

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

PARLIAMENTARY DEBATES

(HANSARD)

OFFICIAL REPORT

FIRST SESSION - SECOND MEETING

TUESDAY, 3 NOVEMBER 2026

PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

IN THE PARLIAMENT OF UGANDA

Official Report of the Proceedings of Parliament

FIRST SESSION - 15TH SITTING - SECOND MEETING

Tuesday, 3 November 2026

Parliament met at 2.24 p.m. in Parliament House, Kampala.

PRAYERS

(The Speaker, Jacob Oboth, in the Chair.)

The House was called to order.

COMMUNICATION FROM THE CHAIR

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I welcome you to today's Sitting. It is with great sorrow that I inform you of the passing of our former colleague, Hon. Olivia Kwagala Kabaale, who served in the Ninth Parliament as the Woman Member of Parliament for Iganga District. She passed on, on 2 November 2026, and will be laid to rest in Nakivumbi Village, Bugweri District on Saturday, 7 November 2026.

The Parliament of Uganda will support with a contribution towards the burial expenses of about Shs 10 million. Our hearts and prayers go out to the family and the people of Iganga and Bugweri districts. Let us rise for a moment of silence in her honour.

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

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I wish to inform this august House that Parliament has hit the ground running in advancing parliamentary diplomacy.

From the 25th to 27th of October, I led a delegation comprising the Leader of the Opposition – Hon. Joel Ssenyonyi, Hon. Annet Katusiime Mugisha, Hon. Sowed Ismail from Busia Municipality, and Hon. Betty Nakisita Mpongo to New Delhi, India, for the 12th BRICS Parliamentary Forum held under the theme, "Fostering Parliaments for People-Centric Development".

During the forum, I interacted with India's Prime Minister, His Excellency Shri Narendra Modi, and held discussions with the Speaker of Lok Sabha, Shri Om Birla, emphasising expanded market access for Ugandan products and increased Indian investment in local value addition and manufacturing.

I also held bilateral engagements with the Speaker of the Federal National Council of the United Arab Emirates, where I raised travel restrictions affecting Ugandans and discussed export opportunities and investment.

I also met with the Vice Chairperson of China's National People's Congress Standing Committee. We explored parliamentary cooperation, trade, and investment. The Chinese delegation accepted an invitation to visit Uganda and extended a reciprocal invitation to us. I further engaged representatives of the Russian State Duma on strengthening parliamentary relations and building on our long-standing historical ties.

Honourable members, these engagements reaffirm Parliament's strategic role in

advancing Uganda's international relations. Our participation in international forums goes beyond attendance; it translates into stronger partnership, economic opportunities, and tangible benefits for our people. This also allows us, as a country, to set the record straight on various matters and national interests in real time without always having to wait to clarify.

I want to thank the Members that went with me and I also thank those in advance who will be engaging. We should take those engagements very seriously. I thank you.

Next item – *(Hon. Silwany rose_)* – Hon. Silwany, welcome back.

2.32

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to welcome you back from the parliamentary diplomacy that you are doing all over; you are doing good work and representing us very well.

Mr Speaker, I want to react to your communication, particularly on the loss of our former colleague, Hon. Olivia Kabaale, and this is not the first time that I am raising this matter, and the matter concerns who qualifies for official burial in Uganda. The last time I was here, I asked the Government and there was no clear answer. I asked the Government as to who qualifies? What are the criteria they use? It is the same question that I want to pose to the Government today: Do former Members of Parliament qualify? Do judges, former judges qualify? Who qualifies because you find this one has been given official burial while the other one has not been given.

I am not particularly talking because of Hon. Olivia Kabaale but I want the Government to come up with a clear policy position of who qualifies for official burial and who does not and what criteria they use. That is the question I wanted to raise to the Government in my reaction.

THE SPEAKER: Prime Minister? Government?

2.33

THE THIRD DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER WITHOUT PORTFOLIO (Ms Rukia Nakadama): I wanted to call the Public Service Minister to come and answer that question.

THE SPEAKER: It seems like it is a hard paper. Public Service?

2.33

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE (Ms Lydia Wanyoto): Thank you, Mr Speaker and honourable colleagues. I would like to appreciate the question from Hon. Silwany. Honourable colleagues, there is a recognition of official burials for senior citizens. In the past and currently, it is under the prerogative of His Excellency the President, the Chief Executive of the country. Many times, when we lose such senior people, the notice is sent to him and he is able to offer that under the presidency.

Under the Ministry of Public Service, we are preparing and reviewing the law on senior citizens and those that are supposed to be recognised, both in terms of retirement, but also recognition when they pass on. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Yes, Hon. Ssewungu?

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Mine is on a procedural matter which I raised some time back and I want to find out why the Ministry of Works and Transport has not responded. Mr Speaker –

THE SPEAKER: Was it part of my communication?

MR SSEWUNGU: No, that is why I was saying if I can come –

THE SPEAKER: A procedural matter is handled there and then. If it was not handled then, that should not be a procedural matter. It could be a new matter that you can wait to submit as a matter of national importance – On communication; three people only.

2.34

MR MARSHALL ALENYO (Independent, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I join the legion of Members of Parliament who have welcomed you back from India.

Mr Speaker, one of the statements which was attributed to you was on the Ugandans of Indian nationality. That is one of the legacies you will leave in this House. Article 10(a) provides for citizenship by birth, and the Ugandan Indians have been trying to become one of the indigenous communities.

Indeed, there are also around eight indigenous communities in this country, like the Kubet (Kebu), Maragoli, Kuku and Ik, which want us to list them as indigenous communities under Article 10(a). I was very grateful that you made a remark on that and I encourage us to follow the directive of His Excellency the President in 2021 about fast-tracking how to make the Indian-Ugandans part of our citizens. Otherwise, welcome back, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. By the way, some other people were not very happy that I said that, but I know the Chief Executive of this country provides strategic guidance and direction, and that is where we need to go.

When I was in this Parliament, the Rt Hon. Rebecca Kadaga was a champion of having the Maragoli. I was the chairperson of that committee. We even went to Kiryandongo and met the Maragoli community, who have been there for donkey's years but are still taken as foreigners. They came in about 1900 from Kenya when they were working on the railways and settled here.

So, it is a matter which, when the constitutional amendment comes, we shall have a say in, and all Ugandans should participate to have their say. Member from Wakiso and Hon. Nambeshe, and then we – *(Hon. Angura rose_)* – Hon. Angura, what do you want to say? *(Laughter)*

2.36

MS BETTY NALUYIMA (NUP, Woman Representative, Wakiso): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I join our colleagues in welcoming you back from the different engagements you have also been handling.

Mr Speaker, I am not refuting what the Government has just said: that it is handling the general policy for everyone in the country. However, it gets back to us; since any of us is a candidate to be former MPs, it is now the prerogative of the Speaker in the Chair to decide what will happen to us when we are former Members.

I would request – and you had also hinted on it as your office – that the Commission, which has control over the MPs, brings for us a policy and we get to know about the policy concerning former MPs, as we wait for the Government policy regarding that of general officials of this country. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: I think that is well noted. Hon. Nambeshe?

2.37

MR JOHN BAPTIST NAMBESHE (NUP, Manjiya County, Bududa): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Let me join colleagues to welcome you back from those diplomatic engagements. I salute your meeting particularly with the Prime Minister of India, Narendra Modi. I would call it an exchange visit because at one time, he was here in this House and had the occasion to address us.

Most importantly, Mr Speaker, it is a reminder: When he was here, he made a pledge for construction of the Mahatma Gandhi Heritage Centre in Jinja. I am reliably informed that his pledge was honoured, despite some delays and setbacks that came. That was way back in 2018.

Now that you met him, I am sure he could have asked about the progress of that project. This House would also be interested to know the status of that very important project because it is worth $15 million. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: First of all, it was not an exchange visit. A Speaker does not have an exchange visit with the Prime Minister. That can only be with the Head of State. However, I am aware of what you are talking about. I do not know whether the Government side –

As much as I can remember, I think there was haggling. There are people who wanted it in Entebbe and others in Jinja. Rt Hon. Kadaga, what is the status? We could have lost it out.

2.39

THE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Ms Rebecca Kadaga): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Indeed, Mr Modi was a guest of this House; he addressed us. He made many pronouncements about the African continent, but in particular, he pledged a convention centre in Entebbe and a heritage centre in Jinja.

However, there were issues about land and, somehow, things did not happen. But I want to assure the House that with respect to the one of Jinja, I am following it up to make sure that the heritage centre is fully constructed. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: In the interest of the House, we shall request you to follow for both Entebbe –*(Laughter)* – and Jinja.

MS KADAGA: Yes, I will also follow up on the one of Entebbe.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. We are going to have a very robust India-Uganda Parliamentary Friendship Group. In India, they have actually 64 parliamentary groups. Every Member of Parliament is designated to one of the parliamentary groups. They do a lot of transactions through those groups. Every Member of Parliament's business card indicates membership of this friendship group.

It is a new trend and very soon, we shall launch our Ugandan chapter. Hon. Shyam Tanna there is coordinating. I did not take him to India because I did not want people to think he is – he was busy, anyway, but he knows. You remember, I stated well in India and was giving his example and others in an interview for the Indian press. But that is very good.

Yes, Hon. Lugwar, you are the last. Communication should not take much of our time. After you is Hon. Angura.

2.42

MR BENSON LUGWAR (Independent, Agago North County, Agago): Thank you so much, Mr Speaker. I would like to join my colleagues in thanking you for playing international diplomacy and also reporting some of the important engagements you had with other development partners out of the country.

Lastly, I would also like to join my colleagues in mourning the loss of the fallen former Member of Parliament. Mr Speaker, I also want to bring to your attention that we lost one of the prominent former Members of Parliament who was in the Fifth Parliament. That is Hon. Peter Okwera, who was a Member of Parliament for Agago County, which has since been split into three constituencies.

Mr Speaker, I would like to request that we employ practical and implementable action that can be extended to our fallen Members of Parliament. As someone stated, we are all victims of being former Members of Parliament. I do not think someone will stay here for 200 or 300 years like the tortoise. I would like you to guide and help to see how we can come up with a practical solution. Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: What the Member is saying is right and I think as we paid tribute, it could have been an oversight on my side from the people who prepared my communication. We also lost a former Member of Parliament, Hon. Okwera. Actually, he is the father-in-law to Hon. Edward Otto Makmot. I think they will have mass in Mbuya tomorrow.

This happened when I was away, but we have also extended the same support of Shs 10 million to the family. *(Applause)* In that regard,

I want to ask you, again, to rise up and have a moment of silence in his honour.

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

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Hon. Angura?

2.44

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I also join colleagues to welcome you from your external engagements and the continued parliamentary diplomacy that will bear fruit as we go on.

Mr Speaker, while you were away, we also celebrated His Highness Papa Emorimor's fourth coronation anniversary in Kenya. I extended your apology. At that celebration, we received many visitors from across the continent and beyond. We also had engagements in the same direction and many of them pledged to come back here. We had 80 royals from the Southern African Development Community (SADC) region, from North America, North Africa and beyond. We also received our partners from the Indian community.

In our engagements with Members of Parliament and government leaders from Kenya, the desire is to see how we can continue to support our two nations move forward.

A concern also came as far as the traffic jam which, economically, we would refer to as waiting in motion. For us, from this side, crossing to Kenya took up to about three hours because of the many trucks there. On the other side, our visitors passed through Uganda but the Kenyans also raised the same concern.

President Museveni and President Ruto committed to start dualling the road from Malaba going back in order to ease the congestion and movement of traffic. The World Bank has rated about $960 million lost as a result of being in the traffic jam.

I hope we can address those bottlenecks that should help us move on. His Highness passes his regards for all that was done and the support that was extended. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Julius Acon?

2.46

MR JULIUS ACON (NRM, Otuke East County, Otuke): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to add something little on your communication.

On many occasions, Uganda lost prominent Ugandans and at times we recognise people here on the Floor of Parliament. For example, the Government promised to complete the construction of the late Rt Hon. Jacob Oulanyah's home, promised to award Hon. Abiriga, and promised to construct a library to remember former Justice Opio Aweri from Lira, in Lango.

Not only that; in 2021, I was inducted into World Olympian for life, and the same Parliament passed a resolution that they would support the health centre, which I constructed during my active time in sport. Lucky enough, I am still alive. We should not wait until Acon is gone and they will say that they will do something. When are they going to do such a thing? The House is still here. Thank you. (*Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Prime Minister, when? They have made pledges. Actually, it was a bit disturbing to see the unfinished house of the late Speaker of this Parliament; the Government should say something. It means you can sit in this Chair, but you are only relevant when you are alive. The late Oulanyah started a house and died before completing it. We instead completed the term of his office but forgot about completing the house. I do not know what you will have to say when you meet them. *(Laughter)*

2.49

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR PUBLIC SERVICE (Ms Lydia Wanyoto): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also thank Hon. Julius Acon for his question. Like I said earlier, the Ministry of Public Service and indeed your office are going to present before Cabinet and

Parliament a comprehensive plan on how to conclude these commitments and ensure that the departed senior citizens but also the retired senior citizens are accorded the dignity and commitment that Government has put forward.

Once again, I would like to join my colleagues in paying tribute to our colleague who has passed on, Hon. Olivia Kabaale Kwagala and Hon. Peter Okwera. Thank you.

(Interjection) The timeframe is very soon. Just give us an opportunity; we will come back and give a paper but also bring to Parliament –

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, for the record, Parliament has no role. Parliament is the one that lost a person. Government committed. What role again? Do you want us to show you the grave that the person actually died? *(Laughter)*

MS LYDIA WANYOTO: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. I have a conflict of interest - let me say it - on the issue of the late Jacob Oulanyah. He was my brother-in-law and the Ministry of Public Service is going to handle.

MR SILWANY: Mr Speaker, I respect the Minister so much, Hon. Lydia Wanyoto, but I want to rise on a very important procedural matter.

Time can run and this is the fourth time since the late Hon. Jacob Oulanyah died that Government is coming to the Floor of Parliament to promise that they are going to complete the house very soon.

Is it procedurally right for the honourable minister – I do not want to say she is lying because she does not lie – to come and give us a similar statement? *(Interjections)* No, I am not saying she is lying because the honourable minister cannot lie. Is she procedurally right to come and give us a statement that is not very right, just like the statement the other Minister of Public Service gave the other time?

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Public Service, I expected that as a Government. What is the commitment? Taking a paper to Cabinet is not a commitment. The commitment we want is to see that the house, which was not plastered, is done. By the way, if you have also failed, come and tell us and then we can start fundraising.

MS LYDIA WANYOTO: Much obliged, Mr Speaker. On behalf of the Ministry of Public Service, within two weeks, we shall bring a comprehensive commitment on the progress. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu, and then Ndorwa East.

2.53

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu West County, Kalungu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Not to be against the minister's statement but I pray that some of these issues be handled expeditiously. You are now going to involve Parliament to bring the chairperson, Committee on Government Assurances, to visit Omoro County for the purpose of the Speaker. Such matters make us look ugly before the public.

