Government. You cannot sit here and claim you do not know what we do. Parliament and the Executive have been moving together. So, we know there is this predicament; the number overshot what the budget could handle.

Some of these students have spent five years in the university and their parents have been supporting them. The only year that is remaining now is where the Government has to look after them – give them the necessary requirements, food and accommodation. That is the money we are looking for here.

Let us handle this matter with that background so that we move as a team. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, this is why I am saying we need a stakeholders' meeting to decide to reduce from Shs 2.5 million to Shs 1 million so that we are able to accommodate everybody. Yes, we can reduce the amount.

MR MPUUGA: Madam Speaker, we are discussing the lives of our people and our own lives. I have listened to the Rt Hon. Prime Minister making a case for the Government but the world should not believe that training doctors is a workshop that was for one day or one week, for which the Government was not aware; that there was a workshop of one week and the number overshot. For five years, there was no element of planning; that we have these numbers and a Government superintending over medical education?

Madam Speaker, this is the last time any Government officer should come out and tell

the world that the number overshot and they were not aware. That is extremely unacceptable. Only the Government of Uganda can state that.

Let me remind the Prime Minister that payment to interns is a matter of law. It is not a question of magnanimity. That is what the law says and when you commit as the Government – Do you want me to teach you the law? Can I bring out for you the labour laws, the Public Service Regulations for work that is a payable? I want to remind the Prime Minister that her excuses are not tenable. There is an emergency-

THE SPEAKER: I have already told you, Members, that you will speak here - let me first hear from a doctor.

3.01

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATIONS TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Internship means that a medical student, in our case, offering medicine and surgery, or a Bachelor of Nursing and a Bachelor of Pharmacy has completed university education and has to go through a period of apprenticeship, where they are supervised by consultants in order to pass and be enabled to practice their profession in Uganda. It is even optional; you can choose to finish five years as a medical doctor and go away. Yes, just hold on.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, just listen.

DR BARYOMUNSI: What the Prime Minister is explaining-

THE SPEAKER: Just like pursue law, you can decide to go to the Law Development Centre (LDC) or not.

DR BARYOMUNSI: So, it should not be understood that the Government has no health workers. They are there, but interns definitely help because they do this internship as they train, but they are also training while managing patients.

It is true that the numbers of medical schools have increased over time, and therefore, the number of students who require to do internship has increased over time.

This matter is being discussed within the Executive, like the Prime Minister has said. We call upon our doctors, nurses, and pharmacists to be patient as the Government mobilises the resources to enable them to start the internship.

There is no need for a strike or industrial action. As the Prime Minister has said, the Government is aware of these numbers and arrangements are being made within the Government. So, I just wanted to give that information.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable members -

DR BARYOMUNSI: I welcome your suggestion that if it requires a stakeholders' meeting, I think it is okay so that we look into it but-

THE SPEAKER: ...so we see how we can handle this in a holistic approach. If it means reducing the amount of money, we do. All we need is for these people to go through an internship.

Honorable members, yesterday, we asked for guidelines from the Ministry of Works and Transport on the utilisation of the Shs 1 billion that is sent to the districts. Yes, procedure?

MR AKOL: Madam Speaker, around 2007, the Government of Uganda went to Amuru District with the intention of acquiring 20,000 hectares of land-

THE SPEAKER: How have you smuggled in that?

MR AKOL: Madam Speaker, this is a very serious issue on the ground, for which I wanted the attention of this House.

Madam Speaker, when 10,000 hectares were given to the Government, the community went to court. In the High Court of Gulu, the ruling

was against the community. Again, we came to the Court of Appeal in Kampala. Before the issue was exhausted by the Court of Appeal, the President called for an amicable understanding, where a deed of settlement was signed.

Upon that, in the Committee on Budget in the 10th Parliament, money was allocated and the people were compensated. Since then, up to now, the Amuru Sugar Works has never started.

What has happened is an invasion of people with cows in the area. Because of that, the people who had been compensated; some who had left the place, thought maybe that was a trick by the Government to take their land and give it to people who are coming to rear their animals. Now, these people are coming back to the land, for which some had been compensated.

Madam Speaker, my prayer is: one, we request the Government to first and foremost ensure that there is an update on the issue of the payment; whether the compensation is complete or not.

Two, if the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives took this land for purposes of the sugar factory, then there should be immediate action to ensure the sugar factory is in place. Otherwise, within three months, there is a high possibility, if those who have occupied the land do not leave, then the people are uprising in the area and that is going to be a great problem. I beg to move. Thank you

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Bahati, the Prime Minister, will receive a written response and you will present it to the House next Thursday.

3.08

THE MINISTER OF WORKS AND TRANSPORT (Gen. Edward Katumba Wamala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was directed to bring and lay on the Table-

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, who were not in the House yesterday, there was an issue of the Shs 1 billion, that is sent to the districts. However, the money is not being used

in a proper way and Members of Parliament who are supposed to do the oversight role do not know what is in the guidelines.

GEN. KATUMBA WAMALA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to lay on the Table the guidelines that were generated by my ministry on the utilisation of the Shs 1 billion, which is being sent to all the districts, municipalities and town councils.

The guidelines provide how to generate the work plans and the role of the district roads committee to which all Members of Parliament are members.

It provides for monitoring and supervision, and how it will be done and so, the guidelines are very detailed and they have all that. Therefore, I beg to lay on the Table a copy of the guidelines to be uploaded on the iPad.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I request the Committee on Physical Infrastructure to scrutinise the guidelines and report to this House. We want to understand these guidelines.

GEN. WAMALA: Madam Speaker, I was also instructed to lay on the Table the status of the update of the procurement of the road units for the 16 districts. The report is here. I beg to lay it on the Table.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We will need the Committee on Physical Infrastructure to look at this and report back on Thursday.

GEN. WAMALA: I also want to lay on the Table the efforts we have made, as a ministry and the evidence we have communicated to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development the need to buy equipment for municipalities, town councils and cities and also to buy the second set of equipment for the large districts.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. It is also referred to the Committee on Physical Infrastructure. In the public gallery, we have students and teachers from Good Shepherd Primary School,

from Nakivubo, Kampala District. They are represented by Hon. Shamim Malende and Hon. Muhammad Nsereko. You are most welcome. Stand up! Welcome, children from Nakivubo. Thank you. Please sit down.

MS KAAYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Likewise, for the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, we approved Shs 396 billion and it is indicated that the first quarter cash limit is just Shs 1 billion. In line with the discussion that Gen. Katumba has just left - we are perturbed by the limits, given the fact that most of us are looking at standing electric poles and the need for the people to get connected to the –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, bring that item and we put it on the Order Paper. It is a very important issue. Can we go to the next item?

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES ON THE STATE
OF CHILDREN'S AFFAIRS IN THE
COUNTRY

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, a society worthy of its name must protect the children, fulfil their rights and reject any abuse of these children that are being neglected. Of course, this has happened in Uganda. The Committee of Equal Opportunities has examined this and is ready to report. Can we have a report from the committee?

3.13

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES (Ms Judith Alyek): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I salute you. I also salute Members of Parliament. First of all, allow me to lay the following documents on the Table:

- i) Minutes of the committee's proceedings. I have seven minutes to lay.
- A copy of the report I am about to present.

- A report of the delegation of the Committee on Equal Opportunities went to South Africa for benchmark;
- A report for benchmarking in South Africa about the children. I beg to lay. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Please lay and summarise your report.

MS ALYEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker.

The Committee on Equal Opportunities derives its mandate from Article 90 of the Constitution of the Republic of Uganda and it is established by Rule 183 of the Rules of Procedure of this Parliament. It is inter-alia mandated with monitoring and promoting measures designed to enhance the equalisation of opportunities and improvement in the quality of life and status of all peoples including marginalised groups on the basis of gender, age, disability, or any other reason created by history, tradition, or custom for the purpose of redressing imbalances which exist against them.

I will try as much as possible to make a summary, but let me give a background on what we did as the Committee on Equal Opportunities.

Scope

The conceptual scope of the committee

Assess the state of affairs of the children in the country, that is, child labour, child abuse, children's rights, child protection, violence against children, teenage pregnancies and marriages, birth registration, access to social services like education, health, shelters, food and other basic needs, social protection of children, children with disabilities, juvenile justice for children, children in contact with the law, detention and rehabilitation, among others.

