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(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FOURTH SESSION - THIRD MEETING

TUESDAY, 4 MARCH 2025



IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FOURTH SESSION - 19TH SITTING - THIRD MEETING

Tuesday, 4 March 2025

Parliament met at 2.06 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

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

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I welcome you to this sitting. Our Muslim brothers and sisters, I hope that the fasting period is treating you well. Tomorrow, Hon. Isingoma and the team will also start the fasting period the way our Muslim brothers and sisters are doing.

Honourable colleagues, the Anglican Chaplaincy will celebrate the Ash Wednesday service tomorrow. It will be officiated by His Grace Rt Rev. Dr Samuel Stephen Kazimba Mugalu to mark the beginning of the Lent period in the Christian calendar tomorrow, 5 March 2025, starting at 12.30 p.m. in the conference hall. You are all invited. It is not only Anglicans but also Catholics and Muslims; it is a blessing when we have His Grace here. We should all go there to welcome him and come later for the plenary.

The Parliamentary Catholic Chaplaincy will also have an Ash Wednesday Mass tomorrow, 5th March at 5.00 p.m. in the conference hall led by the Bishop of Lugazi Diocese, His Lordship Christopher Kakooza.

Honourable colleagues, on a sad note, I regret to inform you of the passing on of the father to Hon. Agnes Taaka, MP Bugiri. The late Wandera passed on Thursday, 27 February 2025. He will be laid to rest in Namayemba Town Council, Bugiri District on Thursday, 6th March. I request that we observe a moment of silence in his honour.

(Members rose and observed a moment of silence.)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I received your congratulatory messages on my election as the President of the Organisation of Africa, Caribbean and Pacific States Parliamentary Assembly (OACPS). I promise that I will make you proud.

In a special way, I thank the Rt Hon. Speaker of Parliament who nominated me. Without her nomination, I would not have made it. I thank His Excellency, the President who gave me the clearance and support that was necessary.

We ran a campaign. Sometimes, I use the principle of, "My son before it is completed, do not announce it." That is how we ran that campaign and reached out to every delegate. Therefore, you better consult me on how to campaign. I will establish a campaign agency. Hon. Okupa knew what was going on.

Honourable colleagues, what is very important is that this organisation meant a lot to two very critical people in this Parliament: the late Rt Hon. Jacob Oulanyah and the late Hon. Cecilia Ogwal.

The late Rt Hon. Oulanyah dedicated his life to this organisation to the extent that he drafted most of the documents and agreements. We have now transitioned from the Cotonou Agreement to the Samoa Agreement, which will be coordinating all these funds you see and support that comes from the European Union (EU).

We will be having strong engagements on issues to do with trade. We want non-tariff barriers removed for our goods to enter the European Union. Issues like Uganda being on the grey list for money laundering - We have already cleared with the Financial Action Task Force (FATF) and met the requirements but Uganda, Jamaica, Panama, and Barbados are still on the list.

I met the Deputy President of the EU Parliament and a few commissioners in the EU. I hope we are going to have it sorted because it is now with the EU Parliament, and we have very strong connections with the EU Parliament on which we can best sort some of these issues.

We shall be pushing for issues on climate change. Our colleagues in the Caribbean and the Pacific have been strongly affected but also Africa because we have had cyclones in Malawi and Mozambique are getting affected and parts of Southern Africa. You can see the heat wave we are having here; all these are issues of climate change.

These are pertinent issues that we are going to be handling but the most relevant for our population here is the European Union Regulations on Deforestation (EUDR) where they are saying that if our coffee, tea and cocoa had been planted in an area that had trees from 2020 then they won't be able to enter the European Union.

We are saying that even when you are promoting climate change, you must do it in a sustainable, fair and just way. So, whereas we support efforts, we need to find a way of meeting minds so that we do not end up suffocating people from poor families and countries.

We are going to have very hard negotiations and luckily enough, some of you will be joining us in that spirit to deliver for the country, the continent and the world. I thank you, honourable colleagues, for your support. Yes, Hon Musasizi? On my communication?

2.14

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the rest of the world and this Parliament to congratulate you on your recent achievement and thank you for making Uganda proud.

Mr Speaker, I have a small clarification. Uganda was cleared from the grey list in February last year by FATF, but the EU has a different arrangement called the blacklist. I expected that, having been cleared by the FATF grey list, we would automatically be cleared from the EU blacklist. However, this has not happened, although we are optimistic. Thank you for picking it up.

I would like to clarify that it is not the grey list - We are not on the grey list; it is the EU blacklist. In the EU jurisdiction, the grey list is for tax purposes but for money laundering, they call it blacklist, and this is what we are fighting to get out from. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister, for that clarification. Hon. Ababiku -

2.17

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the rest in congratulating you. You have consistently made us proud. May God continue to bless you.

In your communication, you talked about climate change. One of the ways of fighting the effects of climate change is to maintain good practices. I, therefore, take this opportunity to inform you and the House that the directive you made in this House, to the Committee on

Natural Resources to go to the field, specifically in Adjumani, on the issues of Zoka Forest, has not been implemented to date.

More destruction is ongoing and people believe that we are not serious, because if directives are not implemented, then where will their hopes be? Therefore, I request that your directive be enforced so that the common people understand what we are here for. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Chairperson, Committee on Natural Resources had told me that they were going at the end of the month. I do not know what happened and he has not updated me. I am going to follow up because the issue of Zoka Forest is very critical and for us, we are not concerned with issues of who is fighting for what. No, the issue is the protection of the forest. That is what we are looking at.

Therefore, thank you for that reminder. After here, I am going to cross-check with the Chairperson, Committee on Natural Resources to ensure the team goes on the ground. Hon. Moses Okot?

2.18

MR MOSES OKOT (FDC, Kioga County, Amolatar): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join Members of this House to congratulate you for having achieved that at a global stage.

However, Mr Speaker and the people who sit on the Government side, you are one of our greatest exports to the world but you did not come from an abstract idea. We nurtured you in the Forum for Democratic Change. *(Laughter)* If we did not nurture you and we condoned the treatment that is being given to the Members who sit on this side of the House, as we are seeing in Kawempe, we would not have the likes of you to export outside.

May it please the people who sit on the Government side - in reaction to your speech that they create an environment that ushers in persons of your stature from this side so that we can have people to export to the world out there. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: My colleague will always find a way. Thank you for your kind words, honourable. Hon. Ssewungu, wait a bit. Let me allow the Chairperson, Committee on Climate Change because he is –

2.20

MR LAWRENCE SONGA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. First of all, I would like to take this opportunity to congratulate you for assuming the presidency of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS). This is a very important achievement for us in Uganda and Africa as this will come with opportunities and challenges.

I would like to focus on the challenges that you can use in this position so that we can benefit, not only as a continent but also as OACPS countries.

First is the issue of natural resources exploitation. There are companies that are coming from some of the European Union (EU) countries and they are operating in Africa. As a result of that, they are causing conflict in some of the ethnic communities; in Democratic Republic of Congo, Cameroon, especially in Bamenda Region, Somalia, Central African Republic, Chad and so on.

This issue must be addressed at the ACP-EU level or under the Samoa Agreement because it is bringing human rights issues where women and children are either displaced or even killed. That issue must be addressed.

Another issue is on the terms of trade, which must be favourable for us to trade with the EU and ACP-EU countries. Let me focus on the issues of carbon trade. In the EU, they are selling a tonne of carbon at €100 but in Africa, a tonne is bought at \$12 and yet this is the same product. Therefore, we need that kind of negotiation.

Worse still, in Africa or Uganda, the average land holding is about two acres. Now, if I decide to plant on one acre and put it under trees to absorb carbon dioxide, you should

pay me good money so that I can use it to go for off-farm income-generating activities. Otherwise, if the trees are ready for timber, I will cut them and they will stop absorbing the carbon dioxide. Therefore, we need to negotiate favourably so that our smallholder farmers can be able to benefit.

On the deforestation law, yes, they say that if you cut trees to plant coffee, you will not be able to sell that coffee to the EU. That is a global call.

However, behind that, most of the EU countries also benefited. They are the ones who cause global climate change.

Therefore, why should they not pay compensation to countries in Africa, where the average greenhouse gas emission is only 4 per cent, and Uganda is only producing greenhouse gases of about 0.06 per cent? One way of doing that is to cancel our debts so that we can start at par. I think those are some of the issues you need to push.

Finally, in the EU, the Council of Ministers is very powerful because it makes decisions. Some time back, they made a decision to remove the president who had been democratically elected in Egypt. President Moshi was removed yet he had been democratically elected.

Under the Samoa Agreement, they should be able to weigh their decisions on Africa, women and children and generally on human rights in Africa. That said, we congratulate you and know that those challenges can be addressed under your presidency. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Now, colleagues, today we have an Order Paper which I want us to go back to. I am usually uncomfortable and conflicted by sitting here presiding while you are appreciating me. I know we appreciate each other but this is our achievement as a House.

If we had been a House that is not valued - you know, you cannot come out as one and you say, "I shine alone" and the rest are not shining. No,

it is because of the collective decisions that we make here and how we represent our people. Therefore, I really want to appreciate you but I should just comment a little.

Honourable colleagues, these are issues that we are going to look at strongly because there are some countries – we have not moved very quickly. For example, the issue of the economic partnership agreement. I hope Uganda can finalise it with the EU so that we unlock the potential that we have with the EU.

To me, the EU is the number one trading partner. We can say the UAE has gold, but for example, how much tax are we getting from gold and how many Ugandans are benefiting from gold?

Therefore, the EU, where around 70 per cent of our coffee is going, is a very critical market that is helping people on the ground and we have registered a trade surplus. Hon. Bahati - I think we are already at €150 million trade surplus and we are doing extremely well. They are really big on tourism but at the continental level, we have to look at issues of Africa trade, intra-Africa travel.

We have to look at how we can work on the African Continental Free Trade Area (AFCTA) to ensure that indeed we start moving in the right direction. But we also stopped the divide and rule which we usually face on the continent, especially with some countries signing agreements on critical minerals. Countries like Angola - I think even Rwanda has signed. There are countries like Malawi. We negotiate at a continental level. The moment we have that strength of numbers and ideas; we cannot fail to benefit much.

I am looking at us benefiting from the economic partnership agreement that we are going to have. We had hoped to have it at the East African Community regional level but we failed. Kenya signed theirs and moved ahead. SADC signed - they have one under SADC.

Then we have the Sustainable Investment Facilitation Agreement. I hope they can open

it up to our region here. We are going to do a lot together through parliamentary diplomacy. This is very critical because someone can say, “But now this is the work of foreign affairs”. No, there is parliamentary diplomacy. Whatever foreign affairs do – A very good example is, the honourable minister on the black list; the honourable minister for finance – The European Commission agreed that Uganda should be removed because there are six countries: UAE, Gibraltar, Uganda, Jamaica, Panama and Barbados. Four have fulfilled the requirements, apart from UAE and Gibraltar.

However, when you go into the geopolitics of Europe, if Gibraltar does not sort out its issues with Spain then it can never get off that list. If we remain under that resolution, we will never be cleared as a country.

Investors from Europe are finding challenges – when you talk to some of them. What we have done – because the EU Commission submitted to Parliament and Parliament refused. They said, “No, we want a resolution of all the six”. Now, who can best get to Members of Parliament in Europe? It is us. Hon. Okupa will give you a list of 50 of them right away because they are our colleagues.

As a Parliament and as an institution, we are going to petition our colleagues in the European Parliament to clear Uganda. That is how parliamentary diplomacy works. It complements state diplomacy. We do not compete with the state. We only complement. The direction we go with is the direction of the sitting government. Then we complement and see how best we can support.

I am sorry. I want us to go back to the agenda. Honourable acting Leader of the Opposition – I have the acting Leader of the Opposition - if we could – (*Member rose*) Under what rule? Rule 8? Okay. Please proceed under rule 8. Honourable colleagues, when I ask you under what rule and you refer to a rule, kindly restrict your submission to be in line with that rule.

MS NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, rule 8 provides for situations that are not provided for.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Not questions, honourable member.

MS NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, the procedural matter I want to raise is that two of your MPs –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Nambooze, let me make it clear. Rule 8 provides for, “Procedures not provided for, not questions.” Kindly go on.

MS NAMBOOZE: Mr Speaker, I have been trying to look for a rule under which to raise the matter but noticed that it was not provided for. I thought that under rule 8, Mr Speaker, you have general powers on issues that are not specifically provided for under our Rules of Procedure.

Mr Speaker, two of your MPs; that is Hon. Muwada Nkuningi of Kyadondo East and Hon. Derrick Nyeko of Makindye, are being held since yesterday.

Yesterday, I was part of a public meeting in the by-election campaigns of Kawempe North as a member of NUP. In that meeting, I was with Hon. Abdallah Kiwanuka who was dressed in red attire. Soon after the meeting, Hon. Abdallah Kiwanuka was arrested. Eventually, he was released on bond. When I read the police bond form, the offence that was stated on it was that he had been charged with an offence related to a uniform. Even the two MPs who are being held by police now were also arrested under similar circumstances.

The procedural matter I want to raise, Mr Speaker, is: you are charged with the welfare of your MPs, and of course what happens to our MPs even in some circumstances also happens to our constituents.

I do not know, as a way of procedure, if the Government has informed this House or authority or under any written law that red attire is now a uniform of a certain organisation or a body of Government that is supposed to be held in preserve for them and that once you are dressed in it, you are arraigned before a court or you are held for several hours in detention. Some people have been beaten.

I raise this because these are people who should be here representing their constituents but now, they are being held by police just because they were found wearing red attire. To the best of my understanding, the uniform of the National Unity Platform party.

I want you to guide us, Mr Speaker. Maybe you would call the minister in charge of defence to educate the country, through this House, on what constitutes a UPDF uniform so that we can also tell our people and update ourselves, as Members of Parliament, so that we do not break the law.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. You raised a matter to do with our Members, so I decided to be lenient. And, indeed, I found that it can be in line with the rules. Rule 78(1)(a) on a point of privilege.

I had not gotten that information. I am sorry, I have been off the phone for some time. I do not know if, on the side of the Government, anyone knows the status of the matter as of now. Yes, please proceed. Could someone from the Government side give us the status as of now?

2.34

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to congratulate you on the achievement you got. When I meet you along the road, do not be surprised when I call you, Mr President, with that achievement, together with our Speaker.

I want to thank Hon. Bitek and Hon. Betty Nambooze. With all the achievements, our faces are looking ugly out there where we are getting achievements. That deters the attraction of tourists and good reception by other countries.

What is happening in Kawempe is very disturbing. There is no reason, even if you go to – let Members meet together, those of NRM and us in the Opposition. We talk as friends. We have been meeting on the road as they go for their campaigns and we also go for our campaigns.

However, arresting Members; first beating them, then you take them for no sufficient cause, is not proper. The biggest question here is: is the Electoral Commission still in control of this by-election?

The fourth Arm is beaten left and right. Yesterday, I saw a video where the policemen from Joint Anti-Terrorism Taskforce (JATT), were asking the Fourth Arm to delete what they had recorded. Why do you come to attack people? Why do you arrest Members when you have covered your faces? It is factual that if you are a policeman or a soldier and you hide your face, that means you fear to show your face and what you are doing is illegal.

We want to ask the Electoral Commission to prevail over the by-election in Kawempe. If it is that we do not need these by-elections, they can stop them and declare somebody, other than killing innocent citizens.

Women are not supposed to be arrested by men at any cost. Women are supposed to be arrested by fellow women. What is challenging is that these people surrender when they see soldiers. They raise their hands. In military law, once someone puts their hands up, you just arrest and take them instead of beating them.

Mr Speaker, my last prayer is, is the Electoral Commission – Justice Byabakama - in the control of these elections? Whenever elections become very rowdy and they have – I am very happy with the National Resistance Movement (NRM) candidate because she also complained about the same thing.

We are competing with the National Unity Platform and the Forum for Democratic Change (FDC), but why do you beat these people you are competing with? It makes us look ugly. Mr Speaker, can we know from the ministry - last week, Hon. Bahati was sitting in for the Prime Minister and he promised to go and see a journalist who is losing his sight because of the work he did under the law.

What Hon. Nambooze, Dr Bitekyerezo and I have stated is pertinent – and the other

Ugandans. Yesterday, they arrested about 26 people, including the MPs.

Finally, I looked at Mugabe when he was the President of Zimbabwe for 39 years. Whenever members of the opposition rioted with the Members of Parliament, police would arrest them without beating them. They would say, please can you go and do this? However, what is happening here, nobody - we have the Anti-Torture Act, but torturing – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Ssewungu. When I see some of these things, I ask myself: “What is wrong?” Who provoked this? Sometimes, these are people who are even against the state. The journalist I saw, whose eye was operated on - I do not think the person who did it loves his Government. Some overzealous people are destroying the image of the Government. I ask myself, what would provoke you to hit a journalist? I saw pictures which I could not tolerate.

Hon. Bahati, are you - no, let us first get a response. I will allow you. As Hon. Bahati comes to address us, honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a delegation of students and lecturers from Bishop Stuart University in Mbarara District. They are represented by Hon. Mwine Mpaka Rwamirama and Hon. Rita Atukwasa. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. You can stand up for recognition. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Honourable colleagues, we also have a delegation of leaders of Kiboga Women’s SACCO from Kiboga District. They are represented by Hon. Christine Kaaya, Hon. Keefa Kiwanuka, and Hon. Abdul Mutumba. They have also come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. Thank you. *(Applause)*

Hon. Bahati, acting Government Chief.

2.40

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TRADE, INDUSTRY AND COOPERATIVES (INDUSTRY) (Mr David Bahati): Mr Speaker, I first of all congratulate you upon assuming the presidency of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States Parliamentary Assembly. The commitment you have made before this House; that you will follow up on some of the issues using parliamentary diplomacy, is a commitment that the Government supports, particularly on issues of trade.

We have two issues that we have been engaged in with the European Union (EU). One is one of the rules that we have outlined, referring to deforestation. We should indeed protect the environment. This new rule that requires us to register the farmers of coffee so that we ensure that they are not farming in areas where there has been deforestation is a welcome idea. This is because it reinforces traceability on the side of the EU, and climate change initiatives.

We would also like you to promote the point of the European Union allowing value addition; importing coffee to which value has been. As we speak, we export coffee which has no value added. It is processed in Italy and re-exported to Uganda.

We have suggested to them not import coffee that does not have value addition. Therefore, that should be one of the issues that you should help the Government to achieve. The trade between Europe and Africa is growing, and therefore, we expect that the organisation would also help us.