So, when it is a promise, let it be fulfilled. If you heard from the Member who speaks very good English, Hon. Acon, the sportsman, he gave a number of instances that have been promised but have not been fulfilled. Of course, the Minister of Public Service is shying away from telling us the truth that they have no budget for that kind of arrangement.

However, with your powers, Mr Speaker, internally, we have the three Prime Ministers and ministers here who sit in Cabinet. Go and handle this matter expeditiously so that the public can see that Government fulfilled its role against the former servant of this Parliament, who was the late Rt Hon. Jacob Oulanyah. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I think it is a very – Minister, do you want to conclude?

MS LYDIA WANYOTO: Mr Speaker, my English may not be good, but I would like to commit; we take note and that will be done.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Member for Ndorwa East, you are the last to submit in regard to my communication, which I made within five minutes.

2.54

MR ELIAB NATURINDA (NRM, Ndorwa County West, Kabale): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The Parliament of the Republic of Uganda is a House of record. Several times, we normally come here and the only response they always give is, "Point noted; we are going to take action."

Recently, when I was in your office, you said you are now in charge and you take action. We have seen that you normally take action -

THE SPEAKER: I cannot only say that when I am in office, but even here, I am in charge. *(Laughter)*

MR NATURINDA: Thank you very much. As a lawyer, of course, I trust you. This House seeks your indulgence: You should call for a meeting with the Prime Minister's office, sit down probably in your office, and manage this matter so that the issue of the late Hon. Jacob Oulanyah is put to rest. Outside Parliament, people expect us to have public trust and confidence, but when they see the Government responding to a matter that has taken years without being fulfilled, they question the credibility of the Government's promises.

Therefore, I propose that you chair a meeting one of these days so that the matter of the late Jacob Oulanyah is put to rest once and for all. I thank you. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: The others, which are, I think - because it involves many others, including a pledge to Hon. Julius Acon and other leaders - I believe there are so many other leaders. The Government should come back with a report on the commitments made to other former leaders, including those who have passed on, so that we can point out.

Honourable members, in the Public Gallery this afternoon we have a group of students from Makerere University, School of Law. They are represented by Hon. Madina Nsereko Ntale and Hon. Shamim Malende. They have come to observe the proceedings of this House. Please join me in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

I do not know how you feel, but the person seated here was in that school from 1997 to 2001. I will give you a few years to come and sit in this chair - and the persons here have all been there. *(Applause)*

In the Public Gallery this afternoon, we also have a group of students from Bugema University. They are represented by Hon. Robert Ssekitoleeko and Hon. Brenda Nabukenya. They have come to observe the proceedings of the plenary this afternoon. Please show them some love. *(Applause)* Bugema is making great strides in engineering, law, and many things. We pray for the best for you. Next item?

2.59

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION Whip (Mr Paul Mwiru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join honourable colleagues in welcoming you back to the House and also to pay tribute to the fallen colleague. I rise on a matter in relation to personal liberty. Our Constitution, under Article 23, guarantees the right to personal liberty. Article 23(2) states that if a person is arrested, restricted or detained, they shall be kept in a place authorised by law.

Article 23 further states that whoever has been arrested has a right to inform the relatives. We have raised the issue of liberties of several people, and last time, you promised that we shall have a debate; we have taken solace in that.

However, as we wait for that debate, other than the civilians who have continuously been picked up, there are also soldiers like Maj. Gen. Abel Kandiho and Brig. Charles Bakahumura whose families approached us to raise the matter of concern, so that they are detained in an authorised place. As we speak now, they are held incommunicado, and whereas they headed these institutions which used to terrorise us, we have a duty, as leaders, when liberty is being

trampled upon, to raise issues. We also have a duty as citizens to ensure that we protect the enjoyment of this right.

I seek your indulgence, Mr Speaker: Other than the Government speaking to these officers who have been held since their retirement up to date - and the families are worried - it affects investor confidence in this country. Nonetheless, we seek their response and your guidance on when the debate shall ensue because we have been telling Members to hold on since the Speaker promised a debate. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: You are now inciting people against me. Government, this is a serious matter. I believe tomorrow we shall have the Minister of Internal Affairs; first, on the arrests and issues of detention - When I mentioned the minister's docket, he walked in. I would like him to make commitments to come tomorrow and make a presentation on the question of arrests. The Government, as a whole, should indicate to me when they are ready for the debate on issues of personal liberties and rights. Prof. Kamuntu, Minister of Internal Affairs, what is happening internally?

3.02

THE MINISTER OF INTERNAL AFFAIRS (Prof. Ephraim Kamuntu): Mr Speaker, Members of Parliament have raised, on several occasions, incidents of criminality. In fact, you had directed me to prepare a statement and come and present it to the Members of Parliament in the House. I have been doing so: I have prepared a statement to make, and as you directed, I will be making that statement to this House, if the order of business tomorrow permits.

THE SPEAKER: Have you heard about the Army? The Army has a different legal regime, but they are also human. In the Army, even if you retire - In any country, matters of the military are never discussed in the plenary of any Parliament. Military matters are handled in a special way because some can cause fear and anxiety. My little guidance is that - one person said, let the Generals handle their own matters, but when it comes to matters of personal liberty and the families have come, we can definitely ask the Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs to come and say something. I request to desist - because they have a different legal regime that governs them. These people you see in uniform are different from us, though they are human beings. Next item?

MINISTERIAL STATEMENT ON THE EAST AFRICAN PAYMENTS AND SETTLEMENTS SYSTEM

3.05

THE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR THE EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Ms Rebecca Kadaga): *Mwenyekiti na wabunge, habari za mchana, bon après-midi,* good afternoon.

Mr Speaker, I begin by welcoming you back from the BRICS meeting and thank you very much for reviving the culture of parliamentary groups. We had a very vibrant culture in the past, and it is exciting that it is coming back. We had relations with China, Serbia, the United Arab Emirates, and many others. We had gone as far as establishing a forum for French-speaking Members of Parliament in this House; so, the future is bright. *(Applause)*

Today, I am here to speak about the East African payment system.

The East African Community (EAC) is progressively developing an integrated regional payment and settlement system to support trade, investment and the free movement of capital among Partner States.

The main executive mechanism is the East African Payments and Settlements System (EAPS), which connects the national real-time gross settlement systems of Uganda, Kenya, Tanzania and Rwanda. It enables commercial banks to transfer funds across borders securely and settle transactions in regional currencies, including the Uganda shilling, Kenya shilling, Tanzania shilling, and Rwanda franc.

A typical transaction moves from the customer's commercial bank through the national real-time gross settlement (RTGS) system, across the EAPS platform and into the receiving country's RTGS system. The beneficiary commercial bank then credits the recipient. Each transaction is settled individually, with payment becoming final and irrevocable once completed.

This system offers faster and more secure cross-border payments, reduces dependence on the US dollar and other foreign currencies, lowers transaction and correspondent-banking costs, increases certainty for traders and investors, supports the intra-EAC trade and regional value chains, and makes progress towards the East African Monetary Union.

It has not yet achieved full regional coverage or optimal usage. Burundi, South Sudan, the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) and Somalia are not yet fully integrated into the platform. Cross-border mobile-money and retail-payment systems also remain fragmented, while businesses continue to face high charges, foreign-exchange costs, limited awareness and inconsistent regulatory requirements.

To address these challenges, the EAC adopted the Cross-Border Payment Management System Master Plan in 2025 to provide for:

1. Expansion and modernisation of EAPS;
2. Establishment of a regional instant retail-payment switch;
3. Interoperability of commercial-bank accounts, mobile-money wallets and fintech platforms;
4. Harmonisation of payment-service-provider licensing and regulation;
5. Adoption of common payment-messaging standards;
6. Stronger cybersecurity and consumer protection;
7. Improved access for micro, small and medium enterprises (MSMEs) and informal cross-border traders; and
8. Increased use of Partner States' currencies in regional transactions.

For Uganda, effective implementation will require cooperation among the Bank of Uganda; the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development; Ministry of East African Community Affairs; commercial banks, mobile-money network operators, fintech companies; and other relevant institutions.

My request to Parliament is:

1. Support the harmonisation of Uganda's payment-system legislation with EAC frameworks;
2. Provide adequate resources for digital and financial infrastructure;
3. Strengthen oversight of cybersecurity and consumer protection;
4. Promote affordable cross-border payments for MSMEs;
5. Monitor Uganda's implementation of regional commitments; and
6. Support the eventual integration of all eight Partner States.

The objective is to establish a regional payment ecosystem in which an individual or business can transfer funds securely, instantly and affordably between any two EAC Partner States using a bank account, mobile-money wallet, etcetera. This will reduce the cost of doing business, deepen intra-EAC trade, and provide an important foundation for the proposed East African Monetary Union and eventual single currency.

The master plan supports implementation of the EAC Common Market Protocol and the establishment of the East African Monetary Union. I have already told you the reasons why we need it; so, I request the House to inform the public about the availability of this arrangement, especially these days when we are having trouble with the dollar, and it has a number of strategic pillars:

1. Governance, legal, regulatory and oversight to harmonise payment regulations, licensing, supervision and consumer protection;
2. Infrastructure, to modernise the EAP system and develop a regional instant retail-payment switch;

3. Inclusivity to expand access to affordable payment services for all MSMEs;
4. Capacity building, to strengthen technical skills, financial literacy, etcetera.

Implementation roadmap

a) Short-term (1-2 years)

Regulatory harmonisation, foundational infrastructure upgrades and capacity building.

b) Medium-term (3-5 years)

Achieve interoperability among Partner States' payment systems and operationalise a regional instant retail-payment switch.

c) Long-term (Beyond five years)

Deepen regional integration, connect with international payment networks and adopt emerging financial technologies. It is also going to build on the African Continental Free Trade Area payment systems.

Therefore, as of 20 October 2026, the following has been done;

i) May 2025, the masterplan was approved by the Monetary Affairs Committee of the EAC;
ii) In March 2026, the EAC Central Bank representatives participated in a European knowledge exchange on payment-system interoperability;
iii) In August 2026, technical working groups were inaugurated in Mombasa to guide implementation;
iv) August 2026, technical work advanced on monitoring and reporting, cooperative oversight and mutual recognition of payment service providers.

Implications for Uganda

We expect to increase intra-EAC trade, reduced payment costs, greater use of local currencies and improved access to financial services.

From the perspective of the Ministry of East African Community Affairs, priority follow-up areas include coordination with the Bank of Uganda and the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, monitoring regulatory harmonisation, integrating cross-border payments into trade facilitation programmes and ensuring that informal cross-border traders benefit from the reforms.

I recommend this to you and ask you to advocate for it, use it, and inform the public about it. Thank you so much. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. The shadow minister, can you provide the shadow?

3.12

THE SHADOW MINISTER FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Mr Hakim Kizza): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is not providing the shadow, but providing the reality.

Mr Speaker, allow me to thank our First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs. One time, as the Committee on East African Community Affairs, we visited Arusha, and one of the people who was praised by the entire community was Rt Hon. Kadaga. *(Applause)*

She attends all the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA) sittings and all important meetings; therefore, we appreciate you, Rt Hon. Kadaga.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, if you want to appreciate somebody when she/he is here, please do it and do it well. *(Applause)*

MR KIZZA: Mr Speaker, when I saw this item on the Order Paper, I wanted to prepare a response. Unfortunately, when I was looking for the statement, it was not uploaded until a few minutes to the Plenary.

Therefore, in my response, there are some issues where I agree with the Hon. Kadaga, and where I differ.

Mr Speaker, I rise to formally respond to the minister's statement on implementing the East

African Payments and Settlements System (EAPS).

While the executive branch comes to this House with carefully crafted optimism about regional integration, an end to dollar dependency and streamlined financial flows, we must separate political rhetoric from economic reality, because the reality on the ground for Ugandan traders and businesses tells a vastly different story.

The statement presented to us glosses over deep-seated structural failures that continue to penalise the very traders this system was designed to protect.

Mr Speaker, the implementation of the EAPS has been spoiled by systematic gaps, lack of political will, and technical inertia. To truly unlock intra-East African Community trade, we must confront these bottlenecks directly.

The first one being the Ministry of East African Community Affairs has failed to popularise this system. Go down to the markets in Kampala or to the borders in Busia, Malaba, and others. Ask the women selling food or youth trading clothes if they have ever heard of this system. They will tell you "No." Most small-scale cross-border traders and several commercial banks remain completely unaware of this system, leaving them dependent on expensive alternatives such as SWIFT (Society for World Interbank Financial Telecommunication).

MS KABASHARIRA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am sorry to interrupt. Mr Speaker, you know we are about 500-plus Members of Parliament, and this is an important person as far as the shadow minister is concerned. Is it procedurally right for him to continue, yet we do not know the name of this minister and constituency? Even on the screen – Can we know his name, Mr Speaker? *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, since you are new, do you want to state your name for the record?

MR KIZZA: Mr Speaker, I want to apologise on behalf of the honourable colleague because I have attended Parliament and have had several opportunities to speak, each time at which I have introduced myself. My name is Kizza Hakim Saula, Member of Parliament, Bukoto South constituency, and Shadow Minister for East African Community Affairs.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you.

MR KIZZA: Mr Speaker, allow me to proceed.

Number two; persistent technical disconnects. Despite years of promises, the integration between national payment switches remains incomplete. Uganda's domestic infrastructure cannot seamlessly connect to our neighbours' systems in real time, leading to transaction delays and defeat the purpose of the real-time gross settlement network (RTGS).

Continued dollar dominance

Despite the rhetoric of local currency settlements, traders are still forced to convert to the US dollar for cross-border transactions due to liquidity shortages in the regional currencies at the commercial bank level.

A local trader wishing to buy goods from Kenya has to convert their shillings into US dollars first and then into Kenyan shillings. Commercial banks make billions in profits from the double conversion fees, taking a massive bite of three per cent out of every hard-earned paycheque. At the same time, the Government does absolutely nothing to stop them.

Stalled legal and regulatory harmonisation

We are currently operating under a patchwork of conflicting national regulations. The Government has dragged its feet on harmonising foreign exchange controls and data privacy laws, creating a legal grey area that deters commercial banks from fully adopting the platform.