The committee visited and held meetings with the following entities: We went to –

- i) Kampiringisa Rehabilitation and Detention Centre;
- ii) Naguru Remand Home;
- iii) Naguru Reception Centre where children are received;
- iv) Kigangazi Health Centre II in Kenya;
- v) Lukango Seed Secondary School;
- vi) Bukomansimbi District Action Centre.

The delegation also benchmarked on how children are treated in other countries. We went to Phelang Special Needs School and Dominican School for the Deaf in Pretoria, South Africa. We also visited Kabete Remand Centre, an approved school for boys, Compassionate Hands for the Disabled Foundation, Kabete Children Rescue Centre, Machakos Girls Rescue Centre and Children's Remand Home and Directorate of Social Assistance in Nairobi, Kenya.

Madam Speaker, in the review of documents, the following are the documents that we reviewed. I am not seeing anything projected on the screen because the Members would just see in summary as I proceed with this, then I do not read the documents that we reviewed in relation to children.

Anyhow, the 1995 Constitution of the Republic of Uganda was reviewed by this committee on issues concerning children, the Children's Act, Situation Analysis of Children in Uganda by UNICEF, the Birth and Death Registrations Act, Cap 309, the National Council for Children's Act, Cap 60, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989 and the Universal Declaration of Human Rights, 1948.

Madam Speaker, the following key findings or observations and recommendations were identified for immediate action. First of all, we looked at the existing legal and regulatory framework governing the rights and protection of children. I have already talked about the

Constitution and the Acts, but we also went as far as looking at the Domestic Violence Act, 2010; the Education Act, 2008, CAP 127; the Penal Code Act, CAP 120; the Birth and Death Registrations Act, CAP 309; as I have already mentioned, and the National Council for Children's Act; the Prevention of Trafficking in Persons Act, 2009 and other laws.

Madam Speaker, Uganda is also a signatory to many regional and international instruments on children's matters, which were necessary in promoting the welfare of children, and has gone ahead to ratify the same. These include: the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Universal Declaration of Human Rights; the Hague Convention on the Jurisdiction for Protection of children; the African Charter on the Rights and Welfare of the Child; the African Children's Charter; the European Convention on the Adoption of Children; the Convention on the Rights of the Child; the Optional Protocol on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography; the Optional Protocol on the Involvement of Children in Armed Conflicts; and the East African Community Treaty.

Madam Speaker, it was very important for the committee to really go through these documents. Now, in Uganda, the Constitution of this country recognises the rights of the child and specifically provides for children's right to health, education, and the right to protection from exploitation, under Article 34.

The Constitution also states that a child offender who is kept in lawful custody or detention shall be kept separately from adult offenders. The Constitution of the Republic of Uganda, 1995, under Article 34, further provides that, subject to the law enacted in their best interest, children shall have the right to know and be cared for by their parents and those entitled by law to bring them up.

Therefore, in Uganda we have the same general human rights as adults and also specific rights that recognize their special needs. Children are neither the property of the parents, nor are they helpless objects of charity. They are

human beings and are subject to their own rights. So, as we looked at the amendment that was done on the Children's Act, we looked at the reform and consolidate the law relating to children, provide for the care, protection, and maintenance of children, provide for the local authority support for children, establish a family and children's court, and provide for children charged with offences and for other connected purposes.

It is pertinent, therefore, to note that the definition of a child is provided for under Section 2 of the Children's Act. Cap 59 (as amended) to mean a person below the age of 18 years. The Act also, under section 3, provides for the welfare principle, which is to the effect that whenever the State, a court, a local authority, or any person determines any question with respect to the upbringing of the child or the administration of a child's property or application of any income arising from it, the child's welfare shall be of paramount consideration.

Therefore, the implication of the above provisions is that the welfare principles are of paramount consideration to children's matters. So, when I go to these parameters, there should be no discrimination against any child. All children have all these rights, no matter who they are, where they live, the language they speak, their religion, what they think, what they look like, whether they are a boy or a girl, whether they have a disability or not, whether they are rich or poor, and no matter who their parents or families are, or what their parents or families believe or do, no child should be treated unfairly for any reason.

Madam Speaker, there are also these basic necessities that the children have the right to grow up in a peaceful, caring and secure environment. These parameters will give us a good preamble for what we looked at exactly when we found these children.

Looking at the best interest of the child, when others make decisions, they should think about how their decisions will affect children. All adults should do what is best for children.

The Government should make sure children are protected and looked after by their parents or by other people when there is a need. Government should make sure that people and places responsible for looking after children are doing a good job.

When it comes to life, survival and development, every child has the right to be alive. The Government must make sure children survive and develop in the best way possible.

In regards to the name and nationality, children must be registered when they are born and given a name which is officially recognised by Government. Children must have a nationality, belong to a country. Whenever possible, children should know their parents and be looked after by them.

Regarding having a family, a child has the right to know who his or her parents are and to enjoy family life with them or their extended family. Where a child has no family and is unable to live with them, he or she should have the right to be given the best substitute care available.

In respect for children's views, we found out that children have the right to express an opinion and to be listened to, or to be consulted in accordance with their understanding when taking decisions which affect their well-being.

On the right to health, we all know that they have to be taken care of health wise. The children with disability or a child with disability should have the same rights to be treated with the same dignity as other children and to be given special care, education and training where necessary so as to develop their potential and self-reliance.

Protection from harmful practices is also one of the parameters we looked at. A child has the right to refuse to be subjected to harmful initiation rights and other harmful social and customary practices, and to be protected from those customary practices, which are prejudicial to a child's health.

Madam Speaker, I need to be protected because I am hearing a lot of murmuring.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Chairperson, do a summary.

MS ALYEK: Yes, now looking at these parameters in summary, protection from violence, access to education, rest, play, culture and arts, protection from harmful work, protection from sexual abuse, and armed conflict.

Madam Speaker, as I summarise what I have here –

THE SPEAKER: Let us go to the recommendations.

MS ALYEK: The committee further noted that trafficking and monitoring the welfare of Ugandan children who are placed under foster care abroad – Madam Speaker, I would like to make the House understand this very well because there are children who have been adopted and taken abroad, and we have information –

THE SPEAKER: Let her finish.

MS ALYEK: The committee noted that despite the strides made by Uganda through the ratification of international conventions and enacting corresponding laws meant to improve the well-being of children in this country, more efforts are still required to ensure that all children enjoy their rights.

We noted that trafficking and monitoring the welfare of children who are placed under foster care abroad remains a very big challenge since Government has not yet ratified The Hague Convention on Adoption. We recommend that Government should ratify The Hague Convention.

We have also recommended that Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development should ensure that the laws promoting and protecting children's rights are properly

implemented so as to improve the welfare and well-being of children in Uganda.

On birth registration, the committee observed that the National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics System should be strengthened through capacity development and equipping NIRA, district local governments and health facilities. NIRA should be supported to develop and implement an evidence-based and comprehensive Civil Registration Policy and cost National Civil Registration and Vital Statistics Strategy Plan to access birth certificates.

We have further recommended as follows:

- i) The Government of Uganda should ensure that every child is registered by enforcing the existing laws;
- ii) Ministry of Internal Affairs should sensitise the community and make it compulsory for every parent to register their children. There are many children outside there who are not yet registered;
- iii) NIRA should also simplify the birth registration process and reduce complicated registration and certification processes that the parents are complaining about; and
- iv) The Government of Uganda should also ensure that Section 28 of the Registration of Persons Act is implemented to ensure that birth registration is free. Furthermore, fees under Section 39, should be waived unless it is a replacement for a birth certificate.

On violence against children –

THE SPEAKER: honourable members, listen to the chairperson. All in all, since you are telling the chairperson to summarise - Chairperson, when you look at your document, one can make a summary of about five points.

When we listen to you keenly, the first issue should be: there is need to strengthen the

child protection at family level through proper socialisation and upbringing. As we all know, the family is the foundation of the nation. The quality of the upbringing of our children matters. At a family level, we will determine the kind of adult that you are going to be.; whether you are going to be an adult like some of us or other people there;

The second is that the relevant authorities should implement the existing laws and abide by relevant international conventions, which Uganda is a party to.