On the issue of violence in elections, last week, Mr Speaker, you were not here but; first and foremost, we sent our sympathies and apologies for what happened to the journalist. Today, I spoke to the members of the journalist’s family, together with the MP from Wakiso. From here, I am also going there to check on them, on behalf of the Government.

We stated, last week, that there is no State-sponsored violence in these elections. The

State has not sanctioned this, and the people who are harming others in the elections should be brought to book. We requested the Minister of Internal Affairs to follow up on this issue.

We are doing what we can, as the Government, to ensure that people enjoy the freedom ushered in by the National Resistance Movement (NRM). They should elect their leaders in a free and fair environment. Therefore – (*Interjections*) – we shall continue to guard against this violence. This is our commitment and the Minister of Internal Affairs will come to this House and update it on what is happening.

On the issue of uniforms, the honourable member requested the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs to come and clarify, but we are also making a proposal on the UPDF (Amendment) Act, and – (*Interjections*) - that will be another opportunity to clarify what kind of uniforms we are talking about.

You have requested a communication from the Government. At the moment, as we said last week - we sort of agreed on this, Mr Speaker, as a House – that when a Member raises issues and you get the facts, and the Government receives the facts, we should look into them so as to have a proper response.

The facts that Hon. Namboozie is raising and the allegations should be looked into and attended to. That is a commitment we can give, at this particular moment. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Bahati, when do you think we can have this statement? I know all the submissions will be expounding on the complaints.

MR BAHATI: Thursday, this week. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable colleagues, I request that we wait for Thursday, they bring the statement, and then we give it time. Hon. Okupa, it will be more helpful. Once you have a statement, it becomes – is it a new issue, Hon. Okupa?

2.45

MR ELIJAH OKUPA (Independent, Kasilo County, Serere): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I thought this would have come at the end. This is not the first time we are holding by-elections. When we lost our colleague, the late Bishop Okabe, we had a by-election in Serere District, where we ended up bringing his son here. I was with Hon. Susan Amero in the campaign. I was arrested and I spent a night in the police cells, from 4.00 a.m. up to 4.00 p.m. To date, I have not seen any charge. No one has given me an explanation. I thought someone would give me an explanation. These matters were raised, but nothing. No response. I hope on Thursday, when the minister comes, he will be able to provide an explanation or the reason for my arrest.

I thank you, Mr Speaker, the Rt Hon. Madam Speaker and those who reached out to me. The Electoral Commission tried, at that time, in vain. I could not get out.

Mr Speaker, I think this should really stop. We were picked from a church where we were giving appointment letters to the agents; Hon. Ekwere there knows all this. This is something which not only spoils the name of the Government, but also the name of the country. When we travel, what do you expect us to say when we are asked this question? Due to the love we have for our country, we are forced to defend her but when it comes to this, it is painful when it happens. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Okupa, do you want people to come and explain what happened to you here? Do you want them to complete investigations and take you back? I think you are safer because your investigation is still going on. They might declare that they were completed and then tomorrow you are taken.

Nonetheless, we should have a general explanation just beyond Kawempe. What I saw from the journalists really looked ugly. Honourable commissioner?

2.47

MR MATHIAS MPUUGA (NUP, Nyendo-Mukungwe Division, Masaka City):

Thank you, Mr Speaker and President of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States Parliamentary Assembly (OACPS). This is because if I simply call you “president” then it could be -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Always learn to qualify your statement before because you do not go -

MR MPUUGA: Yes, Mr President Sir, and Mr Speaker. I am not trying to impeach your guidance on the statement of Thursday but I think we are leaders in this country and we should be well educated as to where we are. I saw my honourable brother, Hon. Bahati, very constrained to no end trying to hazard an explanation.

From the last election, those who committed crimes against citizens have never been brought to book, including the gentleman who shot a journalist, Ashraf Kasirye. He is well-known and well-documented. Kasirye is exiled to the United States of America. The gentleman who shot him was promoted.

We have to speak to ourselves. Probably put a big mirror in our faces and agree on what we are dealing with. I am very sure the minister will come and make the usual statements.

The Kawempe by-election is a rehearsal of hard times ahead of us. I pray that I will be around to remind this House and the honourable members acquiescing with violence and the State’s violence that will not help anybody. Whatever comes on Thursday, there is no rational explanation as to the presence of the military in a by-election.

I pray that if we maintain the Uganda People’s Defence Forces (UPDF) representation in Parliament, we amend the law and the army votes their Members of Parliament from wherever they are in their barracks and then we see the kind of democracy they exercise.

Therefore, there is no explanation. Mr Speaker, I would like to invite this House, with your guidance, that the commitment should not just be about the minister. We need to understand, as the people, what we are dealing with. We are dealing with an Electoral Commission that is disempowered. They can do nothing.

My brother here, Hon. Okupa, could be frog-marched - I mean, you will be frog-marched, beaten and disabled. The pretence must stop. If we are intentional in building a democracy, we must speak to what we are dealing with. If you do not want elections, do away with them and rule by martial law.

Therefore, there is no pretence about statements. It is simply illegality and impunity which have been incubated, accepted and people think it is the norm. As long as you have power, and you are powerful, you can get away with murder. People have gotten away with murder. In fact, murder rewarded with a promotion.

Mr Speaker, you ordered the minister to come and make a statement on missing Ugandans. The days passed; this means it is normal. What about beating some heads in Kawempe out of their wits? You know, break a few skulls and the day passes. It becomes normal and the House of Parliament, which is supposed to be the firewall of the country, is looking on and lamenting.

Mr Speaker, I am not waiting for the Thursday statement because I know it is business as usual. They will look at you; in fact, they think they will even sneer at the Speaker and the Speaker will do nothing. Unless all of us, from both sides of the aisle, say stop this, this is our country, we shall have ourselves to blame. I am afraid. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, this would fit into the debate of Thursday when the statement comes. Let us first get it. Rule 8 on anticipation does not allow me to say, “The minister will bring a statement, which does not satisfy.” No, we should first receive the statement and look at it.

Honourable colleagues, there was a mention of our two colleagues who were arrested and are in jail. I am going to follow up immediately after here to know their status and then I will update you tomorrow.

Honourable colleagues, we have an Order Paper to go to. Hon. Christine Kaaya, do you have a matter of national importance? I am sorry, I know, but let us go back on the schedule.

2.52

MS CHRISTINE KAAAYA (NUP, Woman Representative, Kiboga): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for hosting our women from Kiboga Women's SAACO of over 600 women covering the entire district.

Mr Speaker, I have a matter of national importance. In November, I sat with the association of taxi drivers. They cited a challenge with motor vehicles called the Toyota drones, especially from Japan; that these vehicles break a lot. Their electrification and ventilation have challenges and are problematic. The breakdowns are too much. They need a lot of repairs and maintenance. Their fuel consumption is very high.

The members say that they used to earn and thrive in their households on taxi driving, which is no longer the case. They are requesting that whoever allows these types of vehicles to come into this business should help them because we want to help our people earn from what they do.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: What are the prayers?

MS KAAAYA: Mr Speaker, the prayers are: the Government helps to recover the business of taxi driving by putting a halt on importation of these vehicles because the taxi drivers no longer earn from their business; and to import alternatives of similar vehicles.

Mr Speaker, it is a serious challenge. I sat with the two taxi associations and they requested us, the Members of Parliament, to help them. They look very nice but when – (*Member timed out.*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleague, this is a very critical question and issue. I only allowed it under national importance because a colleague had her people here. This is a question which I usually want you to ask the Prime Minister so that she prepares a substantive kind of answer.

However, I see the Minister of Works and Transport here; I see a minister in charge of standards here. I do not know what you can say about that. Who allows vehicles? (*Hon. Ekanya rose*) No, on matters of national importance, we do not allow supplementary questions.

2.55

MR GEOFFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo North County, Tororo): Under rule 78 - first of all, Mr Speaker, I take this opportunity to congratulate you. I am one of the members who has been - when I was a Youth Member of Parliament, we participated and attended those OACPS-EU meetings. At your age, now the president, we are proud of you, especially because you have the old address at Najjanankumbi.

Mr Speaker, I also saw you recently in the field with the President, following up on the Parish Development Model. It is a pity and pain that while we are in the fifth year – [Hon. Anywar: "*Order*"]

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Anywar, respect your Old Boy (OB).

MR EKANYA: Mr Speaker, thank you very much. We are in the fifth year of the Parish Development Model (PDM) and you were with the President; he was in the east and west. I saw you visiting and the farmers' body language - but it is a pity.

My parish, Asinge Parish and about 120 parishes in this country have not received PDM funds. This matter was raised to the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, the Prime Minister and the President. The President directed the ministers for finance, local government and the Prime Minister to ensure that the 27 parishes in

Tororo County North and Tororo District and the 120 in other parts of the country are given their PDM funds.

Mr Speaker, we are coming to the end of our term. How do you expect Geoffrey Ekanya and you, Mr Speaker, to visit others yet we have 120 parishes not receiving PDM funds in the fifth year? One of them is in Kabale where the minister for finance comes from. What is happening? I am seeking your indulgence to ensure that the directive and the resolution of this Parliament, where we appropriated money, is upheld; that these parishes receive their money.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ekanya, my senior brother, started by diverting me through thanking me and ensuring – of course when someone has thanked you very much, you lose the appetite of putting him to order. Do not compromise me next time, honourable colleague. Stop compromising the presiding officer because we wanted an answer on the issue of the cars. I needed the ministers. Then after that, the Minister of Local Government should tell us about the parishes that have not received PDM funds.

2.58

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I must say that we are aware of the matter. However, this came in when we banned the importation of old cars into the country. I must assure the honourable colleague that buying a car for transport usage is by choice; we have many forms of cars which you can buy.

The problem with this specific car is that once it has a mechanical problem, you must fix it as soon as possible because it has some form of electrical transmission that it uses. The problem is our taxi people want the other old model vehicles and yet they have mechanical problems. The person can proceed and do business, add his mechanical issues because of money and at the end of the day, it causes an accident.

We recommend this one because it is very good. Once it has any mechanical problem, it will force you to go back to the garage. I must assure my honourable colleague that maybe I will contact you to give you other forms of vehicles, which those people can buy to use on the road. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Byamukama, on top of that, it would be important for you to meet the taxi operators and pass on this information. The feeling they have is that these vehicles have technical issues and are substandard so you need to reassure them that they meet the standards. In other countries, they are doing well and you can explain that to them. It would be much more helpful. Isn't it, honourable minister?

MR BYAMUKAMA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. For her case, since it is a special request, I will get in touch with her to go and engage the drivers that side and show them the available options of the vehicles they can use, including runs from Kira Motors. I can also advise them on how they can effectively use these taxis so that they are safe because they are still within the country. We can also advise them to remain in the business when they have the knowledge to operate them. Thank you – (*Hon. Opendi rose*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, under what rule of procedure do you rise? No, honourable colleagues, please - Is it related to this because I do not want us to reopen this issue.

MS OPENDI: Mr Speaker, allow me to also congratulate you for that elevation, but we also hope that you can now push for an EU-ACP trade agreement without hiding certain values that we do not believe in, in those trade values. We have a lot of hope in you, as Africans. As you take over that seat, please take note of that. Congratulations from the friends of Africa, the US and the UK. I bring their congratulations to you.

The ministers from the works and transport sector have not been here for some time and

you are aware that we had issues with the intelligent vehicle tracking system. When we passed and allowed them to proceed with these new number plates, the instruction was that they would come and update the House at least every six months.

We have been seeing media reports that the car trackers that we had hoped would track the vehicles are not doing what we had hoped. Since the ministers are here, would it not be procedurally right for you to direct them to bring a report, as directed when we were passing the report to this House? How are we performing?

We are going into the budgeting process. Some of the monies that are supposed to fund the road fund are actually going to go to the investor who has invested in this number plate system.

Wouldn't it be right that the ministers bring a statement on how we are performing and the progress made so far before we get into the budgeting process? This is in order for us to know what to do; whether to abandon and start afresh with some other company or proceed. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister of Works and Transport, I think Tuesday will do because this was a commitment made.

MR BYAMUKAMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. If you guide and give us space on the Order Paper, we shall provide a comprehensive statement on the performance of our digital number plates.

However, my dear honourable colleague, I would like to say that we have not received any formal complaint in regard to what you are saying; that the digital number plates are not working. On social media, people can choose to communicate whatever they wish but we shall bring a statement to inform the House on how we are progressing. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On Tuesday, there was also a strong statement made; that

of late, the ministers for works are not here. I have not presided over the House for the last three weeks so I do not know whether you have been attending. That record is an indictment that would need to be – (*Hon. Betty Namboze rose*) About what, Hon. Nambooze?

3.05

MS BETTY NAMBOOZE (NUP, Mukono Municipality, Mukono): Mr Speaker, last time I raised a matter here concerning the Kampala-Jinja Road and the interim measures to do with the problem on that road; a real crisis.

Under your instruction, Mr Speaker, you ordered the Minister of Works and Transport to come and tell this House what they are doing. It is now weeks after and they have not returned. Now they are undertaking to bring other statements instead.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I have told you several times that these are colleagues and I do not order and direct colleagues. These are colleagues with whom we talk and most of them have always responded positively. Hon. Ecweru, do you want me to order you?

3.06

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Musa Ecweru): Mr Speaker, first of all, thank you for giving me the opportunity. I thank my colleague, Hon. Fred, for ably handling the transport question.

Mr Speaker, we are three in the ministry and we have agreed with our senior colleague that when Gen. Katumba Wamala is here, my humble self and Hon. Fred should be doing some fieldwork. When I am here, Hon. Fred Byamukama and Gen. Katumba Wamala should be doing some fieldwork.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Now the two of you are here, how do you -

MR ECWERU: Yes, I am coming to that. Today, I happened to be coming to check on

my little pension and I thought that I should come and reinforce my colleague.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you then, here by accident? *(Laughter)*

MR ECWERU: My colleague is the one who is handling the docket today. My colleague, Hon. Opendi, would have wanted me to compare notes with her outside, which is not a good thing. *(Laughter)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: She has said that you have not been here of late and you have not answered. You have only explained about your rota. Were you here, last week?

MR ECWERU: Gen. Katumba was here and when he is here, I and Hon. Fred can go and do other things.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: When can we get an update on Jinja Road?

MR ECWERU: Mr Speaker, there are a few things that we are sorting out because we do not want to bring a half-baked report here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, it is an issue of being motor-able, not the construction. How and what interim measures are you taking to make it motorable?

MR ECWERU: We have a company, which we have not paid for a time and they have certificates that have not been made good. We are in touch with the Ministry of Finance and in the next few days, there will be some resources released that used to come through the Uganda National Roads Authority (URA).

This House was very kind to change the Vote from the former UNRA to the ministry now. However, the actualisation of the cash is now in the process. The moment that is done, we are going to sort out these contractors and work will resume from Jinja up to Mabira.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Update us next week, honourable, and let us keep in touch, okay? Minister for Local Government -

3.08

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR LOCAL GOVERNMENT (Ms Victoria Rusoke):

Mr Speaker, briefly, I join my colleagues to congratulate you. The potential you exhibited is a benefit to all of us. Congratulations.

Five hundred ninety four (594) parishes in the country have received Parish Development Model (PDM) money to date but the Electoral Commission has 717,000. 123 parishes have not yet received PDM because they are not coded. The reason they are not coded is because they were not created by the Ministry of Local Government and approved by Parliament.

The mistake came as I explained, last week when this matter was here - When the Electoral Commission demarcates areas to ease the election distance, members take advantage thinking that these are already government-approved parishes, which is not true. Therefore, because they are not coded, they do not have an instruction of operation generated by the mandated Ministry of Local Government and they are not forwarded to the Ministry of Finance for funding.

However, now that elections are going to take place, these have also been earmarked for elections. They have become official and coded after getting an instruction from the ministry and the Ministry of Finance will respect them and *-(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we need to look into this issue deeply. I have two parishes of that kind in my constituency. I took trouble to engage the Minister of Local Government, Minister of Finance and the Electoral Commission.

I found out that these were parishes which the district passed in the resolution when they were creating the subcounties but were not included in the instrument of the minister.

So, down on ground, people know that there are parishes but on this other side, they are not gazetted. With the ruling of Hon. Kwizera, you cannot create administrative units in the middle

of a term. I am giving my experience. I met my people and explained to them that they are going to start receiving PDM money in 2026, after they have been gazetted, leaders elected and the situation normalised.

That is how I handled mine and they know that I would not be lying to them. They understood. The issue would be, when were these parishes created?

3.11

MR GEOFFREY EKANYA (FDC, Tororo North County, Tororo): Mr Speaker, you are correct on one aspect; that some of these parishes were created by the district councils when the Electoral Commission was doing demarcation.

In my case and in some others, elections were done in the last election cycle. The only omission, which the minister said - the minister refused to capture it on the Gazette but we have counsellors and parish chiefs recognised and paid by the Government in some of these parishes so, this -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I also have parish chiefs.

MR EKANYA: Yes, you have parish chiefs and counsellors. My proposal is that this matter be referred to the Committee on Local Government to look through it and they bring for us a report here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, honourable colleagues, that will be long. Let the minister present a statement on these parishes, explaining how they were created when they were created and we see if there are those which qualify before we go back to the committee. Honourable minister -

MS RUSOKE: Most obliged, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, this can be ready on Thursday, even tomorrow because it should be -

MS RUSOKE: Give me up to next week on Tuesday, Mr Speaker. Yes - *(Interruption)* I want to promise what I can fulfil. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, Tuesday, okay. Honourable Minister for Finance, I hope you do not reopen this.

3.14

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, we are not reopening. However, as the minister has said, for PDM purposes, the parishes we know in our records are 10,594 parishes. These, exclude the cases like the two you have in your constituency. It is also true that in my district there is one parish.

However, we, at Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, do not want any Ugandan to miss an opportunity to access the Parish Development Model (PDM). We have advised the accounting officers in the districts that before these parishes were created, they were villages from a parish.

For instance, in my district, the original parish; Kagarama with 11 villages, which were divided into two, sent Shs 100 million to this original parish and the people in the villages, which became part of another parish are also still part of the original and are benefiting from PDM.

I, therefore, encourage colleagues to work with their Chief Administrative Officers to ensure that these people go back to their original parishes for PDM purposes and benefit accordingly. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Moreen Osoru. Let us wait for the statement, honourable colleagues.

3.15

MS MOURINE OSORU (NRM, Woman Representative, Arua City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in congratulating

you on behalf of Arua City. I rise on the matter of national importance.

This matter has been before this august House and now that we are heading towards the elections, the people of Ayivuni in Ayivu West, in Arua City, have for a long time pleaded with the Government.

When contractors from the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development went to install high electric voltage poles in Arua City, they went off board. They moved deep into people's land and the people were informed that they were not supposed to do any cultivation or development where the poles are placed.