Mr Speaker, I recommend the following measures if we are to implement this system fully:

1. Mandate commercial bank compliance

The Bank of Uganda must issue strict directives requiring all licensed commercial banks to fully integrate EAPS into their digital banking platforms and visibly offer it as a default, low-cost option for regional transfers. Bank of Uganda should stop protecting the big commercial banks and start protecting the citizens. It should also set a strict non-negotiable cap on all cross-border transfer fees;

2. Launch an aggressive public awareness campaign. The Ministry of East African Community Affairs must immediately deploy a targeted sensitisation campaign at major border posts including Katuna, Busia, Koboko, Bidi-bidi, and Mutukula to educate cross-border traders, SACCOs and small and medium enterprises on how to utilise local currency settlements. Set up free public desks, teach traders how to use it, and empower them to trade freely without being cheated;

3. Acceleration of national switch integration

The Government must prioritise funding and technical resources to finalise the integration of our domestic payment systems with regional counterparts under the East African Community cross-border payment system master plan;

4. Establish a regional liquidity guarantee fund

Uganda should champion the creation of a Central Bank-backed liquidity facility to ensure that commercial banks always have access to sufficient Kenya and Tanzania shillings, Rwanda francs, and other Partner States' currencies, eliminating the forced reliance on the US dollar; and

5. Fast-track the cooperative oversight framework

The minister must present a clear timeline to this Parliament for the ratification of regional cooperative oversight framework to ensure uniform legal protection and dispute-resolution mechanisms for all users.

Mr Speaker, we cannot trade on promises alone. It is time for the Government to move past theoretical master plans and deliver a functional, cheap, and secure payment system that serves the people of Uganda. I also want to invite Members of Parliament to understand that the Ministry of East African Community Affairs is one of the most sensitive and important ministries because the country stands on trade. You cannot talk about trade in Uganda minus talking about East Africa because we are a landlocked country. Whichever item –

THE SPEAKER: Which page are you at now? *(Laughter)*

MR KIZZA: Mr Speaker, I am speaking from my mind, not from the report. Thank you. I beg to submit, Mr Speaker, but I request that my response is considered by this Parliament.

THE SPEAKER: It is being considered. Honourable members, the matter of – First of all, we want to thank the minister and the First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for East African Community Affairs. I would like to attest that I was a Minister of Defence and Veteran Affairs, and the Rt Hon. Kadaga is the most respected minister of the East African Community (EAC). She is currently the Chairperson of the Council of Ministers of East Africa. *(Applause)*

When you see some of us seated here in this chair, I was her student for 10 years in this Parliament. Usually, we want to say such good things when people are not there, because we are shy to acknowledge.

Rt Hon. First Deputy Prime Minister, we thank you for your humility. She was very generous to some of us. She taught us how to be good Members of Parliament; little wonder that I am now sitting here.

However, one thing which the shadow minister is saying, we shall allow a few Members to speak about this because I wanted to guide the House that this statement has come, but

we need to know the status of our integration. Generally, how far have we gone? Not just the payment system.

We are organising a marathon for the East African Community where we have invited many people from within the region on 29th of November. This is to create awareness, and we need all Members of Parliament to participate together with their family members.

Therefore, Rt Hon. First Deputy Prime Minister and Minister of EAC, I would request you, you know, I cannot direct; you cannot direct your former teacher. That you prepare a statement again on East Africa. What are the challenges? What other opportunities do we have? When do we expect to integrate? What are the other options that we have?

I am going to invite all the Speakers of East Africa to be here. I think you have also invited ministers. You should, so that we can highlight that. So, we shall need you to come and - so that all Ugandans would get an opportunity as part of the activities towards that 29th, to tell the world what you know from your point of view, because Uganda is now the Chair of the Community.

In that respect, in the VIP gallery this afternoon, we have the following Members and staff of the East African Legislative Assembly (EALA):

1. Hon. Gerald Siranda Blacks
2. Hon. Stella Kiryowa
3. Hon. Fred Rwakaizi
4. Hon. Veronica Kadogo
5. Hon. Rose Akol and
6. Ms Shallon Atuhaire Mugabe, staff.

They have come to listen to the statement on the status of the East African payments and settlement system by the 1st Deputy Prime Minister and Minister for the East African Community. Please, join me once again in welcoming them. *(Applause)*

I will allow strictly three people from here, two people from here and one person from there on this matter. As we anticipate, the one person who is looking at me directly is the Chairperson and should come. We begin here, and I will go right and then left; it will be done.

3.28

MR WILSON KAJWENGYE (NRM, Nyabushozi County, Kiruhura): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I congratulate and thank the 1st Deputy Prime Minister and the Minister for East African Affairs.

Honourable colleagues, we know quite well that our insurance as black people lies in regional integration. We also know for sure that our President, His Excellency President Yoweri Kaguta Museveni, has been and remains the champion of integration, not only of East Africa, but also for Africa.

It behoves us, therefore to remain the champions of East African integration. It is the reason that a very senior member of Cabinet and former Speaker was nominated and supported to take that role. This Parliament, by law, remains a major centre for policies for that integration and support. We also elect nine members to represent us in EALA, which is one of the components of integration.

Mr Speaker, I want to agree with you that this Parliament gets regular updates on the status, on the challenges, and what can be done so fast.

Mr Speaker, you have just returned from a very lucrative Parliamentary diplomatic trip. There is a lot that this Parliament can do if we were regularly updated on the challenges and what we can do, that you can engage the Speakers of East Africa or other Cabinet ministers so that the role of integration is not left to only ministers, but it can be a shared responsibility for all of us, including Members of Parliament, so that when we meet for games, it is not only pulling the ropes and scoring goals, it is also engaging our colleagues in the region on how fast we can fast track to make sure we integrate, because that is our future. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Yes. Two minutes each. Let me get to hear from the lady from Terego then Hon. Otuke and Hon. Omara.

3.30

MS ROSE OBIGAH (NRM, Woman Representative, Terego): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join the rest of the Members in warmly welcoming you back. I want to thank our minister for the wonderful presentation. Apart from the games we have, apart from the East African Legislative Assembly, a lot is still desired in regard to the East African unity.

There is a lot our traders are going through. The banks take advantage of our traders who do cross-border business. If you go with an ATM card and you are trying to withdraw money from Kenya, Tanzania, you pay through your nostrils. It will be very important and imperative upon our banks, both in Uganda and elsewhere in East Africa, to take it upon themselves not to cheat our traders.

Mr Speaker, even when you want to clear your goods at the water points, we go through hell. I cleared two containers, I almost gave up one. We need a situation where we are treated the same way we treat other East Africans who come to Uganda. Thank you so much.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Omara, the economist?

3.32

MR PAUL OMARA (NRM, Otuke County, Otuke): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the 1st Deputy Prime Minister, Hon. Rebecca Kadaga, for presenting this matter to the House.

Mr Speaker, this particular instrument is very important because it creates a multi-currency payment system. Since 1973, when the switch system, which is New York based, has been used for all this time, where the settlement has to happen in New York, and there is exchange rate losses involved.

Therefore, this particular tool, will allow us to agree between nations and their banks, to enhance integration, so that the parties can agree on the exchange rate, on the fees that needs to be paid, and we will be able to do it through this system which is being called interoperability. It is a difficult word but it is where people agree on settlements. That tool will enable us to do it easily; we do not have to go to New York.

Therefore, if there are two important points that we need to take away, they are that it will cut down on the cost of fees. The exchange rate that we have been paying through New York, and again, when you go to Kenya, you really have to do the same thing.

The second thing is, it allows easy integration. If you are buying something in Kenya, you can use Uganda shillings directly to Kenya shillings. There has to be an agreed exchange rate. Therefore, you do not have to lose anything. We look forward to the implement – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nakiyi and then Hon. Sowedi of Busia Municipality.

3.34

MR JULIUS NAKIYI (NRM, Budadiri County East, Sironko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. As the Shadow Minister demonstrated, people lose 3 per cent of the value of transfers they make simply because of exchange movement.

If you transfer money from Tanzania, you first have to change it to dollars, the bank moves it to Uganda, and then the bank in Uganda converts it to shillings. Therefore, you do two exchange transactions, 3 per cent of the value is lost.

What is the way forward? The way forward is to fast-track the East African Monetary Union so that we create a single currency, so that when you are in Dar es Salaam, you can send money to Uganda as if you are in Sironko sending money to Kampala. We need a single currency.

Two, the President talks of integration. We cannot integrate when we do not have similar tax policies. Currently, let me give you an example of mobile money. In Uganda, mobile money is taxed on three fronts. One is that you pay 0.5 per cent excise duty on the withdrawals you make. If you are withdrawing Shs 1,000,000, they first take Shs 5,000.

Two, they take 10 per cent on the charges or the money made and commission earned by commission agents. The Government again takes 10 per cent of it.

Three, the Government again takes a 15 per cent excise duty on the commission earned by the companies themselves, like MTN. Therefore, we are paying taxes on one transaction three times, and there is Value Added Tax (VAT).

In Kenya, they are taxed only once. You pay 12 per cent on the revenue earned by the telecom companies. Moreover, that should be the right base.

Uganda must align its tax policy with the neighbours so that we can integrate very well. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Busia Municipality.

3.36

MR ISMAIL MULEMYA (NRM, Busia Municipality, Busia): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the President and the Minister for East Africa for the message of integration. Integration without Parliament is diplomacy. However, integration with Parliament is democracy.

Mr Speaker, we understand Uganda and Kenya are members of the Common Market for Eastern and Southern Africa (COMESA). Congo and Tanzania are members of the Southern African Development Community (SADC).

The two economic communities have different tariffs. So, we need diplomatic action to be taken with these other member states so that we can be at one or a common market. For example, all trucks that are loading from Busia going to Tanzania or entering Rwanda, they must have what we call transit and COMESA permit. The trucks which are entering from Congo and Tanzania also pay their own tariffs due to SADC.

However, for us now here in Uganda, since we are integrating, let integration be in action, not on paper. The integration that we are talking about today, Busia and other border districts, have already started enjoying.

For us, we integrate to the extent that we have families in Kenya and other Kenyans have families in Uganda. Therefore, we cross day and night. For us, we have already started enjoying integration.

I call upon the honourable Members of Parliament to support integration such that we can all enjoy as equal members of –

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Angura. This is not for border smugglers or something like that.

3.38

MR FREDRICK ANGURA (NRM, Tororo South County, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. It is a privilege to represent a border constituency because the integration that my colleague Hon. Sowedi has said, to us already started. However, we need to be supported. I am very happy that the Rt Hon. First Deputy Prime Minister has presented a payment proposal that we should move very fast to adapt.

At the border, we are all the time taking risks. Border business people have to risk crossing with bulk cash to neighbouring countries in order to minimise and avoid the charges and taxes related to the movement of funds. Therefore, if we fast track this, it will help us to move very fast.

Also, people keep asking how far we have come with the integration. Therefore, I am happy that we are going to continue receiving reports here that will continue to support us on the integration processes.

However, we also need continuous sensitisation. Our people need to be informed about what is going on. It remains amongst us, the leaders, but in some instances, the push has to come down, and this will help us so much. Our movement towards integration returned our borders to the territorial borders of East Africa and the rest of the countries.

In addition, it withdrew one key economic aspect for our people, which was clearing and forwarding at the border. It has been a challenge. We are constantly put under pressure, requesting that the service be returned to the border.

On the 31st, Mr Speaker, the same happened. The pressure we are feeling is also being felt by our neighbours across, but all this is because we are not regularly sensitising people on the benefit -

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Isaac. So on this side, these people have exploited all the debate. You - there is nothing new this side.

3.40

MR ISAAC OTIMGIW (NRM, Padyere County, Nebbi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The East African Community (EAC) is built on four progressive pillars, mainly Customs Union, Common Market, Monetary Union, and Political Federation. You are right to guide that as a House, we need to be briefed regularly on how we are doing on most of these pillars, which is not happening at the moment.

I thank the minister for the update she has given us today. On the issue of trade, we should understand that most of our border trades are dominated by informal ways of trade. Those are the people, for example, the women who are earning daily by crossing through the borders.

In addition, we must understand, Mr Speaker, the issue of Custom Union on free movement. We cannot be as that Uganda are the only country who are accepting some of these. Our borders are open. We seem to be as the only country who are actually following some of the guidelines of the EAC. We need to see that some of these countries neighbouring us are also following the guidelines.

For example, in Nebbi District, we neighbour Congo; some of our people who do cross-border trade are charged visas to enter Congo. The women who are going to cross-border markets are being charged for selling goods across. Therefore, we have to address these matters as pillars and make sure that each pillar is addressed critically, and we see how we are performing throughout. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Nambeshe, whom I do not know whether he is a Ugandan or a Kenyan because he belongs to both sides. He is even a cousin to the Speaker of Kenya.

3.42

MR JOHN BAPTIST NAMBESHE (NUP, Manjiya County, Bududa): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. Your observations are accurate and I am a reason for true integration. I want to salute the Rt Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, for this initiative of the cross-border payment system master plan and the real-time cross-border settlement. Those are wonderful, brilliant instruments.

However, Madam Prime Minister, much as you have highlighted the benefits, and we are aware, you know the implementation bottlenecks that are going to be faced. Already, our neighbours – you know I must salute Uganda; that most of the protocols that were signed to remove such restrictions to allow the free movement of labour, goods, services, and capital are working here. However, they are not working in Kenya and Tanzania.

Mr Speaker, early in September, I had visited my people in Kenya when the President of Kenya, H.E William Ruto, made a very aggressive directive that was xenophobic in nature. He ordered a crackdown on all those who were running small businesses under the guise of regularisation. I remember listening to your response, and you were talking of regularisation - but regularisation my foot. When will it commence? The Bank of Uganda must be saluted for the initiative, but the one million-dollar question one should ask, Mr Speaker – *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Because you are now a relative of the Speaker of Kenya. You are not a relative of the one of Uganda. Add him more minutes to conclude

MR NAMBESHE: I have no kind words for Kenya because the honourable minister is even aware that opening an account in the commercial banks in Kenya for those of us who are living at the Kenya-Uganda border, is a tug of war. In fact, it is easier to squeeze water out of a stone than for a foreigner - Please – *(Interruption)*

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. The information I want to give to the honourable colleague is that recently, the car of one of our Members of EALA was auctioned. Normally, they give them tax-free vehicles, but they had to auction her car because they rejected the diplomatic note from Uganda, which allows them to clear their vehicles, and they auctioned it. To the effect that we need a comprehensive overview of the whole integration; is very important, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: That is serious. Honourable commissioner, conclude.

MR NAMBESHE: I am concluding, but I want to thank you for the useful information. Mr Speaker, you know very well that the minister must be grappling with the challenge of persuading her colleagues, particularly in the countries in the neighbourhood, the Partner States that I have just mentioned.

First, the observation has already been made by my brother from Sironko. The policy taxes have to be harmonised, but it is going to be another tug of war for some of these countries to comply. Of course, still in Uganda, we have all manner of foreigners who are not even refugees. We have Somalis; they do not share a border with Uganda. We have Eritreans. We have so many; they even own property, but it is not possible for a Ugandan who is a partner member of Tanzania and Kenya to own property, unless you have married there, like yours truly – *(Laughter)* - It is not possible, Mr Speaker. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: It is now official that Hon. Nambeshe is married that side. Now, I do not see - Hon. Molly and then Hon. Shyam. Those two should conclude on that.

3.47

MS MOLLY KAMUKAMA (NRM, Woman Representative, Kazo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the Deputy Prime Minister for the job well done on the East African integration. We are Ugandans; we will speak for Uganda; and we will let others speak for their countries.