Three, in delivering social services, we need to pay attention to the quality of care accorded to the children. Public facilities such as schools - that is why you talk about education; hospitals - that is why you are talking about health; and recreation centres should ensure safe spaces for children where it is necessary.

Given the rapid expansion of ICT services, there is need to protect children from harm and unsuitable information. Parents and caregivers must ensure the consumption of adequate information to safeguard children and minors.

Government should also integrate relevant reporting frameworks for children; that is the ministry for children - we need the reporting guidelines to be in the Government and implementation of the policies of Government. Basically, that is the summary that you need from the chairperson. Chairperson, is there anything you want to add?

MS ALYEK: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I also have reports on our visit to Kampiringisa, which is the only juvenile prison in this country. I need to make this House know that the children who are there are in a very bad state. Can I proceed to make this report?

THE SPEAKER: Is it part of the report?

MS ALYEK: Yes, it is part of the report for the children.

THE SPEAKER: Let us upload it. Honourable minister of state for children affairs, you need

to make a follow-up and get this report. Let us upload it and make follow-up. We need to receive an action-taken report from you.

MS BETTY AOL: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would like the chairperson to clarify on whether Kampiringisa is the only juvenile prison. How do we call those other ones? For example, we have one in Gulu and another in Mbale. The one of Gulu has more than 150 juveniles. Are they not juvenile prisons? Thank you.

3.37

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS) (Ms Sarah Mateke): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to inform my colleagues that we do not have prisons for children. We have one rehabilitation centre, which is Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre. The other places like the one in Gulu are remand centres or remand homes. These are not prisoners, but children who are in contact with the law. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much, honourable minister.

MS MALENDE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. For purposes of clarity, a person is taken to a remand home when they are still facing charges in court and have not been convicted or sentenced. Kampiringisa is a centre where they are kept when the entire case has been dealt with and they have been sentenced. I wanted to clarify on that. Kampiringisa is the equivalent of a prison for children.

3.39

MS LUCY AKELLO (FDC, Woman Representative, Amuru): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Should I take it that we are now debating? If yes, I would like to comment on Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre because in the last Parliament, I was a Member of the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development and we visited it.

I would like to bring out the issue of some of the projects there, including the one on green jobs. Part of that was supposed to help our young people in their rehabilitation. However, it is not being effected.

There is also the issue of the environment that the committee chairperson commented on, for example, the court environment. There is a report that I read, which indicated that most of these juvenile offenders find it difficult to actually fit in the environment. What used to be a safe environment has now been turned into a waiting room, but not an environment where they are protected as they go to court.

Age is also a big problem and that is why most of the police personnel just estimate the child's age. Most times, the children find themselves with adults.

Finally, when it comes to care and service, I would like to bring in the component of mothers who get convicted and give birth while in prison, and they end up with these children there yet kind of environment in these prisons is not very good for the children.

I thank Sister Rosemary, who is a CNN heroine. In Gulu, this was a big problem. What Sister Rosemary did was to create a crèche in the facility. So, every morning, mothers would take their children to this crèche and then pick them up in the evening so that the children could have a better environment, and not get mixed up with adults. They would even provide milk for these children.

Therefore, the question I ask, especially to the minister for children and youth, is whether the conditions in our prisons have improved so that breastfeeding mothers are able to take care of their children – those who give birth while in prison. It may not be so comfortable, but at least it should be an environment where a child is able to attend to a crèche kind of programme and then grow up to maybe two years and then they can be removed from prison. That is the issue I thought I needed to bring up.

Otherwise, I thank the Chairperson of the Committee on Equal Opportunities.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We are debating, but I am limiting it to 10 people.

3.42

MS LAURA KANUSHU (NRM, PWD Representative): Thank you, Madam Speaker, for the opportunity. I commend the committee chairperson, but I have a few comments to make. From the list of the places that they visited, I notice that she called them “special schools”, but we choose not to call them “special schools” because they are “segregated schools.”

Also, the laws that she referred to, both international and national, encourage inclusion of children with disabilities. From her presentation, I get the sense that they actually visited schools that are not inclusive, but are also institutions. Now, all these laws discourage exclusion in schools and also exclude institutionalisation of children with disabilities.

Therefore, I am not very sure whether we have good recommendations regarding children with disabilities. However, what I want to say is that the laws that we have passed in this country –

THE SPEAKER: What is your amendment on the recommendations?

MS KANUSHU: My amendment is that we should focus on the inclusion of children with disabilities in schools. We do not need to build any special schools. What we need to do is to include children with disabilities in the mainstream schools.

Also, the minister in charge of children should, as much as possible, make sure that we do not have institutionalisation. If you go to Lweza and Kireka and see the state of children with disabilities, you will notice that they do not even have toilets. The Government must –

THE SPEAKER: Would that be different from non-discrimination of children in terms of education, health and all those kinds of things?

MSKANUSHU: That would be discrimination, if you get a deaf child and create a deaf school – because you are not going to create a deaf university or a deaf college. So, what we are saying is that we should have a deaf child in a school with other children and provide a sign language interpreter. We are also saying that we should bring a blind child to Kampala Parents School and provide braille for that child to learn with other students. This is what we are talking about.

Instead of institutionalising the children, we should support the mothers to be able to take care of those children who have severe disabilities. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

MS LUCY AKELLO: I just want to give information that Iganga S.S is one of those schools that has incorporated - actually, most people think the school is called Iganga Girls but it is not. It has included blind boys in the school. I thought I needed to give this example and information. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Hillary Kiyaga?

3.45

MR HILLARY KIYAGA (NUP, Mawokota County North, Mpigi): Thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am giving a chance to Members who are making maiden speeches. After Hon. Hillary Kiyaga, I will go to Hon. Connie. *(Laughter)*

MR KIYAGA: Madam Speaker, I happen to represent the people of Mawokota, where Kampiringisa Rehabilitation Centre is located. This is one of the centres we take and regard as rehabilitation centres for our children, but the state of this centre is alarming. It is at this point that I ask Government whether it still has the capacity to take care of these centres or they are just there for formality and in name.

When you talk about a rehabilitation centre, it is where we expect to change the lives of the children who are going astray. However, when you go there, right from the facilities –

let us talk about the fence - the centre is in a village and it has no fence yet people take their children and they end up loitering around the whole village.

Kampiringisa health facility got de-roofed but Government, up to now, has never gone to put back that roof. This is a centre where we have our children, but they have no health facility. So, the state of Kampiringisa is alarming.

I would like to ask Government to come out clearly and state if they are able to take on Kampiringisa because we are sending our children to hell instead of the heaven that we think it should be. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I hope you are taking note of the issues that are being raised.

3.48

MS CONNIE GALIWANGO (Independent, Woman Representative, Mbale City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the committee chairperson for the presentation although I just noted a few things.

There is a remand home in Mbale. When I visited it, I noticed it was in an appalling situation. We had to contribute for food. There was also an NGO, which brought some mattresses and blankets because what was there had worn out.

When you look at these children, Madam Speaker, they are in tattered uniforms, and yet these are juveniles. Some of these girls are really growing, but their breasts are always out; it is quite appalling.

I call upon the Government to look at these institutions and support the children in there. Much as they are in these centres, they need a decent life, like it has been put. If we neglect them, we will be throwing them out to the dogs.

Madam Speaker, I have observed that while moving in traffic jam, many children are begging on the streets. I do not know, as a country, what solution we will have for these

children. These children come to beg when their parents are at the sides watching. When they are given anything, they run to give it to their parents.

Can something be done so that people travel safely? Because they really disorganise the people who are moving, and it is very bad looking at a child coming to beg.

Sometime back, we said that anybody who gives any money would be arrested. I do not know what solution we have for this problem. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: It takes us back to parenting; how we leave our children and they end up in the streets.

MS KAHUNDE: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson for the report. I want to seek clarification from the minister. On top of the dilapidated structures at Kampiringisa and other detention centres, we were informed that -

THE SPEAKER: Actually, the detention centres should be renamed as correction and rehabilitation centres, because those centres are basically for correction and rehabilitation.

MS KAHUNDE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Those rehabilitation centres do not have food, and rely entirely on the Office of the Prime Minister. They go begging for part of the relief food to feed those children. Can the minister clarify that because we were informed that they do not have money for that purpose? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you so much. Maggie.