Most of the land owned by our people is customary and small in size. My people are wondering how these poles got installed on their land, as per the agreed surveyed places for installation. The Ministry of Energy should come and correct whatever mistake they caused there. Otherwise, it has become a problem for us, the leaders.

Mr Speaker, I request that the ministry goes down to Arua City to realign the poles because we were told those poles have radiation effects on people. That means they can affect them health-wise – (*Interjection*) - I am talking about high electric voltage poles, not just ordinary poles.

I request the minister to meet the leadership of Arua City so that they can sort this out before we go for campaigns. Otherwise, we are killing the votes of His Excellency. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I request the Government Chief Whip to arrange a meeting between the Ministry of Energy and MPs from Arua City.

3.18

MR HASSAN KIRUMIRA (NUP, Katikamu County South, Luwero): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance regarding a hailstorm that ravaged Bombo Town Council and Nyimbwa subcounty in Luwero District.

Yesterday, the 3rd of March, there was a heavy downpour that ravaged a number of facilities and households in Bombo Town Council and Nyimbwa. Six schools were destroyed: Bombo Secondary School, Bombo UMEA Primary School, Nkokonjeru Islamic Primary School, Shanamu Bombo High School, St Mary's Secondary School, and Namaliga Secondary School.

The community has a market popularly called "Nkokonjeru". This market found in Namaliga was destroyed, with the roof blown off by heavy rains. The magnitude of the damage is big.

At Bombo Secondary School, the entire roof on the boys' hostel was blown off and the students have no accommodation at all. The computer lab was also destroyed by a tree that fell on it. Teachers' houses were also destroyed. As we speak, teachers have nowhere to stay. At the primary school, five classrooms were destroyed. This morning, I also went to Lukole Secondary School and the entire roof on the building was swept off.

Our community is in dire need of Government support. We are well aware that in 2018, the President passed a directive to refurbish Bombo S.S. and the people of Bombo believe that this hailstorm is in response to the fact that there was a delay in terms of actualising the presidential directive. These are our prayers:

1. For the Prime Minister's Office and the line ministry to get on the ground and ascertain the extent of damage caused by the rains;
2. For the Prime Minister's Office and Ministry of Relief, Disaster Preparedness and Refugees to extend iron sheets, timber and nails to repair the ravaged classrooms and also extend to Lukole S.S iron sheets, timber and nails to repair the classrooms;
3. Provide tents and tarpaulins for temporary accommodation for the students who do not have hostels; and

4. Provide blankets and mosquito nets to the learners who do not have anything, including provision of books. Some of them lost all their educational materials, uniforms, books, textbooks and everything.

For the wider community of Bombo and Nyimbwa, many people's homes have been destroyed. As we speak – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable member. Honourable minister for disaster preparedness - [*Hon. Kirumira rose*] Hon. Kirumira, hadn't you concluded? You are taking too long.

MR KIRUMIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. We moved around Bombo Town Council and Nyimbwa; our people are homeless. Most of them do not even have food. So, we pray that the Prime Minister extends some food to help them go through this very difficult period.

Allow me to lay pictures of those different schools that were destroyed and the letter from the Chief Administrative Officer of Luwero explaining the extent of the damage. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable member, give the documents to the Clerk. Do not place them on that side.

3.22

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR RELIEF, DISASTER PREPAREDNESS AND REFUGEES) (DISASTER PREPAREDNESS) (Ms Lillian Aber): Mr Speaker, I would like to confirm that the issues that my colleague has raised are true. This morning, I sent a team of technical people to go on the ground and ascertain the magnitude of the damage.

However, some of the prayers are not going to be handled by the ministry but as a ministry, we are collaborating with the Red Cross and UNICEF to provide temporary shelter for the schools that are affected so that the students who are there can find where to take refuge.

Secondly, we will organise some iron sheets to deliver to the affected schools. Timber and nails are not provided by the ministry so this will not be possible. We will be able to provide food as well, depending on the quantity that we have in the stores because the population affected is quite big.

I would like to request my colleague to come to the office so that we sit down and draw a clear strategy on how we can support the community. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. (*Mr Ssewungu rose*) Honourable colleagues, we do not have much time. Yes, Leader of the Opposition.

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, I would like to have our records correct. I am very delighted with the assurance that the minister has given to this honourable member. However, for you to ask a Member of Parliament to pick those items – Procedurally, it should be the Chief Administrative Officer (CAO). Could we be guided? Who will give him transport? That is what I would like to know because we have had such challenges here.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: The minister wants to clarify her statement.

MS ABER: Let me clarify; I did not say that. The procedure for any item to be delivered to the affected people is dependent on the report from the CAO.

These items are delivered to the district headquarters and received by the CAO at the district and not an individual Member of Parliament or anybody else. We do not even allow your transport because the Office of the Prime Minister has got transportation to your destinations.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The problem with Hon. Ssewungu was the invitation of his Member to your office without his permission. Hon. Naluyima? I am sure that was on a light note.

3.24

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Before I commence, I join several Ugandans to congratulate you on this new role of President of the Organisation of African, Caribbean and Pacific States (OACPS).

My matter of concern is the affected widows and several other people from Bussi Islands. As I visited the island over the weekend, I met several widows whose husbands were killed by wild animals, especially hippos on Lake Victoria.

The widows together with the Chairperson of Bussi Subcounty narrated to me that they went to seek for compensation from Uganda Wildlife Authority because the numbers affected were over 100, but they were asked for requirements which included death certificates.

When they went to the National Identification Registration Authority (NIRA) to ask for the death certificates, they could only issue certificates, but the cause of the deaths included natural death and this could not attract compensation.

Given such scenarios where over 36 certificates are being processed but compensation cannot proceed, these are my prayers:

- a) Can the widows, together with other people, be aided to have compensation in time so that they can be financially supported?
- b) Can we have NIRA review its system such that its database provides for compensation for eventualities, which include human-wildlife conflict deaths, such that they can process death certificates for such occurrences also?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister for Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities, how can these people be helped?

3.28

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR TOURISM, WILDLIFE AND ANTIQUITIES (Mr Martin Mugarra): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in congratulating you upon

attaining that important leadership position. Indeed, it is true that whereas some individuals were compensated in Bussi Island by the Uganda Wildlife Authority. There were also a number of claims that were rejected as a result of a lack of complete documents.

Like the honourable said, what was submitted were NIRA death certificates that either show natural or unknown causes of death. Usually what we need is the post-mortem, medical report plus a police report to support a compensation claim.

I have picked interest in the matter and I am going to help my colleague and communicate to the affected families so that proper documentation is submitted for compensation.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, people who die in such scenarios are from poor families that do not know about post-mortem. You have visited my village down in Queen Elizabeth. Can you tell me if you will ask somebody about the post-mortem for someone who has been killed by an elephant? They will not afford to process the post-mortem. Why don't you make it easy and rely on your police? You have your bodies - Let me hear from Hon. Tinkasiimire.

3.30

MR BARNABAS TINKASIIMIRE (NRM, Buyaga West County, Kagadi): We have to say congratulations, Mr President. The point I want to raise is that the honourable minister and this Government should know the level at which the people they are leading are in because I can state that 70 per cent of our people will go for post-mortem when their persons die.

Secondly, they even have a negative attitude towards post-mortem; that it includes dehumanising their person. They know that you have to open the body of a dead person and to open the body of a dead person in the village is something they cannot tolerate. They will see you as a cannibal and somebody terrible.

What honourable is raising is that they have the security system on the ground. The Gombolola Internal Security Officers (GISOs), District

Internal Security Officers (DISOs), and Resident District Commissioners (RDCs) can confirm that these people were killed by wild animals and sometimes they are eaten.

For instance, if you are attacked by a lion, will the lion leave a bone? They scatter the bones in the national park for hyenas. In this case, the hippos consume you completely but you are asking the ordinary person to provide a post-mortem report. Honourable minister, you can do better. Follow it up with your officers and help our people. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, this was for noting. You said that you are going to see how best they can be helped. Honourable colleagues, my target was to have finished matters of national importance by 3.00 p.m. so that we go on to the agreed agenda. Let me get one more person who I had registered; Hon. Adriko Yovan and we conclude.

3.32

MR YOVAN ADRIKO (NRM, Vurra County, Arua): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to join my colleagues in congratulating you on behalf of the people of Vurra constituency, Arua district.

I have one matter of national importance. Alaa River which connects Obaru, Ombokoro and Nyirivu villages in the Ajia subcounty, Vurra County, Arua District burst and cut off a health centre III, Ajia market and Ajia subcounty.

My prayer is that the responsible ministries should kindly consider visiting the area for an assessment and intervene in this matter. I beg to submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable Minister for Works and Transport -

3.34

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (TRANSPORT) (Mr Fred Byamukama): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will consult the honourable colleague to be specific on whether it is a national or district road. If it is a national road, we shall send our team on the ground and if it is a district road,

we shall work together with the Arua district team to guide them on how to quickly intervene in the problem. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Let us stand over item number three and we go to item number four.

**MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON
THE STATUS OF SETTLEMENT OF
TERMINAL BENEFITS AND SEVERANCE
PAY OF FORMER EMPLOYEES OF
PUBLIC ENTITIES AFFECTED BY
THE GOVERNMENT POLICY ON
RATIONALISATION**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Minister for Public Service, I can see that it is a huge statement. Just give us a snapshot of the issue of settlement of terminal benefits and severance pay of former employees because it is highly detailed.

Thereafter, because of its size and the importance I attach to it, we can send it to the committee for proper processing to summarise and recommend to the House. Honourable minister -

3.36

THE MINISTER OF PUBLIC SERVICE (Mr Muruli Mukasa): Mr Speaker, let me not only join my colleagues to congratulate you on that very wonderful achievement but also to say that I am confident about the pledge, which you made here of following up these issues that are pertinent to our country and our region.

Hon. Jonathan Odur of Erute County raised this issue and concern about the delays in paying terminal benefits to former employees of affected Government agencies by Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX). In line with what you have recommended and because we would like to save time, let me go straight to what has been done so far to pay those affected individuals.

The introduction, as you can see, is there –
(*Interjections*)

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: It is on your iPads, honourable colleagues.

MR MURULI MUKASA: It is there. Certainly, we can definitely follow it up. I would like to request that we go to paragraph four. Specifically, that talks about the status of payment of terminal benefits, in other words, what has been paid and what is pending. That is on page 14.

4.1(i): Funds amounting to Shs29.606 billion were provided to the relevant line ministries in Quarter 1 of this financial year to cater for gratuity, pension and severance packages for the affected staff under their jurisdiction; those whose Bills had been passed by Parliament and assented to.

The Ministry of Public Service has also requested the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development to provide the remaining funds amounting to Shs 85.916 billion, including Shs 61.3 billion for Uganda National Roads Authority (UNRA) in this financial year, to the line ministries to cater for gratuity, pension and severance packages for the affected staff under their jurisdiction, whose Bills were also passed by Parliament under Batch 2 and have been assented to.

As I was coming in, I am glad to announce that the ministry for finance has complied with this and issued a circular to that effect. Therefore, what has been pending is going to be covered shortly.

You are also aware, honourable members, that Parliament authorised the transfer of funds from the various Votes where these agencies were to their new places of Votes. This was also very well executed by the ministry for finance and Parliament. Therefore, right now, the worry and concern that was registered by Hon. Odur is something, which is likely to go away very soon, now that the funds are available and the transfers have been effected. *(Interjection)*

Of course, there are still a few challenges that were expected. That is, the streamlining of some of the sticky issues, even when we passed these laws. This process is going on very well and

is being undertaken by the Ministry of Public Service and the concerned agencies in order to achieve the intended purpose of streamlining of efficiency and making sure that the transfer is as seamless as possible.

Mr Speaker, with that submission, I beg to stop here and say that the matter is under control. The money that was not yet there has now been released by the ministry for finance and everything will move smoothly. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Nathan Byanyima, Hon. Oguzu Lee and Hon. Okot Ogong.

3.42

MR NATHAN BYANYIMA (NRM, Bukanga North County, Isingiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am not surprised that the same minister who came here and convinced the House that things would move smoothly is the one saying “seamless.” It is not seamless. People are suffering. You did this thing with bad intentions. We told you, go slow, gradually, we shall reach, because we have experience. You are the most experienced man here.

This thing you did - you took a big elephant like UNRA and put it in the Ministry of Works and Transport. Right now, we do not have any grader on Ugandan roads. At each station of the UNRA, there is only a station manager and secretary. There is no work being done. Imagine when it starts raining, like you have heard from some areas, what will happen to this country?

I appeal to the minister - You cannot keep somebody for December, no salary; January, no salary; February, no salary, and you are talking of money being transferred. Why did you do that? What was the hurry for? These Members of Parliament are suffering currently without roads, including you, Mr Speaker. There was no point, for example, in moving things at a very fast rate when we did not have money to back up.

We supported you wholeheartedly but with a lot of pain. Now, we are suffering. People are abusing us, as Members of Parliament. The

roads are very bad. Can't you do something so that at least remedial work can be done? Do not talk about money. You did it knowing that we did not have enough money. All of us know that our resource envelope is very small.

When you take these Members for a ride, Hon. Muruli Mukasa, I shudder to believe this. If we are not careful, we shall pay for your sins. I thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I want us to have the record straight. Hon. Byanyima, we are accomplices in this. What the minister did was a proposal to the House. He came here and passed a resolution – *(Members rose)* - Really? How did the Bill pass? Whether it was intimidation or coercion, you passed it. Therefore, when we come here and say we are going to pay for the sins of Hon. Muruli Mukasa, it is like we disown our decision as a House.

Honourable colleague, this was our decision. Let us live with its consequences. Yes. I had picked Hon. Oguzu Lee. Leader of the Opposition, you will come in at the end. Let me first guide Hon. Ssewungu. Today, you are a big man. Just sit and relax, leave small people to keep standing up and then I will show you how big men and women are treated.

3.45

MR DENIS OGUZU (FDC, Maracha County, Maracha): Mr Speaker, I join in congratulating you, but most importantly, I agree with you on the role of Parliament in accomplishing these things. I believe that going forward, we must reflect if we want to continue to rubber-stamp things and cry later. The Speaker is very categorical on that.

Honourable minister, the country is disappointed with you and us as Members of Parliament because we are not able to help them with your proposal. Why do I say that? There are several people who should have got their pension and those who were demanding the Government arising from the proposals you brought here.

We have people in hospitals who have been working, and they cannot get paid, yet what we are grappling with is a first call on the budget. It is a statutory obligation. How will Ugandans look at your future proposals? There was a guarantee by the minister for finance that whatever you are bringing to us, there is money.

Therefore, it would be important for you to give us clear timelines on when you are going to implement these things. People are not getting pension. They need to be paid, but you are not clear on when they will get the money.

As a responsible minister, you need to give proper guidance to the country. I am not yet satisfied, and I must declare my interest. My mother just retired, and she cannot be paid. Whom should she blame? I am facing you squarely. I need a better answer. *(Laughter)* I would like to know when you are sending this money and clear all those arrears which - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I did not complete when I was referring to in Hon. Byanyima's submission. We laid our fears as a House and got assurance from the Government - I think the approach should be in that angle.

When you brought these proposals, you assured us with Certificates of Financial Implication, and our decision was based on your assurances, yet you have not delivered on those assurances. People are now coming to us, saying, "what is this?" That is what is very - there is an honourable colleague who came and said, "After this merger, the person who is standing against me is in the village saying that I chased him from a job, and he wants a job, and they are giving him mine. I am stuck". That is the kind of situation we are facing. Let me pick a lady, not three gentlemen following each other. Hon. Zumura, Hon. Koyekyenga, and Hon. Okot Ogong.

3.49

MS MANENO ZUMURA (NRM, Woman Representative, Obongi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We, indeed, messed up by approving those Bills,

which merged many entities. Right now, many ferries in this country are parked for lack of fuel. The Obongi ferry will be parked from tomorrow for the same reason.

All these ferries were given cards by UNRA to get fuel from Total Energies petrol stations, but when UNRA was merged with the ministry for works, the cards were withdrawn by the ministry, and now we do not have fuel for these ferries to operate.

The minister is here telling us that things will work out. From tomorrow, my people will not cross for services in Adjumani, and other ferries have been grounded. What are they going to do for Ugandans? This is not easy, but we need to ensure that these services are delivered to the Ugandans.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Koyenkyenga, then Hon. Okot Ogong.

3.50

MS OLIVER KOYEKYENGA (NRM, Woman Representative, Buhweju): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I add my voice in congratulating you. Since the implementation of RAPEX began, most work has stalled. For example, in the ministry for energy, when the Rural Electrification Agency (REA) went back to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, all the projects that were ongoing stalled.

I want clarification: do these people want to tell us that when the entities were being merged, there was no single coin on their accounts? Where did that money go? If they were merged, I believe there was money that should have continued the ongoing projects. The same with UNRA, REA, and all those entities that were merged. We want clarification on that. Where did that money go?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, there was an excuse that Parliament was delaying the transfer of money. I had a battle with Hon. Oguzu Lee here on the Floor, and we gave them money and cleaned our hands. The budgets were transferred to the new

entities. Hon. Okot Ogong, Hon. Silas Aogon and Hon Aeku?

3.52

MR FELIX OKOT-OGONG (NRM, Dokolo South County, Dokolo): Mr Speaker, I believe what we do here in Parliament should reflect what we think of our people. Last time, when we were doing RAPEX, the minister confirmed that after the rationalisation they were going to continue paying the workers.

A very good example was when a driver working with the Uganda Export Promotions Board called me in December last year because they were going for Christmas and said that they had not been paid. First, as soon as we passed RAPEX, their services were discontinued, and payment was halted.

Mr Speaker, I think we are dealing with members who are not telling us the truth. We pass laws here in good faith, but at times, they come back to bite us. This example I am giving is of my relative who was working with the Uganda Export Promotions Board. During Christmas, he could not come home or feed his family because he was never paid. A driver, up to now, has not paid; he is home with the children.

When it comes to UNRA; they had a lot of money for the contractors, about Shs 8 trillion, but up to date, they are not yet paid them. Others are about to commit suicide, and their properties are being auctioned.

As members of Parliament, we need to think about our people. We cannot allow people to render services to our Government and you take three years without paying them when they have got loans from banks and their properties are being auctioned. For us, Members of Parliament, we are just looking at our people.

Mr Speaker, I think the minister for finance should come, and this time, we should talk to the President. I know he watches Parliament online. I want to talk to him right now from Parliament. It is very serious because the arrears are clocking Shs 11 trillion, which are

the monies of our people who have rendered services to our Government.

Mr President, we would like to appeal to you. You are the minister for finance. Please pay our people.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Address the President through me.