I beg to submit that we need to fast-track some of the key issues in the integration. As to whether the other countries are implementing, it is up to them. At least we should have the confederation moving. We should have the Monetary Union moving. Let us have them at least on paper.

This e-platform will only be effective if we have a single currency. It will be better. If you have to again – remember; exchange, it will also depend on the strength of other currencies, and some countries have stronger currencies. Therefore, they will still stand to benefit more than the other members, so the best is to have a Monetary Union and a single currency.

As Uganda, we should do our part. I want to encourage you, Rt Hon. Deputy Prime Minister, to do our part. Let others lag behind, they will catch up. I beg to submit.

3.49

MR SHYAM JAY TANNA (Independent, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to join my colleagues in welcoming you back from the BRICS and for your earlier remarks. I have gone through the plan and I am particularly excited being a businessman and one who exports to Congo. However, in this system, one of the key priorities should be getting South Sudan and Congo to be integrated.

As of now, the Congolese come with piles and piles of US dollars and then they stagger payments because for anything above $10,000, there is a charge of cash handling. If we had this system that was integrated with the banks especially in Eastern Congo and parts of South Sudan, it would also push our exports. I beg to submit. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Now, that is the kind of statement you hear from real participants. Honourable member for Ajuri, you are the last.

3.50

MR FRED JALAMESO (UPC, Ajuri County, Alebtong): Mr Speaker, I thank you for this opportunity and also join others to welcome you back to the House. The comic and then the humorous superintendent of the House has come back and is live with us.

Mr Speaker, the East African Community should go beyond the payment regime or mechanism that we are talking about. Currently, we are at the Customs Union, and with it, is the free movement of goods and services, free movement of factors of production including labour. However, when you go to Tanzania, they demand a work permit. Are we truly integrating?

Secondly, on this payment infrastructure, Mr Speaker, the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development needs to table to us here the estimated economic benefits of implementing this payment infrastructure in terms of GDP, export, import, domestic investment and the cost-benefit analysis Uganda has done in terms of implementation of this payment infrastructure.

Thirdly, Mr Speaker, it is not only about the reduction in the transaction cost. What measures has the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, and the Government in general put in place to ensure that the reduced transaction cost is translated into reduction to consumers and -

THE SPEAKER: Give him a few seconds to conclude. You know he uses big heavy words. *(Laughter)*

MR JALAMESO: Thank you, Mr Speaker. Lastly, we need the presenters on the Floor to give us the percentage reduction in the transaction cost, and not that the transaction cost has reduced but by what percentage.

Honourable Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, you need to help us. How is this system managing the exchange rate stability and, above all, the monetary stability in the country when, for instance, there is an increased volume of transactions?

Mr Speaker, I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable First Deputy Prime Minister.

3.53

THE FIRST DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND MINISTER FOR EAST AFRICAN COMMUNITY AFFAIRS (Ms Rebecca Kadaga): Let me thank the honourable members for their comments and observations. However, I am surprised that the Shadow Minister is unhappy that I have come. He said that we have not popularised it, but I have brought myself to tell you about this; I request you to popularise the system to the citizens.

I would like to say that there is no lack of political will. The system is actually working. The clearance of cheques has reduced from five days to one day, and you can do your business. I agree that South Sudan and the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC) should be integrated. We are going to work on that, but some of our friends are very slow. I think let us first move with the willing, and then we shall incorporate them.

When he says that our traders do not know the system, but I have told you about mobile money. They use mobile money to transact at the border, and it is working.

He has some recommendations; we are going to study them and I hope the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development will also help us to study it.

However, just to report on three issues. First, on where we are with the integration. We shall come with the report. But integration is not like "I have done a kilometre of road; therefore, I can certify this road has been done." It is really a process.

Therefore, it is very hard to measure it and say; "Five kilos now, ten kilos". It is a block by

block. However, one thing I am happy about is the political federation. We have finished consultations with five partner states.

Mr Speaker, I would like you to help me with the Somalis, DR Congo and Tanzania, so that by the end of this year, we can draft the constitution of the federation.

I would like that, when President Museveni is still in the chair of the summit, we achieve at least the political confederation because that will also deal with the issues of my border, my money, my currency and so on.

We still have some trouble with the issue of the currency. We are battling over the location of the Central Bank of East Africa. I want it. Tanzania wants it, Kenya wants it, and Burundi wants it. And we have disagreed.

However, if you can help me to lobby so that the other people get out. I have got three acres of land here in Naguru, just waiting for the decision and the East African Bank will come to Uganda. That is a very important thing for me because it is the last tangible institution of the community. The court is somewhere else; EALA is somewhere else. If we can get at least the bank, it will be good for this country.

On the privileges, I am still battling with the Government of Tanzania on the host agreement. Apart from what the honourable member said about somebody's car, I think it was the Member there; one of the Members' cars was auctioned, and yet when they are in EALA, they are actually a resident in Tanzania, so they should be given the benefits of a resident.

The judges have also got stuck with their cars. So, I am trying to sort that one out with the Government of Tanzania.

Again about the political will, yes, what Hon. Nambeshe has said is true and I was just being diplomatic because my President is the Chairperson of the Summit. I wanted to blast the other man, but I could not do it because it would backfire on my President.

Otherwise, I have noted that when elections come in some countries, they try to please their citizens. That is what Tanzania did. They chased away all the small people. I spent a whole year battling with them. When they ended the elections, they said, "Okay, now they can come back". But there are still issues there. Then this side also, because they are going for elections, they are trying to make them happy. So, they have said, "You people are not Kenyans, get out." But as I said, I could not blast the President, because my boss is the Chairman of the Summit.

The Bank of Uganda will do the training. Yes, we shall go to the borders and popularise, but help us also do this work so that if your traders are happy, we are also happy. Mr Speaker, I would like to thank you, very much. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Before we go to the next item, I wanted to give priority to the First Deputy Prime Minister, former Deputy Speaker for 10 years, former Speaker for 10 years, and now - So, that was why matters of national importance competed with matters of regional importance.

Now, I have to go back, vary the Order Paper and get to listen to Members' problems in matters of national importance. I would like to call Hon. Christopher Komakech, Hon. Kaluya Kizza - Is Hon. Komakech not there? Hon. Kaluya, go ahead, Hon. Komakech will follow after you.

The one-minute rule applies. If the matter is beyond one minute, raise a petition. *(Laughter)*

3.59

MR ANDREW KALUYA (NUP, Kigulu County South, Iganga): Much obliged, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter highlighting the urgent need for the ministry to establish reserve national exams for Primary Leaving Examinations (PLE), Uganda Certificate of Education (UCE) and Uganda Advanced Certificate of Education (UACE) candidates who miss their national exams due to circumstances beyond their control.

According to the Uganda National Examinations Board's 2025 reports, approximately 14,000 candidates did not sit their exams, including 10,000 for PLE, 2,000 for UCE and 1,200 for UACE. These learners are affected by serious issues like illness, accidents, childbirth, domestic violence and natural disasters. Despite having registered, paid and prepared for their exams, they miss out.

Many, consequently, lose an entire academic year while others become discouraged and abandon education. My prayer is that the Ministry of Education and Sports establishes - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: The minister is here. Minister, answer the prayer.

4.00

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Ms Phyllis Chemutai): Mr Speaker, I wish to provide clarification on the proposal to introduce supplementary national examinations for candidates who fail to sit their examination during the scheduled examination period.

The Uganda National Examinations Board (UNEB), has considered the practical, administrative and financial implications of introducing supplementary examinations. The Board's position is that the introduction of a general supplementary examination arrangement is neither practical nor sustainable under the current examinations framework.

The ministry wishes to clarify that the Uganda National Examinations Board Act does not provide for the establishment of a general supplementary examination arrangement for candidates who miss their scheduled examinations. The Board has further advised that introducing such an arrangement would present – *(Interjections)* – I am responding. Allow me to respond first.

The Board has further advised that introducing such an arrangement would present significant challenges in the administration and management of examinations -

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Honourable Minister, you have -

MS CHEMUTAI: First, a general supplementary examination system would be susceptible to misuse and manipulation.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable Minister. Order!

MR OLANYA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I rise on a point of order. The honourable member raised a matter of national importance, and from that matter, I see the honourable minister presenting a paper.

We were all trained in parliamentary procedures. When you are responding to a matter of national importance, you have to be straight to the point and not change it to presentation of a paper. Is the honourable minister, who is an old minister of the Cabinet, in order to divert us away from the matter of national importance being raised by the honourable member?

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, I am surprised that Hon. Olanya is raising that as a point of order. In fact, we should be thanking such a minister, who gets the information and gives a detailed response. Such ministers are very serious. *(Applause)*

MS CHEMUTAI: Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: The minister has attached a lot of importance to the matter.

MS CHEMUTAI: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: So, do you want to conclude?

MS CHEMUTAI: Thank you. The board has further advised that introducing such an arrangement would present significant challenges in the administration and management of national examinations.

First, a general supplementary examination system would be susceptible to misuse and manipulation. It could encourage candidates to

defer sitting examinations for reasons that do not warrant exceptional consideration, thereby undermining the integrity, predictability and orderly administration of national examinations.

Secondly, the introduction of supplementary examinations would impose substantial additional financial and administrative obligations on the board. Each examination cycle requires the preparation and administration of examination papers, supervision, marking, processing of results, and other quality assurance measures. A supplementary examination would, therefore, require a separate examination exercise with considerable additional expenditure.

Thirdly, the national examination calendar is already fully committed. Conducting supplementary examinations, particularly at the Uganda Certificate of Education level, would require an examination period comparable to that of the regular examinations, followed by marking and processing of results. Accommodating an additional examination cycle within the existing calendar would consequently be extremely difficult.

Mr Speaker, I can stop there. I think the reason - *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much, but it is very sad if that is the position of the law. Every law that has no exemption is a sad one. As a parent, my daughter did senior four, but you can imagine she told me that one of her friends did not sit for the exams. I asked why? She said, "Daddy, this boy had a sick brother, and they are twins, and he had to go and donate a kidney in India." You can imagine that. Please, Attorney-General, you are presiding over laws, which do not have room for fairness and equity.

4.07

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am very happy that you have made that observation, and I believe every parent should be concerned, but we are here as a Legislature. The laws are not cast in stone and can be amended.

Most importantly, my understanding of my sister's statement is that the budget probably may not allow it because, if they have a fixed, tight schedule - she seems to say those adjustments may eat into the budgeting. If I have understood her correctly, we do the budgeting here, and those adjustments can be made to accommodate exceptions so that there is a timeframe; let us say a month within which those who have missed exams can be allowed to sit exams, as we look at the law and make amendments. *(Applause*)

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Komakech? That is the real point, and of course, they cannot have a budget because the law does not provide for it, so we start with the law.

4.09

MR CHRISTOPHER KOMAKECH (NRM, Aruu County, Pader): Mr Speaker, imagine having 1,272 graveyards behind your house. That is the number of -

THE SPEAKER: Please, I do not want to imagine that. *(Laughter*)

MR KOMAKECH: Thank you so much. That is why I am raising this matter of national importance. Mr Speaker, 1,272 Ugandans are trafficked every year and what surprises most is that there are 479 girls, 139 boys, 344 men, and 310 women every year.

When Ebola hit our nation, the number of people who died was roughly 80. When Cholera hit our nation, the number of people who died was roughly 10, 20, 30, but we have 1,272 Ugandans whose graveyards are not known anywhere.

Mr Felix Leku, a citizen of Uganda and a resident of Pader District, is in Thailand. He was lured into going for master's studies. He is on a sick bed, chained with dog chains and a padlock. Mr Speaker, whatever I am speaking of - pictures are moving around of a Ugandan in Thailand on a sick bed –

THE SPEAKER: Conclude on that.

MR KOMAKECH: Mr Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: I think, as Parliament, we should move on how to scan some of these things so that when a Member is talking, you can refer to it on the screen. I can see it; I have a copy. Clerk -

MR KOMAKECH: Mr Leku was one of the brightest students in Pader District. He has a bachelor's degree, and he was lured into going to Thailand to study a master's. As we speak, his life is on the line, but then what about the other 18 Ugandans he went with? Those are not accounted for?

My prayers are:
1. When will the Government declare human trafficking a national disaster in our country?
2. Can the Minister of Foreign Affairs come and help us to get Leku back to his parents, who are in Pader, before he passes on?

Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Government? The Government already has that copy.

MR KOMAKECH: Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Do you mean there is no Government in the House? The prayer was specific to the Government; the Ministry of Foreign Affairs, but that includes the Government.

4.12

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I appreciate the concerns as stated by our colleague. Today being Tuesday, allow us sit with the concerned ministry and report back to you on Thursday.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. I join you in praying that the Member gives more details so that when they come, they have more details. I know he was just being generous and was stepping in; he was not prepared for this. Government Chief Whip, I know you are doing very well. Hon. Shyam?

4.13

MR SHYAM JAY TANNA (Independent, Tororo Municipality, Tororo): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I rise on a matter of national importance, concerning the devastating rainstorm that hit Tororo Municipality and the neighbouring areas on 1 November 2026.

The storm caused extensive destruction of people's homes, public infrastructure and livelihoods generally. Several houses and their roofs have been blown away, roads have been washed away, and buildings have collapsed, including a very prominent school known as Tororo Progressive Academy (TOPA). The statistics I have now include 21 homes in Bison A, 19 homes in Bison B, and more statistics that will be provided in a detailed report.

My prayer is that the minister responsible for relief and disaster preparedness urgently intervenes and provides relief to the affected communities in the form of iron sheets, emergency shelter, food and any other essential supplies that can help the people of Tororo Municipality salvage the situation. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Government, as you come to respond, under question number 12, Hon. George Oketcho, MP West Budama South, raised a similar one here. Another one is from Hon. Machika, Hon. Angura and Hon. Jacob Oboth. So, it is the whole Tororo District. *(Laughter)*

If this is going to test our leadership, I would like to ask for all the support, except that I would not ask for iron sheets. *(Laughter)* So, Prime Minister, the whole of Tororo is affected.

4.15

THE SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Dr Chrispus W.C.B Kiyonga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I did see on TV last night that the situation in

Tororo is very devastating. We stand with our people in Tororo, but we should expect more such tragedies across the country, as we enter the El Niño period.

At the Government level, a discussion has been held as a way of preparing a response to the El Niño situation. In regard to this specific situation in Tororo, a Government-wide response is going to be made, meaning a Government-wide team will go to Tororo, assess the situation and guide the response from Government.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ismail Kasule – *[Member: "Point of Order"]* - You are out of order. *(Laughter)* A person out of order cannot raise a point of order. Hon. Ismail?

4.16

MR ISMAIL KASULE (ANT, Hoima West Division, Hoima City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. This House is the custodian of law and we appreciate your unwavering stand in protecting the citizens of this country through legislation, representation and oversight. It is on this background that I stand before you to represent university students on a matter that affects many of them every graduation time.