3.52

MS MARGARET MAKHOHA (Independent, Woman Representative, Namayingo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to take this opportunity to appreciate the committee for the report. I am the Chairperson, Uganda Parliamentary Forum for Children. When we are discussing issues concerning children, I am equally concerned.

THE SPEAKER: No, you are equally concerned as a mother.

MS MAKHOHA: Not only as a mother but also as the chairperson of the forum that is in charge of children across the country.

THE SPEAKER: Now, when I ask the leadership of Children's Forum: how many of these rehabilitation centres have you visited and supported? How many times have you lobbied, as Members of Parliament - that today let us go to Naguru Rehabilitation Home and support them? We must be seen to work for others.

When we talk about children, let us talk about children as our people, and as our children. Now, next time as the chairperson, mobilise us when they say they need support - corporate social responsibility as the Parliament of Uganda.

MS MAKHOHA: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for that good guidance. I have two concerns. First, we came up with the National Children's Authority, which was supposed to oversee issues of children in this country. However, as I speak, staff are in place, but there is no budget for the authority. It is like we have left the children to whoever is concerned.

Secondly, if we want to have a stronger foundation for our country - good citizens -

THE SPEAKER: Is the National Children's Authority set up by an Act of Parliament?

MS MAKHOHA: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: And there is no -

MS MAKHOHA: No funding and it is not functional. When the authority is not given money, and it is not functional, then children, are left to whoever is concerned.

Secondly, when we want a strong family and good citizenry, we must also invest deliberately in the foundation of that person. We are talking

about having good policies like the early childhood guidelines or policy, but we have no budget.

If we cannot invest deliberately in the foundation of our children, then what kind of person shall we be raising? So, if we can be here and budget for prisons instead of budgeting for pre-education, then we shall raise mediocre children who will have no future and will end up in these prisons.

Therefore, I want to call upon this House to deliberately put money into early childhood so that we raise responsible leaders.

Madam Speaker, like you have said that we should mobilise ourselves, we are beginning now and it is our duty. In the coming budget, let us do something to have money in the budget specifically for the children of this country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Just a clarification: where do we put the money for the children of the country?

MS MAKHOHA: We have a minister in charge of children affairs under the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development. For example, we are now talking about Kampiringisa and remand homes; she was given Shs 30 million -

THE SPEAKER: First of all, before we take the children to those remand homes, what is our core role? What should we do first to avoid these other issues? What should we do?

MS MAKHOHA: Madam Speaker, parenting is key.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the first thing we should ever think of before remand homes is parenting. Let us advocate for better parenting of these children. Once you have good parenting - a family that brings up children well, you will not need remand homes.

3.56

MR RONALD BALIMWEZO (NUP, Nakawa Division East, Kampala City):

Thank you, Madam Speaker. Education is a fundamental human right, but also resting and playing is one. There is a growing tendency for schools to extend study time beyond the normal time. Children below the age of four wake up early in the morning.

Recently, I told Parliament of an incident that happened around Queensway, where three kids were on a boda-boda and the one at the back slept off, fell down and a speeding car crushed his dead.

Madam Speaker, this Parliament recently told the Minister of Education and Sports to make a statement to that effect. However, up to now, it is almost four months, nothing has come.

The committee has not interrogated the time students and kids, wake up. They need time to rest like we do, but this never happens. I do not know whether learning in class is the only option we have to grow up a child.

Secondly, the committee did not also interrogate the matter of juvenile cells. We have police stations and police officers arrest juveniles, but they have nowhere to keep them. They end up keeping them with adults and eventually, they become endangered. So, it is important for this report to capture that.

I also want to inform the House that we have different disabilities. We cannot have schools with all categories of children. We have these that cannot even study, and cannot learn with others *-(Interjection)-* yes, those with –

THE SPEAKER: Let him give his submission. He is disabled like you.

MR BALIMWEZO: My concern is that we have no schools for free education for people with disability. Education for people with disability is very expensive and when you add on the aids that we use, they are quite expensive.

Therefore, we request Parliament to make sure that we remove taxes on supportive devices for people with disability so that we can be able to compete favourably with others. I have an artificial limb, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: No, there is some exempt; they don't pay taxes.

MR BALIMWEZO: Not all of them, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Information from the minister.

MS ASAMO: Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I just want to give my fellow disabled person, who is acting as disabled because he got an accident *-(Laughter)-* [Mr Balimwezo: *"Order, Madam Speaker."*]

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, listen. Hon. Balimwezo, there is being born disabled and acquiring disability. For her, she was born disabled but for you, you got disabled due to an accident. That is what she is meaning, but you are disabled.

MS ASAMO: Madam Speaker, you have really put it right. It is right and it also informs us as House, that any time we can be candidates.

THE SPEAKER: Any of us can be disabled.

MS ASAMO: Yes, but what I wanted to inform honourable is that on the issue of exemption, the Government of Uganda has exempted but the issue is availability. For example, if you have the braille papers for the blind, there is no shop in Uganda, which sells them, we have to import. I think it is only the Ministry of Education and Sports, which tries to import.

Secondly, I agree with you that they are very expensive but as Government, we are trying to see how we get the wheelchairs, which are affordable through Ministry of Health to get the orthopaedic apparatus.

On the education, while we are promoting inclusion, we are also saying there will be an

annex for those children to get what they call special instructions but come back and learn in the main school. We realised that when it comes to job opportunities, if I appear before Madam Speaker, for the first time as a disabled person and she has never seen one in her school where she came from, she might think you cannot manage. So, that disabled will have failed at that level.

However, if I have old girls and old boys who know that Asamo was in school, and she would do this and that, I will have a correct way of moving away. So, when you treat us in a special way, we look like people in the zoo and the time we appear before the public, everybody is shocked to see us. The first question they will ask you is that we did not know that you are like this, sorry. So, you are even fired before you are hired.

We are bringing inclusion but encourage the Ministry of Education and Sports to put annex for special instructions. Thank you. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR BALIMWEZO: Thank you for the information. I am concluding *-(Laughter)* - Madam Speaker, some of us who got disability when we are aged even suffer more than those that got used to the disability.

THE SPEAKER: The way you people are moving out; has the House closed?

MR BALIMWEZO: Madam Speaker, I thank you for taking up the matter of school-going children to study in the normal studying hours. That is critical and I conclude by emphasising that.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

4.03

MR FRANCIS LORIKA (NRM, Moroto Municipality, Moroto): Thank you, Madam Speaker. First of all, I thank the committee for the report.

However, I somehow disagree with some of the areas because I believe the areas that were meant to inform us, in terms of recommendations, were not captured in this report. I am saying this because Karamoja Region is one of the most marginalised areas and ranks highest in some of these concerns that we are raising in regard to the welfare of the children. It is very clear that 80 per cent of the children on the streets come from Karamoja Region.

So, it would have been very important for the committee to go to Karamoja so that they could be able to understand why these children end up on the streets. That is an issue that Government has tried to address, but they have not come to the bottom of it. This report should have given us that information for us to come up with recommendations that can address this matter for future planning.

So, I feel the report is incomplete. It is prudent for the committee to also include some of the information from that side, given the fact that Karamoja Region still stands the risk of these challenges that we have been discussing. Therefore, I implore the committee that in future, if you are to deal with issues in regard to children, you should be able to focus mainly on areas that rank highest in that respect. I thank you once again.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much.

4.05

MS BRENDA NAMUKUTA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kaliro): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I would like to thank the committee for the powerful report on the state of our children affairs.

However, there is one point that I noted. In 2016-2017, there was massive child registration but up to date, you do not see the real impact of this registration. Most of the names –

THE SPEAKER: How do you feel or measure the impact?

MS NAMUKUTA: Most of the results that came out of that massive child registration were invalid and giving different reasons either fingerprints were not captured and several reasons were given.

My last concern is: I am from Busoga Region and there is a big problem of child marriages. I would like to implore the Committee on Equal Opportunities to do massive sensitisation because you have outlined most of the laws about children but most of our people are ignorant about those laws. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I want us to differentiate between the birth registration and NIN registration for learners. What Hon. Brenda Namukuta is talking about is the NIN registration for learners that was done at schools. That is why you needed the - what did you say? Fingernails? (*Laughter*) That is where one needed to share their fingerprints not the fingernails. That was NIN registration for learners. Otherwise, the birth registration is different.