MR OKOT-OGONG: I address him through the Speaker. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Felix. Honourable colleagues, in the public gallery this afternoon, we have a group of students from the Islamic University in Uganda, female campus, Kabojja. They are represented by Hon. Medard Ssegona and Hon. Naluyima Betty. They have come to observe proceedings of the House. Please join me once again in welcoming them. Thank you. I had allowed Hon. Aogon and Hon. Aeku.

3.55

MR SILAS AOGON (Independent, Kumi Municipality, Kumi): Mr Speaker, I thank you for the opportunity. Firstly, I would like to defend the Minister of Public Service. It may not be popular, but I am doing it personally, not everybody's submission. When we talk about collective responsibility, that is what it means. When we passed things, we said this is "collective action". Now members must learn to know that when I am raising on the point of procedure, "you sit down," that is what it means. We must, therefore, learn to pump the brakes so that we go slow on certain issues.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable, you do not debate using procedure. But rather submit on critical issues. Like now, you are submitting without procedure.

MR AOGON: Okay, let me now submit in the way I usually submit. I know that this country is always watching Parliament, and people are concerned about what is going on. We have ambulances that move on water. They also most likely depend on the money we are talking about, and some people are going to

lose their lives because of what is happening. Others have already been buried and buried on credit.

Mr Speaker, I think it is time for us to take things seriously. When there was a transition from REA to the Ministry of Energy and Mineral Development, over Shs 500 billion was moved. When that money was moved, I can tell you there was a lot of work which was left undone. To date, we have many Members of Parliament here who are not satisfied about what happened with that money which was moved; over Shs 571 billion.

The work which was done around 2017 - wires going here and there, no transformers, no connection, this one missing, the other one missing, the other one going there, this one coming. Information. *(Laughter)*

MR TINKASIMIRE: Mr Speaker, what our honourable colleague is submitting is a very critical matter. It is our bloodline, as Members of Parliament. If you have no wire moving in your constituency, you are going to pay by your back. As we speak, REA is headed by a commissioner named Eng. Atwine Abdu. His current budget is Shs 3 billion.

In this country's mathematics, to send wires to any place, Shs 3 billion is enough to cover just 15 kilometres. The commissioner has 15 kilometres for all of you, honourable colleagues.

MR AOGON: That is beautiful information *(Laughter)*. Thank you. Mr Speaker, you can imagine the extent of the damage created. The people at the ministry of energy needed to be supported, but we do not know how this money was transported between REA and the ministry. What did they use? A fuso lorry, bus, minibus or taxi, what? We are worried about that, and I am concerned about what we call transitional clauses in these laws.

Transitional in that you take charge of the obligations that the person was taking care of in terms of assets and liabilities. *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Silas, you have even been allocating yourself time, which is not good and you even had time to donate. But how do they bury people on credit? *(Laughter)* Hon. Aeku?

4.00

MR PATRICK AEKU (NRM, Soroti County, Soroti): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is with concern that even if we have these issues going on, the most critical is that some of the contractors who were contracted by UNRA have even abandoned work, and when you find that - for example, some roads have high traffic - like the population of people that use it - the number of accidents that have been recorded. Just the other day, I was checking the traffic flow on Serere Road, and there is a particular place which is very dangerous, but the contractor, when called, said, "But now, we cannot proceed". This is what we are dealing with.

Besides that, I also want to support my colleagues on REA. In one of the villages in my constituency, they put poles, mapped it, and scoped it, but the contractor removed the poles and took them away. Now, we all know that, truthfully, this season is very dangerous. If it were the beginning of our term, we would take it while lying down, but now it is a critical matter that needs to be discussed.

To help us as Members of Parliament, we are now in a century where power is relevant for every activity. We must not have parishes and subcounties without electricity. It is not possible now. Mr Speaker, I think you should help us with this issue. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, we are entering budgeting season. You heard Hon. Tinkasimire telling you, and I think I saw that in the corrigendum, they have added Shs 35 billion, but the budget for this financial year is Shs 55 billion against a budget of around Shs 1 trillion in REA.

By the way, to be honest, since the transfer of REA, they have never done any project in my area, and I hear colleagues crying, but I

think when we followed the issue of savings, we never followed the issue of budget. I do not expect Hon. Nankabirwa to sell her goats and come to do electricity lines in your constituency. That, therefore, brings us to the question of, how we budget. Where we are lamenting, Hon. Byanyima told us; that he had warned us several times. That is why you saw him blaming everyone else apart from himself—he did his part.

4.03

MR EMMANUEL ONGIERTHO (FDC, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to congratulate you. What I think happened was that as we were busy here in Parliament discussing RAPEX, what I would have expected the ministries to be doing is, they should have been having their own engagement in the different ministries to see how they will receive and implement the programmes that the different entities were doing.

I think the ministries just sat and waited, and their eyes probably could have been on the money that would be going back to them, other than putting the different programmes over a timeframe so that as the programs come from the different entities into the ministries, there would be seamless transfer of activities to the other side. Unfortunately, that did not happen.

But again, Mr Speaker, you were right; we are not going to cry and completely blame them. It is now our problem that we need to solve because we agreed, so, it is our problem that we need to solve. Only I have said we need to learn from it because you never know if something similar can happen. It may not be RAPEX, but a situation that requires, as the other side is discussing, this side is also discussing how they prepare to take on. That is what I implore you to keep doing. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Member for Rukiga? Now, I need some ladies – Hon. Aol. Colleagues, it is a week for women *(Applause)*, and they are our women. I can see some of you are claiming to be women via UWOPA. *(Laughter)* So, I will also allow the chairperson of UWOPA.

Yes, Rukiga and then Gulu.

4.05

MS CAROLINE KAMUSIIME (NRM, Woman Representative, Rukiga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Allow me also to add my voice to congratulate you, Mr Speaker. I heard Hon. Felix addressing you as “the President”. Congratulations, Mr President. We are happy for you, and we are very proud of you –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: President of where? You need to qualify your statement. *(Laughter)*

MS KAMUSIIME: ACP, Mr Speaker. We are very proud of you.

Mr Speaker, I also want to talk about the issue of REA; it is a big challenge. It is really for you, maybe, to come in and we come up with a strategy – the majority of us are suffering. Since REA pulled out, we have projects that were ongoing, but are now on standstill.

There is a subcounty – Rwamucucu – where we have a seed school. We have had computers for the last four years, but the computers are not being used because we have no electricity. I thank the honourable minister, Hon. Nankabirwa – she has visited my district several times. We do not have electricity in our health centre IV. It is a serious issue and it needs to be addressed.

Thank you for the opportunity.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Gulu?

4.07

MS BETTY AOL (FDC, Woman Representative, Gulu City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to congratulate you on the successful election to the presidency of ACP. Congratulations, on behalf of the people of Gulu City.

Mr Speaker, this is an eye-opener to all of us. When some people resist – other people just

want to say “yes” for the sake of yes. Now, it is biting. Therefore, we must learn. The eyes have been opened.

During RAPEX, a lot of us said: “Please, let us go slow.” Now, this one – when we say some people are being buried on credit, it is because when they are being buried, or sometimes when they commit suicide, it is because they have totally nothing. Or, when they are sick, they are taken to hospital and there is nothing to help them.

We are learning the hard way. Let us do the right thing for the people of Uganda. Let us always prepare when we want change. Some people were very happy with RAPEX. However, some of us said: “No”. When we decided to have these entities, what did we want to cure? When we now decide to put them off – for example, energy; last week I was with the minister for energy. I even said: “Please, for cities not to have electricity in some parts – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable colleagues, I wanted us to limit ourselves to the terminal benefits and severance pay. Okay? Yes, Hon. Opendi and then Hon. Amos Okot.

4.09

MS SARAH OPENDI (NRM, Woman Representative, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Unfortunately, we are now moving this way, yet we are aware that we even have debts of former employees whose services were terminated when the Government decided to do away with the agencies that they owned at that time. Maybe I will raise this tomorrow – we have people like employees of the former Posta Uganda, Tororo Cement, Uganda Cement Industries, and Uganda Railways – the list is long; they have never been paid.

Now, we are getting into another challenge of RAPEX. The Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is here. When you read the statement by the Minister of Public Service, he is pushing the blame on the ministry for finance. It is the ministry for

finance that issued the Certificate of Financial Implications.

It is shocking to read the statement by the Minister of Public Service – if I can just mention one: “Most institutions have not finalised the calculations for payment of pension, gratuity and severance packages for deserving staff.” How did you come up with a Certificate of Financial Implications without these computations? I thought these computations were made and they were the basis on which you issued the Certificate of Financial Implications and told us “For this agency, this is the cost and the money is available”.

Mr Speaker, when you read further, they are saying the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development is supposed to fast-track the process of re-voting the budgets and funds for the receiving entities. How long does this take? I thought we were now not moving on caterpillars – this is a digital era.

How long does it take for you to re-vote? We passed the money here. You actually called us here and pushed us, saying: “This cannot wait. We need to re-vote the money to the ministries from these entities.” How long does this take you, the ministry for finance?

Why are we looking for opponents – pushing opponents to us? They should go for these ministers. Actually, each of these people who have – yes, all those who have lost their jobs should target the constituencies of these ministers – *(Laughter)* - because you are now the problem. You assured us that the Government was going to save so much. I actually said that there was no saving. Now, you can see where we are heading.

Mr Speaker, the delays in constituting the governing structure – these are things that should have been done much earlier before we actually went into rationalising. How long does it take you, the Ministry of Public Service, to constitute the governance structures?

I am not happy, and next time – really, as Parliament, we had accepted some and said

“These ones should wait”, but we were pushed into accepting all of them. We all sinned together. Can you save us, the Executive? You led us into sin. *(Laughter)* Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Okot Amos, Hon. Maximus Ochai, Hon. Baba and then Hon. Christine.

4.13

MR AMOS OKOT (NRM, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Last week, on the Floor of Parliament, when this matter was raised, it was stated that they had started paying the former staff of those agencies.

However, when we demanded that the minister bring the names of those people, many of the former staff of those agencies followed and started calling us. They were very direct with us and said, “These people are lying. Let them produce the names of the people who have started receiving the money.”

Today, it is very clear that all this time we were taking things for granted – we had not been serious. These are Ugandans who have been working, and some of them are young people. They had been doing work. This is not the way you should be appreciating them. If you can appreciate them to the extent that they cannot even send their children – others were servicing loans. The bankers want them to pay the money.

Mr Speaker, I think we need to not only demand but direct the Executive – if anything, we should stop Parliament until they pay these people. Why should we sit here when part of the country is lamenting? We would rather say: “Let us stop until you get the money and pay these people.” *-(Interjections)* - should I move a motion? We are the ones carrying the burden *-(Interjections)*- Motion? *(Laughter)*

Mr Speaker, you said that we are going into the budgeting period, and a few weeks ago, we had been considering the budget framework paper. That is normally where we derive our budget. The minister has said that they need

a supplementary budget. He mentioned that it was about Shs 1.2 trillion, if I heard him well—immediately after he said that, the thing was removed from the overheads.

As Parliament, we should not wait. If anything, we should ask for the supplementary budget immediately. If with the money - the warrant that we have given them to move the money to the mother ministry they cannot fulfil and finish all the work, to me – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable minister, you need to update us on your progress. I heard you say the minister had released the money for this specific issue.

MR MURULI MUKASA: Mr Speaker, yes, I can understand the anguish and the pain that the honourable members are expressing. I am very sensitive. I am a human being like you, but I am also an Ex-Officio Member of Parliament, and I have a place where I come from, where some of these agencies have been working. Actually, I commiserate and sympathise - I take these concerns deeply.

You will recall that the exercise took some time. It was very complicated. We moved, I think, in a circuitous way. However, it was a determined course, to ensure that we could accomplish the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX). With you all, we accomplished this RAPEX programme - you know, first batch, second batch, and so on, up to where we are.

Mr Speaker, the whole exercise had, first of all, to sort out who is going to go and who is going to remain, the job descriptions and the departments that are going to be there. All that was accomplished.

The next thing was payment, which is of great concern to us. Unfortunately, the payments for some of these agencies were delayed, with the exception of the Rural Electrification Agency and the National Planning Authority.

However, all is not dark; all is not lost. As I said, as I was coming in here, I got a communication

from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development - because you cannot pay with cowrie shells; you pay with money. When the money is there, it is paid and everybody is okay. The ministry for finance has finally released all the money that we require to pay and settle compensation for all these people who are concerned – of the agencies whose laws were passed and assented to.

What remains is for each individual Vote to make the calculations and pay off. All I can say is that as soon as this is available to them, which has actually been availed to them, they will start the process.

Mr Speaker, I would like to lay, with your permission, this letter from the ministry for finance, setting our hearts to rest.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You may read the title.

MR MURULI MUKASA: The title is “Supplementary Expenditure Schedule No. 2 for Financial Year 2024/2025 for Institutions Affected under the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditures (RAPEX) Reform”.

Mr Speaker, I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR MURULI MUKASA: Please, I appeal to you: let us look at this matter quite rationally, and help our colleagues who are suffering under this, to overcome this problem.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I need a clarification from the minister for finance: has this been released under the three per cent, or it is for prior approval? This is because he has said it is a supplementary expenditure. You can have a copy, honourable minister, if you need it.

4.21

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (GENERAL DUTIES) (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker.

Mr Speaker, I think you are the one who presided over the supplementary schedule, which moved money –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Schedule 2.

MR MUSASIZI: From the Votes, which had been wound up, to the Votes of the ministries, which received these entities.

Subsequent to the decision of Parliament, which you communicated to us in writing, we communicated to the agencies that “funds have now been moved”. What that means is that the budget is available for these entities to begin spending accordingly. The minister has confirmed that this has been done.

So, the issue is not about the budgets which were existing then. The budgets were not collapsed. The monies remained, and they can be accessed by the various ministries for spending on the affected activities.

So, we do not want to hear that the ferries have no fuel now; Mr Speaker, that issue has been resolved. We do not want to hear that there is no money for road maintenance now; that issue has been resolved. For the Ministry of Works and Transport, the monies, which were existing under the Uganda Road Fund, are now available for spending *-(Interjection)-* Yes, clarification –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just before that, let us make it easy, honourable colleagues. It is important to know what is in this letter.

“26 February, 2025

Accounting officers

Supplementary Expenditure Schedule No. 2 for Financial Year 2024/2025 for institutions affected under the RAPEX Reform

Parliament approved Supplementary Budget Schedule 2 for Financial Year 2024/2025, totalling to Shs 1.243 trillion for institutions receiving the rationalised functions. This is to enable the implementation of revised structures,

new mandates and functions as summarised in the table below.

Recurrent –	Shs 296 billion
Development –	Shs 940 billion
Statutory –	Shs 7 billion
Total –	Shs 1.243 trillion.

“The purpose of this letter, therefore, is to forward to you the resolution of Parliament and request you to initiate the supplementary allocation on the Programme Budgeting System and provide revised work plans...”

Honourable colleagues, the source of funding and budget lines were very clear here. We transferred the budgets we had allocated to those agencies to the new Votes. Therefore, money is available.

What is very important is to assign tasks to the different ministries and agencies so that they can start executing their plans with the available money. That guides us.

The minister had given you a clarification.

DR BWANIKA: Mr Speaker, I want a clarification from the minister. The letter that you have laid is not a warrant and not an Investment Project Financing (IPF). For us to be here and communicate to the beneficiaries that money has been released when we simply have a transfer of the Votes – I want to know from you: when are you releasing the money? When are you warranting? Is what you have read a warrant?

MR AOGON: Mr Speaker, there is new information, which came from behind me, that there is an instruction from the Permanent Secretary/Secretary Treasury (PS/ST) to the ministries that: “Do not spend this money until you are told to do so.”

Can you also clarify on that? You can confirm or deny it.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister?

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. When we communicate the availability of funds, this letter implies that the accounting officer now starts the process of accessing the money.

What is the process? The first process is releasing, which this letter is communicating. The second process is warranted. Who provides a breakdown? The accounting officer. The third step is the invoice—and we pay. So, the process is on.

Can I be - this letter was of –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: On the 26th of February.

MR MUSASIZI: This letter was dated February 26th. That means the process in between—if the accounting officer is effective, by today, the Voters Will have the money to spend.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Although the Ministry of Public Service has a stamp showing the 3rd of February, they crossed it with a pen and wrote, on top, “March”. *(Laughter)*

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, to allay the fears of colleagues, unless there are other matters over and above what we presented here – the Shs 1.2 trillion – all the activities which are budgeted for, under the Shs 1.2 trillion, will be catered for.

However, some accounting officers are indisciplined. When they get this money, they want to use it for other activities. We have also asked the responsible Ministries, Departments, and Agencies (MDAs) to check and ensure that this money is used for its intended purpose. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The Leader of Opposition?

4.28

THE SHADOW MINISTER OF EDUCATION AND SPORTS (Mr Joseph Ssewungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would also like to thank the two ministers.

Mr Speaker, there is a statement that money is available, but the affected person’s children are not at school now. I do not know whether we will receive that.

Secondly, I love Hon. Muruli Mukasa very much. You see, whenever these ministers talk, look at their demeanour: you will get what is true and what is not correct. He said money is not cowrie shells and that you can only give money if money is available.

In Australia, Mr Speaker, there is a hunting system where hunters go with a certain kind of stick called a “boomerang”. When you throw that boomerang to get a bird and you do not get it, the boomerang comes back to you. Here we are with a boomerang, getting back to us.

Mr Speaker, if you look at what Hon. Muruli Mukasa wrote in this statement that he has given – I have taken a keen interest; look at page 15 of this statement. He gives you key issues and challenges on RAPEX and the mitigating measures. Out of all these challenges, they show that there is no money. Once the debate becomes hot, you see a letter coming in to give defences.

I, myself - honourable members, I can give you the telephone number of the Permanent Secretary of the Ministry of Works and Transport. Call him on an individual basis. I have called him several times concerning the Kalungu roads. He said he has no money. Even when districts are willing to give him machines, he says: “You wait for another three months before I get money to work on your roads. However, even if I give you money, it will be for just patching up the holes and the roads will continue to stay like the way they were.”

Here we are, being assured of the money.

Look at the minority report that we gave as the Opposition – because there is time to go to heaven. *(Mr Musasizi rose_)* Just a minute – *(Interruption)*

MR MUSASIZI: Thank you, Hon. Ssewungu, for giving way – the acting Leader of the Opposition.