Mr Speaker, it has come to our attention that this year, graduating students at Gulu University, a Government university, are facing severe administrative frustration and unjust financial extortion due to systematic failures in tracking the National Council for Higher Education fee payments.

Students who have submissively paid National Council for Higher Education fees are routinely told their payments cannot be traced, forcing them to pay twice or thrice, under the threat of being omitted from the graduation list.

My prayers are, Mr Speaker, can the Minister of Education and Sports explain why the ministry and its agencies have failed to establish an integrated, reliable digital payment verification system between universities and the National Council for Higher Education in collecting – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: We need short answers. Honourable minister, Hon. Olanya is still in the House - *(Laughter)* - so give a short answer.

4.18

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR EDUCATION AND SPORTS (PRIMARY EDUCATION) (Ms Phyllis Chemutai): Mr Speaker, the ministry has consulted Gulu University. Every student pays an annual National Council for Higher Education fee of Shs 20,000. The requirement is communicated in the letter of admission and the fee is paid directly into the Council's own account, which is managed by the Council and not by the university. The fee is not part of the graduation fees.

The university itself collects no cash and its own fees are paid through the Uganda Revenue Authority into the Consolidated Fund. Since the university cannot see the Council's account, it confirms payment of fees from the receipt presented by each student, as a condition for clearance to graduate. This is necessary because the Council reconciles the list of the university students against the payments it has received and bills the university for any shortfall.

From time to time, a student pays the Council's fee into the university's account in error. The amount is then credited to the student's tuition account and the Council's fee remains unpaid. Where the error results in an overpayment and the student shows evidence that the amount was meant for the Council, the university refunds it, and the student then pays the fee directly to the Council for clearance. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Denes Sekabira, Katikamu North?

4.20

MR DENES SEKABIRA (NUP, Katikamu County North, Luweero): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. There is growing anxiety in the population about the increasing prices of food items, including maize flour, wheat flour and beans. A kilogramme of beans costs Shs 4,000, but it now costs Shs 7,000. A one-kilogramme loaf of bread now costs Shs 8,000.

I would like to invite the line minister to come up with regulations, so that the common person and consumers are not exploited by the traders. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: I do not know. Government, what do you have to say? It is a general thing; there are forces of - Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development, are you the one making the prices to go high?

4.22

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. From the economy management side, the prices of goods and services in this economy are market-determined. In other words, the forces of demand and supply determine the final price.

However, this does not mean that the role of Government is negated. The Government has a role to regulate when things are not going right. Mr Speaker, this now is the role of the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Cooperatives to protect the consumers. However, the mandate to protect the consumers is with the Ministry of Trade, Industry and Co-operatives, not me. I can intervene where prices in the market are determined, but in terms of consumer regulation, the Minister of Trade will come and make a statement.

THE SPEAKER: I think the minister has spoken. He has literally said this is a liberal economy and that he is in charge of the economy. If you were saying the prices were high and people are not able to afford them, it would be an issue for the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development. However, you said the prices are high so you need the minister to determine. He cannot.

I was at a loss. The Minister of Trade would come and tell us, generally, about the prices of basic needs such as food. We cannot bury our heads here, not just for the ones – *(Hon. Olanya rose_)* - when the Speaker is speaking, even if he is wrong, he is right - *(Laughter)* - how can he be speaking and you say, "Procedure?" Do you want to overthrow me?

I agree that the Minister of Trade will come back with an economic view regarding the implication of what is generally going on with the prices of food. Nothing else but food.

Next is Hon. Patrick Musinguzi, Member of Parliament (MP), Kashari North County - It is not very nice to have your name here, I announce it, and then you are not in the House. Your constituency should know that - Hon. Jimmy Kanaabi.

4.25

MR JIMMY KANAABI (NUP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe): Mr Speaker, I rise on a critical matter of national importance concerning the road connecting Mukono, Katosi and Nyenga, which has become a zone of aggravated robbery for both natives and travellers by unknown persons. The *boda boda* men are the most affected. Almost 10 people are killed per month, mostly along the section between Kisoga Trading Centre and Nkokonjeru Trading Centre.

On 23 October 2026, Mr Dan Emuron, a resident of Nkokonjeru, was killed and his motorcycle was taken by unknown people. I pray that the Minister of Works and Transport installs security lights and cameras along that road - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: I also pray that the Minister of Internal Affairs intensifies the patrols since it is a security matter. Minister of Works and Transport, come. The Member has raised a matter.

4.26

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Siraji Ali): Thank you, Mr Speaker. We agree with the honourable member that installing security lights and cameras on the road in question would help alleviate the matter - not completely. However, the budget we have received from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development this financial year does not allow us to install cameras and the security lights.

Nonetheless, we will engage the Minister of Finance and see if extra funds can be provided for this purpose. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Also, the Ministry of Internal Affairs should take note of the robbery. That is the road I use and this is a forewarning. I do not want to be part of the statistics - *(Laughter)* - let there be enhanced patrols.

4.27

MR EMMANUEL BIARA (NRM, Bulambuli County, Bulambuli): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also take this singular opportunity to welcome you back from India. While you were away, I was also the assistant prime minister when I was in Bugisu -

THE SPEAKER: There is no such position in Government. Is that for a cultural institution? *(Laughter.)*

MR BIARA: Mr Speaker, I rise on the issue of national importance concerning the issue of relocation of people in the Elgon zone. We want to commend the Government for thinking about the people there.

In the last 16 years, we have been losing lives because of mudslides, landslides and floods. We are now relocating people to safer places, but there is a rising concern from the - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Add him few minutes to conclude.

MR BIARA: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. People are being relocated, but there is a concern that their land is being allocated to Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA). Also, the Prime Minister, through the Cabinet resolution, has ordered that their houses be demolished.

My prayers are that the Prime Minister issues a statement to distinguish between people being relocated for safety and land ownership.

Lastly, the Attorney-General should guide on why people's land is being given to UWA without proper processes. I also request that I lay this - *(Interruption)* - please, you can give me information. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: There are no such things like information during matters of national importance. To allow that would mean two things; either you do not know what you are talking about, or it is not as important as you presented.

MR BIARA: Mr Speaker, I just want to lay what we have written as Bugisu Sub-region to the Office of the Prime Minister for follow-up in Cabinet, and to His Excellency the President. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: It is true. I got a number of Members of Parliament from Bugisu and Sebei, including Hon. Chemonges, coming to my office today. I think it is not a matter that you may have a quick response to now. Attorney-General, can you have a quick legal prognosis on the matter?

4.30

THE DEPUTY ATTORNEY-GENERAL (Mr Jackson Kafuuzi): Mr Speaker, I may not give a prognosis. However, I want to appreciate the concerns raised by my colleague, the honourable member from Bulambuli. I request that you allow us time to study this, working with the Minister of Tourism, Wildlife and Antiquities. We need to confirm if the land had not previously been gazetted. We need to see the legalities so that we can advise accordingly. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Karim Masaba. I think I will have one more, and then we go to the Order Paper. The rest will be for tomorrow.

4.31

MR KARIM MASABA (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I join my colleagues in welcoming you back. I rise on a matter of national importance regarding the Uganda Revenue Authority (URA)'s decision to retrospectively apply higher excise duty on commodities.

Mr Speaker, as you are aware, around 14 May we passed the Excise Duty (Amendment) Act by then in Parliament and sent it to the President for assent. The President returned it sometime in August.

When the committee was dealing with it, one of the issues that I brought up was on clause 1; the commencement of the Tax Bills. Unfortunately, it was not captured as one of the clauses that Parliament could deal with. We only had to deal with the clauses that the President had returned.

What URA is doing is giving out demand notices and bank agent notices to the people affected by this law - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Conclude.

MR KARIM MASABA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. They have frozen accounts for the oil marketing companies (OMCs) and for some people dealing in sugar. Uganda Revenue Authority (URA) is demanding taxes that were supposed to have been collected from the 1st of July to the 28th of August.

My prayer is that URA, together with the Minister of Finance who is here, stop this with immediate effect. The Attorney-General should guide on this matter where Acts are applied retrospectively. It has happened before and was challenged in the courts of law. I think it was in 2010, where in the case of *Rock Petrol v. Uganda Revenue Authority*, it was resolved that they should not demand taxes before the Act came into effect. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: The Minister of Finance, taxation through representation?

4.33

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Henry Musasizi): Thank you, Mr Speaker. The story Hon. Karim Masaba is presenting is accurate. We passed the law in May before the expiry of the last term. The law was returned by the President for reconsideration. We reconsidered the law and passed it and the President assented to it. The law that was reconsidered defines the commencement date as 1 July 2026. In this respect, you cannot blame URA because that is its mandate. Its role is to administer taxes in accordance with the law, which has been passed by this House.

However, I do not think it is correct for tax laws to apply retrospectively. Therefore, what happens in this case where the minister has an opinion and the law reads different things? There, I will require an interpretation by the Attorney-General.

We have written to the Attorney-General and scheduled a meeting on Thursday this week. I plead with you, Mr Speaker, that we shall hold this meeting with the Attorney-General and communicate the outcome on Tuesday next week. I submit.

4.37

MR JOSEPH SSEWUNGU (NUP, Kalungu County West, Kalungu): The honourable minister, who is my friend, does not want clarification, but it is helpful as well. Mr Speaker, there is still another complaint on the same matter of URA. This Parliament refused to tax Ugandans in dollars and it is again through a retrospective approach. Someone goes to Europe and buys his commodities; when he comes back to Uganda, you are asking him to pay taxes in dollars yet we refused that here. The traders are complaining about the same.

Honourable minister, can you give guidance on that? If I have bought goods in Europe at $3,000 and I come to Uganda, instead of paying my taxes in Ugandan currency, you are asking me to pay in dollars because the dollar rate has gone up in Uganda. That affects the traders.

THE SPEAKER: That is a new matter, not a clarification.

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, indeed Hon. Gonzaga is raising a new matter. I was also expecting him to appreciate the Government for working on Katonga Bridge, which he was always crying about. *(Laughter)*

That was on a lighter note, but Hon. Ssewungu, you should appreciate the Government. Katonga Bridge is one of the best bridges we have in this country now – *(Hon. Ssewungu rose_)* – you will do it next time

On charging taxes in dollars, this is a new matter. I need to study it and come back to the House with a detailed statement. I pray that you allow me to bring the two statements together next Tuesday.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Ssewungu, you got a bridge through paying tax. What do you think about this Government?

MR SSEWUNGU: Mr Speaker, I thank the Government as they also thank me, because I raised the matter of Katonga many times. I got to the extent of asking people to leave their buses and cross on foot so that the buses could go empty, to reduce the weight on the bridge. The Katonga Bridge was worked on.

Even the bridge in Lwabenge, Kalungu East constituency, is being worked on. It was because of my pressure that some work was really done. The bridge was done well, but we now seek your indulgence, honourable minister and the one in charge, on the people who drive Sino trucks. They pour rubbish and sand on the roads. Also, help us so that we stop going through Mpigi and use our normal road from Masaka. You also enjoy the same road as me.

THE SPEAKER: The Government thanks you every month by paying you to raise the concerns of the people. Next is Hon. Nangoli Gerald, MP Elgon North. Those will be 10, and the rest, like Hon. Kitiyo, tomorrow.

4.40

MR GERALD NANGOLI (NRM, Elgon North County, Bulambuli): Mr Speaker, Mine is similar to what my honourable colleague raised earlier. It is about the issue of the Shs 18 million resettlement package. People want to understand the difference between a resettlement package and compensation.

As we speak, the team of the Uganda Wildlife Authority (UWA) is on the ground, plus officers from the Office of the Prime Minister. They are giving people a different message: once you consent and sign, all your land will go, irrespective of whether you have got the Shs 18 million or not - (*Hon. Anyakun rose_*) - there is no point of order, madam.

The issue is that we should come up and give correct information to the people who are living in high-risk areas for disasters, so that they know what they are signing for. Are they taking over their land at a cost of Shs 18 million? – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: The matter is well captured, and the Prime Minister will respond.

4.41

THE SECOND DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER AND DEPUTY LEADER OF GOVERNMENT BUSINESS (Dr Crispus W.C.B Kiyonga): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is true that at Elgon, the Rt Hon. Prime Minister has been carrying out a decision of the Government to ensure two things: one, that people move out of risky areas, and two, that we have a clear demarcation between the protected forest area and the population.

What I think we should do is that the honourable members from that area will be invited to the Prime Minister's office so that we discuss that issue and get clarity.

THE SPEAKER: That is good. I want to stand over items 3 (ii) and the whole of item 4, and go to the next item.

MOTION FOR THE ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF THE SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION SUB-SECTOR

THE SPEAKER: There is a procedural question. Is it on how we are calling the matter? These days, I am told that you are a specialist in raising controversial matters; change of

prayers, the size of condoms – *(Laughter)* - So what else?

MR NGOMPEK: I am a love therapist - *(Laughter)* - Thank you, Mr Speaker. Members of Parliament are also suffering. Last week, the Bus Drivers' Owners Association increased bus fares. This burden comes back to us because the people we represent cannot afford the cost of living anymore. However, it seems we do not want to talk about this matter.

The price of *malewa* in Nakasero Market here is now at Shs 19,000. The price of meat has risen from Shs 16,000 to Shs 20,000. The price of beans in Bweyale Town Council has risen from Shs 4,500 to Shs 5,300. The price of a 2-kilogramme wheat pack has risen from Shs 6,000 to Shs 9,000 and prices are still increasing. Moreover, our local people we represent cannot afford this anymore.

The procedural matter I am raising is whether it is right for us to continue talking about other matters and forget about matters that are affecting our people with the prices of essential commodities rising. Are we moving right?

THE SPEAKER: Yes, we are moving right because there is an undertaking from the Government to bring the progress report. Maybe, it came in when you had gone to check the pigeonhole, I am sure. The Government should take note of the fares on essential commodities. Minister for finance, do you want to say something?

4.45

THE MINISTER OF FINANCE, PLANNING AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT (Mr Henry Musasizi): Mr Speaker, last week I presented a statement here about the situation in the economy. One of the challenges I emphasised was that headline inflation has risen from 3.2 to 4.6. The inflation on fuel has now come to 14.5. The situation we are in, that our honourable colleague is talking about, is the rise in the prices of goods, which is inflation.

We have even advised that in such circumstances, we must do the following: the Government is tightening both monetary and fiscal policy to deal with the situation. For example, on food, I said that the cause was mainly the drought we experienced in the recent four months, among many other factors.

Mr Speaker, I do not want to take a lot of your time, but let us acknowledge that if we are leaders, let us be leaders. Accept reality and work out solutions that are not based on sentiments but on reality. Globally, the situation we are in is that fuel prices have risen - *(Hon. Karuhanga rose_)* - Hon. Karuhanga wants to say something –

THE SPEAKER: He wants to give information.

MR KARUHANGA: Thank you, Mr Speaker. I was right here when the finance minister presented his statement. We had hoped, like we said, that there would be clear interventions by Government and we had been waiting for this statement. I remember he repeatedly said the statement is coming.