4.07

MR CHARLES BAKKABULINDI (NRM, Workers Representative): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. I join my colleagues in thanking the chairperson. I am looking at that report giving us the overview of the situation of our children within the country and outside where we visited, particularly South Africa.

I used the opportunity, when I was a minister, to tour some areas in South Africa. In fact, in South Africa, they call them rehabilitation centres and they categorise them according to age. I hope you learnt some lessons that you can bring here. The way they are being handled, apart from feeding, which of course is good, they bring some personnel with different topics to talk to them; they teach them something, they even show them how they should behave as good citizens.

When I visited another rehabilitation centre for older children, I found there many Ugandans, and I expected the chairperson to mention that

they saw some Ugandans in those rehabilitation centres during their tour, and majority of them were from Wandegeya –(*Interjections*)– yes and they were all doing one job, witch doctors. In fact, when I wanted to get more information, they requested me to tell the Muzungu, that I meet them alone and we talk Luganda and that is what we did. They told me how they had gone there to make money. That they were mixing soil and herbs and confusing the South Africans, particularly those who are suffering from impotence and so on. And they were doing business.

Anyhow, the learning lesson I wanted you to give us is the way they are being handled and how they change their mind set to go back and be good citizens. That is why my colleague from Karamoja was saying – I wish the good ideas we got from South Africa were brought here and we see how we can use it to handled our children in Uganda.

MR SILWANY: Thank you. The clarification I want to seek from the minister is what the Hon. Bakkabulindi is talking about. Is impotence a disability? Do you qualify, for example, to participate in an election or in an activity for people with disabilities when you are impotent?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members -

MR BAKKABULINDI: I have got another request for information here.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Silwany, do not bring your being vulgar in the House. (*Laughter*)

4.10

MR DAVID ZIJJAN (Independent, Butembe County, Jinja): Thank you, Madam Speaker. My exception is with regard to whether or not these are rehabilitation centres or prisons. I think what we are faced with is a question of semantics and nomenclature. While we would like to call them rehabilitation centres, even the minister lacks statistical data on the percentages or numbers of children who have been to Kampiringisa and have come out as success stories.

When I made an inquiry, I was informed that there was one child who came out and became a bishop. Of course, without information on the denomination where this child was a bishop.

We interacted with officials from the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development - we asked them about the population of, for example, street children in Kampala, they did not know. They said it was impossible to find out the actual number of street children in Kampala –(Interjections)– it was a public accounts committee. The Ministry of Gender did not have this information and they confessed and admitted that it is not possible for them to find out but other cities, know the population of street children on their streets and that information is readily available. Nairobi has 60,000. International Needs (UK) approximates the number in Kampala to 15,000 children but our own Government and our own ministry, does not know.

Therefore, there is no evidence, that the children who have gone through what we like to call rehabilitation centres, are actually rehabilitated and have become more productive citizens. I think that what the report should have brought out is statistical data, backed with evidence of whether we have a proven functional mechanism that shows improvement in the lives of the children. I thank you, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

4.10

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the committee for their report, but what I noticed, and that has been followed by the discussion, which is taking place, is that we are looking at the reformatory element and not looking at something that is positive for the children. Even in the report, clearly, they have stated the places they visited, and you hear it is mainly the reformatory places where children are taken.

However, in this country, Madam Speaker, there are international organisations, that are doing a

great job for our children and our communities. For instance, we have Plan International, Save the Children, Child Fund, etc. These organisations are doing great jobs out there. I thought they would balance up, apart from going to these reformatory centres, they would have also gone to these organisations and looked at what those organisations are doing. I want to believe that if they saw, probably from there they would have made better or more recommendations.

People are talking about schools. My sister from Namayingo, told us how we could help these children before they go into problems. They are taken through a process where they learn and they are okay. I am giving one example: you go to communities where Plan International is working and see how they are dealing with the issues of child-centred development and early childhood education, and how they are managing the transition of these children from the early childhood centres into the primary schools. You will be surprised to see what is happening.

I worked in Luweero, and in Luweero, Madam Speaker, what happened was that we followed up with the children who came from the early childhood care centres and transited properly to the primary schools. Some of them are now in secondary. The majority of them are disciplined children, they are bright, they are doing very well and I would like to imagine if we had such examples we would have known.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us be brief. Many people want to speak. We are now on storytelling?

4.16

MS JENIFFER AYO (NRM, Woman Representative, Kalaki): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to join the colleagues to thank the committee for the report, but I want to focus on the issue that the committee raised, concerning teenage pregnancy and child marriage, where they highlighted that in 2022, between the month of March and September, there was an increase in pregnancies among the girl children aged 10 to 14, of 366 percent. I

think this is something to worry about and as a country, we need to think of a way forward.

Madam Speaker, in the constituency where I come from, you find a number of children moving to school but end on the way. Then we have a number of children who are selling oranges on the Lira Soroti Highway, from morning up to around 10.00 in the night. Some people even at around midnight, you can find them on the way with those trailer guys. I think that there is a need for the ministry to work hand in hand with the local governments and come up with an ordinance or bylaws that will help us to work on this issue of child marriage. There is a need for an ordinance and bylaws. That is the point I wanted to make and thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Actually, most of these children are within our villages and if we cannot regulate them from being in the streets selling oranges and whichever – and then we need to have a regulation or an ordinance that says that when we get a parent who is negligent enough to leave children to do that, we cane that parent. I wish Hon. Ecweru was here. He is good at caning. *(Laughter)* Those parents must be put to order. You cannot just produce children and not take care of them. Honourable members, let me give a chance to somebody who does not have a child. He is a young boy.

4.18

MR DAVID KABANDA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Fortunately, Hon. Shamim Malende also does not have a child so we can connect very well. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: You can connect well.

MR KABANDA: Madam Speaker, I want to thank the committee for this report. First of all, Government and Parliament need to investigate where these children that we take to Kampiringisa, come from. Every day, Government agencies pick children from these streets. The following morning, you find that the streets are full again. There is a night, it was around 2 a.m., around Ntinda, when I was

driving from Mubende, I found a vehicle, a very big truck, off-loading children. They left them there. Government must know that this is a business. When you give these children money on the street, there is somebody who is waiting to receive that money from that child. It is a business. Before we talk about these children who are being traumatised, and Government not looking after them, there are some people who are benefiting from this business. I understand the MPs from Karamoja know this issue very well.

Before you complain about Kampiringisa, does Government of Uganda know where the children that are in Kampiringisa come from? Every day, on the streets of Kampala, there are a number of children. As Parliament, we must investigate the source of these children. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Maybe we also need to understand the reasons that bring these children on the streets. Is it because they do not have homes? Do they not have where they come from? If you know they come from Karamoja or Teso, why don't you take them back to Teso and look for their parents?

4.22

MR BENARD SEKYANZI (NRM, Budyeb County, Nakasongola): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Indeed, we need rehabilitation centres per subregion. Why am I saying so? In our villages, we have many children without their parents.

THE SPEAKER: Let me tell you, before you go ahead - when you say you need a rehabilitation centre per subregion, then you are encouraging negligence by the parents. Actually, we should not have rehabilitation centres.

MR SEKYANZI: I am not encouraging but there are many children in this country without parents. In my village and my home, I have four children that I am caring for because they do not have parents. When you come to my village in Nakasongola district, there are many theft cases – *(Interjections)* – wait, I will give you to clarify.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we need rehabilitation centres where it is necessary, not out of negligence of parents or out of poor parenting. This business of people just producing children and throwing them must be discouraged. You are going to have rehabilitation centres for you to dump your children. Your work is –

MR SEKYANZI: Madam Speaker, some children - I am talking about those ones at my home - lost their parents and others –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, so many of us are orphans; we have no parents but we are not in rehabilitation centres. I am a total orphan, Hon. Obua is a total orphan and we are not in a rehabilitation centre.

MR SEKYANZI: I am still on the Floor -

4.24

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The right to identity is part of the rights of children. A child must have a right to a name and a right to family.

In Uganda, we have so many men who are absconding their responsibility towards their children by simply looking at their morphology. They look at the nose, they look at the shade of the skin and they abandon these children. This has alienated our children from their families, from their homes.