Mr Speaker, included in the Shs 1.2 trillion was Shs 953 billion under the Uganda National Road Authority (UNRA). Now, when you say that the accounting officer – PS of the Ministry of Works and Transport is telling you that there is no money when the figures are here; they do not lie – between you and us, who is right? I want to believe that you are probably misquoting this accounting officer. This is because the accounting officer knows and can confirm that Shs 953 billion was transferred from UNRA to his Vote and an amount, which I can confirm, was also transferred from Uganda Road Fund to his Vote.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, honourable minister, for the information. Both of you sit in the Cabinet. When this statement was being uploaded onto our system, you were together. That is why you have a letter from the finance ministry being brought by him, not you.

Remember that there is time to go to heaven. God is going to ask you: what did Ssewungu say? I will say: “I told the ministry for finance that A, B, C, and D were wrong.” Then God will ask you: “Did you believe what Hon. Ssewungu said? “Yes, he was correct, but I had fear.” I will eat supper at the right hand of the Father and you will miss that meal.

Mr Speaker, what we want to say here is that, before the RAPEX, this money was there. You were paying these staff, and some of them were getting their pension. What happened after going through RAPEX?

Already, when you go to page - you gave us this document - Mr Speaker, there is an attachment on page 65 – institutions which were submitted under Batch 2 and their adverts are out for candidates to apply. Everything is ongoing. There is no information on whether they have been taken or they are going.

Let me give you an example of Higher Education Students Financing Board -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu - colleagues, we are going to rotate around this issue, and we will never finish. We have a lot of complaints on what -

MR SSEWUNGU: Can I conclude, Mr Speaker?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, the issue we have here, on the Order Paper, has to do with the settlement of terminal benefits and severance pay of former employees of public entities affected by the Government’s policy of rationalisation.

Now, the question is: Was it budgeted for? If it was budgeted for, is it part of the money that we provided under the supplementary? Okay – *(Members rose)* — no, listen. If it is part of the money provided under the supplementary, a release has been made. So, what are we debating?

A release – I know the process of entities receiving the money is not yet complete. That is what I need to understand.

Hon. Ssewungu, allow the minister to guide us. I do not want us to continue with complaints when we can get clear and confirmed guidance.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, you have just simplified our debate. Do we have all the money to cater for severance and other terminal benefits? Was it budgeted for?

Mr Speaker, here, we want to look at the numbers properly because at the time of budgeting, this was not an issue. The issue was wage and non-wage for the entities, which were later affected. What that means is that we are no longer paying wages to these staff. We need to now convert these wages into the terminal benefits.

On the question whether this is sufficient or not, I need to check. For instance, I know for sure under UNRA, there is an additional requirement and the money available is not enough to cater for all these *-(Interjections)-* I cannot clarify when I still - Let me make my point.

Mr Speaker, I would like to ask for two days so I come back to the House with proper numbers on what is available and what is not. This is a better answer.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Actually, that was my prayer. Mr Speaker, whatever we are saying is on the *Hansard* - he says money is available. As Members, we are going to hear from our people whether they have got money within the next two days. The honourable minister is not listening to my prayer - Within two days, as you have stated, honourable minister, we expect these people to get g money because they have children; they are being sent out of their houses they are renting and they have other challenges. This is what I was praying for. Otherwise, we are all in agreement but we do want to hear Members bring more complaints about the same because you brought RAPEX in a good spirit, though it was a very big battle here. I pray.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Next item. Sorry to the honourable colleagues I had picked. Otherwise, the minister has guided us very well. Let us be patient. On Tuesday, we will come back here. Thank you.

LAYING OF PAPERS

(I) HALF-YEAR MACROECONOMIC FISCAL PERFORMANCE REPORT FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025

4.37

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

(Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the Half Year Macroeconomic and Fiscal Performance Report for the Financial Year 2024/2025. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable minister. The report is referred to the Committee on Budget for processing and report back. Hon. Mpuuga, do you have a procedural matter?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Just wait. Let us first finish Laying of the Papers.

(II) SEMI-ANNUAL BUDGET PERFORMANCE REPORT FOR FINANCIAL YEAR 2024/2025 - VOLUMES 1, 2 AND 3

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, I beg to lay on the Table the Semi-annual Budget Performance Report for Financial Year 2024/2025 -volumes 1, 2 and 3. I beg to lay.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. The reports are referred to the Committee on Budget in line with rule 173 for processing and reporting back. Hon. Mpuuga -

MR MPUUGA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am sorry for taking you back - I was rising under rule 52 because I wanted to adjoin the debate -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: But we had concluded the debate.

MR MPUUGA: That is why I moved procedurally, Mr Speaker. Since RAPEX was a bit bungled, there are still issues which the Government needs to guide the public to. REA, UNRA, and other entities including Umeme were rationalised with private property; and people's land titles. Many members of the public; and private persons are stranded as to where to go. When they go to the former REA and former UNRA, they say, we were closed. Where do we go? We do not know.

Mr Speaker, will you instruct the minister or the Government to guide either through a circular the public where they can go and access their property that were in the possession of these entities such that the public is not stranded? Otherwise, the ministers seem not to know where they are.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable minister, can I have your attention? I need you to respond to this.

MR MPUUGA: ... so that the public does not think we are equally guilty - I think we are not as guilty as the Government because there is

no collective guilt in Parliament. It is only the Executive. In Parliament, you can object to an issue which is why there are several modes of voting which does not happen in the Cabinet.

Will the Government clarify to the public vide either a circular or any other framework to where they can go or where they need help? For example, UNRA owed lots of money under compensation over various road projects and the individuals owed, do not know where to go.

Mr Speaker, I seek your guidance or instruction to the Government on how to proceed with that matter. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. That is straightforward, and it is good for the public to know where to go.

Minister of Public Service, since you are in charge, meet with your colleagues and see how best you can inform the public about how they can acquire the services which were still pending like people who are demanding money, people who had their titles and all that.

Honourable colleagues, I beg that - (*Hon. Muruli rose*)

MR MURULI: Most obliged. I think guidance will be provided now that we have seen light at the end of the tunnel.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are glad the minister has seen light. Why do you accuse him? Thank you.

MR OGUZU LEE: Thank you. Mr Speaker, the public is eagerly waiting for a report on the implementation of RAPEX. For example, there were claims of savings to be made out of all these processes. I think it is very important that you urge the minister to bring a report on the implementation of RAPEX so that we can track the progress in all the key performance indicators because -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleague, this report has those details, so upload it. The report has four parts: the status of RAPEX's implementation, the impact of

RAPEX on the former staff of agencies affected by RAPEX, the absorption process of the former employees of the agencies affected by RAPEX, and the status of payment of terminal benefits to the affected staff by RAPEX.

On 15th March, we are receiving the ministerial policy statements. Honourable minister, I do not know if some are ready. I need to know accounting officers whose ministerial policy statements are ready. In fact, Clerk, cross check for me those which are ready because the finance minister did his part. We need to start receiving-

MR OGUZU LEE: If I could just give you information - the NFA law has not been signed.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, please. We have done our part and are now going into the budgeting process. Ministerial policy statements are coming. I urge chairpersons of committees to express interest in this report and in this statement of Minister Muruli Mukasa. It is detailed and has many details. Use it when processing ministerial policy statements to ensure everything is aligned.

BILLS SECOND READING

THE CONTRACT FARMING BILL, 2023

4.44

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Mr Speaker, I beg to move that the Bill titled "The Contract Farming Bill, 2023, be read a second time.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Is the motion seconded? It is seconded by Hon. Aogon, Hon. Ssewungu, Hon. Lillian, Hon. Haji Issa, Hon. Mudimi, Hon. Sarah Opendi, Hon. Joyce Bagala, Hon. Betty Aol, the DP Whip, Hon. Nebanda, Hon. Mamawi, Hon. Milton Muwuma (*Hon. Okpua rose*) Member for Kyegegwa and many Members. I hope I am not out of order.

MR OKUPA: Mr Speaker, when we bring Bills here, we expect the Government to

support them. I have looked at the Front Bench that represents the Executive, and noticed that no one stood to second. Is it my understanding that the Government is not supporting this Bill? Is it in order for the Executive to keep quiet as if they do not support this Bill? Are they in the order?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. I have on several occasions seen some ministers not standing up even on Government Bills. When they are here, they are Members of Parliament so I will not force a Member to support a Bill.

Honourable colleagues, on this one, what I want us to do is to receive the committee report so that I can give you time to go and read through it. I do not think it would be right for you to receive a report now and then we go to Committee Stage and conclude it when it is such a long and new Bill. It is not even an amendment. It is a new Bill. I want to give you a little time to read through it. Even in debating, I am trying to see how we manage time. I wanted us to debate but let us watch the time.

Honourable members, also, wanted the Attorney-General to be with us when we were debating. Honourable colleague, would you like to speak to your motion?

DR BWANIKA: Mr Speaker, this Bill, titled “The Contract Farming Bill, 2023” is a Bill for farmers and the farmers of Uganda have been waiting for it.

The biggest challenge to agriculture in this country, which supports over 70 per cent of the people of Uganda, is the market and the fluctuating prices. All of us know that the majority of our population, around 74 per cent of our people, are in the countryside. All of us know that for long, Uganda has been known as an agricultural country. Agriculture has supported the economy of Uganda and 23.7 per cent of our Gross Domestic Production is from agriculture. As such, 44 per cent of our export earnings is from agriculture.

The challenge to agriculture is the market and the fluctuating prices. Farmers grow crops and

rear animals without a sure price. An example is the maize crop which all of you know. Farmers produce when a kilogramme of maize is Shs 1,500 - at one time, it was Shs 2,000.

By the time they harvest a kilogramme of maize, it is Shs 200 or Shs 300. That fluctuation in price - actually diving of the prices in agricultural commodities has not only discouraged our farmers but has also impoverished our populations.

This Bill, therefore, seeks to address the challenge of fluctuating prices and guarantee better prices for our farmers.

This Bill seeks to address the sale of future agricultural produce at mutually agreed price. You produce after you have agreed with the buyer that this is the price I will sell for you so that you are guaranteed. There will be no question of saying, now there is a lot of produce on the market. No. If you agree that you shall sell a kilogramme of rice at Shs 4,000, then when you produce and hand it over, it must be at Shs 4,000. This will guarantee life for the farmers.

This Bill also seeks to address the issue of farm services. Most of our farmers have land and the energy to produce, but they do not have inputs. This Bill seeks to establish a legal framework so that when a farmer lacks inputs and can get them from a buyer, they can work out a contract. You give me the inputs, and when I sell my produce, you discount. However, it must be in an agreed-upon legal framework. That is what this Bill seeks to address.

This Bill also seeks to consolidate parcels of land and aquaculture establishments in a single land unit for commercial agriculture. All of us know that in Uganda, the average land size is 2.5 acres. That is the production unit. You cannot do serious farming on those small plots. This Bill, therefore, seeks to come up with a legal framework on how we can aggregate land without losing ownership. You do not lose the ownership, but we can work together so that we benefit from the economies of scale. We also benefit from the experiences of individual farmers and it will help the farmer to access

markets because they are going to produce in volume.

Mr Speaker, that is what this Bill is about. There are so many laws in Uganda.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleague, you are now going to the work of the committee. Yours was a simple justification of the motion.

DR BWANIKA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. That is what this Bill is about. As I have said, the people of Uganda across the entire country have been waiting for this Bill so that agriculture becomes a meaningful business to give our people a meaningful livelihood. I so submit.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Committee chairperson, this is a very good background. You can start from 5.0. We shall capture the whole report on the *Hansard*, so let us use 15 minutes.

4.54

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON AGRICULTURE, ANIMAL INDUSTRY AND FISHERIES (Ms Linda Auma): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I beg to lay the report of the committee and minutes of the committee meetings.

I beg to present the report of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries on the Contract Farming Bill, 2023. Because of time, I will go through a bit of the introduction and move straight to recommendations.

The Contract Farming Bill, 2023 was read for the first time on 31 April 2024 and referred to the committee –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, did you hear my guidance? I told you to start from 5.0 because we have all this on record. That is page 8; it is committee observations and recommendations.

MS LINDA AUMA: Thank you so much, Mr Speaker.

5.0 Committee observations and recommendations

5.1 Justification for the Contract Farming Bill, 2024

Contract farming in Uganda has existed for some time as a means of organising commercial agricultural production for both large-scale and smallholder farmers. Currently, contract farming is used as one of the promising frameworks for the delivery of price incentives, technology, and other agricultural inputs among smallholder farmers by private farms, multinational companies, and international aid and lending agencies.

While the motives behind contract farming may vary by actor, contract farming is crucial in the commercialisation of smallholder agriculture and, hence, poverty reduction in Uganda. In Uganda, contract farming has been traditionally restricted to plantation crops (sugarcane, tea, tobacco, and currently oil palm), where outgrowers have been supplementing the production of large processing agribusiness farms. However, today, contract farming has been embraced by cereal farmers.

Many other agribusiness firms and some cooperative unions have also extended contracts to smallholder farmers to ensure a continuous supply of critical inputs. Hence, the use of contract farming has spread to other agricultural commodities, namely cotton, sunflower, maize, sorghum, coffee, sesame, oilseeds, rice, honey, dairy products, beef and poultry. Some of these contract farming schemes have been credited for playing a key role in increasing the profitability of crop and animal farming and reducing marketing risks.

While the committee was processing the Bill, it faced the following preliminary questions that required disposition before going to the specifics of the Bill.

1. Whether there is a need for a specific legal framework on contract farming;

2. Whether the Bill satisfies all legal requirements needed to process a private Member's Bill, namely:
- a. A Certificate of Financial Implications; and
 - b. Consultation with the Attorney-General and the affected Government Ministries, Departments or Agencies for technical assistance before introducing the Bill.

We will move straight to get the response to these questions; whether there is a need for a specific legal framework on contract farming.

The committee interacted with a number of stakeholders who either appeared personally or sent in their memoranda on the Bill. The farmers indicated that they have been exploited by big dealers in the industry, who force them to sign agreements they have not read and later discover that these agreements favour the buyers.

They added that the buyers charge a high price for farm inputs, including other costs the farmer never agreed to and change the cost of farm inputs into loans, attracting huge interest. The stakeholders further contended that when prices fall, the buyers refuse to take the agricultural produce. In addition, farmers are sometimes affected by adverse weather conditions which are beyond their control, yet the buyers are only interested in recovery of their investments.

The buyers, on the other hand, indicated that some of the farmers are dishonest and do not even honour their contractual obligations. In most cases, farmers are supplied with farm inputs, and at the time of harvest, they sell their produce to other people. They also contend that it is not easy to fix prices since agricultural prices fluctuate from season to season. They also contend that there are farmers who are so negligent that they fail to attend to their farms, causing the buyers to lose their investments.

The committee, therefore, was concerned and sought to find out whether these challenges are

already addressed by other laws in the country. The committee studied the Contracts Act and the Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act.

When we observed and analysed the Contracts Act, Cap. 284, the purpose of which can be deduced from the memorandum of its Bill, the Contracts Bill, 2008, which codified the principle of common law and case law in Uganda regarding the social, economic, and cultural needs and values of the people of Uganda.

The Act covers the ingredients of a contract, such as offer, acceptance, communication, and contingent contracts that are subject to a certain future event. The Contracts Act, Cap 284, is general in nature and focuses on finished goods and services.

The Contract Farming Bill is a unique legislation that specifically handles the arrangement between the farmer and buyer of agricultural produce for farmers to grow or rear animals for future transactions by clearly spelling out the roles and obligations of each party to the agreement until their objective is achieved. Both parties, the farmer and buyer, move together in this journey of producing the desired agricultural produce. This arrangement is not covered at all by the Contract Act.

We went ahead to the Sales of Goods and Supply of Services Act. The committee studied the Sales of Goods and Supply of Services Act and appreciated that whereas the Act covers future goods and contract farming deals in supplying and purchasing agricultural produce in the future, the law does not envisage that the buyer is part and parcel of the journey to produce the agricultural produce.

The Act envisages the farmer producing the agricultural produce and supplying the buyer on his own. In this arrangement, the buyer is at the tail end, waiting for ready agricultural produce for delivery, whereas the Contract Farming Bill deals with the relationship that brings together the farmer and buyer to be part of the journey to realise the desired goal.

Contract farming is a unique arrangement that requires specific legislation, just as public procurement and disposal of public assets are unique and would not fit under the Sales of Goods and Supply of Services Act.

We also scrutinised the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act. In 2015, tobacco farmers in the districts of Kanungu, Kibale, Kakumiro, and West Nile petitioned Parliament against Continental Tobacco Uganda Limited for failing to pay farmers who supplied tobacco leaves worth Shs 5 billion, which were sold to the company. Instead of paying the farmers, the company technical officers opted to confiscate the contract books from the farmers.

The Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act does not regulate farmers' relationships with suppliers and contract farming. The Act regulates the supply of seeds just for quality assurance, harvesting, and marketing (sales). It does not deal with the contractual relationship with the seed supplier but rather provides the seeds with quality assurance to be followed while procuring them.

The Act and the statutory instrument issued under the same Act gave the Government a big role in ensuring that seeds planted are of given standards. It was easier for the Government to control the value chain. This is no longer the case.

The statutory instrument under the same Act does not clarify each party's obligation to the agreement or address what happens when there are acts of God. It does not further envisage different interests vested in the land and how they may affect the enforcement of sponsorship agreements. The law and regulations do not provide for dispute resolution or the role of local government in settling disputes.

The Sugar Act

Over the last 10 years, the sugar industry has been expanding production by 20 per cent per annum. The boom has been legitimised through narratives of "Poverty eradication and prosperity for all Ugandans". Much of the cane

supply for this expansion comes from the out-grower farmers who are currently supplying about 50 per cent of the total cane required by the major sugar factories.

The out-growers and smallholder farmers to sustain the supply of sugarcanes required financial support and technical expertise to improve their farms to enter commercial farming in the aftermath of state removal from the provision of agricultural services and inputs under the marketing boards and cooperative system. Thus, the sugar corporations end up having contracts with the supplies to provide the farm inputs, as farmers shall supply canes at the time of harvest.

However, farmers and buyers have complained about sugarcane overexploitation, corruption, mistreatment, and missed payments, sparking friction between sugarcane out-growers and sugar corporations. Farmers in Hoima, Masindi, Mayuge, and Jinja complained.

Whereas the Sugar Act, Cap 242 under section 24 provides for sugar agreements between the out-growers, the smallholder farmers, and -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson, this law is already before the House and at committee stage, so let us go straight to 5.2 on committee of observations and recommendations, because we are going into uncharted waters where rules do not allow us.

MS LINDA AUMA: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

5.2 Committee observation and recommendation on key provisions of the Bill

5.2.1 Nomenclature

The committee observed that clause 2 of the Bill defines key terms used in the Bill. However, some terms need to be revised to give them the actual meaning under the Act. Other terms are introduced as the review of the Bill requires the introduction of other clauses with terms for purposes of clarity and ease of application.