The information I would like to raise is that, a few weeks ago, the Bank of Uganda made a statement that they were more than willing, and they think it is important, to touch the reserves and help the economy in the current prevailing circumstances the economy is going through. Apparently, it appears that the Executive is uncomfortable with that.

The technocrats are saying we need to make an intervention. By the time the Central Bank Governor comes out openly and says this is what can save the situation now, but he says his hands are tied, why can't the finance ministry come out clear and tell us why they are not co-operating with the Central Bank to make the requisite, necessary and most critical intervention that we need in our economy now?

THE SPEAKER: Are you the one tying the hands of the Governor?

MR MUSASIZI: Mr Speaker, the statement I made here last week was detailed and I took time to prepare it. How I wish my statement could be replayed for you to hear what I said about utilisation of reserves to resolve the current problem. In my statement, I told the House that it is not best economics to use reserves to manage exchange rate prices.

Secondly, it is not true that the Governor, Bank of Uganda made a statement in that regard. What the Bank of Uganda is doing in terms of monetary interventions is what I also mentioned that we are doing as Government in terms of fiscal interventions. Therefore, my brother Hon. Gerald Karuhanga, I invite you to read my statement again; line by line. You will get the answers to all the concerns you are raising.

THE SPEAKER: Honourable members, let us go to the next item. The Chairperson of the Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation, your item has been called out. If it is not there, next item.

4.51

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (Dr Acuti Opio): Mr Speaker, this particular report was presented and the debate was to ensue accordingly. Therefore, I seek your guidance on that.

THE SPEAKER: We were waiting for the chairperson to avail himself. For the sake of debate, get to the report you presented so that you are ready. I call for the debate, but if there is none, you move the motion and a decision is made.

The first two people here are prepared. We are now set for the general debate, as much as I understand the rules. We shall need the shadow minister to counter when the substantive minister makes a statement.

4.52

MR AMERE ONEKA LIT (FDC, Kitgum Municipality, Kitgum): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am Oneka Lit Dennis Amere, a Member of Parliament representing Kitgum Municipality. First of all, I would like to begin by appreciating -

THE SPEAKER: Kitgum Municipality, *oyee?*

MR AMERE: *Rah!* Mr Speaker, first of all, I would like to appreciate the Chairperson of the Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (STI) for the good report that he has presented. Science and technology is the heartbeat for every country to develop well. As such, we as a country need a well-coordinated STI ecosystem so that we optimise it in this country.

Mr Speaker, I read this report and I appreciate the efforts put forward by the chairperson. However, I felt that he ran short of including very pertinent recommendations that are really necessary. Science and technology have been listed as one of the items in the NDPIV that will help to raise the economy of this country. I would like to talk about three to four things regarding investment priority.

First, I read the report and saw that there is a need for us to really prioritise our investment in science and technology. For example, we have very good sectors, and as a country, if we put in a lot of investment, we will definitely benefit a lot. Look at Kiira EV (Kiira Motors Corporation) which at the moment, has made tremendous progress. I was the guild president in the year 2011 when Makerere University College of Technology invented the small Kiira Motor EV.

Right now, we have eco-buses on the streets of Kampala. Such kinds of inventions really need to be supported under science and technology. We need to give in more resources to really boost and help develop the economy of this country.

Secondly, looking at other subventions like the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI), the Engineering Development and Innovation Centre (EDiC), and Deep Tech; these are part of the subventions that are helping raise what we call "reverse engineering". They are manufacturing things that will help in import substitution. Therefore, we need to prioritise

our investment to such institutions so that they help support this country.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, your two minutes are over. Next, Hon. Silwanyi. By the way, not every report should be debated. There is no rule that everything must be debated. Certain things can just be adopted when they are good.

4.56

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, I thank the chairperson for the comprehensive report that he presented on the Floor of Parliament. However, there are about two key issues that I noted the committee did not capture. There are small innovators. For example, if you go to a primary school and find young children who are very talented trying to come up with vehicles or make things, you really highlight innovativeness.

What financial interventions does the Government have to help the small innovators? When you talk about Kiira Motors, you are speaking at a higher level. You are talking about the banana industrial revolution. That is at a higher level, and an initiative by the president. However, I am talking about the rural people; our young boys and girls who are so talented. Some are deep in the village.

When you travel upcountry, you may find someone who has invented a small grader or something like that. How do we support these young people to come up? These are the people who can end up even making vehicles that can move. They are the scientists who we need to support. That is the gap I identified; so, I implore the committee to capture this and come up with ways through which small-scale innovators can also be supported. This will then move the economy very far. Otherwise, thank you, committee chairperson, for the comprehensive report.

4.58

MR JAMES TAR ONGU (NRM, Kwania North County, Kwania): Mr Speaker, I am the Member of Parliament for Kwania North and my name is James Ongu Tar –

THE SPEAKER: Ongu?

MR TAR ONGU: Yes, the one you know. I stand first to congratulate the committee for the magnificent report that they drafted. Like the honourable member who left the Floor said, in the last financial year the Government of Uganda spent about Shs 500 billion to support Ministries, Departments and Agencies (MDAs) in terms of science, technology and innovation.

In this financial year, the Government is spending Shs 842 billion to support MDAs in terms of science, technology, and innovation. The question is; how is this translating to benefit local innovators in every sub-region of Uganda? Talk about local innovators in Acholi sub-region, Lango, Teso and Bukedi. As a Government, we cannot afford to have very huge elephant projects around, within and nearby Kampala. My suggestion is that it is important that we come out with a strategy that identifies, develops – *(Member timed out.)*

5.01

MR EMMANUEL BANYA (NRM, Koboko County, Koboko): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is important to note that before I came to Parliament, I was a university secretary at Muni University in Arua. I thank the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation because, under their docket, they have given universities about Shs 1.5 billion every financial year for innovations. I can assure you these universities are coming up with very interesting innovations. For example, in Muni, the team of researchers came up with a cooler called *"kyuma baridi"*. It is a cold room that can bring temperatures to below five. It has been tested, and is working.

They came up with another technology for tracking cattle theft using chips. If you have a kraal, you can demarcate the surroundings in which you want your animals to rotate using GPS tracking. Anytime the animals go beyond that area, you will get a notification on your phone that your animals have gone outside your area.

These innovations are very good, but we are failing to commercialise them. I recommend

that the committee recommends to the Government to identify some of these very important innovations in universities because it is not only in Muni. I believe Makerere and other Universities have a lot of them.

We can have a competitive fund from which different innovators can benefit to commercialise these very interesting innovations that are coming up. Many times when people ask for this money, they say, "the industry out there can now commercialise." However, when you leave it out to the industry, then the issues of patent rights and everybody takes over – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: Yes, my honourable sister?

5.03

MS PHOEBE AYOO (NRM, Woman Representative, Gulu): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to appreciate the committee for the report. One of the recommendations they came up with was to increase funding and investment to the Ministry of Science, Technology and Innovation.

One of the problems facing the innovators in our nation is the high cost of certification. Even as the committee recommends increased funding to the ministry, I would like to specifically recommend that funding is increased to the Uganda National Bureau of Standards so that they can bring down their costs of operations, to lower the cost of certification. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Boniface. Then the last one will be Hon. Twinamasiko, just because of the colour of his tie but I was already tired of this side. *(Laughter)*

5.04

MR BONIFACE OKOT (NRM, Kole South County, Kole): Thank you. Mr Speaker, my undergraduate study was in electrical engineering at Makerere University so, this is a sector I am very interested in.

We have set ourselves very serious national targets; the Tenfold Growth Strategy, the Vision 2040. For any country that imagines that it can achieve such high targets without investing in the Science, Technology and Innovations (STI) sector is simply daydreaming.

I have looked at this report and I have very serious concerns. One is that it talks about the gaps in filling up approved posts. Out of the 151 approved positions, only 24 are filled and that is 15.9 per cent. The number of projects in this sector are 141, meaning that every single officer is supervising six projects. This is unacceptable. I propose that we should pause any new projects until supervision capacity exists in the STI sector.

Secondly, when you look at the Tenfold Growth Strategy framework; Agro-Industrialisation, Tourism Development, Mineral-based Development (including Oil & Gas), Science, Technology, ICT and Innovation (ATMS); A - Agriculture has its dedicated ministry with all technical staff. T - tourism, same thing. M - minerals, same. However, science is a secretariat and yet we believe that it should be at the centre. It is important for this Parliament to reflect on the decision of simply having the STI sector operate under a secretariat.

Thirdly, it is totally unacceptable for the Presidential Initiative on Banana Industrial Development (PIBID) to be under pilot for 20 years. We have injected Shs 311 billion and only been able to get Shs 15.5 billion in 20 years. In this same sector, there is a lot of duplication and overlapping responsibilities. You find a situation where the regulators are also implementers. The National Council for Science and Technology is a regulator but it is also involved in implementing the same projects.

There is an interesting project that is duplicated where we were given a grant by China under the Forum on China-Africa Co-operation (FOCAC). We went ahead and got a loan and the country is bleeding on a project that we already got a grant for.

Finally, under Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI), only five out of 83 projects

have exited incubation. Certainly, we must exit this prototype economy where simply as a university student, we were all expected to do final year projects. Many of these university projects are highly innovative but they are gathering dust in their rooms. Therefore, we need to get-into commercialisation. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: That is from an expert. We shall conclude with Hon. Twinamasiko.

5.08

MR ONESIMUS TWINAMASIKO (NRM, Bugangaizi East County, Kakumiro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for a very well written report. I also thank the Government for the massive investment in the STI, specifically, in the Tropical Institute of Development Innovations and the sericulture project in Kween. I am glad to note that the sericulture project has transitioned from subsistence nature to a commercial oriented industrial subsector for export.

If, indeed, there is commercial viability in this sericulture project that involves mulberry cultivation, silkworm rearing and silk processing, then I pray that the Government of Uganda enrols this project in all regions rather than keeping it in Kween.

We should actually involve our farmers into these innovations for tangible socio-economic outcomes, instead of relying on seasonal crops of maize and beans. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Who is the shadow minister for STI from this side?

5.09

DR EUNICE OTUKO-APIO (UPC, Oyam County North, Oyam): Thank you, Mr Speaker. It is going to be my maiden submission as the shadow minister and I am going to be quite disciplined. I was privileged to -

THE SPEAKER: We will give the shadow minister three minutes.

DR OTUKO-APIO: Five minutes would do. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: You do not argue with the Speaker. *(Laughter)*

DR OTUKO-APIO: Thank you. I was privileged to join the committee on some of its activities from where I learnt quite a lot about this very complex sector. I would like to commend the chairperson and committee for the very good work done. They are trying to clean up the sector. I would also like to thank our research institutions and the local innovators for starting the baby steps that we are beginning to see.

However, there are many gaps as we have already noted. I would like to quickly underscore five of those. A lot of public funding has already gone into this sector to deliver results that we do not see but we are beginning to ask questions that are really important. The Government has on several occasions, and in different spaces, made statements that linked this sector to job creation. Where are the patents that we have been expecting for the last 20 or so years? Two, where are the jobs? We would like to see the Government beginning to show the country the jobs periodically that are linked to the STI sector. Where are the manufactured products? We want to see results as a country, not just reports.

Secondly, about the legal safeguards, the report also emphatically stated that there is need for the Government to do proper legal safeguards before entering into or remitting large sums of money to entities. We have noted Africa Coffee Park in Ntungamo District, for example, is worth Shs 58.5 billion, the National Enterprise Corporation (NEC) Kakoge project and the 3D cases that are operating on purely questionable legal safeguards.

We encourage the Government to sign agreements before funds are released and ensure that clear returns to the taxpayer through equity or royalties are taken care of. We want to see the paperwork on that note.

We are also concerned that the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST), which has been cited in the report,

is quite outdated. There is work to be done in that area. We would also like to see the Government roll up its sleeves by beginning to introduce a starter - the Uganda Start-up Act, to take care of issues like appropriate tax incentives and affordable access to essential scientific equipment, and also take care of our youth.

The report recommends that the sericulture project be concentrated in Kween District. We agree, but we also take note that there are same projects in Kiruhura, Sheema, Mubende and Mukono that already have equipment invested in them. We, therefore, call upon the Government for an immediate national asset register in this regard, proper security and the redeployment of the equipment to institutions such as the Uganda Industrial Research Institute (UIRI) because we have equipment that is quite expensive already spread out throughout these sites.

Finally, on this side, we are concerned that the Government is not investing or taking seriously piloting before it scales up. In addition, we note that with respect to the 3D, the sericulture project is - this should remind us that, as a country, we need to learn, test, evaluate and improve before we invest heavily. We are now running backwards, to say that, alright, let us reduce. We are spread out rather too thin on the ground and we did not pick up lessons earlier. We are now picking lessons and saying that, let us now gather our boots and run back to Kween District to do the sericulture. I submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. There are two shadow ministers - this is the Leader of the Opposition (LOP) now.

5.14

THE CHIEF OPPOSITION WHIP (Mr Paul Mwiru): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee and the colleagues who have contributed. I only want to underscore one important thing, that the Government invests a lot of money in research. When you visit the National Agricultural Research Organisation (NARO), Makerere University and the Uganda Industrial Research Institute, you find that our scientists are putting a lot of effort into this project. However, the law as it stands, requires that they must get an independent person to come and commercialise what has been put out. As the Government, we need to depart so that we allow, to a certain extent, some of these research organisations to do the commercialisation at some scale.

I had the benefit - when I was trying to interact with my Research and Development (R&D) department - of visiting the National Centre for Ontological Research (NCOR) and Makerere University. You realise that they have the human resource and the potential, but the limitation now is the law. I told them that they have the land as NCOR and human resource, why don't they move towards that aspect? They told me that the law does not allow.

Therefore, I think we need to do a mix where we encourage members of the public - you know how these other people have been coming in, saying that everything is for the Government; the research and the money. At the end of the day, the middlemen are just street smart; they know people who come in and nip into the effort of the Government. I thank you.

5.16

THE CHAIRPERSON, COMMITTEE ON SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY AND INNOVATION (Dr Acuti Opio): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Let me take this opportunity to thank the Members for their contributions. I just want to make a few remarks on some of our recommendations.

One of the issues that has been raised is about the people in the villages who do not go to school; those in the informal sector. We have recommended that the ministry and the Government come up with a strategy of ensuring inclusion of the informal sectors. We have many of our people in the so-called "*Katwe* technology." They develop machines, brake pads; very different spares, but then they are not currently being considered within the ecosystem. This ecosystem needs to be revised so that they are included.

Secondly, there has been the issue of commercialisation. We have noted that the biggest gap is that there is a lot of research and development being done, but all these prototypes are ending at the lab and not being commercialised. In many other countries, what we observed is that there is a special fund known as, "a start-up fund" that ensures you take the innovation from the lab into the market. We have recommended that this needs to be developed.