Right now, we have a surge of DNA testing in the country and the most affected group are the children. You grow up with a parent, but five to 10 years, someone goes for a DNA test and abandons you saying “you are not their child.

There are also ladies in this country who simply assign fatherhood from a catalogue of men in their boxes. “

Madam Speaker, is it not the time that in this country we think about mandatory DNA testing at birth so that one leaves the labour ward when a child is sure of the father of that child? Is it not yet time?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us hear from Hon. Kenny Auma.

4.27

MS KENNY AUMA (UPC, Woman Representative, Kwania): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I want to thank the chairperson for the presentation she has made. We have a serious issue in this country concerning children. When we go back to our villages, we see children keeping in the trading centres from morning to night hours yet they have their parents. These are both girls and boys. This comes as a result of poor parenting; parents are leaving children. Parents are also doing their own things while the children are in their own world.

When we go back to the villages, we need to emphasise this, as leaders of this country. What kind of children are we bringing up? What kind of future does Uganda have?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, it takes us back to what Hon. Jennifer said. As leaders, we should make sure that we have bylaws up to the grassroot – the local governments – where irresponsible parents are held accountable for their children not being at school and being in the streets. We also have to hold those fathers accountable – those fathers who abandon their children. - Mothers never dump their children. These fathers must be held accountable. By the time you produce, you know you need it.

Hon. Kenny, have you finished?

MS KENNY AUMA: Not yet. *(Laughter)* Let me conclude.

THE SPEAKER: I am giving a chance to the people who have not spoken. Hon. Kenny, you proceed.

MS KENNY AUMA: Madam Speaker, as I conclude, we have children who are taking drugs in the villages. You find a child of five or 10 years taking alcohol in the trading centre together with LC I leaders and parents.

THE SPEAKER: We no longer have LCs I. *(Laughter)* In the traditional world, parenting

is not the role of only the father and mother; it is communal. People should get responsible. Why don't we first hear from the minister? Hon. Helen, please, submit before we hear from the minister.

4.30

MS HELEN NAKIMULI (NUP, Woman Representative, Kalangala): Thank you, Madam Speaker. In addition to what you said, some of the men who produce children and do not take care of them are in this House. *(Laughter)* I know some and I can bring evidence.

THE SPEAKER: There is a point of order. Honourable members, please, pay attention; do not go that way because I know them. I am the custodian of all the information in this House. I know them. Do not say that they are not there; they are here.

MS NAKIMULI: Thank you, Madam Speaker, for your support. First of all, the report talked about juvenile cells and, like Hon. Balimwezo said, some places do not have juvenile cells and these children are put in the same cells as adults.

However, in the island districts, probation officers have to transport children from, for example, Kalangala and Buvuma to Naguru and Kampiringisa. This is very costly for them, yet they are not well funded. Therefore, I suggest that the committee chairperson adds that recommendation.

Also, when we talk about local councils, the people in charge of children's affairs are the secretaries for children's affairs – that is, the deputy chairperson of a village. This brings us back to the need to elect these people into those positions and we make them legal such that they help us with this issue of parenting.

Finally, Madam Speaker – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. We are going to have elections; it is not anything for negotiation. Hon. Agnes Acibu?

4.33

MS AGNES ACIBU (NRM, Woman Representative, Nebbi): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Hon. Alyek, thank you for that report. I have one concern.

When we talk about street children and the juveniles, we should be mindful that they are spread all over the country. My concern is that we are talking about -

THE SPEAKER: Street children are not all over the country; I have not seen any in my village.

MS ACIBU: Okay. In Nebbi, they are there. My concern is about rehabilitation and correctional centres. When we take these children there, they should be convinced that where they are being taken is a rehabilitation or correctional centre. We have heard from what the chairperson read that these places are in an appalling state.

Therefore, it is my prayer that the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development gives more money to the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development so that when the juveniles are taken to these places, they are at peace. We should also have enough counsellors to handle these juveniles. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: We are now repeating the same things. Let me hear from Hon. Faith.

4.34

MS FAITH KUNIHIRA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kyenjojo): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I thank the Chairperson of the committee for the report. One of the things that I realised from the report is that there is no clarity as to whether they interacted with the children themselves and had time to listen to them.

It seems when you go to these centres, you do not listen to the children and later show us what they shared with you. I would wish to see these details in the report.

My second issue goes to the minister. The Minister of Gender, Labour and Social Development, through the Probation Office, is very good at placing the children in the different places, but very poor at following up and supporting the children they place in the different facilities, such as the children's homes and the facilities they have just mentioned.

The Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development needs to come out very clearly: they should either stop their work or facilitate them after placing the children there.

My third issue is that the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development knows the rights of the child very well. The committee chairperson was very good at giving us the rights of the child in the whole document, but at the same time, the right to eat, the right to sleep well and the right to education are not well stipulated and handled by the minister.

My last issue is whether these are rehabilitation centres, remand homes or cells for children. The situation in these places warrants us to call them cells and jails, not rehabilitation centres. The minister needs to come out clearly on whether these are juvenile cells or *—(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Kevin?

4.37

MS KEVIN OJINGA(NRM, Woman Representative, Pallisa): Thank you, Madam Speaker. I would also like to join colleagues to thank the committee chairperson for the report.

I would like to say that this goes back to the issue of parenting. I belong to the Committee on Gender, Labour and Social Development. We moved across the districts and spoke to these children who are in the centres. We asked them why and what happened. Their story was, "My grandfather or my father raped me." The whole thing was strange. That is why most of them are on the streets.

Therefore, let us form these by-laws and see where the problem comes from. Long time ago, we used to hear that children could not

leave homes in the evenings, but these days, we can hardly have a function in the village without children leaving their homes to go to these parties. Parents have abandoned the children. They move and come back home at any time of the night. The whole issue has to go back to parenting. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. There is a procedural matter - honourable members, the issue of parenting. When we were growing up, as Hon. Kevin is saying, you did not move in the evenings. Nowadays, on the streets of Kampala and Speke Road, young girls are all over and you wonder where they are coming from. It still goes back to parenting.

We parents need to take our role seriously; make sure the upbringing of our children is good. We would not have these children on the streets of Kampala. Let us not forget what Hon. Kabanda was talking about - what is the procedural matter?

MR SSASAGA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I have got two procedural issues. One is originating from why children are leaving homes. The chairperson of the committee talked about some of the children's rights and the harsh -

THE SPEAKER: What is the procedural matter? Do you just want to submit or are you raising a point of procedure?

MR SSASAGA: Procedurally, I have listened to all the Members and from the submission they are making, they are coming back to what has already been made. Therefore, could the minister move and make responses? Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister. Just be brief.

4.41

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR GENDER, LABOUR AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT (YOUTH AND CHILDREN AFFAIRS) (Ms Sarah Mateke): Thank you, Madam Speaker. Issues to do with children are cross-cutting. I will not say that it is only the Ministry of

Gender, Labour and Social Development that is responsible for these children. We all have a stake in looking after them.

It all comes to one thing - that we go back to parenting and valuing our families. If this is done, to assure you, we shall empty all these remand homes and all the streets, not only the streets of Kampala but all the streets in all the trading centres.

Madam Speaker, I will address some of the issues that were mentioned in brief. On the issues of dilapidated structures and not having food, the budget we have does not allow us to do any developments. We are only given money for food and it is the same money that we use to transport these children to Court. In case a court session has not taken place, we bring them back. The whole financial year, we were given only Shs 640 million. That means that every quarter, we have to spend Shs 160 million to feed the children, transport them to Court and back.

I would like to explain the number of remand homes that we have. Most of you are asking to know them. I do not think that is a solution. We have a Naguru Reception Centre for those – I am just giving information so that Members can know. We have Gulu, Arua and Mbale remand homes. Fort Portal, Masindi, Kabale remand homes and Kampiringisa National Rehabilitation Centre. *(Interjections)* I will give you the clarification. Just hold on. We have nine remand homes and one national rehabilitation centre. We have one, which is under construction in Moroto, not yet complete.

My sister, Hon. Connie, raised the issue of Mbale being congested and having no food because of the budget constraints, which you all know. We are the ones who pass the budget. Mbale serves the whole region in Eastern Uganda.

Originally, when they were building Mbale Remand Home, they hoped that it would serve around 60 inmates. However, right now, we have more than 200 children in these homes. After the completion of Moroto, the congestion will reduce.