The committee recommends that the definitions of key terms used in the Bill be amended appropriately and other relevant ones be introduced.

5.2.2 Application of the Act

Clause 1 of the Bill deals with the circumstances where the Act shall apply. Subclause (1) provides circumstances that will be covered by the Bill. The circumstances enlisted in Subclause (1) are the ingredients of contract farming.

a) Inclusion of carbon credit harvest in the Bill.

The Committee noted that currently, there is a general trend of farmers planting trees under afforestation and agroforestry. Beyond the forestry products from trees, farmers are engaged in selling carbon credits from trees on their acreage as they preserve the environment.

The company purchases carbon credits to offset its unavoidable emissions. A carbon credit represents a reduction of one metric ton of greenhouse gas emissions, which can be bought and sold on carbon markets. A carbon market allows investors and corporations to trade both carbon credits and carbon offsets simultaneously, mitigates the environmental crisis, and creates new market opportunities.

The carbon credit business needs to be adapted to better meet the potential of smallholder farmers, whose farming practices provide essential carbon sequestration but are often not compensated fairly.

The country's smallholder farmers who are engaged in agroforestry producing some carbon credits that are floating without any monetary consideration can be helped through carbon financing. Carbon finance can help to provide upfront investment into farms that can produce new sources of income (grow timber, fruits, nuts, fuel wood), help to adapt farms to climate change (increasing shade, moisture retention, soil fertility) or provide an additional cash income stream from carbon

sequestration. For agribusinesses facilitating this investment, carbon finance presents the prospect of a revenue stream that can fund deeper and more consistent farmer support, reducing competition on private extension services and unlocking shared value in the smallholder supply base.

The committee recommends that Clause 1(1) of the Bill be amended to include an agreement involving tree planting for carbon credit harvest.

b) Exclusion clause

Clause 1 further provides for the exclusion clause to the production and marketing of leaf tobacco under the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act and the growing of sugar cane under the Sugar Act. The clause further excludes the application of the financing of farming activities by financing institutions of Tier 4 microfinance institutions or money lenders.

Whereas the committee agrees with the bill's mover that this law should not apply to the financing of farming activities by financial institutions of Tier 4 Microfinance Institutions or money lenders, the committee had reservations about the general exclusion of this law from the production of tobacco leaf and sugar cane under contract farming.

a) The committee was concerned as to whether; Tobacco farmers under contract farming are well covered by the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act.

The committee noted that tobacco contract farmers have suffered like any other cash crop farmers do and face challenges like tobacco pest diseases, processing and marketing of their produce, exorbitant prices for farm inputs like seeds, fertilisers, chemicals, and even firewood to preserve the leaf under contract farming agreements, delayed payments, low prices, and poor tobacco leaf grading system that is contrary to what they agreed upon during contractual formation.

The scrutiny of the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act indicates that the act envisaged the Government remaining in control of seed development, providing extension services, and adding the lint that they were buying the produce before the liberalisation of the economy. Today, tobacco seeds are sold in the open market and supplied by different stakeholders.

The committee further noted that the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act does not regulate farmers' relationships with suppliers of seeds and farm inputs under contract farming. The Act regulates the licenses of seed dealers only for quality assurance, harvesting, and marketing (sales). Therefore, the relationship between farmers and the suppliers of the farm inputs, including seeds under contract farming, remains unregulated.

The committee recommends that clause 1(2) be amended to regulate the production of leaf tobacco under contract farming and leave the licensing process of tobacco leaf dealers to the Tobacco (Control and Marketing) Act.

Sugar cane growers under contract farming

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We have a Bill on that? So let us leave it.

MS AUMA: We are moving to 5.2.3, on the ownership of land. Clause 3 of the Bill refers to different land owners and persons with user rights in land to come together to form a block unit for purposes of conducting block farming through an agreement. Block farming is a model that brings together segmented parcels of land into one block unit to undertake commercial Agriculture.

The committee noted that clause 3 mixes land ownership, which is generally known in other land laws, with land use. Whereas in many circumstances, the land owners are at the same time the users of the same parcels of land, in other circumstances, there are those with only user rights limited to their agreement with land owners. It would be erroneous to mix the two.

The committee further notes that, whereas the land user who is not the land owner may have a right to join the block farming, such rights should only be exercised with the consent of the land owner. The committee recommends, therefore, that clause 3 be amended to distinguish between land owners and those with user rights and a consequential amendment to the Bill be effected accordingly.

The Farming agreement

The committee notes that the core element of contract farming is the agreement that the farmer and the buyer will participate in part and the whole production chain, and the buyer will purchase what has been produced at an agreed price. This partnership may involve supplying farm inputs, providing advisory services, and, at times, monetary advances. This arrangement is not regulated by any legal framework so far.

Whereas both parties agree in advance on the terms and conditions for the production by the farmer and the purchase by the buyer, the challenges usually come with honouring the agreement and unfairness in it.

Therefore, the committee observes that clause 14 needs to be amended to close all the gaps that are likely to be the source of dispute, especially price, quantity, quality, and time of delivery. The committee recommends that Clause 14 be amended.

The other area where we made observations was on the provision of quality standard and timely farm inputs. Whereas the Bill in the agreement provides for clauses relating to the agreement for a buyer to provide farm services, it does not require such farm services to be meeting the set standard, the desired quantity and timely provision of the services. Some stakeholders complained that buyers do not supply the required quality inputs at the right time. This affects the farmers' production in terms of quality and quantity.

Whereas parties have agreed that the buyers shall provide farm inputs, the buyer must be obligated to provide quality inputs on time.

The committee recommends that clause 14 of the Bill be amended to require the buyer to provide farm services that meet the standards and are delivered on time.

5.2.6: Risk Management in agribusinesses

In Uganda, Agriculture is dependent on nature, which is prone to vagaries and climate change. This makes Agribusiness a high-risk venture that poses uncertainty and losses to both farmers and buyers. Agricultural insurance is needed to protect the players in this sector.

The committee notes that the Bill does not cover insurance for agricultural production. Such insurance can be done individually by either the farmer or the buyer or jointly. The committee recommends that the Bill be amended to provide for insurance for Agribusiness.

Next is a dispute resolution mechanism. The committee noted that, like any other business, disputes are likely to occur between farmers and buyers, a block farming committee and a buyer, or among members of the block unit. The Bill does not provide for mechanisms for solving such disputes amicably without going through the conventional court system.

The committee further noted that the local council administration is the court of first instance in case of dispute, and later, the commercial officers and production officers in each district.

The committee was further informed that the appropriate technical officers to handle such agricultural disputes are the district commercial officers and production officers, yet these offices are administrative and are not created by law.

The committee also noted that to avoid disputes, the local governments need to witness the execution of such agreements and keep records of such commercial transactions. It is better if the responsible district offices keep track of what is happening in the district, and therefore, the parties to such agreements

should deposit copies of their agreements with the Chief Administrative Officer for further management.

The committee recommends that the Bill be amended to provide for:

1. The Local Council I, where the block farming or contract farming is taking place, is to be witness to the agreement;
2. The Chief Administrative Officer where such transactions are taking place keeps records of block farming agreements and contract farming executed within his or her area;
3. The Chief Administrative Officer, with support from the commercial and production officers, shall arbitrate the dispute arising from such agreements; and
4. The arbitration process is not a bar to a party's right to seek redress from the court.

Mr Speaker, before I conclude, I wish to state that wherever the report refers to any of the following laws, the proper citation in accordance with the 7th Revised Edition of the Principal Laws of Uganda is as follows:

1. The Tobacco Control and Marketing Act, Cap 44;
2. The Sugar Act, Cap. 42; and
3. The Sale of Goods and Supply of Services Act, Cap 292.

I hereby report that this should be modified accordingly.

In conclusion, the committee, having been persuaded by the vital role the legal framework plays in poverty eradication and ensuring farmers engage in commercial agriculture, recommends that the Bill titled "The Contract Farming Bill, 2023" be enacted with the proposed amendments. I beg to report.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you very much, committee chairperson and committee, for the good work. Honourable colleagues, I

will appoint a date next week for debate and conclusion of this. Please read through the report and consult so that we can enrich the debate and handling of the Bill at the committee stage. We shall complete the process next week. Next item.

**MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE
REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON
TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY
ON THE PETITION BY UGANDA TEA
FARMERS**

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable committee chairperson?

5.22

THE DEPUTY CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON TOURISM, TRADE AND INDUSTRY (Mr Boniface Okot): Thank you, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry, allow me to join the rest of Parliament in congratulating you for the new position of service.

Secondly, in the spirit of delegation and showcasing the capacities of our committee members, we have delegated one of our able members, Hon. Edakasi Alfred, who will present this report on behalf of the committee. Without further do, I yield the Floor to him.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER. Thank you. Hon. Edakasi, I will be guiding you on areas to handle because we do not need to read the whole report. However, it will be captured on the Hansard. Well done, Hon. Bwanika, for the Bill.

5.23

MR ALFRED EDAKASI (NRM, Kaberamaido County, Kaberamaido): Mr Speaker, let me join the rest of the honourable members here to congratulate you on your new position. I read through your response after that election and was truly honoured to have voted for you as a Member of this House. I hope the people of Ruhinda will consider that you are already in the next Parliament. They should because anyway -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I hope Hon. Sarah Opendi agrees to that. *(Laughter)*

MR EDAKASI: The options are fewer for them because you have to serve two terms.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: That has been seconded by Hon. Sarah Opendi.

MR EDAKASI: Mr Speaker, let me thank my chairperson, for giving me an opportunity. It is indeed an honour to present a report to the House; my maiden report, and let me start by laying the minutes of the meetings of the committee together with the report. I beg to lay. It is a short report; I will try and go through it fast.

Mr Speaker, during the sitting of the House held on Thursday, 26 September 2024, Hon. Gaffa Mbwatekamwa, the Member of Parliament representing Igara County West, tabled a Petition on behalf of the Uganda Tea Farmers.

In accordance with Rule 30 of the Rules of Procedure, the Speaker referred the petition to the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry for scrutiny.

The committee now reports as follows:

Uganda's tea industry, once a leading traditional export commodity and foreign exchange earner, is facing unprecedented challenges. The sector, which has been a mainstay of the country's economy since its introduction for commercial production around 1925 to 1930, however, is struggling to stay afloat.

The crisis triggered by the Russia-Ukraine war in February 2022 has led to a global economic shock, depressing the demand for tea and causing prices to plummet.

In the Rwenzori area, in particular, tea farmers have been protesting against the absurd low prices, with some even cutting down their tea plantations to replace them with bananas.

The situation is dire with the average price of Uganda tea in the Mombasa auction market

falling sharply from around \$2 per kilogram of made tea to less than \$1 per kilogram below the production cost.

Locally, the green leaf prices declined by over 50 per cent from Shs 600 to Shs 200 per kilogram, with some farmers fetching as low as Shs 140 per kilo.

Despite efforts by the Government to revitalise the industry, including the provision of subsidised fertilisers and allocation of Shs 126 billion as working capital for tea processing factories, progress has been limited. The industry's decline has resulted in tea's slipping from its position as a leading traditional export commodity after coffee.

According to the export statistics from the Bank of Uganda, monthly export revenue from tea declined from \$7.4 million, in 2018 to \$5 million, in 2024, with non-traditional export items now surpassing tea in terms of export revenue.

With the recent decline in tea sales at the Mombasa Tea Auction 2024, Uganda's tea farmers are grappling with low gate prices for green leaf tea, forcing them to sell their produce below cost price.

This has led to a vicious cycle of inferior quality, low prices, and economic operations, causing many farmers to abandon or uproot their tea plantations for banana plantations.

The decline of the tea industry would result in the loss of over 100,000 jobs, primarily in tea factories but also along the value chain, including tea pluckers, plantation labourers, suppliers, and transporters. Furthermore, the economic collapse of business centres established around tea factories would have a devastating impact on local communities.

The livelihoods of at least 60,000 farmers involved in tea production would be lost, and 49,000 hectares of land under tea would be rendered unproductive. The cost of uprooting tea from this land would be prohibitively expensive. Perhaps most significantly, tea

would cease to be a vital export revenue earner, displacing its long-standing position as the second-largest traditional export commodity.

Mr Speaker, because of time, I will skip the petition and the methodology. I ask Members to read them.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable member, for a petition, prayers are always critical because they guide us during the debate and coming up with the resolutions.

MR EDAKASI: With your guidance, Mr Speaker, I will go through them very fast.

The petitioner has prayed as follows:

1. The government subsidises fertilisers for Tea Out growers by 75 per cent in the first season, followed by 50 per cent in the second season and 25 per cent in the third season, respectively, for a self-sustaining fertiliser financing mechanism with the total cost being Shs 43.05 billion;
2. The Government capitalises on a Fertiliser Revolving Fund for tea out growers totalling Shs 69.7 billion;
3. The Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) was directed by Parliament to develop an enforceable tea green leaf standard;
4. The Government concludes with the formulation of a comprehensive tea policy and implementation strategies;
5. Parliament directs the Uganda Microfinance Support Centre (MSC) to put aside Shs 31.5 billion for financing Tea out growers Operations (excluding fertilizer finance);
6. The Government rejuvenates interventions aimed at clearing the aggregate shortage in processing capacities as earlier evaluated;
7. The Government finances support and incentives to tea processing factories

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| <p>to replace aged machinery and upgrade technologies to increase the value of farmers' green leaf;</p> <p>8. The Government supports investments in product diversification and marketing of new tea products;</p> <p>9. The Government creates and guarantees markets for farmers to sell green leaf;</p> <p>10. The Government supports cottage tea processing units to supplement big factories;</p> <p>11. The Government provides a pruning grant of Shs 5 billion to support the pruning of 30 per cent of tea out growers' gardens;</p> <p>12. The Government provides electricity to tea processing factories at \$5 per cent per kWh as is done in industrial parks; and</p> <p>13. The Government effectively intervenes to recover Uganda's tea industry from the crisis.</p> | <p>origin. All teas compete at the same level, and the prices are determined based on the quality of the tea.</p> <p>The committee provided a table, and you can see Kenya, Uganda, Burundi, and Tanzania. On that table, you can see that countries like Rwanda, with few Tea growers, fetch the highest price based on the online transaction and sampling that is done there at the auction.</p> <p>The committee was informed that the quality of Tea is established through a sampling process, and it is through this process that the quality of Uganda's Tea has been proved to be very poor and therefore not competitive at the international market compared to other Teas in the market like we saw in the schedule.</p> <p>The committee learned from the study conducted by Economic Policy Research in Uganda that teas are classified and priced based on qualities such as strength, aroma, liquor, and appearance. Whereas most Kenyan teas are classified as medium to best, most of Uganda's teas are classified as plainers. This directly speaks to the price, where the better quality Kenyan tea and that from other countries, as you saw, attract higher prices than the poorer quality teas.</p> |
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As I said before, 4.0 is the methodology, and we have outlined different people and groups that we interacted with, including the stakeholders in Kenya.

Observation and recommendations.

(a) Performance of Uganda's Tea on the International Market

The committee observed that the performance of Uganda's Tea at the international market through the Mombasa Tea Auction is affected by various factors, including:

(1) The Quality of Uganda's Tea

The committee established that the sale of Uganda's tea at the international market is at the Mombasa Tea Auction, which is the largest Tea Auction Centre in the world. The tea is sold through an online auction system, which is open to all trading parties, and prices are determined based on quality and not country of

The committee discovered that the poorer quality teas, for instance, from Uganda, are popularly referred to as price reducers as opposed to premium brand teas, for instance, those from Rwanda, which attract internationally competitive prices.

The committee observed that the number of factors that are responsible for tea's poor quality include the following:

1. The lack of affordable quality fertiliser on the market

The lack of affordable quality fertiliser directly affects the quality of tea picked from the farm on the producer. The committee noted, for instance, that the Kenya government subsidises fertilisers for farmers by about 30 per cent, making it affordable and accessible to

tea farmers, which improves the quality of the Kenyan tea on the market.

2. Uganda's tea sector lacks a regulatory framework

The sector neither has a policy nor a law to regulate it, Mr Speaker. There is, therefore, no centre for quality input, coordination, or statistical controls. The Uganda tea sector is exposed, the farmers and producers regulate the conduct of business in the sector. Compared to coffee, whose national policy was approved in 2013 to guide the operations of the coffee subsector, annual coffee volumes have grown by about 72 per cent in Uganda and the value has increased by over 160 per cent over the past eight years since 2016, while tea earnings have increased by only 17 per cent and volumes by 38 per cent over the same period.

Mr Speaker, I have provided a table there to show the House these statistics and just to show you how coffee is doing well because it is under regulation.

The committee noted that Kenya, on the other hand, has a Tea Act, which provides for the Kenya Tea Board, which regulates the development of the tea industry. In addition, in Kenya, Kenya Tea Development Agency (KTDA) oversees 800,000 farmers through training, right from the farm care, picking the right leaves, handling, transportation, storage, and processing, as well as ensuring that farmers have access to fertilisers to ensure the quality of the tea. Consequently, KTDA tea attracts high prices at the Mombasa auction, as already indicated below.

The next table you see there shows you KTDA Tea vs Rwanda Tea; what you see as "EOR" is East of the Rift Valley. In other words, the teas that are being grown East of the Rift Valley, and WOR is the teas that are grown out in the West part of the Rift Valley. This is the description of what the committee provided for you in terms of appreciating the 800,000 farmers and how they are playing on the tea auction.

3. Machine harvest, especially for the big tea producers as opposed to the traditional hand harvest of tea by the small outgrowers

The best quality tea is that which is picked from the two leaves and a bud. I hope Members do understand that, just the bud and only the two leaves. For your information, our current biggest producer of tea actually uses machine harvest and is the biggest producer and the biggest exporter.

I do not know if we should say that here – (Interjections) – no, but they are the biggest producer; you can research. Machine harvest, in most cases, though cheaper, is indiscriminate in the leaves harvested, leading to poor-quality tea.

It was noted by the committee that Uganda farmers were not keen on the tea and the two leaves and a bud standard, and therefore, should focus on the quality of tea as opposed to the quality to fetch better prices on the auction.

4. Poor post-harvest handling of tea

Due to the lack of regulation and sensitisation, many farmers and producers transport tea on heavily loaded trucks without proper ventilation, leading to the withering of the leaves before they are processed, which results into poor-quality tea. The best quality tea is that which is processed from freshly maintained leaves.

5. High cost and unreliability of electricity for tea factories

This forces producers to opt for diesel generators. The unreliability of electricity slows down the production process, which includes withering, rolling, oxidation, and drying, ultimately affecting tea quality and the final price. On the other hand, the high cost of electricity increases production costs, ultimately increasing the price of the tea.