We also noted that there is low public sector adoption of technologies. We have recommended that the public sector should come up with a policy that prioritises - where there is already a local innovation developed, they should take it up before considering any other foreign technologies. For example, Kiira Motors. We have even recommended that as Parliament, we should start using the Kiira Motors buses for our oversight. Actually, the Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation (CSTI) asked me to put that as a special request. We want to ensure that we are at the front line of adopting these technologies. What the Global Innovation Index has shown is that there is a lot of investment in research and development. However, we are not seeing the actual outputs because adoption is low.

Lastly, on the issue of the law, we have recommended that there is a need to comprehensively review the law. The Uganda National Council of Science and Technology Act is a 1990 Act. The science of 1990 is no longer the same as that of 2026. However, when you look at this law, it refers to the minister as the Minister for Planning and Economic Development. That means that the Uganda National Council for Science and Technology (UNCST) is supposed to be overseen by the Minister of Finance, Planning and Economic Development.

However, at the same time, there are several mandates that have been expanded under this particular UNCST, which have not been incorporated into the law. Therefore, there is a real need for an urgent amendment of the laws that govern science and technology.

We also need to ensure that for the sericulture project - for the original project, we have a comprehensive report which will present this, but the original plan covered 34 sites across 24 districts. The one site of Kween District was a recommendation that came up to ensure that there is capacity to be able to cater for the project itself because it appears to have taken up more than what it could be able to chew.

Lastly for the universities, they indicated that they are getting about Shs 1.5 billion. We recommend that the resources given to the universities should be equitably distributed. If you look at Makerere's budget for research and development, it is about Shs 40 billion. However, the other universities are getting about Shs 1.5 billion. We are saying that we need to spread it out equally.

Also, we have recommended that all upcoming infrastructure for research and development be spread out regionally so that scientists across the different parts of the country, for example, Tororo, Kole, Gulu, and Muni are able to access the infrastructure and develop those innovations – *[Hon. Ssewungu: Information]* - I receive that information.

MR SSEWUNGU: Thank you, Hon. Samuel. Mr Speaker, when I was a member of the Committee on Education and Sports, we stopped Makerere University from dominating money for science research; every university should be independent. This business of having Makerere University getting money for research and giving piecemeal to Muni, Mbale and Mbarara Universities is not fair. We said, let every university get its own because, a university without research is not a university.

Lastly, committee chairperson, I pray that with your good report, it should still be you to work on the amendment of those laws within your committee. The moment you bring them to the Speaker and he gives us space, we will work on them and they will be useful.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Honourable Minister of Science, Technology and Innovation? Where is the minister? I do not

think I have seen him. I think I last saw him when he appeared for vetting. Is it part of innovation that he shouldn't attend? *(Laughter)*

5.22

THE MINISTER OF HEALTH (Dr Chris Baryomunsi): Mr Speaker, the minister for science, technology and innovation is promoting innovations in the countryside. Actually, today he is at Soroti University - I think he has been touring a number of institutions, and today he is in Soroti. I am just standing in, but the challenge is that if you ask the Minister of Health to speak about STI in our language, it is Sexually Transmitted Infection but here we are, talking about science.

THE SPEAKER: Science and technology -

DR BARYOMUNSI: Here we are speaking about science, technology and innovation. I want to thank the committee chairperson and members for a very good, informative, and constructive report that they made to this House. I also thank the honourable members for their debate and the issues that they have raised to supplement what the report captures.

Many of the issues are basically advice and giving us tasks to handle as the Government, and we take them in good faith. We receive what the shadow minister and the other honourable members have raised, some of which the chairperson of the committee has responded to.

Without going into each issue singularly, the issues raised include the need to scale up some of these innovations and address issues of equity so that the youth in the country and the local innovators are supported. The committee captures it very well. They make a recommendation that the ministry should reach out to the informal sector and ensure that science and technology is not only urban-based here in Kampala, but these interventions reach the ground, the informal sector, and the young people so that everybody is involved. We take that recommendation.

There is also an issue of the need to review the laws. Some of the legislation is old and needs to be reviewed so that we amend them. We also take that. While the committees can actually bring legislation, it is one of our primary responsibilities, as the Executive, to examine these laws like the one which establishes the Uganda National Council of Science and Technology. We shall review them and bring the amendments or new laws here in this House and we shall seek the support of the House.

In any case, science, technology and innovation is one of the key priority areas that this Government is spearheading. I am sure those who have listened to the President have noted that he is always very emphatic on the need to address science and technology if we are going to facilitate transformation in this country. It is in that regard that he established a fully-fledged ministry responsible for this area. Therefore, we shall bring the Bills.

There is also a recommendation coming through many of the members and the report on the need to move to commercialisation for most of these interventions which are started. An example was given of the Presidential Initiative on Banana Development (PIBD) based in Bushenyi. Yes, sometimes these innovations can take time. You see, this kind of science and innovations are different from the story of creation where you say, "Let there be this," and it is there. At times it takes time to develop ideas and translate them into products.

Yes, projects like PIBD have taken some time and justifiably so, but we agree that we need to move from that stage to another step of commercialisation, and I think PIBD is doing that. He is already starting to do that and they need support. However, we take the point that it is not enough for universities to engage in research and come up with wonderful outcomes and other researchers. The point is we should go beyond that. First, the outcomes should not only translate into informing policy, but also into products that go to the stage of commercialisation. It is a very important recommendation that we take.

The other recommendation or major point was about the need for funding to invest in more resources through the budget to support science, research, and innovations. I think part of the funding from the Government goes through this ministry, but we also know through other ministries like the Ministry of ICT and National Guidance has an innovation fund –

THE SPEAKER: Point of clarification, honourable minister.

MR ATWIJUKIRE: Thank you, Mr Speaker. With all due respect to my senior honourable minister - He talked about science not being like creation where you say, "Let there be." However, if it takes a country 10 or 15 years to transform *matooke* into powder, how long will it take it to develop a chemical or some serious substance that is needed in science? I am saying this in regard to the Bushenyi innovation of *matooke*. It started when I was a young man. I am now almost walking with a stick and there is nothing, yet money goes there every day, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Please, let the minister clarify on behalf of everybody else. How can piloting take 20 years? We are told - The example you gave is, "Let there be."

DR BARYOMUNSI: Yes.

THE SPEAKER: And there was.

DR BARYOMUNSI: I can also say that scientists discovered the HIV virus in the early 1980s, and they have been battling with the issue of the vaccine up to today. Yes, so, I would need to examine – No – *(Hon. Ssewungu rose_)*

THE SPEAKER: Honourable minister, I think you can go on and conclude. Hon. Ssewungu, you are not a known scientist. *(Laughter)* If you taught science in primary school, it does not make you a scientist. Let the honourable minister conclude, please. We have another item. Honourable minister, conclude.

DR BARYOMUNSI: Hon. Ssewungu wants to argue primary-school science. *(Interjections)* No, I do not want to be misunderstood. One would need to examine what exactly the banana research has been doing - the methodologies - but the point I was making is that sometimes it may take time to do research and development and arrive at the outcome. It is not that you say let me start this and next week I will have an answer. I do not have time to delve into details, but if there are issues with the PIBID Project, we can examine it and then this House can address them. The point I was making was in generality that at times it may justifiably take a long time in research and development before you can arrive at the solution you are trying to get.

The issue of funding - I think was the last point - and we agree that we need to invest more resources.

Finally, Mr Speaker, once again I thank the committee and assure the House that the Government is committed to ensuring that we promote the issue of research, science, innovation because we know that through that, we are going to attain transformation in this country. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. This month there are two universities and Mbarara University of Science and Technology has invited the Speaker as a special guest to a science and innovation hub meeting that they have. I would like to go with the Chairperson of the Committee on Science, Technology, and Innovation (STI) and some Members from there. I need about five Members from there.

Kyambogo University has also invited the Speaker for a dialogue dubbed "Science Meets Parliament". The theme is 'Strengthening the Interface between Science, Policy, and Practice for Sustainable Agricultural Transformation in Uganda'. They are spearheading this under the Agriculture for Food Security 2030 programme. They have invited me for the 12th of this month at 10.00 a.m.

I will also need to go with the STI committee, as well as the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries. I need five Members on each of those committees together with the leadership so that we can listen. But more importantly, what I can read from the envelope is that they are going to make a case, which I think Hon. Ssewungu and the others here made, in regard to the funding. You know, treat these universities the same.

Therefore, when I go there, I will commit Parliament that we shall make sure that as Makerere - even Makerere is not getting enough; Shs 40 billion is nothing. We should stop joking if we want to do research and development. We should really provide funds for all these Government universities, whether it is Muni, Gulu, Lira, Soroti, Busitema, what else? Kyambogo, Kabale - they should all have - By the way, those who fund these other universities for innovation and research - I do not know, because they all studied at Makerere; that is why they give Makerere more. Please, all these are universities where we take Ugandans to study. There should be equal distribution, if possible, depending on the capacity of funds.

Therefore, I am counting on this Parliament. I will speak very loudly after knowing that your silence means acceptance that I represent you and that we shall make sure that in the next financial year, we shall sort out the issue of funding for all the universities and all science, technology, and innovation.

I have seen even *Mutume* is also shaking his head in approval. I want to put the question to the motion for adoption of the report of the Committee on Science, Technology and Innovation on the performance of the Science, Technology and Innovation subsector.

(Question put and agreed to.)

MOTION FOR ADOPTION OF THE REPORT OF THE COMMITTEE ON GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE AND IMPLEMENTATION ON THE GOVERNMENT ASSURANCE TO COMPLETE THE CONSTRUCTION OF UP TO 30 BRIDGES COUNTRYWIDE INCLUDING AMODO BRIDGE IN DOKOLO DISTRICT

THE SPEAKER: It is a debate issue, and we have 30 minutes to conclude. This will be our second last item. The rest on the Order Paper will be pushed to relevant days. Where is the chairperson?

5.35

MS ANNA ADEKE (FDC, Woman Representative, Soroti): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker -

THE SPEAKER: Just show us that you are here and ready.

MS ADEKE: I am present, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: And the Prime Minister is here. The debate is now. Hon. Jessica Ababiku, Commissioner, Woman Representative, former Chairperson of the Presidential Affairs Committee - When you get the microphone, I will stop introducing you. She will be followed by Hon. Ogwal and then Hon. Aguti. Two minutes each.

5.36

MS JESCA ABABIKU (NRM, Woman Representative, Adjumani): Thank you, Mr Speaker. Allow me to thank the committee for a comprehensive report. One of the issues they brought out is delayed compensation of the landlords or the owners of the land where development is supposed to take place. The process of getting paid takes so long. I propose that Government reviews its calendar so that valuation or assessment and settling of disputes that may arise in the course of compensation are dealt with early enough.

Secondly, there was the issue of unnecessary extension of contracts, as they qualified it in

the report. If indeed it stands to be unnecessary, I propose that the Office of the Prime Minister takes interest so that those contracts are cancelled because they will not add value.

Lastly, Mr Speaker, there was the issue of semi-abandoned sites. The chairperson reported that contractors went to the sites because of the notice they gave out. I also propose that the Office of the Prime Minister takes note so that Government regularly visits those sites and takes appropriate action against those contractors who are abandoning the sites. Thank you so much.

5.38

MR JOSEPH OGWAL (NRM, Dokolo North County, Dokolo): Mr Speaker, thank you very much. I am Joseph Jones Ogwal, the constituency MP for Dokolo North, where Amodo Swamp is found. I would like to thank the committee for visiting Amodo Swamp, which helps to connect more than two thousand constituents and bring their livelihoods to the fore.

As you can see, from 2017 to date, the progress attained is only five per cent, and yet the Government had committed that within 24 months, Amodo Bridge would be completed. From the findings of the committee, it points to negligence by the technical people, corruption, and also loss of money. I call upon the Minister of Works and Transport to immediately help the people of Dokolo because currently, navigating around Amodo Swamp is very risky for my people. Many have died and others are getting into accidents, and yet there was commitment by the Government.

Equally, there are materials which were delivered on site, but they have never been validated to be of the right quantity and of the right value. Some of the culverts which were delivered on site were undersized, and I am told some were even stolen.

This calls for serious oversight by the Ministry of Works and Transport since the Force Account is the one being used to implement this project. Finally, it is very surprising that an engineering project can take up to nine years and yet money was already committed. This is a serious matter which requires urgency, and the culprits should be brought to book. Thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Aguti, then the Member at the back. I want to give opportunity to those who have not spoken, and then you. Hon. Olanya, you raised a point of order. *(Laughter)*

5.40

MS SARAH AGUTI (UPC, Woman Representative, Dokolo): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I am the one who raised the complaint about the presidential pledge of the Amodo Bridge on this Floor.

I would like to give positive feedback that after your directive, the committee went together with me, and the work is ongoing. I would like to thank you and the committee for the pressure that you put on the ground. The engineer is there every day, but the unfortunate part is that last week we got an accident on that swamp where two people lost their lives, and two survived.

However, the work is ongoing. I request the ministry to speed up because we now have two trucks in form of tippers; they are not Sino trucks, and one excavator being used. If the ministry could add more effort and more materials to be used so that they speed up, the engineer promised to finish Amodo Bridge in two years. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. That is quite good. The honourable behind there?

5.42

MR MUSA KARIM (Independent, Aringa North County, Yumbe): Mr Speaker, thank you so much for also catching my eye again.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, I caught your eye. *(Laughter)*

MR MUSA KARIM: Mr Speaker, I was co-opted by the vice chairperson of this committee

to go to Yumbe to inspect Kochi Bridge. I must applaud this committee for the very thorough work they have done on these bridges. In fact, on a positive note, we interacted with the people on the ground and they confirmed that they have been paid. Compensation has been paid to them, except for the one who claimed that there was an element of corruption. They wanted a tip from him so that he could be compensated. I hope that this matter is investigated thoroughly in the report of this committee so - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: He was only co-opted. Hon. Karim, conclude.

MR MUSA KARIM: Mr Speaker, I would like to applaud, recommend and also reinforce the fact that there should be investigations by the relevant authorities of the Government; the IGG, for example, to adduce relevant evidence so that the person who has been denied compensation is actually compensated. Thank you, and to the committee, all the best.

THE SPEAKER: The honourable member here. Let us give an opportunity to those who have not said anything.

5.44

MR KHEMIS MUZAID (FDC, Arua Central Division, Arua City): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. I thank the committee for that elaborate work. I went through the report, and the following are issues that I have realised.

We have Aca Bridge that was constructed at Shs 7.6 billion, and Shs 5.59 billion was paid. The ministry reported 65 per cent progress in work, and yet the committee underestimated that 30 per cent - six of the twelve filling of the culverts was done. A large proportion of the payment was made when work was not actually at that level.

Secondly, we have the Osu Bridge, the Alla Bridge and the Gazi Bridge. The Osu Bridge was handed over in 2020, no gabions, no clear signage, and no guardrails were done on that bridge.