Madam Speaker, the issue of child marriages or teenage pregnancies is something we sometimes sugar-coat. This is defilement but where are these men who are doing this? Surprisingly, I do not know whether you expect the Ministry of Gender, Labour and Social Development to go and search for these men who are doing this. If the parents do not come out and the girls do not report – surprisingly, even those who go to report, there is a way the system just plays around it and the cases “die” along the way.

THE SPEAKER: In fact, most of the defilement and rape cases are settled locally.

MS MATEKE: Yes, Madam Speaker, it becomes very tough for us to continue. There are times someone comes to your office crying; “This has happened to my daughter.” What hurts me most is when a father defiles a daughter and the mother comes to tell you, “I’m a housewife. If I report this man, he will chase me. I still have my children but he is sleeping with my daughter. I need survival.” It gets tough for some of us. Therefore, it all comes to one thing; parenting and valuing our families.

Madam Speaker, you asked the question why these street children keep coming to the streets. Makerere University made a study in Karamoja and there were very interesting findings. One, of course, you cannot leave out the issue of peer influence. The parents still have a very big role to play in sending their children to the streets.

The third issue was husbands, especially those from Karamoja. They send their wives to come and look for money. You have seen even the women. Haven’t you seen them on the streets? They come with their children to collect money. Every month, this woman has to go and report money back home.

The next issue was about food and hunger. Of course, we have people who are trafficking these people. I remember last year, we arrested eight women who were doing this. When they reached Court, the charge was changed. I got to hear that the women are already free and

moving around. Therefore, at times, it gets tough for us.

We cannot leave out the issue of poverty. Poverty does not only affect Karamoja; it is everywhere. We have to find a way of addressing this issue because it makes our children go back to the streets; it makes them drop out of school.

Madam Speaker, it is very true that we have 165 children's homes in Uganda and most of them are privately-owned. At times, it gets tough for us, especially when mothers die while they are bringing to life babies or the children are abandoned. We end up requesting the probation officers to help us trace where to place these children. Most times, we take them to the children's homes as we try to trace their families, especially those who were neglected. The budget of the probation officers is very little. I think in every quarter, they get less than Shs 200,000. We have at least two probation officers who are supposed to handle all issues in the district related to children. So, this little money that we give them is the same money that they use to trace the families of these neglected children to help us handle the family wrangles and conflicts in homes. We should also think about them as we are budgeting because we are the ones who do the appropriation.

Madam Speaker, you talked about violence against children. I cannot leave this place without talking about it. Of course, the protection of children - as a ministry, we put in place a child helpline and we have 68 district action centres. That child helpline is used anywhere in Uganda. We have tried to mobilise Ugandans and sensitise them; for any child in school, we have told them that if they are in danger, they should call *Sauti* 116 and we shall support them - we have supported very many children. Even if a child calls from Karamoja, we are able to trace where they are and help them. Whether the child calls from Kabale, Arua or Gulu, we always come in to support them because we have a network.

Lastly, on the issue of inter-country adoption, yes, we have not yet ratified the convention, but

there were reasons for that. First, as a country, we realised - [Hon. Bakkabulindi: "Order"]

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Bakkabulindi, you switched on the microphone and said, "Order." Now, I will not allow that point of order. Minister, please, go ahead.

MS MATEKE: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Government has not yet ratified because in the thinking of Ugandan laws - of course, the comprehensive laws that we have - we realise that from our Constitution and the Children's Amendment Act, 2016, Ugandan courts of law can handle this. The Hague Convention entails removing the powers of the courts of law to have an independent body to handle inter-country adoptions. We realise that this may not work for us for now, unless we change our Constitution and the Children's Act.

Meanwhile, anything to do with the children's inter-country adoption is centralised in the Family Court in Makindye and it is carried from there. It is strictly done by the courts of law and no one else. We do the movement and searching, but at the end of the day, it is done by the courts of law; the Family Division. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes?

MS MATEKE: Madam Speaker, they are telling me about the National Children Authority; it is very functional. Apart from being underfunded, it is functional. For example, out of a budget of Shs 900 million, we were given only Shs 375 million. From that Shs 375 million, we are basically paying salaries and no activity will be done.

On the issue of the board, Madam Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Why are you paying salaries for people who are not working? What are they doing?

MS MATEKE: They are still waiting for rationalisation. On the issue of the board, we got a letter from the Ministry of Public Service, which stopped us from having those boards

and recruiting. We are waiting for them to open up and after that, we shall put it in place. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: The way Members are shouting - I admire when you start shouting like that.

MR KIBALYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. The basis of the National Children Authority was to help children, not to help people earn a salary. Out of the little money that was sent, people are just earning a salary.

The minister is telling us that she received a letter not to constitute the board. Therefore, there is no relevance and value for that Authority to Ugandans. Through your office, Madam Speaker, wouldn't it be procedurally right for you to stop whatever is going on in this sector, until they operationalise it, formulate it, make it useful and Ugandans benefit from it? Otherwise, it is an avenue for people to just syphon money; to take money and earn a salary.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the committee has very good recommendations and we are going to ask the ministry for action taken reports under Rule 220 of the Rules of Procedure. We will continue talking here and we will not get any feedback. I suggest that we have these reports adopted and we ask for actions taken.

Honourable members, I put the question that the report of the Committee on Equal Opportunities on the state of children affairs in the country be adopted with amendments by this House.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report adopted.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, we need actions taken on each recommendation. Whoever wants to quarrel, go and quarrel in the corridor. Remember, you have been the Leader of the Opposition, Hon. Aol; the Leader of the Opposition is supposed to be a calm person like Hon. Mpuuga. *(Laughter)*

BILLS SECOND READING

THE NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES (CONTROL) BILL, 2023

THE SPEAKER: Where is the committee chairperson?

MS AISHA KABANDA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. It has become a habit of the Executive to ignore requests for clarification from Members. The only way we can get information from them is for us to seek clarification.

When members of the Executive habitually ignore, keep quiet and sit down, are we proceeding well, Madam Speaker, especially when the honourable minister who was here chose to run out immediately? If we also choose not to listen to them-

THE SPEAKER: We still have a Minister for Gender here - but *Hajjati*, you have been out; you have just come in. I also want to say this; it has also become a habit by some of you heckling. This must stop. Do not touch some people on the wrong side. You start heckling, and this has come from my very good friends. I will name you and take action if this does not stop.

If the Presiding Officer has said we want action taken, what else do you need as the legislature? You need action taken on whatever has been recommended.

First, we are saying that before you reach this level, first emphasise parenting. You as leaders, go back to the ground and have bylaws in your area and ensure that children do not move in the night.

I wish I were your voters; I would not vote you because you do not protect the next generation. *(Dr Baryomunsi rose)* Doctor, do you have anything to say?

MS AISHA KABANDA: Let me clarify my stand, Madam Speaker. I did not seek any

clarification because I knew I was outside, I restrained myself and sat down. However, I feel sympathetic for a Member who says clarification 10 times and the minister says, “I will give you –”

THE SPEAKER: You are not the spokesperson of other people.

5.00

THE MINISTER OF INFORMATION, COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY AND NATIONAL GUIDANCE (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Madam Speaker, even we, on the front bench, are guided by the Rules of Procedure. The rules are very clear that points of information and points of clarification are discretionary.

The Member holding the Floor has the discretion to allow a point of clarification or not. So, why would you want us to have special rules for the front bench?

Nevertheless, we always endeavour to explain and respond to issues. So, I do not want my sister -

THE SPEAKER: *Hajjati*, I know you are a very disciplined person. When you say you will move out in protest, you do not need to move out in protest. Just go home and cook for *Hajji*; tomorrow come back. You get it? Do not go in protest; just walk out because you have the freedom.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Madam Speaker, I think the honourable members should not develop a tendency of wanting to discredit the front bench. We are colleagues and we are Members of this House. Therefore, it is unfair for my sister to make comments as if we on the front bench do not co-operate with the rest of the Members in the House.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, we have an important Bill. Next item.

BILLS SECOND READING

THE NARCOTIC DRUGS AND PSYCHOTROPIC SUBSTANCES CONTROL BILL, 2023

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, this Bill- Procedure?