6. Ignorance by most tea farmers about the best practices for tea growing, tea varieties, and post-harvest handling of tea

For instance, the orthodox tea variety, which is used in countries like India, is produced using traditional orthodox methods involving plucking, withering, rolling, oxidation, fermentation and drying. This is a better quality tea and attracts better prices on international markets compared to the CTC method, which Uganda predominantly uses.

CTC stands for Curl, Tear, and Cut way of production. Therefore, if you compare it with the orthodox method where you pluck the two leaves; two and a bud, wither them very well, they are rolled and oxidised, fermented and then dried. The big producers, because of use of machinery, do not pay attention to that, and therefore, spoil the quality of the tea.

Recommendations

1. The Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries (MAAIF) expedites the development of tea policy to regulate the quality of a country's tea within six months of the adoption of this report in order to improve the quality and incomes earned by farmers, as well as reserves with higher tea foreign exchange earnings. In the meantime, MAAIF should sensitise and train tea farmers on best practices to enhance the quality of their tea exports.
2. Heavy reliance on the export market
 - a) Foreign export market

The committee was informed that Pakistan is one of the world's largest importers of the teas sold at the Mombasa Tea Auction in Kenya, accounting for over 40 per cent of Kenya's tea exports. Domestically, tea is a popular beverage in Pakistan where "chai" is part of its daily life, resulting in high per capita consumption.

The committee, however, observed that whereas Pakistan is the largest importer of teas from the Mombasa tea auction, where it buys those teas, it does not domestically consume all the tea. It re-exports some of the tea, often in blended forms, to other countries. Pakistan's tea re-export activities are part of her broader

tea trade strategy, with Pakistani companies blending and repackaging the tea with other varieties to serve different markets, particularly in the Middle East and Central Asia.

The strong tea culture combined with re-exporting practices supports Pakistan's large imports and the Mombasa tea market, which affects Uganda's power to negotiate favourable prices with the biggest buyer of the tea who inevitably dictates the prices for which it buys the tea.

We provided you with a diagram there just showing you how much Pakistan gets out of that auction, how it dominates the markets and how that eventually pushes the Ugandan tea from competing in that market.

3. Limited domestic tea market

The committee observed that Uganda exports over 90 per cent of its tea through the Mombasa Tea Auction, which is partly attributed to the poor domestic tea consumption culture in Uganda for our locally produced teas and the minimal value addition within the tea industry as well as the high prices of quality local teas on the market, which limits accessibility for the average Ugandan tea.

Just for your information, Uganda's per capita consumption of tea is about 0.4 kilogrammes. If you compare to other countries that are consuming over 3.14 kilogrammes, that also affects us because we are exporting 90 per cent. When that 90 per cent is bashed out of the market, it puts it down –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Please, switch on the microphone, honourable member. I really love your explanation, only that it is outside the report; you should not be presenting your views but only the views of the committee.

MR EDAKASI: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I confess that this was my maiden report, but I do hear you.

Comparison is made to India, where the Tea Board of India indicates that domestic

consumption is 83 per cent of all tea produced in the country.

Recommendations

- a) The committee recommends that the Government should invest in diversifying the tea market to reduce over-dependence on foreign markets by, for instance, investing in value addition, product diversification like beer, soap, oils; venturing into other markets like Sudan and DRC. Uganda currently produces predominantly Crushed Tear Curl (CTC) black tea. Therefore, the Government should consider investing in research for the production of other varieties like orthodox and green teas, which fetch better prices on the international tea market;
- b) The Government should leverage platforms like the Africa Continental Free Trade Area to expand Uganda's intra-Africa trade on tea;
- c) The Government should invest in the promotion of tea consumption in the country to boost domestic consumption; and
- d) The Government should invest in research, development and promotion of various local tea types and blends.

3. Tea barriers

The committee noted that whereas Uganda's tea, through the Mombasa Tea Auction, is mostly for export, it is not treated like other teas. The tea pays VAT, it pays a custom bond of 2.5 per cent paid at the border, and it pays a warehouse bond.

The committee noted that the imposition and expiration of these bonds before the tea is released to the buyer is an added cost and takes time, which delays the transactional time for Uganda's tea, while teas from countries like Kenya are zero-rated and easily traded and exported by buyers. The Value Added Tax Act of Kenya has Kenya tea for export or auction as a zero-rated commodity.

The committee further noted that Mombasa County in Kenya has introduced an agricultural process which covers all teas distilled from Mombasa at the rate of Kenya Shs 7,000 per truck of seven tons and above. This poses an extra charge on the Ugandan teas.

Recommendations

The committee recommends as follows:

1. The government should ensure tea for export is a zero-rated good, which should encourage local consumption of tea. This reduces the quantities at the auction, and may, in turn, drive the auction prices up;
2. The government should engage in bilateral agreements with the Kenya Government to address tea barriers;
3. The government should support infrastructure development, including railways connectivity with Kenya, which would considerably reduce the related costs of logistics;
4. The government should standardise power tariffs at \$5 cents per kilowatt to tea factories as it is done to other industrial parks to reduce the cost of production and ultimately the cost of tea on the local market to enhance domestic consumption;
5. The government should increase its participation and that of the Uganda tea stakeholders in the EATTA activities and other stakeholder engagements to ensure the visibility and competitiveness of Ugandan tea;
6. The Government should invest in marketing and blending Uganda tea as "Uganda Tea";
7. The Ministry for Trade should offer a certificate of origin for Ugandan tea to give it tax-free access to other international markets besides the market provided by the Mombasa auction. This would provide a viable alternative market for Uganda tea. Currently, there is only an

East African certificate of origin, which is used by East African countries, and does not give Uganda a competitive edge on the international markets; and

8. Review tax regimes on tea packaging materials to encourage value addition, reduce the cost of tea and encourage increased domestic consumption

4. The Global Tea Production Trends

The committee observed that the relationship between the overall tea production and consumption at the global level directly affects Uganda's tea pricing at the Mombasa Tea Auction. Global tea production, in 2023 stood at 6.604 billion kilogrammes against 6.482 billion kilogrammes, in 2022, an increase of 1.88 per cent. Global consumption stood at 6.212 billion kilogrammes from 6.233 billion kilogrammes in 2022, resulting in a decline of 0.34 per cent in consumption.

This, therefore, means global tea production has outstripped consumption, therefore affecting the global tea prices. Tea prices at the Mombasa Tea Auction are affected by market forces of demand and supply.

In the February 2024 auction, the high-priced Uganda tea from Kisoro Tea Company was sold at \$0.92 while the average price for all Uganda teas was \$0.7 per kilogramme, reflecting a decline in comparison to the October 2022 prices, where Uganda tea averaged \$1.46 and \$3.0 per kilogramme.

This direct correlation between the global tea production and consumption rates directly affects the Uganda tea prices since 90 per cent of Uganda's tea is sold in the export through the Mombasa Auction. This directly translates into the country's foreign exchange earnings and at the current quality, the country has been earning a third of what would have been realised annually.

Again, the graph there shows you the volumes and the value in dollars since 2013. You can see the impact. This is sourced from the Bank of Uganda.

The committee recommends that the Government, through MAAIF, urgently addresses the issue of quality of tea exports since the country is a price taker and has no control over global tea prices.

5. Government's intention to revive the Uganda tea industry

The committee was informed by the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries that Cabinet under Minute 336 (CT 2024) resolved to address the issue that affected Uganda's tea industry.

The minister further informed the committee of the inter-ministerial committee that the Rt Hon. Prime Minister constituted, which comprises the Minister of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries, the Minister of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives, the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, representatives of the National Planning Authority and tea farmers to discuss and harmonise how the Government could effectively address challenges in the tea industry.

The committee observed the Government's undertakings to establish a fertilizer revolving fund to tea farmers with a 50 per cent component as government contribution and 50 per cent as farmers' contribution covering two seasons.

The committee was informed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries that it will be the responsibility of the ministry to manage the farm.

The committee recommends that the Government fast-tracks the establishment of the fertilizer revolving fund to enable farmers to access affordable fertiliser.

6. Tea Financing Model

The committee was informed by the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industries and Fisheries that the Cabinet resolved to establish a Stabilisation Fund tenable at the Agricultural Credit Facility to ease credit accessibility to

enable tea farmers to remain in business.

The committee was informed by the minister that the Government intended to waive license fees to tea factories that would be enrolled in tea export processing zones.

The committee, therefore, recommends as follows:

- a. The government fast-tracks the establishment of the Stabilisation Fund tenable at the Agricultural Credit Facility to ease credit accessibility to enable tea factories to remain in business, for instance, through technological upgrades;
- b. The government should offer tea value chain financing excluding fertilizer financing to reduce farmers' reliance on processing factories to provide financing for primary production; and
- c. The government, through UDC investment partnerships, should increase support to cottage tea processing units.

Mr Speaker, as I conclude, by the instructions of this august House, the committee considered the tea petition and it emerged that Uganda does not have a policy and regulatory framework, which has negatively impacted the quality of tea produced in the country.

The committee, therefore, seeks the Government's urgency in responding to the petition in order to restore the farmers' confidence, attract investment in the sector, and promote sustainable growth of the tea sector. I beg to report. *(Applause)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Well done with the maiden report.

MR EDAKASI: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, this is an issue I have been following up on seriously. I report that I had an interaction with the Head of State over it. The people who are affected - like in my

constituency, people started uprooting the tea. Areas, which had started, like Zombo District, had challenges.

He promised that immediately after his tours, which is soon, he is going to call a meeting of all tea stakeholders; that is, representatives of farmers, factory owners and policymakers, to discuss this issue deeply.

I hope this report will also enrich his discussions and preparations before he meets the tea farmers.

Let us have a short debate over it - it is an issue, which the Executive is taking seriously - then I will conclude on it.

Yes, point of Procedure?

MR OGUZU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I agree with you that this is a matter we need to find solutions to. The tea farmers have cried over and again.

In the report, a number of very useful ministries have been highlighted. For example, the ministry for trade; we would like to understand what role they are playing in relation to accessing the African continental market, which is available.

We have the Ministry for Agriculture that should show us what research they are doing, and all those ministers are not represented here. I do not know whether if we move without these ministers, we shall get the useful input to help us debate and find a lasting solution to this matter. I am seeking your indulgence.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, honourable. Well, their input is extremely critical, but the Executive will finally deal with this. So, whether they are here or not, they will not run away from it. It will find them wherever they will be. Let us conclude our part. And you know that they also appeared before the committee, and gave their input, isn't that so, Hon. Edakasi? We shall ensure indeed it is implemented - *(Hon. Ssewungu rose)* The government is present here, Hon. Ssewungu.

5.57

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Mr Speaker, I was signalling those two to see who is going to report to the other minister -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: No, we have a senior minister here, who is standing in -

MR SSEWUNGU: He is the one I am going to interface with on this matter – (*Interjections*) - yes, then that is clear on our record.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You can see that Hon. Ssewungu has enjoyed being the Acting Leader of the Opposition. He even wants to know, clearly, whom he will ‘shoot.’

I will start with Hon. Martin Muzaale, then go to Dr Abed Bwanika, Dr Batuwa, and then I will come to this side. Let us be brief.

5.57

MR MARTIN MUZAALE (NRM, Buzaaya County, Kamuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is good that Hon. Muruli Mukasa is here as the official representative of the Government.

Hon. Muruli Mukasa, when the Rationalisation of Government Agencies and Public Expenditure (RAPEX) Bills were here, our complaint was that most of these products that are under the agriculture ministry have not been managed well. We were worried about putting products under their management. Now, you can see what is happening in the tea industry. Another one is coming tomorrow; the issue of sugarcane. Mr Speaker, I hope you will give me the platform tomorrow.

All these things in the agriculture ministry - there is a big problem. It is almost dying. Very soon, sugarcane will also die, and many others. Cotton has also been taken over by the ministry. In five years to come, we shall not see cotton in Uganda, and same with coffee.

Mr Speaker, as a committee, we visited Mombasa –

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Are you a member of the committee?

MR MUZAALE: No, we visited the Public Accounts Committee on Commissions, Statutory Authorities, and State Enterprises (COSASE). When we visited, we were able to look at these stores in Mombasa. What we could see - and the stories we were told - in our own stores - of course, foreigners are the ones running those stores, but paying us rent.

Our tea is only bought to be mixed with other brands from other countries. That is the only way it can be marketed. Imagine, if there were no other brands from other countries to be mixed with ours, it means our product would not get to any market. This is what we are complaining about.

As Government, you have not given enough attention to these products that we have. You do not want to invest in agriculture. You are not investing in sugarcane, but you want to create embargoes and curtails. You want to impose taxes on it. You enjoy the taxes, but you do not want to invest in it. It is painful – (*Member timed out.*)

6.00

DR ABED BWANIKA (NUP, Kimaanya-Kabonera Division, Masaka City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I just want to comment on two issues; the one of quality and its impact.

Last year, the average price at the auction for Uganda’s tea was Shs 3,713 per kilogram. Kenya’s tea was Shs 7,800 per kilogram. Rwanda’s tea was Shs 12,225 per kilogram. The difference is just quality. We cannot ensure quality without an agency of the Government that regulates the quality of tea.

We have suggested severally here, that the Executive should expedite the formation of the food and veterinary drug agency, so that we put all these beverages and foods, under the management of that agency, and ensure quality. We are losing a lot of money when you see the differences. It is the same crop. The issue is quality.

Secondly, Mr Speaker, about fertilisers, it is not only tea that needs fertilisers. We need them across the board, and that has affected the productivity and profitability, for the farmers of Uganda.

My proposal is that we come up with a fertiliser bank where every producer can go, not only for tea. You go in and request for fertilisers, and you are charged when you harvest. That is the proper way. That is how we are going to improve our production. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.03

DR TIMOTHY BATUWA (FDC, Jinja South Division West, Jinja City): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for granting me an opportunity to react to this report that addresses the petition on the plummeting prices of tea.

Mr Speaker, the report properly elucidated the problem and enabled us to diagnose exactly what the problem is; the problem was quality. I am here to address the recommendation because I found gaps in there.

When the problem is quality, especially in the context that has been addressed to us, fertilisers may not be the remedy.

I reflected on this problem with the mind we had in coffee, especially from the region I represent, where we were plucking both the ripe and unripe coffee. When I got the point that our practice in plucking tea, the two leaves, and the bud, which are recommended, we are plucking everything.

Consequently, our tea is not tea. It is a diluent. We only get that product to dilute the real tea and be able to sell. We cannot have a remedy of value chain financing because that is not where the problem is.

The problem of quality is not happening in tea for the first time. It has happened in coffee, which we solved using the Uganda Coffee Development Agency.

In tea, we do not have an equivalent. I was browsing - and the Uganda Tea Development Agency that I came to find exists as an agency brought about by farmers in Igara and Kayonza and is manifesting as a limited company.

We need to see Government effort, especially the - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

DR BATUWA: Just a minute.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Who has allowed you to come on the microphone?

DR BATUWA: I am suggesting that the -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Lagen - honourable colleagues, please do not allocate yourself time on the microphone. You do not switch on and start asking when you- that is not tolerable for me.

6.05

MR DAVID LAGEN (NRM, Agago County, Agago): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee, for the report. My deep concern is about the quality of the tea.

When we look directly at the report that has just been read, we discover that our tea is the poorest and that we are bound to lose over 100,000 workers if the tea industry collapses.

What does it mean to the economy of this country? It is loss of a job means loss of life because the people who have been earning money will not be able to support their children at school, livelihood, meaning, the lives of the local people will be jeopardised.

Not only that because when we look at the farmers involved, you notice that there are over 60,000 farmers who have been farming tea. Many of them have been contesting and want to resort to planting bananas instead of tea.

This discourages farmers who have interest in boosting production in this country. Therefore,

the Government should be concerned about this.

I also wondered why the Government has not taken the initiative to do regular assessments, to find out the level of the tea - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Kindly, conclude your point on that.

MR LAGEN: I wondered why the government has not taken the initiative to do an assessment to find out the quality of the tea produced in the country, as well as the prices, and at the same time, take time to build the capacity of the farmers who are involved in tea farming.

Government earns income and taxes from tea production. Therefore, if we leave this unattended to, it means we shall lose revenue. At the same time, the farmers will lose their jobs, which means the level of productivity will go down and that will have a negative effect on our economy.

I would like the minister at this time to take the initiative and be concerned about building the capacity of the farmers to ensure the quality of the tea meets the standards of the world. I think this will help us boost production. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you.

6.08

MR DORCAS ACEN (NRM, Woman Representative, Alebtong): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the committee, for this very good report. As part of the agriculture committee, I would like to say that whatever is happening in most parts of the country resonates with the recommendations this committee has put in this report.

For example, in Zombo District and many other areas, the tea farmers are uprooting tea trees. And it is really sad to hear that they want to move to banana growing. Let me give an example of Zombo District, the prices of bananas in Zombo were even equally very

low. We could not even have where to put the bananas, even if we had wanted to buy them. That would just lead us into a vicious cycle of poverty.

I would, therefore, like to request the minister present here, that indeed, let the Government interest itself in supporting tea branding.

When we were in Zombo District, we saw very nice branded tea. I think if a lot more is done to improve what it is right now; it will make the quality better. So, let us at least begin with what we already have. That will help us as a country to have Ugandan tea, which we can be proud of and which farmers can also benefit from. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon Acibu Agnes.

6.10

MS AGNES ACIBU (NRM, Woman Representative, Nebbi): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. I want to thank the presenter of the report. Today we are talking about tea. We are aware that tea was under the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries – now we have added another burden of coffee to the same ministry.

As we discuss this report, how I wish the ministers were here to hear our concerns about the falling prices of these crops. While we talk about this tea – and Hon. Dorcas has already talked about tea in Zombo and Nebbi districts - tea was introduced, but as we talk now, tea plants have grown into very big trees and the farmers do not know what to do with them. Of course, as a farmer, I know that the population of Uganda is increasing. Food is to be eaten, and therefore, some farmers are even opting to cut down the tea trees to plant the bananas, like in Zombo and Nebbi districts.

I, therefore, call upon the Government, especially the ministry, before we talk about improving the quality of the crops we have, we should do research to ensure that we have the market where to sell our produce.

Otherwise, the farmers are induced to certain crops when they are ready, there is not market and this kills our economy.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Yes, Hon. Baba.

6.12

MR JAMES BABA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the presenter for the excellent report. Honourable minister, the Leader of government Business now, the signals are very clear that we in Government must begin to put priorities on the kind of agricultural produce, which would pay attention to and invest money and tea is one of them.

I come from a formerly tobacco and cotton growing area but in my travels around this country, tea estates are some of the most beautiful sceneries in this country. How come we are producing poor quality tea, yet the sceneries are so beautiful?