Mr Speaker, I now have the following questions: to the Minister of State, out of the 30 bridges, we want to know whether their lifespan was estimated to be 120 years. Could the Minister of State assure us concerning that work, especially since some of it was done in a sub-standard way?

Mr Speaker, for West Nile, Alla, Odrua, Osu and Kochi, most of the local government officials were not involved. Could we know from the ministry what was happening and yet some of these particular bridges were within?

One time I travelled from Adjumani, Moyo and I connected to Arua via Kochi. I also want to thank the team that worked on Kochi Bridge. Sincerely, it was good work. Even as we bring up other points, there is where we must give credit. However, the biggest problem was in Amodo, because I was with the Committee on Climate Change and we moved around.

The team came on the ground when they heard that the committee was going there. Therefore, we want to appeal that these are national issues. When I stand here on the Floor of Parliament, even though I speak about Arua or West Nile, we - *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: That is why you are called an honourable MP. We finished this way. Hon. CD Lowila Oketayot?

5.48

MS OKETAYOT LOWILA (NRM, Woman Representative, Pader): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also rise to support the report and thank the committee for their report.

Mr Speaker, it is good to note, from the submissions of some of the Members, that after the oversight visits of the committee, some of these contractors were awakened, but this raises a question: must Members always be moving for serious work to be done? That is a question that must be answered by the ministries that should be supervising some of these projects.

We are talking about only 30 bridges, but the work is taking forever and yet we also have other bridges like mine in Pader. There is supposed to be a bridge over Agago River separating two sub-counties where a number of villages cannot access services. If the work on 30 bridges is taking forever, how long will other areas continue to wait?

This should really awaken the ministries to supervise projects that are being implemented so that they are completed in time. I thank the committee because they moved physically to see what was taking place, and their efforts have not been in vain. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Pakwach, what do you want? One minute. Do you know where Pakwach is?

5.50

MR MARSHALL ALENYO (Independent, Jonam County, Pakwach): Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. First of all, I thank the entire committee. When they entered West Nile, everybody was aware that a very sober committee had entered West Nile, and their work has been resonated in their report.

If you speak about bridges in this country and you do not speak about the most iconic bridge of West Nile; Pakwach Bridge which was built in London in 1995 as a World War II infrastructure - It was only dismantled-

THE SPEAKER: Did you say 1995?

MR ALENYO: 1945. It was only dismantled from the UK and transported to be used in Pakwach for human traffic.

Mr Speaker, when the Minister of Works went to Pakwach, he said the bridge which has been used for 70 years has a lifespan of three years. That statement has caused a lot of panic among the people of Pakwach. It has been used for very long, it is about to expire, and the people in Pakwach - My sister, Hon. Jane Avur, is here and she could add something. They have said that the bridge is now wobbly. The soil under the bridge is collapsing and there is fear that if Pakwach Bridge is not treated as a very serious emergency in this country, West Nile might be cut off. Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Yes, we were handling the 30 bridges under government assurances. Government, I believe you have heard; Pakwach Bridge is – Buikwe?

5.51

MR JIMMY KANAABI (NUP, Buikwe County South, Buikwe): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I also want to appreciate the committee for the work done, especially when they travelled to different regions, apart from the central region.

Mr Speaker, President Museveni came to my constituency in September 1993 -

THE SPEAKER: How old were you?

MR KANAABI: I was in Primary One.

THE SPEAKER: That is not the age. *(Laughter)* You can even be 20 years and be in Primary One. *(Laughter)* Yes, but go ahead.

MR KANAABI: Mr Speaker, the President pledged to construct Kiwungi Primary School and buy for them a van. However, up to now, that school –

THE SPEAKER: Give full details; the Prime Minister is right here. Which parish and subcounty is Kiwungi found in?

MR KANAABI: Kiwungi Primary school is in Koba Parish, Ssi Subcounty. President Museveni pledged to fully construct that school, but the school is still wanting. When I was the LCV chairman, I tried to construct staff quarters using the School Facilities Grant.

Mr Speaker, the school is in a sorry state and it gives the President a bad image because it is well known in the district that the President pledged to furnish the school. I call upon the – *(Interjections)* - the school - *(Laughter)*

THE SPEAKER: So, is the school like the bridge or what?

MS KANAABI: The school. I am on pledges, and this is the government assurances committee; this is the only opportunity I have to raise it. Thank you, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. You do not abuse the opportunity. Hon. Kabanda?

5.54

MR DAVID KABANDA (NRM, Kasambya County, Mubende): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for giving me this opportunity. Again, let me use this opportunity to congratulate you upon becoming the Speaker of this Parliament. *(Applause)*

When I was coming in, I looked at the screen and saw a new face. I asked, "Is there a new Speaker?" Members told me, "Yes, there is a new Speaker and he is doing very well". *(Laughter)* Thank you so much for chairing this House very well; everybody is enjoying.

I would like to thank the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation for this very good report. However, the issue I am seeing here is that sometimes, the President or Government promises without looking into the budget. It is important for the Government to promise, knowing that it will implement.

I have heard many problems from colleagues. When the President promises something in the constituency and it does not happen, their opponents use it against the sitting MPs. They say that the MP has failed to present their issue before the President. "The President came here and promised a bridge but because the MP is not saying anything, that is why the bridge is not coming. When he goes there, he says yes to anything to do with the Government. He does not want to remind the President, even when they go to the caucus."

For example, the issue that Hon. Kanaabi is talking – *(Member timed out.)*

THE SPEAKER: One minute to conclude on the -

MR DAVID KABANDA: Regarding what Hon. Kanaabi has talked about, Mr Speaker, the President promised a school in 1993, but nothing has happened to that school. You have even heard about these bridges. It is not that the MPs have not reminded the Government, but it is important for the Government to promise something that they know is going to be worked on.

To me, nothing is hard for the Government, as long as they make that issue a priority. If you allow me, I can welcome the information –*(Interruption)*

THE SPEAKER: It is your right.

MS AGUTI: Thank you for allowing me to give you information. I just want to inform you that a presidential pledge is also like a Member of Parliament's pledge. They always pledge wherever they go. It is not about the budget; it is not about the money that an MP has. It is not about the money that Government has but it is a pledge to develop the country, Uganda. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Okay. Hon –

DR BARYOMUNSI: Mr Speaker, I just want to clarify that the President makes pledges and he usually moves with his members of staff. They are expected to capture that pledge and then the President or State House writes to the relevant ministry. So, if he has pledged a school in his constituency, the staff of the President will usually write to the Minister of Education and Sports and then the ministry captures that pledge in the budgeting process.

So, it becomes important that if the President pledges something in your constituency, you then follow up with the minister to be sure that the President has communicated and when budgeting starts, that pledge is captured. That is for your information.

THE SPEAKER: *(Hon. Silwany rose_)* Hon. Silwany, are you not a member of the committee? Why are you saying no, as if it is a crime to be in -

5.58

MR SOLOMON SILWANY (NRM, Bukooli County Central, Bugiri): Mr Speaker, I want to thank Hon. Kabanda and the minister for what they have raised. When you look at the pledges and the bridges we are talking about, we have had this discussion for a long period of time. We are going into the budgeting cycle.

Unless we sit, as Parliament, and appropriate money for these particular bridges, nothing will be done because we have talked about the bridges, schools, and presidential pledges for several years.

Mr Speaker, we need to budget and also ring-fence money for those particular sectors because we sometimes budget but money is diverted. Unless we budget and ring-fence that particular fund for those bridges, nothing will be done. I beg to submit.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Karim, then Hon. Machika will be the last. I have seen two more people but you spoke. One minute.

5.59

MR KARIM MASABA (Independent, Industrial Division, Mbale City): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the chairperson of the committee for the good report.

I think Government needs to put firm action on some of these contractors like this China 7th Railway Group. When you look at their performance in Bugisu, it is discouraging. They had a contract of a few months but it has been years and they have not completed the projects in Namisindwa. Nothing has been done about them.

Lastly, I expected the committee to visit some of the bridges in Mbale but Namisindwa was the only district visited in Bugisu. There is one just about 100 metres from the State Lodge where the President stays when he is in Bugisu. It is in very poor state. There is no bridge; it was washed away. The President has been pledging, every election period, that this bridge will be worked on. It has not been worked on up to now. There is also one connecting Kaguta Road. This is a road that was named after the President because he has a history with the place. It has been years, but up to now, nothing has been done about it. Thank you.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Machika? I do not know where you come from, but you are quite tall. *(Laughter)*

6.01

MR RICHARD MACHIKA (NRM, West Budama North East County, Tororo): Thank you, Mr Speaker, for that compliment. I rise to commend the committee for the good work and more especially, the fact that they visited Tororo; the Rubongi Bridge, which at a certain point became a big problem for us. We appreciate the bridge very much although it is not yet complete. However, we are also requesting the Government - Now that Rubongi Bridge is already up to standard, the people of Tororo are looking forward to the tarmacking of Nagongera–Busolwe road. I beg to submit, thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Thank you. Hon. Amelia Kyambadde, agricultural matters? You know, bridges are connected to transportation. She is the Chairperson of the Committee on Agriculture, Animal Industry and Fisheries.

6.02

MS AMELIA KYAMBADDE (NRM, Mawokota North County, Mpigi): Mr Speaker, I want to thank the committee for their report. Allow me to guide, according to experience.

When it comes to the President's pledges, we all have a role to play: a Member of Parliament and a Resident District Commissioner (RDC). We should not apportion blame to the President. The Principal Private Secretary (PPS) will record, but the details have to be generated by the Member of Parliament and the RDC.

If the President talks about a road, the RDC and the Member of Parliament should communicate to the PPS about the length of the road and the state of the road because when the President pledges, he does not have these details.

As a Member of Parliament and the RDC, you all have a role to play when the President visits your area. I just wanted to guide.

THE SPEAKER: Hon. Sam Byibesho - Ignore that advice at your own risk.

MS KYAMBADDE: Ask the RDC and the district engineer.

6.03

MR SAM BYIBESHO (NRM, Kisoro Municipality, Kisoro): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I want to thank the committee for the work well done.

I was around in the 10th Parliament and on the same committee. When some of those findings come here to Parliament, sometimes nothing is done, more especially on the pledges. We have a number of pledges, which were made by the President, way back in the early 1990s and nothing has been happening.

It is true that sometimes when you go to the State House, you do not find some of these records, which means they are being thrown away. Some of those pledges are not brought to His Excellency's table.

As Hon. Amelia Kyambadde was saying, the Member of Parliament plus the RDC are supposed to follow up some of those pledges. Some of us, the Members of Parliament from Kisoro, have been trying to follow up some of these pledges from the State House and nothing has been happening.

Talk of the tourism roads, talk of the airstrip, talk of the university and many other things. Sometimes when our people look at us, they think that we do not forward these pledges which were made by the President. We fail again, as Members of Parliament, when we come back to look for votes. Sometimes -

THE SPEAKER: Honourable chairperson of the committee -

MS ADEKE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker. We appreciate -

THE SPEAKER: I had not seen you properly. *(Laughter)* I would not have bothered you. However, go ahead.

MS ADEKE: Thank you very much, Mr Speaker.

THE SPEAKER: I am sure you have no complaint about bridges at all. *(Laughter)*

MS ADEKE: Thank you, honourable colleagues, for your kind compliments to the committee. We thank Parliament because it has greatly facilitated this work, and all the MPs in the constituencies who were notified and were able to be physically available on site as we carried out this task. I thank the honourable members of the committee who remained dedicated until the final execution.

Honourable colleagues, I need us to note that under our Rules of Procedure for the Committee on Government Assurances, for an item to become an assurance, you must raise it on the Floor of Parliament and have the minister directly in charge confirm that indeed that pledge was given and that Government is still committed to fulfilling that pledge. That is the only criterion that has to be met for it to be regarded as an assurance under our Rules of Procedure.

We can also, under our Rules of Procedure, channel this information to the sectoral committees, as we all know that we are going into the Budget Framework Paper (BFP) process. We will channel this information to the sectoral committees so that they can factor in those pledges that the Government has already agreed to; pledges it has confirmed as assurances so that they are catered for in the budgeting process.

Of course, the availability of funds is a function of the Executive. However, that is how your

items will be regarded officially as assurances on the *Hansard* because this is a House of record. I thank you very much.

THE SPEAKER: Minister of Bridges? *(Laughter)*

6.08

THE MINISTER OF STATE FOR WORKS AND TRANSPORT (WORKS) (Mr Siraji Ali): Thank you, Mr Speaker. I would like to thank the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation for the report. I met with this committee on two occasions and we had fruitful discussions. We note the recommendations and the contents of their report.

Our engineers are working closely to ensure that all 30 bridges are completed by 30 July next year. We have received money from the Ministry of Finance, Planning and Economic Development and most of the contractors have been paid. We pledge that by 30 July next year, 30 bridges will be completed. Thank you, Mr Speaker. *(Applause)*

THE SPEAKER: Thank you very much. Allow me to thank the Committee on Government Assurance, led by Hon. Zaake, for - I said it before - Hon. Zaake has matured, he is a leader and he has provided leadership in that committee. *(Applause)*

If there is one other committee that the people appreciated, that is the Committee on Government Assurance. They even did not know which committee; they thought it was the Committee on Public Accounts (PAC). However, they went across the country, taking Parliament to the people. We want to thank the - *(Applause)* I think because he had a very good vice-chairperson, Hon. Anna Adeke, whom I had taken a few months without seeing. *(Laughter)*

Please, this is good. The Clerk should take note that committees need to be facilitated to work. *(Applause)* In the next budgeting cycle, we need more money for inland travel because that is what Ugandans see. When you travel and go to - For instance, when I was in New Delhi, which Ugandan saw me there apart from those who are on X. Here they see you concerned about them.

What Hon. Amelia said is why we are elected. We are representatives; we are not delegates. Continue to bring the concerns of your people, follow them up with the President and through this House until you get a response.

She is a former Principal Press Secretary (PPS), so she is giving you experience of over 15 to 20 years. Now you have all known.

The Committee on Government Assurance and the Vice Chairperson, Hon. Anna Adeke, have given you the legal position on how it translates to be value. Some are bringing wish lists like an honourable whose name I do not want to mention, who talked about a school. We are talking about bridges.

Let us be as systematic as the biblical widow, for those of you who know. She persisted and every time went to ask for what she wanted from the judge until the judge got annoyed, tired of her and gave it to her.

That is persistence which overcomes resistance, so never give up. Next item? I put the question to the motion for the adoption of the report of the Committee on Government Assurance and Implementation on the Government assurance to complete the construction of up to 30 bridges countrywide, including Amodo Bridge in Dokolo District.

(Question put and agreed to.)

THE SPEAKER: Amendment when the motion has passed? Honourable, you have been here longer. The motion is carried; there is nothing for you to amend. Next item, sir?

ADJOURNMENT

THE SPEAKER: The House is adjourned to 2.00 p.m. tomorrow.

(The House rose at 6.13 p.m. and adjourned until Wednesday, 4 November 2026 at 2.00 p.m.)