MR KOMAKECH: Thank you, Madam Speaker. We are going to handle a very complicated Bill. One of the reasons we have this Bill back in Parliament today was because the -

THE SPEAKER: Why are you debating in anticipation?

MR KOMAKECH: I am just bringing the background- I request your guidance.

THE SPEAKER: Sit down. Honourable members, we have a very important Bill on the Floor. This Bill was returned because of the issues of quorum. There was no other issue that was raised, to the best of my knowledge. However, when we referred the Bill to the committee, the committee made amendments in all the clauses.

Rule 61(4) says, “*An amendment shall not be permitted if, in the opinion of the Speaker, it substantially alters the principle of the question proposed.*” These amendments have an effect on the principles of this Bill.

I am referring this Bill back to the committee for harmonisation with the Attorney-General and report back to this House.

I advise the leadership of committees; when you are given a Bill, do not go and make changes the way you wish to. Do not change the principle of the Bill. This is not the Bill we had in the House. Bring back the Bill we had in the House without 100 per cent amendments. The Bill is referred to the committee for amendments. Next item.

I am happy we have seen Hon. Nankabirwa here. You had a paper to present on the Floor; I hope you have something. You have had a number of documents you are supposed to present. Hon. Kivumbi, do you remember them? She is here. Remind her of the documents she is supposed to present.

5.05

MR MUWANGA KIVUMBI (NUP, Butambala Constituency, Butambala): Madam Speaker, thank you for this opportunity. The minister was directed to lay the documents related to the gold waiver, where we lost Shs 616 billion, courtesy of a Statutory Instrument she issued, and this Parliament still waits for you to come back here and make good of the instruction that was issued to you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. There is a procedural matter first.

MR EKANYA: Thank you, Madam Speaker. Under the Rules of Procedure, the management of Bills in committees must be complete. Members of Parliament and your staff face problems of lack of technical people from the ministry to guide the process and lack of participation of people from the First Parliamentary Counsel. Members of Parliament and the technical team are left with no option but to make amendments based on the findings from the public.

Madam Speaker, don't you think it would be proper that you direct the Office of the Attorney-General and the Prime Minister to ensure that they have full participation during the Committee Stage to avoid the re-occurrence of this situation?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, the technical staff we expected on this Bill were from the Ministry of Internal Affairs. Honourable minister, did you send the team?

5.07

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Gen. David Muhoozi): Madam Speaker, I would like to qualify what Hon. Ekanya has talked about.

In this case, my minister appeared before the committee. Indeed, the committee substantially changed the content of the Bill as was presented at the first reading. That is why, in your wisdom, we think we need to harmonise and come back before the second reading. I beg to submit, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Government Chief Whip, you need to advise the Attorney-General's Chambers to be available to guide the committee. Our legal team is always in the committee.

5.08

THE GOVERNMENT CHIEF WHIP (Mr Hamson Obua): Madam Speaker, I strongly believe that the learned Attorney-General is more than willing because I am also in possession of a copy of a letter that he wrote dated 19 July 2023, addressed to you on the same. However, I undertake to inform the learned Attorney-General to be present or be represented as the committee considers this Bill, in line with your directive.

THE SPEAKER: Let us hear from the committee chairperson on what could have happened.

5.09

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON DEFENCE AND INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Mr Wilson Kajwengye): Thank you, Madam Speaker. The Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs duly considered and processed this Bill.

First of all, it is the Ninth Parliament that passed the Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance Control Act then, which was annulled in the Constitutional Court. After annulment, there is no law at all. The Minister of Internal Affairs read a Bill for the first time, this time entitled, "Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance Control Bill, 2023" and you duly referred it to the relevant committee.

The committee sat and entertained the minister, the sponsor of the Bill, members of the public and stakeholders. In doing that, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: The substantial changes that you made were on the Bill that was laid on the Table, which Bill you went to scrutinise.

MR KAJWENGYE: Yes, Madam Speaker. When a Bill is referred to the committee, the Rules of Procedure demand that once you have listened, where you find that you need to amend or improve, you do so.

THE SPEAKER: There is a limit – it should not 100 per cent.

MR KAJWENGYE: We did not amend 100 per cent, Madam Speaker, but I take your guidance.

THE SPEAKER: No, there is a limit. If you do it substantially, it changes the principle.

MR KAJWENGYE: I take your guidance, Madam Speaker. The learned Attorney-General spoke to me this morning about the changes.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, it is not that we know everything or we do not know. When they tell you that there is a mistake somewhere, let us accept and make a change. The sponsor of the Bill has said there is substantial alteration. Please, go back to the committee and harmonise. You know how sensitive this Narcotics and Psychotropic Substance Control Act is; most of us here are consumers. *(Laughter)* It is a very sensitive Bill and so, we must be very careful with it. Hon. Kivumbi thinks his request is very important.

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA: Madam Speaker, there is also something, which you need to determine at this critical moment. Actually, while writing the report, divergent views came out, which you need to clarify. When this Bill was laid here, the following day, the Attorney-General appealed to the Supreme Court and the controversial issue, which arose was whether or not the matter did not become sub judice. I call upon you, Madam Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: The matter of sub judice can only be determined by the Speaker and I already determined that there is no sub judice.

They wrote to me and I determined that there is no sub judice.

MR ABDALLAH KIWANUKA: He did not show us the letter. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: It was not for your consumption.

DR BAYIGGA: Madam Speaker, in your communication, you said that most of you are consumers.

THE SPEAKER: Not us. *(Laughter)*

DR BAYIGGA: Let me complete this statement. Madam Speaker, I believe this kind of statement can be captured in the *Hansard*.

THE SPEAKER: We are not consumers in this House but most of the people out there are consumers, including, but not limited to some people here.

DR BAYIGGA: I just wanted to take exception of that, Madam Speaker. Thank you very much.

MR OPIO: Thank you, Madam Speaker. I was just seeking your guidance because the title of the Bill is, “Narcotics and Psychotropic Substances Control Bill”. When you talk of psychotropic substances, we are talking of antidepressants, painkillers and anxiolytics or anti-anxiety drugs. All these are medical and health related.

Wouldn't it be procedurally right that the Committee on Health together with the Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs look at this Bill? That was the guidance that I was seeking because I was just looking at the report and there are a lot of health-related aspects. This is a Bill cutting across two ministries. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: He has raised a very important issue. Whereas Dr Lulume was not the first to understand that all of us take antidepressants and not coffee - Which kind of doctor are you? Dr Nicholas Kamara, please, advise him.

DR NICHOLAS KAMARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I was also surprised to see that the committee did not consult us about these drugs. Actually, there are many drugs, including morphine, codeine and the famous fentanyl, which are all prescribed by doctors and we want to be involved in the processing of this Bill. Thank you very much, Madam Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The Committee on Defence and Internal Affairs work together with the Committee on Health in processing this Bill and harmonise it together. Thank you. Hon. Nankabirwa?

5.16

THE MINISTER OF ENERGY AND MINERAL DEVELOPMENT (Ms Ruth Nankabirwa): Thank you very much, Madam Speaker. Dr Lulume is a gynaecologist. That was on a lighter note although I have never been his client. *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: By the way, Dr Lulume is my gynaecologist. Yes, he is a gynaecologist.

MS RUTH NANKABIRWA: Madam Speaker, the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development is one of the most active ministries regarding the attendance of Parliament. I would like to thank my two colleagues, Hon. Sidronius Okaasai Opolot and Hon. Peter Lokeris. *(Applause)*

We have been working together. Sometimes, I face challenges such as having to attend meetings at State House but I always make sure that the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development is represented here, in Parliament.

When I presented a statement on the gold levy at that time – and the Deputy Speaker was in the Chair – I laid on Table the Statutory Instrument that I signed, which levied the \$200 per kilogramme of processed gold.

I have been reminded that there are other documents that I was supposed to lay and I beg for your indulgence that I go back, get organised

and return to lay those other documents that I am required to lay on Table.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ruth. Actually, we will write to you, informing you of the documents that we want you to lay on Table.

Honourable members – you know, you tire the Presiding Officer with those issues of procedure, order and whatever. A Presiding Officer is also a human being, just like you and is bound to get tired.

So, I adjourn the House to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 5.19 p.m. and adjourned until Thursday, 20 July 2023, at 2.00 p.m.)