Honourable minister, our tea is sold in the Mombasa auction, and it is all exported as Kenyan tea, not even Ugandan tea anymore. What fights are we putting into making sure it is Ugandan tea, hence the branding that people are asking for?

The report talks about fertilisers. Hon. Opendi's area, Sukulu, has vast deposits of fertilisers. We have been talking about phosphorus since kingdom come.

There is another mineral in the Mbale area called the vermiculite. That mineral has the advantage of water retention in the soil. It would help a lot of crops around this country. What are we doing about it?

Lastly, the issue of value addition. We are establishing several industrial parks but none of them are using any of our raw material - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Conclude, Hon. Baba.

MR BABA: When you go to Mbale Industrial Park, you notice that there is no single raw material input in those factories. I have been to Kapeeka; the Chinese are sewing textile material, school bags, and making shoes all with imported material. Even their Goodwill tiles; no raw material is from us.

Our country's base is agriculture. All these investors we are attracting, their first priority should be agro-processing and tea should be one of those key areas that can market this country. Thank you.

6.15

MR PAULAKAMBA (NRM, Busiki County, Namutumba): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee, for a very good report presented.

Mr Speaker, the Government needs to prioritise the issue of supporting tea growers in the post-harvest management because when quality is pertinent to having better prices over an agricultural product that brings in foreign exchange, then we need to prioritise it. If we do not prioritise an agricultural produce that brings in foreign exchange, then what are we going to prioritise?

Mr Speaker, I also testify to the fact that our tea is sold as Kenyan tea because I went to Mombasa myself and witnessed this. The issue of certificate of origin - this is a sovereign state and has all the brains that can go and negotiate to ensure that Uganda, gets a certificate of origin to sell her products directly to the international market. What are we waiting for?

On the issue of fertilisers, we need quality fertilisers. The quality of the agricultural input that we get in this country is compromised. I do not know what the Uganda National Bureau of Standards (UNBS) is doing.

Even when farmers try on their own to go and buy some of these inputs, expensively, they get so disappointed about the quality. My proposal is that the Government should intervene. If we are to guarantee quality, then let there be a

guarantee to the agricultural inputs right from the beginning to value addition. Thank you, for the time you have accorded me.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, Hon. Akamba. Yes, Hon. Auma Linda.

6.17

MS LINDA AUMA (Independent, Woman Representative, Lira): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to also join my colleagues to thank, especially the committee that presented this report. They raised pertinent issues and as a Member of the agriculture committee, i would like to associate with our recommendations and the entire report.

The tea growers are in serious pain, as you have been hearing from my colleagues. When we went to Zombo - because there was also a petition brought to this Parliament - we found Zombo people crying, that Amin used to fly a plane every day to Zombo and take their tea to Jinja. This touched me and I was asking myself, "What are we doing?" Our citizens are in pain as a country. We, the leaders, have to push this, especially the Leader of Government Business here.

Our farmers are frustrated and are uprooting their tea yet tea spoils the soil. It means that those who have uprooted their tea will also not yield anything because that soil is acidic and will not support other crops growing.

I do join in another submission and recommendation that the Government should support tea growers and that they should sensitise the tea growers and give them the knowledge on how to attain quality and quantity tea production.

These regulations on tea, as a committee, we have been asking that your office takes a step on this because we cannot move on without a regulation; it is very pertinent. Thank you, so much.

6.17

MR ANDREW OJOK (NRM, Omoro County, Omoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I will submit on only two areas only. We have talked so much about the issue of quality. I feel that the committee missed a golden opportunity because if you look at UNBS, it is directly under the committee yet when you look at the assessors or the quality specialists at the different border points, there are only 10 in the country. That was a shocking revelation for us when we visited UNBS.

I wish the committee could put more in terms of budgeting to UNBS because there are only 10 specialists who handle agro-inputs.

Secondly, I join my colleagues in thanking the committee on that issue of policy. We have, for example, in Omoro, one extension worker to 5,500 farmers. If you are looking at quality, even just the training on what to do, what time to do it is very paramount but if you have only one extension farmer who is not equipped, who is not trained to do anything, then there is nothing much you can gain from that. I want to remind the committee to add that.

More importantly, is that we deliberate almost every day. I want to request that you invoke Rule 222 on action-taken reports. Every single day we deliberate but we want the government to at least share an action-taken report, so that we are able to know what the Government has done because some of these issues keep reoccurring. We keep reminding the Government but we need to invoke that rule, Mr Speaker. I thank you.

6.21

MR MOSES OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I congratulate you, as everybody has done. We have talked about a lot of supply-related issues, which I will emphasise that we need quality and all those issues which will reduce the cost of production.

However, I want to interest the committee in appreciating the external market, particularly

when you look at Kenya. You have seen that the biggest market that is taking 42 per cent is Pakistan.

Kenya negotiated a special agreement with Pakistan and they accepted their rice to come at a lower tariff but agreed to take a lot of Kenya's tea. You have seen the market. So, think about how to negotiate good markets and on the supply side, let us work on the variety, which is being searched. You mentioned a certain variety, which is from India or something like that, let us work on that and use that whole process, and finally, attract those investors who can support them. When we did the Dubai show, I heard that there were some investors who had come for tea to support the whole process. Let us work on that and ensure that it moves. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, I had kept quiet on this; but you talked about quality. If our tea is just used for mixing, how will we even negotiate, with a country to take our tea just mixing?

We, who make this kasese *waraji*, you know, the money for buying my first trouser came from that kind of *waragi*. There is one we call "juure", it is for mixing before you get the real *waragi*, which knocks you out. Those who produce that one from - and now upgraded, in Mitooma; we no longer produce the one you drink. We produce the one we call 'science.' This one is watery and not our level. You can see the quality. Oh, there is the Alcohol Bill here – Hon. Sarah Opendi.

Anyhow, to emphasise the issue of quality, I have a friend who owns MacDowell Tea. They are the sole suppliers of tea to the royal family in Britain. He sells tea to the royal family and Heralds, from a small garden, but the money he makes - it is all about quality and history. The moment you produce quality; you are on the way to making history.

There is even what they call white tea. People who know tea very well - because tea is mainly in the countries that were formerly British colonies - you find a small bag of tea costing US \$1,000.

Someone gave me a gift of tea, which I will not declare to the Inspector-General of Government, which was 80 years old, fermented in bamboo.

However, when you look at the history and you see the cost of it - tea of \$1,000 - what we are making is really annoying when country in the neighbourhood earns three times our price.

This is not only about negotiating. You will only negotiate if you have good quality. If you do not have it - so, we should never underrate the issue of quality in any way possible.

I was going to pick Hon. Kyooma. Then I pick Zombo. Colleagues who have already submitted on other matters, I am sorry. I am not giving you a chance on this.

6.25

MR XAVIER KYOOMA (NRM, Ibanda County North, Ibanda): Thank you, Mr Speaker and I thank the committee for the report. You have rightly said it and I think even Dr Batuwa said the same thing.

When you study the whole report, the issue rotates around quality - by the way, on the auction, there is nothing like negotiating with the buyer. All the tea is put in lots and the buyers will buy according to the quality per lot.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: All the tea.

MR KYOOMA: Sorry, of tea - because I visited the one of coffee in Nairobi. I guess in the background, the committee has made it clear that Government has put in efforts, has given subsidised fertilisers, given money to those processing factories and everything; but still, the quality has remained poor. Now that our tea is called, Praana? On the auction centre, Praana, we are the poorest in terms of -

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We can call it mixer, for mixing other -

MR KYOOMA: Mr Speaker, when the price of tea falls from \$2 per kilogramme to \$1 and then less than a dollar, from 600 then 200, because

of quality, all the attempts and measures should be focusing on ensuring quality.

I thank you, Chairperson, in your conclusion - *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: You have agreed with him. Yes, Member from Zombo.

6.27

MR LAWRENCE BIYIKA (NRM, Ora County, Zombo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. First of all, I would like to associate myself with the committee report and the submission of the Chairperson of the agriculture committee, who physically came to Zombo.

Zombo District had been growing tea, wheat, and barley, in the 70s. People already had that experience of growing tea and it was booming at that time, until 2014, when His Excellency, the President was asked, by the king that we need to revive the tea plantation.

This was appropriate for but what happened, is that up to now, the people of Zombo do not know how much money was used to revive the tea sector.

We are still waiting for the report from the relevant Government authorities, but what is important is the quality. The major reason why the market is going down, is quality. At that time, many farmers were discouraged because they planted tea but there was no factory.

The Ministry of Trade, decided to give a small machine for processing on small scale to Zombo Tea Farmers' Cooperative. The machine has never been installed up to now yet we need to address the issue of quality because we have people who are engaged in agriculture, in trade and so on. The Uganda Export Promotion Board, Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries and technical people, why don't we address the issue of quality? When you look at tea growers in Africa, for example, Kenya, Uganda, Malawi, then Tanzania and Rwanda and so on - we need to address that issue of quality and infrastructure around the tea sector.

Let us look at the whole value chain. Otherwise, the people of Zombo are waiting for accountability on how much money was used in the name of Zombo Tea Revival. Thank you very much.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Let us hear from Hon. Timuzigu, then Hon. Byarugaba.

6.30

MR MICHAEL TIMUZIGU (NRM, Kajara County, Ntungamo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We are happy to hear that the President is interested in this matter. We are also happy to hear what you communicated that this report is just going to support the discussions concerning the tea sector.

However, for institutional memory, I would like to remind this House that we made a report when I was a member of the Committee on Trade, Industry and Tourism in the 10th Parliament. We went to Kenya, Rwanda, and other neighbouring countries, which produce tea and we discovered, that the trick was one: harvesting two leaves and a bud.

We discovered that here in Uganda, we harvest all the leaves including some soft branches, meaning that the problem we have is just failure to harvest the two leaves and the bud. If we do that, then we shall be good to go.

We also suggested the creation of an agency to regulate tea. Given these circumstances, we need to look at the way of ensuring that the ministry of agriculture regulates the tea sector and other agricultural products.

Otherwise, we need an agency that can regulate the tea sector so that Uganda can really shine. Actually, after auctioning our own tea in Uganda - we had suggested that we auction tea in Uganda instead of taking it to Kenya. We could have - actually the then minister for trade, Hon. Amelia Kyambade, had promised that we would have our way of auctioning tea.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Byarugaba.

6.32

MR ALEX BYARUGABA (NRM, Isingiro County South, Isingiro): Mr Speaker, I have been itching for an opportunity to join my colleagues in congratulating you, for having scooped that very valuable position. I congratulate you over and over, again. Thank you.

Number two, I have had an opportunity to talk to Hon. Biraro about tea. I am not a tea farmer, but I also know that you come from a tea-growing district.

All these things we are talking about - somehow you know why our tea quality continues to be going down every other time.

Growing up, we were told exactly what the previous speaker just mentioned. We used to interact with people working in those tea growing areas; they were pluckers and labourers; we grew up amongst those people. They were Bakiga who provided labour to those plantations and they used to tell us exactly what the honourable member has just talked about. You pick two leaves and a bud, which is not the case today.

Hon. Biraaro told me that the only trick is to set up regulation. In Kenya and Rwanda, they have a regulator. All these countries you are talking about and giving all sorts of platitudes have regulations; we do not have any. We are at zero, as far as regulation is concerned.

Secondly, there is too much competition. Mr Speaker, you know very well that we have liberalised a little bit too much. Very many people have come up with tea factories. The moment you reject a product from farm A, a competitor from – *(Member timed out.)*

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Elder, conclude.

MR BYARUGABA: A competitor from factory C will be more than willing to take anything, hence spoiling even the little that we have already achieved. The moment we do not have a regulator; we are talking like we are at a roundabout.

Let us insist that the Government puts up a regulator to oversee the tea industry. We can go back to our history of being the best; we should be the best because our soils are the best. Rwanda and Uganda soils are more or less the same - volcanic soils. Why is our tea not good? It is because of that; no regulation. Thank you.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: I can see Tooro because tea is very critical there.

6.34

MR PAUL ASABA (NRM, Kyaka North County, Kyegegwa): Thank you, Mr Speaker. When you are going to Fort Portal, the only beautiful scenery are the tea plantations. When you look at our region, you notice that all the development we have has been because of the tea that we have. It is disappointing to see that now our farmers in the Rwenzori Region are planning to uproot these plantations to replace them with other crops that may not give them some good money.

A question comes to my mind, Mr Speaker: what do the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries staff do when they sit in their meetings? What do they plan? It is high time the Parliament comes out seriously because we do not have many cash crops in Uganda; they are very few.

At times, we ask ourselves: when we come here to deliberate and give instructions, what do they plan when they sit in their technical planning meetings and what resolutions do they make? This is a failure to carry out sensitisation on this one small issue of tea or coffee, so that our farmers can produce better quality.

As Parliament, we need to task the ministry of agriculture to lay strategies so that we can have our tea sector revived. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

6.36

MS AGNES AMEEDE (Independent, Woman Representative, Butebo): Thank you, Mr Speaker and the committee, for the report. I would like to dwell on the aspect of standards, especially now that the Minister of Public Service and the Minister for Local Government are present.

The issue of standards cuts across ministries or MDAs. For the sake of the agriculture ministry, we have a few extension workers but they are absent. If I can use the historical language of those days, “The sick man of Europe”, maybe one can refer to the ministry of agriculture as “the sick MDA in the country”.

I have not seen the ministry of agriculture in my village from childhood up to now. They are not going to the farmers; the farmers are on their own. We have fake acaricides and fake seeds; there is no one regulating.

It is not true that we need to form another MDA to regulate this, but we need to strengthen the existing institutions. If only the minister had been watching CNN, he would invite Elon Musk to ask people to write emails on what they have done in the last three days, or what the people at the Uganda Export Promotions Board have been doing.

Sometimes, you look at delegations_ for example, there was a delegation to the Democratic Republic of Congo to negotiate trade, but looking at the people who formed part of that delegation, you could hardly see serious technical people who would – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable member, you do not switch on the microphone for yourself. Wait until you get permission to switch it on. Yes, Hon. Juliet Kakande?

6.38

MS JULIET NAKABUYE (NUP, Woman Representative, Masaka City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I am somehow frustrated. The report has revealed that the consumption of tea in Uganda is very low yet when you talk to those in the field of coffee, they say the same. Therefore, there is a need to find out the type of beverage Ugandans consume.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: We are among the best on alcohol, and I think we have been winning. *(Laughter)*

MS NAKABUYE: Mr Speaker, when we look at the last prayer from the petitioners calling for the Government’s intervention in the tea industry, you notice that prayer relates to the problems found by the committee, as far as the causes of poor quality tea production is concerned.

Findings like the lack of a regulatory framework, bilateral barriers between Uganda and Kenya, and ignorance of the farmers all need Government’s effort- the Government needs to invest in research and find out how the quality of tea should be boosted.

For example, find out about the varieties that can compete well on the market. There could be some pests that also affect the quality of tea from Uganda – *(Member timed out.)*

6.41

MR MUDIMI WAMAKUYU (NRM, Elgon County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for the opportunity. I also join others to congratulate you.

Many Members have talked about the issue of tea and fertilisers. If you recall, in the last Parliament, there was a loan, which the Government borrowed under the agriculture cluster, where farmers were to contribute half of it. I would like to know from the Government where that facility is because I last heard about it when we were passing it here.

Mr Speaker, at that time, you were also a member of the Committee on National Economy. *(Laughter)*

Secondly, the Government also went ahead to say, “No, we are giving an investor the Sukuru area to produce fertilisers.” We went as far as even educating farmers in our villages that fertilisers were going to be sold at half the price. The current price is Shs 150,000 per 50 kilogrammes. What happened to the investor who took over that facility?

Back to our quality of tea; I was in Mombasa. Most of those warehouses where tea for the

Uganda Government is stored- there was a sample, which was carried, they brought three different types with papers marked and they asked me, "According to you, which tea do you think is not good?" I pointed at one and when they turned the paper around, it was tea from Uganda. I got embarrassed and it was from Kayonza, Buhweju, Igara. So, I said, "no, maybe you did this because -," they said, "No, we can sample...".

They picked those 25kgs bags, opened them, and it was same thing. We are simply not serious. Lack of regulations - field extension services are lacking. Farmers are struggling on their own, and the best the Kenyan advised is that for Uganda to compete, they have to uproot all those tea trees and plant them afresh but you have to use much more fertilisers, which we do not have.

I think the issue of tea, we have to discuss it and the Government has to take a firm decision to support farmers. Otherwise, ours is just for mixing. It is like garbage.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Hon. Mudimi, that loan was a scandal. The Auditor-General made a very strong report about it. When Hon. Oguzu Lee raised it here, the committee did work on it. I am going to follow it up because that loan from the Ministry of Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries was a total disaster; you do not need to go far. I think it became a cash bonanza, and I hope some heads of those who were cheating farmers should roll. Many people were cheated, and the Auditor-General made a clear report on where the Government can base itself to bring people to account. Yes, Hon. Iddi.

6.46

MR IDDI ISABIRYE (NRM, Bunya County South, Mayuge): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Congratulations do not cause an overdose. Allow me to join my colleagues and the country to congratulate you upon that mileage and global excellence.

I want to thank the chairperson of the committee, for the report well presented. I have only one

statement to make. One of the cardinal roles of Parliament is to appropriate resources. We only want to commit the Government to put more money into agriculture but we cannot think of milking a cow that we do not feed. How much money are we putting into agriculture?

Research is very expensive; we are talking about capacity building, extension workers and value addition. All those things compounded require money. Can we invest in agriculture in order to we get what we want?

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Honourable colleagues, this has been straightforward. The recommendations are clear. I put the question that report of the Committee on Tourism - no, honourable, on these I do not provide for Leader of the Opposition (LOP), because LOP is represented on the committee. These are not reports from the minister and all that.

Honourable colleagues, I put the question that the report of the Committee on Tourism, Trade and Industry on the petition by Uganda, Tea farmers be adopted.

(Question put and agreed to.)

Report, adopted.

THE DEPUTY SPEAKER: Thank you, committee, our honourable minister, these were straightforward issues that you presented. We are going to extract this report so that we can pass it on to you for action in line with the committee recommendations. They requested six months, so we will need an action-taken report within six months.

Honourable colleagues, House is adjourned to tomorrow at 2.00 p.m., but remember the announcement I made; we are having the Archbishop of the Church of Uganda at the Anglican Chaplaincy at 12.30 p.m., and then at 5.00 p.m., we shall have Bishop Kakooza with the Catholic Chaplaincy celebrating mass to mark Ash Wednesday. Thank you.

(The House rose at 6.47 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 5 March 2025 at 2.00 p.m.)